

SOME POEMS

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LECTURE (08:58)

A SHUFFLE OF BREATH,

FRACTURED COUGHS,

A LAUGH OR TWO,

ALL BRAINS TURNED OFF.

OLDER

THE SIGNS CREEP,
ALTHOUGH IT SOUNDS CLICHE,
THE LITTLE THINGS:
THE MORNING SHAVE,

FEEL BUT A BLINK...

A SIGH REVIVES
ANY THOUGHTS MISPLACED
IN MEMORIES LOST,
TO STRESS, AND AGE.

PEOPLE WATCHING

DON'T WATCH THE PEOPLE,
WATCH THE PATTERNS.

THE HABITS, THE GESTURES,
THE SHARED REACTIONS.

LOOKING

TO REVISIT A BENCH,
IN THE PARK OF NONSENSE -
WHERE AS CHILDREN
WE FELT COLOUR AS DRUGS:

A POOL OF RAIN, REFLECTS
FLEETING WINGS.

AS THE MOSS-OAK BENCH,

AGES.

WAITING FOR SONGBIRDS

A CIGARETTE DRIPS,

BETWEEN FINGERS AND LIP,

AS THE DARK OF DECEMBER,

HANGS.

WHIMSY

TO RECOLLECT

FLUORESCENT CHILDHOOD DREAMS:

A STUFFED BEAR,

CLUTCHED FIRM IN HAND

AT THE LOVE-TORN SEAMS.

CANNED LIFE

I WAS BORN ON A BELT IN THE
FACTORY OF MAN,
ROLLED INTO A HOME, LABELED AND
STAMPED.

MY LIFE WAS MADE HONEST BY INK ON
A PAGE,
AND MY FUTURE CONTROLLED BY A
SYSTEM OF WAGE.

MY WHOLE LIFE THUS FAR, TWO
DECADES OF LAME,
INCOMPETENT BUREAUCRATIC,
INSTITUTIONAL REIGN

HAS SEEN US SHUFFLED

DOWN THE EDUCATIONAL LANE,

WHERE WE ARE UNIFIED PRODUCTS

FOR UNIFIED GAIN.

A BACHELOR'S TRAGEDY

WHEN YOUNG AND STIRRING FROM HIS
BED,

BEFORE HOPES AND DAYS SO BRIGHT,
HE WEARY LIFTS A CHEEK OF YOUTH,
AND TAKES TO TEENAGE FLIGHT.

AND WHEN RETURNED IN THE HALF OF
MORN,

TO SHADES OF AMBER LIGHT,
HE SCANS A HOME SO BLANKLY LEFT:

HIS PRISON CELL BY NIGHT.

INSOMNIA

THE SPIRITUAL HOUR:

THE CLOCK,

STATIC, STAGNANT,

GLOWERS.

NURSING HOME

WHEN I AM OLD,

GIVE ME WHITE WALLS

AND FALSE FAMILY, DRESSED IN GREEN.

BRING ME PILLS

TO SLOW MY GROWTH,

AND SUFFOCATE MY DREAMS.

TEACHER

LENSES, LOOKING OUT:

AT THE SILENT BODY,

JOSTLING.

MELTING MAN

BIRTHED FROM EARTH-WATER

GATHERED WITH LITTLE HANDS,

WE LABOURED IN THE ICE-DARK DAWN

TO MOULD OUR IMAGE OF A MAN,

MODELING OUR FATHERS' CLOTHES.

THE FARM

A JACKDAW'S CALLS

RING OUT THE RUSTED SHELLS OF
TRACTORS.

THE GREY FOG, ENGULFING, PERISHED TO
CLOUD.

AS SHADOWS, LINGER
IN THE TWILIGHT.

NETWORK

COME JOIN THE NETWORK WITH ME -

WATCH YOUR FRIENDS IN THE FREAK

TENT, SEE,

SEE THEIR PICTURES WHEN DRUNK,

THEIR REACTIONS WHEN DUMPED,

JUST SIGN HERE TO... 'TACITLY' AGREE.

AUTUMN

THE POT HUMS A FERAL ANTHEM
AS THE LIGHT AT MY WINDOW DIES.
A CANDLE STAGNATES ON THE SILL,
THE AUTUMN WIND CRIES.

GRAVES

BROKEN SKIN BURNED BY BRACKEN,
TOIL.

AN EARTH PRINTED PALM.

A SHOVEL, OLDER THAN MEMORIES,
THE SLIGHT HORIZON CALM.

YEARS OF MAKING OTHERS' BEDS,

TIME SPENT DIGGING.

THE WIND AND RAIN HE MUST ENDURE,

WHILST WAITING FOR THE LIVING.

COFFEE AND CIGARETTES

IN MURKY PLEASURE, FINGERS REST.

CRADLING A CIGARETTE — HAND

ROLLED,

WRINKLED RAW.

SMOULDERING.

PRESSED BETWEEN LIP, AND THE

GRIMACE OF YOUTH

AS GENTLE LICKS OF GREY

OBSCURER HIS VISION'S CORNER,

FLICKERING.

AS NEW BORN TEMPORARY PLEASURE,

LIVING SHORT ITS LIFE

TO THE CAR HORN MUSE.

SOON FINDS ITSELF IN A SUNKEN PIT

FACE DOWN,

GROUND IN BETWEEN BATTLEMENTS.

ON NICOTINE FUELLED DAYS

WHERE DULL, HEAVY MUSK HANGS

MALIGNANT.

HE SITS.

AND - RAISING A CUP OF CRUDE

TO TOAST THE CAPITAL BULLSHIT PASSING

PEERING OVER NEAR PRESSED VESSEL,

STRAINING THROUGH A BLUR OF STEAM.

DISTANT TIMES

AN ENVISIONED TIME.

IN WHICH THOUGHT ITSELF -

PERCEIVED A CRIME.

A TIME WHERE RIGHTS REMAIN FOR

FEW,

WHERE THE MASSES PRAISE

THOSE OUR FATHERS SLEW.

THE LIFE MANIFESTO

I AM TWENTY YEARS OLD TODAY.

I KNOW NOTHING.

I AM THIRTY YEARS OLD TODAY.

I KNOW A BIT, BUT NOT WHAT I'M
DOING.

I AM FORTY YEARS OLD TODAY.

WHAT LITTLE I THOUGHT I KNEW...

TURNS OUT IT WAS WRONG.

I AM FIFTY YEARS OLD TODAY.

I KNOW MORE THAN YOU SONNY.

I AM SIXTY YEARS OLD TODAY.

I'M TIRED OF KNOWING.

I AM SEVENTY YEARS OLD TODAY.

I NEVER APPRECIATED PEOPLE.

ANON

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MINUTES
BETWEEN NINE AND TEN,
AN UNKNOWN WALKED IN,
GRASPING A PEN.

HE SCRIBBLED A FACE ON THE
WHITEBOARD WALL,

IT WAS A FACE FROM THE INTERNET:

SO WE'RE BROTHERS AFTER ALL.

COLLECTOR

I'M A BIT OF A COLLECTOR, ME.

(I LIKE DISCOGRAPHIES, PERSONALLY)

WHY I COLLECT?

(IT'S FUNNY YOU ASK.)

I NEVER GAVE THOUGHT TO OBSESSION,

(TOO BUSY OBSESSING.)

THESE ARE IN ORDER OF RELEASE.

THOSE ARE ALPHABETICAL.

(DON'T TOUCH THEM.)

I HAVEN'T GOTTEN ROUND TO THOSE.

(SUBSEQUENTLY, I CAN'T LOOK AT
THEM.)

WEARY

FEAR, HAS WORN THIN:

AND MISINFORMATION, THEREIN.

DEATH

A GREAT WALL OF SLATE.

TOO TALL, TOO WIDE -

TO CLIMB, TO STRAFE:

A FIRM DIVIDE.

CLOSED

A SIGN.

TYPICAL OF A TIME, NOW SNATCHING AT
ITS LAST,

AN EBBING BREATH.

BRANDED BRIGHT WITH OFFSET COLOURS

TELLING OF BETTER DAYS,

SWEETSHOP-STYLED, SCREAMING ALL IS

FINE

WITH THE UNSHAKEN DIGNITY

OF OLDER WAYS.

TIME

I FELL OUT OF THE NIGHT

AND IN TO THE DAY.

GOT UP FROM THE MORNING,

STRUGGLED INTO THE BATHROOM OF

AFTERNOON.

STARED INTO THE MIRROR OF MID-DAY

GONE,

AND SHUFFLED DOWN THE STAIRWELL

INTO EVENING.

AS I FOUND A SEAT AMIDST THE

LONELY AISLES,

SETTLED INTO WORRY,

A LOOK AT THE CLOCK,

NO SOONER TO REALISE,

I HAD FALLEN BACK INTO THE NIGHT.

AGE

A MAN OF AGE,

DECADES RINSED HIS MUDDED FINGERS.

RAISES A WET-DOG BROW IN THE FACE
OF RAIN,

HIS LIFE HALF LIVED, HALF LINGERED.

GHOSTS

I SAT THERE IN THE RAIN,
ON THE CRACKING PAVEMENT.
I WATCHED THEM WALK WITH APATHY,
BUT A STEP BEFORE ENSLAVEMENT.

EARLY HOURS

A SEAGULL GROOMS.

THE HARBOUR SLEEPS.

THE SKY A-STIR,

RESPONSIBILITY CREEPS.

THE ODDS

I WILL NOT DIE REGRETFUL,
NOR DISSATISFIED,
FOR I RACED AGAINST THE MILLIONS
TO CALL THIS LIFE MY PRIZE.

'PICK A SPIRIT'

THE NIGHT STRAYS
INTO A DREAM,

A RETREAT:
A WALL,
ON WHICH I LEAN
WHEN UNDER THROWS
OF VOLLEYED WANTS AND DROWNED
WOE,

TO STOLEN ESCAPES,
BENEATH THE WET.
TO SMOKE,
TO DWELL.
TO TASTE REGRET.

INDUSTRY

A TOWER STOOD BEFORE ME,
OF AT LEAST A THOUSAND FEET.
IT TOOK MY RIGHT TO LIGHT AWAY,
AND SOLD ME BACK ITS HEAT.

I STOOD SUBMERGED IN THE SHADE AND
COLD
OF BROKEN BRICKS, STONES OF OLD,
AND IN A FLEETING MOMENT LEARNED
THE WORLD IS NOT A GIFT,
BUT YEARNED.

PARTY (A BEAT POEM)

SO IT'S ABOUT HALF TEN
AND MY THEN FRIEND, BEN
IS WALKING WITH ME TO THE SHOPS.

WE CHAT SHIT ABOUT LIT
AS WE'RE ACQUAINTED THROUGH
COLLEGE.

SO TOGETHER WE'RE RELATIVELY
SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE
THAT AT LEAST WE CAN AGREE
ON POETRY.

As I flip my wrist
To look at my watch
I turn back to notice
That Ben has stopped.

He's gazing amazed at
An open front door
That's bustling with boozers
And music that soars.

"Let's crash it!" Ben demands
Like the house party fascist that he
is,
But I have to admit that
My state was, somewhat unfit
To be called 'responsibly sober.'
So with a heavy eyed grin

I SAY "OK, LET'S GO IN"

AND TOGETHER WE BOTH WANDER
OVER.

AS WE MOVE THROUGH THE RANKS
OF THE BODIES THAT FLANK US,
PAST THE GUY WITH A GUITAR,
THAT WE COULD HEAR FROM AFAR,
AND THE GIRL WHO SITS JUST THERE BY
THE WALL,
TWIRLS HER HAIR WHILST ABSENTLY
STARING

INTO A BEER,

WE STUMBLE UPON THE KITCHEN.

HERE THE MUSIC IS NEARER
AND AFTER AN HOUR PASSES,
ALONG WITH SOME CLEAR GLASSES
OF SPIRITS AND WINE,
WE THINK WE'RE FINE
BUT THEN, IT SUDDENLY HITS ME.

WE'RE CRASHERS, I REMEMBER
AND AS IF OUR AGENDA WAS DESTINED
TO FAIL,
WE WOULD NOW HAVE TO BAIL,
AS JUST WHEN WE MAKE A MISSION
OUT OF APPEARING EXEMPT FROM
SUSPICION
AS IF BY INTUITION, SOME BLOKE ASKS
CASUALLY:

"SO HOW DO YOU GUYS KNOW DAVE
THEN?"

BEN DECIDES TO AID BY LOOKING
ARTFULLY AWAY

WHILST SCRATCHING HIS BALLS,
SO IT SEEMS TO ME

THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FALLS...

"DAVE!" I SAY, LOOKING ABSENTLY
AWAY,

"WE GO WAY BACK MAKE MAN,
HOLIDAYS IN CORNWALL AND THAT,
Y'KNOW, CARAVANS?"

THE BLOKE GOES AWAY,
PRESUMABLY IN SEARCH

OF THE MYSTERIOUS DAVE,
AND SO I TURN TO BEN AND SAY
"GO MATE!
WE'VE BEEN MADE!"
WE BOLT FOR THE DOOR PAST THE
PREP LADS,
THE MUSO AND A CHAP ON THE FLOOR,
BEN'S GRABBING BOTTLES AND FAGS AS
HE GOES,
WHEN A VOICE ASKS ALOUD
"HEY DAVE DO YOU KNOW THOSE
TWO?"
HIDING OUR FACES WE PICK UP THE
PACE,
PUSHING OUR WAY TO A TIDY ESCAPE.
WE BURST OUT THE DOOR AND ONTO

THE STREET,

FINDING IT HARD TO STAY FIRM ON OUR
FEET.

DESPITE GETTING MYSELF CAUGHT ON THE
GARDEN GATE,

IT HAS TO BE SAID,

...BEST PARTY TO DATE.

THE GREY

ON SLOW-LIGHT MORNINGS

I MEET THE GREY,

AN ABSENT SKY,

IT'S LIGHT, AFRAID.

IT HERALDS THE BLEAK

THE TIRED, MUNDANE,

MOST LOATHSOME, MOST

DESPAIRING OF DAYS.

AND YET THIS DAY, THOUGH BLEAK,

THOUGH VISION FRAYED

AND BLUE SKY STRANGLED

BY THE 'GULFING GREY,

AFTER A SHOWER AND AN EYE-SHUT

SHAVE

THE BLEAKEST DAY,

IS REALISED.

I AM AWAKE.

REBEL'S EPITAPH

AT SIXTEEN, HE SET ABOUT THE TASK
IN WHICH HE SAT HIMSELF AND ASKED,
WHEN TIME IS UP, WHEN STOOD ALONE,
HOW BEST SCRATCH HIS YEARS ON
STONE?

FOR FEAR OF NEARING TRAGEDY HE
WORKED
TO FIND THE WORDS THAT FREELY SAID
THE BEST OF WORST

AND SO PENNED THE LINES
THAT IN HIS MIND,
JUSTIFIED HIS SELFISH CRIMES:

"I SOUGHT TO BE A MAN OF LEISURE,
BUT THEN LEISURE MET THE BETTER OF
ME.'

GHOSTS II

AS IT FALLS, CLAD IN SHADOW,
THEIR HURRIED HEELS ABHOR
THE SPECTRE,
A SPRING PETRICHOR.

HORIZON

CLOUDS,

QUIETLY FRAMED, AFLAME.

THE EARTH,

SPECKLED DAMP, WITH RAIN.

ANOTHER TIRED EPIPHANY

FOR YEARS HE STRIVED,
WORKED HARD, AND BLIND,
TO THE REACH THE PLACE
THAT PROMISED A MIND.

AND ONCE ARRIVED
HE FELL, STRUCK, TO FIND,
THAT THERE ARE NO ANSWERS,

ONLY LIES.

CONFESSION

HER EYES, REDOLENT OF A RIVER'S
TREMOR,
STARTLED ME FROM SLEEP.

PETROLEUM

I WONDER HOW MUCH
A BARREL OF BLOOD,

COSTS IN DOLLARS...

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OTHER COLLECTIONS:

COFFEE AND CIGARETTES

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