

# SHEARSMAN

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SUMMER 2016

EDITOR  
TONY FRAZER

*This issue is dedicated to the memory of*

CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON

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### **Submissions**

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We aim to respond within 3 months of the window's closure.

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# Harry Guest

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## Alteration

Wishing at times things wouldn't change

*these leaves to hold their gold and pools  
to guard a wayward cloud stained by  
a falling sun unmoved its curves  
unfretted all the tones between  
electric scarlet and a smear  
of almost green to catch before  
their fading disappoints to greys  
eventual dark like foliage  
that crackled underfoot turned brown  
then to no colour only slush  
a nuisance broomed away as both  
the dying and the dyeing lie  
in movement paradoxically.*

*Time lingers sometimes with the dusk  
at hand to shroud those boughs against  
the sky once any suns have left  
a glowing backdrop to their fate  
replaced perhaps by rain*

— is wrong —

or even childish. Recognition, life  
from birth past death, growth, fever, failure, all  
is change brought forward for the best  
though often vice versa, worse  
than hope had been so sure about.  
A transitory fact is such  
you know each lived-in moment won't  
survive except in files, cold archives, vaults,  
and they too are a waiting prey  
or likelihood. Worms, lightning, flood,  
moths, conflagration, every threat

from earth, fire, water, even air  
when hurricanes are imminent,  
cascades which wear away the very rock  
that made them so impressive or  
pollution

(Niikuni's so  
meticulously concrete print  
of kanji'd pus — one small space only on  
the centre of those seas still holds  
pure water).

Hard to learn again

how all is temporary, will  
be lost, destroyed or just not there  
now. If we rot, towns fall, birds beasts  
fish insects one by one become  
a sad guess like a dinosaur  
or dodo how can we regret  
the exit of a sunset, loss  
of petals and the daily drift  
to nothing of the details in  
those photos we took long ago.  
You can't stop music like an act  
caught by some cunning camera of  
three leaping dancers in mid-air,  
the sword about to win the duel  
immobile near the soon to be  
struck heart that goes on throbbing till  
the movie moves again and then  
no more. So symphonies switched off  
aren't there, there's nothing to assess  
like the iced smile or silent scream.  
It's not the question of a note  
sounding for ever. Sound has gone.  
The flow of intricate response  
from flute to cello, sharp to flat,  
now nowhere like the absence of  
touch, hearing, taste, sight, odours like  
dismay, joy, carelessness and love.

All must go on and fade or stay  
in place for languished moments, know  
what's mourned in time and then replaced  
by need or apathy, get thrilled  
by novelties which never last  
forgotten sooner than the start  
of autumn when all will go on  
to snow and bleak sterility  
and then to spring and yet again  
to spring so better shrug, ignore,  
walk out in rain and back in hail,  
deny, remember wrongly, dream,  
plant hyacinths, yawn, weep, sketch out  
another novel, squander, fail  
to pray, recover, understand,  
play Mozart clumsily and wish  
in vain things didn't change until

# Alexandra Sashe

---

## Ode to Spring

White councils  
of the season

sun-bleached days  
before the harvest.

Rooms enfold with a static confidence  
afternoon hours lived with windows'  
immaculate lungs, umbilical sunlight.

An angel draws upon the wall  
words eternally pregnant with silence :

unspoken, with clasped hands,  
we lean against his wings.

A newly reborn hour  
bequeaths us its renatal clothes.  
We exit the clock and slough  
our names and shadows.

The angel retraces upon the sky  
our outlines  
with chalk.

## Lenten

Spring transcends with a quiet step  
its thaw, – with an amorous hand  
breaks the mirrors.

Its ardour leaves unstirred the surface  
of spring water, smooth the surface  
made of cloth, of virgin paper,  
of stained porcelain.

The Spring justifies him who receives it  
with cupped hands,  
with open arms,  
with naked face  
and uncovered shoulders ;  
with palm branches  
    and mute mute  
        solitary walks  
up and down the hill.

## **of Evolution**

This tree, departed from its species,  
all ashes sweeper.

in our secret, we grow  
    skin and bark,  
        rootlessful,  
*sacri-* and *sancti-*  
        -fied  
kernels and bones,  
sky- and heaven-  
    wards.

( We part and depart,  
    abnegate and negate  
        ourselves,  
        taking turns,  
in the deciduous season,  
    florescence season,



dispelling our selves,  
spelling  
    the selves away,  
upholding each other – for bridges –  
slenderly, over each winter )

in our secret  
we are in light :  
a spacious room,  
a timeless hour.

Here, you have grown an olive branch.  
Here, I am seeing the dove in.

# Alan Wall

---

## The Posthumous Reflections of Sir John Soane

### 1 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields

Observe this morning's luminous *étude*:  
how godhead enters  
man's diminutive stone wigwam.  
Molten gold. Zeus impregnating  
Danaë's brazen tower.

Alone once more I light a fire  
kindled from sundry owl-eyes  
crystal tears from Pliny's crocodiles  
one lizard tongue, its wreath of ribboned flame  
a rainbow dancing. <sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields in London was once the home of Sir John Soane (1753–1837), and is now his museum. Soane, the most inventive architect of his day, had a lifelong obsession with the interior effects of light, and he could be equally unexpected in his treatment of exteriors. The loggia of Number 13 is made of Portland Stone, and inserted into it are four corbel stones, dating from the fourteenth century, taken from Westminster Hall. This loggia displays the incised lines which Soane employed to indicate pilasters and columns, instead of reproducing them in three dimensions, once they had retained no structural purpose. The radical modernity of these incised lines, together with the antiquity of the corbel stones, displays Soane's genius at a glance: the present must keep hold of the past, and the past is ever-dependent on the present for its presentation and survival. Nothing could better summarise Soane's architectural philosophy. The kindling items listed here are imaginary, but are in fact no stranger than many of the objects to be discovered in the basement of 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields.

## 2 Chiaroscuro

Light was ever my study  
its high enchantments  
grading down to shadowed rest.  
How Helios caresses his brief creatures  
for a day (we are ephemera, no more)  
before arriving with one hot kiss  
to sign us off.  
A holy breath that smells of asphodel  
spearmint  
the faintest hint of methylated spirit.

The canopy in my Breakfast Room  
suspends from nothing visible  
so light arrives from everywhere and nowhere.  
Each time an eggshell cracks  
hosts of angels chant masonic halleluiahs.

Each lunette His peephole. <sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Soane was a mason in all possible senses. His father had been a bricklayer. The boy learned the craft of making buildings from the material foundations upwards, as masons in antiquity reportedly did too. In 1813 he himself was initiated as a Freemason, and had a portrait painted of himself in full Masonic dress. He went on to design the Masonic Hall on Great Queen Street. And in his obsession with the effects of light, he was reflecting the central Masonic belief that God, as architect of the universe, spoke through light, since He Himself could never see a shadow. Freemasonry can be seen as the natural religion of the Enlightenment, its emblems appear on the title page of the *Encyclopédie*, and so it is appropriate that the luminous syllable at the heart of that word Enlightenment became Soane's lifelong study. Each mausoleum he devised is intended to be shrouded in light. He himself translated Le Camus de Mézières' book *The Genius of Architecture, or the Analogy of that Art with our Sensations*. In that work Le Camus expounds his doctrine of *lumière mystérieuse*.

### 3 Amanuensis

Out of the sepulchral cave  
a cult man comes, dressed in shadows  
having gleaned the secrets of the dead.  
Ready to survey the tumulus  
check that its burial ship is caulked and tarred  
Arthur once more ready for his journey.

The day Joe Gandy arrives in heaven  
he'll promptly paint the place in ruins  
as eternal sunset fractures to a million lucid shards.  
Then watch our man present his panorama to the seraphim  
waive any bill in lieu of future kindnesses  
doubtless to be given him in Paradise.

I only hope they take him at his word  
a good man destined for a dark asylum  
whose incomparable eye will never  
see the good clear day again.

Joe Gandy, Patmos John to me  
limner of my curious Apocalypse  
its megaliths and microliths.

Mine the shining city on the hill. <sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Gandy (1771-1843) effectively became John Soane's painter. He depicted not merely the edifices Soane was planning to have built, but also the ones that never would be built. Never could be built. Vast cities on imaginary hills. Buildings that achieve their only life on Gandy's canvases. Regarded in his day as a failed architect, altogether too awkward professionally ever to succeed, and therefore obliged to hang on to Soane's coat-tails, he is now thought to be a genius of a curious and rare nature: he could imagine into being architectural scenes of such grandeur of spirit that it seems as if they really must have been built; built in the only place his contemporary William Blake believed anything ever could be permanently built – in the vast labyrinth of the imagination. His vision of Merlin's sepulchre, or of a Pandemonium taken out of Milton, inhabit a topographic world of their own.

He and Soane shared a land of vision, a terrain midway between the antique ruin and the modern dream. If the obverse of the Enlightenment world was Palladian design with its lucid structures of symmetry, white stucco walls encasing shining interiors, there was always a reverse to this vision of logic and reason. Many buildings of the time employ exaggerated rustication in their basement storeys, as though acknowledging all the roughness, the incommensurable chaos that could never be translated to exposition and justice. This was the age of misshapen hermitages, hidden away in the grounds of grand estates. Sometimes hermits were actually employed to fill them, as though Poor Tom were still hidden away in his hovel, awaiting the arrival of the demented king. Piranesi's *Carceri* provided glooms deep enough for the abyssal opium journeyings of a De Quincey – and both Gandy and Soane were devoted to Piranesi. They both contemplated mausoleums so beautiful no corpse would ever decompose inside them. They saw Rome in ruins; in the distance oriental monuments of unimaginable grandeur. The whole suffused with the ambience of a cosmic twilight. Like John Martin, Gandy created palaces with smoke emitting from them, potent enough to occlude the sky. This was after all the age of industry and revolution. Something else to be made out on the horizon. The eyes of the great Mason had to squinny sometimes, in order to retain their focus. Gandy's wits finally came astray, and he ended his life in an asylum in Plympton. There is a tradition that King Arthur sleeps in the Welsh hills, but since he is *rex quondam rexque futurus*, he will awake one day and return in glory.

## 4 Inventory

Item:

One terracotta of Aeneas  
carrying Anchises out of burning Troy  
upon his shoulders.  
Were it my son George  
he'd throw me back  
into the Trojan flames  
and grin.

Into his mother's womb  
I injected treachery  
for which I am  
repaid in kind, each day.  
Repaid most handsomely. <sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> This might be the saddest part of the whole story, sadder even than the destruction of his Bank of England in 1925, for this was the familial ruin that he had to live with daily. The son, one of two, was called George. Soane had dreamed that this boy would become a great architect like his father. He even built ruins for him at Pitzhanger Manor over in Ealing, so as to give the lad something to get his teeth into. But George preferred chewing on other things entirely. If he inherited one thing from his old man it was neither his architectural flair nor his ability for such mighty toil, but that saddest of all bequests: *ressentiment*. Both father and son had a genius for this corroding faculty, the acid solvent of the soul, but only the son actually made it into a career. For years, as Mrs Soane received the peevish, ill-tempered and abusive letters from her offspring, ceaselessly riddled with demands for money, money, and yet more money, payment for a life with no real purpose but parasitism and revenge, she hid them from her husband, knowing the fury they would provoke in him. In the *Champion* a two-part article was published, *The Present Low State of the Arts in England and more particularly of Architecture*. Soane's work was singled out for a venomous attack. It was soon established that the anonymous piece was actually the work of Soane's younger son, and Mrs Soane did not long survive the revelation. George was ultimately imprisoned for fraud. He was later to try to prevent the Act of Parliament which facilitated the endowment of his father's museum, believing the money concerned should go to him instead. When Soane invented the Monk's Parlour at Lincoln's Inn Fields, he also invented the disconsolate eremite who had seemingly lived down there among his memories of the earthly life and thwarted love. *Padre Giovanni* he called him. Father John. Father John had been so tormented by the world that he had left it behind for a life of meditation and prayer. One senses that John Soane, the father, not infrequently envied his own creation.

## 5 Lachrimae rerum

Two glass lachrymatories I purchased  
at the Yarnold Sale of 1825  
vanished in the lists of 1837  
(ah how the tears of yesteryear  
gain antique lustre  
with every day that passes)  
stolen perhaps by one  
who scarce knew how to cry himself.

I think I know his name.

An incubus riding the corpse of my elevations.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> All ages have their intellectual clichés. One of ours is the Oedipus Complex. So awful were relations between father and son that we might even be tempted to invoke it, but there was no such notion available for either of them to invoke at the time. Soane would have been entirely baffled by any such reference to Oedipus, who was called upon then as a solver of riddles. As in Ben Jonson's line from *Sejanus*: 'I am not Oedipus inough, To vnderstand this Sphynx.' The nearest usage to a medical notion would have been *oedipodic*, signifying a swollen foot. The infant Oedipus had had his ankles pierced, so as to facilitate his death from exposure. Even as late as 1928, when the first full edition of the OED appeared, there was no reference to *oedipal* in its Freudian sense. How times change. Curious, is it not, the tradition of preserving someone's tears in tiny receptacles? Soane's buildings all tended to be reduced soon enough to rubble. And so his elevations were levelled. Only the groundplan remained. Lines incised on a grey metal plate.

## 6 Palaeontology: its records

What do we know of seeing  
who barely open our eyes  
before they close once more?  
Now look hard at this trilobite  
nestling in my palm so tranquilly.  
Calcite eyes. Calcium Carbonate.  
Same stuff made the white cliffs of Dover.

So much white powder  
since those once living are now dead.  
After millions of years  
commanding the ocean floor.

He fashions fossils  
(the Great Mason)  
as I shape ruins:  
our only true and lasting gift to time. <sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Soane lived on into the great age of fossil diagnosis. Fossils had for centuries been employed to exemplify, back up or clinch whatever version of life, cosmology and creation the displayer elected to project. In the *Wunderkammer*, they were even exhibited as sinister creations from the left hand of God, products of the vital energy of earth. And sometimes they were the Satanic exercises that took place under cover of darkness, when no one was looking. But some had already spotted the living form in the petrified remains. Leonardo and Robert Hooke were both in no doubt what these fossils represented. And throughout the eighteenth century, palaeontology proceeded apace. Riddling out the meaning of those bones soon transmuted antiquarianism into science. This process could be haphazard: Cuvier's readings of the ancient skeletons placed before him, often lifted from the gypsum quarries of Montmartre, were hampered by his belief in the Biblical Flood, and the immutability of species. But in countless publications, like the *Transactions of the Royal Society*, the fossils were being analysed, a sense of the past life of the planet was being attempted. Geomorphology and stratigraphy proceeded apace. The trilobite was one of the most successful species that has ever lived. It lasted for hundreds of millions of years, then simply disappeared in one of the great extinctions. All that was left were fossils; time's ruins. Soane's obsession with ruins was once more vindicated. He had even built his own. And Gandy painted the ones still to come. In this vision, the ruin is our ultimate destination.



# Yvonne Reddick

---

## What Hughes Believed

That rowan is used to draw information from reluctant demons.

The wryneck is an ancient erotic charm.

The raven's cry means, "The farther I am from man, the better I feel".

Cultivating land drives out fairies.

To be humanised means to be denaturalised.

Foxes possess people in Japan by creeping in under their fingernails.

A fox once took the shape of a train on the Tokyo-Yokohama line.

Werewolves who stalk the University Library are called 'lupinomaniacs.'

A dream about a tiger coming down the hill, and knocking over your hut, will make you write about a jaguar.

In Scotland, Gruagach sprite-maidens often keep their souls in external things: three trout in a stream, or any bird on Ben Buidhe.

The tribes of Mount Elgon do not dream. Only their witch-doctor dreams, but he hasn't dreamed since the British came.

The Papuans think crocodiles have gone over to the British Government.

Apples symbolise Avalon, and poets' immortality.

That even in the midst of fierce flames the golden lotus may be planted.

# Simon Perchik

---

\*

Before each landing these stone steps  
soften for mops and brushes  
the way all feathers are preened

by heights and distances –this old tenement  
is heated for 6 moons, 12 stars, 1 stairwell  
for each ascent, spreading it out

and though there is no fire  
you dead still arrive as smoke  
that now is the other way around

has become a river, on course  
waiting for the wind to let go  
touch down, suddenly dry your hands.

\*

“...to undress  
the river and  
place the water beside your body.”  
Bruno K. Oijer

You cover your eyes the way this casket  
reaches around from behind then falls  
where the darkened water comes undone

as moonlight, spreads its make-believe  
already filled with streams bitten into  
by the small mouths guessing who

is standing beside what has become a lake  
calling to the boat below that's not moving  
though you are drowning in this bathroom mirror

that's waving its arms where there are no waves  
from shipwrecks or oars or in your heart  
some rope that's lost the sound from bells

could no longer pick up the bottom, tie it  
to your bones that come only at night and knock  
as the thud that cannot dry in the open.

\*

You died with your eyes open  
though the scream smells from salt  
hidden in the chimes pulled by boats

and reefs that become waterproof  
once they leave land the way shorebirds  
track a fishing fleet and what's left

—these gravestones no longer move  
are shining where a sea should be  
could show the sun on your face

at low tide, waiting for you to let it rise  
and from the wet dirt between your lips  
finish the drink, swallow you whole.

# Makyla Curtis

---

## Dialoguing Deserts

a)

600 kilometres of apple trees and the cities dissolve. This sparse constellation is a suspension of southern winds, a barrier against sparse but icy sand, a mainly tussock strewn space on the road, no road, a never-ending road, heaping itself over hillocks.

b)

A hard-shouldered morning, with no road, a series of scarcities, literally, figuratively, figuratively, figuratively natural, nature-beamed and west. Just a constellation on a map.

c)

Like a chill effect of the poetry of known places, spaces. This is no frost, only a tussock, haumata, an intersection of darkness beneath a perplexed moon.

d)

To the drying poem, salted and hung up: a city's winter voice receives the Whangaehu that gurgles and roars indefinitely.

*(Haumata is a variety of tussock grass. Whangaehu is a river that runs through the central North Island of New Zealand.)*

# Alasdair Paterson

---

## My Life in Russian

That was when I lived near the big river. Don't ask why or how, it was just because.

That river was old school – a meander towards its annual ice quota, grumbling away underneath. We'd walk out on the thick ice and cut a hole. Fish, in a paroxysm of boredom, would open their mouths to the hook. We took our crepuscular trophy pictures. Life of man. Life of fish. Half-life of isotope.

There was nothing shoddy about that ice, though. It endured. Where it made its last stand, in the heart of the river, they would set charges to crack and rumble downstream. Think of the arc *basso profundo* makes from Last Judgement to your gut. Or ice-breaker waves of vodka shaking the tongue loose. Or the munitions of Spring.

The Spring of the air. The Spring of the birds. The Spring of the riverboat wakes, fanning out like flourishes from a swaggering accordion played by a friend who's not quite sober, to lap the feet of birches skittish in their dance-hall queue. The Spring of the captain, emerging from his winter hibernation among the furs and pickled mushrooms. He walked the gangplank all smiles – gold gold gold gold.

In the passenger saloon, a land of spirits and murky views, down where words burned recklessly, some rhapsodised about the river – all we can learn from it, how it waits patiently, steadfastly, to slip its ice-shackles and wrap itself in green. Others would say – the real lesson, surely, is the persistence of ice.

And me, the minority party of one, back on the promenade, who thought both schools of thought could be right, but then, what of it? And skimmed a stone towards the meltwater and celebrated its unlikely teeter for that moment and that moment and just that moment more. Ripples. Chords. And not forever.

# Annabel Banks

---

## On Hebrews 13

Any god that keeps you going is a good god by me, except when choices rattle like dice in a chalice. Throw a three, say a prayer, throw again. Take those pictures down from the wall, the banners from the hall. Is it true that you're a finger-pie brain tweaker, reluctant jovial ready-speaker, cloying programme cult leader? Thirteen step breeder? Any god that keep you bowing is a good god, so have you taken on that role? Does your disapproval keep them from falling down that hole of misery and death? Do your words mark flesh? I know a son who knocked another to the ground so he wouldn't be late for your laying on of handy hot drinks—shocking, yes, but I have experience of promised pressure to tick my lists, so perhaps could understand your brand of love, even though I velvet-glove my cold ferrous fists. But then I don't metabolise, metastasise like you. We're systematically different, despite our origin-myth sympathies, that same cracked cradle. It's fucking fascinating, truth be told. I wonder how your day has gone today.

## Mind Reading

This happens all the time. A red dress, fitted correctly. Perhaps my first tour through your dusty house moves a mouth well prepared with farewells. Don't bring bread into it, or arguments about the philosophy of art, but invite some tenderness to get bitten on the back, much too hard, while we lead our ignorant armies up to bed.

This has happened again. When I can laugh at your structured ladders, boxes, but nothing after that, it's like some madman's decision to miss the train. Enough to recall a hand on the cheek, loudly ignored armpits, the invitation to preen. My height, adjusted to reflect magnificence, became a confirmed ending, and I would remind you of my eyes but can't see you any more.

This is happening now. We watch the speeches. Flout the stink-mouth rule by eating my wrist. There is always more art, more science. We make darkness in the dark.

## **“Some Good Stuff Here”**

*For RML*

Writing a poem for you means I'll breathe out like you,  
unlunging a process beyond myself. Glue mischief down  
with sneaky cut-up phrases imported, unboxed, then write  
by smashing that green glass ball no one wanted, the one

left on the highest shelf. Dustpan and brush is a collocation  
I can't clean up. Am I allowed to say I tried? It's a pain, though.  
Later, in the pub, Carter suggests that pauses are immoral. I agree,  
but not immediately. The students are practising necromancy again

and though I'd love this last stanza to get really fluffy, open out  
with inclusive statements, (love as a leaf, shared human frailties,  
fucking is dangerous, and so on,) I'll resist. It's SO hard. That snail  
has been on the bathroom wall all week. I'll heat up my coffee now.

# Norman Jope

---

## Addis Ababa

I am there and not there, walking pocked pavements with the weary and the wary, listening to Mulatu Astatqe's ethno-jazz and thinking back to the florid shirts of the early Seventies. I have no sense of the geography of this city that I wander in, stared at by sad-faced young men in brown jackets and disdained by Abyssinian maids with brightly-coloured headscarves. I have no clear sense of a centre, and Le Corbusier boulevards give way to shacks and corrugated panels. Signs declaim wares in syncopated English, and the eyes of jackals are upon me as I parch – or so I imagine. Not one of the seven million inhabitants can lead me out of this labyrinth. I reach into my pocket and all that it contains is sand from the Danakil Desert.

Cherkos, Kebena, Urael, Kazanchis... I drift from district to district, dodging vendors whose goods I cannot afford to buy this evening. So can I bluff my way into the Sheraton, 'the best of the best' and revive myself in a marble bath? Or beg and cajole my way to a plate of fasting *wat*? Night will fall soon. I wander up Churchill Avenue, with its most English of names post-liberation, asking myself if it was ever Via Mussolini.

I colonise this city with my *dérive*, like an Emperor who, with a sweep of his hand, claims lands the size of Spain from his raft. The city will be named after me when I am dead (I hallucinate) and the Lion of Judah will roar at my graveside.

To be there and not there at all, wanting to be there in the land of antelopes, strolling like a ghost as rain begins to fall.



# Susan Connolly

---

```

m m t           p           cl
mm mm h         pea         o
mmmmmm e       peaco       u
mmmmmm         peacock     d
mmmm m m       screech
mmmm m a       scree
mmmmmm i       scr
mmmmmm d       s
m mmmm e       sun
m mmmm n       n
mmmmmm         s
mmmmmm         set
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m mm o
m mm w the the the the the the the the the
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mmmmmm r road road road road road road road road road road
          caravan caravan
          c av n c av n
          carav n carav n
          o o o o
          boat
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iver iver iver iver iver
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wallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwall
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llwallwallwallwallwallwallwwllwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwallwa
llwallwallwallwallwallwallwallaallaallaallwallwallwallwallaallaalla

```

## **the seawall, Baltray**

standing on the seawall at Baltray,  
looking at Mornington,  
the Maiden Tower and the caravans,  
fishing boats upside down  
on mussel shells

# Joey Connolly

---

## Starry

A lyric which is at best a silk  
settled over and then staplegunned into  
the flaking MDF poster-board of tradition.

Tradition at best a five-cent gumball machine  
stocking only the acetic taste of anxiety. All round an antiquity,  
which is bestwise a history-staid quintessence

of luxury. Luxury which barely conceals these  
thriving bibelots of worry,  
which at best are only a tawdry excitement which at best  
is only a kitschy exemplar of the rush to lay a hand

or leastwise finger on the special cornucopia  
of the plastic and the various  
and the well-intentioned: the tenured chemist

smiling through his test-tubes the  
sweet-sharp scent of alkanes and esters  
drifting from his faculty-funded fume cupboard,  
like smoke from the corners of a film star her  
collagen lips her signature brand

her gracious acceptance of a bouquet of asters,  
her gracious acceptance a bouquet of asters,  
it is the same complaints again.

We know nothing but it is synthesised.  
Which is never a critique, only a curtseyed portrait  
of the singing child, her dear dangling teddy-bear.

# Adam Day

---

## Dead Friesian in Winter

Far from the cusp of the tractor  
path, beside an empty creek, propped  
against a pin-oak like a fireplace aslant

to the chimney of a toppled house.  
Still steaming, the nose firm  
glistening, the hips going. Gray

tongue thick, purple  
in morning darkness, where needles of light  
strike the bulk of the wrenched

head, reaching its knees to disappear  
in a moving mist. The grass  
a frozen crust, corn arched

and angled into a field's naked  
girders and beams, a stone wall  
in wet snow where blackbirds argue.

## Braunvieh

She turns in the doorway  
buttoning her blouse,  
a mouth-sized bruise  
at her breast. Outside  
a cow has dropped green dung  
wet over a bucket of cherries  
left by the spigot – in the rain  
it smokes a little. The sun  
is perched on a crest

of thunderheads. She's walked  
now into the harsh light  
of the kitchen's bare bulb  
and I am sitting like a scarecrow, like a  
man shot through  
the cheek, naked-legged.  
Not ten minutes earlier  
a bull jumped that cow  
and their throttling  
sent them thudding against  
the clapboards, clattering  
over the cellar door, a hoof  
put clean through to the fetlock –  
a wind brought the smell  
of them in–the bull's slobbery  
head, the clumsy hot  
lowing throat gulps.

# David Rushmer

---

## The Memory in Our Wings

as if the possibility  
were birthing its own ghost

the ether  
to give up  
all material bodies

human documents,  
beams of spinal light  
relinquish them  
against the corpuscular theory

it goes, without saying.

in the form of waves  
& the brutal loss  
to injury.

We carry the memory in our wings.

## II

wound, spread,  
    where  
        the tongue formed  
the branching vessels of language  
    attached to the mother,

son followed  
earth.

the paper bodies

    bloody containers of matter  
        open, burning

        night recovered  
            his voice  
in lightning veins  
asunder.

We carry the memory in our wings.

# Lucy Hamilton

---

## from The Diarists

### Crocodiles & Frigate Birds

It's years since the Diarist last saw it. Men had to manoeuvre it [*one good tree & axe for hollowing*] through trap-doors up to the third floor, winch it up on ceiling-rollers in two, or was it three, pieces? It's the only object of his on display in the museum [*long planks from single tree*], one small notice with his name and the year of the Expedition. No items of clothing [*pieces of rattan*], no diaries or sophisticated instruments. When they were small her awestruck children fingered the intricate crocodile [*carved beast for figurehead*] and the frigate birds in perpetual flight. Now the canoe is suspended so high you can't see inside [*wooden weights, hooks, scrapers, thwarts, brackets*]. Last night they all crowded round, skyping a granddaughter in Bolivia. And she could see her face and hear her voice. It's amazing what that little 'periscope' can do.

### Notes & Quotes

The Diarist's son owns a fibreglass sports kayak. When he goes. When he goes white-water kayaking in the Atlas Mountains. Only a Greenlandic kayak is called *qajaq*. C's kayak would be *qajariaq* meaning 'like a *qajaq*'. Each man's *qajaq* is built to the specifications of his own body. *I always tried to make it so that it was not too short – so that I could load the insides with skins and provisions*. The Inuit copy the animals – that ivory bear Uncle Tom sent for her 10th birthday! – match the skins to parts of their own body. The women stitch a seal-gut jacket – *tuilik* – with bone-needle. Sew two-layered leather stitching not to hole the fabric. To retain water-tightness. To stiffen where necessary. C. wears his neoprene wetsuit & jacket. When he goes whitewater kayaking on the Oued



Ouzoud. When he wears his fibre-glass crash-helmet. When he plunges between rockfaces. Flies between water & sky.

## Bedtime Stories

### I

**A**nd the Diarist smiles, seeing as vividly as yesterday their eager little faces pleading to hear again & again: *In the worst and deepest of the rapids, we touched a sunken tree, upset, and the canoe went careering bottom up down the stream. The father she hardly knew ... I got caught in some of the underwater branches of the tree, was dragged deep down to where it was horrible and quite dark ... How still they lay and rapt, eyes wide as owls'. Oh, the times he escaped by a feather! I was carried along by the current at a hideous pace towards another swift and deep rapid ... which would certainly have been the end of me, had the Dyak not caught sight...*

### II

Not a day goes by that she doesn't think of Mother. Mother who was 'waiting until you were old enough to understand'. Standing at the fireplace, turning her face away to tell what N. already knew – but he hadn't believed the boy at school. Now it was true. He would never forgive. Not until he'd eventually write the book ... *Ironically Dr. S. became better known for his appalling death than for his distinguished life.* Mother descending the stairs crying ... *For us she published a selection of his letters & diaries.* Now it's the grandchildren reading *The canoe was recovered, but the sack containing my bedding and everything else was lost.*

# juli Jana

---

## she boards the train at belleville

I see her sandals first  
a broad strip above the toes  
the red nails neatly spaced  
jeans rolled up at ankle

ignoring me she takes out pen & paper  
I keep on writing so does she  
her head slightly tilted  
shoulders hosting black bra straps

we pause at the next station  
watch the panning billboards  
each searching for stimulus  
I catch her eye challenge her quest

at anvers she gets off  
a broad footed woman holding a fan  
takes her place opposite crosses her legs  
uncrosses her legs parts her knees  
starts fanning up her dress  
it is 37 degrees in paris

## the circus barker

if you would oblige me a trifle  
ladies & gentlemen  
I would you listen to a story  
I entreat you not to turn a deaf ear  
there's a fish tale told by a fish  
a toddler's rhyme recited by grandma  
the weird & wonderful expounded by darwin

he'll even produce a monkey-man to prove it  
or an elegy sung at a death bed  
the girl with the goat has travelled far  
to tell the story about man & beast  
there is also the happy gathering for a chit-chat

the stars are out tonight

I would I had a voice to join the howling dogs  
the costume of a fresh water fish  
so I could offer you a dish from the swell  
but if you get a-waking with your night legs  
pausing at each stall each station  
a character may be let out the bag  
as old as an old sailor with a pipe  
and a story as long as a line with a hook

there be an air of mystery  
boys & girls the haunt of a melody  
the stars are shining tonight

join the campfire  
enthralled faces turned inward  
pause at the camp bed to catch a strand of comfort  
kneel in the lamp lit corner for ancient wisdom  
sit on grandma's knee for the storybook tale  
hover by the tents catching snippets  
dance round the lighted circle

walk the dogs or the goats  
there may be angels in the woods

the stars shine brighter tonight

# Clark Allison

---

## Experience, Again

I wanted to know  
in order to do the right thing  
in accord with the  
perhaps inexplicable reality  
if not mystery  
of having been  
brought into this life

experience may be many things  
but it is not simply a game  
and it is not lies  
it is indeed  
not what you say I am  
experience, in short,  
exceeds and takes priority over  
what they deem to regard  
as social adjustment  
or, you are not me  
you perhaps haven't a clue  
don't even know me  
or, who do you think you are  
claiming and lying  
about these things  
you don't own me

facticities feel the green sledge  
mountain face curious among the dark  
pilgrimage is it steep  
am I getting it wrong again  
letting (un)open or just tired  
and pissed off  
had enough of it  
many props litter the stage

lots of seats but  
are they empty  
every time he looks  
I feel like he wants something  
maybe something I don't  
and never will have  
stay or go  
when you can  
we must make arrangements  
maybe I should leave  
for other pastures  
or merely continue here  
somewhere I can  
lay my head  
glacial rock run cool pool  
amongst light against walls  
puer/  
cronus agon  
multiplicities  
countless variations  
perhaps one can only  
make of it what you will  
or is it can  
what's been  
what's next

# Linda Kemp

---

## Archive of Separation I

*instruction led to belief & apostrophe*

Rarely basic data observes  
her absence  
contributing other forms  
or else  
unusual applications seem to yield

ontogenetically proceeding from an end-  
product, walk  
directly into phases of personality

s/he seems symptom & syndrome.

Regularly in childhood  
starting points entail  
radical end-stops,  
present-day theory adjuncts  
thought contributing to loss & trace  
working prospectively.

Primary observations characteristic of the present  
function as direct import

it is important to know this

these psychical processes enter the consulting room  
whilst adopting a neural stance separates twigs &  
drops off branches

s/he out theorises the theory

those trying offspring, spongy &  
how useful in proving 'yes  
or no'  
thick description proves its own  
properties  
focusing on pathogens

bright  
& a synthesis so strange  
the strange say impossible things  
microphones  
doubt  
& the doubling limitations of watching strength  
in whose doubt accuracy races into traditional method.

Walk me home.

## Archive of Separation II

Healthy  
& after systematic conditions the first  
separates into either  
studies occur in the ought  
unlike possible observations the write-off  
begins between age &  
upsetting others,  
a switchback to  
uncertainty & other records,  
afterward unsettling until describing in detail  
little claws &  
soon after

in unfamiliar environments data collates  
reasonable & secure  
between two phases, describing the immediate &  
the chancy

acutely distressed, the rest  
diminishes into concave laughter &  
other lessons

quiet &  
not because crumbling but neurobiologically  
it's best

during subsequent visits the seat  
languishes into lanes

untrammelled visitors leaf through guilt-bound  
tomes & behaviour insincerely

each day he cried &  
each day he appears the same

not much upset

in familiar environs the sheep are painful & yellow,  
the eyes, eyes &  
nothing left except, never  
left in unfamiliar environs he looks about &  
absence is evenings  
familiar  
& undoubted

insufficient levelling.



# Matthew Stoppard

---

## Two Sonnets

### Seeing *The Light* in The Star, York Road

There's filth and grace in  
a pigeon feather  
sent twirling by wind  
where cousins gather  
for a christening  
in the ground-floor church,  
a kickboxing gym  
upstairs when you search  
this art deco urn  
containing ashes  
of lovers, film fans;  
pigeon flight becomes  
ghost of a flicker –  
movie projector?

### Aerial stunt over The Regent

Burmantofts twilight  
lingers like an ache  
for those who catch sight  
of the aeroplane  
Attendance is high  
on opening night,  
six block letters lie  
on the roof – don't fight  
the urge to raise hands,  
clutch falling paper;  
our spectacle and  
picturehouse never  
could be seen for miles  
now Al-Murad Tiles.

*The Regent and The Star are two former cinemas in Leeds.*

# Liz Adams

---

## Automatic Myth

*After Ethel Schwabacher*

Swollen with a *warm rain* the mind floods pink and a stroke of grey. Pain draws you into myth, into darkness, into a light you hunger for. Summon up a god and the colours relate or the woman's face blooms; the floral nature of the design becomes eyes and trembled cold reminding the viewer of some chase through time where Eurydice fails to come to the sweeter calls of Orpheus. Forget the stone of circles for this is dynamism: how the stars vibrate whilst pain is always fertile purple crinkles upwards on another canvas my right eye patrols like the shaking yellow that announces arrival is all *Seasons and Days*; in the way that myth moves back through symbol and the unconscious is always remembering, like the stone moving towards liquidity there is some kind of dance and the city dances always, but to tell you that automatically these colours and how far they reach across the music halls of that day, where the sky shakes with gold and purple-red explodes within all heart.

# Kenny Knight

---

## A Supermarket in Honicknowle

What thoughts I *had* of you tonight, Walt Whitman

*Allen Ginsberg, 'A Supermarket in California'*

So where are you tonight  
Allen Ginsberg  
now that the supermarket has closed  
and Santa Claus has gone back home  
to wrap up warmly for Christmas  
and the checkout girl from California  
has flown across the Atlantic  
to spend New Year in America  
with the store detective  
from your imagination.

Are you on the same flight  
reading *Sunflower Sutra*  
or out in the car park with Jack  
waiting for a train  
that passes through  
the Nineteen Fifties  
or are you pushing  
shopping trolleys across the night  
to distant high streets of the heart.

Are you working in a supermarket  
or selling sunflowers  
at the end of a switchboard line  
chanting Buddhist mantras  
over the tannoy  
to get yourself through  
another supermarket day  
your voice moving  
from department to department

calling workers on the shop floor,  
workers in short-sleeved shirts  
dressing shelves  
and serving images to customers  
or are you working the night shift  
trying to make ends meet  
like two old friends on a street corner.

So where are you tonight  
Allen Ginsberg  
are you haunting the dreams  
of the next generation of writers  
reading poetry  
in dream supermarkets of the night  
as you cruise the aisles  
shopping for inspiration  
filling your shopping trolley  
with sunflower oil  
and Valentine cards  
for everyone you've ever loved.

And where are they now  
where are all of my old  
teenage friends from childhood  
those cowboys from the corner shop.  
I've not seen any of them for generations.  
Are they happily married to television  
or out walking the streets,  
homeless shadows looking for shelter  
and strangers to love.  
Have they been consumed  
by the Consumer Society  
recycling themselves like Himalayan monks  
or egg boxes in the cardboard bailer.  
Have they fallen  
into the black hole of capitalism  
like Harpers garage  
and Pete Russell's Hot Record Store.

I'm working in a supermarket now  
serving lunch to Mrs. Flatfish,  
The Witch and the Wardrobe  
and the Five to Five Man  
working with my grand-daughter  
reading *Guthrie to Ginsberg*  
and other poems in church halls  
and libraries  
all the way from the Honicknowle Hills  
to the outskirts of town,  
but I've never read  
in a Supermarket in California  
or in the dining room of the Beat Hotel.

I remember the night you shared the stage  
with Peter Orlovsky at the Lower Guildhall  
on the corner of Catherine Street  
and I remember that night  
wanting to hear the lonesome whistle  
of a locomotive replace the car horns  
and scooters on Royal Parade  
remember wanting to hear you read  
*Howl* and *Sunflower Sutra*  
for the Buddhists and the beatniks,  
the prehistoric penguins  
and the train spotters  
wearing halos of nostalgia  
and long hair in the crowd,  
but you didn't read  
any of that old City Lights stuff  
or bring Gregory Corso,  
Lawrence Ferlinghetti  
or the store detective from California  
out from behind the curtains  
to make their debuts  
at the Lower Guildhall,  
no trio of Penguin Modern Poets  
no bunches of sunflowers

no shoplifters in the crowd  
crossing the car park  
with books of poetry.

That night at the Lower Guildhall  
as we passed through evening stardust  
you drew a sunflower  
two or three inches tall  
a black sunflower from America  
which took root like a memory  
and found a home  
on the windowsill of my room  
overlooking the park  
and one afternoon  
as March gave way to April  
I found a packet of sunflower seeds  
in a corner of old shadows  
in my father's garden shed  
which I planted  
to brighten the neighbourhood  
a galaxy of sunflowers  
constellations of them  
all over the slopes  
of Honicknowle and West Park.

The sunflower you drew is thirty years old now  
thirty years since I stood in front of the stage  
with Allen Clarke and Bernard Brotherton  
and smoked cigarettes with Peter Orlovsky  
until he realised it wasn't weed.

Tim Allen was there  
unknown to me then  
one of two hundred strangers  
in the beat poetry crowd,  
but I didn't see the store detective  
was he hiding backstage  
or lingering by the bookstall

did he follow you  
periodically through the years  
until his shadow grew thin.

Before I read you I knew nothing  
about supermarkets or sunflowers  
knew nothing about Lorca,  
Whitman or Kerouac.

By the time I'd negotiated  
the foothills of adolescence  
I'd read snatches of T.S. Eliot,  
Alfred Noyes and Ogden Nash  
and listened to the blues singer  
Bessie Smith  
in Kenny Frost's house  
on Shakespeare Road  
when I was fifteen and still at school  
and now I'm approaching sixty  
and my shadow is pointed  
towards the supermarket  
and the moon is following me  
across the still forms  
of sleeping policemen in the road

and you where are you tonight  
Allen Ginsberg  
are you walking home  
with all those other beat poets of the night  
while I'm walking around in crazy circles  
outside a supermarket in Honicknowle  
under the constellation of the sunflower  
from where Walt Whitman sends his regards.

# Adam Flint

---

## Valence

*for Valerie Eales*

A tarrier in the tumbled cuttings early sunlight warms  
wants to fix its linger  
ignore the fingers white clowns wag  
tailor its shape to the shorn  
sunday morning drunken parks  
wherever silence perched  
concentrate  
young sap and marrow  
ferment though a fatal term

\*

Bruised wings flew black celldrunk echoes  
over northern daylight tufts  
slight webs  
spotwhit  
spunleaf edges  
mercurial dog in dock  
remedial re common nettle  
yellow archangel  
hop

\*

to weak hook awake to white  
regions and timid symmetry



deer-grass quave in the easternness  
engrained a blexter

snagged dusk clouds down  
closed and flush-jambled doors

\*

Moledawn  
sunnel  
golden/taupe gloss

all well in afternoon augusts  
piling husks north of the crags  
in corners of open boyforts

dirtwarm thornlike  
patches of process

\*

A hardly discernible stigma wakes  
capsules of yellow rattle by  
chitin-scales grazed opaque  
buckled highland fern

\*

(In spundown margins then eventuals  
the imagined mother wrings  
hands over fragile thought)  
black brook meniscus  
pure-glint context  
ripple mint + juxt  
hilt-deep in white horehound

Up raw milkroots supple pillars rocket  
into the evening's granular light  
berries rust beneath the young  
in October spikenard  
shoot-heart

folded in raintide  
boatsmile a leaf  
turned down at the margins  
captains 48hrs

\*

For two days four-fifths a taper  
flits over sparse turf sprung plum limbs  
moss walls thatch-ricks  
the ventured-blind abounding with

encounters encounters  
behind a facial cone

branchshine and pictures  
auburn citrus  
pinebread  
milkpots  
sitting around on grass-stems lightships stalk

\*

One white clown cell sidles through the flush nodes  
keeping healing blood from harm

like a minor fauna  
into dottings semilunar  
calamint and clary  
light sleepers reaping pinlight  
clinks on the lawn

Please help  
Please help me  
find and know a name enough to generate the face

else we are only

offspring

of wordshape

\*

Every breath a grey sac  
dissembling through the dark  
a secretive eluder skulking foodplant

beyond bound chambers  
ditchborn screams  
bush-hidden  
scar-glittered  
windows in knapweed  
patched with neural tating

\*

Shadow-tailors threading  
unbolted eaves to rust-eaten eyes  
widened in outhouse subsidence

sang the epiphanies tabbies retire to  
deep in crannied granary walls  
never once in excess of the broad  
shining median oblique darkness cuts  
burrowing into the high barn rafters hollow knots

abandonment-embracers clone and

mother

their own wings

# Claire Nashar

---

## The Fish [edited]

wade [this question]  
through[, and back with] black [proceed, drop] jade.  
Of the crow-blue [stirs, the] mussel-shells, [and burn seeds] one keeps  
adjusting [an order of the visible] the ash-heaps;  
opening and shutting [divisibility] itself like [i know]

an  
injured [future] fan[s us  
keeps] The barnacles [kind] which encrust the [same] side  
of the [same] wave, [a throat] cannot hide  
there [much less tongue] for the submerged shafts [voice-lit] of the

sun [and ideal],  
split like [you are] spun  
[and the] glass [within], move[, underlight] themselves with spotlight  
swiftness

[quivering] into the crevices [skinny]—  
in and out, illuminating

the [silt of]  
turquoise sea [and  
curl] of bodies. The water [presses flowers] drives [weed] a wedge  
of iron [air] through the iron [sky top] edge  
of the cliff; whereupon the [emptied of] stars,

pink [silver  
our love] rice-[pale in] grains [my love], ink-[sunk since  
or] bespattered [eyes where] jelly fish, crabs [die] like green  
[sick and then] lilies, and submarine [you are  
with spore-filled] toadstools, slide each [in so] on the other [you

] All  
external [Rock  
marks [are marks least] of abuse [most] are present on this [float]  
defiant edifice—  
[its] all [toward a state] the physical features of [my ball fisted]

ac-  
cident—lack [the story]  
of cornice, dynamite [of astral aspect and] grooves, burns, and  
hatchet strokes, these [claims masked] things [with] stand  
out on it; the chasm [lung no]-side is

dead.  
Repeated [water  
is] evidence has proved [kinful,] that it can live[.  
Put] on what can not revive  
its youth. The sea grows old in [fussing] it

# Eduardo Moga

---

*translated by Terence Dooley*

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## **[Eyes Adhere to the Bodies]**

Eyes adhere to bodies, they cede to their rigour and their clay. They lose whatever made them eyes, and yet they see more clearly, with more hands, more iron, more irony, like magnetised moons. Eyes, birds in a storm, are raised to other surfaces, and see within the seen. They isolate the bodies then, they wrap them up as if in gusts of winds that disappear into their own vortices, extract the brilliance of their dreams, the substance of their cloth, their sounding ruins, what they keep of bodies born to die.

The flow of gulls. The pavement is a cry. (To cry out is to age, as to caress). Cars drink the space.

(A black man passes by, I listen to his skin of water, skin of reeds. It whispers like silver. I hear the pain revealed in his sandals, his dusty glance, I hear the white extension of his silence, within it alkaloids and night. His every part: sphincter, lashes, fear, all told in his tense blood, in the elastic oneness of his blood beneath an aura of acacias and handkerchiefs).

Bodies carry with them ugliness or gift. My arms are theirs, their death is mine. Their roll towards repentance drags me down. My nipples, and navel, and inches, and vertical blood, and joints that sketch vague smiles, the rigging of my body brothers me to all the other bodies. In them lives what I have never been, flowers decapitated by distance, the noise eyes make, solidities that other lips have kissed, smouldering smiles, flames in whose waters I bathe, swamp-crystals of consciousness. Shapes that absorb the past and all that never came to exist.

(A lifeless someone passes by. Collar and tie. He doesn't know he decays. I note his yellow crown, his incogitant capillaries. Yet I need

the odour of his evanescence, the brief infinitude that keeps him with us still, brief petiole).

Such longing to become the thing I see, to lodge in difference, to cross the threshold of the eye, to breathe through it, to light the dark spark, the stump of harmony.

I struggle with myself, my walls bite. I pay my skin no mind, it lays me siege. I fell the tree I am, it flees and hides in all its rectitude, and from its crown the birds fly up. To break out of one's skin, tear off the bark of breath, to make myself into someone outside myself, within the shining dark that covers every tomb and attitude. To glide like gulls along the edge of day, along the paper's blade, to be more, ambiguously more, but in the river of the new, in which one body breathes made up of all the bodies.

(An inspecific someone passes by. He smells of birth, of nothingness; he shifts like me the weight of slavery. Another blow whose force is stifled in this polystyrene street. Another way of facing up to death).

The houses also move. Doves and geraniums breathe. The colours altered by the sun protest. Would I be them, the multiplicity that lives inside them, or the soft sky alien in its quietude? Would I be the silent washing hung to dry, or music of the unseen?

(Something goes by, an imaginary dog, a shape, a light, and in its lines I recognise the tongue I aspire to, the sons forgotten, standing on the back of time, the eyes, the birds, the symbols that draw breath, the names of all the nameless beings, these that loom about me like a body or a flood).



# Günter Eich

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*translated by Ken Cockburn*

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§

The gardener seeds a lawn among tares,  
plants a bed of phlox by the wall.  
In my room the cobwebs have all been swept away  
so time doesn't snag there.

Just let go of them: Bellum Gallicum,  
Rembrandt, soup kitchens, artichokes in Bern,  
sea-views and graves –

lawn, tares and phlox,  
sown together with hopes  
for cobwebs and laughter,  
for the world's unpainted pictures.

§

May doesn't stay for long,  
seven eight nine minutes,  
an immaterial blink of the eye  
with light rain and a southerly breeze,

one might ask it nicely to come again,  
as if it mattered,  
one might ask it nicely to stay,  
as if it mattered.