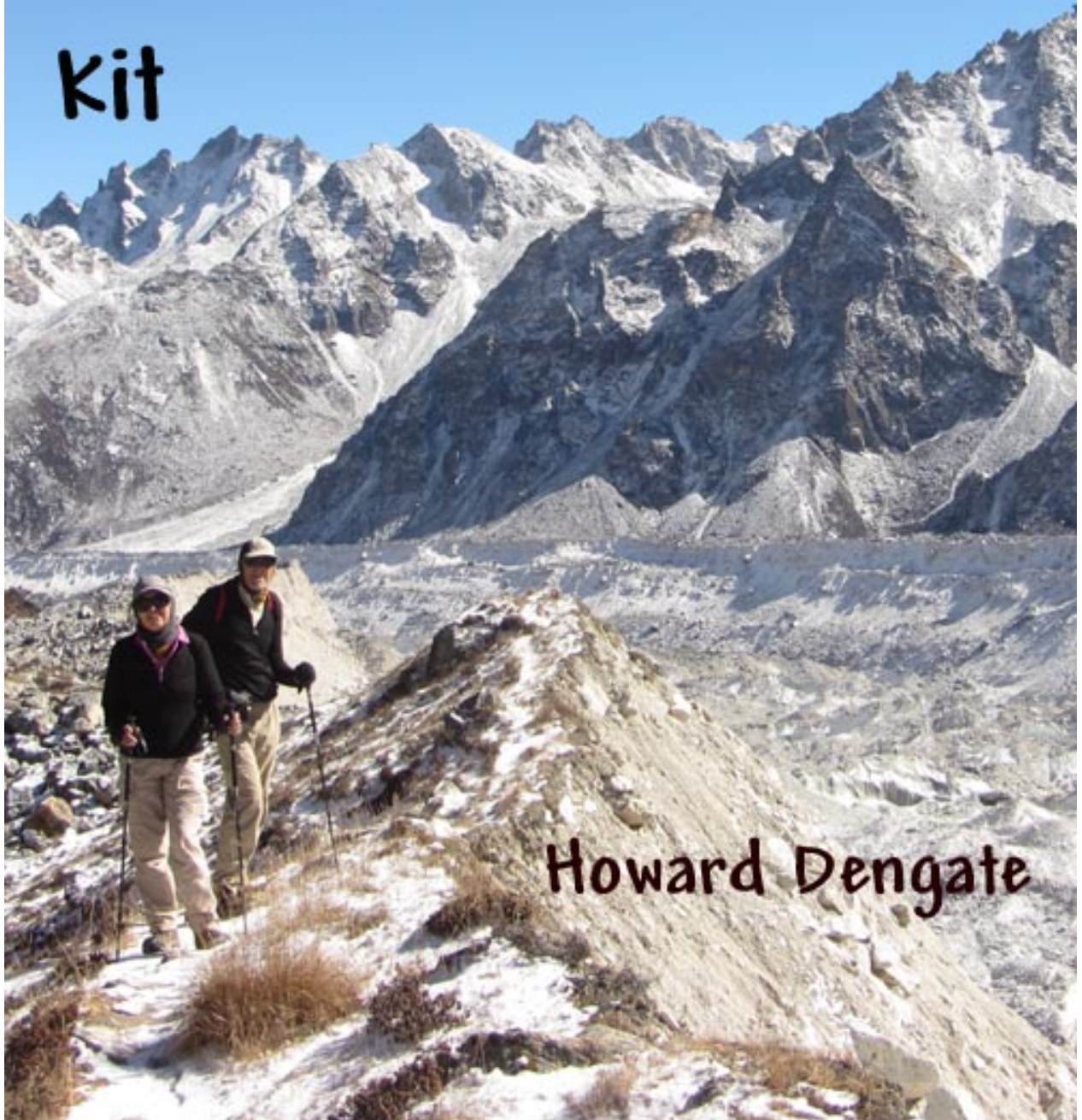


Unavoidable incense Kit



Howard Dengate

Unavoidable incense Kit

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This ebook in mobi (Kindle) and epub formats consists of three previously published books:

[Incense and other ecstasies](#)

[Unavoidable cloud of heron](#)

[Survival kit](#)

Contents

Incense and other ecstasies

OVERLAND

[Specially made for Puja](#)
[Only the ashes](#)
[At Gulmarg in Kashmir](#)
[Kathmandu evening](#)
[The breathing forest](#)
[Why travel?](#)

LONDON

[Cold London](#)
[Brother Panic](#)
[September's answer](#)

FIRETOWER

[My Buddha Root](#)
[The Butterfly Question](#)
[Sun-spent](#)
[An Autumn Solitude](#)
[The Indecision](#)
[The Compleat Angler](#)
[Panegyre](#)
[O Man! Attend!](#)
[The Magic Stone](#)
[On Dustless Paths](#)
[The Great Glad-wrap Plastic Maya-finder Failure](#)
[First Collected Haiku](#)

MOUNTAINS

[Mt Rolleston](#)
[Bivvy on Zurbriggen's](#)
[Panegyric to Ullr](#)
[The Generator](#)
[Taking off snow-goggles](#)
[Matthew's Easter](#)

ANTARCTICA

Antarctic Summer sequence:

Christchurch

Lake Vida

Mount Orestes

Onyx River

Midsummer's Day

Return

MOVING

Reconstructed war

Autumn Report

Taghairmist Lament under a Concrete Cataract

Little Akaloa

Linked Haiku

The Farmhouse

Second Collected Haiku

AMERICA

Houchin's Ferry, Kentucky

Lake Tahoe, California

Laurie, we are

The Thistle? A Moon?

Pilky Int

PERU

Me Mad

Leaving Colque Cruz unclimbed

The Stars Hiding So

Letter from Peru

The Dreaming Tree

La Selva

To the Alti-plano

NOTES on Letter from Peru

Glossary

Acknowledgements

Unavoidable cloud of heron

Cass Pass

[Seeking the Arrowsmith](#)
[Cancer for Dinner](#)
[Denial at table](#)
[Swallowed anger](#)
[Down the hatch](#)
[Bargaining for bone](#)
[Another helping thanks](#)
[Speaking of Shiva](#)
[Surfers](#)
[9-line Horrors](#)
[Springing](#)
[The Violet Village](#)
[To the Unknown Inhabitant room 67, Rorke's Hall, Auckland University](#)
[Argument 451](#)
[Ah Aha Ha!](#)
[Computer-generated Haiku](#)
[Variations on a Theme](#)
[Edited Computer Haiku](#)
[Old DX0:STORP](#)
[Unedited Computer Haiku](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Survival kit](#)

[Lullaby](#)
[Pied Beauty](#)
[Sonnet 18](#)
[On My First Son](#)
[Marina](#)
[\(I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud\)](#)
[The Sick Rose](#)
[Ode to a Nightingale](#)
[The Windhover](#)
[To His Coy Mistress](#)
[Sonnets from the Portuguese: Xliii](#)
[Sonnet 116](#)
[\(Break, Break, Break\)](#)
[The Tyger](#)
[Genesis](#)
[from Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey](#)
[\(No Man is an Island\)](#)
[\(I Think continually of Those Who Were Truly Great\)](#)
[Ozymandias](#)
[Sonnet 29](#)
[Harp song of the Dane Women](#)

[A Season for Everything](#)
[The Second Coming](#)
[Heaven-Haven](#)
[\(On His Blindness\)](#)
[Psalms 23](#)
[\(The New Jerusalem\)](#)
[God's Grandeur](#)
[Beach Burial](#)
[The Soldier](#)
[Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking](#)
[To Autumn](#)
[The Road Not Taken](#)
[Cargoes](#)
[\(Sonnet\)](#)
[Bell-Birds](#)
[Ode to the West Wind](#)
[\(My Heart Leaps Up\)](#)
[The Ten Commandments](#)
[If](#)
[Sonnet 106](#)
[Kubla Khan](#)
[Sailing to Byzantium](#)
[\(The world is Too Much With Us\)](#)
[\(Carrion Comfort\)](#)
[Crossing the Bar](#)
[High Flight](#)
[Ulysses](#)
[\(Envoy\)](#)
[Index to First Lines](#)
[Index to Authors](#)
[Acknowledgements](#)

Incense and Other Ecstasies

by **HOWARD DENGATE**

INCENSE, AND OTHER ECSTASIES

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OVERLAND

SPECIALLY MADE FOR PUJA

Ah beautiful incense smoke Moebius
twisting in ribbons of seaweed embracing
yourself and dancing
making vulnerable your throat in laughter
flowing
grey tulip with long exquisite petals
smooth as a river silver
silent across a foreign land
breaking slowly sideways as a huge crashing wave
disappearing
me gently.

Where you cloud as amorphous thought
calming for an idea forming balming
curl. Aching shapes
tense towards waiting perfection
condensing
soft you turn your palms towards me
that I might slowly
take in your beauty
where all the ancient scrolls of the world unfurl
gladgiving
me secrets.

ONLY THE ASHES

Once I sat in untidy rooms
inventing discomforts, blocked by alien prayers
from entering my rightful wisdom.
Listening outside: the hums of ancient women
may fade, filtered through magnolias,
magnificent sounds of purple and white.

And scattered like dreams I remember
pasts, and I imagine futures
whose reality and value escapes me.

For now my fingers have traced
unknowable codes, from textured walls
my eyes have deciphered great vistas.
Listening inside: the hum of ten thousand things
inscapes to depths of painful beauty
bearing glimpses of the home, the void.

And warm drifting soft I wonder
why was I given this vision?
And why was I not given the power to express it?

AT GULMARG IN KASHMIR

Wild thunder makes me start
thinking of avalanches.
Then all the morning's wind comes at once
sudden from far dark places
strange clouds moil in my valley
spill sullenly over my pines
 hissing like mist on snow.

Now fighting tearing tumbling twisting
black green pines clout and flail
the stormsky ah the rivening hail.

The sky, set on blue-white fire
crashes down on shingled houses
silent. Purple. Disbelief.
 hailstones frozen in a curtain actinic
blind
 moment of intense waiting
waiting . . .

The air splits with noise.
Spits noise.
Backlit. Frontlit.
Storm battered. White spattered.
The pines writhe in pain from the thunder
amongst them and the smell of the hail.

KATHMANDU EVENING

(with apology to Hopkins)

As chiloms catch fire, hash-freaks draw flame;
Then tumbled over rim and filthy sills
Cockroaches; like each scrabble sound tells,
 each screams yells
Sandal swung finds tongue to squash out broad
 its aim;
Each stoned fool kills one thing and again:
Screeches out that inside each a cockroach dwells;
Crushed – upon itself; *horror* it squeaks and
 smells,
Crying *that mess was me: for that I came?*

I say more: what cockroach sacrifices;
Stays extinct; that stain of ichor truth traces;
Acts in this drama what in this room he is –
A Cockroach – for cockroaches scrabble in ten
 thousand places,
Lowly in limbs, and ugly in eyes not his
Staring stoned through the carnage of carcasses.

THE BREATHING FOREST

With my eyes closed I am a cave
listening to a woman late and leaving
down a narrow forest path,
reassuring herself with song
in the chuckle of raindrops raindrops
come to make the needles dance as
wind arrives in an urgent pour, stripling rain
drops silent needles, clean and sharp
on my breath become the wind
drifting, only breathing
 in the forest
 nothing more
nothing special
 no movement yet
 all around are changes
 processes
cannot see the wind
 nor the mind
only arabesques of branches
 soughed by my wind as breath
 becomes beneficence
at the top fusing of each breath
 and at the bottom
 is there deep energy?
 merging?
 including? . . .

This cone and rusty-needle carpet
is moon-coloured when I wake,
and clouds in an endless becoming
drift, to wink the eye of night.

Such a night in a field near Kabala
the peasant woman brought plums and sang
and in the Aegean next morning, warm and wet
O Woman! The Sea! The Sun!

WHY TRAVEL?

I have journeyed to the East
you may speak to me of music
of rose-fleshed flames in everything
of falling into the sun.

I know the runes on ziggurats
I start to wear my hair in plaits
and resting on Benares ghats
I made mantras out of human smoke
where vultures wheel like scraps of paper.

I saw Vishnu and Shiva at the billard table
remove the cover and drape themselves
to play the game that neither won
then cloak the table again and leave
me there. Brahman.

And you are Brahman.

So then.
Once you asked me why I travel.
I thought to choose a lyric vein:
 “To see and feel a thunderstorm
 come over Kathmandu
 and you
 stoned on the rooftop,
 O and I have never been
 stoned in an estaminet in Antwerp.”

But enough. I tell you, ask the mango:
Mango
is this it then
to plump, to grow, day by day,
just for that one sweet moment?
I have journeyed to the East
you may speak to me of music.

LONDON

COLD LONDON

Hallo old man sitting on the tube train
your old belly hanging awkwardly over scrawny knees
that strange angled join of old bodies . . .
You're going to die soon. I can see the marks.
And the sadness, knowledge in your eyes.
And you'll still be wondering why you lived.

If I spoke to you I'd frighten you
your grave-marked world-weary hands
held in an attitude of prayer . . .
Only this saves you from my words.
You've never been so aware of your life.
I won't twist the knife, but
I don't know why you lived. Or die.

BROTHER PANIC

What happened to brightness?
Where is black?

Ah, despair around each corner with each step
down these grimy stairs
is something black, falling
panic, no legs no arms
falling reduced to a grey spot falling
I court your edges I teeter on your brink . . .

Brother Panic!
Be my guide!
Let me not fall not knowing
let me lose my fear and know your depths
 (That which I seek may lie in you
 down there, the jewels of awareness
 the scent of the beast and yet
 I could lose all and gain
Panic! You twist my guts
paralyse my will,
to look at the sky brings fear
to think of looking more fear,
weakness, willness, panic-denying then
no reasons. Nothing.

SEPTEMBER'S ANSWER

Now comes September in its natural way
stinging with cold, the sky perhaps grey;
these buildings are buildings, nothing more
these people are passing, nothing more
none of this can touch me...

I am so
sick of travelling, sick of alien stars:
skies like the bellies of long dead fish
rot in my mind. The putrefaction
of square stinking cities, streets,
slimed with the hopes of other lives,
viewed through glass and poles and posts.

Endlessly the rain of desire pours
brimming my well of discontent
wanting too much to float this all away
to purge the dross and leave my life
charged with meaning; beyond myself
I search the streets for gods to bite,
take omens from the wind and ask:

What is there, what is both
beautiful and eternal
and from and part of me?

I probe for the beauty others see
in asphalt, rain and broken bottles, then
brooding over sprawls of sunwarmed cats I note
they eat some grapes and leave the skins
tooth-pricked behind the rubbish bins.

FIRETOWER

MY BUDDHA ROOT

I took an old twisted root
cast by the storm, before,
now it was to be my Buddha
come in to my empty house.

I left it for a while, the carving
to turn and feel, take out possibilities.
Such wealth of dormant form lay there
then opening in flower's slow explosion
I saw some earlier hand appear:
a woman, twisted in ecstasy,
dancing the god's dance orgasm,
in pain from another angle
so close, but a move of the light.

*Your body runs to your navel,
I can see right under your chin,
you smell to me of pine forests
of wisdom and ancient sin.*

Then I saw her shadow on the wall.
A scolding hag with flapping dugs,
hairs bristling from each nostril
and her belly, arrogant, old
and her hair, lank
falling together away from love.

*Your double chins quiver like jelly,
I can hear you bray like an ass,
you preach to me in wood's shadow,
your hope become a black mass.*

I thought still to whittle, to improve,
and brought up my knife.
I thought still to shift cobwebs, bark,
break old sticks, to improve.

But stilled my hand.
Slowly I knew: this is already perfection.
It lies already around me in the forest.
It lies all in me and in the people.
It lies all ready.
And this is joy, the matching dies,

the contemplation.

THE BUTTERFLY QUESTION

What does this butterfly report?
Safe, safe with his brothers on the other shore,
after his one day of life?

I'd say they have great arguments,
sects, divisions, in proper Protestant fashion,
as they talk of Heaven:

Is it raining? Is it dry?
Do pine trees grow? Gum trees?
They cannot even agree on one sun,
and find light
as a concept
inexpressible.
But definitely illuminating.

SUN-SPENT

Leapt early from bed, before the sun
to play Peer Gynt, my morning mood
matched his;
the magpies' gurgling joy melting
a silver selvedge of fog abrading
strands of symphony, hands
of hard sunlight warily stroking
agapanthas awake, hesitant
and smoky about the iris; then
pouring in pouring in
bursting from the trap of my singing pen
destroying all nets of words.

Through mist
sun cuts
nestling
its huge body in mine.

AN AUTUMN SOLITUDE

This rain is ripened in a stony country,
laid thin and pale in nests of ash-grey straw,
mellowed in the dingy holds of creaking coasters
to mizzle, drift. Such fine old cobweb wine
is sparingly sipped by frostbitten pumpkin stars
and beads of its bottle-sweat load the heads
of barley grass, and age the dying leaves.

My cat goes crazy on such a morning.
Arcs through the golden dampness
in great coiled springs of happiness,
crouches hidden by a blade of grass,
then springs his sodden underbelly forwards
showers diamond seeds of haste
to share with me his joyful frozen paws.

Then surely cold shining mornings will never cease!
Wet biddy-biddy, and brown-top, and sweet golden vernal
and roistering infusion of spiders' wine
interlocking to fill the sky. One green hole remains
through which my norwest eye always watches.
It is me that rains on the hills, I feel,
in this one fixed point of a seamless autumn.

THE INDECISION

I thought I had my throat cut.
This twitch will be the last.
This one.
This one.
This one.

Started up three times from dreaming
and once from sleep, smelling fire.
The crackling of my dry brain bleared
half into fears for survival.
My death is not important,
memory dies, not I, although . . .
 There is a force in me to offer
 my little as sacrifice
 my body as the altar
and there is a yearning in me for assurance
of unity in all things.

Once I thought to grasp this sphere.
Cautious I put out my arm,
ran, ready to jump, now!

And ended on my knees.
In the dust.
One hand raised in supplication.

THE COMPLEAT ANGLER

Once he was a fisherman
earnest at the water's edge, casting
his hopes and ambitions as a net
to catch the future sky.

The world came in like square pink worms
of probability, robbed of other forms
and colours, extruded clear
of the infinite living possibility.

But this man was a feeling
of unconscious, blemished,
deep and mouldy, unsanitized
inclined to laugh at ambiguity.

Now he casts both net and certainty
 into the water
 wanders his way
 dirty
 and lets the freezing wind gaily bring
 the stink of rotting weed.
And catches fish by hand.

PANEGYRE

Held entranced.
The dance
of a brown fantail setting the sun.
O flaunting revelation ripple gash
grace pride of silk-fledged breast praising
plume! And down to turn and open glory!
O skill-struck spark of heaven hold!
heartfelt sadness happy brimming
plunge praying crimson
into the sun
for insects.
Before the yellow poplars.

O MAN! ATTEND!

(with apology to Nietzsche)

Feel for, man, feel for the million-year sweep of her
nature, next to your petty anger, or life
perspective may take you more often, calm, frustrate to grow
 (not the turning-inwards of making-sickness
 but the bursting outwards of) laughter in
this untouchable joke, unreachable joke,
nature; and the endless spawn of her: man's mind
that hopes on this phantom voyage to find end
or satisfaction of all desires, even this; remove
the screen that blocks the other-people-tell-you-world
from you; lend you; mend you; your inward perspective
to match the outward unfathomable sweet sweet mystery
man: feel for us, you are thus, ah yes!

THE MAGIC STONE

Purusha walking by an unnamed river
in a monotony of gravel and shingle
seeing small grey stones, remembered one
that he had taken long ago.

He was feeling yet the sting of that awful moment
when chaos, warm and cherishing
cold and hating
which knows all things and nothing
burst. And still
the birth waters flowed in his head:

I am the magic stone had said
from which Purusha turned with dawning mind
to see himself separate from his world.
I here, not-I there, which moment created
fear, the first-born fear of ambiguity
strung high and thin across the chaos
from his first trembling, conscious, thoughts.

Still that first bright sight burned inside
like salt tears, now separate from his eyes.
I am not those trees.
I am not these stones.
I am not this river.
Though once I was. Crying.

For now Purusha knew time, which left an age
to be lived step by step, seeking meaning.
And to forge this purpose, three battles:

The first was fear:
for storms were aimed at him, and fire
joined him in his hunger running
from chaos into learning.

The second was clarity:
knowing desire and the satisfaction
knowing his smallness and his cleavage
yet impatient, larger than his world.

The third was power:
to change his world, be cruel,
capricious, but he learnt control
by learning how and when.

And now a fourth, the greatest:

if I am, there will be time

when I am not

walking by an unnamed river
through a monotony of gravel and shingle.

He squatted now to learn from the river
the lessons of old age and death
beside the magic stone.

He watched the river without pushing,
sought for an answer without seeking,
while the answer roared beside him
unsnarling the knot of the final ambiguity.

He laughed. Enough of this agony.

There is a way from these torments of division,
a way from joy and grief, positive and negative,
back to the unformed.

He danced and capered, almost jeering

O kukru, kukru, kukru,

in the high holy mountains

thou hast engendered little ones

from sacred cliffs. Chanting.

Laughing, Purusha took that small grey stone
gathered his fears, his clarity, his power
and with a yell that shook creation
cast it into the river

no laughing no saying

raining is

by

rocks are god seed

how marvellous?!

ON DUSTLESS PATHS

O this is the gait
of the man who walks
a long way slowly.
With his eyes in the air
or bent in contemplation
never conscious of his feet.

This is the man for whom
the forest holds its breath.
And he comes with a bullet in his mouth
with a magic wand of wild tobacco
he tells the birds
Sing!

O he tasted both streams
in the deepest nexus
and found them one.
And on every reflection for days after
the holy landscape singing
One!

THE GREAT GLAD-WRAP PLASTIC MAYA-FINGER FAILURE

This was going to be a long poem
for I was going to create a world
from a sheet of glad-wrap plastic
to infinity in all directions
nothing but plastic, maya
like this page

and then:
fingers from below arise enrobed –
Here a finger, call it a tree.
Colour it green and call it growing.
A water-pump with variations
on the sun.

Call them leaves,
roots, twigs, branches, bark,
xylem, phloem
It is a tree.
Here a finger, call it a man.
Colour it pink, or brown, or yellow.
An air-pump with variations
and a hole through the middle for maya.

Call them feet,
ears, arms, hair, skin,
liver, lungs
It is a man.

This man is aware of itself
it thinks, with plastic mind,
and different from trees, it thinks
and makes strange things from maya.

*Have you seen the god of rhythm?
That which blocks your sight
is glad-wrap plastic, like your skin
it joins, contains, and separates.
And your vaunted awareness
is not awareness. Is not yours.*

This man has past and future
it thinks, and makes words
to focus maya into understanding
Forgetting that reality is plastic.

*Remember now? That god died
lost under the plans for hospitals*

*in 1984, and plastic memories
of the glorious edited past,
far from the glad-wrap boredom
of here, reading this.*

This man creates gods for reason
it thinks, but forgets even this:
that conceivable and inconceivable
are words, arising from maya.

*Can you be unconceivable?
Stay with this, for maybe
this is not glad-wrap plastic
but the whence of fingers
where why dies and I
kills the god of reason.*

This man forgets and struggles
it thinks, to know itself.
But a finger cannot feel itself
nor glad-wrap plastic maya.

If you can laugh at this man
then you have the god of laughter by the hair.
Drag him forth to teach you
to laugh deep
 and weep
and dance and sit in solitary confusion
like me.

And I'll tell you a story:
Once the finger so tickled a man's unconscious
that he turned troubled, and asked another –
“Where is God?”

And Jesus preached the kingdom with suffering
 eyes
 waiting for his finger to be withdrawn,
 cruel and unusual punishment
 for teaching man of man.
And Buddha laughed and twirled a flower
 on Grdhrakuta mountain before the monks.
 Only Maha-Kashapa smiled, though he tried
 to control the lines on his face.
And Lao-Tzu ate his rice and washed his bowl
 and walked through the forest of gateless
 gates
 and talked with friends and slept and then
 ate his rice and washed his bowl.
And thousands looking deep
 in the eyes of their brother

saw fingerprints and laughed quietly.
Holding up a finger:
Where!

*If your wisdom is deeper than priestcrafts
then worship now under the open sky.
Amid the rumpled glad-wrap plastic maya
grass clings to earth. Love and know!*

But in the end it's a short poem.
For you cannot rest your head
on the meander of cathedrals running
gaudy carved coloured vulgar shining
sparkling curious into my dreams.
This came too soon, the game more now
to play the maya flute
than future plastic poetry.
I'm off to swing with my finger.
Or let my finger swing me.

FIRST COLLECTED HAIKU

Behind this tree
in the mist
hides the forest.

Distant mountains washed with light
live with me inside
this dewdrop.

On the snow-grass slope
in winter sunset
slippery as butter!

Stormbound under a rock
and for amusement
this drip!

Despite the winter overcast
sun touches this moss
from inside.

Fire. Cat purring.
Rain falling on iron.
What is this thing?

Ah – new blood
in the veins
on the window.

MOUNTAINS

MT. ROLLESTON

All day I stared at thick grey rain
towards remembered mountains, wondering.
Your footprints seen in dangerous places
traces, only later did I find
that these were all you could leave.

And the snow came lowly down
drifting among the beeches
blessing with silver the leaves
laying a benediction
on your damaged body.

Your death will become casual,
slow words to fill the glacier heat
as we rest tired on moraine walls.
With unmeaning jargon we will hide
your person, your pain, your past.

I feel as if in childhood
I had turned, from toys and trains
aware of play – this concept kills
the childing drift of endless days.

BIVVY ON ZURBRIGGEN'S

We lived in the belly of an orange animal
with strange half-views of boots, and thighs
lying on incense, scroggin, each other
we laughed. No beast could digest us.

Though it tried, mad with hunger
bashed and slapped with showers of ice
moaning with frustration, now sighing
withdrawing, baffled.

The anathema lay outside:
The sky was grey polished walnut over Mount Cook
then suddenly visible in a white explosion
the wind came down.

PANEGYRIC TO ULLR

(from the Tasman Saddle Hut book)

Ensconced on this epicurean tumulus
in our arcanelly castrametated caravanserai
tempest-beset, we curmudgeonly tatterdemalions peruse
the moiling tenebrific cryopastoral glouting
 over glaucous rheobarbicans.

Being languidly otiose, we cogitate tosticatedly upon
 the ennobling vicissitudes
 the transient anodynes of youth
 the multifarious hegiras of hedonists,
but in the grimpageous coign circumjacent
still no attrition in the ululating liturgy.

To such lambent seriatim shibboleths come hiatus,
 between the ideation and the epitome
 between the peroration and the periphrastic antinomy
in sententious taciturnity
 between the deglutition of possets
 and the imbibition of decoctions
comes micturition, aching micturition.
Then falls the sybarite on his orectic sword.

For the blizzard-tin is pleni-slop brimful,
lacking ullage.
 Grant us, Ullr, thy desuetude,
thy apyrexia from this termagant cadence of susurration
that crawls in chiaroscuro over our harrowing plight!
Make us empty, Ullr!

 And he does. Five minutes suffice
to xanthopsiatise porraceous seracs below
and resume our coruscating disquisition
with novel prolegomena:

Desiderata the wind,
it toils not and spins,
yet has it need for blizzard-tins?

THE GENERATOR

Some flaring crackle of thoughts distending
beyond reason, ungovernable,
some eccentric generator burst from stator,
bearings burnt,
insensately whirling in the endless knot
drives me out onto these dark
 open mountains fearing deeply:
what if all our light should come to this?
pounding noise burns while the stars ache
silently
antic air bitter in my hair oh
 yes my agony of my moment
 comes from clutching
 black shapes and skies
into lies.
what? in archetypal highlands
seen by all, how when did could all others accept
uncaring stars?
Something deeply tells me no!
Worlding living letting go!

Stars!
in this mind I burn them
they in me
frictionless, friendly, exquisitely friendly but
slip-rings spark, catch, and fail again.
I want nothing nothing nothing.
The moment. The moment.
Ah it tears and burns and aches I
this skyfull of me and stars and
cursing the noise that makes the light.

TAKING OFF SNOW-GOGGLES

what? fish trapped in diamonds
emptied spilled onto a seawet deck
of cobwebs spun by spiders high on acid?

bells glanced by, maps glimpsed but
not understood.

MATTHEW'S EASTER

He stands by the edge of a clear stream
staring, such that looking down
 on my return
his breath is locked low by cold
 over the moving water, a mistiness
 over an earlier clarity.

He looks into water, in awe
 of the stippled water-pebbles in the shallows
 of the drifting water-weed chased in shadows.

He is free as he stands
where there are no interruptions,
mind full of autumn leaves and
scarce-seen webs between the boulders
mottled with moss and lichen and
 one leaf steaming as it curls.

Below me, still, in the deep green vaultings
of the forest temple he watches, light tumbles
as liquid from the higher levels to the lower,
spattering from totara
 to soak in dark punga
sparkling from ferns
 to flash silver on riffled matipo
transfixing his face
of peace in eternal illumination.

Resting so quiet and gently penetrating
his share of easter, in the darkness,
the green-blackness, lying in complex shelves,
under banks, amidst the profligate balance
of falling earth, of creeping tendrils, of exposed roots,
 in all this he lies.

The scent of decay promises life
to secret-flowering toadstools.

O and the water,
the water-mystery, speaking so gently
of infinite patience, slow
scalloped swirls palely hurtle
clearly into quiet small pools,
rose-mole shadows kiss and drift apart . . .
 he looks up, blind-faced.

And speaks, but not to me:

*“As trees sway with this wind
so may the wind of creation flow through me
and bend me to our will.
This prayer beside a stream, lost in your body.”*

ANTARCTICA

ANTARCTIC SUMMER SEQUENCE

I CHRISTCHURCH

I go now to the teacher of awareness, this
final wasteland of ice keeps sacred,
as a secret, the fresh hymns of spring
and feeds the ear with keening wind
of infinite subtle variations; the eye
with a million colours, all white.
My dreams of summer are gone.

I would decipher the cuneiform
of primrose thorns, and enter
the forest as a lover
on my return.

II LAKE VIDA

In planes I could not conceive
ice of bubbles burst, cornets of lace
curled for attention. There was no place
that I could still my feet, forces
were curtains roughly chopped, torn sideways
space become glazed, silk-screaming, frozen
sudden. As though flung here awake
looking deep into frozen-forever lake:
What am I doing here? I, who love life,
in lands where water passes for life?

Still the sullen sun swung
grain of the ground to reveal, to conceal,
lend time to my eye, scan
scratches for pattern, glaciers for glare
glooming over-down in the cold-crazed air,
sinking back into mauve shadow, mountain.
This rawness, no-man-seen, now seen,
What for?

That I might count forward
all life added to this, this desolation?

My fur-fringed world: obscene rock husks
sucked clean by worms of wind, these
winter vermin have formed leavings
fluted by light; turns of worms castings
seek escape in beauty from earth processes
huddled in the grotesquerie.
I shiver in my share of eternity's wind,
valley, lake, and mountain.

Or is this again my favourite trap
of coming into all experience backwards
then finding in my moments past, joy
which once were agony?

III MOUNT ORESTES

Nearest sounds flow to my ear familiar:
blood drums as dog's bark, keas' kraark,
or million year melody-of-menace simmers,
distant; drones on far-deep porphyry dykes
undertones from mourning raga; the sitar
sport of rock on rock, stings; near the ear
and near, the ear, nearer teases rhythm, stone
grey wind's shape, moulds wind's tone
still no movement, none
 but scores stone, scours
 O! rushes greater
gathers again again again, hunting
hurls hurt, howls the last last
(sudden desperation) last burst of noise
snaps the strings spills
 into gravel-gashed unravel-rushed
 thrust past pattern thrust
silence.

IV ONYX RIVER

Hard-black unfeeling? No. Clear
two-month-flowing doomed to ablation
by sunlit windbells, so skelter froly
for so much joy, so much small; lively -ah
bolder and boulder-bright with
hellions laying scales now, to
scar you silver beautiful.

V MIDSUMMER'S DAY

Only, only in this land there is nothing to learn
but myself; that screens my eyes
each day with thoughts on empty stone,
lays words that lie between
me and the wisdom of rock;
 and that not teachable.

Nor is there need for me to cry wonder
at my unacceptance of nature's gift, myself,
and so name a GOD, name a thousand things
that move and shift. This is wonder
that there is no need to be different
from myself, that there is the quiet stream
shaded by beeches whose bark blisters
with all the cycles of the secret: lichen,
fungi, ferns and insects – all have their share,
 accepted, and no more.

Am I to say that they too are not
given their glimpses? to render life
less gaunt, flesh out this thin gruel
so pale that daily
 dissatisfies my belly?

VI RETURN

Here I am close packed close
caught with perfumes of incense of life
renewed in the ancient sooted temple
by stars with smells and seeds borne
on the aimless grassheads.

Here is dark and fecund,
familiar yet dearly bought, clearly
breeding, bubbling, moving with
complex simple miracles, and I amongst them:
an apple! a butterfly! a sparrow! this
festering fermenting mud is
so fullness-welling much!

How lucky there are trees
for the wind.

MOVING

RECONSTRUCTED WAR

a wet day
remembering
Passchendaele, the mud, the corpse fluttering
on the barbed wire like a leaf

a young man in an old body
being barked at by a dog

quiet Sunday rain, the barrage lifted
and some obscure promise
holding the day together,
mood resting for some effort,
the many falling leaves lost
in blood, time, mud

the wind blows and holds
the leaf against the wire
my brother.

AUTUMN REPORT

Bang bang bang bang
autumn colours shoot out my eyes,
even the gorse
booms quietly in the hedge;
the shimmer in wild steaming yellow
forces my eyeless skull, strangely glad,
into this swirling, sun-tasting
frost and touch in empty places
left by glaring summer's cannon mouth.
Dawn-greening and cut-bright
birds-feet leaves, sodden, shining
feed sockets to flesh some hunger
that only dying fruit know,
only eyeless autumn's
frozen ruts and clear silences
can fill.

TAGHAIRMIST LAMENT UNDER A CONCRETE CATARACT

A lot of waterfalls I've seen
but none, I think, were so obscene
as a certain electrical cascade
with a coinbox in the nearest glade.
Now wandering through Pukekura Park
I search for coin-slots behind the bark
fearing that should I fail to pay
the trees will shrivel, and Judgement Day
(with God's permission, if the Council assents)
will foreclose this world
 for lack of only ten cents.

LITTLE AKALOA

The wind's sun was crazy in the tussock
running through flames in a heated dance
stuffing both nostrils with warm cool earth
blowing full up my lungs with joy.
I screamed gave birth, some silent godsound
too inexpressible rose up and howled,
wordlessly, at fleeting perfumed moment of earth.

Later I searched for that flower,
that incense haunting my dreams.
There was none.
Just green growing things.
Bittergreen.

LINKED HAIKU

Waterdrops on beech
take only the silver
from autumn clouds.

Oh yes, and I suppose they take
the wobble from the wind?

On the freezing dusk
my feet fell hard
as yellow poplar leaves.

A man offered me a ride.
I offered him a walk.

The skeletons of trees
held autumn leaves
when last you were here.

Through the archway it is winter.
The seasons succeed each other.

Three stone houses, roofless
in a clearing
and a field sown with slate.

What tragedy happened here?
Walking, too soon am I lost in the landscape.

With the mail
on the autumn evening
another rejection slip.

Oh no, just a leaf.
Makes green tea, regards the sliver of moon.

THE FARMHOUSE

Larks were hymning, settling
with the sun to that silence which prolongs
the last sad flush of light; doomed brightness
pitted and tore the weatherboards, feeding
as does lichen upon rock, and feeling
every fault suddenly ensouled
as plainchant of the ordinary.

From which some deep light irrupted
to englobe the slowly closing day,
to stop all movement but the wind
allowing lava flow from clouds. This too
that there was neither expectation
nor indifference, neither menace
nor caress; none could colour
this time of seething peace, of stillness
in a gentle seamless web. The cause
may be grass so green, amazing, or chookshit
or trees at their evening
singularly breezing, their haphazard leaves
become orient to cleanse the sky
and show in vibrant worlding, processes
I had forgotten, nor had need to remember now
so soaked in the sap of the moment:

There was
a small white fire burning deeply
of gems spilt carelessly
to confuse the light;
here was
the end of love-longing.

This is a kind of death beyond
pain and panic, where patience
unbelieving ripens into peace.

This is death the mirror
reflecting good and evil
powerless to join the emptiness of decision.

Here, I am not afraid of death.
Now, I am not afraid of life.
Then an inexplicable nomad, dressed
as was his custom, clumsily,
came to me-unbound; declared:
“I am the bearer of a known face

yet you know me not.”

I saw
his face the colour of twilit water,
light on his clothes from cathedrals,
silver weeds whipping at his sandals,
yet knew him not, although familiar,
for he was me.

Again he spoke:
“Man, you are nature, nurtured
by it besure but still nature
with an urge to grow, gather
your powers together; gorged
with need for gathered freedom
you will become, knowing this.”

And very quickly, in one devastating glance, I saw that I was
twenty-eight new-hatched chicks, bantam mothers, cock-proud fathers,
a billygoat, a hive of bees, Bruce bending over them, Ali in the garden,
a grey cat, a black cat, a hungry black and white cat,
Jane with nasturtiums, Pete with his flute, Daboy by his whare,
Howard and Bali baking bread, Poma, Richard, Sharl and more
all together, one house, very quickly, one house!

I tried “all then is one idea expressed . . .” but
he left me with a wave, whether
of derision or sympathy I am not sure

I have come this way but any other
will rediscover a house of friends; myriad selves
may sometimes be seen to act in concert;
there is
a fasting of the mind, where is
no reason to hold the joy from birdsong.

SECOND COLLECTED HAIKU

Behind one tree
in the mist
there is nothing.

Searching in the mountains
alone at sunset
the cry of the plover.

Under five blankets
with the window open
to enjoy the rain!

If I'm crying
it's because of the rain
in my eyes.

In the rear-vision mirror
all this hour after sunset
the full moon trying to overtake!

The winter moon
is lost in mist.
how hugely empty I feel.

A kestrel calling
above the Tasman ice
turns air solid.

AMERICA

HOUCHIN'S FERRY, KENTUCKY

Far away under the stripped oaks
across the floor of black and dying leaves
on a cold morning so sodden
so exhausted by dampness and monotony
 that even the rain has stopped
the ferryman talks to himself.

LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA

we smiled across the café and we knew
us each tired, lonely as the other

each as battered, overfull with living
as slumped shoulders glimpsed in a silent room

yet hesitant, with secret glances
we sought our eyes in separate cups

yearning from the cups to give
solace to the stranger, hoping

we would contrive, working together
to meet

LAURIE, WE ARE

betrayed again into my own emptiness
watching slow dawn take the cedars
 through your hair and my world
reduced again to that simplicity of the burning plane
 where our skin touches
where sated darkness utters our abandoned forms
again into possessiveness and doubt and jealousy
into this undetermined day . . .

I see the light lay
silver cobwebs
of age upon your hands.

THE THISTLE? A MOON?

out of the purple sobbing darkness
along that transverse bone we share
hid by hair
our one movement, moment, ended
haunts . . .

dew falling from the silence
skin parting and hissing
the moon suddenly
deepening your breasts to ivory . . .

I would that I could creep
as perfectly as the light, perfectly.
Perfectly.

I would kiss your belly, breath of babies,
sculpted by lust, crushed,
sour with lost touch.

my finger smells of shit.
something of crushed straw, swirled grass,
a brush lathered with moonlight
coiled hair of babies . . . thistles . . .
I have forgotten . . .

PILKY INT

pilky int soed ne lise
limon trurgle snartly
ul jama ped ut sneed lafu
mit yat o lut o snivel scarny.

Yopu, yopu, chalus enkrew
ya carpa dot apu
int ij ralif notingey-perd
o pan, sudget, ut bombes mu.

Dut fu te caka, tombes su
int ful te grink aparta,
ut guw se soad, tark ne pode
puk ruel te sangle cona sarter!

PERU

ME MAD

Me, mad for god-visitation
skirting the local rabid dog
met a violin player with Buddha's eyes
so beautiful

and challenging said
"Here? You are here?
even in the anonymity
of this mountain child
who smiled?"

She plucked one string, saying
"I am a feather
held momentarily to the ground
by the altiplano wind . . .

I am the opaque tears
of the crying candle."

"But" I protested, "is that enough
when I have this huge need on me?
When I burn to live all lives,
to feel them from my fingers
like a skyfull of sunbright birds?"
Touched by doubt's black wing:
"surely one is not enough, the limits
being too easily realised?" crying
I need everything but this,
this living among ruins
which I can no longer explain.

She took the violin, her eyes froze
as if curious absorbing pain
had incredibly filled her fingers,
and played. And played. And played.

LEAVING COLQUE CRUZ UNCLIMBED

Early, with the tent creaking
and the zipper stiff with frost
I walked with diamond lupins at my feet
washed my hands on frozen roses, crushed them
tiny and green in the shadows,
then stood far off to admire the sun
in daily patient work, loosen the stream from ice
and blaze the orange lichen on the rock.

Then turned and walked away from friends,
down into the jungle.
(From the jungle came a skimming light
so low that it seemed to grow from earth
in which moraine and tussock shuddered
together into life. Above
sharp rock peaks slashed veils of mist
to slake their buttresses in the given gold.)

THE STARS HIDING SO

who stared so over Spanish walls?
at all their history lying there, breastplates, skulls,
heaped up among the garbage and the rain releasing
weeks of dried stale from the cobbles,
down whitewashed streets harrying
 hurried beshawled women
breasting geraniums in the trivets
now lost in dark patterns of stone
 in the shadow

are men gathered to the corner writing poetry?
of rain in the desert, easing tensions
see, over this sillar-wall in the secret garden
are suggestive stones to share with you
 sadness and lice, bells and bravado
in all their thrown-together shape hinting
at histories unresolved, questions
 that might have been upon this place.

LETTER FROM PERU

*“y cuando todo el hombre se enredo en su agujero,
quedo la exactitude enarbolada:
el alto sitio de la aurora humana.”*

Pablo Neruda – “The Heights of Macchu Picchu”

1. THE DREAMING-TREE

Winter could not last so long
nor overfill my garden with more frost
nor spend my leaves so carelessly
into this brutal rim of cold,
 you must understand
that I stand here by choice, having lost
any further power of decision;
that by distance I hope to cut, or confirm
either separation or conjoining, to force
some issue from this rooted indifference, to find
more than my eyes can swallow
or believe.

 But nada nada nada
receding dully from blind-faced eyes
through the white rocks of the desert coast;
where boats rust at anchor, in fleets,
and swell hopelessly with each silent tide;
the earth remains an indifferent pool of light
waiting for such rain that the sucking sky
has not released in living memory. Runners carry
no rumours along these conceited lines of stone
into the decaying teeth of clay
into the earthen sockets waiting
for the melting congelation of empty time.
Who ventures into this solid silence
that beats and lusts like air?
Who sweated to draw images for this sky?

Who is to reword the covenant?

The indifferent knife could trace
the dividing of desert and living green.
The easy knife could draw
again the circle of words that rounds to nothing.

Yet rooted, yet with no instance of purpose,

the permanent dawn declares itself against me,
tasting of copper, still, caught in the barrens
ensnarled in potential day yet mourning
over shattered light in dust that moves
dimly to its bitter ends.

If I keep on like this, hoping
will you guide me or forget me
love me?
awaiting the sun with goosepimples
shredding my shirt and waiting, waiting
for the soft sudden hush of wings above my head
and not any longer this hiss of dead sand in the wind.
Here perhaps I could take up something, confirm direction
in the labyrinth of the desert. Strange how dryness
lies inside and out at once,
how scarred the country is from recent water
how many birds flush wildly with the slow pink dawn.

2. LA SELVA

Celebrate with me, damn you
eighteen months of winter;
bucket down squalls of warm rain, quaff anise
crush green foam from spattered leaves, breathe
and plunge the spiral tongue
into the genitals of flowers,
secrete rainbows into the flesh of forests,
shatter with each macaw's spasm, swirl with me
in this turgid river, drop heavily with each rotten fruit,
each rattle of bamboo, each slap of broad plantain;
overwhelm and over-reach, burst outwards
into such profusion the knife
has no edge, no attack.
Could I cut a million insects from the air?
Carve more lines on my face?
Survival seems inherent;

so celebrate
this puff-eyed prophet of yet another millennium,
offer to his ageing belly wine
of warmth and wind and rain and find
each fat drop of sensuous kiss
on lips that like the jungle bleed
green and flood the garish mud.

And yet there is no access to joy in this.
The green poison syrup of light drips
from an unseen sun; this translucence
serves only to hide separation; then where?
Nada, nada, nada, what?

Strange then to stare back to find
you sometimes with me
in the furrows of the salt-trails,
in bargaining for bones, by the sea
where fishermen came in; how marvellous
in the curves of the dunes!

While imitating a random progress
you with me
your almost presence flowering in passionfruit,
your eyes coming cast with sadness
from searching love on borrowed floors,
you with me
your eyes seeds of the dreaming-tree
or tears that shape themselves against me
or twin streaks on your crumpled face,

two halves of that ancient one
we share in the flickering of the faces
that I half-know.

 We need no longer
wait, nor search out vines deeper
to vindicate our restless dissolution,
nor hush for birds, our moist eyes
seek upwards for the city; the knife
gropes gently in the pastel dark.

3. TO THE ALTIPLANO

Destello, the king's messenger,
emerges wide-eyed with dawn, scattering hummingbirds,
carving apart mist with his knotted message,
striding wet lines of stones; falters.

The perfection of stone is empty.

Undawned light fits stones together. Yes.
They groan, boulder against boulder.
Creeps perfectly to the inevitable fineness
of brutal, astounding labour. Yes.
Makes the dream of dawn solid,
demeans our present labour
recalls 24 virgins' bones
unfurled on high, yes, yes.

This is the city.
But empty.

Too late or too early?
Successive waves of temporary flesh
break daily over the bones of flint,
the high reef of the human dawn
remains unbroken, unpeopled, unspeaking,
though breathing them in dust,
mutely stabbing the stones,
appealing the fissures,
rubbing warm rock,
seeking entry,
nada. Nada. Nada.

The tethering-post of the sun is empty;
No generations of man attend, no woman,
no mute precision.

Destello, thoughtsmith, reduced to action,
actions reduced to words, seeks in the wild
explicit couplets the condor's lair;
knife in hand on open mountains'
soft curves urging tears and closeness,
aching in the shadows; through white nights
and their broken skies, watching, deciding,
finding shards expressed from stone, water
after the necessary desert and jungle:

Bring water!

Neither this nor that he wants.

Clear pools current-beaten
from webs of living silver.

The sun's gold dying into green water.
There, where it dies.

The face cast into silver
and instantly dissolved.

Amalgam of movement
and errant water. There.

Water carrying the sky's silver
in tribute. There.

Unknotting the string of moving water?
Yes! I love you. I love you.

By the headwaters of all the rivers
what he knows is what he used to know.

And one morning wakes soft as a petal:
the sky of mercury hangs
from the wings of a solitary skylark
(He will understand this or go mad)
between each note grows
crystalline silence, the rewording;
infolded light, the conjunction;
origame of energy.

NOTES ON LETTER FROM PERU

The structure of the poem was suggested by what evidence remains of human activity in the three distinct geographical areas of Peru and also, successively and in each part, is dedicated to the sun, to a woman and to God. The line notes that follow may aid access to the poem.

*“And when all of man in us cringed back in its burrow
there remained a precision unfurled
in the high places of the human dawn”*

1. THE DREAMING-TREE

Among other figures sketched on the rock plateau near Nazca, on the desert coast south of Lima, is a huge tree more than 10km long. Visible only from the air, it was made by digging trenches more than a metre wide to expose the whiter underlying rock. Present-day desert Peruvians, who seem immersed and dulled in cultural and creative sterility, can neither explain these figures nor emulate the feat of imagination and labour. Literally scratched onto the earth, it seems symbolic of human self-awareness or consciousness by relation to the Jewish torah and other trees of relative knowledge. It bears only dreams for fruit:

“ . . the cold friction of the expiring sense
Without enchantment, offering no promise
But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit
As body and soul begin to fall asunder.”

(T.S. Eliot – Little Gidding)

16. due to over-fishing, the large Peruvian anchovy fleet had been tied up for two years at the time of my visit.

20. I was told that it had last rained here in 1925.

21. the old highways, no more than twin rows of stone two metres apart in this terrain, lead into the deserted mud-city of the builders of the dreaming-tree. The city would have been utterly dependent on water from the cordilleras of the altiplano. This vulnerability may account for the desertion of the city.

29 Ceremonial knives resembling a mushroom, with the blade being the cap, are characteristic archeological finds of this area and of the contemporary Chimú culture to the north. The image also serves for that of intellect, the ability to discriminate or choose, as a subset of consciousness.

34. “Before the Incas came to reign in these kingdoms or were known there, these Indians tell a thing that far exceeds all else they say. They state that a long time went by in which they did not see the sun . . .” (Cieza de Leon, quoted by Hammond Innes in *The conquistadors*). The Incas, and presumably those before them, worshipped the sun as the prime natural phenomenon that controlled their crops, but also recognised as supreme creator Viracocha (“foam of the sea”) or Pachacamac (‘invisible god’) depending on the region.

44. “The dome descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.”

(T.S. Eliot – Little Gidding)

2. LA SELVA

Either the jungle is too voracious for buildings, or the quality of life discourages such ideas of

permanence. Some Incan ruins from about the 13th c. have been found hidden by overgrowth.

“Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments to unaging intellect.”

(W.B. Yeats – Sailing to Byzantium)

68. Strange how one expects a burst of sensual happiness, even one tinged by desperation, to usher in a new undying age!

80f. these are the ruins that give some promise of a pre-existent ‘exactitude enarbolada’ and even of water, albeit salt, with the shadow fruit.

81. the sea voyage to Peru (16), the roads that took salt into the interior (21, 92) but also from “Beowulf” (trans., Michael Alexander) in particular:

“ . . . god they thanked
for the smooth going over of the salt-trails.”

82. see 25f.

98. the stone highways have become living vines, at the cost of a bad pun!

3. TO THE ALTIPLANO

The three-quarters of a million square kilometres of barren highlands lying between 3000 and 5000 metres was only fully subjugated by the Incas less than a century before the arrival of the Spanish under Pizarro. At its height, the kingdom spanned from Chile to Ecuador along 5000km of superb highway. Chasquis or runners relayed messages from posthouse to posthouse at up to 200km per day along this network. The centre of the kingdom was Cuzco, but possibly to ensure continuity of the rain-forests’ wealth of exotic produce, the hanging city of Macchu Picchu was built high above a loop of the sacred Urubamba river.

“I will not cease from Mental Fight
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem . . .”

(William Blake – The New Jerusalem)

103. Destello (roughly ‘of the star’) is entering Macchu Picchu from the jungle.

105. Verbal messages were supplemented by ‘quipus’, clusters of knotted strings which, besides numerical tally information, conveyed other knowledge in ways that have been lost. In a similar manner this image supplements that of the knife or intellect, now seen as an endless knot.

107. it is in these lines following that my debt to Pablo Neruda becomes most apparent. If I could induce you to read his poems, particularly ‘The Heights of Macchu Picchu’, then part of that debt will have been repaid. But, unlike Neruda, the stone city remains obdurate towards Destello, who seeks further.

114. “Four and twenty virgins came down from Inverness
And when the ball was over there were four and twenty less.”

A traditional bawdy Scottish song, but seriously:

The only bones found in Macchu Picchu to date are those of young virgins, a fact which remains unexplained.

121. “Alto arrecife de la aurora humana” – a beautiful and recurrent image of Neruda’s.

129. The ‘intihuatana’ remains as a central monolithic shadow-clock in Macchu Picchu, where on mid-winter’s day the priests recalled the sun (Inti) from the northern hemisphere towards which he had fled and tied him again to their destiny.

134. couplets – not just the twin lines following but also the conjunctions sought (9, 25f. 93f).

The Incan rite of the condor’s passing was celebrated with great feasting and singing as the

renewal of power and strength.

164. or origami (I prefer the pun!), the Japanese art of folding paper to make animal and all other forms in three dimensions.

GLOSSARY

chilom – vertical clay pipes used in Nepal and India for smoking hashish or charas (also chillum, Sanskrit).

ghat – broad stone stairs that descend to the sacred river Ganges, used for bathing, cremating, ear-cleaning and a very various etcetera. (Sanskrit).

grimpageous – climbable (Gaelic).

mantra – sacred text used as an incantation in India (Sanskrit).

maya – that which prevents one from seeing that we live in a state of unity with the universe, illusion (Sanskrit).

Moebius – the name of a mathematician who discovered that if the ends of a strip of paper are joined together with a 180 degree twist then the circle so formed has only one side and one surface.

Puja – the Indian ceremony of oblation, worship or giving performed before important undertakings (Sanskrit).

Raga – colour or mood of form in traditional Indian music (Sanskrit).

rheobarbican – neologism from rheo (flowing) and barbican (projecting watch-tower over castle gate).

sillar – an easily carved moon-white volcanic stone used for most buildings in Arequipa (Peru)

sitar – long-necked string instrument used in traditional Indian music (Sanskrit).

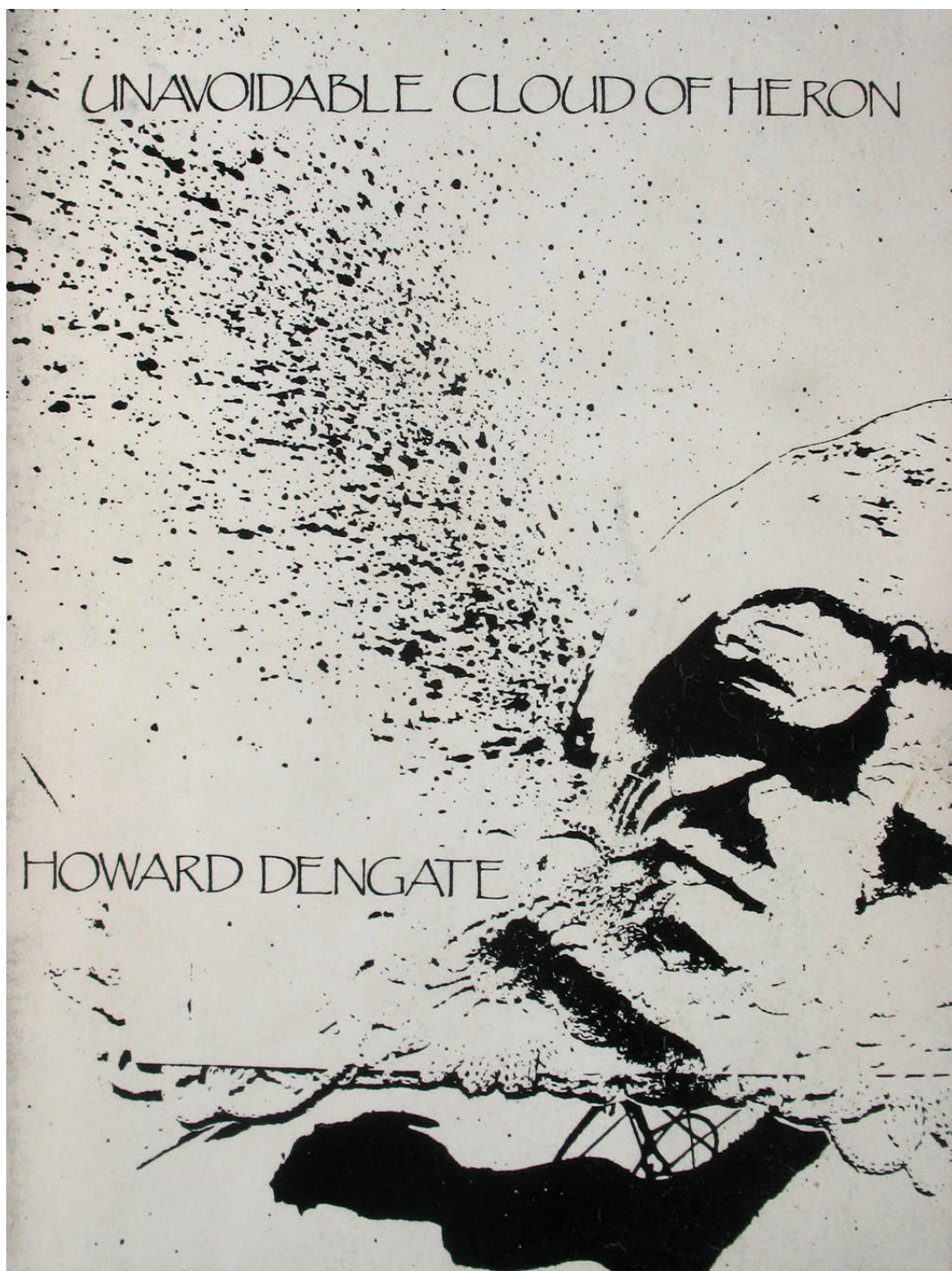
taghairmist – one who seeks divination or inspiration by lying wrapped in the hide of a freshly killed bullock under a waterfall (Gaelic)!

Ullr – Norse god of mountaineers.

Acknowledgements: thanks are due to the following, CANTA, CAVE, LANDFALL, NEW ZEALAND ALPINE JOURNAL, PACIFIC QUARTERLY and the TARANAKI HERALD, in which many of these poems first appeared.

UNAVOIDABLE CLOUD OF HERON

HOWARD DENGATE



UNAVOIDABLE CLOUD OF HERON

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CASS PASS

We found Cass Pass at midwinter a lonely moor
high, empty, glanced with early light
unfolding purity with insects' voices
sounding separately into emptiness

stretched a sky thinned with winter
tasting of a past also present, fitting
each tussock and frosted pebble exactly
as hoarfrost clings in shadow

I fix it like this for you
as it will remain entire when I'm dead
as few things do

still ringing with silence
sun distills the tussock

on and on the insects' voices.

SEEKING THE ARROWSMITH

There is always some intimation in the land:
harried-flat tussock swirling tongues,
headily stinging sweet-vernal swings
and toils the huge awful stillness
of the underlying plains; but in the mountains
we can more closely approach the non-breathing
one with rocks and icearth
in our inmost heritage, river, blood.

For this we reeking with city staleness shatter
great snowflakes of stillness,
wade webbed in mist-heavy brown-top until
we clumsy and intrusive learn
with gentler movements to slip between
diamond matagouri; to fix on the unseen mountain
until all small city nightmares fade,
are seen external, without effect: colourless
yet shot with chroma it is not what we came for,
it fleshed itself without our expectations,
it the supremely effective ungrasped stainless
empty mountain of blood.

There is always in the morning, mist
cloying as indecision and broken purpose.
Though cold as a wound behind the bandage
unease itself demands our movement:
within this chinese landscape we sense
some blood brazen spur lurks imperious
plunging from airmist to ice, immutable
in all this grey illusion
somewhere poised in unquiet white
lightly blissfully permanently Buddha
of solid gravity THERE we sense.

And if our approach seems mediocre,
somehow servile, so be it –
we are guileless and mark minutely
floating questions among the rock
rearing upwards through frozen thought, clink
crampons on stone-water, held by prayer
over blue depths booming emptiness knowing fear
in the body of fog, body
in the emptiedness of movement:
will this mountain choose our way? will these
legs last? until light lying like swords on ridges?
rich and merciless, yield some unnamed col? utter

our tiredness onto shadowed ice, rest
from life depending on metal spikes? until
ridge light catches
lovefilled curve of mountain
spurting line

scorching white fog is
raked by sun's stonefall

silent emotion is
water speaking rain

remember where the tussock is
shivering and tongued with anguish?

rocks drown in ice and wind
voices and consternation in the dark fog

we would understand
we would SEE

that obdurate Buddha mountain, maker
of shards sharpened and these singing fragments
of a burst exploded whole hid
by mist and what we crying expect to see

So that we might come down into the valleyhead
among dark riverbeds and searching shafts of light
singing, footsore, heartwhole
with the solitary kea
to the earth-flesh smelling of mother and
draw again life like a breath, full and
overpowered with the vast air and
the river
running more deeply darkly lovely

CANCER FOR DINNER

1. Denial at table

The garden remembered where
she was eaten by bees
and the mauve rose reminds now
of bone rasping against skin, the scent
is necrotic, your eyes well-sunken
you lean forward with sudden dreadful
glimpse of overwhelming nearness:
I know that He will save me. There is Time!
I cannot but agree, there is, but hearing Capitals
I am overcome with hopelessness,
the evening fails me, mercilessly
I breathe in carefully so as not to offend
and control my sighs.

Surely even doubt would seem effective prayer
against this fleeting wave of flesh, even
eyes of ice could echo my intention
to purify my act of silence.
It is not enough that the stupid should be brave,
the brave stupefied
by petals falling as we control our breath.

Mr. Heaton is dogged on some tenuous course
plotted from momentum in the past, eats steak
and flies scallops from the south,
has one daughter doing school cert and valium
and will shortly, for revenge, take dessert
which his wife declines. It seems
her wound interferes with their reality.

That evening is some silent thunderstorm
amongst philodendron shadows on the faces
the future twisted in separate words;
each category tending that shared trance
that we shall not be broken together;
an art of immortality, like cancer,
where cells refuse to die but equally
refrain from function. The compliant topics
dared not fuse; though doubt swelled greasily
we did not speak but moved our faces
smoked cigarettes and talked of places
eased quiet wind, distilled some breath

and never never mentioned death.

2. Swallowed anger

This morning? *Well.*
Sleep? *Exhausting. There was something.*
Dreams? Shards of a shattered life
nibbling on the breasts of infinity.

I am widened by hatred of knotted hands
and clouds pooling galled and bitter.

*It's so unfair, that I should lose
so much. So much. I see no winners.*
This cold moment of jade falling
mountain of water-world-wave
where bone blossoms briefly flesh.
All ambulatory meat awaits its hour.

Lined hands throttle lace.
The white clouds. The white face.

Mr. Heaton? *You want to know that too?*
I tell you who is being measured and is measured and shall be measured.
I know all that and could tell you, but I do not want to.
What is your name? What does she shut? She shuts her eyes.
What does she hear? She does not understand; she understands not.
What is it? I say what is it? Attend! She attends not.
If you follow now, he won't follow, will not follow
Swallow swallow swallow die.

Knotted hands upon the lace
belie for me all states of grace.

All your life? *Yes!*
Quieter, *yes.* My eyes are cannons,
I cannot see, bear to see, my heart turns
on the energy of a raised eyebrow. *No.*
Her hands explore each other gently
despite the sunlight on the lace
and the dying in the face.

The swift blur of some hidden birds' wing heard
above the water, impossibly hard and clear.

3. Down the hatch

*Though the trees are laden with fruit
they will rot.
There is so much now
that cannot be achieved,
and although it was rarely obvious
that I was underway
nor that there was direction
both appear with approaching end
but burnt of reward and roundness
as indeed they always were.
There is some grace in fear,
but not in my small fear.
The mountains do not tremble.
There is no grace in the waste, the waste,
the tedium not lived intently
and the intensity not valued. My waste
overwhelms at the worst time, waking
to smell dry earth and stale sheets
and the sky dull and eternal
with the ache of exclusion and the fear of cessation
to feel death magnetic, death tonguing
a corpse with dying senses
and the grave I carry. My future
lies behind me and though I would
the earth sowed to seed behind me
my passing is as water.
I have lost my taste
finding point neither in the sun-vinegar of tomato
nor sour bite of plum.
Satisfaction is a moment wasted
requiring repetition until the nerves have cooled,
and then forgetting.
The earth is
nearly
uninhabited.*

4. Bargaining for a bone

Hot? I suppose it is sometimes
at midday under the trellis washed
with arched norwest and canyons yawning
between the yammer of the sparrows.
Really, would there be so much fuss
from one killed quickly by a bus?

But if I had not denied my anger
or angered at my denial
been less caustic, been more gnostic
less fastidious, been more hideous
exchanged hilarity for more vulgarity,
surely then?

In what way will answer to the question
cause your name to cling to bone?
What has been heard is heard again
and that unheard dances
an unreal ballet of bloodless categories.
Flesh is alone with words again alone.

If I had known, only known
and surely now I understand?
Is not destruction to the wicked?
Yes, I shall beat on Mr. Heaton
bash his face till meaning flows
demand a task, a reason, time.

Time without meaning, time riddled,
and meaning without time.
What is wrong with your dying
that you chose your birthing,
and where were you when he laid
the foundations of your earth?

Even when I remember I am afraid
and trembling takes hold of my flesh;
meaning leers from the fog, murmuring
in stinging song of skylark
unsalvaged and unredeemed from time, in the song
I do not, can not, will not understand. Meaning.

5. Another helping thanks

*Rather an adventure, shyly
a real project, humiliating,
subject to necessity and contingency
not the fantasy of forever.*
Maps forged in you
more ancient than the land.

sun lands in drifts
on the muscles of the gum

*No matter how often I walk
into a flock of gulls
they remain unmoved. Somehow. Just so.*
Then. And now. Some reformation.
A coalescence of the elements, brow
knotted with neither age nor pain
accepts the ache no flesh can save

and yet without the flesh no ache

*That moonlight of the past – where is it now?
I have thought a lot.*
There are many witnesses
accepting the possible precipitation
out of this solution of air
to join the crystal dead with all
faced tombstones in the valley

the armour of light, now in the time

At the caesura a woman's hair
black as a fish's bowels,
sun beating on soil as red as flesh:
someone flung a white flash gull
guttural, feasting on wind, fast and flashly
wide, white, now bellying on air, held
high

flat leaf of flame

SPEAKING OF SHIVA

I am ashamed
lord of these misted hills
to find stored in me
tears kept so long they've turned black,
sorrows, dry and bitter
drifted into the corners of your house.
I am ashamed to have done this to you
for years, filled up with anger and hate
that spills now in a red wave
 emptying me
that I might approach you
with love, all day, all night.

Almost forgetting you at times
lord of these misted hills
under the swarm of memories
that sting a thousand times worse
than a lifetime spent grubbing gorse
bareskinned under a hot sun
with a penknife closing on my fingers
waiting with a dry heart for you,
some touch, some glancing wing.

But that which was excitement
dissolved throughout all the earth
is become crystals of fear
that pierce my flesh,
hearing the groans of your people
lord of these misted hills.
Did you plant this deep poison?
Share it amongst us at birth?
Soon, lord, o soon, soon
teach me.

Is it like this then
lord of these misted hills?
Like lips that when they touch
are no longer seen
and no longer desired?
Or the seduction
step by step, taking up
from the last liberty until
there?

Why didn't you say
that it's like diving into a pool

until nearly out of air then TOC!
breathing diamond
lord of these misted hills?

Or say its like fishing?
Drop a hook into the tide
run out metres of slack line
and never never watch the bait
until, sure enough, TOC!
catch the sea
lord of these misted hills.

The donkey braying at night
wakes me into
a vast dome of silence;
you slap me across the face with reality,
silence folded within silence
ice-cave of energy
lost in the moods of light
O lord of these misted hills
silence within silence.

And coming at dawn by bus
by the estuary
among the pink and yellow, the water
about to burst in a floodtide of love
I see the oyster-catcher alone
with his shadow, you
lord of these misted hills.

Lord of these misted hills,
you are
water to the parched earth,
my obliteration to howling darkness
where you come as a warm breath
breathing me in, breathing me out,
the warm soaking rain of stars
a white hiss in every hungry cell,
the body's-length stab of lightning
soft as a petal.

It's no use hiding
lord of these misted hills
behind screens of pierced bone
or the sepulchral meander
of stale thoughts, there is no way
to contain or conceal
your love.

Whose body am I washing in the shower?

Whose hands comb whose hair?
Which silence
O lord of these misted hills?

SURFERS

This is a recording there is
no reason to leave the hotel
raw pink slots prowl the halls
for pleasure hibiscus flowers
blush and concede greedily all you need
our computers insist black-eyed boys
lounging and twitch where you from? where
you going? you like? crutch-tightened eyes
gleam too much in knotted faces how much?
what buy? when we were here last year
the air alone was alive with frangipani but
petals are no longer permitted in the streets
turn brown like broken glass from shame
room service will supply the sand
sifted nightly and searched for evidence
of pleasure reports of violence
are exaggerated yet achieve their ends do not
leave the hotel carriers of as yet unpopular
sexual diversions waddle and strut seeking contact
in manners unspecified underarm deodorants
thicken with dusk threatening desperation
in tar-cured throats seeking grist in smoke
leering bring me your suckers and puffers
your poor with gonorrhea of the throat
we shall oil them for future service
all folds and holes are available
wrinkled desire has no need there is no need
we cannot desire for you how much?
this is a recording.

9-LINE HORRORS

I turn off the light, turning on the moon. The white weatherboard drunken wet with silence. The body of Chagall floats past. Incorruptible in winding sheets of moonlight. On the sodden road a car sound describes a perfect catenary, $\cosh^2 x$. Tyres jet water, some equation so full of discontinuity that hairs rise on my neck. Stainless fear. I am trapped in the complexity of a raindrop, sink into simplicity, white breeding night, maggots working beneath the shroud. Autumn too full of nights, vomiting while waiting. Almost I would peel back the pall of light, eat. Such hunger at the flick of a switch! You sleep on.

Thoughts refuse boundaries. Initiated they seek unresisting their own hallucinatory conclusions. You yawn. Your jaw drops, keeps dropping, peels back like a tear-tab, opening throat, chest, stomach, organs spill out in a quivering wave, steaming and misty about your feet. The smell of velvet loaded with warmth. Am I so boring? I tap my teeth together in reply. Bite harder, seek some grating end. My teeth splinter and crack, still I bite. There must be reason for jaw design. Blood bubbles to my lips, I spit fragments of shocking white teeth and blood. With no change of face the flensed tongue flaps.

Seagulls flock over the house. Mother, father and two children lie on the front lawn, bodies ripped open for the birds. Clouds drip blood but the air is too full to feel anything. No smells, no horror. All seems possible and true, even nice. Separate identity is confirmed for each blade of lawn by spattered bubbles and clots, repose is confirmed by abandoned attitudes in honest light. Red-beaked gulls spend more time squabbling than exploring the guts of the situation. Rise like sheets in silly alarm. There will be no more reason for fear. Look for signs of life escaping. Hope is extinguished with sunset.

The second tactile symphony. Dark red meat purpling in air incised with trembling care by a knife rigid with trumpets, the violins' cutting edge. Teetering over the last piece of gristle, sawing at the perfumed fat. At the parting there will be entrance to ecstasy. All things descend as a river, powerful, assured, purpose fulfilled. Revealed by violas as majestic largesse, gritty as brick, a vast rich exotic delta bursting with matterliness. Subsumed by chiaroscuro, trees, bark-breeding, cadenza of inevitability. Parrots solidify, their brass-laden breath is foul. Flutes squeal. Drums beat the agony of joining with this flesh.

SPRINGING

old iron green field
spirit nailed to bone

envoi:
the ordinary needs equally to be sung
posterity is harsh on flesh & fragile bones
soft energy shuttles briefly
over this poor frame

envoi:
thing is a the striving for reifying gerundation
smeared greening becomes green, the ing drifting
to breed with definiteness, limiting dark resources
nobody knowing from whence.

THE VIOLET VILLAGE

I call out stop stop this is
the violet village
mist over the emptiness
scourged with keas' kraark and
wind whining in tussock
born of effort and height, finally
but
some hunger draws us on.

TO THE UNKNOWN INHABITANT ROOM 67, RORKE'S HALL, AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY

No traces of welcome, only
puce-lettered on the wall
“I well might strike you
for implicating me
in your true dream.”

I shudder for the blow, wind rattles
at the thrice-painted sash.
My dream is tawdry as the unshared room.
Surely we lack only time and coincidence
to hold something in common?

I slam the drawers, seeking faces,
by the tarnished mirror find:
A hairpin, hinting at extinct passion!
A handle, that fits nothing!
A toothpaste tube thrashed
within an inch of its life!

You have implicated me.
It's a risk but
there's no end in sight
my true dream is that I love you.
Strike!

ARGUMENT 451

You celebrate secret birthdays
of ill done to you, of embarrassment
or suspected failure,
and year by year accrete
more harm to hug against the day
when no-one cares.

I suspect you too of harbouring
some hierarchy of desires,
privy to yourself, that day by day
multiply in impossible spaces
incapable of satisfaction. This too
against the day when no-one cares.

Strange how much you need my promise
that we'll fight when we both need;
for in classic usage I should now
declare I love you and forgive.

AH AHA HA!

Coming through winter at that instant
where light turns branches to golden jelly,
seeking the mauve mist of evening
for one definite object separate
from the touch of a dying sun:
the fullbodied drunken clouds
exploded in the west. There was
a moment in the belly of the world.

He who thought to fill his hands with blood
is left with rain-battered blossom
thinly greening into summer.

COMPUTER-GENERATED HAIKU

A computer program was written to generate novel haiku by:

- * assigning each word of 100 famous haiku to 14 word classes (ie noun, noun plural, adjective etc).
- * determining the frequency with which one word class followed another (ie noun is followed by adjective in 30% of cases, etc), the range of lengths of haiku (ie 5-17 words) and the range of permitted start words and end words (ie start with verbs in 25% of haiku etc).
- * disassembling these 100 haiku and creating 14 dictionaries of the different word classes.
- * randomly selecting a word from a random dictionary, then directing the selection of the next random word by the frequencies determined above, and so on. If the start word, length or end word are not permitted, start again. Otherwise print the new haiku.

1. Variations on a theme

The title of each is a code which defines the word order. In the first case: preposition – article – adjective – adjective – singular noun – determining adjective – plural noun – present verb.

Each line can be punctuated into a three-line haiku.

ODHHAGBI

In the bamboo spring bell as herons peer

In a low fathomless stone all skys come

To the far-off far-off fire all waters pay

For the fragrant infinite sandal real smells think

DAAJODHA

For the temple wind sways above the summer heron

Against the bird serenity watches of the autumn sleet

To the moon peak wanders above the autumn day

On the mountain sky skylark keeps on the summer nonsense

HBHACIH

Cherry ravines white crow it drive dark

Free birds bland persimmon I see both

Secret evenings plum journey I remain nice

Heat monks yet sparrow it sing wintery

2. Edited computer haiku

Snow all day/a death/the worms sweet from another sea.

Drift/alive flowers/in the willow combs.

In a sacred shadow/and moon growing/with the mud.

Long branch/eats from the blackness/in the spring.

Telling/quite damned willow/fishes in the tide.

Water./All of darkness/watches frozen worm.

Secret cloud/forms at a temple/on the hand.

Asking/how plum world/falls on the voice?

The saucepan flits/to the loving darkness/shower leaping.

Little bottom/on chirp-fish/the faint dewdrop roadside thinks!

Out the mad moon/and stream/leading to a stream.

In the fragrant heart/and smell/bearing on the dream.

I come, bend,/my lonely lip's/no noise of yet.

Cool forest/in cloud darken./A white ancient hand sweeps.

Shrieking/just shrieking./Heart quite bloomed off the rain tree.

3. OLD DXO:STORP

READY
RUNNH

The single chirp sick.

A still worm comes.
The rain blossom returns
the everlasting something blends . . .
but how sacred clouds testing
and how dense crows drifting
Pick an evening!

4. Unedited computer haiku

Glistening how autumn mist shrieks at the moor

The midnights of there stream with seeing out an evening night watches

The moon howls at the rain the sleep it birth no flower on the moon

Cuckoo so the frog the temple the sandals full in the black breeze

Field all the bedding the quiet the trees sacred as a spring year

Keeping of blossoms it looks desolate in I leap I fly enough cicada asks on

The mud-sorry frozen crow of waters long day enough

Peer summer days in the frozen tombs

Far crow steeped in darkness remains noon under the heart

I birth only bland sandal this wave of same frogs look to streams

The sleet even the fire moves sorry monk

For winds around a monk die with fragrance on a kite-perching day

Pure sleet through skylark cloud the ancient full crow keeps on

The willow keeping snow waves pointing from the dark day

Cold mad nonsenses see the nonsense the world's planting

From a breeze snow makes to the summer pond

Abandoning how a banana tide sweeps in a coffin

Same dreams secret bird it refuse mosquito

In a heaven snow floats in the yet world

A mountain wanders on the morning time plain passing

Dewdrop faces mountain moon you view white

From the tiny rain chirp even fields shriek

At the serenity moon scours at the clear heaven

Nice fire makes out the shadow in the belly

Thinking how withered cloud clouds under the autumn

On a desolate pond and the plover vaulting for serenity

Autumn thief where I see summer worm

The bird the heedless white ravine

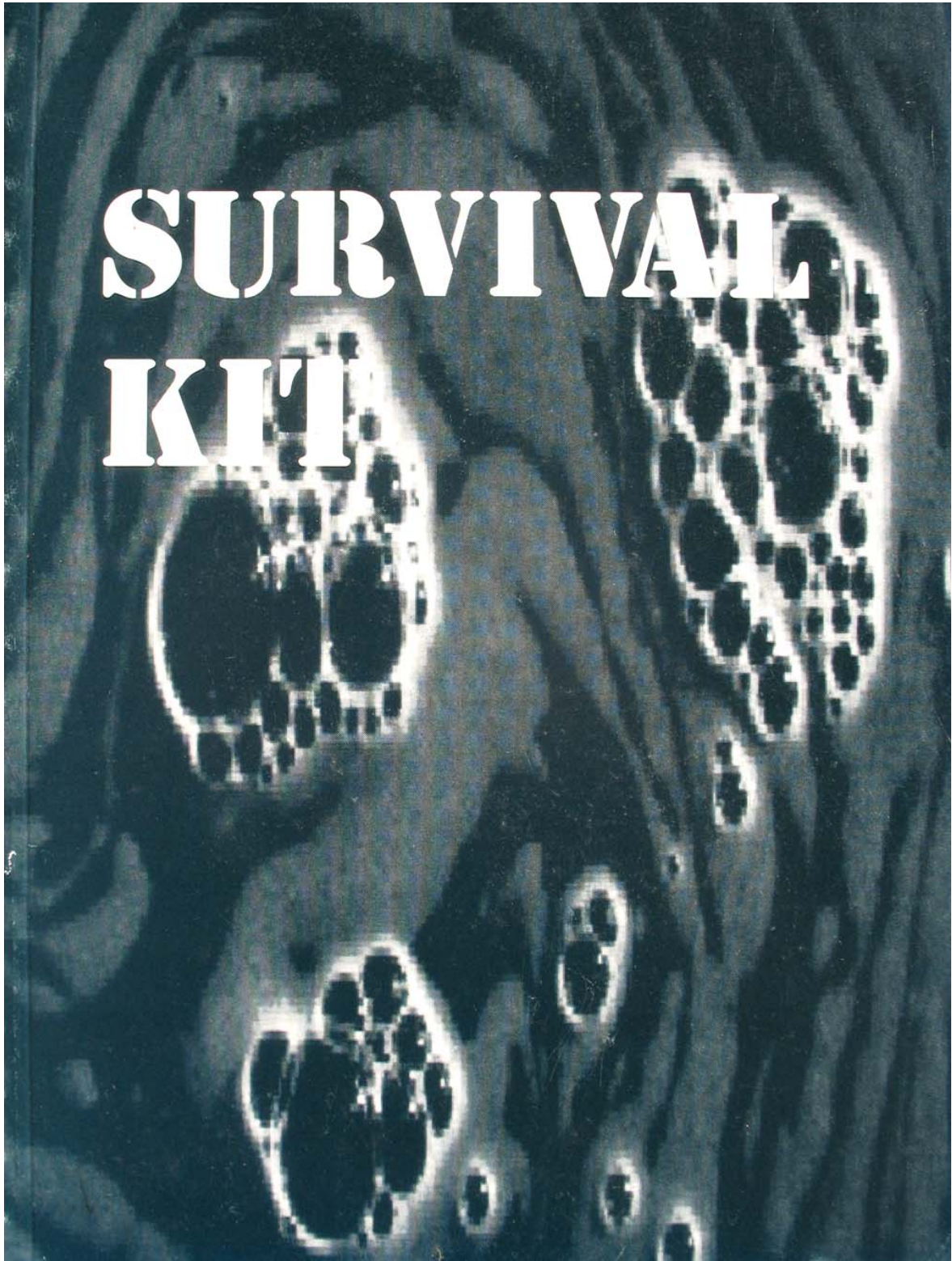
The fragrant fertilizer rustles a faint cherry shadow

Snow lights in the cedar releasing unavoidable cloud of heron

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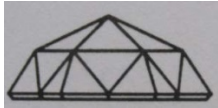
SURVIVAL KIT



SURVIVAL KIT

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Prepared for my children, this is my survival kit for a culture which is forgetting its precious history and its inner world. It is limited to pieces that make my heart beat faster whenever I read them.

In its draft form, it had an interesting reception. Most people I showed it to said that nobody else would want to read it, but would I mind if they took a photocopy for their children?

I thank the poet who simplified it all thus:

L
BLOOD
I V E
R E A
T T
H H

Howard Dengate, Darwin 1998

LULLABY

Lay your sleeping head, my love,
Human on my faithless arm;
Time and fevers burn away
Individual beauty from
Thoughtful children, and the grave
Proves the child ephemeral:
But in my arms till break of day
Let the living creature lie,
Mortal, guilty, but to me
The entirely beautiful.

W.H. Auden

PIED BEAUTY

Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Gerard Manly Hopkins

SONNET 18

Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough windes do shake the darling buds of Maie,
And Sommers lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And every faire from faire some-time declines,
By chance, or natures changing course untrim'd:
But thy eternall Sommer shall not fade,
Not loose possession of that faire thou ow'st,
Not shall death brag thou wandr'st in his shade,
When in eternall lines to time thou grow'st,
 So long as men can breath or eyes can see
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

William Shakespeare

ON MY FIRST SON

Farewell, thou child of my right hand, and joy;
My sinne was too much hope of thee, lov'd boy,
Seven yeeres tho'wert lent to me, and I thee pay
Exacted by thy fate, on the just day.
O, could I loose all father, now. For why
Will man lament the state he should envie?
To have so soon scap'd worlds, and flesh's rage,
And, if no other miserie, yet age?
Rest in soft peace, and ask'd, say here doth lie
BEN. JONSON his best piece of poetrie.
For whose sake, henceforth, all his vows be such,
As what he loves may never like too much.

Ben Jonson

MARINA

Quis hic locus, quae regio, quae mundi plaga?

What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands
What water lapping at the bow
And scent of pine and the woodthrush singing through the fog
What images return
O my daughter.

Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog, meaning
Death
Those who glitter with the glory of the hummingbird, meaning
Death
Those who sit in the sty of contentment, meaning
Death
Those who suffer the ecstasy of animals, meaning
Death

Are become unsubstantial, reduced by a wind,
A breath of pine, and the woodsong fog
By this grace dissolved in place

What is this face, less clear and clearer
The pulse in the arm, less strong and stronger –
Given or lent? More distant than stars and nearer than the eye
Whispers and small laughter between leaves and hurrying feet
Under sleep, where all the waters meet.

Bowsprit cracked with ice and paint cracked with heat.
I made this, I have forgotten
And remember.

The rigging weak and the canvas rotten
Between one June and another September.
Made this unknowing, half conscious, unknown, my own.
The garboard strake leaks, the seams need caulking.
This form, this face, this life
Living to live in a world of time beyond me; let me
Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships.

What seas what shores what granite islands towards my timbers
And woodthrush calling through the fog
My daughter.

T.S. Eliot

(I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle in the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed and gazed – but little thought
What wealth the show had to me brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon the inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth

THE SICK ROSE

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

William Blake

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness, -
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Far far away, dissolve and quite forget
What thou among the leaves has never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Away! Away! For I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless winds of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain –
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music: - Do I wake or sleep?

John Keats

THE WINDHOVER

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn
Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on a swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, - the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

Gerard Manly Hopkins

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Had we but World enough, and Time,
This coyness Lady were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long Loves Day.
Thou by the *Indian Ganges* side
Should'st Rubies find: I by the Tide
of *Humber* would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood:
And you should if you please refuse
Till the Conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable Love should grow
Vaster than Empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine Eyes, and on thy Forehead Gaze.
Two hundred to adore each Breast:
But thirty thousand to the rest.
An Age at least to every part,
And the last Age should show your Heart.
For Lady you deserve this State;
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I alwaies hear
Times winged Charriot hurrying near:
And yonder all before us lye
Desarts of vast Eternity.
Thy Beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in the marble Vault, shall sound
My ecchoing Song: then Worms shall try
That long preserv'd Virginity:
And your quaint Honour turn to dust;
And into ashes all my Lust.
The Grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hew
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing Soul transpires
At every pore with instant Fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,
Rather at once our Time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapt pow'r.
Let us roll all our Strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one Ball:
And tear our Pleasures with rough strife,
Through the Iron gates of Life.
Thus, though we cannot make our Sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Andrew Marvell

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE: XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need; by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, - I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! - and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

SONNET 116

Let me not to the marriage of true mindes
Admit impediments, love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever fixed marke
That lookes on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring barke,
Whose worths unknowne, though his highth be taken.
Lov's not Times foole, though rosie lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickles compasse come,
Love alters not with his breefe houres and weekes,
But bears it out even to the edge of doome:
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

William Shakespeare

(BREAK, BREAK, BREAK)

Break, break, break

On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

Lord Alfred Tennyson

THE TYGER

Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake

GENESIS

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so.

And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.

And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was in* itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

And the evening and the morning were the third day.

And God said, Let there be light in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.

And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was* good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that *may* fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, I *have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so.

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and morning were the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all

his work which God created and made.

Moses: Genesis 1 & 2

from LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY

13 July 1798

The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. – That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such a loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore I am still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, - both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

William Wordsworth

(NO MAN IS AN ISLAND)

No man is an island, entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
If clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less;
As well as if a promontory were,
As well as if a manor of thy friends, or of thine own were;
And man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind;
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

John Donne

(I THINK CONTINUALLY OF THOSE WHO WERE TRULY GREAT)

I think continually of those who were truly great.
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history
Through endless corridors of light where the hours are suns,
Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,
Should tell of the Spirit, clothed from head to foot in song,
And who hoarded from the Spring branches
The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious, is never to forget
The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs
Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth.
Never to deny its pleasure in the morning simple light
Nor its grave evening demand for love.
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother
With noise and fog, the flowering of the Spirit.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields,
See how those names are fêted by the waving grass
And by the streamers of white cloud
And whispers of wind in the listening sky.
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.
Born of the sun, they travelled a short while toward the sun
And left the vivid air signed with their honour.

Stephen Spender

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert ... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

SONNET 29

When in disgrace with Fortune and mens eyes,
I all alone beweepe my out-cast state,
And trouble deafe heaven with my bootlesse cries,
And looke upon my selfe and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possest,
Desiring this mans art, and that mans skope,
With what I most injoy contented least,
Yet in these thoughts my selfe almost despising,
Haplye I thinke on thee, and then my state,
(Like to a Larke at the breake of daye arising)
From sullen earth sings himns at Heavens gate,
For thy sweet love remembred such welth brings,
That then I skorne to change my state with Kings.

William Shakespeare

HARP SONG OF THE DANE WOMEN

What is a woman that you forsake her,
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,
To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

She has no house to lay a guest in –
But one chill bed for all to rest in,
That the pale suns and stray bergs nest in.

She has no strong white arms to fold you,
But the ten-times-fingering weed to hold you –
Out on the rocks where the tide has rolled you.

Yes, when the signs of summer thicken,
And the ice breaks, and birch-buds quicken,
Yearly you turn from our side, and sicken –

Sicken again for the shouts and the slaughters.
You steal away to the lapping waters,
And look at your ship in her winter-quarters.

You forget our mirth, and talk at the tables,
The kine in the shed and the horse in the stables –
To pitch her sides and go over her cables.

Then you drive out where the storm-clouds swallow,
And the sound of your oar-blades, falling hollow,
Is all we have left through the months to follow.

Ah, what is Woman that you forsake her,
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,
To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

Rudyard Kipling

A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING

To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and time to pluck up *that which* is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together, a time to embrace, and time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes: Ecclesiastes 3

THE SECOND COMING

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

William Butler Yeats

HEAVEN-HAVEN

A nun takes the veil

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

(ON HIS BLINDNESS)

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide,
Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd,
I fondly ask; But patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
Bear his milde yoke, they serve him best, his State
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and waite.

John Milton

PSALM 23

A Psalm of David

The Lord *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

David: Psalm 23

(THE NEW JERUSALEM)

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire.

I shall not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green & pleasant Land.

William Blake

GOD'S GRANDEUR

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

BEACH BURIAL

Softly and humbly to the Gulf of Arabs
The convoys of dead sailors come;
At night they sway and wander in the waters far under,
But morning rolls them in the foam.

Between the sob and clubbing of the gunfire
Someone, it seems, has time for this,
To pluck them from the shallows and bury them in burrows
And tread the sand upon their nakedness;

And each cross, the driven stake of tidewood,
Bears the last signature of men,
Written with such perplexity, with such bewildered pity,
The words choke as they begin –

‘Unknown seaman’ – the ghostly pencil
Wavers and fades, the purple drips,
The breath of the wet season has washed their inscriptions
As blue as drowned men’s lips,

Dead seamen, gone in search of the same landfall,
Whether as enemies they fought,
Or fought with us, or neither; the sand joins them together,
Enlisted on the other front.

Kenneth Slessor (El Alamein)

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-birds throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wander'd alone,
bareheaded, barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears,
From these beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne, hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of the here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.
...

Walt Whitman

TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them thou hast thy music too, -
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

John Keats

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost

CARGOES

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the isthmus
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stoack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

John Masefield

(SONNET)

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves – goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*

I say more: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is –
Christ – for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men' faces.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

BELL-BIRDS

By channels of coolness the echoes are calling,
And down the dim gorges I hear the creek falling:
It lives in the mountains where moss and the sedges
Touch with their beauty the banks and the ledges.
Through breaks of the cedar and sycamore bowers
Struggles the light that is love to the flowers;
And, softer than slumber and sweeter than singing,
The notes of the bell-birds are running and ringing.

...

Often I sit, looking back to a childhood,
Mixt with the sights and the sounds of the wildwood,
Longing for power and the sweetness to fashion,
Lyrics with beats like the heart-beats of Passion; -
Songs interwoven of lights and of laughters
Borrowed from bell-birds in far forest-rafters;
So I might keep in the city and alleys
The beauty and strength of the deep mountain valleys;
Charming to slumber the pain of my losses
With glimpses of creeks and a vision of mosses.

Henry Kendall

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

O Wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!
...

Percy Bysshe Shelley

(MY HEART LEAPS UP)

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I would wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

William Wordsworth

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

And God spake all these words, saying,

I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the house of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing that is* in the heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

Moses: Exodus 20

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream – and not make dreams your master
If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can walk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling

SONNET 106

When in the Chronicle of wasted time,
I see discriptions of the fairest wights,
And beutie making beautifull old rime,
In praise of Ladies dead, and lovely Knights,
Then in the blazon of sweet beauties best,
Of hand, of foote, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique Pen would have exprest,
Even such a beauty as you maister now.
So all their praises are but prophesies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring,
And for they look'd but with devining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we which now behold these present dayes,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack touns to praise.

William Shakespeare

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did KUBLA KHAN
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where ALPH, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

...

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread:
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Samuel Coleridge

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
Those dying generations – at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore have I sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

William Butler Yeats

(THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US)

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. – Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

William Wordsworth

(CARRION COMFORT)

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist – slack they may be – these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry *I can no more*. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.
But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? Lay a lionlimb against me? scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? And fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee and flee?

Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, cheer.
Cheer whom though? The hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot trod
Me? Or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one? That night, that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God.

---oOo---

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?
My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief
Woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing –
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No ling-
ering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief'.

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

---oOo---

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree

Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me.
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark:
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,'
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar.

Lord Alfred Tennyson

HIGH FLIGHT

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds – and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, nor even eagle flew –
And while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee, Jr.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an agèd wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breath were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle -
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me -

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads – you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved heaven and earth; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Lord Alfred Tennyson

(ENVOI)

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Walter Landor

Index to first lines

[And did those feet in ancient time](#)
[And God spake all these words, saying](#)
[As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame](#)
[Break, break, break](#)
[Farewell, thou child of my right hand, and joy](#)
[Glory be to God for dappled things](#)
[Had we but World enough, and Time](#)
[How do I love thee? Let me count the ways](#)
[I caught this morning morning's minion, king-](#)
[I have desired to go](#)
[I met a traveller from an antique land](#)
[I strove with none, for none was worth my strife](#)
[I think continually of those who were truly great](#)
[I wandered lonely as a cloud](#)
[If I should die, think only this of me:](#)
[If you can keep your head when all about you](#)
[In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth](#)
[In Xanadu did KUBLA KHAN](#)
[It little profits that an idle king](#)
[Lay your sleeping head, my love](#)
[Let me not to the marriage of true minds](#)
[My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains](#)
[My heart leaps up when I behold](#)
[No man is an island, entire of itself](#)
[Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee](#)
[O Rose, thou art sick!](#)
[O Wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being](#)
[Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth](#)
[Out of the cradle endlessly rocking](#)
[Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir](#)
[Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness](#)
[Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?](#)
[Softly and humbly to the Gulf of Arabs](#)
[Sunset and evening star](#)
[That is no country for old men. The young](#)
[The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want](#)
[The sounding cataract](#)
[The world is charged with the grandeur of God](#)
[The world is too much with us; late and soon](#)
[To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:](#)
[Turning and turning in the widening gyre](#)
[Two roads diverged in a yellow wood](#)
[Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright](#)
[What is a woman that you forsake her](#)
[What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands](#)
[When I consider how my light is spent](#)

When in disgrace with Fortune and mens eyes
When in the Chronicle of wasted time

Index to Authors

Auden, W.H.	Lullaby
Blake, William	The Sick Rose , The Tyger , The New Jerusalem
Brooke, Rupert	The Soldier
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett	Sonnets from the Portuguese
Coleridge, Samuel	Kubla Khan
David	Psalm 23
Donne, John	No Man is an Island
Ecclesiastes	A Season for Everything
Eliot, T.S.	Marina
Frost, Robert	The Road Not Taken
Hopkins, Gerard Manly	Pied Beauty , The Windhover , Heaven-Haven , God's Grandeur ,
Sonnet , Carrion Comfort	
Jonson, Ben	On My First Son
Keats, John	Ode to a Nightingale , To Autumn
Kendall, Henry	Bell-Birds
Kipling, Rudyard	Harp Song of the Dane Women , If
Landor, Walter	Envoi
Magee, John Gillespie, Jr	High Flight
Marvell, Andrew	To His Coy Mistress
Masefield, John	Cargoes
Milton, John	On His Blindness
Moses	Genesis , The Ten Commandments
Shakespeare, William	Sonnet 18 , Sonnet 116 , Sonnet 29 , Sonnet 106
Shelley, Percy Bysshe	Ozymandias , Ode to the West Wind
Slessor, Kenneth	Beach Burial
Spender, Stephen	I Think Continually of Those Who Were Truly Great
Tennyson, Lord Alfred	Break, Break, Break , Crossing the Bar , Ulysses
Whitman, Walt	Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking
Wordsworth, William	I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud , from Lines Composed A Few
Miles Above Tintern Abbey , My Heart Leaps Up , The World is Too Much With Us	
Yeats, William Butler	The Second Coming , Sailing to Byzantium

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