

Tripping Daylight

Selected previous publications by Peter Dent

Settlement (Leafe Press, 2001)

Unrestricted Moment (Stride, 2002)

Adversaria (Stride, 2004)

Handmade Equations (Shearsman Books, 2005)

Overgrown Umbrellas (with Rupert Loydell) (Lost Property, 2008)

Ghost Prophecy (Kaleidikon, 2011)

Dasein and Scarecrow (Offline Press, 2011)

Price-Fixing (Kaleidikon, 2011)

With Number Plates Disguised (High Tide Editions, 2011)

Limit Situations (Smallminded Books, 2011)

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*'The intensity of a brought-about recollection
leaves one worn down; it consumes cells of the
being if not the body. Truth goes on to eat
through the weakened fabric.'*

—Elizabeth Bowen, *A World of Love*

'Half of every experience is lack of experience.'

—Fanny Howe, *O'Clock*

1.

Tripping Daylight

1

It's not as though I'm taken in by questioning who in his right mind would ... it's answers that fail to ring a bell aggrieved when listening to the hubbub that surrounds I'll tend to lag behind 'off minor' maybe excusing myself with a regular bag of tricks take nothing but trust for granted however you measure that time between the faded calendar and what lately passes for well-being more mood than ever heads for a vacuum if only the dodgy miracle would quit its act for make-believe but more efficient a certain frenzy's out and addressing itself to even the faintest accusation a dream? or a silent movie bodily it shakes the screen

2

Not that this morning's light is too intense I have a scheme that interests itself in 'desirable structure' in evocations of a promising site illusion is proving less than useful no security no substance I know of can help the sequence forward the plot if it really is a plot excites more fear than hope I'm presently unprepared to entertain such a climb up scaffolding and ladders quick to a count of ten rather I skip preliminaries? and make the next stage work? best practice indicates it's only the higher connections matter applaud the performance or approval can't be guaranteed! cold forecasts weathering light I shall scale the great unseen

3

She could do her own life inside two paragraphs
but only on a good day a yellow brimstone
on a mounting-block would do just as well if
you think about it? last year was only a kind
of half-way house as she knocked the ash off
another cigarette I knew it was simply a case of
character building with the blocks supposedly
on order somehow I had to reach the top and
not exaggerate the brogue some prone to listen
out for 'conflict' rather than call for help next
year I'll be handling facts with massive caution
not letting unwanted appointments hold me back
concealed entrances and a life unknown continue
to stake a claim how sulkily she asks for more

4

With which he tried to avoid the outcome out
of the frying pan and not without noticing the
sense of incredulity which greeted his work a
disadvantage to some he found it easy to borrow
someone else's temperament death was having
a word just the other day about blasphemy he
had companions enough to spare the blushes and
keep the peace whose war has become a sullen
occupation after dark lets bloodshed draw long
queries from the fire he stared and stared and
swore on all that was just he'd make connection
on which attractive note mists rose and caused
both entrances to disappear the last of the day
and something from the sky with a face he knew

5

Fair trade not merely when you count the cost
or swap contempt home's never far she says
if keeping a tight ship knows the half sunlight
as we know it taking just eight minutes to get to
the point with lessons placed on hold it's dread
now figuring in every canvas but the last in
which that need for contact takes a certain turn
I tell a lie she says and tells another a portrait
fittingly dressed in red tomorrow repaired she
feels like starting another one with its burning
questions recollected in places devoid of light
she's glorying in the change of heart as if there
isn't another threat! whilst moments choose to
gather pace sail on and never once make land

6

If this is what diplomacy means or in a month
of Sundays seems to imply forget whatever is
in a hurry to follow I'm taking the chance of
a spell of weather to put my several policies in
order and not for the first time vigilance is
due a spectacle to conjure with distances of a
more ethereal kind are done away with I'm
taking a gamble on ghosts till now untouchable
coming to play my landscapes are abstract
enough their faces all acrylic seem impressed
it's the way the senses take the obvious course
that inspires my appetite I'm no longer playing
hard to get or styling truth more death-in-life
is scarcely an option when daylight's through

7

Some definition that some are privy to and I'm definitely not it concerns me keeps my writing awake at night but I can't get past the first instruction now scratching the surface engaging with maybe seven alternative deals? I'd put no finer point on it we're as sound as truth in part believe me it's better to re-enact the past than to live it up for real with life strung out with history when trusting masks can result in telling it straight last night was one too many picking up pieces read on for a comprehensive quote I excuse the daily oracle most things like budget removals or rites of passage rewarding a perfect pitch can make the usual rate per se

8

True to the end of time and surely not before against strang malladies my policies look well assured? quit reading those earlier paragraphs or concentrate like fury nothing's ever as it's meant to quibble over fiction? it's a bridge too fly for any syntax right in the mind to go on note the quantum leaps implied lights off then judgement gift-wrapped for a much more promising scene joke joke! it's entirely at my own expense when out of pocket's not what it was or will be reminders are red like crazy obscuring whatever's best deception is better? last legs then down to horoscope or headline judging what papers say may we safely burn

9

Discreet occasions and pettie griefes I'll defend
to the last she said no more and took a delight
in obfuscation a blur of abstracts making it
ofttimes quite a bit like old times never more
willing through parks and playgrounds of the
rich where history projected its all-star cast in
heroic loss could she make a mountain out of
less? something preposterous there in the way
she'd censor art when her own too garishly
exposed her sins three graces turn up trumps
if terribly scarred by time foreign again to the
eye but trembling easy to the hand she takes
another lesson in sophistry to heart and pleads
for all she's worth crime ordering a nasty fix

10

A perfect sentence that and nothing in-between
I could see from one side of his work to another
light prevailing there it's period black and white
and camouflage but hadn't I seen it all before?
some delicate situation turning to sheer abuse for
kicks his companions knew exactly how to read
his mood and take an exit double-folded often
unspoken the predicted words were liable to make
an altogether other appearance in days to come
his instinct was to cancel all those voices raised
by nature and disengage the self why not why
not see quandaries off the graph? a respectable
line you could say even one off-balance would do
the trick and freefall ... parenthesis or bust

11

What I am returned to is the sense of balance in
an uninhabited sky interior and unreachable the
equivalents as last lights redden and thin you
find that you're trapped between tall conifers and
a text if never absent in a thought's unmaking
truly devout and everything to do with keeping
an eye on futures spies I volunteered to watch
through words find a half-light blinks on familiar
paths yet more nights stripped of stars but they
just won't measure up the perfect answer's out
there breaking dreams are we still unoccupied
by history I imagine I'm back with you and it's
falling steadily as leaves? the questions that we
sealed in a hollow tree they're signed for good

12

Contrast like with like and you're getting close
since when has a forgotten statement left such a
stark reminder? she looked if not suspicious
then sort of uneasy shooting half-glance after
half-glance while visiting a tired authority with
familiar ease to abandon story-time retune the
senses with 'what is' and dread a second guess
collective amnesia when she thought of it was
part of the contract love in a foreign light or
getting lost required no practice delicate as
the postcard's wintry scene all words escaping
to a clean horizon a dulcet air and a breeding
ground for days nothing remotely of substance
tried her song unconsecrated and kept on ice

16

13

If ever a text looked odd it was this! the very last such debate as followed never took kindly to the risk though being followed each day by crime connoisseurs proved infinitely worse not that biography was involved but whatever the motive was there was 'precision fit' or so they said each pilgrimage escalated now to a loss of life just eccentricity or the new élite? I was feeling nothing but rectitude and the rule of law as if such stories mattered! in dark by now notorious churches clashes ensued vivid enough I'm sure for anyone's taste but more or less in tune with the latest virtual theory so withdraw from intent let justice gracefully tip the wink!

14

An introductory offer or a timely intervention? he'd queried and carried on packing his bags a bit grotesque but clearly to the point those acts of madness had to go never mind the tower she'd ruined in advance it wasn't just for now but a world to come to be aghast at thoughts still ready to recreate the shimmer of mystery uppermost though in mind was candlelight the swirl of dresses a dance to mistranslated fire or perhaps a portrait dressed to kill? the girl made nothing of the facts if he'd understood intensity! how soon he would leave her empty-handed Lammas and its gilded windows serving all like a homemade angel letting down its hair

15

Without a shadow it's an unwarranted illusion
but never in all these years of mine more real
who'd verify the equinox anyway? when I still
believe in heresy a wavelength with the most
gorgeous smile it's targeted by oh I don't know
whom for scrutiny maybe they'll let me in on
the scam I just keep up the input attending to
business the only way I know wide-eyed and
dutifully in and out of trance but it's a shuffle
of clouds and rain reminds me hanging around
is out of date the bus tonight's impatient for
news not history with illumination a checkpoint
to crash through everything for some's already
happened initiation: can't come quick enough

16

Approaching a memory someone's left for dead
I feel too much feel too far north of the place
it's happening unnaturally cold and wanting to
come inside don't think I can ever redraw the
circle pour in words to suit looking back on
the act it's still unanchored a light exhausted
if calm enough to be with your story it has to
be said not mine I'm learning to pass on final
questions putting the future into reverse love's
never in neutral? well I've sometimes said so
not forgetting whoever's the ghost that writes
it up now likely the last resort for some try
those with a magic lantern or a traveller with
a one-off gift for accident commune with eyes

18

17

'Winter' was about to go to pieces in her mind
immanence on the other hand was getting itself
established though one of the two was surely
a front for something out of sight yes I am
it's true the camera! I can't stand half-way
houses at the best of times delete or save is
usually my motto reinforcements not required
when the cold sets in she's all for kicking her
way through frosted leaves the minute she sees
them no place like it but I can't get over the
way she strings a project out I'm swinging
back and forth like no tomorrow doing my best
for form with 'compounds strange' it's better
the day accepts some angles will catch a light

18

I want you to know how something and nothing
stands with the world as realised in part you
can make a weave of fact excluding philosophy or
trade ideas with the storms and multi-coloured
calms that afflict 'localities inside' it's false and
frequently hand-to-hand public pronouncements
as you hear them are liable to die of strangeness
still rhythm can override so I'm told it's not a
problem spareness in the word can bring most
crises into line the beautiful often choosing to
terrify for myself I happen to need a change
of accent never the sound of bells to debate
the merits of pleasure? like the arias of nightin-
gales we're not to be put on hold . . . dream held

19

Broken in a flash by shadowy flight it's a tale
of alignments in a single word as yet there's
nothing spoken will vision answer to the mind?
if quick to travel circles I'm useless monitoring
lines geared up to travel out rock hard believe
me is the birthplace in the world I work out
of a wish to guard at least till the call comes
in my name is intrigue not one of the crowd
though hints of a bright soliloquy flake away ...
materially isn't it oh all the same hard ground
and ivy a complex acid scaling the wall you
can make a case for devotion acts that belong
to no-one are shaping up for good all wings
a flutter tucking light I should bury under life

20

Putting the glimmer back where no-one's angel
cares to look a soft spot under the greybeard's
hill or a bleak unread Collected no matter what
it costs you can bet the future's in *someone's*
reliable hands? more sanguine and a couple of
decades older than the next I'm sure the counter-
culture's spoken for? curated goodness name
plates tarnishing the big white wall I've seen
the camera tracking the way we came considering
several forgotten lies but that's less fielding for
the par than nights out on the town I've had
my fill as she regretted prematurely good and
bad at getting the corners coloured in it's only
a matter of fact candles burning both ends fast