

# Domestics

These pieces were created during a period of emotional turmoil grappling with ill health both physical and mental between the death of my mother and up to about a year after the anniversary of the death of my beloved father at 95. Amongst other domestics issues they are about that emotional levelling and resurrection we go through trying to consolidate memories of lost loved ones or broken relationships into a new future in spite of losing them or being without them, reminding ourselves of where we are, what is left of us and what lies ahead.

**Sea Drift**

Face pressed against sea drift  
Pricks in the shallows of that face  
Crawl up to the surface of this other.

Lenses dutifully harvest spume  
Extracting existential salts  
To be expended in the wiping of eyes.

Pacific breakers retreat  
Carrying the memory of singing  
Never to return with my rhythm.

These waves are not departing tidily  
Might never revive these naked toes  
With another comforting lap of summer surf.

Originally 12th March 2014

**Lily Con Carne**

Too loud, too destructive  
Never force it out of me.

I must navigate this fight alone  
By my own signs  
Wrestle this dragon  
Unstate a history  
Which if voiced would be the last of last things  
Would remove all trace of the few  
Scribbled excuses which survive.

Better road-bound in circulation on the ring  
Ever dreaming of arrival at the crux of it.

Originally July 2014

**An 11th Hour** (of an 11th Day of an 11th Symphony)

In a horizontal laid-out-straight-on-trestles attitude  
This door being finished in clear oak  
Over finely figured veneer slips fugitively  
Into the form of a thin box.

Compelled to assimilate January the 9th (Julian)  
In this symphonic snapshot

My composer paints an aftermath for me  
Of revolutionary boxes identically mirrored  
Into an endless slightly curving infinite loss.

In single file on another day *her* days ran out  
To an end this thin conveyance might have served  
Were it not for a strength and quality of grain  
That could never be diminished.

Originally 18th February 2015

*Odd the things that come into my crazy brain; this the conjunction of a Shostakovitch symphony,  
varnishing an oak door, thoughts of mum.*

**Weather House**

Over cold or under dry  
More than hot enough or soggy  
Cover up or cool it down  
Umbrella morphing into sun shade  
Foggy hills or shimmery glade  
Hedging bets so better pack  
Some sunscreen and a plastic mac.

In and out the weather house  
Mrs. Sunny, Mr. Rain  
Cracking earth, flooding plain  
One or other rules each day  
Depending on the time and place  
And who is presently holding sway  
Though both are coupled at the base.

Originally 11th March 2015

### Confessions Of A High Maintenance Face

Out from the mists of worn out dreams  
 Stunned into stirring by wafts of beans  
 As the sly sun sidles through the curtain  
 And gleams up the motes of our floating night skins  
 I rouse and I sip 'til grounds reappear  
 And transient fragments of morning adhere  
 Then insinuate myself in at the rim of the play  
 Into mindful ablution a light year away  
 From the stage.

Washing outside of this cup and this platter  
 My reflection reflects on the crux of the matter:

Are the contents of this age whited sepulchre before me  
 (full of uncleanness and dead men's bones)  
 Suspected in anyone else's story?  
 And is there a chance that the mirror will shatter  
 This face I prepare to conform and to flatter  
 The disgrace of a compounded vanity?

I note that the zygots have worn a tad slack  
 Where blemishes blended in furrows attack  
 With lines and divides of historical fact  
 And that little grows down there deep in the crack  
 Of appearance.

But I shave and luxuriate in the moment suspended  
 A king in his universe not comprehended  
 Surveying what potency lies in the vastness  
 Of a yet empty day that can never be ended  
 While I stand at the pleasure of my purpose.

Originally June 17th 2015

### Fifty Not So Upright Years

Casually against the red-brick of industry  
 Trying to seem as permanent, as belonging  
 With my first working day ahead, we leaned  
 Impressing epic resonance on impressionable innocence.

In one continuous flow of flapping overalls  
 Dolly slopped Jingle style with a touch of pigeon over his dogend  
 And negotiating obsequiously past Hawkeye  
 Dived into the sweet tobacco ambiance of Will's Woodbines.

Besant, coughing on his second roll-up  
 Declared his status and comedic credentials  
 By grabbing at my dear father's genitals  
 Who, by way of initiation and without a flinch or smile said  
 "Fuck off George", and to me  
 "Let's go. He's an idiot"  
 Stubbed out his own fag next to mine.

\*

*Will you go to Bosistow  
 To a look out in a loft  
 And peer into the vacant sea  
 From Faraway normality?  
 Or will you pick at the sores of love  
 Soft scarred contusions spreading blue  
 Proclaiming yet more visibly your loss.*

\*

Trundling came the enemy  
 His determined uphill rumbling smacked  
 Of orders under execution,  
 Slow, searching, deliberate,  
 One baleful eye impartially disposed,  
 Barrel nosing, poking his tankful of doctrinal power.  
 Ducking quick, Vic said  
 "See you at the pearly gates Sam!".

Later, in the death camp  
 Within sight and smell of God's evil  
 He would gently turn a young girls head  
 With his new-born hands

Adjusting the last rag of her soiled decency  
 To look a bit more dignified atop her mound.  
 Later he would recall her murmur "Danke"  
 As her blossom shed its petal of finality  
 And his spirit bled its masquerade of faith.

\*

*I will go to Bosistow  
 (But not upon the tide)  
 To a pier that rides a star strung sea  
 The length of it I'll stride  
 And on my glistening sea of dreams  
 I'll bob along the rim  
 Of history healed  
 Where time stands still  
 And smiles go on remembering him.*

\*

Trundling the enemy comes, rumbling for attack  
 As spies are shot, explosives set, grenades go flying back.  
 But out of the particles of war has come  
 An old familiar face now young  
 Has come at last to their trysting place  
 For her soldier boy once more.

Dismissing curtain lurkers  
 With their world-will-keep-on-turning chat,  
 Securely binding warders with his charm  
 And by lobbing out with deadly force  
 Whatever served his purpose,  
 My father made his bravest stand  
 And after fifty not so upright years

I hear him swear a second time  
 "Turn that fucking light out!"  
 As we said goodnight.

Goodnight Dad! X

27th October 2015

*Dolly, Lloyd Dolphin, chargehand for the cutting room and bulk floor.*

*Besant, George Besant, Bulk floor assistant chargehand.  
Hawkeye, Nelson Hawkes, factory security supervisor.  
Vic, Victor Webb, an SAS compatriot in WW2.*

*My father took me to work as a casual labourer at WD & HO Wills Swindon during the summer holidays from school in 1965 where he had already worked for 31 years and from where he eventually retired in 1980 after a total of 44 years interrupted only by his army service. Without any doubt this was my Father's greatest contribution to my education and development.*

**And the Point Is?**

Rotate your aegis at some point on its rim  
(Suppose a round one for the sake of logic  
And suppose also a self-tempered burnish  
For throwing back an assailant's visage  
To bite and grind upon itself)  
Let previous incumbents become reflections  
As you begin to discover yourself  
Within the sanctuary of your own charge.

17th January 2016

**Blue In Green - The Commital**

To the softest chord  
To quiescent conclusions  
Fractious presents transposed  
Into mentally clattering silent reflection  
And a timeless forever  
Each melody must fade.

A cosmos of private knowing  
Hands back the gilded clockface  
Submits to immutable laws  
And tapers off the shelf of history.

Time heals  
But only time arrested guarantees a cure  
For beginnings without ends  
Yearnings and their only-dreamt-of caresses  
Hopes without means  
Degrading debilitation without respite.

A project of being is complete  
And now those same immutable laws  
Begin their fossilising business  
On the midden of human endeavours.

What has been is mere exhaust  
Every timeless interlude a practise run  
For this grand finale when  
All manner of things are made well  
All ills are cured  
All secrets lost  
All knots are sealed  
All passions rendered inextinguishable  
And dissolving down into the anecdote and record of times  
We become at last exquisite on the lips of finality.

22nd March 2016

**At The Height of The Broken Flight**  
(Voyeur at the Rain Dance)

In the rain dance  
Blackbird and goldfinch enervate semibreves in deluge  
Their sex talk a symphony on an existential stave.

Pigeons copulate at a snail's gaze not at a snail's pace.

I observe the snail, the progress of it,  
And the progress of it,  
The pigeons on their fourth attempt,  
Their fifth,  
Tits filching fat at the feeder  
And reaching out a naked palm of origins  
Sharing cosmic particles and receiving some in return  
I am grateful,  
Though different from my own  
They are as familiar and I am in love with them  
Treasuring their unrefined but loving countenances.

I am replete in the leaf of this acer  
In the gut of that nesting bird  
Flying with him as the caterpillar back to his nest  
To his home woven by me  
In the shed where I make minds-full  
A mind built in the image of shed  
Built by me at the height of the broken flight  
Made to ascend in vigorous moves  
In old steps laying one beyond the first

Beginning at ground level  
Ending in any and every new invention  
And safe within irredeemable wear and tear  
I find myself content in the arms of my choices  
With this mortal soul of my contriving.

I stand as perfection incarnate  
My side of this bounding transparency  
Detached, sufficient,  
Aware of the mimicry in forms of green  
Patient with this rate of going about it  
Startled only by the sudden spurts of grass.

Snails mist into an oblivion of my own devise.  
I chose not to belong to that future  
But to make allegiance with another  
And as much at liberty as the world's dandelion  
With all my ephemera behind me dry,  
My extended perennia out there wet,  
Suspended in a chasm of self deficiency,  
Apprehending a coalescence of heartbeat,  
I am become a being of interminable breath.

26th April 2016

**At The Edge of Now**

Time is in the past and of the past,  
Content, shape, order and the pace of lives  
Is history.  
Standing here at the edge of now  
Fathoming this abyss of unknowable existence-to-be  
I am unnerved.

The road ahead is only in the head  
The way behind an archaeological biograph  
In the fossilised detritus of spent decisions.

There is no speed from where time has ceased  
No stumbling where time is not  
No professors who commentate on singularities  
Where death is never and zero an evacuated infinity of plenitude.

The choice is between turning away  
Sleeping sightless in the motion of old days  
Oblivious to the ways  
Careless of the means to the ways of becoming

Or to face quivering the still point of timeless calm  
Feeling pregnant, powerful, magnificent  
At the edge of now and the possibility of everything.

18th May 2016

**I Go Up**  
(and I go Round)

Being inclined to wonder if that sunborne flittering  
Is the larger or the smaller of the white butterflies  
I go up and I go round just as my father did.

In any case the post-tea observances are overdue  
So I go up and I go round rattling the ritual keys.  
I open up for today's business  
Check all deliveries  
And conduct the rite of looking up and down.

\* \* \*

Actually I go up to plan and to think  
Considering if this would be better there  
Or over here where I began some days ago  
Or should I branch off on another plan,  
Abandon this and start afresh?  
But where?

I go up to re-confirm if all that now remains,  
Complete or incomplete as it was left,  
As it stood the day before, is still a work in progress  
Still marked for when the page at last must turn.

I go up to where my compass reigns  
To see if sullen memories thrive  
In their imperative relevance  
Or if they lie becoming or already quite as dead  
As their long forgotten binomials.

I go up to breakfast without restraint.  
I gorge upon a feast of death and life  
To nourish my definition  
To steal away the breath of chance.

I go up as far as the farthest extent of my desmene,  
I note which demarcations need repair,  
Inspect for boundary violations, unlock locks,  
Check the lockables and stockables  
In their various agglomerations  
And make a measure of what is and what is not.

I go up because my story is mine to unfold  
Poking about the focus of this plot  
Alone, sufficient, unafraid, adding it all up.

I go up to see my loves and to pluck out my loaths  
I prune, I snip, I chop and amputate  
Maintaining the balance of pride in my pride  
Striving to arrive at an accommodation with pain.

\* \* \*

I have made a truce with being.  
I want only what was and what is  
Because it *was* and because, as such, it *is*,  
A static delineation, an artwork of perpetual existence  
Frozen in the severity of my dominion over it.

I go up because I must, because I can,  
I go up because I learn, relearn, recall, forget, reverse, advance  
My life from end to end on each and every circuit.

I go up without guilt, fear or delusion,  
I go up because I follow  
The measured pace, the studying gaze  
Of a man who was no mystery to himself,  
The man I try to be, my prototypical mortal soul  
Mindful but accepting of life as it is  
Not deluded by false hope  
Allowing only one faith, a faith in myself  
Believing it will all turn out right in the end.

22nd September 2016

**Diana Comes**

Sober in shades  
Out of her black-drop  
Tentatively yielding.

Awake  
Not nearly  
About halfmost  
Half waits  
Half hopes  
Half drowned but clings on  
Enfolded, enrapt.

Over  
And the same  
Same  
Always the same question  
Lingering sickly  
Always the same answer  
Familiar as death.

Maybe its the same thing.

Sun rises  
Unturned responses  
Fumes of Lethe reeking abroad  
And tomorrow still perversely feasible.

On the high, high seas  
A corpse bobs lovingly  
Still wrapped in the warm ghosts of her.

15th January 2017

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