The Return of the Man Who Has Everything
Also by Rupert M Loydell

*Esophagus Writ* [with Daniel Y Harris]  
(The Knives Forks and Spoons Press 2014)

*Ballads of the Alone* (Shearsman Books 2013)

*Encouraging Signs. Interviews, essays and conversations.*  
(Shearsman Books 2013)

*Tower of Babel* (Like This Press, 2013)

*Leading Edge Control Technology* (The Knives Forks & Spoons Press 2013)

*Voiceover (Riverine)* [with Paul Sutton]  
(The Knives Forks and Spoons Press 2012)

*Wildlife* (Shearsman Books 2011)

*A Music Box of Snakes* [with Peter Gillies]  
(Knives Forks and Spoons Press 2010)

*The Fantasy Kid* (Salt Publications 2010)

*Boombox* (Shearsman Books 2009)

*Lost in the Slipstream* (Original Plus 2009)

*An Experiment in Navigation* (Shearsman Books 2008)

*Ex Catalogue* (Shadow Train 2006)

*A Conference of Voices* (Shearsman Books 2004)


As editor:

*Smartarse* (Knives Forks and Spoons Press 2011)

*From Hepworth’s Garden Out* (Shearsman Books 2010)

*Troubles Swapped for Something Fresh: manifestos and unmanifestos*  
(Salt Publications 2009)
Rupert M Loydell

The Return of the Man Who Has Everything

Shearsman Books
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'I reached that odd point when you are no longer young, and yet you're still not old. You become a kind of centaur: half the person you used to be, half somebody else; that point when there is more you do not care about and less and less you do – you are in no man’s land; you keep moving but not because you will get anywhere.'
– Benjamin Prado, *Not Only Fire*

‘Everything that ever happened to me is just hanging – crusted and sparkling – in the air, waiting to happen to you. Everything that ever happened to me happened to somebody else first.’
– Mary Ruefle, ‘Saga’
1. The Other Side of Nowhere

‘I heard some rumours about me’
– Larry Norman
Catching Up

The voices in the distance turned out to be the radio left on so the cat wouldn’t feel alone. I coughed my way through the night and the first hour of this morning’s seminar then called it a day. We’ve talked before about how a new voice emerges on the page among the plethora of personal and quotation, part of the ghost society that inhabits our subconscious when we forget to think, which we often do. And when we do I have to remember to think for myself and not expect much from the others. If you do, you’re bound to be brought up short, or find yourself diverted away from the main route through. Are there ways to say all this without references? Earlier we decided so although there is a lot of catching up implied for the reader, who has to work on trust, hoping for truth amongst the form, the author’s apparent involvement with text upon the page. If you draw circular lines in the air then you might get an idea of the kind of thing we were discussing. Were they letters, opinions, an interview, an argument or an essay in disguise? Certain questions are not worth asking, certain answers not worth waiting for. How can we combine these points of view without losing emotional impact? Or is a tree of smoke sent up by an author enough to convince us of what we know?
Waiting for Luke

I am waiting for Luke in a pub he doesn’t know how to get to. It is probably my fault but the beer is quite good and I have never seen it so busy. We are both visitors, both due somewhere else quite soon. Here he is now, larger than I remember and panting, worried he is late and in the wrong place. Later, Oliver may cycle over if he has time and I might even get to the book launch I have put my name down for. Tim and Sarah and others I know will probably be there. Earlier, I bumped into Bernard but now I’m not so sure which Bernard it was, Plymouth or London? The former would make more sense, given the warmth of greeting, the latter because of where we are. Meanwhile, Luke has come and gone, and a hundred students also. Where is the man on the bike, my friend of 40 years? How scary is that? How old am I? And why does the depression that so many of us share break up marriages and tear our world apart? I would like to visit the bookstore on this woman’s bag: Housing Work, New York. And I would like to know her name; there are far too many good looking women out in London today. How different this 6 o’clock pub is from our local early evening: the whole world is present and everyone knows everyone. Neil is jealous and wants to be here but has urgent housing matters to deal with, namely where to live. I can’t help him relocate from a distance, only raise a mental glass, an actual glass, and think of friends I haven’t seen for years. The man who bursts through the door is Oliver for a second, then clearly not. Let’s hope he turns up soon, before this poem gets too drunk.
Under the Radar

Although it seemed right at the time, we later decided it would have been more tactful if we hadn’t. Meanwhile the door lock became a swipe card and the whole marking system changed. The journey toward summer is more convoluted and confused, no slipping out under the radar this time it seems.

The voice of the book brings rapture if you can keep away the sound of the main road since they moved it to build the new roundabout. Today, our seminar is in a different room and I must ascertain if the blackout curtains work, along with the projector. It has to be said it’s a struggle sometimes,

is tempting to set fire to the forest, burn bridges and retire before the job gets under way. There is an undertow of malice and contempt, a hole in my heart where feeling should be but only the river flows through. Mixed metaphors are like scar tissue which never heals. I’ve been here before but it wasn’t that much fun.
The Burden of Proof

The burden of proof falls on each and every one of us as we sift through the ashes that are all that’s left of what we used to know. I am still unused to the way the days bump and knock into each other, how every time I clear a space it fills up right away, every tabletop and surface commandeered for play, every moment something else to do. The sand glimmers like snow, the unlit path leads into night; gridded signs and arrows, patterns of coloured lights, do not make the approach or touchdown any easier. Certainty is hidden from us, the gravel has been raked to give the appearance of calm; in its natural state the beach is full of litter, a broken umbrella collects seaweed and refuse, bins overflow. Dogs are allowed to roam until April the first.

Back home, black and white papers wait to be folded, words to be rearranged
into better shapes.
At least one book
is finished, possibly two
or three. We’ve been busy,
my friends and I, and
the results await publication.
Can’t seem to stop the flow
but wonder where the river goes,
who reads this stuff or understands
and does it matter anyway?
She died in her sleep and that
seems the best way to go
if you have to go at all.
I’d rather show you the sky.
My daughter’s young face
stares back at me from the shelf;
did we really dress the kids
like that? What will it be like
to never wake up, never write
another word? I go back to
my mother’s story, but she must
feel the same: doubt around
the edge of foolish belief.
I should write a book about it
when I’ve ascertained the facts.
The Taller You Are
The Shorter You Get

Gravity was everywhere back then
but I didn’t let it get me down.
You were so sure you could just steal
her sentence that you did. I didn’t
think it was right. At weekends
I am 35, with a bright white smile,
a tight t-shirt across my chest.
It does not help you understand
if you do not turn up to class;
the idea of realism can be undermined
by cutting away all visible support
and gathering up discarded toys.
You did not understand the new book,
were waiting for UFOs to land
with medication that would work.
The paper said it was ‘uproariously jolly
& splendidly inventive’ but I did not
find it so, have started taking coffee
black with two sugars. Any glitches
are deliberate, designed to accentuate
the beat; any mistakes are mine.
I was listening to my past and
thinking how good it was in retrospect,
was wishing I’d kept a diary or record
of some sort. Then we hung the exhibition
and waited for our audience to come.
Which half did I paint? That would be
telling. Why do I do this kind of thing?
I couldn’t say. In the soundpool
everything is looping and is plural,
the echoes wave and beckon, memory
lives in the dark. This is not the end of the concert but it should be, it is only feedback keeping the signal alive and pulsing through the air.