This compilation copyright © Shearsman Books Ltd., 2016. All rights in the works printed here revert to their authors, translators or original copyright-holders after publication. Permissions requests may be directed to Shearsman, but they will be forwarded to the copyright-holders.

Subscriptions and single copies
Current subscriptions—covering two double-issues, with an average length of 108 pages—cost £16 for delivery to U.K. addresses, £18 for the rest of Europe (including the Republic of Ireland), and £21 for the rest of the world. Longer subscriptions may be had for a pro-rata higher payment. North American customers will find that buying single copies from online retailers in the U.S.A. will often be cheaper than subscribing. This is because airmail postage rates in the U.K. have risen rapidly, whereas copies of the magazine are printed in the U.S.A. to meet demand from online retailers there, and thus avoid the transatlantic mail.

Back issues from nº 63 onwards (uniform with this issue) cost £8.95 / $16 through retail outlets. Single copies can be ordered for £8.95 direct from the press, post-free within the U.K., through the Shearsman Books online store, or from any bookshop.

Issues of the previous pamphlet-style version of the magazine, from nº 1 to nº 62, may be had for £3 each, direct from the press, where copies are still available, but contact us for a quote for a full, or partial, run.

Submissions
Shearsman operates a submissions-window system, whereby submissions are only accepted during the months of March and September, when selections are made for the October and April issues, respectively. Submissions may be sent by mail or email, but email attachments—other than PDFs—are not accepted. We aim to respond within 3 months of the window’s closure, i.e. all who submit should hear by the end of June or December, although for recent issues we have often taken a month longer.
Contents

Ken Bolton 5
Jill Jones 12
Sheila Mannix 16
Michael Farrell 21
Michael Ayres 24
Julie Maclean 28
Mark Goodwin 32
Tom Cowin 37
Stuart Cooke 40
Maria Jastrzębska 44
Ian Seed 46
Hilda Sheehan 49
Alasdair Paterson 51
Claire Crowther 54
Cathy Dreyer 56
Isobel Armstrong 58
Carrie Etter 60
Sarah Cave 62
sean burn 64
Simon Perchik 67
Mark Harris 70
Eluned Jones 73
Rachel Sills 75
Agatha Abu Shehab 77
Valentino Gianuzzi 79
Jon Thompson 82
James Sutherland-Smith 86
Lucy Sheerman 89
Robin Fulton Macpherson 91

Kjell Espmark  (translated from Swedish by Robin Fulton Macpherson) 93
Mercedes Cebrían  (translated from Spanish by Terence Dooley) 97
Mario Martín Gijón  (translated from Spanish by Terence Dooley) 100
Mariangela Gualtieri  (translated from Italian by A. Molino & C. Viti) 102

Biographical Notes 104
Fewer Pages—A Review

Fewer pages left—
in this pad I found—
than I thought.

Not a metaphor.

“(W)e’ve come to put our trust in suspicion”

says a canny review
in—the London Review of Books—

accurately shafting Alex Katz’s innocence,
his having (finally, it becomes clear)
bitten off less than he might have chewed.

I like him—but agree.
I wonder if—like him—I have, too.

I always liked Katz. Tho it was clear
—was it, always?—they were not quite enough. The emptiness was... “a little empty”.

Bored, rich, the shirts too clean & pressed
(too ‘Beach Boys–Pat Boone’)—

characters preppy, bland,
unashamed, too—

a quality, this,
they held positively—
derived, says the reviewer,
from Manet &—further back, Velázquez—
or Milton Avery (a possible first instance)?

Now they were empty
(the Milton Avery)—

tho the colour might
also have been of note,
to Katz—a tip, an influence?

The books I’m reading, for various reasons all halfway thru

—Sloterdijk, Roussel—one too thoughtful for my current mood—

the other hard to read except in the best light, but funny.

Susan Sontag I could pick up—
her journal, the second volume—

& drift back to the sixties,

my seventies. That is, ‘the sixties’ occupied
my nineteen-seventies.

Pam’s recommendation—Panegyric—
at work,
where I take it
& read at lunchtime:
so amusingly declarative &
calculatedly ‘insolent’, harsh, firm,
cheerful (cheerful ‘in despite’ of things).
Not very Alex Katz.

Too Gallic for the *London Review of Books*.

A snotty reviewer
damns Zadie Smith for
—pointlessly, he says—
focusing on guilt
at achieving a degree
of middle-class status. (Hard
to please the *London Review*.)

And then he ends: *Still, it may be her best book.*

‘Take that’?

I sit with Pola for a bit.
Her doggy head absorbs a great deal
of massage & scrunching & stroking.

She rests it on her white paws,
wet, I see, from wading in the pool,
which she does
every so often, because it’s there.

It might behove, or complicate
a Katz character;

but I don’t want her to feel guilty. (Do *they*? Katz’s characters?)

The fish pond
is an amenity
she should use.

How she sees it.

And we are amused.
And I write this…

because I can
& have time, suddenly, free—
a review written—that I dreaded—
days early!—

a busy week
thus prepped,
so my day off becomes
my ‘day off’, &, like a Katz character,
what to do with it?
Like Debord, sharpen
an axe or two?
Or like Manet—whose
Sunday sailors
sometimes were given
to wearing striped shirts,
straw hats—& hung, for comfort,
with the picnic basket

(but his ‘Impressionist phase’—yes?—
he probably affected the carelessness.)

(Or not: must Manet
be Oskar Kokoschka? No,
much as I like Oskar K.)

One prefers the anxiety
of the woman & daughter,
near the train at the Gare St Lazare:

more stripes, but anxiety
in buckets.

#

“One prefers”—
& I am one with that one.
How about you, reader?

#
Guy.

I heard an awful story once—
from the Children’s Court
or Family Law—the judge asks,
And what is the child’s name?
Gooey, comes the response.
Gooey? Yes, your honour.
How do you spell that? G. U. Y.
Judge nods.

Like the London Review of Books
I wonder—well, I might—how
did I get so middle class? And
how middle class, exactly (rather upper,
rather lower?) & how do I feel
about it?

Though I do not wonder.

The defining
middle class anxiety
might be
about becoming no longer
middle class—losing the money.
I will find out when I quit work:
A life not devoid of surprises.

I am not middle class enough,
for the London Review of Books.

Only an Australian this poor
would buy it. That’s a thought.

(In England I would
‘know my place’?

Ha ha.) In fact, I ‘scarcely’ buy it:
they write, begging for money.
Pam gets me a free, ‘guest’, or ‘trial’ subscription & they write testily to her
that their gift subscriptions are not for repeat
but for new readers: they have seen through “Ken Dark Horsey”—
tho they “will honor the subscription”.

Another offer from them—
is addressed to me as Fran Daddo.
But I refuse, as Fran, to subscribe.
I plan to join next,
via Pam,
as Kenneth D’Accorsi.
Will my luck hold?

The current issue—just when
I am about to throw it out—
suddenly becomes interesting.

“You think it’s lame
& then it isn’t.”

My ideas about Katz
shift and settle slightly—

I remember the extreme,
bleak serenity of some—

a wow factor associated
with Abstract Art—the paint

“as good as it is in the can”.

Frank Stella? I remember the intake of breath,

the Katz blues, the reds—like gifts.

(Like compensation for the emptiness—which they ask us to understand.)

(Sad, troubled pretty pictures.)
About the Soul

Every isthmus is an opportunity,
every mouse is a rodent.
This is only the beginning.
Then the thugs arrive
and start dividing the factories.

Wires change direction.
What now?
The serious stuff goes underground.
That’s some claustrophobia.

I’ve been calculated. I am a mix.
The brewing storm.
The churning soul.
Lace panties. All the fashion.

The thugs storm the soul.
I flee the isthmus in a skip.
The mouse builds its house
of lace. It seems to be
the better deal. Thank you.

My feelings saunter. I am arcades.
I fend for necessities.
The tiles are like fancies.
Ah, little beauty sounds
coming and leaving.

Two seconds into terrible
awe, then there’s trouble.
But above, the blue west
chortles with bells.
It’s the thing we need.
Fresh words
in itchy machines.

**Accounting**

As if aplomb was a value.
As if outcomes went anywhere.
As if shadows were made of more or less.
As if shadows were made.
As if there’s nothing more precious
than light on earth.
Even sleep maintains this.
Who rests may not sleep.
Who sleeps may never rest
upon the dearest ground.

But how will you ever identify
these things if they lie untasted, if they
do not rattle or move, if they aren’t said
among people. Therein lies a bond.
Therein lies a way beyond marks.

If the people will have you.
If history will jump. If epochs will gape.
If laws will succumb, if not the years.

Because time is dumb, actuarial
seasonal, full of so much verve.
There’s something more or less
blue in all this.
No wonder it’s not to be trusted.

I want the yellow city.
I want some of the cold light as well.
But I want most of all
the living, that they live
without all the modest accounting.
If there are no exceptions, and this ground is dangerous, you may learn how to comprise yourself.
One
The Postman speaks Latin. “UBI SUNT,” he cries, in a West-Country accent. A medievalist re-enacter, no doubt. I foresee dwells and laments on the transitory nature of life and beauty. “Where are they?” Where, indeed. “You said seventies bungalow. The place is full of seventies bungalows. You said palm trees. The place is full of palm trees.” On the radio: howling like wolves at the side of the road...the dandelion verges on being a symbol...a wolf slaughtering a black lamb and Vulcan hovering over the scene...is there any such country? The herding of the cows lashed across the skies of Ireland. Durations, dynamics, articulations.

Two

Two magpies in the garden
Cordylines, dog-roses, wild
Sea grass with squid leaves

You could put that on a menu
Set up a stall in the market
And now for the good news!

Three

Excavate. Archaeology of Self. Yes, we’ve all read Lacan. I can still hear Emilia Weber’s laconic, “Have I confessed something?” Let’s start with the books. Sceptics, cynics, romantics, revolutionaries, hermits, beatniks, punks, dissidents, decadents, oulipians, existentialists, three waves of feminists, atheists, nihilists, idealists, materialists, anarchists, communists, socialists, realists, naturalists, abolitionists, expressionists, impressionists, symbolists, modernists, linguists, cubists, structuralists, satirists, classicists, formalists, futurists, constructivists, semiologists, dadaists, surrealists, absurdists, psychoanalysts, situationists, neo-realists, relativists, postmodernists, deconstructivists, liberationists, ecologists, vitalists, conceptualists,
post-humanists, objectivists, phenomenologists, post-structuralists, neo-avant-gardists, trans-avant-gardists, post-avant-gardists, neo-modernists, post-postmodernists… I meant Dust. Forget I ever used the word *Evacuate*, I mean *Excavate*.

**Four**

*Brief tableau.*

FINNEUS faces a wall and replicates imaginary death positions, wears a long black robe. STONE smokes and drinks wine, sports knuckle dusters under lace mittens.

STONE: Let’s give mystic nature a bash. For the competitions. FINNEUS, engaged in act of auto-asphyxiation, turns to STONE.

STONE: Here goes. Storm-fronts queue dark skies like jets on a runway. A saffron-orange ferryboat is away to Cape Clear.

FINNEUS: I’m reluctant.

STONE: We’re broke.

FINNEUS: We have enough to eat and a roof over our heads.

STONE: I’m running out of wine.

FINNEUS [Sighs.]: Beyond the Sound the islands Horse, Hare.

**Five**

A subject comes into being who has been mortified in his sovereignty, whose “crown” has slipped into the “creaturely.” This subject has passed through an abjection and has constructed – through the “artifice” of material and mental writing and drawing – a new ego, a Lacanian sinthome, a dialogical self.

**Six**

STONE: More complications!

FINNEUS: Wasp’s nest under eave. Wasps thud and whirr, destroy my ease. Buzz-off wasps. DIE!!!


[FINNEUS jumps up.]

FINNEUS: Enough of this self-laceration! I cannot be a monk on a rock!

[FINNEUS sets to ramble. STONE follows him.]

The Artist

has four Arms and they are assumed to live
a sheltered Life. but an artist falls in love
with a Murderer, in love with the child
of a Murderer, in love with the brother
of a Murderer, in love with a suspect and
a Witness. the artist’s barista is also murdered
this admittedly is Shelter, compared to the
Lives of those just mentioned. there is sweetness
out of Windows, but try to imagine a time
before Windows. everyone you see is painting
a Picture on a wall and when you go up close
You see it is their self portrait. some People are
alarming; sometimes the Artist is one of those
People. try and soothe them, try and find out
their favourite Tunes in order to soothe them
this is barbaric, You say, when you come across
their Writing in an email sent to an editor. the
Culture of barbarians is older than that of magazine
Editors, let alone emails, so respect that, please
if an Artist hurts you physically by all means
report Them: they are not above the law. they
contribute to the Law, but so do you. they have
four Arms to hit you with, but you have a lot of
Skin like everyone else, with nerve endings
You might pogo down the street and see a gang
beating up an Artist. use your pogo stick in any
way You feel comfortable in order to afford the
Artist protection. this need not be a violent use
be creative, if Anxiety doesn’t override this
Possibility. anxiety can be used creatively if you
think for a Moment. time tends to slow down during
Acts of violence, and while this seems unfortunate
to the Victim, it can be vital for the use of the hero
this Time is similar to artistic time, but it reflects a different Colour and it vibrates with a different Sound. they have taken all the willows from the River, wanting to free the river of the willows. Where else would such a thing happen? councils are the same Everywhere. the artist follows the river Track, stops at the bouquet of flowers signifying Someone has drowned here. the artist moons, muses for a while until a Family with dogs appears to be heading in the same Direction. the artist wants to be more at Ease with dogs but not today. the Artist is in love with one who is in love with dogs.
Inside a book

Ten years inside a book. And all the things he encountered there sustaining a kind of afterglow, happily forever after blurred like the lights of a departing train in a mid-summer shower, the very last to leave the station tonight.

A great oversight, to set against a great fecundity. Ogres, musicians, poets and pigs, and whole cities hidden inside the bud of a rose: magicians, psychos, sailors, populace enough to cast a thousand Shakespeares, and sad palaces sufficient to expel a million Versailles, with mazes of mirrors innumerable as the waves of the sea, with their reflected jewels of images like shimmering weapons drawn, more than adequate to exhaust a hundred years of glaziers’ armouries.

And in that book, intense and detailed love. Duels fought for honour in a mist-hushed meadow, life stripped back to its essence and its end, in the pulses of principals and seconds the working parts revealed, the cover thrown open on the relentless engine of moments. Intense, and harrowing, and detailed love. Engagements and derangements, wild scarlet hullabaloos and deer-leap fleeting visions on the run, in motels and mid-70s discos, beds that become Africa or Antarctica, with hipsters and youngsters, the fools and the wise all equally desperate to read the signs inside their hearts, to search for their kind of others, at last to find themselves in their lovers’ eyes,
and so, in the night shift, as always, plenty of work for Saint Valentine.

And in that book, a cornucopia of locations, from Mondrian uptown boogaloos of New York traffic, to the golden boredom of the August steppes, the simmering bullion of ripening grain and too much Soyuz-blue space to entertain lasting thoughts of rebellion.

A stream of concepts, too, and a glisten of dragonfly minds flitting above them; and in the evening the drifting fireflies of dreams as if scattered from some distant conflagration.

Doors, and doors, and doors, and doors! Such an opening and a closing, a clicking and a slamming shut as might compose a staccato symphony, each and every one the result of a vital decision. Furore, tumult, gods and bores.


The moral, supposedly. The climax.

What was it like, the world he found when he emerged at last from within that book? Like Crusoe or Rip van Winkle, Dracula hammered into his coffin, or Howard Hughes tented in oxygen and dollars, it had been a while. Was it as he remembered? How had it changed? With his butterfly beard and haze of reference, what did he make of a planet returned, the new schools, radical movements, happening styles, deep cuts, fresh grooves? When he heard the voices, did they make sense? And had his opinion altered at all on what appeared to happen when words melted into silence?
In the Annals of Tourism at The British Library

‘But I don’t want to go among mad people,‘
–Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures Under Ground

Once I’d boned up on
Von Guérard and Buvelot,
Warhol just in case,
up to the armpits
in special facts, anecdotes highlighted in fluorescent pink,
jokes to break the ice
and readiness to say
‘I don’t know now,
but will find out’ when asked ‘Did Gauguin visit Geelong?’
it was not my job to measure satisfaction
although mine stood at zero
in a range of 1-10, ten being ‘most satisfied’.
In a co-production there might
have been asides and a giggle,
light at the end of a worthy tunnel.
In its absence I conducted a ‘probabilistic analysis
of guided tours during the slack season’ and found that
guiding a tour on Saturday in regional Australia
is a waste of blood and adrenaline since most
of the population is doing the weekly
shop or yelling from the flanks of a foreign field.
Fanatics in pursuit of the pneumatic, he might have said,
or engaged in what is known as Aussie Rules—
the first and subsequent being fuck knows.
Maybe I should have devised
an ‘alternate approach to modelling the slack
season provision of guided tours to tourists’
Tourist Management, Vol.31 (4) pp 482-485 (Peer reviewed)
Our slack season’s been running for two hundred plus
non - peer - reviewed years.
Answer under my breath No, you idiot!
Ptarmigan Mist, Am Bodach, March 2016
Note: Am Bodach is a mountain just north of the head of Loch Leven; its name means – The Old Man.

behind us is
sunlit snow

& soft white blades
of corniced ridges

& Am Bodach’s
black rocks set

in shining névé

parts of our
minds are

behind us on
Am Bodach’s

summit at a

recent past set
in a glistening

history of

lit minutes & iced
metres we have

just traversed

at summit fog
enfolded ground
and we descended
through grey air

on mist-smudged snow
and just to our

north the faint
dangerous line where
sky & cornice merge

and to south
clear black rocks

of safe solidity
up-poked and

marked way

now here in

a fog-hollow of
corrie in

front of
us perched on

a snow-tussock
a ptarmigan

bold & gazing
caped in white

red-smudged black
-slash eye-mask

hooked apple-pip beak
thick frosted legs
his

sudden ratchety
guttural call a

miniature thunder

he is

massive in his
little proudness

a bird of
mountain

his feathery
snow slopes his
crag-black rudder

his cornice-grace
ful curves

in front of us
now a mountain
of bird

set in mist pulls
Am Bodach’s

mass and we
are tiny figures

climbing along a
ptarmigan’s wing
Bishopstone : Tidemills

downridge raised above a wash of dried chalk foam descend the uncropped path as per guide on foot turning brittle carline thistle knots the sum is more hurt and walking grinds the glass in the ankles Ouse estuary sump dragonflies jag the reeds the beaten zone mocks natural landscape and the lives moved from aggregate beach you would ghost this coast more than this haunting if I thought so I try not littoral hardcore and concrete remains tide resistant and footsore keeping defilade by sunblinding and being elsewhere from reachable past the stationmaster’s ruined walls and wild mallow interiors I am soled with sea beet leather and hope against all that all ordinance will fall at my feet.
Partial, & Remorse

—what we’re left with here is a hand in another
(the close examination of a knuckle): what

happens now, what
happens now—these blurred
   wrens darting

into the scrub
behind us—to us (in the wind

swept channel, the whipped
cream of a tide’s top
retreating

the available possibilities in the tattlers
the gingery hind-leg of a
memory as it touches

an oyster catcher floating above the bow)—

back then (carving my lungs from the water)
when I clung to you

like a barnacle on a hull: gestation
of a muscle you didn’t want

timbre of the flattest peaks;
circuit of the smallest wing—
what happens now, in your murky wake?

(as if the sky’s searing slap:
winded in the thump, the delicious beasts
of the blue-green multi, their hooking spoon) coughed spume torn

and ionic, coming up for air (where are you?) breaching that wary void
corrugated glimmers, the ecstatic noun of a night’s suffocated face, seated

amongst bells: amongst hands

my feet are eaten by a magma slithering below the surface of the sand is needing

what I need, further & prior to any of this: your relentless desire—the design of a coast

one waiting for the other’s unwavering voyage
Inside the truck there was almost no light except for the smallest crack in the metal shutter doors, which enabled her to guess if it was day or night. The drivers had shouted that they were not to try opening the doors when the truck stopped or they could be apprehended, maybe shot. They had stopped only once in a forest and been allowed to relieve themselves at night. A signal of knocks from the driver’s cabin had been arranged to let them know when a border patrol was being approached. Inside the truck there was nowhere they could relieve themselves so someone suggested they make one side of the truck their latrine and all sleep on other side. They dragged some cylinders and boxes across to create a divide but sometimes the urine trickled across to the other side anyway.

The clatter of the truck and passing traffic were something she quickly got used to. Much harder were the heat and thirst as no one had brought enough water for such a long journey. On the third morning, as she imagined it, even over the stench inside the lorry she could smell something different. The smell of brine. Ocean. They had reached the ocean.

Oh, oh! cries Ingénue, when she sees two humpbacks breach, shattering the ocean’s glass blue sheen. Where? shouts Cowboy Hat. How come I never see them and you do, even when you’re driving?

Eagles flank their pathway, swooping down alongside the truck, which levitates above the tarmac’s haze. Ingénue rests an arm on the rolled down window. She purses her lips and whistles to the birds, offering them fragments of quesadilla. Cowboy Hat opens one eye. Eagles alight on her lover’s arm, snatching morsels from her open hand. I was gonna eat that, mutters Cowboy Hat then goes back to sleep.
The palatial hotel is over a century old and retains its grand style. The wooden lift still sits in its steel cage. Leaving my suitcase with the porter, I go upstairs to say hello to my father, who has arrived earlier that day. But there is nobody in his room. I take the ancient lift again and go wandering from floor to floor. The search through ornate corridors is so pleasurable that I soon forget what it is I am looking for. One room has its door open. A woman as glamorous as a silent movie star is lying on the silk sheets of her bed. She blows me a kiss and beckons with her finger. I stand in her doorway, unable to move. Then she sneezes, and I hurry on my way. Eventually I find my father sitting at a table in a lounge on the top floor. He is staring at his watch while waving away a waiter in a white tuxedo. He looks disappointed when he spots me, as if he should have known all along I would only be up to my old tricks again.
Cabbage is the secret to a view of the future

At night, a plate of cabbage and the vagabond of my dreams appears outside Sainsburys on my walk home from work. Something of the cabbage in him, something of the future too. Should I stop dreaming by refusing the cabbage but this bored me. I needed the future, I needed the vagabond. To give him my loose change made me feel better, daily. On nights without cabbage I slept, I slept without dreaming of a future made of homelessness and a need to give to it. How can I walk past any other unknown vagabond?

Donkey Governments

The donkey it had no legs but there was mud for it and could slide out of roads in the moans of animal cows who walked like he once had and there was mud for it when there were no eyes on this donkey or those eyes we so admired there was mud for it when it’s belly sunk and its teeth sunk and its heavy liver sunk there was mud for it when nothing could save the mud or the donkey legs were received in limb-loads awaiting hand-outs empty of giving.

Going Cold

We were called to the bedside of the suicide. Tubes coming out of it in recognisable piss and junk. I’d hoped that this might stop it from being hung, slashed or drowned, but I failed. Sitting side by side, we discussed the burger going cold, intended to cheer us up. There was favourite chocolate. ‘I have consumed whole packets of capsules intended for you,’ said the inconsiderate murderer, waiting in an ear. ‘Let’s rearrange the furniture into listed negativity, and make sure each pillow is depressed.’
My life as a detail

When I fell down in the wood did the trees hear? Did anyone?

How long would I have needed to lie motionless, supine in the wood aforesaid, to be pronounced dead? A minute, a week or a month? A few hundred years? And then, pronounced dead by whom? By you? By an expert? Before or after the leaves cover me? Is there in fact the slightest chance of a single leaf covering me? Do leaves fall here? Am I in fact dead now? What do I mean by ‘fact’? What do I mean by ‘now’? Is this a deathly pallor or leaf dapple? Or is the paint ageing, changing, though so much more slowly than flesh would?

Shall we go forward on the shared understanding that I really am dead? Shall we assume that understanding is something we can really share? Can we retain the word ‘really’, with all its dubious, head-scratching applicability, for the time being? What is the time with you, by the way? Am I in time and if so what time?

How do you die in a wood? In my own time, i.e. in the time herein represented? Shall we consider homicide? The footpad stealthy? The cuckold enraged? The war party past caring? The lunatic, terrified and terrible? The family, as usual? Or mishap, perhaps? The tree root? The fallen bough? The passing boar? The lightning strike? Should we not consider natural causes various? The whole unknown mechanism within, shuddering to a standstill, heart, brain, lungs, failing in a wood? Should we not suspect judicial issues or similar? The squeal at the end of the manhunt? Gurgle and twitch till the bough breaks? Is self-harm, alas, a legitimate line of enquiry? What about divine judgement? Does it exist? If so, does it cover all of the above? If not, can I blame the artist?

What do I look like? Is this a good colour? Can we blame the light through the green leaves? Do you agree, it doesn’t look good for me? Supine, white hair, eyes staring upward? Can you see me, now?
Who else do you think will see me? The peasant and his horse, perhaps they’ll see me next, as they plough a furrow in the direction of the wood? The shepherd who notices nothing, not even his sheep, but might hear a cry of discovery? In a moment? The fisherman distracted by a big ripple? The ships sailing on? Everyone who misses everything, even the tangle of legs and wings and estuary water out there?

You didn’t miss that fall, though, did you? The watery one? At least, not the moment of impact? Wasn’t it intended you would notice? The title being a clue? The Fall of Icarus? Or maybe Landscape with the the Fall of Icarus? Doesn’t that get you looking? And the artistic framing that leads your eye there eventually? The splash you see, that no-one in the picture sees? Being the point about suffering? That no-one sees? But who notices me, here, lying in a wood? Did you really notice? How many times did you look before you noticed? Did you get a tip-off? About looking for the hidden meaning, the same meaning as the splash everyone in the picture misses, but a meaning you missed too? The real meaning? In a blind spot, in the corner of a scene, in a wood?

So will the plough-horse discover me in a second? Will he shy away? Will the proverbs rise like bones from the glistening furrows? The careless shepherd dreams while his sheep stray? The plough doesn’t stop just because a man dies? About suffering they were never wrong, the old masters?
A Pacifist Matriarch Finds Herself at the Royal Air Show

Though they dye cloud red
    with a secondsworth of exhaust,
    I’ll rest

while the chief pilot
calls them to cross each other – wuupp,  
    haaruwupp –

since Two and Four waft
    half a smoke heart each – formation: 
    python –

or get chips, or veer
    off to buy stickers. Could I break
    and take

this moment, feeling
    no body’s weight and surely no bomb’s
    falling?
He thinks you can find
a c, on e it’s lost. But you an’t
whistle for it, or plu k the lyre
to make it ome ba k. You may
find tra es, in Poland or Gree e,
if you know what to look for,
whi h is halk. halk is made of
ountless mi ros opi c shells,
subje ted to geologi al eras of seismi
pressure. The shells were se reted
by tiny protozoans whi h lived and
died a hundred million years ago,
and armed themselves with
minis ule al ium arbonate
platelets, or rings, for prote tion,
perhaps from predating
zooplankton. No one is quite sure.
When they died, their shields
fell like snowflakes, dan ing,
through warm, shallow waters,
as though they had all the time
in the world and no spe ial
pla e to be, when they were
always lo ked on target, heading
for the c bed. There, they lay at the
mer y of te toni eruptions and re-
settlements, pressed into ever
ondensing layers of spa e, pressed
into seams of soft, fossiliferous ro k.
You need a c sometimes. A c to sail
boats on. Boats to Afri a, boats to
Ameri a, boats to Never omingba kia.
You read a c, too. Youreadac.
Or You rid a c.
Youridac Youridac Youridac.
Maybe this time he will
trust. Maybe this time
he will omit to the musi,
let you find your path through
the shadow lands. Maybe this time
he won’t turn around.

Originating

start from here, but here I am, I wouldn’t
from here, but here I am, I wouldn’t start
here, but here I am, I wouldn’t start from

but here I am, I wouldn’t start from here,
here I am, I wouldn’t start from here, but
I am, I wouldn’t start from here but here

am, I wouldn’t start from here, but here I

I wouldn’t start from here but here I am,

wouldn’t start from here, but here I am, I
The Atheist as Refugee
(Atheist Series, No. 3)

lie at the bottom of the sky
in the bombed street’s chasm

a patch of petrol a smear of blood
on concrete they left behind

crawl along this space beyond nowhere
the dimness is not light or darkness

there is only thought here but
it does not grow dreams

somebody else’s soft warm body
is unimaginable

nothing grows here so I thought to plant
plastic flowers

this must be hell for
death has already been and gone

a single pomegranate seed here
would be voluptuous
what did I hear in the distance? Qui tollis peccata mundi that takest away the sins of the world…

all nonsense he lifts them up occasionally then they fall back you hear them fall with a crash

words shrivel
plastic flowers shrivel
petrolpatch
bloodsmudge
The Gist

*These words come from the first page of *The White House’s “Fact Sheet: What Climate Change Means for Illinois and the Midwest,” dated 6 May 2014 and beginning with the word today.*

Today, phenomena generated farmers and ranchers vulnerable to late spring freezes.

Today, importantly, Illinois.

Today, the Administration acknowledges climate.

Today, pests consider added stresses.

Today, already, already….

Today, the Obama generated a plan.

Today, climate impacts already underway include increased heat, flooding, drought, late spring freezes, pests, disease, economic shocks, and extreme weather events.

Today, Illinois alter[s] in ways that most people in the region would consider detrimental.
Reversed Catechism

In this dark wilderness, do we walk?
webs of silken linearity

This is what makes the world dark.

In this dark wilderness, do we seek?
an abandoned home

This is what makes the world dark.

In this dark wilderness, are we tender?
shells broken – warmth, inner cocktail

This is what makes the world dark.

In this dark wilderness, are we obscured?
concealed in rock pools, moon making milk of darkness

This is what makes the world dark.
sean burn

**heather leigh**
(from cracked handful ov blue -on free jazz / free improv musicians)

foot forced to floor
accelerants burn to lair
signalling from stars
the howl life-giving no unhinged holler but redeeming

**mette rasmussen**
(from cracked handful ov blue -on free jazz / free improv musicians)

deliquesce around
mercury badass heels
reel in golden nets
ov air snare times under-tow
and towering play it rare

**sabine vogel**
(from cracked handful ov blue -on free jazz / free improv musicians)

wings liquid vibrates
wind-funnels - that whispered
tunnelling ov desire
as lungs long lunge blows urgency
over the singing notes
Five Poems

* 
You fill in the name then prop it with the same black ink that will widen for the underline and keep the word from falling as your shadow still holding on to the pen and your fingertips that stop by twice a day and each evening draw a name on wood the way rings in a tree keep count how many times you circle her graveside to keep it from moving, warmed under a sun made from paper whose silence goes on living as just another word for two.

* 
It’s all they know — these drops fall, then feed — by instinct coil around their prey till a puddle oozes out the ground — rain will never stop swallowing you dead though for a few hours at a time
you become water, make your escape
as mist where there was none before
rising the way your tears even now
are burning out between your fingers
as the stench you need for ashes
and forgetfulness — you become a sea
ankle deep, with tides and a shoreline
where something will happen
someone will turn up pulling a boat.

*
The man in the mirror pictures you
covering his forehead with a cap
the way a grave is held in place
by a lid piecing together his grey hairs
makes you lean closer to the glass
— it’s a ritual, a tight fit
and though you tilt the brim side to side
the dirt stays blanketed with ice
and every morning now — the man facing you
wants you to close his eyes then sing to him
over and over the same lullaby, help him
remember the darkness, its little by little.
Entrance to the Dove Holes

(after Joseph Wright of Derby)

Erosions we follow
down limestone pale as

erasure
windblown contour, bone laid bare

to the open oval the eye knows
the way through

hollows wept dry, gray washes
of looped space

winding toward a keyhole of light
the plumb line

unspools, a soft call echoes
My English

Llywelyn’s death-song ignites, rain re-making
the drabness of my coat into something uncommon.
Gruffudd knew this intensity of a grey autumn;
his words burning centuries, my thoughts fashioned
as leaves as missals as missiles. Now
the old crow elaborates wind into denuded wings,
his call an obsession for the pasty-faced palms
of men who fire borrowed synapses between screen and screen
while coffee mingles with spices on my tongue
as I attempt in an illusory moment
to taste the tang of a decadent chocolate.

Van Eyck’s ‘Adam’

The pity, tempera and oil on panel.
Texture has become unpronounceable,
blending light with despair; such capture
in the definable moment when knowledge
is brutality and a flawed man in his veins
darkens into the physicality of sudden, palsied
bone, unfathomable muscle – the humble
material of his sweat, of his aware, cringing
sex. Eyes recess; an artist’s hands
disturb the outside of mortality – his
translucent sin rendered as if the finger
could encroach this candid density
that foreshortens an unlooking stride.
A son will make death in his discarded blood.
On the Edge of a Roof a Cloud Is Dancing

Threat of rain. It’s slate grey today across the way but I do like an urban landscape, lovely lead-lined ranges. I have used up all my data and I and I want to call a taxi due to peep-toe shoes. Those grim hooves. Them grim hooves. Rain tap-dancing across the roofs.

The Evening Cuts a Fine Figure in the Theatre of Roofs

Rain that moistens the moss on the roofs of the lofts of Castlefield. From a tram through these roofscapes, a seat in the gods, the seat of the gods, you see little lives play out. Someone owns a book called The Breathing Book. It’s me. If I could see, I’d consult it. I’m concerned. But in this weather I just stroke the blurred line of figures.

Under the Weight of Clouds

Rain like a cow relieving itself and I mean that most sincerely. Afterwards, roses lie battered in the manner of a disillusioned new wife. I can no longer look at things, the sky is so heavy. This contains scenes which may be upsetting to some viewers. Tiny apples have been massacred in the June drop and lie in pools of russet light.
The Scrying Mirror

Lightning, Sand and Silver
bound together in a violent marriage;
these are the materials of magic,
these are the materials of Mirrors.
Be wise if you offer your thoughts
to reflection. You stand before the other plane,
sly, with a neat trim of faux gold or flashing bulbs.
You stand before the twin of everything. Sly
and aloof whilst envisioning your fate.
Never flickering, never altering its gaze on now
as you graze your chin with a fingertip –
bothering a blemish. Now, as you embrace
your beauty, now, as you abandon it. Now
as you bargain with the glass.
Three Erasures from César Vallejo’s *Trilce*

Between 2004 and 2007, the Irish poet Michael Smith and I collaborated in a translation of César Vallejo’s poetry, eventually brought together in one volume in 2012 as *The Complete Poems*. During those years Michael lived in Dublin and I lived in Lima and our translation was done through email correspondence: it was an intense exchange of almost daily messages with attached drafts of versions, discussions about word choices and arguments about how to read Vallejo’s famously cryptic poems.

Although I started living in London in 2009, I never met Michael personally. Peruvians need a separate visa to travel to Ireland and I focused on my studies with the hope that, after finishing my PhD, I would find the time to travel more extensively and meet Michael. His death in November 2014 left that hope unfulfilled.

As an attempt to try to approach this void textually, I began to work on erasing words from our translation of *Trilce*. That erasure seemed to me to best represent that ‘falta sin fondo’ (to use Vallejo’s words) caused by Michael’s parting. I have approached the act of erasure not with a set of pre-conceived constraints or restrictions, but with the freedom that Vallejo’s work embodies. At times, it seemed to me that Vallejo’s original words should be transplanted into the erased English translation, in order for the result to foreground more clearly the palimpsest-like qualities of this mode of writing. Below is a sample of this work.

```
I

that din,

let

it    be late,
     be better
, the simple
briny
insular
```
swish.

the liquid even

THE PROUDEST

unafraid,
the deadly line of balance

II

Time
drains
time
Era
en vano.
el claro día
era
Mañana.

El caliente
mañana.

Name
that which
suffers
name
mE.
Shadow calligraphy wavering on the ground.
Slender branches write Chinese characters
over one another.

* 

The play of afternoon light & tree shadow
on green grass should
be remembered for its ever-changing grace.

* 

Old shotgun houses built
by former slaves torn down &
replaced by white McMansions.

Things get lost in
words, generations
lost without a trace.

* 

Things get lost in
words & no escaping it, we
need/want/desire that loss.

*
Death, it’s said, is not a thing. It's just you happening in time.

Screeching of the Norfolk Southern wheels coming to a halt, hauling chemicals west.

*

The poet who crossed the street couldn’t see the poem in front of him.

*

Through the years he remembered the dream of a teenager friend, a suicide, sitting in the branches of a tree saying something unheard.

The Recording Angel does not listen to the arguments regarding why the innocents are gunned down. He just tallies the numbers.

*

Other countries have poets with dangerous dreams. We have zealots & businessmen.

*
The grammars of all our friends
have gathered on the powerlines
and the topmost twigs of trees
then ascended to inscribe
on the past or the future
various loudly twittering
four-dimensional figures,
a murmuration of syntax,
tachyons and tachyoffs,
nobody will see us coming
when we’re gone and do be quick
into an ether where we’ve barely.
Tachyderms lift their long
hairy snouts from swamps to trumpet
the coming apocalypse.
The river suffers tachycardia
when swollen with rain water.
Tachyscopes provide no other
finding than infinity
ends neither sooner nor later.
Tachydramas are enacted
on pavements in our neighbourhood,
a couple shouting at each other
in dialect about stains
of bodily fluids on knickers
which belong to neither of them.
The black cat becomes a grin
a mile high which a gothic church
could never accommodate.
You and I interlocute
then interlock and can’t be
told apart of life’s simple pains
and pleasures oneself whilst
reading the inside pages
of the Daily Telegraph
featuring an especially
scandalous divorce’s details
the assassin to leave no phrase
alive or identifiable
after forensic examination.

*

The black cat knows all there is to know about
the four hundred thousand years before the Big Bang.
It’s a pity she’s so far outside language.
You’ve never played the violin for me.
Just the once I overhear your showing
our granddaughter a scrap of Vivaldi.
Olga! I think, but then take a linguistic turn
for the better away from ranting on the radio
and recall Toni Gramsci in pain all his life
as the black cat comes in out of the rain
and grooms her fur which settles under the forces
of gravity and a tongue with hooks
into its petty bourgeois order and shine.
Rain punctures the river surface with silvery glints,
a long cadenza of whispers and light.
from One-Way Chorus

i.
You have a one way ticket
There is something soothing about this
It could be joyous and amazing
It would be nice to be somewhere with no distractions
You don’t have to think
Just listen to all the crackle of life
You have a very curious nature
You can’t ignore the clutter
Don’t grow accustomed to it
In the end you won’t have to accept it

Could you make a decision like that?
All sorts of things could go wrong
You can’t be what you don’t know
I don’t think you have to say yes
Don’t take the risk without knowing
Would it make you stronger?
Could you become a much more global person?
Could you do without books?
The scary bit only lasts three minutes
Subliminally it sounds like you want me to take the risk

ii.
We are in a long distance relationship
To have just the one other makes it a challenge
Do we agree on anything?
I'd like to continue my life with you
Shared experience brings you closer
If I had to go with someone I'd prefer to go with you
Perhaps we feel we ought to want to go
I wouldn’t go to live on a desert island with just you
You think we’d grow apart
You don’t know do you?

Why on earth did we get together?
We don’t actually agree on anything
We will get more set in our ways
We might end up counting the days
You spend a lot of your life in a relationship
You live separate but linked existences
Our views are very different
It would be a shock to be talking to each other
We could disagree in order to arrive at an ok outcome
Talk more about bigger issues

iii.
The journey’s part of the experience
Who wouldn’t want to go?
You really want to know the person you are travelling with
It is just the two of you forever and ever
Maybe it is all one way
We are sharing time together
We are doing something although it might not feel like it
This is a different scenario
Space makes you feel so insignificant
You can think about things in more holistic ways

Every now and then you do fight back
You know who’s in charge
Who’s going to be the leader?
Dissect how you arrived at that point
You can’t always have your own way can you?
You’re making yourself vulnerable
The need for other people is there
We could procreate. Create people around us.
We can work together
We might both arrive at the same ending
The Lakes Have Their Say

White Swedish nights staring at me,
relentless lakes with just one word
they can never stop repeating:
if that word “defied translation”
it might tire of following me
but no,
it’s at home in any language.

Evolutionary

Low on the scale? No fins, no feet?
But aspens and jack pines far north
survive
as if there’d been no forest fires,
tormentil tiny and local
survives
as if there’d been no winter ice –
and trailing nasturtium tendrils
reach out the way theologians
reach out hoping to taste the air
beyond the wires of their reason.
The Bird-Sermon

I’m all that’s left of our village,
too withered to be raped.  
They call me feeble-minded  
for I claim to know what the birds say  
and feel the pain of Africa in my joints.

I’ve heard the thrushes preaching  
on the avaricious rule of the whites  
who stroked out a piece of Genesis  
and left nature gasping  
as if unable to breathe.

And I’ve heard the swallows prophesy  
about the black people who’d come  
on wings stolen from the Koran  
and steal our children. The horrified trees  
tried to pull up their roots and run.

The rebels hammered us with their message  
and forced our girls up onto the lorries –  
then I heard the very ground screaming  
instead of the murdered victims.

I trudge away in search of my own  
in village beyond village,  
beyond time if need be.  
I see how the forest around me  
has retreated to long ago. And the birds seem  
as if they’ve just flown up from Mother Sea.  
Their space too is incomplete.
Inquisitio

When my gay leanings were revealed
I was summoned before the inquisition –
ancient men who bowed to each other
in the Spanish fashion
before letting their bodies take shape
from the experienced chairs they sank into.
Their faces were of dark parchment
which had been scraped and scraped
for each century’s new text
while preserving traces of the earlier.

Well, did I acknowledge my name, Alan Turing,
and my address in The Right City?
I have never denied my identity.

Before the judges stood a pair of scales.
My war effort was laid in the one pan,
how I cracked the German code
and sketched out a machine
to compete with the human brain.
That I made love with men was laid in the other.
And that scale-pan sank with such force
that the first tipped out its contents.

I was sentenced to have my lips sewn
and my testicles burnt to ash
to prevent my heretical notions
and my diseased seed
from infecting future centuries.

But they failed to erase entirely
that sketch which bore my name.
You who find each other in cyberspace
borrow my voice.
Andorra: See what happens

People sometimes mock little things and Andorra too is little.

(300 cigarillos are no small thing: arranged in indian file they can cover up to 27 yards, and what about two and a half kilos of white powdered milk representing the concept of a vast ski-slope.)

Verifiable data, and if we haven’t mentioned the co-princes it’s because we can’t get our minds around them, we haven’t brushed their cheeks with our lips, but we do understand their flag: look, let’s fix our eyes on its 3 primary colours, you could combine them to make purple, green or orange with the greatest of ease, and this probably arouses dread in us.

What to make of the muddle, of the purchase of video-cameras in a mountainous landscape, with freshwater waterfalls. What to make of the cataract, the transaction, the miniature life-blood flowing through Andorra whether the shops are open or not.
Untitled

I am a withered plant without
the wise juice of your kiss
my fingers broken stems without
the whisper of your s(y/i)n–
copated skin
dep(r/i/a)ved
within these sheets

burnt offering

terrified by terrain untrodden
by you I
wandered through the suburbs
of your name

the irate air
bore embers of scorched pain
weak I sacrificed
on the altar
of your absence
from heaven

in propitiation?