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in memoriam

Martin Booth 1944-2004

Cid Corman 1924-2004

Ian Robinson 1934-2004



shearsman 59

poetry by

richard burns

avik chanda

mark dickinson

helen foster

evelyn holloway

w b keckler

karyna mcglynn

eugenio montejo

john muckle

gregory o'brien

gavin selerie

janet sutherland

translations by

peter boyle

RICHARD BURNS

The dead do not hear us

i.m. Martin Booth (1944-2004)

But the dead do not hear us, and we are not Orpheus. Why
Was that singular man, crossing the street at that moment,
Run down? And that child, though curable, taken? Why
These slaughtered innocents, and why those survivors?
The good friend, the man on the train, the woman
Behind the counter, that old fellow who used to sit
Whole evenings on his bar stool, smoke two packets,
Down pint after pint, and never seem worse for wear,
The virgin of Lorraine or Toledo, the Jew from Vienna or Wrocław,
The schoolboy from Kragujevac, the noble Ethiopian,
The farmer outside Srebrenica, the librarian from Priština
Or the shadowed chauffeur whose name nobody remembers
Who drove the English princess and her Egyptian lover
To be crushed against a pillar in a concrete Parisian tunnel?

So many we remember but will forget in just a while,
So many no-one remembers, although they have just gone,
So many recently praised, now bypassed and ignored,
So many hardly noticed, even then, and now erased
And far too many in all, ever to remember,
Though some were engraved in stone, entered in the logbook,
Filed in temple archives or the public records office.

And why, in that manner, and at no other time? If no single
Life weighs more or less than another, how is the balance
Tipped, and how is the measuring made? In penuries?
Ages? Numbers? Hairs? Sufferings? Solitudes?
And what screens, ikons, imagos, flew or flashed
In or upon them? What, if they thought, did they think
In the precise act of dying? Or were they too engrossed
In backgrounds, surfaces, contingencies, irrelevant incidentals,
Pain's precise details, the registration of particulars –
Like most of us most of the time – an unwashed cup,
Shoelace left undone, unwatered plant on a windowsill,

Sunlight-painted patch in an angle of a wall –
To pause, reflect a little, consider ends or origins,
As they were taken over, out of sight and mind,
To the shore further far than any of our dreams?

If dying is an art, and the only one each of us
Is expert in by default, who wins the top prizes,
Is awarded *Summa Cum Laude* by the invisible arbiters,
Judges, examiners, angels, executioners
Lurking in silence behind the dark side of the mirror?
In their all-seeing eyes, Lords of the Far Side,
Who truly performs best, gets special commendations,
Dispensations, permissions, perquisites, privileges,
Scholarships, fellowships, directorships, the very highest
Distinctions – oscars, knighthoods, ministries?
Shall it be the one who refuses, who does not go gentle,
Or he who whispers ‘Now’ to his soul to go,
The sudden swift sprinter, long distance runner,
High flying champion – or piggy who stayed at home
To look after Mother or Grandad, dig the allotment,
Clean well and stairway, keep windowsills and doorstep
Spick and polished for sudden arrivals of strangers?

Does the dimpled wide-eyed child with features unbruised
By incurable mismatches ticking timebombs in her blood cells
Do her dying better than the stroke-bound nonagenarian
Bedridden his rest of days, who has received final
Notice to quit? Or the one caught stunned, off balance,
From an active career of tendering, by the backhanded
Assurance of a unique short-term contract, with cancer?
Or the one who could not wait and prepared for the event
By jumping or diving in, as though death were a pool
And not a bottomless pit without rope or ladder?
Or that other who recklessly defied doctors’ predictions,
Soothsayers’ bargaining and evidences of stargazers
And outran all of time like a sail before wind? And what
Of the ones who, without any warning, got it
By knife-thrust, neck-blow, car-crash, air-crash,
Flood, fire, explosion, dog-bite, wasp-sting, nettle-sting,
Stray bullet from friendly fire, bullet aimed in the back

Or in the back of the neck, throttling pillow or towel,
Wrong diagnosis, lack or absence of medicine,
Error by expert, dereliction by specialist,
Remediable poverty, government-managed drought?

We are not Orpheus and the dead do not hear us, or care,
Even if they could, to tell us, what all of them know, always,
That secret we shall never learn until we cannot break it,
Till we have been sworn in too, eternally, to their silence,
Trustworthy only once, like them, completely dissolved
From sap, charred leaves, peat, clay, charcoal, amber,
Separated and crystallised into water and minerals,
And all our words forsaken – our tongues glued
To their velar vaults, and our lips stuck together
Like immovable boulders, sealing up life's cave mouth.

Wherever we turn lurk the dead, waiting to surround us
With their barriers and blockades: like pillars, like monuments,
Like comfortless sentinels, they spread above, below
To the edges of our gazes; like cliffs towering sheer
From mountains under oceans to Himalayan precipices
Rising all around us, hemming us in among canyons.
There is no other horizon and wherever we stand
On this shore we shall never learn to cross them.

I want to say this simply but simply do not know how.
I should like to speak with conviction but am condemned
To stammering. Ours are more or less decent mouths
Commanded by brains neither dishonest nor infallible,
So how, when it comes to this, can we claim anything other
Than scantest glimmerings, most fleeting premonitions?
We who are informed by such paucity of insights,
We who are not Shamans, Imams, Rabbis, Ministers,
We who have no certainty and possess absolutely
No greater authority bestowed or loaned from on high
And no accreditation or to dispense or receive
Tokens, tickets, passports, passwords, swipecards,
Special keys, codes, combinations, promissory notes
For plausible rescue, improbable deliverance, sudden
Unexpected salvation, deserved reward or recompense

Into this or that *Elysium*, *Nirvana* or *Paradiso* – how
Can the likes of us claim anywhere anything more
Than a handful of smoke and puff or wisp of dust?

But all I want is impossible. To hear and understand
Whatever the dead may be saying, whatever it is they want
(That is, if they do want *something*), across this dividing gulf
Between these gull-haunted, rock-dotted, island-strewn,
Wind-hammered, rain-battered, sun-beaten
Archipelagos they have already sailed, endlessly,
And we yet have to negotiate. Indeed, what I want
(That is, *everything*, and nothing less than miracle)
Is by definition ungrantable by the invisible
Puppet-masters and mistresses who pull the strings
Of the living, and the dead – who may even *be*
The dead: for, whenever we try to examine them,
Or merely delay or halt them, even just an instant
For questioning – as if through a telescope, or zoom
Lens of a camera – they gaze away, detached,
Seem not to notice us, chatter and go on chattering
Oblivious among themselves, like flocks of nervous birds
About to migrate somewhere else, or like wholly
Human foreigners, fulfilled in their own company
And utterly derisory or regardless of us –
Fluent in their clammy languages of indecipherable
Signs and shadows that are to us wholly insoluble
And may only be traced in such ideograms and glyphs
As flower forms, wind scents and bee murmurs, tickings
And clackings of cicadas against onsets of summer nights,
Or, over hazy hills, among orchards, fields and gardens,
In hazardous, hieratic, dervish movements of butterflies –
Steps, scales, figures I can never quite substantiate
Let alone remember and, least of all, understand
No matter how I strain to catch at them before they
Dissolve in mist or disappear in shadow, migrate and
Separate, evolve into further forms, colours and movements,
Or get blocked for good around unturnable corners.

And just as they ignore us now, so too will they turn
Away at that precise instant when our destiny

We believe, is to meet them? While, one by one
And as though magnetised, inexorably we are drawn
Painfully and slowly towards our final conditions –
When our ends approach, shall we go on moving
At the same regulated, predetermined speed, like
Cargoes in holds of ships or products on a conveyor belt –
Or, like runners in a marathon approaching the last
Bend, offer one final spurt, prepare to throw heads
Forward and arms high as we cross the finishing line
And, gloriously abandoning every one of the disciplines
That allowed us to arrive there, stretch up exultant
Hands, so they can lift us, cheer us in recognition
Of our ultimate achievement, victory, arrival, as
We mingle souls among theirs, pour ourselves wholly
Into them, as into a crowd of welcoming companions,

Or, like water-drops from a fountain, fall back into the pool –

Only to find at that precise instant time forever stops
And space wraps itself tightly into a parcel that contains
Nothing but itself and shrinks and disappears altogether
From our own hands, and everything we have been vanishes
And consciousness itself of what we have been vanishes
And all we have imagined, believed, dreamed and aspired to,
Even touched and reached, really consisted of nothing?

* * *

Richard Burns now lives in Cambridge and is the author of a number of collections, including *Book With No Back Cover* (David Paul Books, London, 2003), *The Manager* (Elliott & Thompson, London, 2002), and *Against Perfection* (King of Hearts, Norwich, 1999). Forthcoming from Salt is a *Selected Longer Poems*. His *Avebury* (1974) is available for free download from the Shearsman website.

Janet Sutherland lives in Sussex and has recently returned to writing after a number of years away. Her poems were included in *The New British Poetry 1968-1988* (Paladin, London, 1988)

JANET SUTHERLAND

Freedom 2

we have watched
them walk into the wind
and hang in the creak and rustle
of full sails
in the clear air above Mount Caburn

there the words
are the curves of the hill
her creases and shadowed folds
the trickles of scent, fox sharp
among nettles and briars
small furtive movements
and a hawk so high up
silent
still

here the words are
the field boundaries
easing out
the gnarled trees
set in their ways
they are broken and unbroken
promises
taking off,
startled,
thrilled
at the parting

Freedom 3

Trapped like a sepia print
I cannot look you squarely in the eye
You must hold still

Your mind travels
Without permission
To many strange places

Buffalo and wild green maps
Come to your room
An unfriendly chicken

Settles itself on your bed
You pluck at the covers
Sometimes we wave it away

And sometimes we cry
All of us and laugh
Because we are falling

Slowly into another place.
The sampler made in 1824
Reminds us of industry

And improvement
In the young.
Stories weave in and out

Of us.
Then we are still.

Covert

nestling between
two brassy consonants

and hiding under cover
unconcealed

your o could be a cipher
or lament

a lost breath lying underneath
the ocean

the breathless song of whales
is not more pure

for travelling through storms
so when you leave

embrace me with a calculating heart
and tell me it is over

Crumble

I have cut out all the rot
the scab, the canker

the codling moths
are flown

spot, pox, and mould
excised

my careful knife
has peeled decay

and autumn lies in shreds
about the table

Gregory O'Brien was born in Matamata, New Zealand, in 1961 and now lives in Wellington where he works as a curator at the City Gallery. His books include *Days Beside Water* (Auckland University Press / Carcanet, 1994) and *Winter I Was* (Victoria University Press, 1999). He co-edited the *Oxford Anthology of New Zealand Poetry* (in English), which appeared in 1996, and a collection of his essays, *After Bathing At Baxter's* was published by Victoria University Press in 2002.

GREGORY O'BRIEN

Rocks, Te Namu Pa, Taranaki

I have seen the tribe upstanding
as waves of a sea and I have seen them

collapse, from the inside
like tents, their poles removed, or as trees

flattened on a hillside. Because there were
people here once, not just stones

long conversations wading the river, then lingering
as the light that lingers on its bed

of evening boulders, isolated clouds
nestled around the mountain

and tomorrow's rain as it falls,
as it is supposed to fall.

Untitled

Water, you are unwell
a stone falls through
your battered embrace

like the heaviest
weather or a comet plummeting
through space. If you had

daughters they would be
a line of markers
in the harbour

of your body, not at all far
from the entrance, signalling
the channel out.

Beausoleil

The beginning of summer was the end
of summer; spring became
autumn. A lizard running down a stone wall
ran back up. This year became that
year. Peak season became the shoulder
on the beach towel
and the blue of the beach towel that both measured
and defined summer
had wrapped itself around a colder
body. Summer at the beginning
of the pier became summer at the end
of the pier. And the vocabulary
of summer, with its lifeguards and loquats, had been
translated into a far off language—
one we could no longer speak, but would sit
listening to, as we sit listening
to the last waves of the season. And the dolphins that
we never saw. Ah, we can see them now.

European

A rectangle floats down
a river on which the riverboats are
triangles, except
as they pass beneath us: then
they are kites trailing their
fine, knotted lines.

Home is something we circle
but not as you would a cloud
or as a cloud would

you, rather as racehorses
crashing around a
Sieneese town square

which is, as aerial photographs
confirm, in fact the shape
of a seashell. Most times a square

is only someone's inaccurate
memory of a rectangle;
a hexagon is a country

in which we live—although this
doesn't allow for the edges
as they soften

and harden and on which
rectangles of rain and sun
go to work

each day. We sit
on the circumference
of many circles or parts

thereof: these bays
and inlets where
far beyond

the frenzied particles and
particulars
that outlying island

is a perfect square and
one perfect day
we will go there.

So you feel sorry, you can
They will never see you properly, only say
Your words in drips and dribbles
Altering without doubt

Your meanings

Nowhere left to go
A nothing comes to pass
A pasteboard counter

Smiles at another's ordeal
Letting go one of his mock rages
A pleasure in his sister's pain
Readily cracks his face

Girl fears are unspoken
Wondering where they have gone
Obeys commands
Nobody rushes towards a knife

Trying to find a word for you
What isn't black or candy
Boy or girl, lightness and darkness
Treacle set into a rock.

On a small percentage, sad or happy
Now trying, now playing dumb
Gone where, gone there
Without rhyme or reason
Like a dropped stone in the grass

Her Way Of Telling

It was as though you were being
spied upon by some kind of benign thief
too scrupulous even to imitate
your voice, her intention being
to take "you" as a model
replacing you with her analysis.

Can such people be benign?
Yes, yes, they can apparently.
Afterwards she handed over
the solution to your life's maze
with the air of a pavement
sketch artist. There, it's done.
You handed her your last penny
and she handed you a map
she had quickly made of your life.

Her depths were in the gutters
of her utterances. Her depths
were in her arguments, or in
directions they pointed out to you —
wrong turnings crossed off once
and forgotten. Here in the middle
of the beginning of the end
I remembered her kind eyes,
her even voice evenly telling me
which turn to make to get out.

I'd place my hand on one hedge
if I were you, unless I had all
the time in the world, enough to make
every conceivable mistake.
I'm afraid that's the way it is
with you, she said, resign yourself
to a long, circling journey
and to passing by everything twice.

Point Clear

A funny sort of day: to hold hands with Irene
On Point Clear beach, a look through weatherboard doors
At old ladies' ruminative knitting,
Crows, the sea wall, and an astounding
Ache. You bad girl,
Why didn't I humiliate you
Instead of letting you in to maul

My bag of threadbare broken tricks. A lapse, eh?
Steve tip-toes over each step and crack, gingerly
Into a muddy tide pool,
Walking a tightrope beside the sea
As the earth's crust crumbles away
False-footing his last turn, and it's all
Remembering dreams of nasty kids, of searing
Chinese burns. My mother's light as driftwood.
I lift her, whimpering
And place her on a double bed
At home in the plenitude
Of penultimate days. I live here
And forget it, the outlying
Chalets peeled blue, and when will a smile not hide an ouch
Or an inflated frog?
No end to it, nor the hurt
I feel you're harbouring in your night fears
Spoken out to all and sundry,
Excited gabble in which you wish your life away.
It's just that you seemed as if I might
Be at least on the right ground
As turning to reassure Irene, she grunts, kicks out at me.
I grip her arm, stroke her knobbly hand, shoulder her off
Look over the water to Brightlingsea at sixes and sevens.
Where's my window?
Am I getting better at this game of patience?
She settles into a steady shuffle and a honk
Of muted satisfaction, motion, my arm's pressure.
Results of passion: more bleating
A turn in the light
Towards darkness and blank dread —
My crocodile shoes, where all
One sole is broken open to the seeping rain.
Thunder and pretentiousness amongst men.
Is that a hair or a pencil stroke
In the margin of the next day?
Sleep on it, night's misadventures, tidal rushings,
Bubbles pop in mud and moorings part company.
I mean to say, I mean
That dream is every dream

The point they're making is unclear
I'm back in the van
Thunder blue, or a scratch, with sea-salt rubbed in it.

W B KECKLER

Authors I Have Met

I have no hope for regret.

Having forced rivers of it through my body,
only monastic canyons are left.
Imagine! To find such fossil-gleams,
the relics of such multitudes,
jealous, selfish, sexual
ones. The pink of siphon and fingers.
Anemone, earthworm, monk.

The pronouns fly past, screaming geese.

Enter

A door is a collection of weathers
where the hand outside reads hello,
then goodbye on the other side.
It's vaguely wisteria-shaped, a crane's foot
or ancient Chinese recording of a star.
If you ever see nature forgive,
phone me immediately, please take a picture.
I expect there may be a fox
that uses this cemetery as a highway.
Deep in snow, the concept of bridge
attacks the venerable concept of wings
as the Unnecessary Angel. No one
remembers when silence became a bridge.

Poem Traveling

(for Sheila Murphy)

Ovine-kneed as dreams, go dawn
You are blest as the Isles shining, shattered
bones and Izanami and her mirror lover
Pearl-eyed moments held in a dulse bed

Tangy, they tang as seaweeds in mental winds
Goat-footed dreams choral laps at salt
Retsina in the bureau has its own eyes
which one must refuse to mail homewards

Whose new cartography trails mustard
through paper breath hollows the sheen
of tiny bird bones left on a plate?
Outside, a cat melting in the fog...

The fog is the phrase "After all, after all..."
spoken polished as a tombstone in Ghent
where you lose all but the most precious consonants
This room like an empty suit owned by Henry James, hanging

the feel of an unopened letter in her hospital...

W.B. Keckler's most recent book, *Sanskrit of the Body*, won in the National Poetry Series 2002 and has been published by Penguin in the USA. His other books include *Ants Dissolve in Moonlight* and *Recombinant Image Day*.

Avik Chanda is a management consultant by profession, and has been writing poetry for some time. Recent publications include work in *Other Poetry*, *Richmond Review*, *Brittle Star*, *Comrades*, *Eclectica*, *Black Bear Review*, *Morpo*, *Three Candles*, *Spork*, *Poetry Depth Quarterly*, *Rearview Quarterly*, *Adirondack Review*, *Reflections*, *Slant*, *Ascent*, *Kimera*.

John Muckle makes his second *Shearsman* appearance here, his third if one counts his entry in the online Shearsman Gallery series, *Firewriting*. His prose publications include *Cyclomotors* (Festival Books, Colchester, 1997), and he is currently assembling his first poetry collection for publication in 2005.

AVIK CHANDA

Torch Lamp Drawings

I

A neat triangle at first, equilateral,
as in the Vastusutra, then another,
inverted and superimposed on it,
and at the bottom, craggy letters
in Bengali: fire, water, life –
the desperate refuse of hope.

II

Thin strokes strung in a mesh
around the wishing tree: Puri.
Here, for a hundred or two,
we guarantee riches and sons
and a laptop job. Tie your string,
My good sir, like the others.

III

Lively at the Nacht der Museen:
a clot of mellow light at the top
left-hand corner, with lines
sliding down in beered perspective,
tracing a lithograph tracing Böll:
der Zug war pünktlich.

IV

Dermis over veins, blood, flesh
and metacarpals. Her hand.
And between the sunburnt here
and there of skin, this most
delicate of all strokes, marking
the band where she wore her ring.

KARYNA MCGLYNN

Deep Eddy

How many chins
has shade unlocked and lifted
cleft heart witches

wetted by splash, dog-print
leaves a trail of archaeology

trunk lofted, jostled
on razored legs, stockings

peeled in the heat
moss sunbeam bone

leaves: cash pressed
on small bird mints

wave there happily
soft and flaunted

mosque-cut leaves
who bicker in whispers

cast off dissent and drop
little brown bathing caps

pointed and hard to help
how many people

slide from one end
of the pool to the other

above eddying time
the cottonwoods watch

every swimmer slip
through the skins

of everyone they were
and will be, chin collapsing

gently into the wooden neck
both man and watchman

EVELYN HOLLOWAY

Dreams

1
Sent to the Carribean by train. Afraid of the unknown. A river full of red
orange juice

2
Climbing down steep steel stairs

3
A bag full of small sharp knives is emptied on my head.

4
I wear a wig to hide my baldness and sunglasses to hide my burnt eyebrows.

5
My eyes are covered. I smash mirrors.

6
I have black hair, wear a red dress and lipstick smeared around my mouth.

7
A friend walks through streets with me, familiar and confusing at the same
time. Are we in Vienna or in New York? Everything is black and red.

8
Somebody comes up from behind and hugs me. Don't know who it is, but it
makes me feel warm and protected.

9

I walk in a landscape of walls and fences. After every wall I hope for open space, but there is another wall.

10

My flat is empty. I am nowhere. I look for myself in favourite places. Friends look for me. Waking up I have no memory of disappearing.

11

In Heathrow. Which train. Which terminal. Going where. Buying ticket. Not finding it. Where am I? Who are you? Where are we going?

12

Smothered under lots of blankets. They keep falling on my face.

13

Everywhere around me shades of blue. Sea, sky, everything bathed in light.

Evelyn Holloway is Austrian and splits her time between Vienna and St. Ives. She is a professional translator.

Karyna McGlynn is a writer and photographer living in Seattle. Her work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Wisconsin Review*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Plainsons*, *No Exit*, *The Paumanok Review*, *Medicinal Purposes Literary Review*, *The Blue Mouse*, *Nidus & Pindeldyboz*. Ms. McGlynn is the editor of Screaming Emerson Press, which publishes chapbooks by local spoken-word poets. She attends the creative writing program at Seattle University where she serves as poetry editor for the *Cascadia Review*.

Eugenio Montejo was born in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1938. He is the author of numerous books of poetry: *Elegos* (1967), *Muerte y memoria* (1972), *Algunas palabras* (1976), *Terredad* (1979), *Trópico absoluto* (1982), *Alfabeto del mundo* (1986), *Adios al siglo XX* (1992), *El azul de la tierra* (1997), *Partitura de la cigarra* (1999) and *Tiempo Transfigurado* (2001). He has also published two collections of essays: *La ventana oblicua* and *El taller blanco*. In 1998 Eugenio Montejo received Venezuela's National Prize for Literature. Australian poet **Peter Boyle** appeared in the last issue in his own right; his edition of Eugenio Montejo's *The Trees: Selected Poems 1967-2004* has just appeared from Salt Publishing.

EUGENIO MONTEJO

(translated from the Spanish by Peter Boyle)

My Ancestors

to Alberto Patiño

My ancestors gave me the green voice
and limpid silences that spread
there in the grasslands around Lake Tacarigua.
They travel on horseback around the haciendas.
It's hot. I am the horizon of this landscape
where they are heading.

In the bitter fragrance of the joba trees
I hear the sounds of their harsh guitars
crossing the dust and traversing my blood.
Under my skin they look at each other
so sharply I can almost see their faces.
And when I talk to myself, they are the ones speaking
in the rustling sheaves of the sugar plantations.
It's hot. I am the tense wall
where their portraits hang in a row.

My ancestors come and go through my body,
with the airless breeze sighing from the lake,
the galloping of dark shapes that come down
to be lost among distant seedtimes.
Wherever I go I carry the shape of emptiness
that unites them all in a different space, a different time.
It's hot. It's the green heat that joins them to me.
I am the fields where they are buried.

Left Behind

Down these streets my funeral has just passed
with its pathetic speeches.
Lightly they lifted my body
among unrecognizable relatives.

As the procession passed
a woman stopped and gazed
with flirtatious embarrassment.
Later I realized she was a shadow
already shouldering centuries under earth.

Above the clouds continued their monologues,
a slow plane barely moved in its flight;
below mourners cough, polite gestures of the crowd,
the usual phrases.

Asleep and with no sense of where I was,
I was going on the last journey.
It was my farewell to this world,
the first time that I was going to die.

Towards the end of the millennium
suddenly I found myself outside of the group,
left behind, contemplating the trees.
The funeral, without me, continued on its course
through the shady half-light of suburban streets.
I walk slowly following it now from far off
down the passage of the years

Mark Dickinson: Born and bred Scarborough, & whenever there's waves, I'm wandering the Cleveland way from Jackson's to Staithes.

Gavin Selerie was born in London in 1949. His books include *Azimuth* (Binnacle Press, London, 1984), *Roxy* (West House Books, Sheffield, 1996), and (with Alan Halsey) *The Days of '49* (West House, 1999). *Le Fanu's Ghost*, a work-in-progress deals with the Le Fanu, Sheridan and Blackwood families, all intertwined by marriage. It treads the interface between horror and laughter.

Helen Foster cannot remember a time when she didn't write poetry. She lives in Plymouth and finds herself surrounded by elements that make her think differently than anywhere else — whether it be an expansive view of moorland, an urban street, a curled shell or a dockyard siren. For the past ten years she has been active in the constantly evolving poetry scene in the city.

MARK DICKINSON

from 'Littoral'

iv.

Littoral beach and comb
Litter swells between shells
Cast upon the near – foam
Shelves its pattern then delves
Into the patter of a pool;
Shells-be-spell – into a process,
Into an unmade made & jewel
Into the transitory press
Of a cellular caress of move –
Then movement on the drift.

In Tide & circular both rest & rove
Are slackening; O' how they rift
Within their roving, shells-be-spatter
And mark a making out of time.

No matter may mend only scatter;
Which lymph's upon the mime
A rampart. A fixation to better.
But trust is upon, word to the contrary
Fettered to an error
That silos in a sea of memory.

viii

Sinistral or swirl and pattern

dextral as highly prized non-

terrestrial movement over bed-

rock layer upon fixture as at tide line

slack beneath makes slow towards
green belt fringe over rock
minority feeler *amongst*
dwelling *amongst* rock-ling & peeler

GAVIN SELERIE

Suspiria

A light stroke across the windy pane
in the parlour
you can't stir
cedar wainscote
white as the blank sheet of a letter
a rattle like all in a tremble

wind cries from the orchard
such a hoo-hoo-o-o-high
LET ME, LET, LET, LET ME IN
something or another slips in
close by your leg
as if it belongs

you might see him stretch his neck
to the ceiling
out of the cravat, throat cut across

People are plaguy sharp, you wouldn't want
to sleep 'beyant at Ballyfermot'
it's a vile house the tiled house
and ready to tumble down

Under all this smoke
there smoulders a little spark of truth

The mansion skulks, right for retreat
down an avenue of elms
a bat flits over the court-yard
Mr **Mordaunt** might take his place
out of night
a lord of hemlock and nettles

nothing but a hand laid on the sill
tap tap
pressed against glass, feel for a gap
rap rap

a white pudgy finger through the auger-hole
first the tip,
then two joints

a kind of gentle squeeze, a brushing

to lay an impression in dust

a white puffy hand

the ghost of a hand, and no more

nor was it separate (the body hides)

Your **TYLED HOUSE** quivers from base to cornice
always the back parlour
door and pane
those pranks remember, an old story
from swag-flaunted boughs to window-stone
ay, ay, indisputably

rip, rap

the palm of a hand rubs briskly
the snow, bitter eddies
to open a peep-hole
white sliding curtain

Zekiel **Irons** lips to the glass
clerk of Chapelizod
gestures

what the devil, sir, do you mean?

he greets you with a message
he'd have you understand he never did it

Doctor Helios Lights The Lights

Chase some oranges
 Chase some numparals
 Chase a bill of the play

Wilderness paint
Ablaze—the sky at noon

Lines meet on the ceiling:
a giant bird cage

Four tiers and the renter goes
 anywhere
 but behind the frame

You can lose a shoe or a hat
at the pit order, a flash

Cut-glass candelabra—sugar-candy
 voise verse
in the oilman's mouth

See to be seen, expectation
 on tip-toe
No room and no money returned

**At the touch hole
in Hades' lair
the guisers gone**

**Smouldering to step out
as words you can't hear**

**Contagion climbs to the dome
on gothic stilts**

**Fantastic at a sennet-pitch
in coils of smoke
the screen crashes**

**Every score and script
(St Cecilia's harpsichord)**

**Sparks and flakes—crackling
to stun all memory
as molten lead descends**

**Boiling silver with a hiss
to ensure
the ultimate pageant**

Banquo's ghost in the Greenroom
Kemble leaping from a casement
Ireland's Horsus cut by the curtain
Grimaldi faced with a riddle

Fears and hopes
chewed
into holding sense

Josepha through dungeon spikes
Elvira come back in a nun's habit
Hermione saved from the flame

That evening never done
ringing

echoes in a horse-shoe
on swags of blue velvet

Steal from the stealer
round mirrors
a dose of spectromania

**A sprite that has wandered unawares
never loved these huggers
here to stave off ruin
topples Apollo to the floor**

**A column of fire
close/remote
on the river glaze**

**Shivers, a gunshot volley
cordage blown to the clouds
in a late roll**

**Drag from the ashes
a peal of bells**

**your patent in an iron box
beside one gaunt shoulder**

**Laugh off the smarting tears
calmly take
the draught to start again**

HELEN FOSTER

The Bait Diggers

If I could live in praxis, like you
– you're so good at it –
I could let this glide away
without wanting.

See the arena
all around us?
Nature is extravagant!

A theatrical union
A transfusion in the sky
hour into hour.

The seabirds are at the
close of the afternoon
loitering and high
Barking over the bait diggers
Soporuous lugworms
writhe in pails

Preening rooks decorate the tips
of the trees
that spit branched threads of pitch
upwards into the purple
They belong to evening.

Where are we then?

Promiscuous, the tranquillized sea
embraces the light
and welcomes the darkness.

These enamels
and colours are breathable
and quell
the weather inside.

The Glass Blowers

First

All night hot as fever backs cracking
The girdled stokers heft sand into the furnace
This violence liquefies – It has method.

Next

The glass blowers blunt and unpolished
toil in the uproar
Metal rods syrup-twist globs of sun
Lung bellows blow out glabrous blisters

Next

Ungloved the sweat vested stem-puller
stretches tensile stalks to near imperfection
(The precision machine waits formally)
He is from Italy.

Next

Along the line
brittle snouts brutally cracked
Needle keen barbs crunch beneath black clogs.

Last

Gibbous bowls shiver
glacial in the loading bay.

Grimspound

Weighed down with granite
and collapsed sunsets
The leather men stalk
stilt legs through thick peat
The bitter grass wind blasts
away history

Crouched in their great stone clocks
Pots of scattering chaff clasped
As the sun slips down their insignificant hills

Slow murmuring
Dry breathing

Stone, Iron, Bronze
Down tools
Down time

They straggle towards the edge
of the land that beckons
Rolling the stone across
Looking back over their shoulders

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