

The Visitor's Guest

Also by Nathan Thompson

the arboretum towards the beginning

The Visitor's Guest

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Contents

Looks

open book	11
the thing about	13
both minds unhurt	14
securely visual	15
painted on a sunday	16
airbrushed	17
news from the hill	18
angels	19
courting the days	22
brief histories	23
offshore lifeboat	25
nightfall in the colonies	26
the magic study of happiness	28
wishes entering a land	29
the machine arrives	30
houses	31
evening poster girl	32
noctivigation for beginners	33
ellipses for painters	34
scarcely relevant	35
every facet has its shadow	36
dances with conversable provision	37

Listens

lay by maria	41
the visitor's guest	42
percentage of did not answer	47
now and at the hour	48
morning series parallel	52
how the script was used	53
an aquarium for michael tippett	55
multiples of O	63

Leans

spatial practices	67
would you, but would you	68
translating hope street	70
the visitors adrift	71
the piper	80
that knows and so do I	81
black butter she said	82
spatial practices #2	87

For Laura

Looks

open book

the ladies were fierce in their requests for flowers

magic is pessimism taken to its logical confusion

discuss

it is getting harder to conclude anything
older than yesterday

and even then
excess of confidence can be misleading
'play the scale as if you actually know it
and you'll fool 70% of people' (except musicians)

knowing who's an expert
is perhaps useful for future development
but too many coffees may nonetheless result
in catastrophic diagnoses
about how hearts beat faster when in love with themselves
and everything else is fear

when I left the prefab and came to find you
it was dark in the extreme
alleys of discontent winter butterflies
fluttered like snow
reversing any sense of control

and I have been inspired to tell you this by a liar
who shudders collages with his broken thumbs
obscuring misprints at pivotal moments in the argument
such that not to go to work is as relevant as
sitting here watching smoke-shards retract into baggy clouds

and when you can say that you can say anything
that was ever concreted under the poetic patio
without the slightest risk
that locks of your hair will become romantic trophies

if I find you agree I will let you know
that considering these points was important

until then 'mist envelops the whole reckless cathedral'

the thing about

the thing about is
things turn
round a way of seeing

spring colours on an afternoon
is ashes on wednesday by another darker
flowing condensed
or ears' open promise
saved for tomorrow in a frieze of possibilities

now is continued
flushing out memories
open winter crossed apart too long
from here as
 lower the windows and
blink perfect days hanging
magic by its own admission

not always guilt signs and
collective misuse of understanding

shall we go to the

is it worth

before edges focus
kaleidoscope switching

to bleed is but we're not curious

circulation idea swap arteries
see what happens
when you come by again veins pantomime dipping

both minds unhurt

now closing the body
tired cushioned mornings

‘I want to stick with you’

little sugar teeth
extract pockets’ resistance
grow hungry as light forms
scales balanced tipping
waiting

‘love is all in the head’

expressionless feelings dancing hard
splits of crows dribble the skyline
figured confusion
being intense
to lick lyric dry
folk-sung under summer blankets

securely visual

somewhere is a body carrying the psychological baggage of sleepless nights

I follow you under your eyes folding tattooed skin recycling aesthetics
until no bigger than a red letter

days spent in foreign language wet with blood held up on docked
fingers counting institutions trashed and toxic

driving a drunk in a memory of driving

painted on a sunday

late sees only
changing spaces

the park is playing with
your mind as

what are you reading
is it good

music turns three paces inward
weighted against a blank page

bliss is to pass up tenses
quills or feathers equally you

angels

there are as many fingers as there are
owls in heaven

remember the world is holding the keys
to your heart and making a big mess of it
THIS / DOES / NOT / WORK written on each chamber

by implication there are not enough owls in hell
because the remainder are in purgatory today
knitting ladders

unusual as they seem
to fly so naturally you could touch the way they fly

is it ever not autobiographical 'the key to your castle?'
I accept there could be some confusion here

back in the picture some houseflies join me
in what has become known as *the post-ultimate glade*
where we feed on meat and other flies
things left behind by crunchy feathers
'life on earth as we know it in the rain'

okay I'm flagging I'll write this story in terms
I try to relax no part of you that aches
with emotional complexity

the moon
giant and yawning on an impressive table

but something is yet lacking handing us back
autonomy too intimate vague enough
for a doctor at midnight who signs for his alter ego
all my life I've been in love with its colour on my lips
as if drunk boys stomp on secretive shoulders
then commute nervously admitting to all the taints that look good
motionless as statues of ushers selling oranges
in pictures of old thought themselves into part past cities
without recourse to method

do you have any questions

try praying or turning to the noise under a cow when its bell rings
time almost as beautiful as she lives and carries
a stetson for the richest disease in the room
full of people I love just as one moment becomes
not quite the next or the wing I reject as
absolutely false an established compendium of nails
down a blackboard placed in me by nature

to recap *I begin the establishment of the castle*

the bare minimum trusting your name
that is to say others need pay no further
attention to crawl through the grass with me
water flowing underneath where the moat . . .

flesh alone has escaped reclining bones
regurgitated through the beak 'appeals?' or
screaming monotone dialectics emphatic carolling

these words are too dense I prefer the way
you snuck out of the dormitory 35 times
20 losses poking holes in your armour

the rest of the evening passes
medication reduced to architecture
crumbling beneath your feet

you called to say you were dead
your one and only the prophet's hair
flowing from his unwritten turret

ivy where is suitable for perching
dancing even the distance after that owls are so wise

I thought to myself that this must be god