The Memory of the Drift
Also by Paul Holman

The Fabulist (1991)
The Memory of the Drift, Book 1 (2001)
PAUL HOLMAN

The Memory of the Drift

Shearsman Books
Exeter
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The Memory of the Drift
The Genii of a Secret State

He selected the great closed helmet: it might have fitted god or hobgoblin. The borrowed tape of star music pleased him: his trumpet of Helium
This blur of angels: 
the trace 
of a more brilliant 
language. Some 
diminish into cloud, 
too rapid 
[        ] birds’ flicker 
[                               ]
find a common shape 
in flower, 
star, Medusa’s head: 
their sign. It 
shed that precision 
[                 ] us 
no first loved site, 
no haunt [              ]
their note on space 
must fade 
[         ]
[         ] leave 
these altered folds, 
turn wild 
among hart’s tongue 
or catnip. The 
ghost we dismantled 
is silent: 
even the underworld 
fails us. Each 
masque of shepherds 
[               ]
that looked trivial 
once [               ]
I
were roads
upon which
one
sleek
monster
of
but
the true
of

I believed
there were roads
upon which
one might meet
not the sleek
monster
of some child’s
story, but
the true carrier
of flames
My course is serpentine:
even the rich field
that I made too little
of, still held
back by the austerity
of my childhood’s
eye, was never clear
but phantasmal
their code of romance
each lover forced
upon that sacred blue
note the dragon’s
how some who received
into London. Even
enough to be a medium
powerful I raised

their code of romance
fail. The kindest
are led into the trap:
each lover forced
to select noose, mesh
or leash. I tread
upon that sacred blue
still to be found
beneath stem and barb,
note the dragon’s
path. It is no longer
dangerous to tell
how some who received
the divine signal
sent their hooks down
into London. Even
to number them turned
me stupid, docile
enough to be a medium
for their angelic
discoveries. The most
powerful I raised
coughed fire, circled
reeking furniture
or kill the oppressive lie
to destruction. I set
[                                          ]
[                     ] her face
on her world is accidental:
with liberty [                    ]
immune to the satisfaction
to release her unhappiness
aside from experience
of both to let fascination
a decade since I last
[   ] possess a temper
a companion to desire:
by a newly deserved recoil
but do not ever spell
is curious and indifferent
[                     ]
and prefer to keep nothing
to gain love. My hold
how demonic I might become
of an alien [                 ]
how I split the text apart
or kill the oppressive lie
that I might help her:
to release her unhappiness
into a regulated life
is curious and indifferent
to destruction. I set
her scar and her split lip
aside from experience
to turn upon a starry axis
count it too wasteful
of both to let fascination
dissolve a friendship
and prefer to keep nothing
her face
become labelled and secret
a decade since I last
practiced such crude magic
to gain love. My hold
on her world is accidental:
an absence of control
possess a temper
uneven enough to show
how demonic I might become
with liberty
but restraint is no longer
a companion to desire:
it is shrouded in the home
of an alien
immune to the satisfaction
of being less haunted
by a newly deserved recoil
to consider
how I split the text apart
to make space for her name
but do not ever spell
it in full
absent | vacant | erase | dissolve | vanish
8: *Herdsmen*

too severe to accept
some woodland
king for his model.
In delirium
the yellow waste
bag became an animal
and delicate red
bird life crackled
in the harsh
air of the isolation
ward. Of course I
am no better than
a declassé market
trader. Horus:
*This wine is corked*
9: Stargazer

fucked up. In 1979 I had no idea that Pam Burnel was a name used by Allen Fisher. He counted the letter K three times in the design on my cigarette packet. The blast must have damaged that witches’ launch pad on the Isle of Dogs. Each leaf game that my daughter invented
10: Het Up

the alcohol behind each chocolate
| sketch: eye | more beautiful
in this migraine glitter. I tell
her that the Greenwich axeman
is a sad | scribble | hair fixed
in a chopstick halo no weirder
than a biro or two. That smashed
cat head is just wood | space |
painted some kind of elfin hunt
upon the second
11: *Sally Day*

it is shrouded | hood |
but the other siren
is kind | haze hedge |
taught me to construct
a bomb: match
head and nail varnish
| deluge | bird catcher |
er her crayon spectre upon
the blackboard