

EVERY TIME I SAY I LOVE YOU,
I THINK OF HOSPITALS

(2011)

The First Day

In my new job at the model village
the supervisor begins to go through the essentials:
Personal details, payroll, health and safety,
Orientation, training schedule, and skills.
He pauses after skills; his small eyes lifting
A pair of caterpillar eyebrows and asking
Skills? Do you have Skills?
Yes, I said, nodding.
Good, it's good to have skills.

Putting down the clipboard to gesture whilst talking,
*So, the main responsibility you have here, is to stop
Any animals, mainly birds, from experiencing any
Adverse reactions to the model village, like existential
Crises, for example. The size and scale you see, sends
Them off all googallally, they can't reckon it see?
Also, if they crap in there, it ruins the whole perspective.*

Not to appear a pushover, or indeed, idiot. I pushed back,
*So really, I just have to stop any animals from getting in.
Sure not how badly they could be affected by scale.
For instance, a pig wouldn't look down and think,
I'm bigger than the pub! Ah Jesus, I can crush the gas works
And this sunset does not belong to this horizon.*

The pig wouldn't do that, because the pig does not know
What a pub is, or what Jesus is, or how a sunset can disjoint
Itself over the gas works; or even, what a pig is.

The caterpillars flinch
At unknown void
Of a butterflies' wings.

*Or, even if a bird flew over, it wouldn't just crack up
Because it thought it was suddenly in the stratosphere,
Attempt to correct altitude, and bellyflop on the whole village.
Steeple through a wishbone. It just doesn't work like that.*

*Oh doesn't it now? You've been here 5 minutes
And you're already telling us what's what.
I'm beginning to have serious misgivings about you*

You said you had SKills.

I felt the back of the throat clack of the job centre
And did not argue back

*Yeah OK, sorry, I will keep an eye out.
I can guarantee there will be no existential crises
On my watch. Unless of course it is mine.*

Oh good, crack on then, crack on.

As the supervisor walked away, he half laughed
Half muttered something back at me,
I couldn't quite make it out but
It sounded like, *wait until it's picnic season*
And you've got all the ants to deal with.

If You Were Brought Up Ere, You Don't Need A WeatherMan

when nature is a floor, rising
 up into you, relief of a
collapsing morning wind on bones
 stuttering in veracity
optical truth soaked & broken
 because rainbows hide in the deep
curvature of the earth. End of
 shadowed ground when light becomes black
burn of backdrop red down on
 crashlanded leaves. Fertile ancient
land of childhoods lost. Low freezing
 blue reservoir giving life to
cosmopolitan cityscape,
 a nice thriving gravity. Through
valleys that curve with radio
 broadcasts as teenagers listen
to bellowed cities howl &
 sit still, frightened of the sun. Burnt
out heather embers left waiting
 to turn green, so young moor birds can
fatten up & grow out as though
 nothing is wrong. Of course they can
hide. But as the boys & dogs beat
 fear jerking reptilian brain
bird on a bone, reflexing wings
 looking for anything to fly
fly away to. But men with quick
 fingers & even quicker minds
stand straight, they watch & wait all day
 cocked guns, same place, same sight, same sky
steadying, holding breath, then squeezing.

Top Road

driving down this road again
potholed
crumbly dry-stone walls
siding against fields
separating from tarmac
slanted down into the valley
gravity pulling
life seems an age
melting crises back to original love

I had begun to forget
all those memories
of riding bikes
and glancing at
each other
laid down in sasquatch dirt
as the side of the road
with a broken yellow line
only guardian
from the terror
of the cars

watching your freckles grow
in midsummer afternoon sunshine
as we picked grass-stains
out of the wrinkles of our knees
only ever hoping for
an ice-cream van
playing a lullaby fresco musak soundtrack
to a dying generation unborn

it was always best after the rain
the trees were greener
the dirt darker
puddles laden with
dingy water cleaner than Eden
then moments would filter
into days
days blur into summers
summers into memories
riding bikes
unafraid of the world
up and down this moor road
'cos we just had no place
else to go

P.o.p.

I

I was here
transplanted from happiness
Into provincial abode
Dad built with bleeding hands

the plug, pulled out
from stainless kitchen sink
where you bathed me
mock farmhouse kitchen
wonderment of freedom & protection
rainbow curve bond of breastfeeding
& cheeks wiped with handbag tissue

all turned black & creased
with swoop of signatures
from bronchial arguments like thunder

swoop of signatures that dissolved
umbrellas staircase development
in legal Latin statutes

all turned black of our gypsy hex words
as a thumb screw to eventual hillside grave

II

In our village, the kids built the bonfire
each generation passed down
technique of construction
dragging pallets, discarded furniture
across football fields
with soft uncalloused hands
green with moss mildew
from where it had been left out in the rain
tetanus scratches & tears
on market bought nylon pants

all our hopes were leant up against the height
fleeting, before we burnt it all down

Then the day would come
parkin, candy apples, sparklers
squeal of children's laughter
hiss of bonfire, ooooo ahs
blink flash blink

but don't get too close
always wear your gloves
careful of the older boys
have you been drinking!?

but please,
on top of this love torn burning remains moorland
if we let it
we could have a beautiful apocalypse

my love for you is
slow spin of soggy Catherine's wheel
all the magnesium spent in the air over Britain tonight
that search flare sent up that hangs
on the smog across the valley

to run-away
from solitary-whisky-living &
your blood

& I've seen fireworks popping
through alphabetic combination
grand corona germination of my soul

& I've run naked through rainstorms
& dream of mass produced ecstasy
& industrialised heavy-metal Ketamine

& I've vomited, vomited hard
on your worst nightmares
in Bristol, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool
Roma, Barcelona, Boston, New York
& I don't give a shit

I'm not saying it anymore
All I am is that big rocket
on arc of exponential flight
that just wants to pop!
across the centre of the sky

Crisis of Faith

Quasimodo stared at self portrait
face backwards giddy frenzy
like a kid that's had too much
brandy off t'christmas cake

looked around the room
resigning himself to the chandeliers

*and I always wanted to go to Palestine
to see where Gods got kicks off their lies*

looked out from the balcony
swallowed the whole world clandestine
like a shot of German cough syrup

salvation only through my name
and you'll see your inner devil proclaiming
repentance at the gates Megiddo

Quasimodo's vision spectrums
to the pressing matter
of the road below, as the colonnades
sigh in apathetic pity

the prophecy is complete!
cast lots over my clothes
string me up on the highest hill
and shriek my name in hatred
Quasimodo! Quasimodo!

the portrait is drowning in hysterics
into a dimension only children know

the universe of man lays dormant
as fat man's gut straddles stone balustrade
without grace flopping to the Earth
forty nine feet into the ground
gravity does not tolerate glut, I see.

I can't believe in you
just the fat men strung up on high hills
offal akimbo

vagrancy of the mind
grand larceny of the conscience
with followers preaching fallacy
Quasimodo! Quasimodo!

and then
whatever is left of me
I
I with giddy giddy child
locked in the painting
locked in that dimension
locked in the shrieking of me

Memories

the sky
simmered
like
grandmother pots
 of boiling
 marmalade

Rembrandt was outside

feral wind scatters
 leaves
 plucked
from outstretched limbs
 of gambol-dreaming
 saplings

hanging paper aeroplanes
twenty years in the making
folded by accident
on churchyard washing lines

made with dreams;
hallucinations of Bleriot
& falling
 crashing
simply crashing in flames

to feel life
 to fall
 to burn
 against
fractured backdrops
 of pots of boiling
 marmalade

There was a riot t'other night, the so-called battle of
Stokes Croft

sirens soundtrack our lives
in light starved consumptive streets
little boys & girls of Albion
 snapped
 against
barcode binary bondage

panning & picking thru pigeon eared gutters
of discarded metropoli enterprise
 endless sun

loved ones incorporated as trading companies

wanderlust biometrics!
 precision of engineering
 so efficient
 it could lever the earth of it's axis

slow appearing arc of a shareholder's smile
casts long shadow across the back of man

apocalypta mind
dragging out electro poets of ecstasy fame
 evicted from their telepathy

big society black boot
 fluorescent down
astroconsecrated landscape of hippicraft
 sacrificed

gutted building
 torch dropped
into ghosted wasteland of slipped disc aesthetics

torn up roads
 melty plastic
 temporary autonomous zone
no language just sound

& the police officers became mime artists

copter script spotlight cutting the dark
acting in a short play all about

Economies Of Scale
Military History Books Of The British Empire
& the worn metal of people's souls

the kettle element
 simmering
 pressured spheres of air
lifting in boiling water
 pent up – smog night
the beginning
 of a long hot summer in Stokes Croft

Suspension

so I was in Clifton one night
& I thought how nice it would be
to go see the suspension bridge
see the arches covered
in lights
& see all the lights of South Bristol
with all it's cars & people
& how the river moves
underneath in the darkness
all the way down there
like a fanbelt
in a big velvety machine.
so I wander lost & entranced
with height
& light
& being alone
with Bristol all under me
I get to the platform on the other side
stop watch breathe
& with breath create ghosts
& mirrors & frames
for the Bristol down there
sat in it's wintering
when I notice a man
stood about ten yards down
the wall
but I'm full of it aren't I
& say something cliched
& innocuous
about all this light
& height
but he says nothing
then something about this scene
dawns on me
how most people aren't like me
in that they would be happy
to be out here on this bridge
at half one
on a November Tuesday
just for the sake
of been on the bridge

at night
I take another look
& see he is stock still
as if made of the steel cabling
as if he is made
from the bridge
& I've heard
that some people cling hardest
just before they let go
& I don't know what to do
his shabby grey jacket
unkept moustache
small second-hand shoes
I reach out
& lean
my leather gloves
upon the stone barrier
but the cold masonry
doesn't give the support
so I put my hands
down into my coat pocket
and feel something
a book!
I lift it out
under sulphur
and white lightbulbs
a strange mix
swirling crème egg
ROCKET
by Wilf Merttens
I know
immediately what page
to turn to
19 – *rocket*
when I finished reading
the poem out loud
there was silence
silence of forgiveness
then he moved
rolling back his shoulders
like a shrug
like he was shrugging me off
like he was shrugging Wilf's poem
like he was shrugging off the bridge

like he was shrugging off
fifty years
of an unoriginal man
& he turned to me and said
I must be getting home now
it was then I saw his face
for the first time
singed pink eyes
I thought it could be
my portrait
then he turned
& walked back
across the bridge
into Bristol once more
I stood
& realized
that if I'm honest
I'm really honest
with myself
about that man
honest about that bridge
honest about Bristol
honest about Wilf's poem
honest about all those lights
& why I was really there
miles from St Pauls
alone
on a Tuesday night
at half one
on a bridge
in November
then it's clear to me
in order to save a life
at first
we must save ourselves

Anarchist Anarchist Anarchist Oil drum Oil drum Oil
drum Cannabinoid Cannabinoid Where Were You

A dull red wine room squares swirl of passed on
conical spliff
thick bloomed smoke cloud exhaled from even
thicker lungs.
Slow wry smile of caught anecdote plucked
from the air,
roach like soft moss left behind from
unintentional
kisses & the nuclei of our memories that
move us
through stages, away from time
transisting
down stations like a radio in bad weather
clutched by
black fog. Each gap between frequencies
hisses white noise
but we rest briefly & each station plays a song
of you,
or what we will become. Jazz, Rock 'n Roll, Drum 'n Bass
down-beat,
a news programme, then your favourite film from childhood
rewound backwards

Silence
Silence
Crackle
Whisper

Mayday
Mayday
Can you
Hear me?

Mayday Mayday, please, come
get me, but
who can hear?

who can see those million spiders
that spun
a steel cobweb over your mouth?

what escape
is there from your escape? Who can forget?
those mirrored eyes
like CCTV Cameras watching every breath rise
out & up
away from you, then with every blink that goes
down & lost.
Stuttering a slow prayer out in Morse for
salvation.
To be safe again, away from knife pivot
cliff-edge
curled up in cotton, a dreaming foetus
waiting for
the black fog to separate before it passes away
into white.

Me, Myself, & R

I look into tall free standing mirror but only see
a fidgeting reflection of a black & white line of pretention,
staring back with hungry hollow eyes, scared & lost, naive as hell.

As I write those lines, under a poverty of candlelight,
in amongst the cities buxom buzz, overlooking a Catholic Ziggurat,
St-Marys-On-The-Quay, declaring Christ forever as king.

As I write I see unfold from my (bookies) pen
a self-fulfilling prophecy: myriad of balloons fall on the earth
filled to the brim with self-indulgent excrement

* * *

as if you had double vision of The Invisible Man
Rembrandt stumbles past the colonnades inside, perhaps
he was going to pray, perhaps he was cold & drunk

He finds a book alone on a pew; it seemed out-of-place
within this white, cold, Godded walls. Clear as day it was titled
'Nirvana In A Pamphlet' & It glowed like a power surge protector.

Clutching at the book like folded tin-foil, he put it inside
his Harrington then scowled around the church like a Crow
hunting forgiveness for it's very being; it's very creation.

He took the book down to the copy shop. Rembrandt stared
the tongue pierced shop assistant in the eye & without regard
for copyright permission, ordered 500 copies.

Remembering his diploma from the Judas Iscariot School Of
Commerce
he sold them on for a profit, pamphlet £10, leaflet fiver
(leaflet holds no hint of repentance)

Rembrandt became rich in an instant of time that was so small
the grain of sand was not falling but flying in the hourglass.
Until the day Nirvana became just another stop over

on the backpacker trail, & Rembrandt just had to go,
wiped clean from the records, an admin error in hell.

The pamphlet became ruined & T.S. Eliot turned in his grave

Here it is always, the crux of us, & do not worry
if you do not understand. There is plenty of time
when there is no time in The End.

* * *

So now anytime an event is reported on The News,
or The Earth completes its orbit & season's change,
or someone falls in love or falls out of love

A myriad of shit filled balloons appear unsolicited
sent by a mass poseur vigilantes who in their largesse
only really want to stand on the steps of The Pantheon & say

I know somebody must pray for me.

At the Crossroads

on the 3rd Thursday
of every month I go out
to the Crossroads to sell
my soul to the devil
Lucifer, bringer of the dawn

but he just stands there
drawing a fag back in 1 go

*look kid, if I've told you once
I've told you a thousand times
your credit isn't anywhere near
good enough, I got stung last time
on sub-prime mortgage swaps
sure, I could give you the world
but all I would get in return
is the philosophical equivalent
of a half-eaten cheese sandwich*

& apparently, the devil doesn't care
all that much for cheese these days

So What Exactly Are You Going To Do With All This Existentialism?

I came home the other night at almost 3 o'clock
& I undressed in the dark as usual to save the chance
of catching rib belly reflection. As I was getting into bed
I got the feeling that somebody else was there also
& sure enough as I stretched out under the sheets
my big toe nail scratched the oily hairy skin of another man.
Well, I thought, what's the difference? it's only a man.
So I got into bed with him. But the Ketamine from earlier
had saturated me through so I couldn't sleep, lying there
a mere reverb of a person. Well, what's the difference?
I thought so I got up & rolled & lit a cigarette & after a few
minutes I had the thought of seeing who this man might be.
Moving the limp cherry torch over his face & with a cut
of moon coming through the taped back curtains
it became obvious that this man was a dead man. Well,
I thought, what's the difference? at least this one
won't be moving around rolling into my side tugging the duvet.
I got back into bed. I tossed the cigarette into the bin.
I thought that maybe the loop left in my visions memory
by the trail of the cigarette could be same trajectory of
a fallen angel burning white hot through the atmosphere.
I thought about perhaps writing that down somewhere. But
I didn't. I never have. Well after a while of not sleeping
& a tame conversation with dying embers of pop image
hallucinations I think I smell smoke. It wasn't cigarette
smoke. It wasn't smoke of skin. It wasn't smoke of burning
books. I lean forward; the bin is burning away like a tabloid
editor's soul. Well, I thought, what is the difference of a bin
being on fire? & It made such a lovely bright & comfortable light
I thought I might as well read for a while. Patting the dead man
on the shoulder as I climb over to the bookshelves
I think this might ought to be the time for some great big smashing
poems.
I pick out The Four Quartets by T.S. Eliot. Turn it over in my hand,
flick the pages across like I'm shuffling a fixed deck & then instead
pick up an annual of Omorashi Magazine. After about ten minutes
or so the room has got a bit too hot & bright to read so I go
into the kitchen instead & butter an entire loaf of bread to make soldiers
for one egg. I think to my-self. I am the North Korea Of Breakfast.
I am the North Korea Of Breakfast. I decided that this is a really good
thing
to write down & write it down a 167 times in order to symbolise
the growing importance of the number 167.
I am the North Korea Of Breakfast I am the North Korea Of Breakfast

In a later part of the now, blue lights appear outside & huge firemen
are coming up the stairs. I reckon them out to be rather weak
hallucinations
as well. I say I am the North Korea Of Breakfast.

"There is a fire son we gotta get you out of here." They shout

"But I am the North Korea Of Breakfast. I am the North Korea Of
Breakfast, But I

I am the North Korea Of Breakfast."

"Come with us son, please".

I look away at my army & look back at the men of fire with their axes
& powerful water & big stuff & asbestos lungs & conclude.

Ok why not? What's the difference?

Ah, The Times

Ah, the times you first meet someone & the mere sight of them
creates a low tune of static electricity in gaps between
bones

& then when you get a little time alone & you talk & it works
you talk of the things you want to talk of everyday & you share the
same loves & your disagreements are refreshing

& then later there is some slight flirting that is so innocent &
subtle it just is & of course unknown to either person backs
of fingers faintly brush elbows it's all so polite &
considerate you exchange contact details & you actually DO
keep in contact

& the waits between replies are Joy they are purgatory they are
every spare square inch of frequency on interstellar radio-
waves they are the barrels of bitumen icing the motorway
that separates you & for once it seems it is going O.K this
could be fun I want something for once

& then you realise all this time that you have forgotten something
forgotten that you aren't the sort of person who can have
relationships

forgotten all that bi-lateral misery!

silly Billy stop trying to get involved with the human race honestly
It's like you do this shit ON PURPOSE.

Yeah, OK.

this week I have had two panic attacks over losing a collection of short stories by Will Self because I can't remember buying the book so convinced myself that I had made them up in my head

& they never actually existed & have instead of just been sat in a warm bath reading a Penguin Edition of Grey Area I must have just been sat there watching bubbles in a trance whilst I drool prose of English suburbs across my brain until I convince myself of a conclusion decide to shut an imaginary book {careful not to get the pages wet} & dry myself & shave myself & go to sleep then go to work

& really when you begin to get into it all it unravels like fresh tripe out of a bucket so like what is real is the book real was the warm water real how do I remember how to tie a tie when I can't remember learning did I invent Will Self because without the internet I would have no reference I would have no transition of life as which to compare mine to slipping by you know like a river or something

& I'm a bit of impermeable stone that never gets to move but then you hear the tripe slap on the chopping board waiting to be seasoned by vinegar

& think Christ what If the internet is a figment of my imagination how I can tell if anything is real now because it is rare to experience something with someone else when I feel something I can't think why because I never remember learning it in the first place.

Anyway, I found my copy of Grey Area by Will Self, about a third of the way through, & eager to get back to where I left off, before I think, It was me who interrupted.

Every Time I Say I Love You, I Think Of Hospitals

PSYCHIATRY

my current decision making process pivots
between two fetishes;
suicide & latex

but at the moment I'm writing this poem
so I guess rubber is lighter than rope

I could go away but my erection disappears
at the thoughts of ECT
& murder

of hoi polloi neo beat art
It was all meant to be studio volk & free love
but it's strangers & empty anecdotes

I could go away but a psychiatrist
would be just knocking the tops off
& dandelions seed spores which flood
out
& pollute like Anthrax
when wind cross weaves
brittle fibres
into slab of asbestos

* * *

at night by the open fire
I watch prophecy in embers & cinders
unfurling symbols of ash
but it can be stifling because if I stroke it
one way, the ash spells out
I FEEL FINE
but if it slips the other way
I FEEL NOTHING
this could just be an inch
a silly little inch
a solid inch
a proper inch
but what does it matter
because this is all there is
So Go Kid, Dance!
It's 33 1/3 & this is it
our thrill seeker chance
to burn as lights
postponing life & reality
aspiring to glow
in a seizing growth
of never-ending-thinking night

* * *

One day whilst I was waiting for the bus
palms folding over fists as the chill
of Autumn sang the springtime of death
I saw my spent up future synchronising

with red high heels under an umbrella
smudging colour into wet pavement
vanishing into a point of perspective
to a hummed chorus of No No No

fading away in a falling whistle
like a bomb landing just out of earshot.
A policeman walked past
he eyed me up like a tailor

or was it an undertaker. The bus came
around the corner & as I fingered for
loose change, I thought very briefly
about braking distances

* * *

to survive
we must become ruthlessly eclectic
so give it another day
because there ain't a poet yet
that can submit innocence to death
with it's chariots of ambulance
plus I need to pay my lekky bill
and two Thursdays ago
my counsellor said
I have a way with words

CHAPLAINCY

let's tell them all Sister (Trust me)
Elvis is dead children
stop casting your consensus
of an everlasting rock n roll
(Trust me)
the moment you even begin
is the moment you sell out
(Trust me)
dead is the light dead is the sound
dead are sideburns dead are tattoos
dead is youth
(Trust me)
I've felt the mods phetted up dancing crazy lovely
in Bingo halls to sped up soul into a rising form
the greatest ever rising (Trust me)
dead is mohair dead is parka
dead is whizz dead is Detroit
dead is style
(Trust me)
I was there when that clear electronica lifted us
from our axis as petrified sunshine produced
an outline of beautiful blood before the moon
separated us into a glory, a gruesome mercy
(Trust me)
dead is freedom dead is drops
dead is CK dancing dead are high tops
dead is smiling
(Trust me)
let's tell them all sister
let's tell them about the gap, inches wide
to dive past electric train crushed crowd scene
of a trillion faltering adults into fretting & fretful
memory- our Secret fetish, only the good die
independently, trust me, trust me you say
(Trust me)
these confrontations of faith, rewording innocence
to make youth ashamed of youth
with hard scripture of Lions, Lambs, & Time.
then you dispatched me off,
like a child being sent to bed.

REHABILITATION

A prayer to ensure gambling success
was given to me by a poet on a scrap of paper
which folded into a divine cinema postcard
sky-reading aloud:

I will exist one day in the sky
with the true flight of poems
in amongst the blameless things
who exhibit noise above the sea

so men have said,
when they come quickly hitherward at dawn
for lobster & blue rope.

the sea which is womb cloudy life giving abused
but can absorb even lightning.

when I was shrill in voice a lover of dice
rolled up aces over queens
& check raising impatient businessman
to the last inch of their trouser stitching

I took winnings home
& burnt them unknowingly
as offerings to Apsarses of Ghandharvas
for Gods & ghosts of gambling
what innocence was twisted
away in vapour
tin-foil
 folded
 vertiginous

But no luck in creating pillow biting
despite teenage knees trembling
hedonist, equally sheeplike
directionless & smuggled
in between high street nylon.

It was no accident
that your blush broken capillaries

echo effervescent
as your favourite brand of cigarettes
on my wrist, withered
like daffodils in a children's ward.

It could be
the desperate aura
that was not fear
but torment of skin.

naked & sideways
dirty light
eyes struggle to focus
breath or sigh
halting
it's hard to run away
when you live inside a wall
a frame of you
& reckless issue of finger
upright against lips

In the hard lit morn
she sipped at stale rum & didn't wince
I watched her put on stockings
before anything else
I wanted to put her into myths
she said she hated sentimentality
snarling a silence
hours of untold violence
I was simultaneously
the plaster on the wall
& a constant rerun
of the man from Porlock

ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY

my eyes woke with fatigue
of old concrete standing up
to a tsunami, no time no time to fall apart now
be strong grasshopper as there isn't much time
and look how methodically it moves

I was expecting blue lit sirens sirens sirens
but they didn't even ring the buzzer
seeming just to be there at the front door
in silence, I guided them to the living room.

But your eyes lad, stroking up the back lids
Stripped down bleached white bouncing
sour milk glue murmuring pure cotton wool
not yet you – *Arise & Breathe!*

intervals of hope dashed, looping pressure
most days it's a choice between the doctors
& a fun night out - this boiling point of bile
just after a half eaten condemnation of love
slips back like a fistful of pills
to shape a clean stiff narrative
that haunts our brief instances of joy,
before silent flights and hard episodes
Arise & Breathe

this must be love, filtering, this must be it,
stopped, must be us, bleak, falling
like dirt thrown onto a coffin

* * *

nah ere la did I ever tell the
about this little creature living inside me
born on a day the Sun wouldn't rise

I dream glass, whispering.
In silence, we all beg for sex
In silence, we all remember the stupid shit

when the backs of knuckles would touch
as the bed was made up in the dark
or how often those beads of sweat ran
into small hairs they never knew they had.

how when you strapped a gas mask on
& your eyes became voids of air pressure

voids of Gin, Larazopam, & Helium
voids of regret, voids of felt pen on doors
Sorry Joe, Don't come in, call the Police

I tell the la, I once had this little creature
living inside me and it yawned at life
sniffing solvent tubes in cobwebbed towns

syncopated with the electrified drizzle outside
that I ran to eagerly then backed up away
as the thick polaroid sun singed eye skin

this quickening pain of the moon appearing
to dictate our moods & speculate water
Arise & Breathe, Get up lad, stop messing about

* * *

This weary old linguist stuck in Briny Convent,
all the days of this working life spent judging
himself against his unfinished work

immersed in the scribble of words
as a rasp used to take away flaps of skin
just to get to infamy quick enough

forgetting when he first fell in love
with Alphabets, how crane's legs twagged
into triangles of lost afternoon water

or the slight dry rot of Preston Library
either way, the perfect found poem.
what dizzy ambition of this water

these molecules of notebooks
these brain processings
these tonics of happiness

when the old linguist died
he left a witty epitaph
so no one would feel sad at the graveside

but what if, this time
there is no punchline - so here we are
cloudhead, half drunk now

from something light and strong
half clothed cloudhead, surrounded
by blister packs & gas canisters

a synthetic petrified anger that turned
in words and turned out
like you fell through a trapdoor

into the tricks and warfare
of psychiatric care, so now
this routine again brother

this trigger of longing darkness brother
but I realise that cities grow

underneath all of us brother

roots & branches wrapping like a tourniquet
re-worked dissatisfaction with humanity
how I witnessed a loose thread unravelling

& I didn't put my finger on it
hummingbirds don't pull the petals off orchids
so what's it going to be this time ey?

when the rain comes again brother
a real pale skin clutched in foetal shell
staggering open handed towards the moon

in the gutter, when the rain comes again
anonymous as fish shot in a barrel
a constant inorganic slaughter

in the effortless grace of water pulled
by fullness and dropped by emptiness
of this & always fucking moon

EAR, NOSE, & THROAT

You mysterious vehicles of childhood, power me
send me fluid through grand gallery
of wobbly belly buttons, stretch marks
of the company secretaries who are on the cusp
between classical & quantum physics
when they are seamless, gagged
on limbs, helpless voyeurs of time,
taking turns to dominate
eeny, meeny, miny, moe,
David, Goliath, Go!

voyages born from imported Indian Pharmacies
they called us the Rosewater kids
passing from excursions of peasant happiness
we retraced civilisation, back to that little archipelago
of cedar trees swaying in the breeze like coughing lungs

until my dreams hold enough darkness
to contain growing eyes slit against a blizzard,
where you stood on a straight cobbled road
with a Birch strap in each hand, ordering me to kneel
before long black boots marched over me
as if I was Europe, resting the heel
upon the bulge of Adam's Apple with a look
with a simple look, all of life & history was held
in the power of a high heel and I could have not
being more resigned to its darkest wish

* * *

so help me God, that was just a brief pause
I promise I will tell you everything I know
I was fooled but I was innocent
and innocence is always unsatisfied

* * *

when you've had enough of designer drugs
please promise me you won't disappear
like everyone else, stay here with me
& we will make Heaven by ourselves

* * *

* * *

O the paramedics who came
& stretched in their latex
slightly hesitating to make sure I see

this time I say, I won't be derived
in presence of first dawn
where we were crown together

just above the messy steel shutters
in old unpleasant curiosity of buildings;

miscellany adorns my body
corralled in a span of colour

right arm depicts mad hearts
symbols of perceived sanity,

left leg bears the scars, fingering
through shaven headed white linen

between legs are brittle twigs
lost flesh to graft, empty

eyes poached with paintings
women of substance in clam shells

flanked in the flames of oil tankers,
above the third eye, a fallen stop sign

reading visible when the eye
blinks against the internet sun

death will be lashed to a needle
slowly bleeding away shoulders

a Union Jack Hung up on fraying rope
sliced with a golden hilt

& very soon
there could be no skin left

