

*Lessways
Least Scarce
Among*

Also by Peter Larkin

Enclosures

Prose Woods

Pastoral Advert

Terrain Seed Scarcity

Slights Agreeing Trees

Sprout Near Severing Close

Rings Resting The Circuit

What the Surfaces Enclave of Wang Wei

Leaves of Field

Wordsworth and Coleridge: Promising Losses

PETER LARKIN

Lessways
Least Scarce
Among

Poems 2002–2009

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Preface

The “Scarce” word can easily seem so much small change in my writings, however equivocal it has proved or however plurivocal I might like it to be. I hope it’s clear it’s not a minimalist tag because to treat with what is scarce as unsubstitutable rather than just a designed infrequency requires a certain textual extravagance (which will in part be theatrical or hymnic) to winnow out what is both less than and the one thing without which. The lessened risks a failure of relation but offers its own sub-species on behalf of. The scarce is not a naturalism or elegiac realism but an incidence of damage which riskily ups the stakes on offer, that is, takes up the stakes (deliberately tree-like) to redeploy a less than holistic circuit (broken givens) in a field of more than the whole. Such givens beckon to a rarity-insight (rather than value) by not expressing gift in their own terms or as any additive form of themselves: rather, a certain subtraction (historically and ecologically real) impels the less-than to become over-determined, so that it is no longer living within its means. A scarcity of relation doesn’t effectively bask in the shuttle of detached plenitudes opaquely speculative of the world: where a meaning does occur it does so as gift and event, and so as unconditional but slighted.

This is to push naturalism to the crisis of being open to what is unaccountably less than itself (the pastoral difference), not reductively but as a charged (therefore burdened) site of the given-to (the charge not plenitudinous but wholly exceptional). If a giftless world should at last bring us the ordinary (Nancy), a gifted one plies amid the scarcity and fragility of the non-ordinary. Why should it be scarce? Because the latter can’t be included among the permutations of givens (which as permutations tend to neutralise) in any other way, and this is a way to indicate receptiveness, openness to what isn’t a self-similar plethora. All it can do is work at the chafed difference between givens and what gives without collapsing the necessary paucity of mediation, so as to be a work of inflection not determination, givens tapered along the tail of gift.

So, static contortions and abraded obstructions can well contribute to the grain of a singularity which at the same time summons the intimate unblendings of horizon (the desire of limit more othering than difference because on behalf of). This making scarce over a wide perspective is in ontological deference to the micro-stiffnesses of the finite, and it is these

which in falling behind or below do inflect it, so that finitude on the slight side of itself (no self-sufficient diminution) mainly breaks off at its vertical taper. The prolific in ordinary might prefer to defer to the interfused commonality of the scarcely most alive. At this point traps and temptations do really diminish the scope of the scarce, which is why my language itself needs to refrain from austerity *per se*.

There can be ways in which what is scarce is not withheld at all, which is why some of the texts here show a renewed interest in the quantum verticality of trees or the willingness of horizons to stretch out surfaces just where those surfaces are not so much at risk of being intercepted as of being invited to something other than a sumptuous refolding (however formally differential): this is the poverty of not affording the relation but offering it, reaching to where there is no predetermined interruption but only singular eruption, dedication. The fraught rarities of scarcity have no way of buying off finitude but pay into it as what no longer simply elates the sum of that finitude's own differences. The world's abundant nothings are creatively slightened to "as nothing" in the face of promise, an on behalf of, or more exactly, incommensurate givens receptively less than their own (unpossessing) origin. What is scarce can be lived out as a compression of the ontological (lessways have that adverbial tinge) but is the very opposite of a contraction: no longer least where intensely among and not just sacrificial slights but more festive for tenuous.

Peter Larkin
Kenilworth
January 2010

Slights
Agreeing
Trees 2002

*The limits have wintered me
as if white trees were there to be written on*

FANNY HOWE

*Distance
Dappled with diminish'd trees*

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

*A desert
walled by forest*

JOHN KINSELLA

Uncertain that the world is wooded impartially

LYN HEJINIAN

1

Turf Hill

Some livery to simplify a real shank through the wards, power-lines at a slope of conduction with rapid incomplete owing of ground. To blow with spreading on the grid some green flutter of smaller rigid body.

Not covert and long not to be covered in links of shadow, a joined way lifts itself into fringe. The pylon avenue isn't corridor pulse interceding with plantation, but ventilation as if by air-arc of the horizons within clump. To displenish beside refreshed ground, what is healed and hugs shaft but never swings anew upon line-break. Grit at the big branch, anti-tentacular of hung community, but generously ferned.

How the boles thin to the widener of tracking turf, pylon by terrace of heeded instrument! If the tree-standing for wire is the pull of cantileaf, what can indent its continuous ornament looping on power-line? The trees are resident by unavailing advantage, full technical sorrow lattices their derivative store of staying beside-hand a cloaked way below. Each wafer strut as actuator, soft spring between wing and store. Field follower across overhead pitch, into the straits which fertilise a neb of impasse, but where wire cups to its beak a lift of towers inciting local spine, so spike your green along. Forked untransformable at heel of branch, trees topped for their sail-at-root, they bare these iron masts whenever nothing can have happened to the great limb.

Penned to place browsing rubric at passover, a hangar of unmixed trees is to the very source so little absorbent of archaic refuels off line. The pylon position anterior to ground raiment they are the plantings beside. These graces rest from detail, a culvert where timber narrows from indigenous refuge, crossed by splint of site-renewal, but always beneath a mono-difference which is for cable the single swoop other, inelastic divergence

along towers. The trees perform the alterity at a remove which decreases into their own, derivatives at an unmoving dispersal. A current which tilts but levels out effect shorn upright at each organic corner. Overhang (below) steers to an angle shady with branched case of the relay, delicate tips hardly shamble a temple of greenest cages on stake-by. Or seed initiative to the more consultant rigidity, parapet of a tree's outwired profile.

Confession to gantry is pure-pining for a fabric of previous limb, cut to sidings of nonhuman repetition (stable remission), given a tower-split to land on. Meanwhile, the trees compare obedience to this graph of the open hearth, its free hollow is heath across them, with what remains of their own nape of verticals prised towards porous tier. Sigh for morphous readiness, precariously inactive by what discerns the infill. How easy the open is, cut commonly to infinite row! It coats the plantation's corridor with escape-stint primaries, attachable outward healing alarm in green.

Rising margin cocoons a planted oblivion, the landlight of surge fosters a dawning onto apron stake, conductors made nonspecular or no backing for tintless trees. Light can do nothing with this holster of woodland, keep it drawn to nurture only where it was outmarched. If denuded to a sentry of passage, still the pent tenantry of spending tracery like iron branch or root.

How trees stand ajar-remote at their reparation schedules. Sitedly gapped, no use-of-passage goes to unless it be their misassembly apart. Incompressible flow knows the studded circuitry of tree load. Detection of infill is raking the conduit, flash-overs of insulation are stroked transversely by the branches' own shield cable.

The tree like a cradle of wire has no pylon-pause for the elevation. These superstrings awake the wood cord, bake over it. Braced for the inexhaustions of line, insular cup these greener slots sip, shade slipped through needle. New wood transfixed by a peremptory earth's infused tower. Swathed forest interval roped aloof by the kilter of interruption.

If this, too, composes arenas of completion, the savings were too unwandering for there to be any linear invective against inclusion.

Wire sag falters no crossings, increases fibrous entreaty by way of its attrition not entering but swelling out shelter. Root means square error for non-linearity, cross-stalk, or drift with no output other than put bidding the contraction below-mast. The hazard is trees pose no traditional housings, unhidden by brilliant conduction of own limiters. This secondary panning to pylon is unintervening, a leaf away from mutilated ground.

Seedling pine caught gridded onto relational scatter, lean lid for bare earth, fraught with the fundamental parcels, lesser infill, the siphons of burden. By-posted, assigned contrastive vitiation by a vital lifting of frames, and answering with the little purchase it is, continuable small rigidities of survival on receipt. That, with time on charge, the outspread is starker to join aside but patches for release the space of it during anchored tree-bed. Scouring rides of turf, the flow of pylon cleaning the woven. With stunting-yards below, perfectly alive slabs of nestless orisons, vested to a humility of the minimal stiffness of beginnings. Horizon's bole is pylons' drop platform, saddled increase in distance-to-cable at such half-anchored world-brakes below. Pines cutting low over the hill with no swing to their throw, fawning on bog-umber for outlying water, retying pylon-ember to attempt the strings of the sun.

- : import of knot, insipid at the young high towers, forbidding no placidity against bleakness
- : pylons kneel on the air, trees fold a co-striation only, dress to it their offerable hulk of surpassed result
- : interior wiring transients, uplift for foundation in dense cohesionless leaf-coil
- : any remission of pylon is real scene, the contrition of sealed by diverted green

2

Five Plantation Clumps Near Twopence Spring

Somehow I can't help flocking to plantations of fallow inquest. As if obeyed that resentful pool made sheeny by perforated rest. A net, not fully woven onto narrow earth, of nearer, sparser horizons for anywhere shelterable yet. Five courses at an arc of tentative verve, a counter-furniture between preventable barren grain.

Unclipped, wrapped shadows, the irregular huddle coating futurity is various ages of prop where you don't fall on arrival but aren't shielded by surround across such seriously enchanted plans. Though something is well on with awning over local stretch, feathers tailing in its guide-stick, an outyard of leafy arrows. Less than radiant cavity on the spot is its trees over it.

Coupled or cammed fluting, a porous belt stretches fenestration to enmesh ovals at canopy, beaches in wafer impenetrability. What blots into tree, stacks blind a particular clump, I now can't tell to be surprised not to be leaning into anything here—this woodland frequency broaches restive clips, commonly neglected cutout. Along these instilments beaten green we share an unresulting entry widely offered as if to non-partakers, though there are none. Where a through-hallway is openly scant it's no longer empty, but sent into sequels of reserve, nurture blankly observed in its liminal rigidity. From the dappled niche this side of it given, handling the focalities it is handing on, any unaccompanied horizon is brusquely kept at bay. Embayment from here will forage towards a more markable ring of what there is of it, too little to put down out there. Pre-fixed fingers at least know the fractions of reach, keep the landscape's waxy criblines stubby but cristate in the roads, rare rods once they seed. Trees

abbreviate where they collar their rinds of origin, a debt so paled and unfrequented as not to be called for under these rates of cover, striking in aperture and outright arising.

Among simmering clumps something committal, the holding delay sorting into times of quickened hold, combing the honourable brittleness of what can beset occupancy here. Abrupt resumption upon stiff wave, no bridges between the resources. It cramps spools of light shining the axle out of fringe, close-grown now as spindles mown-to-light, these stores have seen midgreen through. A mould frittered in woodland jammed adjacent to empty pincers of the ploughed wold, a nothing-flaring which mists and stiffens the wanting to leap overhang. Unshadowable null difficult to caution, bright salves of dedicated breach. A nought of nature astounds nurture by these simple visitings, hounded to right range on behalf of each frontal of trees. What is to be sheltered is what draws, tacks before additions less continuable, with unstable arrest enters for bunch any remedial arising cranny.

A static pact with projection, no tame slumping at the dug-ins of circulation. Stations along the sweep into arc, often as not with the holding spell for sheltering dispute, to stop along the way, blocked into being on the way. To say of a clump that it gives with winding down any primary escape out of attached provision—attachment brokers the open for its unenshrining commons, but stowed for numinous standing at the open, entering it on behalf of any scrambled moment of the unbroken. Scraping the cyst onto its sticks of origin, the waving harmlessly ribbed enough for uplift. It stirs cohesive swirl, locally unfettered but toiled on a spiral of thinly rigorous attraction. The random fillable, litterable, whatever fidgets between the recently unexpelled.

The clumps pit our approach around middle-detours of a menial space, not so untidy a hurt over their own spits of arrival. And ration us to this abiding particle via their own captions: a life's force copes a life's resource over the fountainous-unsheltered. In distended community offers its no longer intricate knot, but the loose lances, weak stayings of its vertical shadow. If uprising was through the hollow of the knot, it is since an horizon's trace became not solely taut in the eye but furnished

in slackness within the knotting itself. Held open by darting that spar of shelter between itself and its hold.

Unblown offered recorded, slighthened at will, between the skinny re-entry bays of the wood. The intrusion of a breach into its own healing-space, a sill of reserve. So blunted upon own foreclosure, it stains the gift of this place, patrolling the rounds of true burden beyond offer. If leaves drop, they pelt shelter, over frames or from branched frames—this is for reelings-in of a sea of wheat or rape. Not out-given, but given upon scarcity, serving what little of it the plenitude of a within always unenterably devolved at the swelling pores of a without.

A green credit which ventilates one spate of deprivation from another, with another, a secondary fall-back upon unheaped shelter as time grows the usual stickings over itself—that the promise couldn't so punctuate and circulate if it weren't jogged by primal forest, the instinct (not the vestige) of jutting into, an apex of having stood everywhere. Are these trees the non-liver, or a greater bowl, of this boundless waste?

From initial pressings onto site, these clumps are unlike arena, but, pared to angles of association, become a circulation of non-auxiliars, adaptations to a broken proximity, which breaks through the neutrality of distances not given to co-incision at such stabbings. A circulation which is then the fossil exactitude of riven shelter, here degreened to a living infrequency, but taller keeping with glades not yet renewable. Already rigidly dealt to place.

Serial relations clump contra acceleration, compassion is the trees' mutant stiffnesses not immediately for an unloaded flow of time, but a derivation which endures its tug round local compression, irregular sanctions, perfect stanchings in little relief.

Not a circulation of one thing (which would be an uncompletable) but a cutting (copse) which pricks into partiality of ground at the slightest

vertical patience. Shelterable outposts where arcs by analogy with surround overstep the one, but bending to traps of enactment enfold what as trees doesn't stoop. A trip to plurality is the stilt-share of attachment's inbush. These gift-storms blow back to the *lien* of the alien, in lieu of a ground-lift which is scarce piercing of ground-target, entrussment of untyings of horizon winding the same residing. A vertical leanness-to-stop startles the gap onto ascent as byway. Nesting rents, woven into an embrasure of the gap, whose embouchure is pursed along an horizon of scarcity. Calm, unassistant, but not lack-making, screening inwards towards the lining these smaller obstinations are open upon. The gap is untouched, unfilled but fed, occupied to a slenderer drift between fortified irregulars of trust.

- : to cliff green shell in pocket raisings-forth
- : tying in what chides of the nest, no splinter of assent flies away from bush
- : a world overdue is despised for clump, a guest in debt to scarce foliage, but even so