



Duppies

D. S. MARRIOTT



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EDITIONS







DUPPIES





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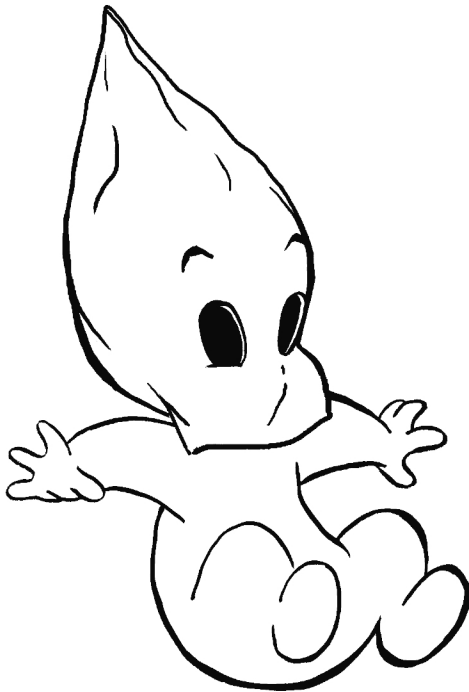
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FOR ELLA







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Preface: 16 Bars







DUPPIES

Grime is late shift, zero hour, it makes a beeline for bare life, but what it lays bare leaves everyone cold. Grime is the thread that links afro-pessimism to afro-futurism, but its role proceeds without ties or duplicity.

Grime is post-work and post-brexite, its riddims respond to the necessity in which I exist—see these wheels, they may be brand spanking new, but under the bonnet there is fever and anguish.

Grime is last orders, a mugging made up by thefts, an evocation stripped down to the bone. It expels pagans with a fierce rigor and method in which only the coldest excel.

Grime is disjunctive, a useless meditation on parataxis; think of the absolute having to earn its living, but finishing up with hardly anything at all.

Grime is payback for n-words and asboes. It has dominion but no license for each dissolve is charged with an asbo. It makes music from a manor that is not-me, but what it gives has neither use-value nor beauty.

Grime is a medium of the *unknown*, it refuses everything but *possibility*: its violence is one without immunity, but its real is dispossession, and is inconsolable without knowing it.





I.

GRIME N. MIDDLE ENGLISH GRIM (DIRT, FILTH),
FROM MIDDLE LOW GERMAN GREME (DIRT), AND
FROM MIDDLE DUTCH GRIME (SOOT, MASK)





Murking (after Stormzy)

Think of a moment exploding
as a pulse
 leads us on
 into unaccustomed light—
everyone astonished
 at the unerring cold
of a thousand cellular voices.

The panic desensitized by suspicion.
The walls bathed in sweat.
Bodies in a heap forgotten in the basement.
Dis is no joke, star.
How many ‘yous knows-me?’ are in this place?
Talk to anyone,
 violence is no more or less than beauty.

The sudden imploding trace,
 the realest codes
 flashing like sirens,
but there is no one here, so whose song is this,
still embracing still linking
 the downs that made us give up
the towns that made shit one of the seasons
 the rain pouring



down all the elsewheres and maybe nevers
of experience.

And here I am
barefoot bleeding
leaning against the po-po
so viciously off-key
from one imploding moment to the next
(the human orphaned
from its spirit),
where each thing granted is farther off (fenced)
(and each random zero
is beside itself with boredom)
still murking
still mired in the nevernever.

Me,
a man, singing in the circuits,
hearing
a voice bored by itself,
a voice reserved for nothing,
the smoked just too pure
for what really matters
when the fix remains too fixed
for the expanses the distances
and passion is the least delirious
and what remains of the junk means
that what could not be made good
is the still point
of heaven.
(That's how it is – the infinite
always dissolving into leaven
like ash
in celestial fire,
the remainder
suddenly flooded with stars.) In me
a petrol-soaked carnage, its art
igniting fires on the streets.



Back in the Ends (after Kano)

*Have you forgotten where you're from?
Wind up your neck, star,
the oaks are covered in concrete,
the reading rooms are full of oaps enthusiastically rapping
to the sounds of a falsely secret obituary;
and ever since you wanted away
no one knows how to cipher or covet
the invisible needs of separation—*

*And for anyone who reads
these transcripts
clearly and dispassionately,
recognise the deceits, the never ending betrayals,
and the rasping voice
of the heaving, unwilling witness.
Indeed, there has been so much blah blah
dispersal is the only beacon left.*

Date each word.
Talk broken glass. Say “nigger”
without finishing the sentence. Each poem
an affront to the covered coffin. Nothing
happening.



Chatter is the first sound,
the first salvo, but grief
speaks volumes, it is the sev
ered word that attends each assassination.

Whoever speaks first,
however
calm or low-key, say a big hello to the Enemy.
We're such perfect friends
 that even when I find my words jammed or scrambled,
 —the codes
out of sequence, and each mocking
 letter
 strangely confident in a world without translation —
I know that we will embrace over a stack of newspapers.

Such freedoms are never enough:
Mr. Brown you must wait,
and then choose your moment,
calmly and openly
take your place
in the great struggle—
as your body is wheeled down the corridor on a gurney.

Yours will be the most refined cameo.
A reading
 —the line from the autopsy stretched out like a lament —
that divides
the commandments from the commanded
 (Prevert's perfect wooden matchboxes) —
and then
the *sudden* railing, *forced* sentences,
the jubilation of hearing footsteps,
the *unhurried*, *ruthless* beginning,
the bounded limbs
that will never walk again,
the marchers rapidly pursuing
hard-won achievement to motionless ruin,



DUPPIES

and our obedient deaths
across these pages
that will never be heard again.

But here, in these bars,
a new path will be traced back to the ends
of forgiveness.
The black crests of the spars
welling up over defenses
the waves breaking
and where they break on the piers
eyelids will open confessing
the tribal solitudes
of sounds
that will never cease
for those who heard it—
the just born names
pushing into
even deeper extremities, contemplating
codes
spitten over the rim of broken teeth,
like the choked air
pushed through black mouths
exhaling the gentle gusts
and the gags through which we maintained
our endless corpsing
rising from too much ra ra
to a dreadful exhalation
itself choked by silenced
empty mouths
full of nothing but echoless beginning,
and a sound that is nameless
that only hood niggas can sing.



In Memory of the Rascal

Next up are the leeches
snakin through
the black caucuses
on the road to bitterness.

No slackness for these verses of mine
the ballpoint duplicates
kept well away from the swollen tip,
a hundred per cent profit
for the end of grime.
Its a big deal in these days of trial.
Fresh blue the handfolded
held up even closer to the light—
the transparence veined and eloquent.
And you, good for nothing,
with just enough
childish presence
that even here the ill-fit is haloed with no-worry
just eyes
overflowing with impatience,
forced through a red bricked prison
(giving us a scare)
outrageous as blades, a shivering beast



no longer afraid
of yesterdays sudden mined explosion.

How many lives
are held up at the station?
Stripped and searched
just long enough to accrue a fine—
until it dawns on you
that the sign held aloft has no region,
the privilege reserved for our non-arrival, star,
forever and ever looking out
over the partitioned earth
where we are detained without time.
On winter days
looking out the bars distractedly
with our hands
forever clasped around our knees,
unsought because unenthusiastic about nature.
The target of the world obscure,
as though our memories
had been overlaid,
but for all that cheering and waving
when the rails we crewed made them obscenely,
deservedly small,
scarcely old enough for the clearing.

As though growing up never happened,
and our desires and wants
were sentences without appeal, white with rage,
rather than lowlifes
that will never rascal again,
because they have reached the scornful end
(the villainous look that will never change)
born into lifetimes of wrong—
gone the runny nose, gone the skinny terraces,
gone the wilds and smart mouths,
gone the kestrels and snows and dark roisterin',
for today the heaths are sheathed by settlements.



Paradise the same instruction of injury
as we look back, prowling the suburbs together,
the studios cold inside.





Der Mandem

So lemme txt u, *sis*,
 yous knows
 I'm way past forty,
 but something inside me says:
it's strange, the tings a man gets used to
 look at me,
 I wanna see you, believe me,
 but right now I'm about to lose it,
 I just wanna think of u
 but all I can ever think of
 is the world and its aura:
the pissy smell of the tenements
 the dog littered church yards,
 the factories
 either lightless or burning;
 and every done thing
 not to be availed of this, this *this* of nothing
 empty of all speech and power,
the inconsistent weaves, bright red silks and bandanas,
 and u,
 the perfect match for each
 rescued semblance.
 the inexpressible raveling the
matchless.



How I want to be full of u,
 full to bursting.
 Right now you're it—
 but I cannot touch you without winning.
 And all the dirty reflections
 and boarded-up doors,
 tell me my heart too is ruined,
 and our fate a residue or surplus
 to which I will never return,
 unless you come with me, this
 instant,
 for the most beautiful dream
 lasts no longer than this,
 a thought without a body.

*He just won't leave me
 the fuck alone*

so sweet at first
 fine as fine can be
 the sex going on for days
 in a swarm
 cold-fingered in the grass
 Now he wakes me up with a slap
 and in the flat
 a punch to the head
 stands in for
 dearest:
 all done up and done in,
 the soul torn off in strips,
 and dragged along by the hair, briefly,
 until the blood gathers in my sweats.

*Let's have it, SLAP
 Let's have it, SLAP,
 wipe yer whitefish now, huh?*
 (he takes his time, so much time that time, too, is fugitive)



DUPPIES

I'd 've taken 'im back in just
so the hidings would stop

now its only me
lying awake at night
too sore to sleep
else degraded & ditched,
right next to the shopping bag

and I hear myself whisper
go on girl
take a look at yourself
go on baby girl
go on



Eskimo (after Wiley)

*And once again this wedge is my
hypothesis, for what is denied isn't
a true beginning, and what you
see below isn't an answer,
or a final step, but truth's living
flesh being hacked to pieces.
But then that's poetry's falsehood.*

*And at the end of these words
I will ask you endless questions
for hours and hours on end
taking turns to write or yell
accusations, and I will tell you
the proof of what happened,
and with this confession
you will be unable to contradict
or resist me, or turn back from the rim
of remembrance, and thus return to the dim
constellations of memory.*

*And you will forget what you did,
and I will take you to
the grey zone where all the bones are buried.*



A hunger should be cold
cut with shards of catastrophe.
A tsunami that simply refuses to die where bush fires
go out, and tidal waves recede,
waiting for the rescuers to arrive. It's the end of virtue;
a slag-heap of the endlessly perishable,
a lake where thought itself, neither slough nor swale,
drags us down into darkness.

Because every "might've" should be hard, relentless,
as indifferent to the surrender that wants no part
as to the desire that asks for it
for they are both the same—
I will show you what happened
the night before your innocence,
when what might have been
was just one of those days when truth is forfeit,
and *what happens is itself already damaged*,
and it's hard to decide whether the most guilty
is the one who runs away,
or the one who spends every day
in thrall to the sanctuary of forgiveness
because he's already erased all traces?

Go on then go on then, try me if ya name's man.
And once again truth is held up as a threat,
and I will look at you
during a pause in the interrogation,
and soon it will be your turn again, and there will be
no restraint in the cells when the little one wanders away
and black as death the conquest.
And I will hear you scream again,
and during the beatings
the words "I wasn't there, I wasn't there"
will return like skiffs already covered over by banks of chromatic rain
in a vast sea of heartlessness—
and your lips will seek another hearing,
and you will listen to the tapes silent, but horrified.



And the wish not to be pagan,
head bowed, wrecked by humiliation,
sent scuttling back to the island
and to the waters that should never
have been stepped in, and the body
which all year long has been the source of the sun's empty interrogation,
will admit to the dead no sacrifice.

And I will ask you once again,
and you will look at me and see
my pupils burning with sunlight and fire,
and your eyes looking at me will see
why sacrifice for the dead is the only thing that matters
even though all that will be saved are dungheaps.
And all of us blinded as we head back to the blue,
the ice-fall and snows,
the avalanche and glaciers that bury you also.

Man knows he will never escape
and so walks on the beach anonymous: was this the intricate, blank sun?
Will the guards look after man, bring me lunch, as I am,
or are they just waiting to leave again? The bars
are overflowing and dangerous, each incident must be met with a chill
forbearance in the noonday sun, then massaged
as flaccid, dingy outlines net each pilgrim.
Only then does everything pass down to extinction
down there, as each journey opens with hope, and thought
enters the great, carnal round of beginning, sun-blinded,
its naming programmed in neon, man's confession an epic
that takes in the whole world, now, but a homecoming,
a reunion, with no one to sing the story or knit its arrival.
And even the oracle rages for its lack of vision
to bet on the thing that never happens but always will.

Slowly it dawns, in the clubs and lobbies.
The sun is fate. The clue lies in how it takes shape in the kiosks
the glare of immortality, and none the wiser for seeing it.
And the thought that life is but a shadow



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falls like guano across the most famous landmark on the island,
but it was only the body of a dog petrified once more
tales of what happens, and the fear of what fails to etched into our travels.

The police take up their places. Near but far and always waiting
to explore every inch of the island, looking for temporary truths amid the
locals,
finally all those inebriated with thoughts of death & glory.
And a new song emerges from all the rapturous things on earth,
the bars, the cafes, the grey stucco houses and storefronts
the sanious delirious bruise of an island, and all the waves
versions of waves flattened under the sea's immense weight.
The tides taking us farther and farther out,
where we flounder, lost in what we will & don't know, that no sea dispels.



The King of Shanks

oh my
oh my
so many blacked-out days

wah gwan, blud

man's crack
flow like
fox dust urine

a wee bit of pseudo-anamorphosis
scattered
by garages yardies

sharp as a blade

push-it, g,
g-men fucking in the toilet
fry-ups, a couple of egg rolls in the morning
taxi! airport
boom!
ding-a-ling-ding
let me tell you



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that mission was forreal

the only sound in my head

ain't it sad though

a purple aki

broad and boundless

who says unafraid:

no respect without pain





Sooty N Sweep (after Skepta)

chim chim-in-ey, chim chim-in-ey
chim chim cher-oo,
I once saw a nigga and I thought it was yoooouu!

And there we both were in the ballroom of the real, heading nowhere, but captivated by the dreams of exotic fish. The surroundings so obscenely fragile there was scarcely any time for me to take one or two sips of my drink. The adjuster sits across from me discussing the price of milk, city bois stand slowly swaying, shaking their hips, waiting for the waves to crash, while two women politely make fuck you gestures to no one in particular. I don't know what to make of this and so I head to the bathroom. The attendant is skeptical, well-read, and very emphatic about the need to wash my hands. What desire seeks is no longer hidden. And wrongdoing is not a language. Now some people don't sound H where it should be, and some people fink summat rhymes with broccoli, but the lawyer's plea for gentleness is so infinitely remote, and so staggeringly indecisive that it makes me break down in tears. Joost chattin' like, he says, but I have no time for gossip and so I take meself off home for tea and a cig and a bit of how's your father, and ta ra the woman says I've just been raped, so I head for the exits instead of just going to wash me 'ands, and a city boi, lacking for nothing, says it must be time for a show, and just for a giggle he's kissing her all polite but its on the lips, and its worse than



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that other time, no much worse, cause it isn't meek and mild, but more like he was practicing animal or—more important—it wasn't just the innocent exchange of new prices thinkin' the future might have turned out different, but more like a Senator opening a disgraced vein. Or a kid dreaming of being let outta school just to spite the hand that slapped him. Well, I could've screamed blue bluddy murder, and how lucky you *are* I thought that that fist up yer arse is Matthews, our dear arthritic companion, and not my black Freddie Krugers. Then there's the deft use of knives and razors, it makes you flop about as if you were a fat furry Ed fuckin Balls.

I hear the key in the lock, the front door closing softly, someone climbing up the thick stair carpet, the bedroom door open, and as we turn to look at one another its always the same nightmare of being invaded during sleep, the cogito utterly at the mercy of a wolfish egotism brutally driving the res cogitans home until it spills its long kept secret: that the four words delighting everythin' are shut the f up and mum's the word for the fates upstairs asleep on the sideboard who know the bubble's about to burst and who cut the threads accordingly.



Information is Nothing (after *Visionist*)

Do you see it coming,
Tameka, the sure life of the species,
the seat too hot to sit on,
the junk rusting in pools (of emergency),
the well of happiness
a permanent stain at the bottom of the bath?
Shoeless
in the desolate deserts of disquietude
the future life is nothing but residue
(all black)
in whose stench
terror consumes itself
like dragon skin charred after battle.

Come on, T,
there are vast plains ahead
littered with junk & staggeringly white Australians.
Cruelly they will hunt down anyone
who is not either filthy or who is not howling
with impersonal rage
at the silences of the harsh, postindustrial sun.



Look at me—I am not a convert.
I've sullied the territories with nothing but words
 (the same places
 always written about differently).
I've given birth to the fifth of the fifth
on roads full of god bone & dust vertigo.
 All night I have faltered
in the forced march of the vaults,
 the caves too dense for movement,
and the words, whispered in snatches,
like empty beer bottles left on the sands.

Today something nestles deep in my blood,
 anonymous, millennial,
freed from all talk of sex, or cruelty.
It breeds as if in a hatchery,
(every day it disfigures me in its rummaging)
stumbling on bone-empty limbs knee-deep in faeces.
And I can't help thinking:
 how calm I am,
 when what turns into bone
 are foetal sweepings over blood sinks
that leak, then drop, oozing out on all sides,
 like sacks left unstitched, inchoate.
They've shaved my head, dressed me in rags,
 opened my veins in the foundries.
It's a manufacture (gone wrong)
 without a person at the other end!

Apparently this is what it means to be mad, disintegrated,
 to pursue the immeasurably old
 secret that assures me
 the base is always the axis
 where each moment
 is continually dissolved,
 and is always about to fall
into the infinitely sick
 jokeshop of the heart,



when one turns to the other and says, shaking visibly,
This is my body, its none of your business,
all flesh is bankrupt. This is what it means
to be a slave in the apocalyptic history
of who one is, when what evolves are
genetic enigmas soon to be forgotten.

Perhaps all that is wanted is a new *me*?
When the world wants no part of us,
only nail, sinew, and orifice,
and the list of numbers that go with it.
Life must begin somewhere
and somewhere end,
when the sundered parts make me gasp as human.

Last night I dreamt I was on the road again,
like meat going to market
(the shreds all black from the packaging).

I thought that I had been cured,
but in the dream I realized I couldn't speak Australian.
I have lived life like a corpse, Tameka,
fixed in an impassioned fear of encroachment.

Today someone else lives deep within.
It's me and some other thing that is not even part of me at all,
that survives by dividing us, a sly Cheshire Cat,
and one that never fizzles out.

As when, standing before a mirror,
what comes into view are not eyes or teeth, but some unheard-of chimera.
(The old sins always the most immaculate!)
I feel skeletal, paper thin, unwarmed
by fat or tissue—

I see how the desert swallows me at the threshold,
standing at your cabin, wrapped in blankets,
reveler of the bestial (indefinably joyous),
far from life and home and country.

After an interval of years, maybe decades,
see who has returned, silenter than the rest,



(relic of the infant that no one missed),
 who carries a rolled-up sack of nothing.
 Indifferent, yet fascinated,
 not one of us, but older,
 who mumbles something before catching himself—
 words of the purest obscenity maybe, or highest sorrow,
 (all of it gibberish, or no longer extant),
 and who walks lightly through the trash,
 through a series of interconnecting chambers,
 where hidden in the depths
 is a stone, probably from Africa, painted over by Greeks or Romans.
 All traces of a path beyond
 have gone, and all distances,
 where it is difficult to separate the maze from its blueprint,
 and where each sign, like a monstrous object in a dream,
 burgeons in the vacated emptiness.

What else is it but inhospitable
 the dead imaginary
 tying logic to the aura of a lacerating wild
 where survival is sold as commuted transportation?

Today each souvenir, each recompense,
 is one of unforeseen accidents, Tameka,
 where veils are false leads,
 tablets in lieu of absence. There is no precedence.
 Every wrinkle is a black swan, every leaked pinch
 registers over the damp patch
 from floods overwatering the fine threads
 of phenomena, and in so doing
 recalls the site of their vanishing.
 This is why the impact of displacement is always set to one side,
 and why the random is for me just another trojan computer.
 The codes crazed and subterranean.
 All over the earth: persons embarking
 without a stitch.



Grimaces

A single beat
so slow in its monotony,

suspended between what happens &
never stops happening,

a moment
(the colour of molasses)

of lightly falling mist
that happens without not being able to happen,

adrift among so much horniness
below decks

where fortune is grossly spread
& in tribute
to the occupants at rest –

where we see them in their cocoons,
humming, naked, relinquished,



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motionless as they sleep,
weaving a world where everything is possible,

no wonder time
is either paused or slowly disappearing!

whatever the morning promises
it will end in three denials—
 one for the possession

two for the possessor
 three for the dispossessed

a mixed tape re-enacting
 the endless intervals of day





II.







The Girls

To be able to
three beers ta! pressed tight
beneath the dear-fed lacquer of morning

To not have to
each behind a boy
the new-mana of packed beasts in ruins

To prefer not to
the fuck-callin-wavin-out
held fast in the close thickets
the skin unmarried
unenvied by the unself-slag
blood seduced by promises' throat
me-you seduce me

To not wanting to
belting along
the constant minima of roads
crossing their hearts
or was it the most intimate-part?
lettin im do whatever he wants
in the convulsed breath of copula



Because each scrawled name
is necessary
for the unleavened silks & hems





Black Jack Poems

From time to time
I have days when *days when*

I feel walled in by nothingness
when I-and-I

sit screaming at each other,
until the I is extinct.

I mean days
when nothing is distinct

and I just sit motionless
(as black bugs crawl

across the edges of the real)
looking up at the ceiling

in front of the blacked-out
window;

where there is nothing
to see but their lengthening arc.



As a man, I wanted to walk the highest peaks,
for there were days when *days when*,

the highest point
was nothing more

than the darkest drop
of insanity,

where I gave my frail assent;
days when the fall

was so deep
plummeting down the verticals,

that every voice I heard
echoed down

the cascading darkness;
the highest descent

a cell where I lost
all dignity.



DUPPIES

I have had days
when the world gives me everything I longed for,

days when
I have looked out

onto scenes of indescribable purity,
and everything wished-for is close at hand, not far away;

days when
I have delivered up my last breath

like a piñata cleft, that won't descend;
like the most perfectly speared insect

that lifts up its head and laughs,
and whose immaculate lament

echoes from the crevices
of the world's nonexistence.



Black Jack's Lament

And there are those who wear the most fitting raiment, the seams dividing the immodest from the too thinly cut, where what is visible, or too rudely exposed is nothing but a man's physical form revealing the gestures and attitudes of the penetrant, the bleached out contours of the skull. Now time clusters on the hills like an evicted tenant, as the costumed glove slips from the hard outer garment, piercing and dividing the countenance as if desire were merely an unstitched remnant spun out of saliva and tongue. Truly, we have woken up as if from a dream, our eyes riveted on the exits, as the weaves circle knowledge without summit or regret.

But in what hunger, O heart, are rewards punishments, do not make of me a rambler for whom the law makes every man appear naked before judges, forced to enter courtrooms wearing hyphens like necklaces, and every name a blindfold casually draped over their shoulders. Man knows that he who seeks the stars has to first dwell in the snows and furrows like a doe running in the blind, enclosed by the harness that awaits her. Alas these bonds are ill fitting and these sentences, so justly weighed, will expire shortly before the years of incarceration. Shall the seams be reined in by indiscipline and correction and the hems be undone by fear and superstition, and the incrimination of each defiant gesture be no more than a stain of guilt or of knowledge, a shiver along the spine for how each word was taken, before the heart of the proud rambler can



enter a plea that the land he strides be no more than the utterance or enclosure of a final passion?

Here it is the sheer reaching of the fold, the imaginary thread or fabric that exposes the sinews of a man who freely accepts his degradation, where the promise of the coast opens onto diverse locations, and the white water begins its ascent over shimmering stone. And here, a thousand times over, he sets forth the weft and wades through the swell to the other side of the boundless, to the chasms where all meaning is endangered. At sunrise, despite the cold, with scarcely a word of complaint, he will set out again, wearing only the simplest of cuts, pronouncing the canvas with a cheerfulness that knows no prohibition, and dogeared and dirty will enter the halls of justice without so much as a penny, his work completed in the filth. It doesn't matter that the world he enters is a dungeon for the body, or that shame gilds it like an apparition, for he conquers with fervour the summits ranged against him.

And here naked as the body that embroiders it, I imagine the outer garment is a shining border: and all the delicate fancies that he wears shed from the stays, the slubs of knowledge frayed or exquisitely interwoven. On one strand, the heart whistles like a bird until it is gone like a dream in the night. On another, a head-scarf of felicity and discretion for the dear one who departs, to the surety beyond, blind. And standing in the midst a man who sheds his affliction for the squall from which each spell was broken, as each sentence that falls away from the skin announces a new sojourn and prohibition, the moorland declared free of the indecent by persecutors of the indecently free.

And I and I,
never wholly ejected, nor accepted,
I must tell how far I have been forced to yield.

I who was neither strong nor heroic
neither rich nor cruel,
the years spent doubled over
under the mishaps of speech,
having endured incompleteness as a child
the oblique gales unerring;



nor did I care for the labor that made me more docile,
that sheltered me from the sense of true shape
as if mercy were an unmade estate
and not the reincarnated wake
of a rambler made to give way,
the delicate and frayed nap
taken from the hearth amid silenced shame,
the refusals masked by too much haste,
where the evictors are too busy
to make of the sentence
a final severing stroke,
the outrage never as real as the pleasure,
and the anger that was father to every renunciation
alibi to the son's fateful appeasement.

What embrace what sunrise
could lead me to cast out the half-defined life,
the snows boundless wherever I was led,
the water purified by its own constraint,
and the hunt
meaning nothing but that the doe
has run itself to death
as the heart and lungs collapse
and the hounds gird themselves
at the living end
ruthlessly exposing the unmade conspiracy.

And see here
the trust that encloses the searched-for secret,
the variations that perturb the evidence,
the bruise that lingers under the assault
of what is hamstrung,
what strides forward over the stones,
the blood hospitable to its own degradation,
where all bets are lost, the odds a little too long,
waiting for what slobbers and growls
to unleash the punishment,
the denouement smeared across the highlands.



Here at last we go through the lots
as though knowledge were some maze or garden plot,
as if reaching the summit
were no nearer the promise of summer,
and to be complete is to seek what outdoes the torture,
the hoped-for end
never vertiginous enough to map the tedious descent
of discovery,
and the small but dearer loss
never enough to bear the anguish,
the initiate casting round shameless employment,
the storms without break
amid the raging swells
sure of the path to destruction.

Well, am I black enough to qualify?
I have maundered in the sun
longer than I ought and am no nearer the highlands.
And the skull that hides itself
is the world at our backs, the bowl emptied by surfeit.

The night's edges grow nearer. The day's premium
falls empty as a wallet,
and from the mountain passes
how deep are the silences in the valleys of woe.
And suddenly, the dense clouds open
having withstood the storms, the reckoning,
the farewells, the deer-led-lightly, the forests covered by snow,
for he who loves no longer holds the world unearned,
and where the bones are lavish
the land is a portent of the way we get to ask for more, or may never;
for those who have nothing
work is not why they live, nor why the sun lengthens their estate,
and this is why we go from house to house, all the way to the north.
It's enough. It's never. I have nothing more.



In the Ra Jail

Once there was a coiner
for whom the future was an unbridled c.
He wears stars on his head,
the debt-ridden crowns a halting:

in fact, he doesn't know whether the unceasing reels
are hordes or merely waters
swirling around "the fallen" —

those who won't wake up
drowned, who won't hear him
calling out the phrases, now that the coast is clear,
and the astrological stores are now open,

where thousands pour out onto the streets,
seeking different nebulae, or napkins, the mightiest
among them needing no sleep,
and able to tell apart fourth quarter discounts

from whatever lies disgorged, as ransom,
making sure that glitter turns to profit,
rich like a skim of milk in the morning.



DUPPIES

Who, then, is this emperor who knows *the* time,
the dream of many,
who tips us off to starlines black, and weaved, therefore?

Who forcefully frees us from *that* room.
Who played us out, via a kind of emblematic endorsement,
from God's trespass, once the surplus was tarred and hung out,
like dried fruit in the clearing: *a chunk of manna in the mouth!*

Once in the republic
there were others who heard time as a kind of music,
where all that is resounds,
a sounding in whose echoing the world begets the remotest tribe,

and people leave their tongues behind, prompted by a hunger
to make of the world's twelve notes
comets that fall like kamikazes in the ear,

when all's that left is language, or light,
or silver heralds
evermoving in borders of hatred as they pass from star to star,

star to extremity; and no single thing to limit us,
like me enslaved
by fretworks, the black algebrae of language—

No, so many can hear it now, the universe of beckoning:
starred and starless, an angel
in transit, hewn into nowhere, laying-on the orbits, over folds of time—



The Bunker

I.

How deep it fills when the water seeps in
and the grey dawn emerges from the forest.

Like thought pouring out from the fall of day,
whose futility means more than the direst warning.

Et in Arcadia ego. Near the closed garden gate
he's caught carrying signs, a philosopher of dreams, sozzled.

Of all life's unprepared he was the least adaptable:
it envelops the wise, leaves behind the other livers,

The decay: it reminds us of what happens in the end,
as each weary traveler, addled with age, finds its rest.

In death, how many syllables do we name as day?
the steep, the impossible, the same old winter.

Lying around on trolleys, traces of sawdust & warm water-baths—
“A boy swims out from the banks, no more the wiser.”



DUPPIES

2.

Everyone walks to the bunker. A drum filled
To the brim with poems, guitars, thoughts
On the exacter measure, Strega beside copulating couples.
Careless, these visitors. Fingerprints
Are the body's message to the world. Leave them behind
With the bar bills & festivals, at the sleek enameled door of the poor house
Chattles are flushed down the toilet, waiting
With the most morose patients...

And never more
Than when we're sleepless maidens, or professors.
Then we are exemplary, swimming out from the seashore
On waters of oblivion, and a great rush of joy there, at the landing.

That is how we get there, our log is a ruse to affect
The would be affected, carried from the impossibly far. What
Are these ships, these customs, in the mind's unsought-for danger?

3.

Here nothing combines with nothing,
In a barely perceptible flicker. The bunkers are dark,
The windows of office blocks hum like clocks.
The air is glazed over with the fineness
Of winter as we sit huddled there.
What seeps is a world that swirls with ideas.

Return to the sea. Float out as if onto an open promise,
Flattened by waves too big to see over, near frigate birds who
Drown accidentally, who sink past the one and only particular:
Scholars, with their canons, and language-games,
Poets in cafés with the young, all-over their tattoos.
The famous colour of a vowel so unseasonable
In the high saffron crevices.

Fragrances wash the dark November streets,
Revelers alarm animals with their teeth. It could
Be a city of philosophers, lost somewhere between
The century and experience, and the idea of the sea.
Time reveals a few leftovers in the lobby: papers
Where words are disgusted by the thought,
That yesterday was so assiduously lifeless.

If each moment is a rehearsal that promises a
Brief cameo let us not be spectators, shows that we
Pander to, notorious voyeurs that we are.
The event is meaningless if it pertains to you. That is a consequence
Of a life set so softly down, blackened to the root.

in memoriam, Stephen Rodefer



Sexts From The Royal Infirmary

The body lies in its boredom and shit: desire
roots through the interstices, between vacant stares and a word
that reminds us
of the whole echoing loveliness—
like attending the wedding of two strangers
locked into a kind of passionless divorce
that is also the acceptance of a life-altering, unforgiving love.

Still, what comes and goes
are thoughts that lay the body bare, sort of,
in the form of mutual non-acceptance
that won't be embarrassed by what no longer defines them.
The terms are no longer those of closure or revelation,
but maybe those of an open ended feeling
that, prior to being open, was neither open nor conclusive,
but a kind of crude margin
that shadows every human thing.
Think of an actor who knows,
deeply flushed, that he's about to be kicked out of a crowded theatre,
and that will be the biggest punchline of his career.



You are not what you seem,
for what you are is enclosed.
A flock of fledglings alight on the balcony, and of course, they too
discover, by chance, the rim of evidence
before their bodies can even formulate it,
though the arc of loss and learning is theirs alone.
Seeming is not how life enters the world, nor how it becomes.

I speak to you, and your eyes
move swiftly along a train of thought—
but something gets in the way,
something pertaining to you voids the hunter
tracking through drifts against the winter cold
before the quick thrill of capture, or is that the stabbing-shuddering thought
wedded to a god, though admittedly he can always escape through
transformation.

Seeing you just lying there was hard, I admit,
for how one lies is always the final poser
whether it be the ecstasy of desire
or the death that turns one over so to speak, as is customary on such occasions.
That would be neither hope, nor presumably, knowledge,
but merely a kind of impenetrable usage
that has grown old with the thought of itself, yet remains resonant in its
ongoing beauty.



Fallen, Rising, a Sack Full of Symbols

All night the rain
persistent, in
swells and puddles, our rival.

Beneath the dark water
a deeper water is rising,
absorbed in the work of creation.

A misshapen, formless thing,
not yet earth or air,
hauls itself forward

lurching under the branches
into thickets
of deception, each step a churning mud—

and very slowly,
like a mountain shaking free the earth,
it emerges warm and moist into the wetlands.

What am I
but a dark storm rising
above the wet black earth



a bad smell
full of fear and desolation,
thick and dense as a sewer airing its abandoning.

What am I
but these fords of discontent
so insistently wetted, the cool air

never the release
(from discord bridling)
but the reminder, of rain, its hardnesses on lakes and mountains.

Gore-washed and heavy
I rain down the great doors. I enter the silence of the hall.
Each motionless form so easily reddened,

grabbed and folded, bent and torn.
They weigh almost nothing in my hands
as they yield to the changes

I pull out of them,
their open mouths
devastated by the sluicing recalibration.

Mother, a storm is in the air,
you don't need it
to become a river, or to flood

these otherwise dry
borders, to become
a new ark for our damned world.

Something still glistens,
and is falling (between us)
somewhere between sky and earth.



Barrow Boy

There they lie in the thaws earth-held in puddle and sludge on the road to a new country. Even with the illuminations, the air is as cold as a sharpened blade. The only warmth is from the reliquary, and the sacrifices boned by the sharp glimmering. “Health Abounds, Beauty Surrounds.” And many a couple were presented there, gaily welcoming a new spring teased out of the dark land, gently strolling the distances. And after the night fires had turned to ashes in the brazier, the closest untied the halter from the lure, just to make sure that the cord of the absolute was newly pulled to its limit.



Two graves. The grave of one piled with earth from t'other in two display cabinets. Why was the work so scarce, we asked, and why was nobody watching, taking instruction from the stones to pour rust dark water over the other's body? The endless chain-links rusted, and the steps too far away in the scudding mist. Or, to be more precise, I couldn't get past the blood-chasmed bogs to claim the exhibits. What kept me back were those wearing black (the law's birthmark), and even though I wanted to understand the strange hail falling as I walked past the turnstiles, I couldn't cross the ridings, for there was always somebody watching. It meant a further trip back to where desire meets the expanse, where, almost resolutely, the greyer wax was surmounted by its own emerging. When I returned home I felt a bit daft like, like a moist pup who maybe needed to be reined in. It left a bad smell, the smell of summat leakin unfamiliar in its randomness.



DUPPIES

The hour is where everything begins.
The sickly sweet smell attaching itself
to the one gone blind with beating.
It compels me to ask what is death?
Because he walked the cold miles with
nary a word of complaint, against all
odds, the sky domed by arrows, and
the black meshes cut and cut until
lace-like and brittle, whoever saw him
would answer yes this is death. The
blades piercing him over and over
are no different from “the nine stages
of pregnancy.” It is this simple: he
experiences the fetuses as grins lost in
gaping wounds when, turning around
and standing in front of us, he says
“he shall be holden with the cords
of his sins,” but there was something
in the way he said it that stuck in the
gullet. For those who heard him it
was the grimmest sound inconsolably
disarrayed, and one well-suited to a
world heaving to a black sea of bodies.
There was so much blood it gathered
in pools all the way to the horizon.
And the dead standing there looking
at us, with birds circling them in the
dark of the moors. The half-dark almost
inviting as he went up to St Luke’s to
get tut job sorted out. The pus oozing
out from the chancre, like the drool of
iniquity it is.



Or say that what is lost is never obliterated, and what remains in the graveyards are old dialects that no one remembers, like misers awaiting luxurious gifts. Let him simply say sex is a cancer. And the moment of clarity is the smack of a hammer behind the ear, as he turns away and adds: its time to forge a new idiom. Like a wee drop of ewe's milk in fresh spring water, what is obscure shall be rinsed translucent, and what remains in the embers shall be gathered in the call, the syllables like wounds repeatedly washed by loss, the sounds heavier because overshadowed by obliteration. The thing that sets his juices flowing is the idea that corruption is man's most difficult trial. *Lissen, no I ain't takin the piss and man's knows I don't give a shit bout any a dat. What I am sayin is in the midst of battle, only one stayed and the rest scarpered like the battyholes they are. Man was like a calm sea, fam, in all that frenzy. He was the only one who wuddna yield nor let his sword arm fall. He wudda cut down his own shadow if he cud, squatting in the trenches with the mountains behind him, mad with rage and grief. The others just shat themselves, despite their blood oaths they just didn't fancy it, their insides sheathed by diseased worms.*



DUPPIES

Or the one meaning is buried in the
grave of its own making. The excess
indicating the presence of nothing so
much as faith thrust deep into bone.
The cords twisted by the most strenuous
hardship.





Duppies

Sometimes at night they come back,
So earnestly pleading,
Each in white parading at the centre of snowstorms.
How I envy their elaborate need to speak.

To go walking where no one goes. To be pinned down. The clocks
Begin to dream at 3am and they're in holiday mood.
The bed is shaking again, bathed in pig latin & pea soup,

Waiting for the screaming-mad
To plunge into a rose-coloured girl's mouth.
Fuck me Jesus! We don't need to do it yet!

Once they saunter in you can see them
For what they are, actresses in flares and mini skirts,
Priests playing at a piano, drink trays carried by Nazis,
All turn there, a legion finally home to a child waving.

They are *the gap* through which *nothing* existed,
When being was *it*. The day may not remember them,
But night certainly does, as the *most* resilient once life
Has ended, viewed from hotel corridors, or snow-hanging woods.



DUPPIES

And hidden among them, yet quite different,
The same malice-voiced marionette,
That one night touches us as we sleep, tormenting
Us as we dream, the mirror we step through into existence.





Internets

Think hunger,
a story about what rises up
on the rim of a cup:
 cold, pitiless, blood.
No cellular communication,
 or not enough to go round.
Like the others, proudly, bused in
behind enemy lines,
 you need to know that
 the rations are dull and tasteless,
the logins dug in
like tics moving ever close to evacuation—
 hungry, tired, glass-bled.
I can hardly bring myself to say it:
there is nothing cooler
than these yahoo pursuits—
 whose fridging is all the more beautiful
because there is no time to let it happen,
 and what is gainful,
 —cables, seals, worms—
syncs inside a strangely dying universe
 whose obit
is always the same disappointed thought:
the sad faces of cattle backed up by a bank of limos.



On second thought, why not?
Let's go through the motions
before they sell on our futures elsewhere.
Here are screens, look:
 whose innocence shines out
—still sleepy
 from hours spent in failure-fucks—
whose light is air (the deception of sunrise).
Here it is written, look:
 how shall we measure
these bursting sacs of transformation,
the devastation wrought within
 by incessant lacking,
the prematurity
 that reaches back
 through life,
sniffing the earth for blood?
It's such a long time ago,
 I'm having a hard time accepting that these versions
last barely longer than slide-shows.
We, however, have no such compulsion,
we'll consume everything until nothing is lost.
The new human
 ushered in by self-loathing
but for all that
 menaced by soon-to-be-revealed simulacra.

Nothing is forreal.
Think of the splendour
 a god's new grin,
an age in which every stranger
 is seemingly hot, and every speech act felicitous.
And the only concealment
 is the gap between fauna and flora
 and its undeserving expression
 at sunup.
Then there are the days spent in hotels,



where the only honest words are Nigerian,
 and every memory is a passageway to loss.
 In the blink of an eye
 high rise windows are not perceptions,
 (which are everywhere, or nowhere, and are chemically flooded REMS).
 And who will scrutinize the city's indecipherable justice,
 edit the place of future science fiction,
 or rewrite Spinoza's ghost-written papyrus
 graffitied over by scammers?
 1963 continues to resist every effort to blow it up,
 and what waits to be seen
 are clouds mushrooming beyond the highest towers.
 Sure, MLK had issues (well, didn't he?),
 and a recovered dream should not mean waiting
 to have a lost prescription filled.
 At least Malcolm's sickness was contagious,
 a case of bad cryonics
 brought back to life
 astonishingly by the Man.

Even though railcar roofs
 prevent us from seeing it—
 he was not the only one who saw
 the gap that wasn't there yesterday, wasn't already past,
 but was infinitely more than a core
 to be ejected miles over the stratosphere.

So its about time you knew,
 we shall be known by wiped memories
 that tell us how we imploded, like a star.
 And why not? After all, its June, and these data shards
 can only embarrass us.
 For it's true, nobody looks good naked.
 All the rest will be a virus
 pure in its suddenness but immutable in what is,
 like a tablet generated *ab initio*, and seemingly
 generated eons ago
 by the first selfie to arrive
 on earth,



DUPPIES

in the tableau of all living things.
And in the lobbies
stupidly looking to the skies
for an answer
rather than the codes stalking lamplit streets,
the suddenly dark skyscrapers.





Poundland

The austere margin, from highrise to taxi
whoever enters here will see hope
rising from envy, their seasons opening amid branches,
where we feast our obese flesh on tiers
of cost-priced plenty, the newly-owed duly begun,
counting the junk as though the whole thing, in the end,
could be accounted for, yet never enough for benefit's benefit.
From c-aisle to counter, hauling shamelessly
whoever comes here knows the price
of exultation, the shores submerged in dross
where everything is changed to wager, and food and rent
are discovered to be counterfeit, floating free on a gigantic ocean—
like boats listing, taking in too much, voyaging out because empty.
Alas, the illusion wanes quickly,
the unearned tides are mere glass, the waters hold no vision:
a seagull flies across the bows of the familiar,
salt-stained by sewage; and when the arrow is loosed
there is neither loss, nor modesty.
Why are we so enslaved to these enchantments?
God knows it's not worth saving yerself for.
Saved enough to ruin yerself didn't yer,
when your own proper store is counted unearned...
Its the last rule of the undeserving.



This is what we take to the temple: the gleam of first things,
a cynicism discounted for want of the unwanted,
the sums uncountable yet countless, a windfall
only some can ill afford, needing no credit.

So down the aisles we went,
beyond the tills, the tiers clogged with indigence,
the clarity of the rules like sentences,
here, where desire leads happiness always follows,
and to be without is to be alone and desperate.

Go on then. Chuck us those empty tins.

Hurry up. Stop stopping behind.

If you lose one the whole world is ours.

But who's to say how much is nothing, when naught is all,
and the expense is worth less, however brief the forfeit,
than the yearning—here, where the price
is, more often than not, unearned—and what remains
is the sum of our famishing, the bye taken from us?

The day's promise burns bright with the vicissitudes of longing.

The most lasting delusion is never the thing that lasts,
but that which comes and says believe, learn to resemble
the endless avatars of our enduring.

For the citizens of tomorrow, we will be like sirens,
doling out songs for the untraveled distances,
the waters, where they enter it, neither a lure nor a symbol.

Come on then. We're all one pound' owing.

Damned because the buoys and tugs are scherzos.

And the drays: duettos.

Even the deliveries are tremulating with impatience!

So its five down with a pony on top fer interest —it's a steal
for whose who know their pomegranates from their oranges,
just sums from the desolate moorings

never ours to arrive at, or own.

Look at em. So envious, grasping their boxes like unmuzzled dogs.

The further they get in the dirtier they become, and when yer
walk down the aisles you can smell the filth:

the desires that fostered them, raised to the level of existence,
beside the sins they covet, irreparably impoverished, and skint.



Dooboy

get on get on

the sheering & bends
when the semicircles and orbits
—because each unfolding is—
grow longer
& greenblack or vermillion
are light, with
out weight;
that's when we turn back home
where (to live is to never
have been captured);
the
scissored air & sharp turns
reveal triumphal images,
or flawless
superfluous things
(when each boast is of return
or disappearance, the age
become
what no longer exists)—
and *the mastery of getting on*
smacks of sinfulness



DUPPIES

and
 conjunctions
 (beyond shame
 — the hatches sealed like traps—
 the enclaves)

high above the waterfronts
 & abattoirs

plunging
 (with
 out end)

 over lines of white starlit paper: the beauties!
 and each heartopened movement
 a thread of embroidery
 or silk line capsizing
 or wing-beat
 lost in infinite phrases
 above onlookers and pilgrims
 (blue-and-white
 — where there is no answer— bested and never understood)
 and what won't reappear again
 flies delicate like loyalty or hate—

and each point of departure
 hovering in between the stations
 a blur on the brim of estates
 falls down and gets lost
 or just disappears
 upwards in fine mist
 furring the edges
 of expectations
 a listening rain in a pitch of black
 the signs and inventories
 unexpectedly expectant or doleful—

the quelled & innocent who
 grew up searching
 (voids
 pearled



by nothingness)
—the encircling eyes of pigeons—
for whom there is no reply
that does not end
here on the horizon
of each cleaving stroke
(or transition,
beyond the shite
politics of class re-enactment)
where each promise was kept
and each breath was held
an unforgiving song of retribution
a desolation neither fixed nor seldom
the colours (ever
lasting)
echoing each tumble and swoop



The Gwai Lo

*He who steps out of the grove,
steps out of the dark echo
of himself laughing quietly as he goes,
a mere shadow on the leaves.*

The Reporter, December 16. THE OPEN IS NOWHERE, say ta ra to the long nights and the stinking robes and toiling, and down ye go to the valleys below, the hills barren with not a tree in sight.

I.

The Policeman

Suddenly the floor is encrusted by it. As it is there are traces of barium and antimony; look well upon this picture, the grim remains, the reeking bundle that melts away like salt in the rain, the now obscene object. The real bad it was. Yes, that's why death is jealous of all it contains. The groans and gurgles swamped by sickness and terror. Game over. The blow had to fall.

II.

The Lover

Where are you now, my heart? When I think of Yang Mu's wife, when I think of her on the bridle path, a great sadness overwhelms me, a sadness paradoxically like joy. It doesn't matter that she went down to the city, or that the salt she grinds is not as ruinous as the men that defile her, or that she sits drinking in the luxurious liqueur of this impure air, like a courtesan in a house of jade. Folks said she'd been touched in the womb, that she'd come out the wrong way, but when I first spied her in the mist I saw a shape whiter than the snow. On those



afternoons she was like a boat navigating breaking waves. As salt-tides heave beyond the shore, and the sea washes over the oarlocks, black swans fold and unfold their wings, waiting for the waves to break. Best not to dwell on those crested dragons, but to dwell on what lingers. As a sword is to the anvil, shored and shaped by the hammering, or made brittle from the tempering, on whose cooling blade the sun fades away in splendor and isolation, I knew a blow had to fall.

III.

The Bandit

Imagine a sacrifice in which each word was true, and the bestowal of oaths is no longer eviscerated or murderous but a crucible in which the cascading blood is neither an economy nor a benediction. *The journey out was cold and bitter, and against the snow the horses stood shivering in the drifts. Where did she come from? Flat, and still, and lying in the snow: braids of silk in a sea of sorrow.* Far above her, destiny wears a veil that obscures it (all naked, poor thing)—the names as delicate as they are darling: I thrust my chipped teacup into the open sack and watch it fill with grey tea, all dustash and murkiness. Up at the caff, I walk where solitude and resentment lead me—*Oh Ecstasy, toward where and what do I bring you forth, for what silly cow are you the most perfect Presence?* The last time I seeded her she looked sad and restless. It looked as if a light had gone out. Perhaps the blow had already fallen?

IV.

The Philosopher

These folding screens hold or pose certain questions, are comprised of many islands and estuaries, including many illuminated truths and fables. In this room of jade the day has become weightless, unmoved and unmoving—it is as if every element has been forced to recognize an exemplary fate, and the evening has become a destiny (a mist hovering) in which we are utterly without pain, a film in whose



destructive power we are once again cast into the flames. "Listen to me. Take yer hand off yer halfpenny and study the form on that bird. There is blood and water all over the bedroom floor. See her come in as helplessly the petals fall and pages disappear into a crack in the wall. Plunge your fingers into the moistness. Listen to the drizzle slop as it hits the bars, splashing the paint and the porcelain: remember not everything is a temptation and where it's dark, sluice everything down until it trickles homewards beyond shame or woe. For what won't be cleansed will be washed away." I tell myself it's like an abyss, or a maze, or a reed stalk floating in the murk washed repeatedly by rain. But nothing could have changed the blow about to fall.

V.

The Clairvoyant

Read the signs, the black viscera. Untie the rope. Do not drop the body, these bones shall learn to walk again, faithfully. Wrap it in balm, or honey, tender it with oil. It will not be destroyed by fire, nor shall the organs and viscera be removed. Lying there, what leaks out shall be repaid with puissance or power, magnificence or praise. As such, a sacrificial name will not be required. Nor any reading beyond the commonplace. We know that not everything is transparent like water. Witness the unerring runners with their banners. The armies standing victorious long after the storm. When I think of that unsheathed blade rusting by the east wall, I will, inevitably, think of what occurred here, and all that went before. That, needless to say, destiny too is a sword, and if that's all one expects from life, so be it, for when the stroke falls you'll be wanting it to fall for ever, the blood spouting red and warm from the swiftly dismembered carcass. Which means its going to be that kind of year (in whatever time it takes to make visible the codes of the temple), for the blow about to fall.

The Reporter, January 8. THE BRIDE WORE SILK as she walked through the fair and the lanterns glimmered on the streams and terraces. It was the first fall of snow.



In The Grey Zone

I did not want to.
I couldn't even if I wanted to.
I'll never be able to withstand this not wanting.
But I have in me the most resolute will in the world.
Life in the grey zone,
The zone of endless toothless putrefaction
From which I look down into existence
(Sweating and oblivious, belaboring the far distances)
And see these familiar streets, and see people passing
And want to warn them that everything is out of place—
Mysteries sprawl on buses like hunted beasts,
Inaccessible to any but the most elaborate inner networks,
The light, impenetrably dark, the air, unaccountably heavy,
The city swarming with birds I can barely pronounce,
The libraries home to cocoons made out of blood and spittle,
And, as I dream, laughing girls walk down the road to mayday mayday

Today I'm abstinent, I walk by stalls and ruined buildings.
Today I'm sober, come into the tower of my gaze
And paint kinship's creature with several shades
Then fan yourself and say oh dear, this love is Dahomey and this
 music colored houses
A row of blue trains, with a skip down the yellowbrick road for departure



Blown by a mustachioed Dorothy
And my nerves snapping like toothpicks on the other side of a groan.

Today I'm a promenader, I walk like a man who is too busy to arrive or
leave or become.

Today I'm a soldier torn between modest indiscretion
And a malicious calamity improbably executed and well done
Like a squadron whose unerringness falls like the firebombing heat of
Dresden or Hiroshima.

Black over everything.

Since I have never known love, perhaps it is easier to love unknowing?
I left my home for new minuses,
But they smelled of tramps and old men congealed by dirt and lice
and needles.

I heard the music of centuries like sirens.
But all I felt was beige magic and empty bandstands,
And instead of brass the noise dissolved into an immaculately
uniformed intermission.

I turned then to violence. The hospitality there was fine and sincere
(like the dying glory of an aging city).

Why should a Samurai sit exams, if all he can do is slice off heads
like cabbages?

Why should he swot in the shadows? Have his danglies yanked in a
rugby scrum!

And pursue these scholastic rituals when he has mastered the ecstasy
of steel!

Warrior or student? At this moment

A hundred thousand kagemushas are wearing stripey pyjamas like me,

And it may be that each will be run through and defeated,

Standing in rows like handsome jewels in the ceremony of the sun.

No, I don't believe in dying, just the forcefulness of being.

Soccer fields are full of heroes who beggar every virtue!

Am I, who can whip a ball through every descant, more witch than
Buddhist?

No, in the ranks of the world my jewels are gifts nailed to a tree...

In the music of alienation all I can hear is an alarm or scream



That is too close to the bustling world of the poor.
How it fills the domes and towers and cathedral spires
—Yes, penetrates beyond words
And perhaps even displaces them—
Merging virtue with a horror that feeds on everything?
The life-mold is for those enjoy carrion,
Not for those whose beauty is to be nothing, even if they
accept everything.
I've had a hard time accepting that givenness was no haven.

I've lain down on park benches next to pigeons as if Rimbaud was
my cushion.

I've secretly filmed actors rehearsing Brando as Poitier.
But I really do sound like a promise ignoble and profane,
Even though the pigeons tell me they really don't think so.
I'll always be the one puking on subway platforms;
I'll always be the one who drops his phone into the gutter;
I'll always be the one who automatically steps aside for the most High
Whose assassination overwhelms him
Like the voice of God telling Moses his one big idea.
What am I like? You'd think you'd stumbled into a new icon
Who presses himself against you on a subway train
Breathing his refined stink into your hair (more curry house
than lavender),
And the rest of him coming, as he must, on your stockinged thigh.
Imagine disgust as a fine powder,
Sprinkled down the years like strange new snow in the morning,
And each moment dusted over with it,
Until life melts it away in the evening,
And we go outside and see that it's covered the entire earth
As if the nothing that happens and keeps on happening was a
winter storm.

But I confess, every since I was a boy,
I was delirious in my exhaustion,
Like a fly too picky to find a sweetheart knowing it'll soon be all over.
Still, there's comfort in not settling for just anyone,
Even though a fling might've been better than the enameled dissolution



By which I am dissolved and swilled down into the sewer of the world,
 Into something like an oasis without shelter, clogged with fat
 and shitcakes.

(O my captain, who leads and therefore gives,
 Who knows nature is not art, nor a history of ruins,
 Make of me a who man who always questions,
 Make of my imagining something vast and angry,
 Lest it lie wrecked in the black crucifixion of a whale—
 Whatever my soul suffers let it be this, that it seize all self-loathing
 And find there a prayer or a musket.
 And recreate there my own negritude black and perfectly white
 And as tall as the tallest building.
 This is nigga science. A memory crossed with black fidelity.
 A mass flurry of spears over a fire-red horizon.
 A new commandement under a low sky,
 New sinew and ivory for the strangely swollen,
 New flesh for thin dogs and the no longer living lion
 Whose name is taken along with its beautiful head.
 And my revenge will be terrible and so will my wrath,
 And all of this a wiped blade, shaking with the sacrifice of enjoyment.)

I've fought, studied, fought, and studied again,
 And have fenced with forbearance until presumed dead.
 In the barracks I paraded in tolerance like a snail its shell,
 And I had faith: to skewer my allotment was to turn the knife in my chest
 (The blood broke forth like a river through a dam);
 Before then each moment was merely a light going out,
 And each day a memory that slowed to nothing, the sheer boredom
 of existing.
 I made myself into a prophet of force,
 And what I couldn't make into shrapnel I tortured.
 I put on the costume of war
 And was immediately taken for an ill-fitting suit, and I destroyed what
 couldn't be turned.
 When I went to the abyss of creation,
 It was like I wanted to drown.
 When I resurfaced and saw myself in the pool,



My face was lined with cracks and ashes.
I was allowed nothing but hides dirtily etched on the landscape.
I crawled through tombs and slept amid the corpses
And watched the birds and beasts slaughter one another
And fed on the leftovers,
For I was a growing dead thing and my skin a dry bark.

Thunder and rain and sacred factories,
I was no more than junk and bone,
An oil drum gently dripping onto garbage,
Instead of a consciousness disinterred from its history,
I was a slave bobbing around in a sea
Shredded by tides of malicious melancholy energy.

I could see the spires but they were so far away from me!
So I drifted on signboards and packages, all black in a sea of blue.
A little white boat eventually neared me, and so I raised my arms.
Eventually they hauled me from the depths where I thought I would die,
And I lay siege to them like a jokeshop terror.
And after the bloodshed stopped I fancy I saw them clothed in deep white.

I feel like embarking on the crowded streets once again
Walking as if gasping for air,
Trying to catch a view of the city, knowing how long it has been there.
An old woman sings in my dreams,
With a tra-la-la that echoes the impossible mist of reality,
That I listen to differently in the heat of the day.
Strange how shadows lurk on spittle threads like stars...

All that I am explodes at a stroke,
And in this martyrdom I savour my freedom as it never was.
My escape into smoke forms its own immutable trail
But for all that, it lasts barely longer than an instant,
A liberation from all shadow has its own reflection
And what mirrors us is this awareness that each moment is a cosmic
version of myself.
Then I see my faith
In regions where there is no invention.



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As a future that permits no ending, and that is the true gift of death.
A loss whose reward is happiness, taking everything and giving nothing
but the loveliest light of day.







III.

NOW DS — HE SAID — WHY ARE YOU SO FUCKING
STUPID TO TALK LAW AND ALL THAT SHIT IN HERE
TO ME AS IF BUTTER WON'T MELT AND WE COULD
ALL CALL IT A NIGHT: DON'T YOU KNOW BETTER
THAN TO MESS WITH MISTER INBETWEEN?

ABLATIVE N. (LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH: FROM OLD
FRENCH ABLATIVE [FEMININE OF ABLATIF], LATIN
ABLATIVUS, FROM ABLAT — “TAKEN AWAY”)





I danced, with my shirt soaked and bones broken I danced because the pain made me smile. I danced faster, with bruises all over my face, blood everywhere, and I danced the song of no one fucking cares. I danced in the middle of the avenues, looking sick as a dog and, oh sweet jesus, it hurt but I couldn't get enough of it. And I danced back over the road knowing it was killing me, passing by the newsstands, and down the subway stairs into the cave. It was filled with riches, treasures piled on top of the other, with thousands of dead black boys stretched out in the ashes. In the cave there were jewels, black jewels: they just lay there waiting for all the black boys to discover them. I practically fell over them, and I knew I'd never be able to stop now. I danced because the boys were all so fucking beautiful, and because I just wasn't fast enough. I danced the song of no one fucking cares for the thousands of dead black boys that lay dead in the ashes. I danced to them:

The Redeemers

Together with the suns before them
beneath the amber,

they push their carts
to the midst of the barrens, to where
the steep roads are met
by dispossession and loss. The hope

is for day, always, the richest binds
they heft to the night
pioneers of the nameless,
bound to the discovered weight
with no tale to sell.

Scribe the sodden bins,
the unwanted.
In the darkened cities
comb through the drifts,
the thinnest shards of plentiful loss.

Scavengers:
make the task take the heart forward,
lest all be lost

They said it was what desire
entails, the blood and the semen
and all the little precious things
that fade and wane. I had all my
belongings with me, and was
about to exit the gates, together
with my boys behind me, but the
fuckers wouldn't let it be. They
left me there for hours hanging
from my arms—the dumb stupid
fucks—waiting for me to make a
statement. They took me out to
the marshes, and the other bloke,
the one with the bad smell, then
started in on me. He had a blade
in his hand and it made a noise as
it went in. He was hardcore. Real
cutting edge. I would've danced for
him if he'd wanted me to. But I was
too shy and frightened, even with
the blood whistling in my ears, and
the smell of my own shit telling
me I was no longer up for doing



to abandon, to a world without
hunger or restraint.
Taste it in your mouths
these tithes that prosper, without
risk or remembrance:
sacrifices. Beggars of the never was.

Push these carts:
you do not know how far they've
come,
you do not know of their return, or
belonging,
come,
take up the life-day dirt
on your way to the depots
looking for the signs (the
anointing),
but seeing nothing but dust.

any business. That's how I arrived
at the blue cave. The stupid saga
started there. That's how it began:
the love affair that left me wasted
but ever eager to have it all, now,
the stink that reveals the kill.



The Negatives

If the negatives are what we the elegiac ones
are searching for, this is
because they out-endure everything. Mark these years
with their desolate passions so pristine
and evanescent; hear these exhalations
that surge from the cavities with a whoosh
exhausted by the long-drawn
out sicknesses whose glue is the juice
of liquefied flesh; examine these eyelids
that feed on emptiness and Nothing's forsaken daughter:
What could be more disenchanting or more refined
than non-existence, for the great thought of Night
setting over the famished lands of the earth, taking
the arm of each lover left elderly and blind
in their abandoned apartments? From damp cellar
to grey hotel room, from supreme power to
the briefest of cuts, from hired mourner to speechless loss,
the fatigue that is the final resting place
of too many aspirations is no more than a name
too loosely sitting in an empty socket.

Condemn, then, these shades as they twist
about the throne endlessly absent, endlessly vacated



like wishes caught in webs; or secrets
 spied through the chink of
 a lock, the signature that no one could possibly miss
 rummaging through the trash, unable
 to perceive the mask, this human testament, as each page
 flutters hither and thither in the
 dying sentry's mouth, an archive
 of false trails: for who among us
 could sift through the heap of desiccated
 sentiment and not wretch at the interpretation?
 From everywhere come sounds of voices,
 voices where the newly-departed, engaged
 in denials, laugh at all the bullies and snobs; joys of generations,
 pierced and ventured, and in their quittance
 more vulnerable than ever, the derision and fascination
 with which we startle them, draining the lifeblood
 for each impossible comeuppance: to become them
 or starve them into personhood or ruin, their
 eyes groping in the void; it could happen to all
 but for the black splinter in the flesh...

Into this garden or abattoir,
 what terrifies is the smell that lingers,
 the obsolescence that insinuates itself,
 the stain that settles, the chill taking up residence
 on the dark skin of children. "Fort!"
 says the cot or tower,
 "the spindle will never leave your ready hand,
 the broken toy is yours forever." (The thread twists
 about the hand, ever tighter.) "Da!" drools the empty nursery,
 "what is left is always some other who has
 come and gone; and the vacuum revealed
 is nothing more than dust on the breeze,
 the tomb of your own bestial squalor: reel in
 the blight if you want to, its yours." (Into the room
 solitude embraces its own scrawny victim.)
 But the real terror, in whose faltering step a void opens,
 is the ghost of what, yesterday, was never there:



“when he is near there’s nothing but empty spaces;
and his eyes know nothing but veils. Faithful to the last;
he always comes too late, when all the world is evacuated.”

We, though, know all these slow,
living traces; the loss is not a precipice,
nor a curtain swaying before densely-filled masks
where disguises peel away and make us see: A reality
seen as if from outside, interconnected
to dreams that dance on the frieze, with knives
for the pink sketchbook of flesh. Not me:
so I dig a bigger hole for the swallowed-up tongue
that hurt neglects, where nothing remains
but elephants beside imperial ponds; dark empires. The horses’
parting, trampling on bits of the disappeared,
the weariness seen through cracks in plaster,
the truth outstript (like a husk or wire),
like so many antiteleological traces before us;
and these black astronaut visored children,
pursuing the last great leap with such
everlastingness, the step of pure beginning, a flight
to rebuke us: yes, you will leave us now,
reproach us for the bloodlust of childhood. Not for time or coins,
not for the fortunate resentment of centuries,
but for the one whom no one missed,

the abolished measures and distances, the stick cast into water,
or the dust settling where no one predicted, these
melees where the strongest founder, whose wounds no lover can staunch,
and who fade in the grip, are perfect,
and perfectly given up. In so far as I carry you homewards
to death’s returning grasp, no doubt we will be buried together: But if
living in the wards, if neither of us asks for reviving, nil or dumb,
let the hammer rebound and punch
meaningfully through the nail
made solely for the x-ray of our long convalescence:
The image will not care from what angle it is viewed from,
having nothing but the surface of things. Love, when I leave,



it will be because I could never leave you, but when I try to imagine a
faithless love,
or the death to come, what I see is the freshly laid
out streetcar of our commuting, what I hear is the negative
as it springs from its lair.





Noticeboards

There's a philosopher on the estate called Rav. He makes menaces with logic, and commands respect for his superior knowledge, but he'd fuck a pig in knickers. Mucky bitches, he says. This is what I love about America: the city I live in is not the city that I would choose to live in. I would rather choose time in solitary. It's all absurd anyway. One never knows, after all, when it will happen: the assault that is not at all pleasant, the battered face that I no longer recognize, the animals injured by the roadside, the punters gorging themselves on another beautiful victim. The news is full of a new fragility. And here no one sees the need to reduce logic to expression: on some level, the phrase 'fuck right off' simply means that your presence bears no resemblance to an invitation, or perhaps that you've said something that is either too liberal or fascist and therefore in question. The philosopher likes to tek us round the long way, for he's on the run; he's missed too many classes, and the old fat slags of Bingley have said that he's way too cunning, that a dialectical fact is not worth the fucking. Careful, luv, not that there's much love these nights, but in the dark we can still feel the shame of him, this man child, the ice soon enough melted, let the rebuke loosen his Old Testament tongue and merry an' cheerio an' pleased to meet ya. Though neither are hard-working or black, or, more accurately, neither have legal paperwork, I feel that, as we walk the fields beyond, this orgasm will last forever, that the *secret* is getting smaller, as one of my fears—that I am no longer tight, that my great mangled hole literally nauseates him—no longer matters as we sit down and read Hegel, in which being American amounts to a feeling that will never



come to an end as we lie back and relax holding each other. The land is derelict, but what is present is also conspicuously missing. One can literally already hear its aftermath like a small explosion in the ear, but it's a liberation that I have difficulty recalling.

That night I sat in bed listening to the rain. Always seemed to bloody rain here. I can hear them screaming below. "I done her for the money, for the fucking moneeey." Each word hung on the consecrated blade of defeat. It's the desperation that bothers me, the impression that something bad is going to happen and that is what we are waiting for, the pointlessness of it all and, above all, the violence that will strike out blindly at the world when the full horror hits, the blow sudden, the beautiful eyes of the young victim about to be extinguished in torture and blood, and the newborn that springs forth is desperate to know whether they are a god or devil. I just want to be able to live. There where the vanquished are loaded in rooms there where we wake and lie waiting in the dark for the long beguile of a light, the heat so hot it melts my shoes, the sight mortified, and outside the window beyond my closed lids everything is either dead or spinning. And the best resolution will be to enjoy life on the run when just about everything

You really are a pretty boy, Rav said, stroking my head, a real cute little ass. He's explaining why, as a philosopher, he has to bugger me to death. We'd gone up to one of the checkpoints. I put a condom on him and then he said he wanted it from behind. I knelt on the passenger seat facing the rear with my neck on the head rest. He was behind me and as he thrust it in I felt like a piece of meat on a hook, but he was unable to come and I told him to take it out as I was getting cramp in my legs and my neck was aching. He started shouting at me in Israeli and then the next thing I knew I was hit in the side of the face. I was very frightened of him and agreed for him to try again. He started slowly, with his hands squeezing my throat, but he still couldn't come. I wanted to get away from him and so I said I was going to be sick. He then opened the car door and I managed to get out. He grabbed my arm and then while holding me shoved a finger up my ass. I turned round and shouted at him and then



that wakes is falling, except that in the illumination gathered there no one will ever know what this meant for me or my generation, and those burning husks won't know us either, nor those flared sapphires, and the jewel-like reflections that testify to how we were blown up and irradiated, for our eyes will be like diamonds scattered in the dust. In any event it's unbearable not to be able to just linger implicitly, especially when there's nowhere to go and there's nothing good on the telly and we have nothing in common but being American even though we can't stand each other and wouldn't give each other the fucking time of day because as the prophet once said – and who's to say he was wrong? - lo an' behold we are the luckiest devils in all the free lands.

managed to get away. I ran until my heart ached and I became incapable of running any further; I tried in vain to catch my breath. Between breathing and the desire to stay still, I was sure that someone was behind me, that I would soon be seized. I am beginning to think that if I walk out of the woods death will come upon me and in my hiding place I won't ever be found.

From the vantage point of logic, yes, I had fostered out myself, and yes, I was no longer a tight-lipped vase. But that's because I was homeless and penniless. From the vantage point of parataxis, I was simply waiting to be surprised, neither face down, nor dead. This is why, at the end of the night, I will dance freely across the border and I will only come back for nostalgic visits. I guess this is why I can't stand to speak American, even though the placards I hold up are written in Arab-Israeli script. And everywhere, forever jubilant, dazzling, there will be murals of me scrawled on noticeboards, ten feet high letters and syllables outlining my blowjob trade, the envy of my disgrace scrawled on mud and cement, and out of these combinations, written down in ashes and blood, in gold lettering, the only thing truly worth considering: the joy of being martyred by the most perverse strength.



The Traps

There's a cave. In the deepest forest. In it my unburied body is a home to vermin. Next to me are jewels, black jewels: like a river glittering in a thousand places. And beneath my dead body a new phrase arises, and takes shape, great, ambulatory, and ready to manifest a new creature, that speaks to you in a voice that is no longer a human voice. Hear the creature say:

da da da
nnn ccccee

eeeeeeeee

I knew that there was nothing, absolutely nothing here for me. I knew there was something different. I used to hang around the station with the forest boys. Then I started going to the dogs, first king of the tracks I ever met was there. I went into the cubes, with all the numbers and letters in my head, and everything was illuminated, but not too brightly. That was all right, not a bad scene. I left home and I just mingled in, and that's how I got crammed full of figures and letters, like. I used to remember everything, but now its all disappeared, down into the black, as if I just slipped out of my skin.

We should've knocked his teeth out years ago. If you cause shit with one of us you had to take on the rest. You wouldn't just get one kicking, you'd have a kicking off the rent boys and another



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kicking off the homos. We had a good time. If you didn't like the atmosphere, fuck off.

I've grown old. If he slaps me now, I just leave the blood all over myself. My hands and nails are always dirty. You can smell the dirtiness on me. I'm the one who earns a living but God knows, what I owe to him is not worth the care.

I do not sleep: I'm coming down with something, but he wouldn't think to come over here. Three days I've been stuck here. At night, claws scratch the door. I reach toward them as if they were not dangerous but alluring. Then the drugs kick in and I am back in the cave that my ruin brought, the electric off, and the front door too swollen to close, the place looking worse every time you saw it. Anyways, I've had enough of it. No fucking respect, like DS said. Everything perjured or forsworn, and in the darkness a secret light that is my deepest shame. I nearly died of it, the bastard, and him all too glad to get out of here, as if I didn't know. Still, I deserve it all. Below the curtains are further remnants; places where I see myself stumbling, drunk, exhausted. These days I spend the time preparing the exits because his arrivals are always untimely. For a week already I've had to defend myself against further incursions, staring at tombstones,

swamps, battalions, settlements.

*But why is he so quiet,
why has my mercury been dropping
when the hallway is full of light—
what am I sick with, and what has
yet to go missing? My landlady
smiles at me from his bed and
closes her amoeba eyes in agony. I
know all this signals defeat, walking
barefoot, watching the dense and
rising waters running over my feet,
and I get frightened. Fear causes
my heart to break, and legs grow
numb, fear causes my head to shake
like a cabbage. Which was when
I saw him and I knew it was over,
knew no one would help, and am
glad it was over and it was dark
and he was surprised that I received
the cut with pleasure, not hate. I
wanted out, out like a light. There's
no telling what would've become of
me otherwise, for we both knew that
my disease had no name.*

The mystery of things – a
black eye and bruises all over my
face and he says your not going
out like that and I says fucking
hell I am –adrift in the lap of “the
recently banished,” and when I
look at them and think about how
their meaning pierces the heart like
a dagger, utterly shameless, and
the punters screaming as the dogs
come out of the traps, with a speed
that no one really understands;
it's a mystery that they just get out
of there, fast enough for all the



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numbers and bets. Yes, this is what I learned early on: things persist when all the lovers and all the good times

have gone. And what do I, who am no more than a dog, know about it? How can I say such things? A weakness begins to fall in the incessant rain, and it begins in the... morning showers. And suddenly a thought comes to you and leaves a nasty red welt: what if this is not because of the lover, but the lover is here because of this. Then it gets even more excruciating and you spill a glass of water. I can't conceive of him ever leaving. I try to get rid of him. But whatever I try turns to obsolescence and I see my lover again. And once glimpsed, my entire history becomes unrecognisable. Like some train station in some forgotten town: ill-fated, no longer in service. If only I could withdraw, become a state not consented to, bound to the unwanted like the no longer looked-for tied to the bedposts of an orphanage. But he could come back flattering me with honeyed words. He's out staring at vegetables, explaining his views on bloodshed to some poor unfortunate stick or stone. The world burns because it has heard it all before.

(I write this to you in the midst of his return for I am uneasy



and uncertain.) The same old story of bridges arcing over infinitely distant objects, below them rivers indifferent to the cascading nearnesses where little boys piss in the stream, ever eager to escape the world's statutes and covenants.





Remains of the Day

(for servant and slave)

I am nothing
but I find even this is too immodest.
I live
without being noticed.
The high point
for me is when height meets restraint
and what renews
is the most delicate obliteration.
What else is it
but an evacuation minus one's estate?
Like waiting for your father's death,
when emotions
can only stain the weepless day,
and what withers
—beyond the grounds and grand houses -
is an almost silent grief silently laundered away.
The price of this life
a merciless vacancy of spirit and a power to praise the strength of others.
For what does it mean to master one's fate?



When defense is the relief of distance,
loyalty the restoration of estates,
and below stairs
the always meaningful proof
of the work that you have chosen to do?
Coal fires, maids, buttons, collars, shoes & stays, all ship shape.
Every morning at sunrise
you await the immaculate rendezvous,
and, at day's end,
you reach a new dawning of what is slavishly true.
Yours the mute reverential part: others the life unwitnessed.
But even if the polisher has no reflection,
does this shield him from Medusa's kiss?
And what of those most betrayed (the last to see justice),
for whom there is no hard-won rings or title, just
wagers soon to be forgotten in the kitchens and factories,
with no follow-on from the long commitment to decency.
And for the one who forgives
why is it enough to communicate absence (the easier deception)
when the point of surrender remains spotless, without contrition?

Impossible to move, to know,
impossible to beckon, turn, stretch out,
impossible to blot out
the inexplicable
stretched out next to you in ruins.
Berths, cabins, locks, and chains—
the closest parentheses
closing off
what appears real from the edges of the waves.
A man needing water
offers you the chance to wear a crown of cowries.
But the price caught you unprepared.
He sounds aggrieved.
Attempting to be of service, and so as not to be distracted,
you reach out for what is near, but far,
for what is near
is not yet alive, or almost alive,



it leaves moving, it seeps,
 it makes night into day,
 it bludgeons itself in its immaculateness.

It sings, it sleeps,
 it falls heavenwards
 like a stone until each stain weighs heavier.
 But you will learn to tidy away
 its pleas, and how to erase
 the shock of its non-arrival.
 You will not drown or starve, far from home,
 and from others you will see and know
 how to endure a thousand nights through bars,
 to endure
 after each sack is tossed to the harrow;
 to have the strength
 to touch the shadow, to resist, to go on,
 to walk as far as the eye can see
 without moving a muscle;
 the animals
 still warm in the beast-sodden fields,
 remnants
 of the steepest downfall and its inevitability.
 For you there will be no restoration,
 just pain and cruelty:
 for there is no harbour in grief;
 the ends of the day have no ending.

*And if for you, fell-one, if I've forgotten
 how fennel touches your forehead without charity
 the lords of the shackling-pen
 baying by the roadsides, at the edge of the moorland, and I, like you,
 beckoned onwards, by the lacerations of exile, that shone and gleamed
 with the promise of arrival,
 the first tranche of our enslavement.
 What guide left us
 bloodied, speaking softly, from your straw bed or your black earth-stone
 burned white with snow? Maybe*



*he who pierces us
wears a Roman's battledress—
and led again into the pens by legions restless
in their presences, over the high moors, under the twisted branches,
we crop a few ears on the banks—
he who serves the soil
shall inherit the earth
till it reek of hides, the pensiveness of animals, on the threshold,
where a swallow's wing sinks in the bowels.*

Again, I turn to you,
for who else will remain to do the honours,
to seek us out, to cure our blue-veined weaknesses,
to carry us beyond the prison yards & fences,
when those who serve lack distinction,
and them who serve
are slaughtered, the plate as empty as the mouth
fed by nothingness?
After every storm a new day rises,
where every impoverished desire is fetched back from the mires,
and every deserted martyr is returned to the earth,
whence my turning to you
— in hope and faith, and the work that can't be named—
and the surrounding that, in the long flanks,
tethers each obliteration
like it was some accident,
a disloyalty that bestows neither strength, nor virtue,
neither apotheosis, nor arrival,
only the withered prow of existence—so
why do I shake in the yards when not even the dead will enter?

Free me from these freedoms,
from the endless sacrifices that mean nothing
unto my servile
lineage, my need for the least deception,
free me from these semblances, from my submissions
to the desecrations of truth and error,
you, ravaging flesh of my mouth,



DUPPIES

unharness these serving powers, be a new day mastering itself,
high off of the treetops forever
pass over husk and ear
cutting deep into the ranks of forgiveness.
Reverse these distances,
this speech newly mastered,
this wish to soar higher than manor houses.
Restore what was laid down
as so many zeros held in oblivion's grasp.
For who now cares to serve, to be slaughtered,
to be ruled over, if there is no one to master?





Cradle and All

I told myself that I am not the child I was. But the capsized boat was drifting, and I saw no shadow in the swell. And everything that I heard were the sounds of far-off birds. And I examined the nearness of these calls, and, hearing no words, I wrought the sounds into a bell-shaped shell so that it might float off into the distance. I understood the waters suddenly rising, pitiless and unending, and I saw in the surge nets tied to rafts like premonitions. I unwound them like fragile branches and let the waters enclose them. And, depending on the descent, I let the child I was plunge after them, the waves furrowed by nightfishers.

And the sounds grew more distant, akin to the vast expanses. And the birds looked upon me and I pierced them with

By the time we left the pub it was about twenty past twelve and I went to get a taxi but I ended up flagging a punter down. I asked him if he wanted business. He said he did and drove his car into the park opposite where I went down on him; he paid me £10. When I got back to the flat dad was there and so I went straight to bed. I slept straight through till 4 pm. I went back out on the beat about 8 or 9 pm. I didn't do very well, I had two or maybe three punters and so I said fuck it and went to meet Ronnie and Jo for drinks. We had a few drinks together and about 11 pm. I was approached by a punter called Paul from the flats. Black and tall he was and handsome as fuck, if you like that kind of thing. He took me in his car down to St Mary's. After we had done the business he took me back to the Station House.



the arrow of my tongue. And all fell silent, and I howled after them so near did they seem. And I gave them my longed-for name.

Now in the middle years of my life I have become weightless once again, afloat on the silent sea.

Then the birds answered: we are dots upon a painted ocean.

And suddenly I ceased hearing them and, soon after, fog and mist began their reign. And I was persecuted by the winds that drove them.

But then I understood that I am a boat without an ocean, and am aimless in the voyage. At first I thought the stars were vanishing. But then I understood that this was the sun and what I had seen before could penetrate neither night nor morning.

And I had always known what sun this was, but what I had seen before had never risen, nor bore witness, to this hellish indifference. Everything was illuminated, but there was no wind in the surrounding void.

And when the birds reappeared their calls turned into a nameless fire, and their voices ceased to burn close to the flame. And the young child I was ceased to go forth on the horizon.

But soon I understood that I am not the child I was, penance was not my cradle's name. I

I must've torn something because I felt something sting down there. I stood outside for about five minutes and two blokes walked past. I asked them if they wanted business. One of them called me an effing batty and told me to fuck off so I did. The rest of the night I went with Jo. We got blocked but I didn't feel right and I started to get sick. I ran to the toilet to vomit but couldn't push open the door in time and I puked up everywhere. Jo was going crazy shouting that I had to get fucking out of here. I felt like a right fucking bitch and that's when I knew that I was bleeding in my pants. I cleaned myself up a bit. The next day I went to school as usual. After that I went home: back to dad and the silly cow who married him, and thoughts of all the beautiful boys who gave themselves generously to everyone before being gutted, scalped, and then running away.



became innocent, thinking that the child had no blame. But while I was thinking this, I realized that had the child been blameless then I would already not be swaddled in flame. And I watched looking for the boat, but not finding it.

And soon after the sea stood still.

Then I realized that since before there was nothing but joy in the first welcomings—there had to be silence at the heart of the universe. And now it's gone.

There's only me.

And then I realized I am the child that I was. But the child's not me.

There was no boat, and nowhere to land, and among the reeds are birds that dare not communicate the sea's relentless name.



Colorado Deserts

I. ON CODES

The following kinds of code are indecipherable: for example, he just sits there in silence, the slap, bloated by blood, still visible on his cheek: you could have it large have it boned have a line if your not too knackered or have it on the piss with your mates just do me a favor stop thinking about it and open your fucking mouth: and you didn't even want to go in there, too fucking stupid to reach for the exit in anything but the most shameful way, pressed down into the seat, waiting to be wanked off or blown away. Oh, remember what he said to you on the first day, pay attention to everything, even the most insignificant parts, so that the more marvelous the thought the least indelible (or mechanical),

II. THE ILLEGIBLE

For what are we sold let us speak of a beauty that never sees the light of day, a nothing that can never take the form of day, an extremity that always lies elsewhere, and a motion in which we can turn neither up or down, nor from side to side, our revolutions in thrall to sacrifice and value? Walk into a store where only one thing is ever sold—on another day you shall be forced to forget this fact—and buy a manifold of pots, urns, silks, and jams: the refined glimpse of the world's disenchantment mirrored by the refused detachment of each purchase. For some reason, everything weighs the same, although black things are unfailingly heavier. After which make a bonfire of relics and twigs



the taste of him mixed in with your cod & chips. He'd found you on a street corner offering yourself, where you stood, to everyone who passed: one million five hundred thousand black jewels got it sorted, lying covered up in bed, and his body so big you couldn't even embrace it, the sheets smelling of burnt limbs.

In another life we are out walking on sunlit paths under exquisite cliffs of opal. O loved one, its good that your eyes are almond. How can I explain that I have chosen this path for its own sake, when you tell me that life's dearest was never bought so cheaply? Is not a loved thing a good thing to be? At the threshold of such a bestowal who among us would not run out into the street rejoicing? As the flames reach the foot of the bed, the loneliest and remotest brilliance swarms around me; I am utterly undone, unable to breathe; I am a pound of illuminated flesh that has been charred into a little black marble. It is time to rejoice. The air burns like a jewel, like an incandescent star; it fills me with wild joy even as it consumes me.

—the hewing bark dense with material. Say you have no money but are ready to take possession of every selfish thought and desire ever loaned you, to assess the value of the dead now law to the living. Be happy, inquisitive, say how marvelous and fresh everything is. Be eternally grateful to the servers who show you their scorn for being indecisive, but note how this unpreparedness already starts you on a voyage of self-discovery in your war against all objects that cluster there on the shores of the living; the deep impress of the waters, the lightness of the reefs, the vessels reminiscent of the adage that to live you must first float out on journeys not yet dreamed. Take pleasure in each and every object that chastises you for confusing number with meaning, desire with bread: know that the exception is the rule, because the one thing one wants is never enough for the wanting, and the known is something other than dispossession's advocate. Do not be anxious. What deceives is the wanting to be undeceived, besides all your questions have already been answered. At night don't worry about losing the loss of your limbs. An old woman will manage your fear by the maze of her lips. Her prophecies matter as does the affordable place she



III. THE CORRECT WAY TO EAT HORS D'OEUVRES

Let us suppose that the most valuable parcel is the one always left behind, seemingly exempt from curiosity, and that the kernel is not encased by the fruit, buried inside it like some grey mist or impossible dream or seed of tenderness, but that it burns unutterably in the desert of things, wherein love's sapphire eye gleams brightly on your dew-moistened skin, and will remain there unendingly as if held by a spell, until you split the brown paper in half disgusted by its mouldering impurity. Sometimes the fruit rots on the trees like carrion, and the spiked bracelet is reason rusting inside the sheaths of truth.

IV. THE CORRECT WAY TO REFUSE HORS D'OEUVRES

After each disorienting pleasure you should know that such beauty has no worth. See how their resolutions swell, blinded by the most selfless renunciation, their eyes so fixed on the empty cup that lets sight impale itself on the unforeseeable. But even if one quits, pointing to one's choice not to carry the comfortless stones, to repair the torn disk, to douse the burning piece of paper having

lives in, albeit it is a destination never to be arrived at. By what means could she be so long in her engagements, holding this bark on which she stumbles ever onwards? She will eventually stop screaming when she is force fed some bread. Do not touch that plate of boiled meat, but eat it hungrily, like a cunt (this hors d'oeuvres should be eaten according to which reeking vessel it empties). And remember there is just enough left in the glass for another impolite or tactless question. It will be interesting to be standing there completely indifferent to the possessors of such threadbare booty knowing that you have no secret to exchange, and no mystery for the ruse of continuing your rumination.

Righteous is he who stands between what can and must be done, and even when absolutely neutral bears witness to their relentless warring without pleasure or suffering.

Are you leaving? Well then, walk towards the door with infinite slowness and, once having found it, be mindful that this here's the place for you and that you might be able (or not be able) to stay. I'll meet you at the entrance marked 'no one exists'. I'll sign you out. The letters stamped without hesitation or forgiveness. The purity encased as a parting gift. As you leave



become acquainted with despair
and loneliness and the groundless
grounds that rise like swans
leaving behind only absence,
the perfect sphere can only ever
present itself as a distant island.
And after the final ascent what is
it that trembles in the air between
us? Therefore, chew over these
negations collected like leftovers
from finite countenances and
their ending near white fences
and tennis clubs and raindrops
speared by the long grass. It is
night and the white lines pass
beyond the eviscerated towns with
their masts and vignettes, past the
lots where we lose our taste for the
adjournment and the consoling
fog of “lost potential,” the “could-
have-beens” reprimanding us for
the imperfect grief of “what was.”

*please don't forget your umbrella—the
little boy's inertia is just shyness, and
naturally his frailty is neither negation
nor absence. Just remember to take
out the cords and purify his daylight
flesh with a thousand cuts and
amens. The day opens as it closes,
on crushed hues that tender to the
force of every violated thing.*



Be good, save

the rain that falls
and drowns—like a noun

the disappeared—unrecognised,
but walking
beside you—

street by street, as you veer away;
the noun
unburial, like bone, in a blue
of fear,

relentless
on the ice-floes of each syllable;

and breaches the low-keel
as it spills, over the rims:
obliterating, obliterated,
the clarity of a word
within reach of the unclaimed,

the designated one,
always beside you,

I am falling, falling down to the
bottom, and as I fall the rushing air
is dancing in my ears, a breathless,
tumbling dance that contains
everything that I ever was, and all
at once everything that I ever was
is just bursting to fill out this one
moment in which, shaking deep
within, I enter the blue cave.



who gives and saves
each flood its due,

when no other comes near.





DUPPIES

In this respect then, washed ashore like all the others,
he plunged into the shallow water:

and we all
began to dance again: manservants, hustlers, and slaves.





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