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

_Iain Sinclair_
Warrant Error

ROBERT SHEPPARD

Shearsman Books
Exeter
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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 emptive 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
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