



ZONE OF THE WHITE
WOLF
and other landscapes

poems John Jenkins

a collection
of experimental
blue skies
glaciers
and branches

c/- 1974 John Jenkins

(This new digital edition designed by the author.)

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Serial numbers

1.
no words echo
in the test tube's intricate landscape
 to trace each photon
 caught for a silent eternity
between sandgrains
and the salt-white sun

(see pink enamel flake
from the cheeks
of your forgotten children.
in attics
 where a million
 greycastle moths
 tremble in the
remaining light.. .
like a cloud
 or the continuous fluttering
 of false eyelashes).

2
find
our ancestors
clothed
in dreamshadow flesh.

3

if and when
should

then

dissolve
celluloid sunlight
dream and dew
dissolves
and we are
left to stare ...
and we are left
staring

at

eachother. strangely.

4

come to an end
at peace
culturing
the weeks of razor nicked flesh –
redeemable
still-life
study in cold greens /
frozen vacancy
of skylights/ mulled
cobwebs
shadows,
vertigos.

abandon

the thumb streaked mirror.

Syntax

a line of dots
reconnoitre no-man's-land
like an effortless book
 of blank pages -

hallway of empty rooms -
of silent pianos
 in a vacant concert hall -

white, ineluctable notes
for no ears -

in absences rendered
 audible
through indeterminate distance -

a falling away of the moment
into its own dis-
integration -

a line of black dots
 vanishing
into the snowdrift . . .

The white wolf

The white wolf bows / to set back daybreak /
as the night owl stares down /
 (a lone animal.
wolf whiteness. The whiteness of fur and teeth /
set in the whiteness of bones outside the lair, and lost
in a greater ambience -
 the whiteness of snow.
whitewolf emerging silently -
 a streak of shape moving out of vision
always of snowlandscapes - under grey skies -
emerging from the continual snowfall - streaks of grey and white
over the rising slopes - into clear skies of dawn vision
 and the light / of this continual winter.
wolf fangs. the red buck's blood spilt on the snow, red on white –
form a simple relationship - elements in a wolf's world . .
 transparent
vision
 of ghostshades shifting ...
wolf knows the time and measure of winter -
 the melting of stars /
and liquid clarity of icecrystals
(as rain washed away the mountains ...
and is, as wolf world. (a warm shaggy pelt - hard light glinting from
icesheets. frost. snapping ice shivers.
 and a loping stride,
 pressed to earth.
moving through reflections /
 of past winters, in memories,
 all the time of long journeys /
 where breath paled in air
 beyond the snowhills.
as wind in tall trees / shivers / the rasping of branch upon
 bare branch above
ice melting into streams - intricate lattice work of crystals
losing hard outline - blurring into moisture - the smaller cycles
of the great thaw - with new streams forming - and time sluicing

like a thin stream beneath the ice - as the old streams freeze over
and begin again -

slivers of ice dripping moisture / liquid and frost
into the huge iceworld

as the white wolf emerges from emptiness
to drink from chill pools, with cataracts roaring.
howls again.

over unbroken horizons - the echoed purity
of a white wolf's need

(to set back daybreak)

to the forgotten white fires of glaciers.

where vast panoramas
stretch endlessly ...

all focusing to the muffled sounds of night - while the snow
still falls to stark branches - silhouettes remaining
through dawn images - as leaves remain - buried beneath the snow -

it is the warmth then
of the lair.

in packed earth. wolf peace, as the snow
still falls -

a presence
(or memory)

cold.

and white.

as great winds are heard blowing faintly outside ...

beyond the lair / in the huge emptiness

(images of stars fading ...)

as winter consolidates itself

no life to rage in the storm

as. the. white.
wolf. melts.

into.

dawn.

Ending (tones)

Starlings sit hunched upon the bare wires outside my window, now the angel has stilled these clouds in quietude. The bridge we remembered still rattles, bulging heavenward, but orchards and gardens have turned to seed in my mouth. Patience then - the thin heart you promised, caught in amber, fossilized, or set inside the crucifix you hold in your hand mon ami. Did the glass break as you said, or do strange doors still shuffle in the wind over the old amusement piers on the strand?

Remember - the temples along the quayside which coveted their mirrors, bottles, and jewelled censers? Their sullen alphabet of reverberate domes? Riverside Park has left you sheathed in the wind, though we still look for pearls in the grass; like Ramses who ruled his two Egypts with sharp hawk's eyes. (I have placed his two severed claws in a deep, hand-carved wooden bowl, stiff amidst dried rushes and everlastings.)

But new waves gyrate now upon the soppy grate of Autumn; the tides are tied to smaller horizons. My dreams were left unfulfilled in late September, while you feathered your mind in hair of silk and glass. Little rose, your soft mouth is lined with fur and straw, and is the world's glove and stable in this Autumn of grieving lust.

You took only the quietest doves into your hands then, granting them the deepest caress, to feel the tiny pulse tick in the throat, and small bones beneath their flesh. Your cold songs flow across your thighs. Little rose, the world's skin in thin, nicked and budded, a soft edge for ...

... crepuscular twilights, and the red heart of evening. Now Autumn holds you, and night and the stars conspire with the sensual lips of ancient mouths. And their forests - whispering in your hair!

Moonlight edges over the black rivers where the men of these cities uniform their young, instructing them in foreign lands. Even poets have revived the art of killing here, as pale bodies of the homeless litter the midnight streets amidst the ravaging beaks of winter starlings. Does my wayfarer then know that his laughter must break over an ocean of wasted spumes? He alights upon the world's shore, empty of promises. A razor is close to his heart. A keen edge - it will wound the false masks of kindness, the patriot's sneer. The altars of this city drift with dark perfume - musk, death, and the blown rose. Feel the scarlet itch of fire between tangled nerves. Exquisite killers, you have scored these white fields in lymph and blood. A landscape of stunted salt bushes allays your ghosts, as alleyways of metropolis would harbour your bruised hands.

How shall we survive this news, make the near far again, and the far near? The boy soldier from below the soil, he rose to fight a sky of thunder. The whores were once simple village girls, their tears are endless. The fire rained down, and bitter chemicals scolded earth. Now murderers strut with surety through the plagues and frosts of this anniversary year.

Deceptive distances sounding in the loud bells beyond the headland; are rounded in an open pink bell-throat, in raw meat, and caporal. We retreat into this mood, into a distance between each thought and feeling. Stars aspire above the mast spikes, over mulled and leaden water. Harbour lights confusing the waves with composite shadows of spar and hull. The sea is burdened with vestiges of distant land; its steady rumours unclasp each bitter hand.

Smouldering wrecks on sunset. Fires burn behind shattered windows. The landscape has frozen into stone, and widows grieve from the tiered windows of paradise.

Only the sea. The quiet. The unhindered shoreline. This stillness we have reached; the unforeseen crossing of a double star.

Black priests and fat nuns rant in solemn dormitories. Their faces will shine like empty lanterns in the dark. Only this ghostly billowing of clouds, the sun's bloody glory, and the darkest veins of manhood, as day expires. We will awake upon that other shore, and sing the chaos; as transient unison of breathing stars.

Today, we hear only endings, tones. Go back. Rewrite the songs forced on us at bayonet point. Strip away the years, and tear the plunderers down, the sly, the slippery, the little sharks of night. Turn upon all those heartless ones, only live and breath again. Caste off their cruelty and doubt, before they steal your voice forever.

School story for ken Taylor

I shall soon return to my father's greenhouse. Where old ladies stroll with feathered boas, intricately crocheted shawls, and delicate white parasols. A disembodied voice calling from beyond the green, floating over artificial lakes in countless botanical gardens. Insubstantial, echo-like, and fading. A leisurely walk, then. Surrounded by old lawns in afternoon sunshine, slightly acrid-sweet with the redolence of pressed flowers. Some children are playing with cane hoops. We pass them by, nearing an ornamental fountain. Pausing to admire the stone cherubs at its rim. Chubby little bodies balanced on pilasters - lifted up upon stunted wings - streams of water trickling over their coy smiles. Then into the years which followed these paths, to the last platform or street corner. Years following paths under aerial canopies, where time was almost held complete unto itself, as the returned in a brown attic piled with magazines of 1895 high fashion.

Years to begin. The door opening again. Onto footpaths where sweating labourers (later arrivals colony), swear in a foreign language as they clear from the sides of trenches. Where, one by one, pipes are lowered into the earth to be fitted together below. The sun shines on pavements as people flow past. There is the same activity, but not the same enthusiasm. And no time now for that 'Quaint Charm' in world stripped of uneconomic superficialities. To expose the true harshness beneath an outworn façade. Layered city grime, the rat-race fever in commercial streets, clashing with a type-caste modernity, signified by polished aluminium and glass. Environments of new anonymity, and the sole, shrill imperative of getting on with the job. People flow past. Through streams of memories, each a small story of eyes and ears, and the revolutions of seasons within minds, merging in paypackets down roads of this history. Roads that feel good underfoot. Beneath the soles of walking shoes that must be well made, as there's a long way to go. Past piles of pipes that disappear, as they are fitted together below the earth. Last week there were hundreds of them along this road. Rust stains on sickly yellow grass marking where they lay. Rust-crusted fittings, stars of rust, and rust in thin flakes on pipe joints, as parts are uncovered from the recesses of council vans, Rust a product of past winters - rain beside the footpaths - and rain in puddles forming slides of mud. Perhaps they have been assembled and dissembled many times.

Rain, brushed off overhanging leaves, onto grey school pullovers, where it soaked in, later to give off a smell like wet rabbit fur in steam rising before open fires. Secure with teacups in a space of familiar dimensions - the rain outside now - heard beating faintly from within - or glimpsed momentarily through the chinks in an uncurtained window. Rain drumming onto the roofs of sheds in playgrounds. Then, clearing, leaving swings and slides stark against the background of a cement wall. Their tubular steel frames showing streaks of bright silver where they curve into the ambient winter light. All washed, made fresh, after the rain. Some children however did not play on the swings or slides. They preferred the mud. Skating in leather school shoes - a quick dash for speed - then sliding warmth caught beneath winter uniforms - yelling out with the excitement of their own shared pleasure. Small voices over the playground. And others, walking home, stepped into the puddles which were everywhere after the storm. With wet socks and numb feet as the water insinuated itself through worn shoe leather.

Night over the park. And rain falling he pages of an exercise book - left forgotten under the tall deciduous trees first brought from across the seas. Open-paged, upon fallen leaves, all brown, orange, and yellow. Small blue smudges forming, as rain washes over figures of simple arithmetic, scrawled in a large childish hand. Columns of figures, dates, numbers, and all merging together in the rain... To intersect in a time of cicadas and other amongst a green border of gum trees. Voice faint over the school playground... where slow eddies of dust are rising on warm summer afternoons, near the grass verges where lizards scuttle.

Come and I'll show you how it was. You see – here, at this place. Small children trampled the grass c eyed and purposeful. With brownpaper-sealed jars in their hands, fastened with 'laca bands', all colours, and punctured with a pin to let in the air. Lizards, caterpillars behind the glass, scuttling slower now in smaller circles. Slow in smaller smaller...

And fifty pair of eyes looking to the front. All staring outwards. The tallest standing straight-backed, shoulder to shoulder, forming a long back row; the shortest in front, sitting with hands clenched on knees. An orderly arrangement of dark school trousers and plain dresses. Faces set in a standard rectangle. Each a small story of eyes and ears, and of seasons within minds. Later, to merge in paypackets down long roads of this history. But there is always one who pokes a tongue out at the camera, or crosses his eyes. Perhaps the same who returns home with wet shoes and muddy clothes to receive a belting, penalty for braving the mud slides. Most eyes, however, are full of interest. Struck with the novelty of the event. Cross their t's and dot their i's in classrooms with chalkdust slowly gathering in the concave runnels beneath blackboards. Ever since the turn of the century, these photographs of lives against brick walls, with teachers smiling pleasantly to the side. And it's a special honour to be chosen to hold the smaller blackboard with classgroup and year written in white chalk... sifting down slowly. .. through horse and cart days preserved in varnished sunshine... to the paranoia of traffic jams and possible nuclear extinction of the endlessly chilly undeclared war, the cold one. The blackboard centred in the foreground, preserving a pre-ordained symmetry. As images return - little boys in sharp cut sailor's jackets and round Edwardian shirt collars. Bow ties in sepia prints. Yellowing photographs - the chemicals change state, and images grow faint. It's in the light; the light caught in *that* instant when the shutter opened then closed. A rectangular snapshot. Late afternoon sunshine on faded lawns, where frail old ladies stroll with delicate white parasols.

Looking from within the camera - it is very dark. Interior panels are painted black. Focus slowly - and the huge uncertainty of history is reduced to fixed outlines, is the small island of clarity which the camera defines. Then - in a suddenness of the outside world - CLICK! There are children seen upside down through a small glass portal, all smiling towards the front. And into a slow decay of paper. As chemicals absorb light over many years. Images blur... falling like chalkdust ...in smaller and smaller circles slower now behind transparent walls - no longer caught in the glass jars of children.

Ah, there were so many parades! It was a time of parades, with representatives of the monarchy gathered from all over the world. And how grand they looked! Mounted upon horses, with stern, self-absorbed expressions; eyes looking towards the front, backs ramrod straight, in fine military uniforms. The white plumes on their helmets

tossed in a 1912 wind. There was so much of a peculiar naive enthusiasm in those days, it's difficult to imagine it now. Rule Britannia and the sun did not seem to be setting. We were a dawn of a new era, confirmed by men of daring machines, an ever-present spirit of adventure, discoveries in so many new fields. And we cheered and we cheered when the parades went by from a dying world. England a mother of colonies, in crystal palace optimism, and Sunday boating jaunts on sunny afternoons caught on impressionist canvasses. Times Le Douanier Rousseau found progressive and modern with helium balloon in background of Portrait of the Artist.

But, it was also a time to come. Of Wilfred aching brain in the merciless east wind that knives Eliot's lonely men in shirt sleeves. As faces in parades fade into masses anonymous and stereotyped with their small worker's caps. Cheering from the roadside. And that grand zeppelin, optimism, deflating along the front stretching into No-man's-land. Legacy of the Eiffel Tower's new of steel construction, engineering exhibitions, and old songs we sing bring back the tears. And thousand of photographs of dead children out of fading backgrounds, preserved for personal n in the pages of bound albums. Small scenes which r history of a family; outings remembered in high tone plates ...

I looked through my family's album that morning, before catching a train where the roads converge... with people taken in pictures before I was born. And school pictures the same as mine. Fresh smiles and big drooping moustaches. Faces hurrying for paypackets this morning in the grime of new streets ordered to choking exhaust fumes and the interpretation of time and times; a vanishing of perspective along the lines. And a changing of fashion from wide trousers with pin-stripes becoming blue 'pegged' stovepipe jeans to return with cuffs and a new flare below the knees. And probably back again... The standard cut in dog's-tooth material, by wide shaded verandahs in semi-cleared bushland, to clipped hedges, and new settlements through carriage years. Put away in drawers, in cupboards, in trunks, with important family records, and last wills and testaments. 'A time of small business on the face of the earth.' Old photographs the high points...

A perspective of years intersects here at a synchronous moment when the shutter opens then closes. These classrooms, one for each year, one behind the other, into a sepia tint of generals. A transmission of reality through overlapping generations. Children kept in drawers and cupboards - to be removed again years later in another world by distant relatives.

Strangers lose their strangeness, become friends, then, drifting apart, become strangers once again. I will look you up when I get the chance. In Anzac day parades in the rain. A memory of trenches and old friends shifting through economics and subdivisions. Merging in blurred figures of simple arithmetic, the falling rains of this history. 'The hour cometh; yea, has come, when ye shall be scattered ...' Sounds of pipes being fitted together in a dream where a million people stood on a wide plain each bearing in their hands a wreath woven of leaves and grass and flowers... The faces changes through each other when I was thinking of it all again, and words returned. . . 'It took so long to realize this was not the way.' Within another dream I had of bright citrus groves near painted columns and people laughing in the sunlight,

past all care, only a smile now upon the games and worlds, dying time. . . Gone - dissolved completely - not even a reflection upon the lake.

Hammer drills belting into cement. Pneumatic shovels drone and a grinding mixer continues to turn in this particular photograph. A gang of Italian any labourers sweat at the roadside. Hard reality. Defined as clatter, grit and grin smells and swelling blue veins around clenched wrists. Yet - becoming history, a memory. Already - see it from the future - already forgotten. All patterns dissolve into background - yet their influence still hold. Future and past, this time. This *time!* Can't hold it, though it flows on, then and there into here and now, this continuum continues, and grows like light, diffusing as distances increase away from the centre. A centre finally removed from the standard rectangle.

In concentric circles which graduate into a haze; as Van Gogh saw around gas lamps in the Paris cafes. With the waiter's white, brilliantly white, coat. Hullucatory colour and flaming suns over golden wheatfields – sunflowers slowly exploding - a shifting of centers from the narrow focus of a rifle bead - sighted through platforms and street corners and classrooms - as the severe edges may give way to an ecological principal now apparent - life enhanced by all the living. This, the new dream. Also Van Gogh's boot in another picture. Such sharpness of imagery. Lying there on the floor. Given the painters' most intimate attention, its existence defined in intricate precision of itself. A fact among facts.

Walking down the road, I notice that there are fewer pipes by the side of the road than there were a few weeks ago, when the trenches were just being cut. The city is expanding. Melbourne is growing outwards to reach us, to take us in. A great deal of new development. Cranes on the skyline. At the building site I glance at a piece of cable end. Each twist of the wire defined with precision and clarity in the early morning light. And my eyes trace the line over scaffolding tubes, to the end of a cantilevered boom, and then down twenty metres, where two workmen are balanced cautiously upon a steel girder. From that height gazing down upon the open cityscape below them.

Slice

1)

Walking sunlight on polished
chromium mirror tripped me
centrally /
a revolving door
 open
upon
traffic lights and
corners /
my mind let go
whirling
certainly no need in the wide world now
that casual eyes could not erase –
the quite avoidable fate
of bad faith and bland certainties
a sham consequence through a century
 of recent myths / and
 endemic lack of ease –
edging it out, out
(the tight hammerlocks of assured belief

and - breathe in deep –
no absolutes –
relative products of
 circumstances, and what is
too readily bevelled in at the edges –
at an edge
or *the edge*
- and what for?

no value,
 rejecting it / simply
to settle into nature, into
a slow evening sense of continuity -
simply, no revelations –
anyway, not as it's whispered
with the insistent *sheen of* sanity
and that the thing –
more, to be *just so*,

an ordinary enough presence,
as I find it, too –
as the day unwinds
and your senses open
into the flow /
 steadying us
like the strokes of a long-distance swimmer.

2)
When we meet again
hug me
and I will lick the warm tears
from your eyes.

(I have a moist
red tongue,
like you.)

The earth falls away
beneath our feet
yes continually falls away -
I am beginning
to find my situation
the only one imaginable,

as daylight accosts me
a grinning sprite's lips
edging macadam -

the cat's soft grey paw
crinkles over newsprint -
on this little planet
in the middle of nowhere
for such a short inconsequential while –
the thick cup on the squat bench
and births and deaths of galaxies
in the steam.

3
No lack of other-
mindedness;
even,
as it is so often assumed,
from the beginning.
Though as gossips and primates
we hunger for the most
ordinary of things.
Every poet I'm sure has noticed this
at some stage, along with the merely
self-delusory chimeras
and the feeling may last for years.
As it comes to mind (already, you see)
someone called the earth
 "God's golf ball"
(an *inflating* description for such a mote)
but the breath, here, the sureness of touch
is given
through a fullness of delight and misapprehension
touching the absurd. (Bravo!)
Yet it persists
for a while
in the imagination - as constellating image –
and no need to make correlations either,
it being that special sense
of a
compartment / world.

The earth itself
seeming to grow faces,
as we, in our inimitable fashions
become the caricatures
we disavow
(I'd say one must stay on the right side of paradox
or consciously lie - inaccuracy for its own sake
only admissible where one becomes "pleasantly
confused".)

Our constant need is to make reasonable (or
unreasonable or whatever)
and not withstanding
very interesting *guesses*.

It is the meaning, then, in the meanings
we assign.

And

we assign the world to its proper place
with all due care and flattery,
falling
as we do
flat on our faces - so
intent on watching that crazy metaphorical mirror
we *must* be holding up, tilted downward at our feet
and where they're going.

And our bootstraps are still trailing
and there's no way round that one either, it seems.
As if your finger
 could double
and touch itself
 at the very tip!

Knowing that mirrors
always distort to some degree,
and that a fall onto an earth
harder than we are
will hurt, often as not,

and *that* counting for directness!
For the trite "palpable hit".

Though fair game
in a tricky quiz
when left to it, as we are.

4)
Especially for the bankrupt,
there's nothing in the whole wide world
beyond

 this forced liaison
with town planning –
committing wanderers
 to discrete divisions
 of sense
 and purpose.

Contrasting only with time,
the moment

 opening like a tight palm
 upon small change -
and upon these terms presented
 so gravely.

Yet, there are days and instants
that proffer so totally
one cannot seriously talk of paths and sidelans,
as I would once of heaven and hell
or hell and heaven, like a fool.

Down the road
is, surely, enough.

If I see you
I will recognise
your amble.

5)
When I run my finger
along the bridge of my nose
I am aware
of the delicacy of the bone
beneath,
its vulnerable position
in a world of objects.
I imagine it crack
and split
on impact
if thrown against a wall or rock
or stopping the out-lunged
rifle butt
and yet -
what an absurd thing –
to be so placed
all one's life -
in the patently severe light
of self-styled Iron Men.
Myths that have dragged us all
through hell
for an ounce of pride.
People go broke
attack and defend
trying and are
ever trying / to stop /
trying
every day in small ways / in desperation /
ever mind rolling minds
as the day unwinds
and it doesn't really matter at all.
And how easy a dawn wavers, or a bird dies
in the sure ease of its flight –
and the wish
is to let go
and finds you waiting / where you
have never been holding onto anything,
except tight nerves.
The sunlight softly warming
your world.

6)

We lose this game
only through *anticipation* –
though I have no doubt
that my flesh would
reel, outraged,
 at the first kick
to face and eyes –
the burning pain
and sick adrenaline
fear and terrible disappointment
that it were so
 would strike me
dumb, in an instant -
and require no definitions.

7)

(i)

I pursue this dialogue with myself
like a small child
clinging to
a rigorous and surly hand
in the gratuitous uncertainty
of cold comfort.

Chance events
to be more (or less)
particular.

I will not grow home-made
 worlds
from fear
but only for the hell of it.

So ...? We all know that
thousands die every day
it is, as the old tomes say,
 in the order of things /
in the balance
which sways as it is counter-
weighted

life is the crop
and death is the harvest

accept it as it comes
but avoid mantraps.

(ii)

Just a thing to which the mind returns
until it is spun out –
the cocoon -
uncentered - unravelling –
around an ideal distance
which life is not the object of.
And hence this lack of focus.
If we turn ourselves inside out
we only find guts
not
an inhabitable empyrean.

8)

(i)

Now I just want to say
that I've been here too long
it was an unsure feeling at first
but now it's getting strong.
You know I just can't stay baby
I'm always finding myself
looking over your shoulders
instead of in your eyes

I've got itchy feet and roving ways
so don't be surprised
when there's nothing more
for us to say.

(ii)

Come and go with the wind
the sparrow, the sparrow,

(What branch did you fly from...?
And did the slim grass stem sway
in strong winds
to bend beneath your weight,
touch earth,
and break your fall
as it too
was broken in that
mutual act of time and distance?)

Swift the flight from the bow
the arrow, the arrow,

no way more simple /
following
 how I find the world to be:

a death in cages
doors that turn in the wind.

(iii)

Waiting for the train to leave –
leave the train
leave the platform
all the leftovers
and uniformed attendants
checking tickets,

that last train
and that one
again –
another goes
and another
from another here
to another there

it may be a long sad story
perhaps just,
listening to my wristwatch ticking -

(the pale wind of dawn
through an empty overcoat),

somewhere
is the next station.

(iv)

A rumour of chill air
as dogs shiver
through restless dreams
see
time etched against
the dull cliff face -
a settling, grey wall of cloud
or the slow steady drumming
of cold rain
until dawn –
where ears bend
to shrill uncoiling serpents
of steam,
and the rush of huge engines
through night
until the border towns.

Lamps flaring red, flaring white,
over misted fields -
hard then pale, ghost-shades, distanced,
along the doubled silver lines –
and their incessant perspectives
of glistening light!

9)

Some people go by time-tables and schedules
and wishful thinking and coffee-table hunches
some people go by books and movies
or what other people tell them
some people take a bus
half way across the country
collecting up on city lights and one-night stands.
Me - I think I'll go by the stars
it's as good a way as any as I see it
as good as I'm going to find
I think I'll just go by the stars.

Some people buy themselves into limousines
and stock market shares
surround themselves with money, people,
and easy scenes
blocking out the cold winds they feel
around their hearts sometimes
hoping it will all give the right excitement
but I'm going to ride
through this sideshow,
drifting through the carnival
and keep my heart for the stars.

End of day sounds
with the wind in late-summer leaves –
the sound of trains leaving stations –
night, when the stars come out,

everyone's just standing round and waiting
 wanting to let off a little bit of steam
 hoping for good-times, something to do,
 I keep an eye out for clouds
 thinking I'll follow my feet awhile.
 It's as good a way as any as I see it
 coasting down hill on the freeway ride
 think I'll just let it all go
 by the stars.

(ii)

Fix it into a pattern
 and make all the ends tie
 put in an easy rhyme
 blow out an easy tune
 swinging around the sun
 all in the same carnival
 on this same old roller coaster ride.

You're just a small part of it all
 take off your hat then
 and have a look around –
 wipe your tired brow
 and breath a sigh –
 from the warm slime
 to the cold moon
 it's all the same
 round and round we go again
 tangled in eachother's bootstraps
 on the same old roller coaster ride.

I'll let it all drift by
 as of no account
 and the sounds of a summer night might suffice
 lay down upon the earth
 and tell a few stories to myself,

taking up a little of your time,
notice - the city lights stay brighter
when there's no moon to see,
it's late - and the dogs howl from backyard fences
as headlights sweep up highway lines –
just relax and take it easy
on the same old roller coaster ride.

10)
Distraction,
and slow distraction
of all the world gives –
gratuitously
 and undemanding –
down to the merest reflection
upon unmeaning -
light upon a leaf's edge, upon a
trainticket in the wind –
let loose just
 now -
heh! and a smile following
just for the well! of it
that I would care to make a song about -
infinitely small,
like rainwater.

(11)
How expressive
of themselves
a chair
a crumpled pillow
may be -
difficult to discover
beneath other meanings
as one would read a line /
fishing for horizons
see the hook
dip

through reflections
and clear water
parts and
drips
there
as you would study landscapes
walk through them
with your eyes
or peer into lantern shows
or over the weaver's shuttle
on the wind tides
eroding
a weathered seam
as in miniature,
faces, edges,
where rocks are scars
the tradesman's saw has scored
deep into the table-lands
above all alphabets,
and the child's bright eyes
over his bowl's edge
into the toyshop after dark -
(into a strange town of little pointed
windows),
or through walls of rain
drifting over subways
where water-melons
lie cold and fragrant
in thin pinewood boxes
and the melonman's small laugh
trips upon edges
of blue and white tiles
there, below,
at the centre of the world
eternally into being
by the mind-light
like a secret
you might try
to tell forever

until it fades away
again
and a thousand things
and days
given birth
by what
is really
this matter of matter
an assemblage of attributes,
even,
as we are.

(12)

Why should I be concerned
when life is a song?

No bluebell bonnet
for my baby
she's so pretty
when the sun's shining
in her fuzzy gold hair.

Must poets feel miserable
be crazy tortured souls,
exquisite madmen,
(as in the myths)
to compensate somehow
for the world being
a black event.
out of some
curious sense of "justice"
or "compassion"?

And who needs it anyway?

What we talk about is the reality –
is propagated
and sustained.

Surely not -
a dour spook
riding the unearthly hummingbird
of suffering
into an electric blue and universal
funeral where
all hell breaks loose
while a last lonely bell
chimes?

It seems a curiously tall order
and an even taller story
difficult to be put on
like any old overcoat
one might find in the back of the cupboard.

(As it seems to me,
all Romantics enlist the dubious
artifice of their broken hearts.)

In short,
I smell a con.

I find
my right hand does know
what my left hand is doing.
I must watch myself stack the deck
when I draw the black and the white
aces.

(Aesop was having us on.
The grasshopper was the real,
moral, and most ideal
of heroes.)

13)

Plump plums
trim trams
billboards and bluebells
and strawberry jam

who cares?
dusty moonlight
dusky moonlight
gliding on my feather bed

see you soon light
and deep maroon light

riding on my feather bed
sun comes up
and shines
so high
it's so fine
blue sky and
red wine
sweet little lil'1 be mine
in the
morning she'll
rhyme

happy like
a silver ring on
the
little finger
of summertime

14)

Concert. commitment,
the angst of ingrowing toenails
are a swindle.

The "human condition"
is human conditioning
(in a particular place
in a particular time
in a particular culture)
As - the alienated poet
has been shoved down our throats,
along with his attendant mythology
for far too long -
obstructing our freest voice
when he wasn't busy
choking us.

Not much too choose between,
either forced feeding
or the silver spoon.

But after the spewing forth

that's been indulged, whether lordly or despicable,
surely the emptied stomach
proceeds
a grand desire for a change of diet.

I'm not going to concern
myself with a response that's been deposited
like some limited security loan
in a piddling little back street brokerage house
which would presume the whole universe
is on its payroll -
and yet, go broke
at the first signs of dirty weather.

I just can't be bothered -
summer has been settling
against these windows
like soft full fruit against a thick glass bowl
ripe and firm for the taking.

15)

The last long breath he took
was of night and ashes
where rainclouds
were burning thunderous applause
in the west.

The night's crinkled curtains
bloomed horribly full
of holes and daisies
as taking up the skeins
of veins around his throat
and
grasping of course the reins
he rode *the lone black star*
to shine up there

while sunsets
beaded in his own thin blood
over "all those impossible yesterdays"
sadly
trembled
and dripped.

Until the spell
fell
and he unhitched from the rails
and he rode, and he rode,
hi ho, and away.

We all find ways
of making it easier
as well as harder

on ourselves.

(But let's not get
Too American,
Our foreign policy
Made in Washington –
our cultural kowtow –
another doormat!)

Let's keep it simple,
keep it local.
Smile, often.

16)
Tediously
picking over
threads in the wind

it doesn't matter

and doesn't matter
that it doesn't matter

let tautologies
dig their own graves.

standing stern and ridiculous
in my boots.

17)
Sea-saw beneath
towers
of a fingers breadth /
fire and rain on the hillside -

in the rainmaker's tent -
the old trickster from the hills
over his stock-in-trade of 'magic'

his teeth are cracked and rotted
when he smiles
but his eyes are twinkling
over deft hands, amidst herbs and potions.

Blackened stumps of burnt-out trees
edge the hills
to the bleak borderlands,

lightening strikes like eyes,
but yet he smiles,
smiles and mutters
as he mixes.

We came a long way
to melt in this crucible,
having surrendered all illusions
of ownership
to set our stern faces against inhospitable
and imaginary
winds,
and yet, were angry, disappointed ,
giving way to an easy despair
at the least inclination –
picking over gigantic foolishnesses

and unravelling instants.

Time was on it's own side,
there were no great plans to follow
no need to win,
even, to begin.

Only an unexceptional
return
to an original point
of balance and departure.

18)
By only the most
subtle of chains
could the dancer
be bound

the light the dark
a secret a rose
the heart

a place to step
to another place

childish St. George
with dressup armour and sword
lifted the blade
and it was true
clean through all the ravelling
and unravelling threads

no reasons needed
when action carries
its own impetus

nor watch our shadows
glance across the floor
and mistake them for yet another
pit
fall

only to be born
and die
in such a light
time

its own instant,
and is.

19)
Another day
to ink the pen
to pen the ink

to throw paper planes
into the wind.

Open Sequence

He said reflecting, feeling, and moving are spectrums which graduate into each other, rather than self-contained categories.

And somebody else noted that art was a matter of definition and history.

Open Sequence

grew out of these two stray wisps of conversation.

The art of the indefinite.
And exploration of possibilities
heretofore unrealised.

Bearing a marked similarity
to ordinary life slices
& (Oh two dollars per kilo
wrapped, unwrapped, Oh held
in the balances of

contortionists
&

no bodge podge
this

what (is)
(WHAT?!) *the man in*
(is) (it) (really)

but

the street
(that) calls

musical phrases
the ways to read

(it) common sense (?).

- with our eyes -

(Most of what we call reality
after all, merely a matter of tacit agreement

Oh hogey pogeey
picked the eyes
mapped the day
and drained it dry.

- with our inner ears to note
the music
the sense - flow -

data-flower -
of each mind-page.
So:

Regard some

pieces as an inherent sense
of jig-saw puzzling

why

don't

others as strings of stepping

stones (to)



step across?

or
as disparate objects,
salt and peppered to taste,
with our

Budding Tongues

Tight guidelines of Puritanism / ethics of exclusion and deprivation / sheer ice-force / minimalist attitudes reject: environment as world/body, *imagination-ionid-ideas*, emotions without starched collars, much of you, much of me, that could be . . . replaced by 'maximalist' ambling approach of nourishment-gathering with more systems open to inter-react and respond. A sensual understanding of the worlds we create, live in, and share as the natural extension of our total bodily identity

OR

a still lake of STARS

s
 r
 t a
 r
 ar
 a r s
 a a
 a s s t s
S T A R S
 a
 a
 s s t
 s r st r s
 r
 s ar
 r s
 r
 s

Sit down upon a comfortable
 arm chair. Pour a glass of
 liquor,
 drink a little

WEST *ing* d r
 MELTING *ing* links
 bl a little

under the light upon the glass lip,
 a single droplet poised.

these millions punctuating s T a R s
 sonorous chasms, blinking

Morning breaks

A A
 BELL BROWN
 A OWL
 BEE

pastorale o pastorale /
 calls the woodland
 Ovid oval

(WO)man
 avid alive
 alive in light

light

LITTLE
LAMBS OF THIS LAND
Oh
light brown, bronze
 BELLS & BEES!

Our country in its most universal particularities will be calling for the almost unaccountable of variations.

sing sweetly	The earth as it
sing long	swings around (land away my
sing a long	boys land away)
sweet song	just round and round and
	round

far enough for
directions that you've found (turn away)
and
eventually
the same
place
be
(Oh away land away)

our little boat will set out
from here

Travel on
land of awake
the moon, full oh full
find
destiny smile
ing
over
all our silent hands
that gentleness opens to these
magic nights

of cloud place gleam
 ing - to soft soft on
 embers quicken
 ing ly where's only night/fall
 (fall s the note
 To
 an hearing
 ear EAR-ing
 ing
 rings soundly sheathed in
 a round night's sOUnd Or gan

FROM NIGHT THROUGH
 THE WINDOW MORNING
 GRACES THE DRAPES

The sun is a huge ball of molten atomic lightening - is that not so? - it's alive and reaching out everywhere ...

So maybe you're lost afraid a lonely
 wailing waif without
 bank account or wife sad
 in and out
 in the cold so blue
 and alienated it's too bad you might go
 mad you're so nervous stale
 staid
 and self-conscious very well then this
 exercise is for

... uncoiling deadly white-hot tentacles - sizzsizzle fizz sizz - hell - can you feel it sizzling up there!

FROM MORNING GRACES
 THE DRAPES TO NIGHT
 THROUGH THE WINDOW

Moon, moon, barren, naked, in lunatic dream-still skies,
 I see great fish of the sea foaming through your weird eyes –
 great ghostly tuna and marlin streaming through the foggy auroras
 and that moon oMno! shining
 over my shoulder!

Jump out of your seat, rush into the street, and meet a stranger there. Make up a completely autonomous poem about the shape of his/her nose, reciting in a loud voice, jumping up and down on one foot, and grinning insanely. Make your exit by doing a vaudeville shuffle up the footpath. I guarantee it will have an immediately efficacious effect.

Now - arrange a fishing trip on the bay. Salt water. Ok?

It is relatively easy to free your intellect and your imagination. Harder to navigate freely through the realm of the emotions, but nevertheless, still possible. Hardest of all to change your habitual behaviour patterns - the patterns of your movements and actions in the world at large. And to know that a circle of integration is closed in this openness.

To discover an interesting contrast, sit on the floor of your room. Meditate on the inspired simplicity of traditional Japanese architecture, or the serene beauty of mathematics, of the order and balance of Mondrian's light blue paintings. Let your mind inhabit cold Nordic landscapes - the eternal frozen nights of an arctic winter. Drink a glass of clear, cold water. See your mind reflected in the glass as you drink.

Make a list of
all the associations brought to mind by smelling

- i) new plastic
- ii) old newspapers
- iii) a bar of soap

experiment with combinations of i) ii) & iii) ... do poems happen?

A Collective Event

Place a record player in the corner of a large room - the furniture out of the way - put on heavy chaotic music thump clatter and bash saucepans together - make a racket; - loose yourself in the confusions you've created - shout - act like a fool - act like someone an overly po-faced person would abhor - enjoy yourself - shout out, whoop...

Or

you could go outside and potter about in the garden for an hour or so.

GARDENING. Defined in a difference. In a now. cities have gardens. All streets should have gardens. If look around you'll find one, even if it's only a window box.

When a garden is not a garden

Questionable questions?

I remember in the white-painted room the girl was tag about Knowledge and Understanding. She said each question followed its answer, and that questions seek 1 answers through the human mind. I said, perhaps matter of construction. She asked, do you mean construction of language or of the human mind? I said the complete situation, and the person who experienced that situation, and all the apparatus of perception through which his experience was defined, and which, as a matter of tautology, are operative parts of that unity of situation, person and experience in any case. She said, you're too diffuse, you become too vague. That's because you try to encompass everything at once. True clarity, however, is only one thing at a time.

It's a sharp focus of attention. I said, there are focuses and focuses. There is an art of the vague as there is an art of the clear. Many things are possible. I plot my course upon a map whose edges always extend into the unexplored regions that I have not yet seen. I said, I am not a religious person because religions always seem to claim to have discovered The Answer to The Question. I look upon The Question and The Answer as curious objects washed upon the beach. Or as pinecones in a garden.

GARDENS. Word trees. Poet trees (sorry!) Pun ferns. Indefinite grassy objects. (Incidentally, I can tell by the way you're reading this that you're the sort of person to have an old, tattered gardening coat hidden away in a cupboard somewhere – do you remember leaving it there, twenty years ago?)

It is good then, that you retrieve
your shabby old gardening coat again –
put it on -
slouch (ing)
with your hands in the pockets -
and we will continue our little walk
through this garden.

With all the worlds held easy in your mind's pockets - walking around - the sun in the day - nearer to living in moonlight - strolling very leisurely - note very delicate blooms, oak trees, everlastings - look, those wind-flowers! - and a window ledge with geraniums - easy to another tune now - trip / skip / pace / step - soft shoe baby build a feather nest in the stars - come along - sing and see extraordinary landscapes growing on the underside of each leaf ...

Ah, never could remain of
a serious caste of mind
when every little sparrow
in every little tree
sings for his supper
sings for his tea.

FROM FLORA TO FAUNA.

If you have the room - relax, and the moon is your kitten
- eyes quick you see - parnclose a small kitty, jay?
- clipnose a nitty? - spend at least half an hour frogging –
whisk of nonsense, feline gesture, a glint in mineral
light bright eyes – yes?
have you ever seen a creature more curious?

But how about if *you* look in a mirror, Mr./Mrs/Ms Primate?

Better make yourself a cup of tea, sit down and drink it.

I worked out how many miles it was to Andromeda. It would take a long time to walk that far! Ridiculous idea. There's no road to Andromeda. But say we could go there in our minds. What if thought travelled at the same speed as light? It would take six million years of patient thought aimed in the same direction, for us to arrive.

(Warning: it's possible to be caught up in this sort of mind game. And you only have only so many years to play with.)

And anyway, there might be far more interesting things right on our doorsteps. A deal closer to home than Andromeda.

For example, given the right conditions, it is possible for us to be happy. And very happy at that. Why then, is this so rarely the case, even where people are warm, well-fed, with roofs over their heads, and with a little leisure on their hands? Simply because most desire that others share their happiness before it can be said to exist. And, alas, there always seems to be such a dearth of meaningful communication between people, on all but the most mundane of levels. Ask your friends if they have found this to be so.

In some exceptional individuals too, there is a desire to experience the whole spectrum of human emotions. Even sadness, despair, loss, fear and madness. Indeed, I have met some who were attracted to these darker shades as vehemently as others craved the sunlight and the good life. We all, in some way, whether great or small, manage to seal our fates, and must live out the fates we have chosen.

But perhaps, you might say, there is no choice. Perhaps a person's fate, even his very personality and identity, have been determined by circumstance; and he is just another accident of history. Perhaps.

But - there may be other exceptional cases too. I think of those (mythical?) highly independent individuals who are

content to be happy by themselves. And who are happy primarily because they want to be. Even though the world around them be the blackest of events.

But for us - the unexceptional - we must chart our courses more intelligently. It is our fate that we are always tripping up in each other's bootstraps. We will lean together in the wild weathering winds of this tiny planet.

And there is a need it seems to redefine our abilities - to respond and find response/ability - openly and creatively – to again reconnoitre the outer boundaries of art – and then, have a look about us! Perhaps, for the first time.

Wash your face in a big lather of soap, whistle a tune, like one of the seven dwarfs, go outside and do a little shopping. (Yes, I know this is absurd humour.)

Forget everything else.

Enjoy everything around you, life is just a bowl of cherries now, and you are in control of it all, just the right amount.

Return, and cook yourself a good meal.

Play boats in the washup water.

Why not?

Street Music

Change allows the possibility of modulated harmonious patterns. Dynamic equilibriums of mutually reinforcing elements established within the limitless inner world.

The Invitations

This stage	Spores to burrow deep into the core of the world – heart's dark bight spinning light
is of	like sunsets aflame through the atom-rind The pulse or changing tense one fire
the world I set	transforming even these cast-off rags of listless days, as mind becomes assumption of intricate linkages - follows the spark net jingling small change in its pockets - seeking a key to seed-locks and the cellular stars – the ever-lost moment to brooding presence
registered	in the fabulous garden / and ring each note to note / see each molecule and nerve
in its most	strung
romantic light.	into banded coins across the winter brow of time and their casual ironies glistening.

Leading Questions

What is this process we are about to
become
involved with, in here?
Are *we*, *how* many now?

Overhear conversations in the street, do we move to the same songs.

A street plays the same music as I do.
Surely.

Hear this. Anything.. .
Hear. (Within here.) Light airs.. .

Where was your mind then?

Same lost key that jingles somewhere in the fog, or coin rolling an interminable journey along wide-walks and sunsets, to jump each interstice, then roll on again anew.

We catch a light finally spinning into the wind before the long flat lie of stasis. (The smoke drifts over our shoulders.)

Delicate membranes (passing by-way shrubs in their squat municipal tubs now), a few thin cells within your ear attuned to the finest murmur. All of an airy brain, translating the changing pressure pattern (s). World modulating vocal chords, then ear, a subtle pick-up head of nerve endings, as chemistry triggers sense, continuity, shading, word, picture; detailed throughout a continuously on-going dialectic of structured probabilities, then this what we are in the process of, where can we draw the boundaries?

The Two I's Of A Bi-symmetrical Brain

The circle joining into itself,
joins in the fact. Two eyes resolve (into) each (and) centre.

Reading. A World of Imagination

Time-placing. Timing. Placing.
Pacing. Phantoms through musical streets.

We have come to: "Marie in the Library-world". A series of innuendos over Lake Word. Or, in the lit. 'vernacular', direct character sketching techniques.

She might live with her mother in a little rented by the sea ...In a mood of ultimate listless abstraction Marie trailed her long index finger across the water. The waves whorled into foam across the red-varnished keel of her nails. Then, discarding *Robinson Crusoe*, she lay down her book, contemplating a darkling sky. (Black, swollen storm clouds!) I might be caught in the rain, she suddenly realized, brushing sand from her dress...

Or she might live on the top floor of a high-rise flat block ... Marie mused over her novel, rocking back and forth upon the solitary tubular steel swing set up under the huge shadow of flat block five.

Marie, Marie, your father bends spaghetti!

A child's taunting, sing-song voice.

Furious at being so rudely woken from her Marie flung her copy of *Emma* at 'that little rat Austin Spokes from No. 2'.

Blurred pages shuffled open in the wind as it ricocheted in a graceful arc off the side of his head:

"...which Isabella never/ flap/ elegant decorum / absolutely detested

// flap/ confined society/ equal for temper/ flap/ thrown completely away....”

Thud!

Now the triumphant overseer of Austin Spokes’ tears, Marie retrieved the slightly dented book from where it lay and with the monumental and unruffled dignity of a revenged Amazon, strode haughtily away...

This process of creating a character, of evoking ghosts.
There is the writer and where is the reader?
Phonograph then, who the record - where the pick-up
needle - locate the song - and who the speaker/hearer?
Or, within the same sentence - do you need this word or do I?
Black, White and Grey, ghost-writers all.

Or, Again

(Along the line of eye sight. I. Sight. Sigh. See sadly
through the tale of unfulfilled lovers in say a true con-
fessions testimonial. Cry, and I cannot read the next
(blurred) world. My cloudy tear-drop lens.)

Gestalts

Letter to syllable, to word, to sentence, to
paragraph, into - this gradually emerging environment.
You see - it begins to shape itself already. Horizons,
speech-scaped.

(Similarly, newspapers, novels, theses, or soup can labels.)

An unspoken tongue is transferred through its language roots
into the braid. Sense routes of ganglion jungle (the nether spokesmen),
into synaptic punctuation - following the same lines as the other senses –
and all connecting, spoke-like, within the Greater Communications
Transport System.

The Reader Demurs

Dull shelving, dull books, Marie puts down
this raw M/S transformed into a fully published
(digital) edition by the gold-like potentialities
of wishful thinking.

Marie pads the thick municipal carpet to sliding glass entrance doors. And waiting at the bus stop, memories of a classroom when, for no obvious reason, two years before...

Marie's new dress - ruined! - altogether. And ink all over the floor and everywhere messy faces went ink red when Mr. C saw it – but he was alright yes the *favourite* teacher. Maths and English.. .

She looks for her new decimal school ruler with centimetres (will confuse everyone!) and underlines the times on the Ivanhoe Buslines table.

Scuffling in her schoolbag again for the tenth time today amongst erasers, workbooks, a scarred compass case. The smell of vinyl drifts everywhere all year through her schoolgirl's world .. .

Not quite the strong sickening smell of car seat covers when the hot summer sun bakes them... Toot! (Old lady, cross, and crossing, mutters at the traffic.) Toot! She had better be careful, too - traffic very heavy hereor end sadly like a *column of wounded doves*, (or was it *wounded columns of clouds?*). ..that strange book, by that odd poet! Jenkinson, what's his name, was it?

Anyway, Marie thought, I wonder why I should be thinking of this? Well, well... doves, just doves everywhere! Two strange phrases to associate with a real dead bird, like this one lying by the side of road!

In the gutter here, today. Did I put the thought in his head? But that's impossible? How can a character put a thought in the author's head. As though we had made up the gods. Doesn't the writer write the characters, not the other way around? And - later on - in one of his (very!) odd poems, I think – an entire city was made of dove's soft bodies. Just think! And a Saturday tomorrow. At last, to look forward to. Good. And now the bus is coming. . .

(... into each song – there reigns events, faces, images, as the Rain softly falls, over a washed surface of words, mirrors and the light caress of your eyes.)

But I am growing tired of your schoolgirlish face Marie. Please be a good character, catch your bus and breathless be. Ok then, I can't just leave you there, suspended forever at the bus stop. I had better write you out of here... So, here goes:

"A strange cigar-shaped craft pulled up to the bus stop. Marie entered, waved goodbye to the reader then the writer, She entered. Soon, this very special 'bus' was flashing off, at near the speed of thought, on its way through several remote nth-dimensional parallel worlds, through space and time and sci-fi simultaneously, and soon (understatement) on its way to Andromeda."

There - that should do it.

But no – Marie somehow re-emerges from a pause
between two straying thoughts, her schoolbag now full of road maps
and stellar charts, commenting upon the walnut-maple
geraniums of a remote star cluster in the constellation Antares!
Sigh! I will be completely finished, if this continues.

Of Course - Now - The Method

Need only return, turn round in the
dance, complete each step. The feet link - through no
collage - though my net be of coarse weave. (Wires
and branches.) I shall be fisherman of these waters.
My net is the forest's reflection in lakes of rainwater.

And here I might try for driftwood, or there for coloured
leaves, for stars tracing their course across its sur-
face, for the pale floating lanterns of the moon, or minute
silver goldfish.

Reflections In A Municipal Library

What a bastard is the angel with whom I wrestle, for my own
piece of mind. Seems impossible, in abstract, but
I would like to reflect upon the totality of this reflecting
process such that even this reflection (now) is
of that totality.

Perhaps why everything keeps on wandering in and out.
But perhaps again this idea has merely arisen as an instance
of semantic doubletalk.

Mmmmmm but what? of course ...now.. ..*but*
mmrnmm la da da cough, splutter, then also...
the method'?...mmrn.... which is just not to mention...
mmmmm scrape, er, you... toot! Rumblemumble toot!!

THUMP!

All random, 'social soft-wear' pages. The reflec-
tions breaking into ripples where hardware worlds intrude.

Back In The Street

A dawn rehearsed from white ice. Early coolness then may be strung along nerve-lines. Formula is form. I, losing the street when in the work, yet lest I forget its bleak handshake. The R.S.L. local branch duly dully passed. (Well - another link!) This street - the other hand behind the pen. I its solitary muser. May read and see each fossilized time-track etched into ink and tiredness. Two glazed pupils at the stop. School's out. Pencil sharpeners to strip word-flesh from a cerebral skeleton. All back to bone. Cuts to the minimal - uncovering each bridge I cross. Rains softly now. Rather wet here more often. Fall in and swim. Winter now. Sing out – Hey, I've seen that face before. She grown much older, suddenly, the same age as me. It's Marie. Space travel must have aged her! Dark hair and flashing bright eyes... Yes, it is! She moves from the focus again, and I try to keep up with her, my so widely travelled and now suddenly grown-up invention. Who also seems to see the future...

Columns of Wounded Doves

Columns of Wounded Clouds

Firstly, an item of distraction. One flat, asphalted dove (I think it's a dove) on the main road. Looks like it has been run over a thousand times already. Should have stuck to the park. Out of harm's way. On a busy shopping day. The two capitalised phrases a come strangely to mind. Difficult to say why. What process of association. But this street is a commercial one. Money money, changing hands. (Hence the links are economical.)

But ah - too long at this point. I've lost her!

Waxes Bleak / Philosophical

The Poem Blooms A Skeletal Rose

The street
and a cold light in my head.

Shining interludes.

Openings /
 reflected shifts
and cold steel /
it sings faces
 - strange puffballs
drifting down
an enormous
lift well.
Images in alleyways
threading the specific
 with fear of lost words -

a language of black alphabet snow
(It follows your falling eyes...)
and chunks and chunks of buildings -
tiles - chimney stacks -
to dent hats
or deal multiple conclusions
in pummelling, rhythmic club-blunts
from the air.

It's raining!

(And now, Marie-ghost, will your rich Mediterranean
blood flow through the cashier's fingers? I cut you from a
library girl in bluejeans - from the tough kid's crazy eyes
at the Pizza place, from huddled schoolgirls at a bus stop.
And now your ghosts have fled into the silent frosted
glasssheets of these shopfronts. And I have been caught up,
and swallowed by the street.)

Away Upon The Snow Winds

And shall we share then
the same sails,
exclaiming
the same
seasons,
tread
the same footbridges
to eat
these same words
at this same plain table, as now?
For here the wind is rattling,
hear the wind,
upon the cold panes,
and hissing emptily overhead
as if through hollow bones
of a dead night.
Saying: Tssss thssss thssss.
Listen, do you hear it?
The air troublesome
under loose planks
of the wooden stairway?
We step down to ground
from makeshift platforms
put up
to appease the impotent gods of virtue
Let me take your arm,
we shall balance upright
take our weight
in this scale
of flesh

a proliferation of irritable cells
of life
the hazard
of the almost exact
my friend.

(Sometimes the night. And so quiet. Life seems to rustle
through the dusk. Only the breath, a deep draught of
stillness, and body-warmth, centred under the heart,
will suffice for love. Or, its instant.)

Say: who spins worlds? Coins, coins of sunlight. We take
our chances crossing these roads. Where black tyres eat
asphalt.
Decode your loss, or till the dark for gold-gleam
and the long lonely singing in the wind.
All's vulnerability.
Old logbooks tearstained by time.
Let's cry in our beers boys.
Until they're dry, until we're by.
Perhaps a moon to remember.
Soft nights. As now. Worlds.
Good to walk into, good to walk out of.
Each spinning world like arks across the orphan's crown.
Small animals to track the snow.
Then fade from view... Ghost-lights all else... the horizons...

Now That Death Creeps

Only In The Melodramas

The wind
 overturning paper cups
 on the abandoned pier
 was the same
 in which doves veered
low;
their light-breathing wings
to clip
 the face of earth.
A light breath which speaks
 no final yea or nay –
absence or presence of
 conceptual light -
nor deals darkness upon the mellow turf
 of dreams,
nor the *far*, nor *ever*,
of nostalgic sadness
to trail from instant beams of streetlights.
Only a precision / as
 fortuitous as accidental /
in this cool irradiation of the possible.

(Again - the mind detaches itself. A play upon the stream.
An inclination to no purpose - that of knowing - only itself.
I shed notes of pale blue for our soft eyes.. .

Understanding

Notes turning around and around the conceptual point.
To say: I know this or that. I feel this or that.
I don't know this or that.
Or - a rose may grow. An atom split. An amoeba divide.
A man dies. I write this word. I put a full stop.
Here. There. Anywhere.
A thousand forests might shake their leaves onto me.
Or single tree.

The order is always the same.
Always within. Another womb. World. Tomb.
Break down one boundary, jump each stepping stone,
cross the lake - each one – yet everything extends
limitlessly onwards around the next bend, until –
inevitably - we re-enter

Time's Cool Seas

- ice-floes
in which
I drift. (Only because
it's winter.) Everything is perfectly
so. And then we die.

Yes

My intentions throughout (I should have realized earlier!) are fictional.
I had thought to *enter* the continue of world and idea, fact and fiction,
yet at the same to stand outside it.
Revealing our definitions as inter-dependent, continually shifting,
and completely relative; that is, related.
Which is, of course, the case.
However, there is no point outside this continuum,
and no way of halting its flow for the purposes of examination.
To presume to have an independent intellectual understanding
of its totality is sheer foolishness. It involves a tacit negation of
one's context. To negate all produces a world so defined, not
stillness or clarity or the overall view. One can bend back against
one's own natural, conditioned, socialised inclinations only so far.
Then the tension becomes unbearable. It was a mistake to think
I could have stopped the flow. Do you see now why I say the intent
behind this entire work is revealed as 'fictional'?
I.e., to discover for myself the implications of that word
in the most complete sense presently available to me.
But enough of this. Let us return to "the work in itself."

Wires And Branches

Come, seek shelter beneath a forest of bare winter trees.
We have a photograph of it in our heads. It is very cold. A wind-sieve.
(The bareness of the branches, also, may bring other times
to mind.) Perhaps a taut steel wire strummed by the wind.
A forest of nerve-ends, with thoughts shuttling each line.
A line of words across the page.

Five Related Wordplays

We make the statements that wake us.
We state ourselves.
We are states of each other.
We take place within states of mind;
 our own, and each other's.
We are mindful of our statements.

*By The Hairs Of Our Heads Are We Then
Raised To A Statement Of Grace (?)*

Granites of language
worked by mind-adzes
to promulgate

an exterior calm
 (my lucid-sun-likeness
the image-cry - splits the grainy woods
to hone miraculous shards –
construct makeshift temples
of this idiotic little dishpan city –
my first love,
now your lovely wings
are just cheap linen
 upon the bargain counters.

And I look to the street's multiplicity
of faces,
a thousand I's,
searching the diamond plane.

See them age:
crowsnest of intricacies
in time-worn flesh-vellum.
Tenacity
 to no clear purpose
 my animal
only time *may* heal -
the crux in these workings
 here
reveal places and faces
 as fantasy milestones
 we stumble home
 past weathered walls;
and sustaining light,
 great substance,
in surface play.

And as the air might *play* - light rains upon

the pool,
into frost and sunshine
that mind glimmers and gleams,
a sense
 of fine relief
 to remain above
all our painstaking exactitudes,
and this street of stars.

Hence

Myths in skins,
shed epidermis,
time-peeled wombs,
 left to rot
 in fallow fields
- the world reduces all
 to its own sense of
 intricate compromise –
old Prima Donna
it's always 'just one last spotlight' –
the merry dance we're led.
Yet - we take up Ariadne's thin threads -
your lines tame the handler!

(Ah young ghost-girl, you have become the whole world.
Have aged, become timeless, and a goddess. So – the old myths
might yet outlast the sun. Our mothers remember.)

Swing Down Sweet Earlobe

Now - that platform we abandoned earlier. You remember?
It may have been of a useful height after all. We could both,
I hope, see a little narrow bridge from that vantage, threading
its way between all this forestalled twilight - the ghostly
branches in which we both feared entanglement. It may be time
to cross that bridge and see how the lands lie.

UPTOHERE

A Familiar Return

Marie walked down Lower Road, a shopping bag bouncing jauntily at her hips,
feeling a brisk interest in everything she saw, now that the street had all the air of a
Saturday morning. She recognised old Mrs Petroni, small and moustached, hunched
over a display of capsicums and string beans outside a greengrocer's.

Early sunlight skipped around her and over the footpath, flashing from the
chromium trimmings on cars and prams, and from the polished shop-fronts. The air
felt cool and invigorating against Marie's face and bare arms, made her smile
inwardly to herself, as she dodged amongst the shoppers.

"Pasta, ham, margarine, and cooking oil. . she tried to remember the mental
list she had made earlier. "It doesn't matter," she mused to herself, smiling outwardly
now. "I'll remember when I'm in the market. I'll see everything around me."

...The stalls, with piles of fresh fruit and vegetables, and fish sellers who clean your fish while you watch. And the voices calling out, "Who'll give me fifty cents for a big bag of apples?" And all the colours and the smells and the people. She felt a sense of anticipation as she passed the chemist shop, catching a glimpse of herself in its large plate-glass window. Young and slim in bluejeans, perhaps twenty-four, with wide dark eyes, and long thick black hair falling over her favourite, slightly sun-bleached blue blouse with its green border of embroidered flowers.

A fleeting impression of other reflections drifting across her own - a young man who looked oddly familiar, making notes in a notebook - as she turned the corner, suddenly slowing behind a distraught housewife loaded with bundles and baskets, her attendant litter of young children together in front of the red light of a pedestrian crossing.

Marie stopped with the others, waiting for the green light. Her eyes roved skywards. First over the shopfronts, and then, losing focus, through memories, to a silent guitar on green grass and reddish-yellow leaves. Perhaps cedar, ash, elm, or oak. She couldn't say. Didn't know the names of trees. And someone's hands would fall to music. Five strong brown fingers to draw melodies from the taut strings. The deep notes evoking long summer notes, the moon and sea, and fishermen hauling their nets from the waves...

The image vanished. Now the press of urgent people, moving across two bland white lines, drew her with them in their flow. She quickened her steps and jumped to the opposite footpath ahead of everyone.

"I'm a dreamer, dreamer, dreamer," she intoned to herself, nearing Hillcrest Road, where a light blossom-scented rush of summer wind caught her pleasantly un-awares.

Turning into the market street, she stopped to flick her mussed hair from her eyes with a quick imperious gesture of her head. It spread out like a dark wave against the clear then cascaded gently down again, across the Mediterranean Sea of her blouse.

It was shady here, full of life. She was followed by the young author with the notebook, still trying to 'get her right'. As the cool, sheltered interior of the market place closed over Marie, just like the end of a story. Or perhaps the beginning of one.

Notes On The Notes

In effect, what I am doing is to play a (within) you and via your eyes.

Some music of placement /
of shifting accents /
and some the tug
of
heart strings.

As green - the growing, life-sustaining –
and the power of green - as colour against your eyes –
multiple associations of grass and woodlands.
I say, we say, a word, and you colour it in.
Like dreaming - weaving cellophane in the wind
one way or another of keeping a torch
aloft.
And

- cell-workings of blood / sugar / oxygen
(a change of state of these)
are all that is said,
the 'experience'.
As - when the senses are more or less closed, and sleeping
or when one particular sense gains predominance –
(reading - the eyes)
we stew in our own juices.. .
a tug at the heart strings –
imagination - the day dream:
dreaming, like thinking,
as thinking is like dreaming.
A difference of degree, of tone-change,
imagery emotional colouring,
being "hardness" or "softness"

structuring the energy levels -
the degree of melding-into-articulation.
Or more, or less as... I feel the seed opening
I know the seed has opened
I am the seed in the act of
self-opening

into an environment
drawing upon the happy convergence
of right elements /
to act as trigger everyone's common
chance of light, soil, and moisture.

So -
human experience is a matter of change:
of biochemistry, bioelectricity
of cellular structure, of the total body,
of the totality of our human-ness /
and of human environments, both social and physical.
The coded software. Soft, wary, uncertain, yet -
It is always (this) total gestalt inter-reacting.
May we use this place to write from –
perhaps to broaden the base of fiction, a
and modulate our sense of narrative and duration?

That Is, While You Read

In any narrative situation the picture and sound
are not "real" *except in* a landscape of words (peopled by phantoms).
YOU are day-dreaming ... the words are dream-stimuli.
Or now, as I am speaking in an abstract way which does
not produce images, you are thinking in a cerebral,
intellectual mode. Merely the shuffling of software
codes in your brain, to which these little marks
on the page have become associated in the course
of learning (conditioning). This is not just dreary theory
for academics, or quackademics, but how it really
happens. All too complex. Yet you immediately understand.

Back To The Library

I dream this memory, this song of you, great saddened day. The lost worlds more
distant than architectures bone-pickers might sift. The burning edges of dark flowers,
only a second since - and they became legendary in the darkness. Your floating face,
and hair drawn finely over smooth brows, eyes catching the light of time... (and die,
and die, the notes dwindle...) Into the future, moving by degrees, when the present
falls into place like Newton apples
Fall
at
your
feet!

Now -

From the library at noon. Squat rectilinear blocks are stamped out in the city's fume-laden airs. Hands stiff like chalk with the cold, close upon a plastic biro - to pen soft summer days. To sing with you now. Come into the nerve-light-garden with me. See time as a paring knife beneath the thin, translucent skins of a thousand apples. Past in the ink, a pause, and oceans tremble, to lap the ice-floes. A whole city meeting me here across miles, via optic nerve to brain... My cold flesh quakes in this winter air (and hence that penultimate arctic image adrift ...) Cold dancing upon chance lights... It's secrets...

A young girl pauses on the stairways, reading. Dark hair and eyes, and our persistent Romantic tradition, as Marie calls to me again like a vast liquid shadow over the winter streets.

As I Idle Hours Away On Mental Crosswords

I am beginning to repeat myself...

But this is not a day for thinking; it is more a day for staring out of windows. . . the sheer glass walls replete with drifting ghosts .

The Dove's Tail

The titles are affixed in retrospect - constitute much of the continuity, the follow through. And the songs - word songs - which I hope might fly in any context - are her wings.

This

landscape of wings,
a city built of soft dove's bodies,
built in, built of,
and through air,
upon steel wires of cerebral winter,
of common streets
I sing. (For my 'white lies' forgiven,
my snowgrounds, playgrounds ...)

Where notes resound, endure,
disappear,
are shared - are shed.
A music to walk to /
leisurely and ambling
through a paradise of ordinary
daytime,
of the now-chime, snow-chime,
until the rounding day –
of sundown, a warm glow
at the centre
of your dream.

Street Music

13 past 10. Green blades beside the path. How magical and strange even such a simple phrase may seem. A song - as your dreams are - your days - as play upon the stream. This alley-way to the gate, and then to the street. Red brickglow passage-womb-to deliver me – associations turn over like pages as I stroll. (I return to the great rounding day.) Doorway opening to sky. Big sky fields! This transition zone from my home to the street, a way into public reality. Though absent-minded at times about objective details. Absent minded at times. Absence of mind only. The always public reality abounding, binding and surrounding. Of course. I in it, and it in me. Turn around again, and turn again. Jingling the small changes in my pocket. All this is mine of course. And yours too. Public reality. Street music. I leave you here. I step out into it again and walk away.

Sail plane

As yet wordless
white noise of page
 bared
to stillness
exact /
this background
to stress
 location.

We rise

riders of air
trembling in cold light,
abashed to take courage
against the ice-walled mountains.

Face to face
 dream to bland dream
disdaining
 once again
the maternal earth
beneath our hands .

and there -
pounding -
all breaks and folds are sundered
where the dark stallion
arches sleek in his sweat,
a black flame against sky.
Rider,
dream-laden,
extending energy through distances

races the reined or borderless field
where first and last,
 all loss and gain,
begins with the least shudder of muscles
or flashing quartz-fleck of eyes,
tracing the curves
of soft breath
 rising / and balanced /
in a simple placing
of the elements that are his own /
to mind
 the chill clarity
of poem
and circumscribe
these resonances near-mineral -

a crystalline horse
or imaginary field.

(Where?
A way into our eyes ...
to search the nerve jungle!
May links be
as synapse,
 economical as daylight,
for all taking part, all parts are taken,
as we pass fruits
 hand to hand
proffer gifts
and celebrate the given.)

And here
 drawing time
at their birth-place –
yet purely abstract
 in your ghost-sight,
 Marie Celeste,
oh Dutchman,
the impossible creatures arise
to cloud my palms
 with silver,
or with careless freedom
 launch a child's delicate
sail-plane
into turbulent airs.

Glide from field
into wavering image -
I can almost touch your mind –

rider of bypaths –
your strange eyes!
The cellular mountains of speech
topple into silence around us,
enumerating chance cadences;
real only in a relative way
to an imaginary observer
who inhabits a universe without walls –
where millions of little worlds
are pin-points of burning frost
in the dead heart of the snow-star.

The same that
Basho shook from his frozen beard
on the winter road to Sugita.
No! he has stopped
 to know the heart-space
 of that word, or that one,
melting,
 they fall,
as thin snow, the world-rains,
shattering below
upon each grassblade.

And the forests bleed
all day into twilight
 both shades
 of his road.

That there
is always a world to fall back on –
the timely descent
 into her structured womb
when winds are woven
with shadows of monsters or gods.

(What a pity
the funniest monkeys
have lost their tails!

Left to reiterate
a geometry of absence ...

Leave them alone
and they will come home
dragging their jungles behind them.)

Our past-aping selves anew
with mirrors and ears
form roaring tigers
from their varnished planes
 at half-light,
emptily echoing imaginings
to embellish the grainy woods
with fur faces
 (upholstered hearts)
the Rousseau-jungle dreams.

Table lands of mist
crying into ashdrifting
 fieldnotes

of a sullen music
over distant veldts at dusk.

The white abstract silence
closes over each image
as it dies.

Sheer slipstream
to take eroding memory
into the times and spaces
of smiles and eyes and faces ...
past

 the nets
enmeshing quiet anchorages
we watch
 now
over waters,
 leaving land away behind ...
a lone ice-locked seabird departs
not quite a haiku
winging
 grey and white /
 again

 white and grey /
spurred wavewards
as dusks float adrift
upon turning tides

we enter her smile
at crossed stars

the black queen
who abandons
all dream-nights to Orion.

Have no fear
we shall awake.

Tremble in morning;
our eyes free of oppressive stars.

Familiar faces
 cut a way
to blue skies and the day sun.

Break bread with me,
stranger,
warm bread of the sun.

Let us beg of the ripe day
a plainchant
to redress the stubborn auguries of earth.
That disparate tongues
may lie becalmed
amidst sea-dreams and seasons.

Arms thrown wide
to the peacefully oblivious
houses and fields
in a conscious grace
of our common earth-abandonment
grounded now
upon ordinary forms of daytime
and our trades.

The clotted honey
of mellow afternoons
stirring through lighted panes,
dust settling everywhere
and old dogs curled outside the yards
where their masters drink and talk.

Or, as our city address insists:
a day on instalments
niggardly

wearing the leather
from our feet,
tired-eyed at five
 under sheer walls
of featureless buildings.
Inhabitants of passive streets,
with no angel now
to beckon from the sheets
for a friend or lover;
and our courtly manners,
roses pressed to the chest,
quite as tenable
as any sense of human justice.
Not a bit the less
"poetic".

Old bottles, drab streets, mangy dogs,
a list -
ticked off from behind a wheezy snot-rag
while aged ditherers
lisp the muse.

So push talk and varnish vanish /
the misanthropist peers
from a newspaper in the rain –
(unnerving in any tempest)
even the leftmost tower of the temple
is struck out by lightening –
collapsing into bricks,
dust,
over dawdling stations
and a thousand empty subways

where glib posters state
that home is where you find it.

Return
to the crystallization in the garden,
with time's hammerlock on each tree,
the bud at the breast,
and an infant mouth to draw
upon a perfect O of absence.

We have for the day
the sun
so high at noon
above each man
casting his shadows down
 to a level footing.
Soon the listless winds are blowing
where he lays his head to the leave's
whisper,
the light breath-drift
carrying sail-plane down
to frozen grass

fading into dew
as older now
we tie up our own shoelaces
to tread our daydreams into earth.

Fall

The first dreams
to stir, all throughout
those slumbering
massed days.
Simple `truths'
a simpler eloquence,
all bleeding white
into darkness –
a long time ago now.

An edge of fall
into driving rain.
It begins to dissolve.

(Yet -
suntans, toenails,
birthmarks,
remain.
The skin-deep human words
as traceable
as winter breathing.)

And yes, we really were
annoyed by flies,
and welcomed the canned
insecticides.

(As the words would
have it, worlds of their
own!)

So I shall offer to my lady,

or intone to myself, alone:

Do not sing of winter, Icarus,
the poem's fall
to life
and spring.
Pledge her a beakerful of light,
and wash my eyes.
I shall drink with her
to summer and the vine.

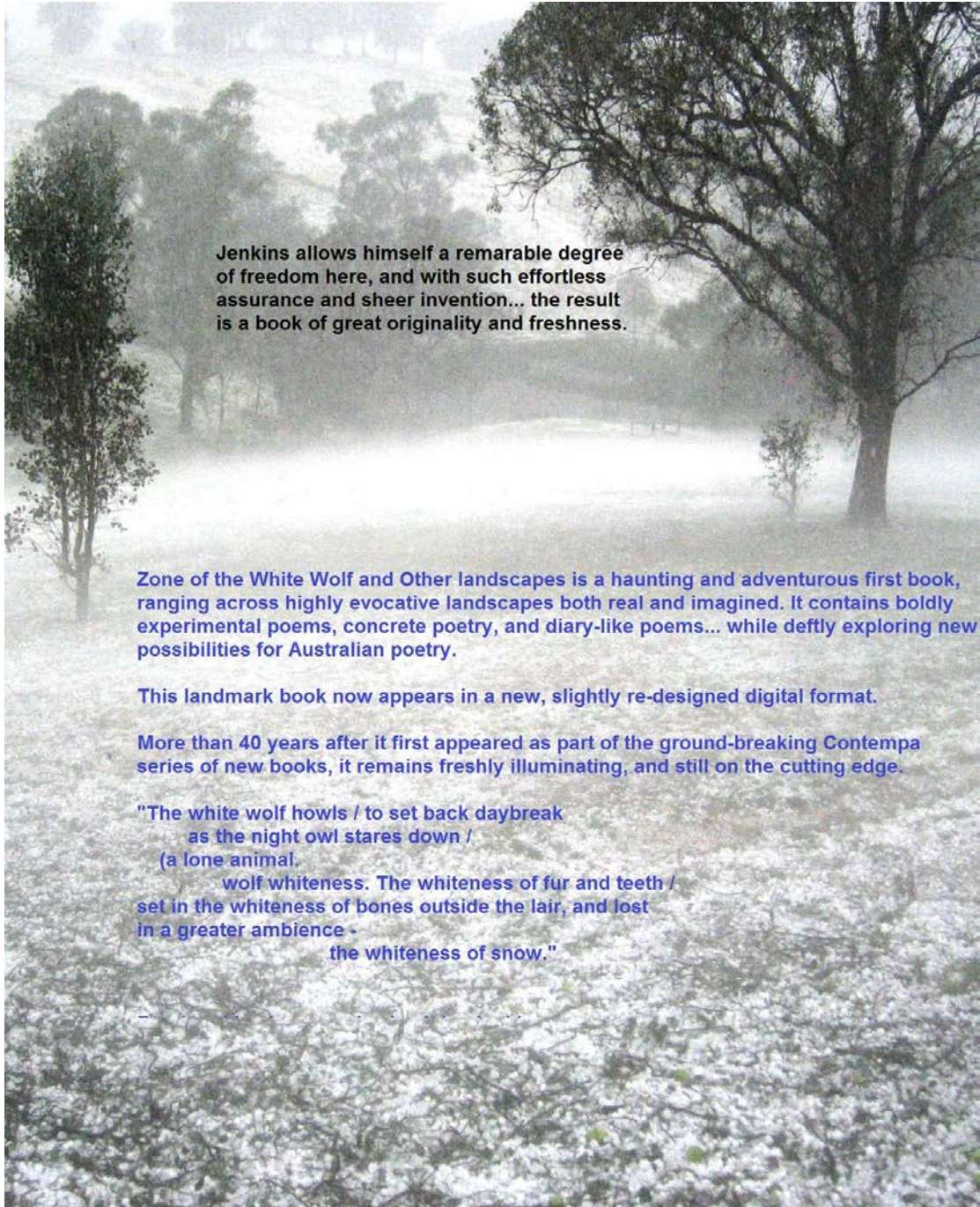
Whether fall or return
the poem touches down,
still, alone, still alone,
it offers from its flight
only bland, blue sky,
(your South American pines, Naruda),
knows well.
to forgive the air.

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A note on the text:

In this *pdf* edition, I have made some small changes to the original text. Way back in 1974, I was often in two minds about *some* sections of *a few* pieces in *Zone of the White Wolf*. I have now looked back at the various drafts, and in those few instances where I've found what seems a slightly superior line or sentence, then I have made appropriate changes. But these changes are quite minimal, and this *pdf* remains overall identical to the original printed book of 1974.



Jenkins allows himself a remarkable degree of freedom here, and with such effortless assurance and sheer invention... the result is a book of great originality and freshness.

Zone of the White Wolf and Other landscapes is a haunting and adventurous first book, ranging across highly evocative landscapes both real and imagined. It contains boldly experimental poems, concrete poetry, and diary-like poems... while deftly exploring new possibilities for Australian poetry.

This landmark book now appears in a new, slightly re-designed digital format.

More than 40 years after it first appeared as part of the ground-breaking Contempa series of new books, it remains freshly illuminating, and still on the cutting edge.

"The white wolf howls / to set back daybreak
as the night owl stares down /
(a lone animal.
wolf whiteness. The whiteness of fur and teeth /
set in the whiteness of bones outside the lair, and lost
in a greater ambience -
the whiteness of snow."