

Peter Dent

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Poetry

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At the Blue Table (Blackthorn Press, 1999)

Settlement (Ferne Press, 2001)

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The Full Note: Lorine Niedecker (Interim Press, 1983)

Not Comforts // But Vision : Essays on the Poetry of George Oppen

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Peter Dent

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*At times it seems to me
that, between us, there is
the confused memory
of mutual crimes.*

*Here we are projected face to face
for understanding.*

Guillevic, *Carnac*
(tr. Teo Savory)

HORIZONS AND FAÇADES

NEW REGISTER

Smouldering the new blues attaching themselves
To Autumn hills where his someone watches as
Always anxious at the wheel of an empty sky

His words more likely to turn a fortune in
Its quick immaculate machinery and its gratis
Invitation to nothing else he knows it knows

Himself the demand lies elsewhere seeing over
The hills what looks like trouble skies burning
Up with promise familiar easy roads now just

Impossible to read he'll not be finished so easily
His starmaps left for night for love left partly
Consummated too immaterial an illusion trying

To see him off and minus belief it's easy if
Still an interim account the answers trickling in
To a natural lake come October reconstructed

Asking to see it out woods high on the skyline
Find him dreaming up the marvellous extremes
Of chance he's steering clear he's ready to go

MAKING A CLEARING

Memory nothing now I consider it registers
This garden's a fine creation the colours track
Mad circuits to repeat and repeat me briefly

Handing over the fine control whose better day
Works up and over fiction sparkling any blues
And silvers even out of a mystery a palette

To turn your head more things than can guess
What's next I ask you taking everything in
Hand love's undercover situation do broader

Headlines occupy more space time's up just
Look how opening a thousand heads to colour
I quit this minute's wild-eyed editorial may

Make for better style live petals ever the worse
And maybe better for wearing out choice dazzler
Can you sign this register again before you go

Repeat and repeat me things that every garden
Knows my season's asking who steals who
Evaluates do I self-regulate belief its flower

WHICH DAYS

Which context are we speaking of a strong
And unsubstantiated wind and flash of light
To pray for a safe return there was nothing

To it said the correspondent I am part and
Parcel of the 'whole darn thing' discretion?
Still worse than visible revenue it's a world

Out there of colour distressed or polished up
Persuasion today there's a spring in my step
Like yesterday imagination turned out wholly

Other and complete he heard the first and
Then the second explosion masonry glass
Mid-city deserts no going back but glances

Your cautious eye like every yesterday I've
Yet to know (say when) keeps pouring in
And sparkling no-one's to know how long

Impressions last to think who could've been
There reigning grief a distance in the thick
Of it whose skin is golden fragile stay

ONLY AN EVERYDAY CONCOCTION

Flashlight memory knows the perfect interval
Down a trail flicks switches sometimes for
Sorrow and sometimes who can guess its game

Misplaces a shine renewing in a landscape
The least familiar figure skyline silvery quick
To a quandary has the restless day go down

In words to love? as random as a word is
Often disengaged like an apparition I've mislaid
Examines in absentia rudimentary gold hours

Hanging on to hang on but they can't be told
Too smoky-smudged for an oakwood nothing
Is ever at our beck and call come in it may

Invite for sleep to lose more yesterdays than
Time and so it goes holds nothing against
One shadow sworn to fade days just a place

To get things done leaves weather a sky to
Wholeness gales of the 'great thing coming'
Watch how resolution finds us playing up

DREAMED-OF EXTREMES

questions on a day out

Description? something there in the counting out
Of things what actually is whether you like it or
Not makes up a 'fullness' for the intellect of sorts

Grand colours working a line through mental weather
Chiselling out a decent angle that avenue or this
Taking a walk through the park hearing the singing

Singing the birds outlandish almost turquoise trees
In a certain kind of light you know you have to be
Full grown to measure and how much time? your

Statement's calm controlled in its white quotidian
Way I am concerned who's asking the question here
When I'm much more into play than yesterday I

Looked the part all right an average passing eye
And getting square with the world more often even
Unphasing its rags and bobtails of off-white clouds

But propriety? and nothing worked for just that
Sense of possibility the last hours of a maze worth
What? good reason's smiling it makes you think

COMING ON ORDER

and cannot say

Given to understand a little local colour to find
Myself a minor place unearned with deep shade-
Driven buttercups memories climbing the higher

The look there bright on your face subliminal
Equations for how amazed the world is dreaming
The figures I needed to know at last complete

In a stream of instant daybreaks firing perhaps
Attenuated perhaps disrupted with absurd delight
Some other 'beingness' on call its yes to enquiry

Asks me am I breathing taking a second breath
To feel the secret weather loaded in it still no
Meaning gives the game away just one I mean

The wildest takes it easy though unknown it's
Better known to some if preternaturally bound
To light the fuse imagination turning into world-

Wide riot whose future can't reread the present
Tense its every power line energising all the
Dark I'm touching if nothing ever total earth

LOGBOOK CRAZY

and talking it up

Today this week or next the weather calls
Another truth to order its convoys moving
Steadily out of town quite violent company

Despatching words if only after dark such
Lavish industry would work involve myself
Obedient to occasion a metaphor for once

Left out the picture and calling the shots ...
Companions of honour do I mix it all that
Light for now in a field's explosive places

Mapping the unsold text reluctantly in time
Moved off through barbed wire as another
A black word said more zeros in the mouth

Where paras head for psalms tomorrow say
And the sentence after after this don't let
High Summer mess with individual nature ...

Engagements off and the guns go quiet
Last duty: get the bloody thing discharged
Let even the dirtiest cloud select its hour

OF FAILING INTEREST

'Be there' be prone to such an order and daring?
Not that I'd intercede on a day like this or do I
Entertain such brazen skies make this or whatever

The last time seem enough exceptional on its own
That you put it down to 'business acumen' okay
In the circumstances cloudless as Midsummer

Day repeats itself sees everything in clover heavens
You say but you hadn't a prayer or escape left
Only this the chaotic and half-constructed empire

You'd unhinged whose was whose is it nobody's
Fault but mine turns a late night conversation
Down on its luck till a new day burns dictating I

Read you hard like most good stories demanding
A presence an offhand twinkling of an eye a gleam
On blackthorn? even odder day-to-day phenomena

The half-right word in its mobile hinterland its
Deep interior darker than you think I'm proving
Everything is special if only when it's through

PRE-WINTER MANIFEST

Night with its overdose its electrons crowding
The circuit so life's but once too memorable
A window overgrown for paradox too bright

Blues in a sudden band an envelope whatever
Registers enough is sure to be contained there's
No persuading what stops what leaves its trace

An eye for shadow? not looking for reasons
Even rests its case here's willing all across my
Spectrum oh any gleam can settle out of court

Headlights and rain in mind and then to see
What answers turn away in two dimensions there
It's something and nothing precious in the air

The verb 'to bear' repeats itself no stopping
The red reminder was it yesterday that now
Plays up good grace is actual knows its place

Another field it was resolved and not the first
Time saved these maples hard along the edge
The traffic all of its shifting amplifying red

SCHEMA AND DEPARTURE

thinking on W.B.

As Summers go as Summers in their likeness
Go and nothing slowly leap by leap this
Side of heaven's swallows in their 'heaven' turn

For home then anything I say and do I say it
Will be out of some peculiar dark gravity down
To you *subtending* — tell me how — what

Apparatus? not something I claim to know
I'm hazy still about the deal it takes to raise
A cloud its like unmade enough I dare to speak?

Not thinking even and some say better so long
Lives condensed we're quickly into it like
Metaphor? to find ourselves 'constructed'

Dropping shadows out of shadow whereby this
My thin excuse *unminded* taking it all to heart
To open up a line unstable but exquisite cloud:

Use additives judiciously whatever the word
Says aren't we just the end give me a call when
Skies come clear look up download this flight