

7 Poems



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All My Sons

The invisible Marcus
 is painting the ceiling. When we slept together
 he was painting the walls
 the shade of a number problem, a veil,
 he lingers on the adult side where television
 is not a ration and the poem is a manner
 of holding it together. Do you think it's right

that only certain people can be famous?
 To extend the definition and give us each
 half a chance would keep us from getting ancient.
 We climb elephant-coloured branches,
 the air is free like us in the entire world under
 a state dept. travel warning.

It's given out that a wild boar has seized a train,
 the hoof prints lead to Calais.
 When its blood is up it has a blind stamina

the rough edge of its hair rubs off its skin,
 the skin keeps it from sliding into the hole
 of a carnivorous tree into slavery,
 if it is silent it will soon be laughing
 burning like a herd of suns over the fields
 of Fukushima.

The girl must be a Peshmerga
 boar-spear or dragon, she chooses
 the blue and white sail and circles indefinitely
 above the Angolon. These fierce and slender limbs
 climb jugs and divots, she flies
 breaking nuance among the pine tops
 but would be the child I lost,
 her lungs scissored by an epoch
 or she goes out drowned in scarlet.

The boys are also ones I would have lost,
 and may yet, the pitiless front
 of their jammies maps every place
 that is not a target, it is the single dinosaur
 who might have evolved into a man but is now
 a relic they dig out of bricks for fun.
 The box overhead shows a heaven made in ash.
 They grow towards it forcing a trope of fear
 as a thing to be managed or blamed.

I saw the heavies of special branch
 in the departure lounge guarded by seven gates
 and seven crowns. They chose the boys
 for their ballistic look and the girls as slaves
 who fell through that fabled hole in their bodies.
 Waking up with a sword, smashing the wrist with trucks.
 I snatch him away

he has been flipping his brother his whole body
 shakes and can't be held in fear
 of my outrageous discipline. He asks only for special time
 riding the 38 in a loop, London's carbolic sky

full of canaries and cancer, we agree
 each chapter must end with 'boobytrap'.
 At night his head rests on owls.

There are only four people in this room. We
 threaten to leave the table
 in Vienna as a sandpit full of fox piss,
 leave the children by dying off to
 pick each other up under the arms,
 make a catenary arch on Hatterall ridge
 and subsist as best they can forever.
 Their skin is still dripping; putting the head
 through the hole is doubly impossible,
 how can they make food or lodging?
 He consoles himself picking out carbine stars
 and multiplying them by larger numbers, sketching
 out groups

of fish and cupcakes and imagining filling the toad.
 What is the number before infinity?
 What does produce mean? That the art of holding
 is palliative, and no one need live
 having lost her sparkle.

Tonight it's claw club, the lesson
 Gothic mathematics,
 each werewolf sleeps in a cubicle where in the daytime
 it does some clerical work.
 In combination they produce feelings
 which take the place of the sum;
 the tv is full of spying numbers,
 they shoot out of the arm of the sofa,
 the brain quivers with disco as a rubiate x marks
 their zone of landing.

You are a bonkenger called rhubarb.
 That means fighting but then holding
 hands with strangers at soft play,
 crying when asked to be sorry as if

your entire personality was on the spit
 at the despatch
 box. The fox
 fought with the breakfast till it turned into dinosaurs
 and was cleared away.
 We water-board amoxicillin,
 owning the good we claw back his shut face.
 To make up that good with sweet
 night gardens believing
 we are rescuing their ears. The analyst
 saw this child

as an artist whom the mother records
 shouts into oblivion
 wishes to repair sometimes
 like a clock whose singular complexity she keeps,
 is shoved off, anxiously needed.
 But he recoiled from being fed on too.
 Retreated into the hollow trunk of a tree
 where none could command him to communicate,
 a prince of lost countries.

Smiling over the field
 of poppies like a good witch their mothers
 feed them with their own images
 which is the lie of their harmlessness,
 which puts them to sleep
 instead of killing them.

That is a strong place. Like Socrates
 the baby tied to his pushchair waits
 in his bedroom with a blanket covering his head
 for death; the child drifting in and out of reality
 in his bedroom
 with pythons and rats,
 his wrists held by wires
 to the fire-guard, and nothing will save him.
 The sky bulges with giant bullets,

but only an individual retches bringing
nothing up but the desire to know nothing again.

I must get back to my own.
The only consolation
of mornings like this one is that their damage
can be so easily held.

Day Song

What is the value of this number? It hangs in the air
remote as bells, it swings in the sheer air
is up. The dog blundering in heliotrope

as a colour lives a fast stupid way,
which burns through too fast for thought,
and so is gone again

to whatever house picks the snow.
Contrails scratch its glass
but the curls also dry

as the flesh-eating sun does its tricks
glider slips downwards on a blade of grass
becoming natural through this fearless

collapse in the vast abstraction of sky.
Poster girls all have open mouths
our archives a vast emptiness of money

and squandered protection which apes
the thicknesses of all historic thought,
or possibly only this film of liquid creeping vividly

along the floor. The field of offerings is perfect
streaming a number which is zero's oddness
even making that sky blue.

What I thought was a face is a metal plate
this is not an arbitrary proposition
unlinked to the others, like the collective,

films of lives no one wants
keep us sad in the evening, or crammed with gore,
working out our psychotic wishes in that gap

between the subject and its community,
object, master, the police. I can fight with you
only if I believe you are immortal, like every day

comes a different way up the track
or falls like thunder out of the sky
and floods the screen I send this to.

Insomniad New

The bird door, billows
behind which a pinked sky bulges
with fluff and dirigibles, every one
opened and shapeless like the new
school where I take the kids,
her kids, but they are mine,
out under showers to the country,
away from the other mother's
neglect, packing their summer clothes,
but what about my job, the waiter
with his canapés hesitates then nodded.

The country from above
is velvet peaks, the grass golden
and soft as icing, the trees wine-
dark though in New England pink
to gold. I weep here, by the boards,
the grass is long the ringing
of the hardball chucked in my face
subsides into our possible life;

sinking and hooking
 back up above the icy surface,
 fevers curdle in my armpits, my mind
 knotted in a hideous pink bow,
 then it simplifies like a triumphal arch.
 The line needs no defence
 and is endlessly reformed:
 does your mother know you're here?

Stridor

She thins the rib skin leaping clavicle,
 her life in the summer bed always full
 of sand is a boring thoracic effort,
 her pelt luminous as mayonnaise.

From the park lofts Pharrell Williams
 the summer disguised as Lollards
 and the children too weak for pitching
 still sleep with basilisks and etch on dawn

with their porous bones. Still sleep
 covered with the mama dog,
 contactable by dirty men.
 I say so because I never know

when I may need to, the synthetic
 crepes twist spagyrically on the washing lines
 made of an obligation rather than an intensity.
 And the wild boar took out my liver, she said,
 and used it as a flag. Actually

it was someone else's liver. I knew by its
 mushroom birthmark, stretching
 as the leg grew out of its cast. The crossers
 made little headway with their bat-and-ball
 lollies, licking them like cats, but the others

were leaning away from animals
 and the doctors knew they were wrong
 by the way they barked all day
 they sweated into the night.

Salthouse

You are softness suspended
 in the edgy air, oh corporal
 of selection noises. And you touch
 the dust makes patterns in creases,
 whorled and deep and heavy as a nautilus.
 Succeeded by your others illuminators
 creationists paled and flattened by the need
 for sleep, we watch them mistake
 midnight's cockerel and shoe
 the snake in hooves. They watch us
 like white wolves cattish and healthy
 in trees. In the depth which is still
 our lives, own, we melt and frost
 making our centre a certain
 knot of peace. These limbs your reach
 harden and rooted in elective ground,
 the fathoms vibrate with monsters overwhelmed
 push yourself up from the dive you are now
 running with melted sugar and close
 your primitive organs, dry yourself
 and take back yourself across that broken bridge.

S / L E D G E S

The possibility of life in the mind
 of you living on such a brink table
 top, ice of the Gospel giving
 out tickets to hunters of wild angels

or furriers blazing search in gorse
 for mice, hardly in winter, ticking
 over of engines and popping warms
 honey-coloured blood with sparks

from their halos or the circuit held in place
 in barrel-chested batteries like treacle.
 To see you all gripped by fire
 and to see a summer walk

round the Ewyas with sky for
 a canopy are two indefinite futures,
 the catastrophe eliminates any
 indifferent particles, hunters

turn back in deference from the high
 flattened roadworks and you take
 leisure to turn your face up
 towards buzzards or were finches in

hail. The infant cupped in his cradle
 seat, one of three kings illuminating
 the pass with their gifts of horse,
 shit and chocolate, and firs

blow out a melody of snowflakes
 to the white queen of their inscrutable
 origin their downloadable patterns
 their weight in multitudes and fine singularity.

We turn back rudely, hastily, too near
 peaks to risk annoying our company
 too far from loneliness to see snow
 perish under a hot mystic tread. At home

with pies we recreate satisfaction.
 The wind like a lake bears
 steadily down on the house, luckily
 it's got thick medieval walls

the walls are still standing. Let the pouring
beat up the fields, let it defeat sheep
and gobble the grass. Let ancient minstrels
serenade the pederasts among the cultivated

skin laid flat as the history of this valley.
We have as much to keep as an infinite
hayrick, it glows with honey-
coloured potency, we should work hard

to keep it all alive and ready to wander
the night if our care does more
than teach their gross needs to blow
outwards we must keep hold of them

firing the night with their sainted hearts
as we banish death with dreams
and the miraculous novelties
incarnated as love himself.

The light pulls off.

The light fades into
sound, so sounding spits and becomes
flat and wide: light salts,
whose angles hurt,
dumb windows break
letting in the whole sea.

The sea heaves. It pushes
the sound gets in everywhere
first and is a coiling sensation.

The hand breaks. The hand is flat
under the roller, the sea
does everything it intended.

The hand is transparent
so thin as held rice. Light pushes
through it onto the ant face.

The ant face has two lines for eyes.
A sound insults the eyes

behind the lines like a garlic press
and the night sits not
vomited in the stomach
with the meal paid. The meal
is ground and scattered
behind the eye where the people
and the objects skitter
against the flap which holds them
cannot hold them still. The cars roar
as the light begins and the reasons
crawl through the see-
through hand with the bird
singing out frère Jacques has no use.
The sound of roaring shuts
behind creaking roses
standing at the security desk
an apology: rose salt
cusses the Christmas turkey,
her excess skin tucked back against her
hole shamefully, where the slaughterman
falters. The ant at home at sea
the triple barrel of the sea in museum
windows, presses light
out of the language
interfering with children
whose salted angles spit
a normal sound,
a little light music in pots,
a little hungover tremble that beats
its coiled vapour against the sea.
The spring creaks, a ring
pounds hatefully on its coil
when the eggs break
out in spots, turned on
a high-voltage lamp to check
the specimen grows.
The face turns and creaks
towards the door the smell of fat
of trickles and bad tenancies.

The press creaks. The light
 is the last layer before the painting,
 it holds up its sainthood to the sea,
 the sea spits and roars in shameless
 security at the wake
 up, and roll
 over into the light. The day spits.
 The roses twist into the shaft,
 the yellow crop spreads poisonously
 in fen light for meal.
 The breach appeals. The balls split
 off from the head sing out
 Mary had a little lamb so they are not
 split off at all as the whole is,
 the new line rolls out. Rolling out
 of sound go the ant-tracks
 under the whole sea. The sea burns.
 It doesn't give. It doesn't give you
 doesn't give a shit doesn't give away
 doesn't give credit doesn't give notice
 doesn't give room doesn't give credence
 doesn't give thanks doesn't give refunds
 doesn't give space doesn't give space
 the space forgets. The energy disperses.
 The matter splits the head splits like
 wise is wrapped in tissue in the bin.
 The tissues are counted and some are whole.
 The light spoils. The light spreads out
 the meat spoils, it hangs in the cooler
 and as the muscle relaxes the taste
 of the hole becomes more
 nuanced, the slash
 in the eye marks a line ending
 as a row ploughed or turned
 is salted by the eye breaking
 itself on its field. The field so cranked
 and normal is imputed to that hate
 tucked into the roses like a flap of skin
 so obviously it shudders there

in the engine's place. The roller
continues flattening the road.
The sea and its weight
continue in the place of the light
which constricts to the size needed
for a fly
on the wall incinerator, the pill
is placed carefully on the paper hand,
the light splits and either side of the light
is bleached with the inflation that sticks
in the pill which sticks in the throat,
the multiples shoot out
of the pill is a fly dangling in water
but it is not fake. The choice is not fake
the choice is fake the light is fake
the sound is not fake, as it grates the eye
and the light is fake, it fades,
it pulls off
a little trick, the museum shuts,
the sea shuts, the holes shut,
the children shut, the sky corrodes
where the breach dangles its pealed
edible drop of fat skin and the sound
giggles the hand
slips out of its envelope
where it has its reasons the reasons burn.
The reasons burn as the pill takes
and the bicep coils around its flimsy origin,
flimsy right, the right to light
scalded against the things, the dust. The inventory.
The fronds drip into the bowl
they count as an inventory, even the one
holding its secret original poultry,
the split between what is done for or to
a wall of muscle splitting the sea
and the salt in the cistern is there for good reason.
The heaviness of water which eyes must lift
if they will look out
will look out for others

will look out for you
will look out for the slaughterman
will look out for saints
will look out for rollers
will look out for fowl
will look out for reasons
will look out for refunds
will look out for breaks
through a line, a salt, a spit
sliced through its skin
to see
if it runs
clear.