Also by Rupert M Loydell:

**Poetry**
- *An Experiment in Navigation* (Shearsman Books, 2008)
- *Ex Catalogue* (Shadow Train, 2006)
- *The Smallest Deaths* (bluechrome, 2006)
- *Familiar Territory* (bluechrome, 2004)
- *Home All Along* (Chrysalis Poetry, 1999)

**Collaborations**
- *Memos to Self* [with Nathan Thompson] (Underhand Behavior, 2009)
- *Overgrown Umbrellas* [with Peter Dent] (Lost Property, 2008)
- *Shaker Room* [with Lee Harwood] (Transignum, 2005)
- *Snowshoes Across the Clouds* [with Robert Garlitz] (Stride, 2004)
- *Eight Excursions* [with David Kennedy]
  (The Cherry On The Top Press, 2003)
- *The Temperature of Recall* [with Sheila E. Murphy] (Trombone Press, 2002)
- *A Hawk into Everywhere* [with Roselle Angwin] (Stride, 2001)
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for Jessica, Natasha and Sue.
Always.
“I locked up all
of the beautiful things
that might move me.”

—Paige Ackerson-Kiely,
‘The Potential of Rapture’
SAFETY NET
SO FAR AWAY

‘Doesn’t anybody stay in one place anymore?’
— ‘So Far Away’, Carole King

Imagine there was a place
seven hours away by plane
with buildings pricking clouds
and jazz music in the park.

A place with bookshops
open till midnight and
books you want to read.

Slow flourish of sunrise
over skyscrapers: soon
we will be in New York.

Imagine there was a place
two hours away by train
where a muddy river washes
the edges of history and art.

A place I sing lovesongs for
and lived in as a child,
my half-forgotten city.

I am losing sight of whatever
growing up was, can no longer
say I belong in London.
Imagine there was a place
where our children felt safe
and the sunshine and sea
were never far away.

Imagine a place to call home
somewhere I didn’t had to leave;
a little white room of my own.

There is. There was. I am
trying to localize the pain.
It hurts to move away.
’My tummy is hungry now’ says our daughter, the morning after she has finished being sick. Mine’s full of curry and ache, indigestion and worry, as we enter our final few days. It is impossible to find things already packed, difficult to relax or feel at ease. Outside it’s the second day of sunshine in a row. The shed I have used for only one summer is already warm inside but is piled high with boxes and chairs. What on earth are we going to do? This view of trees, our struggling lawn, is going to haunt me, this empty room always be filled with poems and songs, overflowing shelves. But now I am hungry for a new home, somewhere where we can belong.

Hunger
Packing Up The Past

Today, I hurriedly packed up my past and took it to the dump. Tipped it neatly out of the car and drove on. Someone else can have it. I’m done and dusted, off to somewhere else, somewhere new. I can’t control my memories any more than the future, but am doing my best to walk away and forget the coming storm. Everything is still to be decided.

On the way home from the doctor’s there are old men everywhere, walking the pavements and alleys, taking slow steps towards the future, all carrying too much. I offer them cardboard boxes so they can tidy their secrets and worries away. They tell me I will be sorry when I get to their age and cannot recall when nothing had been decided.
SAFETY NET

I shall look back on these years
as I looked through the pub window
yesterday: at a scene I’m no longer
part of. Who were all those people
I drank with? Why are they still there?
And how come only my life changed?

Now I won’t have as much time for letters,
emails and drinks. Friendships that rely
on constant jostle and jibe of voice or text
won’t last. Dialogue becomes monologue,
misty breath in the cold. I know it’s warm
inside, know there’s a safety net of company

I’ve fallen through, bruising myself on the way.
Cuckoo

‘I’ll find you one day raiding a brighter silence
or hugging the darker place you left for dead’
   — ‘Containment’, Peter Dent

Each morning the ship leaves harbour;
the past is here again.

In sunshine the village seems different:
acorns and oyster shells after the rain,
wet gardens and windblown leaves,
mudflats and mudlarks,
charred pumpkins and abandoned brooms,
smell of fireworks in the air.

I am on the isle of the dead,
a ghost among the living.

Friends moving too
share worries and wonders,
scars of recent removal.
I really don’t want to go,

have lived here as long
as almost anywhere else.

Thank you for sending the image,
it looks like a still from a film.

Cuckoos in my nest delight.
Light ripples on the creek.
Out of Sync

‘Summers make their own poems; sometime you think that they haunt you.’
— ‘Summer Reflections’, Harry Martinson

Sometimes the tide slips out of sync with the way we live. Too late to sail or row in the evenings—it gets dark before the water arrives and the pub is tempting and warm.

Sometimes the seasons slip out of sync with the way we want to live. We end up in the dark, reading The Wishing Chair out loud and wondering where we could go if only the world was as magical.

Sometimes our lives slip out of sync and we are left all alone, looking at a flattened and vanishing perspective, nights interrupted by a 4 a.m. fox, snout buried in the lawn, oblivious,

for sometimes time slips out of sync with the way we are expected to live and conduct ourselves in the suburbs: we make our own poems and paper over the cracks between granite slabs.

Sometimes everything slips out of sync. A waxwing flies over the stone wall, a branch drops from the oak tree, the shadows hardly move. There is no wind and no end to the moment.
TAILSPIN

All night in the village pub
the woman having a breakdown
spits out staccato questions

needing no answers.
Answers only lead to more questions.
Drink and questions keep flowing

as a policeman takes her away:
What ifs and Do you knows and
Buts and Whys suddenly gone . . .

In Em and Malcolm’s garden
the birds spin song in the air,
lying from feeder to feeder.

They need nor give no answers
as I have my Full English Breakfast,
wondering at sanity and despair.
I am saying goodbye to the mumble and mutter of Exeter cathedral, watching sunlight stream in and colour the stone. Icons glow quietly, carved figures in the wooden altarpiece frown. Cathedral Yard is full of spring, just as it was when we first moved here, though now the High Street’s lined with the same shops you find everywhere else. It could be anywhere, which is fortunate, because that is where we are going. Paul and Graham are both working today, so I get to say goodbye and tell them our new address. This town will simply become somewhere I used to live. In my shed there is no wind, only tins of paint, charity shop curtains, brushes, tools and rags.

There, I have happily mumbled and muttered for many afternoons, making shelves or mending toys, hidden from family and sun. I tried to explain to my daughter how special places lose their magic, how things fade and disappear. She’s not convinced, has only known this one town and her set of friends. Seven years old and we are uprooting her; even her baby sister knows the neighbours’ names and that we have packed her toys away. Will our new house ever feel the same? Is there enough room for our things? I hope spring really is here, that the sun keeps shining down. It’s been a foggy winter, with hours spent on the road and nights spent in a B&B. Now we must rebuild our lives and try to make new friends.