

WARRANT ERROR

Also by Robert Sheppard

Poetry

Returns

Daylight Robbery

The Flashlight Sonata

Transit Depots/Empty Diaries

(with John Seed [text] and Patricia Farrell [images])

Empty Diaries

The Lores

The Anti-Orpheus: a notebook

Tin Pan Arcadia

Hymns to the God in which My Typewriter Believes

Complete Twentieth Century Blues

Edited

Floating Capital: New Poets from London (with Adrian Clarke)

News for the Ear: A Homage to Roy Fisher (with Peter Robinson)

The Salt Companion to Lee Harwood

The Door of Taldir: Selected Poems of Paul Evans

Criticism

Far Language: Poetics and Linguistically Innovative Poetry

1978–1997

The Poetry of Saying: British Poetry and Its Discontents 1950–2000

Iain Sinclair

Warrant Error

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THE WAR HAD ENDED, IT HAD NOT ENDED

Killing Boxes 8-10

No distant figure cuts diagonals across
the hot war which fleshed this near
scorched field they thrive on threat
citizens perfectly informed of 'trouble
ahead' drift under the flickering syntax
of a virtual journey rolled along
disconnected whorls of mud-ruts
easy arrest made permanent sacrifice
is thrust upon them their own juices
drug them across the defrosting stubble
of last year's crop No grass
grows through these scattered flints

7 February 2003

Carpets woven with jargon surrender
monkey ground level realism pumps
a Kalashnikov before the gold cupola
a tight wrinkled lip of double-stitch

Every night you fall asleep invaded
by this market target couch drill

an embedded journo pillowed on gas
buys a free full monster with an
empty promise your night vision
goggles catch the first line of his
collateral excised scribble '*barging*

in on targets' struggling with his war
poem the dark god of his sonnets
freeze framed death tools downed

29 March 2003

Self empty victims shimmy to
the umbrella skeleton weepings
of Mars

 'regret' the ancient
wheeled ordure spilling sewage spice
where they gnaw gnats' gristle
on a rubbished ground plan

Sex down the tar on sparrows before
a dodgy House

 law games shake
depleted prayers to your stump
the gazelle's eyes have it
clearly somebody's brother's
missing in a ghazal of mass ifs

The direct cost of life is a hit
single radio vomit over reach
over Babel's Tower blowing the
red caps scorches a French
veto

 a horlicks of humans
and freedom fries

27 June 2003

WARRANT ERROR

What better disguise for evil
than sonnets?

Bill Griffiths

SEPTEMBER 12

Immensity's blade rushes the wind and
grieves a full deck of bad luck

A managed democracy dances in tune
to a spread-cleft litany, as the Queen's English
warbler, toned to death, unstrews his truth

The blind justice hangs his slogan. Stop.
Burgeon a burden for the chant laureate
entuning and consuming his own genius. The comedy
terrorist brags his mince as roast beef

No peace fries up on a multiple mind grill,
dithering states in desperate times: the sandy
trap-door promise of paradise rusted by frost.
The biggest part of self weakens its softest
option: its cast out old iron alibi song

Steam from the nostrils of the talking engine,
Nervous sweat, stain your place in history.
I myself believe no matter anti-voiced

A crowd's pellicle riddled with restraint as
bulldozers cut deep veins in the sand.
Veiled bodies are piled in, no happy hour for
a last prayer, no compensatory *homaranismo*

I'll buy it, the testimony of the dead, the
imageless human cost: dark stars aloft
and dirty bombs below. I pay with portions
of myself billed in flickering slices. Gifting
the price, a real pain I say: 'As

soon as I write I I am gone (I am not) I
say (to 'my' self): "*Make yourself scarce*

Each creaking oak beam evokes catastrophe
the erotics of raw terror the frisson that
talking will make it happen, acknowledged pain
dispensed at each doorstep. An

index made in just being Britain
invokes threat itself its wincing
nomination held hostage by
shutting our eyes or gnawing
the dry grains of near-certainty

Lips sealed our mouths threaded for
easy snoop and sniper

Our heritage conscience cools the
pre-judgement of history's closure
a hissing that stripes the swart tarmac

Cream light drips
through a moist
sky. Somewhere above the
clouds airliners with
the wrong tickets are

eased out of the
story. Mute pictures

of misery provoke dream
helicopters hovering over
the 'problem', unable to land

*Breaking into my
neighbour's house to silence
his burglar alarm I
intervene in history*