

*LINES OF A LIFETIME VI*

'MIXED BLESSINGS'

poems

Bruno Scarfe







September 2017



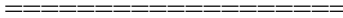
***MIXED BLESSINGS***

**Food, drink and quirks of the table**



**A selection of poems from the collection**

***Lines of a Lifetime***



**BRUNO SCARFE**



With  
food for thought  
(*en su punto*)  
in mind



## **INTRODUCTION ‘Mixed blessings: food, drink and quirks of the table’**

‘*Mixed blessings: food, drink and quirks of the table*’ is volume six in the overall collection *Lines of a Lifetime*, following *Cadiz*, *Eros I*, *II* and *III* and *Measuring up*.

The unusually high number of poems noted as appearing also in other volumes, calls for comment. Food or drink as principal subject rates low here. But food or drink as an image, a trigger, or whatever – means it must appear both here and in other volumes, in situations involving *Cadiz*, *eros*, the individual and nature. And it can invite word play.

My interest in the subject of food began at home as a child, and I quote my letter in *BBC Magazine* (10.12.2012) on the article by Joan Bakewell ‘A Point of View: A feast for the soul’:

My mother made me help her in the kitchen - which gave rise to a curious reaction of irritation, curiosity and maybe understanding. Now I can be a quite excellent cook, with hindsight thanks to her, though I do not as a rule follow recipes as she did, but cook creatively responding to availability of ingredients and a situation affected by time, mood and urges. Having had to live alone for long periods this ability in the kitchen has been helpful. But something for which nobody prepared me was how to put up with the relative sadness of 'enjoying' good cuisine alone. As you say, there's more to food than the food.

Bruno Scarfe, Cadiz, Spain

-  
Food and drink, then, are more than the basic ingredients that meet the eye, are more than the material: they evoke a wealth of subconscious ideas, pressures, memories ... and both reward and tantalise us.

All but one of the poems in this selection were written in Cadiz between 2001 and 2015, the exception being 'Marketing' written in Melbourne in 1971. There are of course other poems with a food or drink element written before the Cadiz ones, but these have not been included in this volume for all manner of reasons, not least of which is their minor rôle.

Why have so many poems with reference to food and drink been written in Cadiz? In part because much of my overall output has Cadiz as its place of origin, the result of having more time available. And in part because of sharing a culture where leisure and entertainment matter, and in which food and drink play an essential rôle - and play it well.

### **INTRODUCTION General: *Lines of a Lifetime***

I am told I wrote my first poem 'Summer', when I was eight.

It strikes me now as embarrassingly flawed. I seemed to think that swallows landed on the ground and, a little while later and at another place I seemed to think I could recognize a particular swallow ... well, I ask you! Not to mention the matter of describing a cat I claimed to be unable to see ... Yet my father was delighted at this effort. Why? I suppose he considered these ingenuous aspects as secondary, reflecting a child's psychology where reality may come second to the wish and where time sequences are not of the essence. I can feel though that the poem has a sense of rhythm ... actually rhythms, and all over the place, but rhythms nevertheless. I believe he used the poem when lecturing on poetry, possibly making some of these points.

All so embarrassing. And yet there can be no doubting the positive

effect his pleasure had on me. Later, during the rest of my school years, I continued to receive his encouragement, and from his mother a little reward which helped supplement my meagre pocket money. Yes, truth will out. So that's how my poetry began ... and continued ... and continues, for even now there can be errors of fact, and controversy regarding suitability of subject and taste, not to mention techniques and presentation.

When, a few years ago, I decided it might be worthwhile at last to bring together and present my poetry, I decided to call it *Lines of a lifetime*, and organised the poems alphabetically by title. This would make for a random reading which would avoid pedantic chronological sequencing and the limitations imposed by an artificial grouping of subjects. But this was objected to, and I was urged to arrange the poems by subject: not at all easy ... as many poems fall into a number of subject categories, leading either to perceived misrepresentation or to obvious duplication. Tough. The total collection now appears under the original title, above, but with these 11 subtitles: 1) 'Cadiz: people, places and situations', 2) 'Eros – foibles of the flesh', 3) 'Eros – heavings of the heart', 4) 'Eros – *in absentia*', 5) 'Measuring up: some of the inside story', 6) 'Mixed blessings: food, drink and quirks of the table', 7) 'The Natural World – heaven and earth', 8) 'The Natural World – the bestiary I', 9) 'The Natural World – the bestiary II', being cattributes A-Z, and others, 10) 'Words at play: games with words expressed in verse', 11) 'Wrestling at dawn or, Juvenilia'.

Hopefully the subtitles may provide some insight into the nature of experiences I have chosen to express in verse. The poems, from 1947 to the present, owe much to my time in the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, France, Spain, Germany and India. Most are in English, many in Spanish ... and a couple in French.

All thanks

To my mother,  
Margarete Magdalene (née Geisler)  
b. Wuppertal 1903  
lived in Hungary, France and Great Britain  
d. Cadiz 2002

for her example



## **MIXED BLESSINGS: Food, drink and quirks of the table – a selection**

Absence 3: “A fistful of finely fluted chives ...” (to Win)

All a-tumble

*El bellaco en pelotas*

*Bonito error (a Carmen y Ramón)*

Contribute 'D': "Dietary supplements ..."

Chives

The coffee affair

*Contigo (a Glenwys)*

*Una copa de más*

*Cosquilla 2: “Poderosa Dama ...” (a Maribel)*

*Elegir su elixir I y II*

Fragment 3: “Saffron ...”

Fragment 4: “Juniper berries ...” (to Ann)

Hard-pressed

Holus-bolus

*Un lugar para armas tomar (a Olimpio)*

Marketing (to Phoebe)

Metric feats in S minor I, II and III

*Miércoles ... en Casa Lazo (a Carmen y Ramón)*

Mind the monkey! 5: “Lazy Susan ...”

No nonsense, now! 5: Gifts of Smell

No nonsense, now! 6: Gifts of Taste

*Pasatiempos: Sol y sombra*

*La Pérfida*

Pirelli paradox I and II (to Win)

Surrounds I and II

*Té con tomate*

Trish 1: “There was a smile ...”

Trish 2: “Beware the lion ...”

Trish 3: “Above the sea ...”

Wanted, missing (to Win)

*Ya no sirven (a Milagros)*

### **Illustrated**

*Cosquilla 2*, Fragments 3 & 4, Mind the monkey! 5, No nonsense, now! 6, Pirelli paradox I & II, Surrounds I & II, Trish 1, *Ya no sirven*



## Absence 3

*To Win*

A fistful of finely fluted chives  
and gay canopies of parsley – some to be left  
with San Pancracio – (you planted them),  
olive oil, pepper, salt and butter, water, eggs  
and bread: a recipe well-tested  
to raise a smile. But I forgot that when you went  
my appetite would die.

## All a-tumble

How safe's the rice  
piled on your fork  
– each grain with its own thoughts?

They're girls and boys  
let out to play  
– just wait, and they'll be off!

## El bellaco en pelotas

‘Sol embotellado de Andalucía’  
el anuncio del Tío Pepe decía  
según recuerdo, y me gustaba.  
Ahora he visto otro, que rezaba  
‘Jamón de botella’. Contemplaba  
confuso lo que vaticinaba  
con respecto a su precio y sabor  
hasta darme cuenta ... del error.

## Bonito error

*A Carmen y Ramón*

“¡Qué lasaña más rica! ¡vaya esmero!”

le digo contento a la cocinera.

“ No, ¡que es de atún!” me contesta seca,

“es lo que se emplea, ¡que no es mero!”

## Cattribute 'D'

Dietary

supplements for newtrition ... spare me, do!

Just vary the menu,

with dollops of liver paté, garlic

chicken, and FRESH pellets; water tastes

better off the shower floor (by the way).

The alley cats can have my scraps, bites which

won't – I hope – precipitate

diegestion.

# Chives

Slender tubes  
raised from fine white flasks  
'downstairs',

and capped with  
spheres of purple glass-  
like air,

when finely chopped -  
enhance food,  
and echo notes blown  
silently  
on dark green flutes.



## The coffee affair

It waits in  
suspense, silent but  
warm, to

rest or to  
rouse, then smiles as you  
date it.

When, in a cup,  
it's shed its  
colours, taste, and scent,  
who'll resist  
this loved one's touch?

# Contigo

*A Glenwys*

Vente conmigo querida  
te lo suplico,  
al chiringuito de Réynold  
el ‘Malibú’,  
a ver la puesta del sol.

Me da igual ~

que no sirvan horchata,  
chicharrones al uso,  
ni pechuga de pavo  
ni jamón de Jabugo,  
cuchifritos ni chícharos,  
chirimoyas cremosas  
(pa’ chuparse los dedos),  
leche frita, torrijas,  
ni cuajada con miel,  
y no se halle el anís  
Chinchón dulce (¡sin hielo!)  
auténtico de ‘la Alcoholera’.

~ al estar tú conmigo en el Malibú.

Nos pondrán un gin tónico  
(un Rives) en balón;  
más papas aliñadas,  
pez espada y caballa,  
acedías y sardinas  
y más de *un* boquerón,  
albóndigas, pimientos  
asados, croquetas y

filetes a la plancha;  
nos pondrán carajillos  
de brándy, o café  
y anís la Castellana (en balón).

~ ¡Sin igual,  
al estar tú conmigo en el Malibú! ~

Entretanto chirigotas,  
el chapoteo  
de las olas, la inquietud  
de este levante,  
y el paseo de la luna.

## Una copa de más

“¿Qué quiere beber señor?”

“Un tinto ... del Duero, natural.”

Y me pusieron una copa de tinto, mejor de lo esperado, así que luego les pedí más. Me pusieron otra copa, algo sin ton ni son.

“Vaya, ¿por qué me han puesto otra copa?”

“¿Y no lo pidió señor?”

“Vino sí; no hacía falta otra copa.”

“¿No lo pidió natural?”

“Sí, pero con respecto a la copa ...”

“Sin copa estaría fatal.”





## Cosquilla 2

*A Maribel*

Poderosa dama es doña Quilla,  
protegida por San Sebastián  
y Santa Catalina.

La corteja gente esclarecida,  
a la que le da la bienvenida y  
le place festejar.

## Elegir su elíxir

### I

Yo, cuando me encuentro gris,  
me animo con un anís.

Pero algo en los bares odio:  
se trata de ‘El Mono’ polio.  
Tiene fama este licor  
de ser (dicen) ‘el mejor’.

Excluir por eso a otros buenos,  
limita, y me pone negro.

## Elegir su elíxir

### II

Le veo en sueños a ‘El Mono’  
nada manso, sin cadena:  
alza en alto su botella  
para pegarme en el coco.

¡Ay de mí! que soy culpable.  
¡Ay de mí! pues él lo sabe.

Siendo joven, me pusieron  
a estudiar lo que más vale:  
en lenguas clásicas, griego  
y latín – el culto viejo



venerado por la flor  
y la nata intelectual;  
luego, francés y alemán,  
inglés y, claro – ‘español’.

¡Pobres padres que me guiaron!  
¡Escuela, universidad  
y academia, que otorgaron  
mis estudios ..... incompletos!  
Ni en Oxford, ni en Salamanca  
insistieron en lo bueno  
que me perdía, y venganza  
catalana que habría.

Y ahora, otra vez, la huída  
de El Mono aterrador.

Una gota del licor  
en la lengua filistea  
que ignora la contraseña  
catalana, daría con  
toda mi digestión hecha  
polvo inútil, en el suelo.



## Fragment 3

Saffron, they claim  
(from the stigma of the crocus)  
gives food flavour,  
gives food colour,  
lends a delicate aroma.

Some fast-food cooks  
– mainly chasing  
profits cheaply,  
and thoughtless slaves to microwaves –  
say such talk is hocus-pocus.

But fragrance left, to smell and taste,  
and colour (look!),  
gently tell that saffron's claims aren't  
gobbledegook:  
some stigma's worth its weight in gold.



## Fragment 4

*To Ann*

Juniper berries,  
elderberries,  
sloes:

exuberant preludes  
    to smiles and sighs;  
clusters of jet  
    set for turning to wine;  
sharp eyes in hiding,  
    fast among the thorns –

juniper berries,  
elderberries,  
sloes.

## Hard-pressed

The sea-food market in the square  
is tightly packed and humming; still  
crowds pour in, panting, set to buy.

A nudge – I'm just in time to glimpse  
the bum packed tight, cheeks pertly poured  
in the pants, and set. Crowded, what!

“Not on the market!” I mutter,  
and then the lump swelling in my  
throat shows it hurts, this food for thought.

## Holus-bolus

“... holus-bolus? diced?  
in your salad bowl,  
Dear?” ... “No! Let us ... fry  
my boletus, whole!”

# Un lugar para armas tomar

*A Olimpio*

Para comer en el café bar  
la Rambla,  
le ponen cuchillos, y además  
navajas.



# Marketing

*To Phoebe*

Side by side and  
separate, so long,  
he came to drink again  
the nectar on her tongue.  
“No! no!”, she said,  
“why don’t you try  
a nectarine, instead?”

## Metric feats in S minor

I

Inch by inch they've always moved, and  
move today: centred, steadfast, slow.

2.54cms.

– is all the talk now, as they glide  
concerned, but gallant, through the grass.

2.54cms.

– seems quite absurd to snails, who ease  
their way imperially along.

2.54cms.

Round it down, to 2.5? or  
2? round it up, to ..... heavens, what?

2.54cms.

Come what may, life will never be  
the same for you, or snails, or me.

2.54cms.

Might there be marches? chaos and  
clashes? ..... as the law concerning

2.54cms.

looms, and bites? Will snails soldier on  
regardless? They'll be spared, at least

– under the sway of metric rule –  
all temptation, when running late,  
of putting their best foot forward.



## Metric feats in S minor

### II

When the heat's on, will snails convert  
(at sixty seconds a minute)  
from our Fahrenheit to Celsius?

## Metric feats in S minor

### III

“A pint of milk, a pound of flour!”

– “These measurements, Sir, aren't used now.  
.568 of a litre,  
.454 of a kilo  
is what you mean, but – we regret,  
such quantities aren't practical.  
Half a litre, half a kilo,  
that's how we sell them now, you know.”

“That's not much drink, and too much dough!”

– “Just relax, Sir, and face the facts:  
you'll have to change, and start again,  
unlearning all you've learned before.”

# Miércoles ... en Casa Lazo

*A Carmen y Ramón*

Era de noche  
y en pleno invierno  
que me fui al bar  
a disfrutar  
un plato del tiempo,  
el muy casero  
'Potaje de coles'.

Ajetes hubo  
y judías, mucho  
garbanzo y unos  
cachos de carne;  
y no obstante  
a pesar de una  
orden de búsqueda  
y de captura,  
no acudieron  
las coles, ni las  
de bruselas, ni  
las de las flores.

'Potaje de coles'  
se denomina,  
receta más básica  
con o sin *brássica*  
(ni caracoles),  
que siempre invita  
a repetir.



## Mind the monkey! 5

Lazy Susan spins  
(slowly), shows her bliss  
when she meets a dish  
that she can service.

Lazy Susan saves  
time, meets the guests, turns  
and circles, and makes  
square meals successful.

Lazy (!) Susan saw  
pepper foiled and on  
his knees (for assault),  
the vinegar gone.

Lazy Susan's days  
are numbered: T.V.  
meals save so much space,  
and are so 'easy'!

Lazy Susan wants  
to turn the tables:  
– table her turn as  
one of the faces.

Lazy Susan shud-  
ders: think of the East!  
A thousand and one  
spices – at each meal!

# No nonsense, now! 5

(Gifts of Smell)

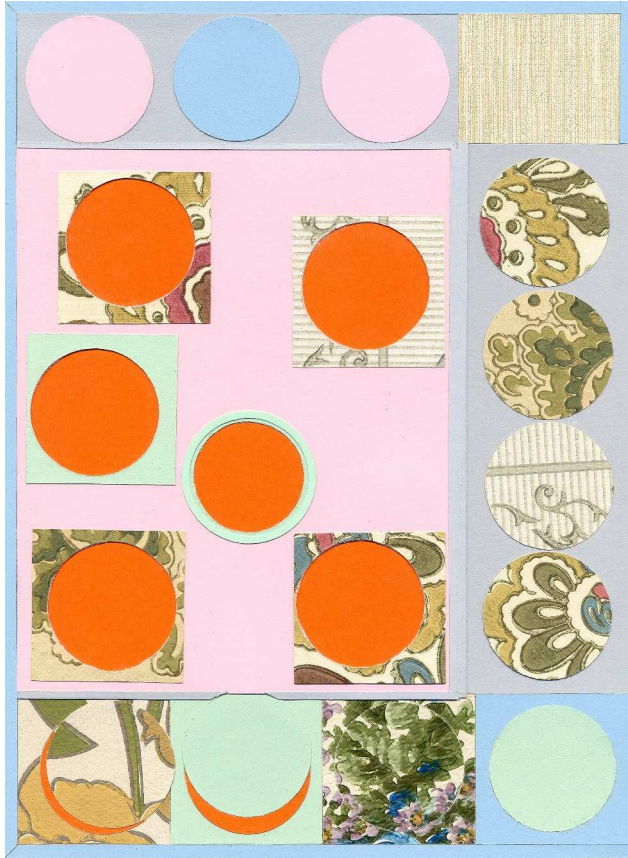
Bread – baking,  
coffee freshly ground,  
warm toast,

stood for home:  
like incense, in crowds  
praying.

Hay, and wood smoke,  
grass and earth,  
were fragrant foils to  
pomanders,  
and phials of gold.







# No nonsense, now! 6

(Gifts of Taste)

Time and heat,  
garlic, pepper, oil  
and salt,

helped transform  
food – fried, roasted, boiled  
and steamed.

A cheese, a mead,  
wine, liqueur,  
and bread? They're 'just' grapes,  
wheat, milk, pure  
herbs, and honey!

## Pasatiempos: 'Sol y sombra'

Olor a toros:

la plaza a sol y sombra,  
con calor.

Olor a corridas de toros,  
a plaza de sangre,  
a plaza de polvo,  
a plaza de pena:

¡ay! de asco, y ¡ay! de calor.  
Sol sin sombra  
y sin amor.

Olor a corridas de toros,  
a música y paso-  
dobles, con sed de hielo,  
de agua, y de vino,

la copa de coñac y anís:  
sol y sombra  
con abanicos.

Olor a toros:

la plaza a sol y sombra,  
con calor.

# PASATIEMPOS

## Sol y Sombra

a b a n i c o s ■ ■ p ■ c ■ ■  
■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ h i e l o ■ p  
■ t ■ ■ ■ s ■ ■ ■ ■ n ■ r ■ a  
c o n ■ c o ñ a c ■ a ■ r ■ s  
■ r ■ ■ ■ l ■ y ■ ■ ■ v i n o d  
■ o ■ p ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ d ■ d  
■ s o l ■ Y ■ s o m b r a ■ o b  
a ■ ■ a ■ ■ ■ a ■ ú ■ ■ s ■ b  
■ ■ ■ z ■ s i n ■ s e d ■ ■ l e  
c o p a ■ o ■ g ■ i ■ e ■ d e  
a ■ o ■ a m o r ■ c ■ ■ a ■ s  
l ■ l a ■ b ■ e ■ a n í s ■ ■  
o ■ v ■ ■ r ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ c ■ ■  
r ■ o ■ ■ a g u a ■ o l o r ■

## La Pérfida

En su camiseta se leía *Rock and Roll*.  
¿Por qué tanto afán en comunicar  
que se iba al Peñón  
a tomar un bocadillo de jamón?







## Pirelli paradox

*To Win*

I

Encircling my darling's Middle Kingdom,  
they run rings round the sluggish populace.  
Their revolution threatens to impose  
fasting, much to the Governor's disgust.

## Pirelli paradox

II

In the East  
Hindu wives reveal well-being  
in rolls which gleam around their loins.

In the West  
belles toil for Lent, welcome cycles  
of famine or (more kindly) 'fast'.



# Surrounds

I

Between walls of cork  
and doors of glass

– people sit,  
and talk,  
indulge,  
grow weary,  
– while wines,  
in silence,  
lie still,  
maturing

between doors of cork  
and walls of glass.

# Surrounds

## II

The ‘Cork and Glass’ pub, British? No, the  
‘San Antonio’ restaurant, Cadiz,  
ambience for gentlemen and ladies.

Bacchanalia, orgies? No, the likes  
of you and me once more relaxing,  
for which the bill proposes (later)  
sundry diets, and medication.

Wine, not genii, in the bottles;  
but cells are similar: imagine  
then, the monks inside, their spirits poised  
to find fulfilment, elsewhere (later).

That, however, is another tale,  
on soul and body – not what surrounds –  
called “Looking ahead, now’s not for real”.

## Té con tomate

“¿Qué te tomaste? ¿un té, Marta?”

*“Pues ¡anda! Tomás, me tomé un té mate.”*

“¿Y luego no comiste nada?”

*“Comí un mollete y aceite con tomate.”*

“¡Té con tomate! ¡disparate!”

*“¡Toma! ¡que no me dispires ni mates!”*

“¿Marta, estás harta? ¿qué te falta?”

*“¿Lo dices por el té o por el tomate?”*

“¡¡¡Por lo bueno de un santo más!!!”

“Queda té, ¡tómalo! ¡ja! ¡qué mate!”



## Trish 1

There was a smile and it came with  
a country girl whose name was Trish.  
Now country girls who're into books  
may paint their face all night and day  
but they're not famous for their looks!

But this Trish here, she had a smile  
to melt your heart at half a mile,  
and though she said she couldn't cook  
a roast, an egg, a slice of toast,  
she was a wizard with a book.

“Why cook?” she said, “when I've been taught  
that books are packed with food for thought?  
No need to peel and scrape and stir,  
to scale a fish or wash a dish,  
and handle pan and colander.

No need, in short, to drip with sweat,  
to turn yourself quite inside out  
all full of hope (but can't quite cope!),  
only to hear that dreadful shout  
“What! Is there nothing ready yet?””

## Trish 2

Beware the lion in her lair!  
The Show is done, and so is she!  
She's fast asleep, beyond all care  
and crossing lands across the sea.

In and out and round about,  
dunk 'em in and pull 'em out.

The odd thing is, there's just a whiff  
of ... what on earth? Could it be ... fat?  
It seems to come ... I wonder if ...  
it's something from a greasy vat?

Round about and out and in,  
pull 'em out and dunk 'em in.

And look! Her claws, her nails – I mean  
are clogged with gunge, both grey and white!  
For lions, clean, it's quite obscene  
to treat us all to such a sight!

In and out and round about,  
dunk 'em in and pull 'em out.

Quiet, you children! Not one more scream!  
And cut the television blast!  
– So she can rest and cease to dream  
and wonder will the batter last.

Out and in and in and out,  
round and round and round about,  
you'll get slim ... the others stout!



## Trish 3

Above the sea, below the snow  
I know a dish in Omeo,  
no 'use-by' date to seal its fate,  
it's in cold storage waiting for  
a bear to try the freezer door.

Sweet as heaven, oh what a dish!  
(I wonder if it's known as ...?)  
Though frozen solid, it has hopes  
a bear may get to know the ropes.

Some cinnamon would do it proud,  
and nutmeg too ... (is that a crowd?)  
Then serve it warmly on a bed  
of roses, rice, and featherdown  
and watch the bear go off its head!

# Wanted, missing ...

*To Win*

The wardrobe's  
full of shirts she's pressed,  
the fridge –

butter, milk,  
home made bread: he's fed  
and clothed.

But bed's a grave,  
and silence  
attends at table.  
Where's desire,  
now she's away?





# Ya no sirven

*A Milagros*

Estalló el vaso. Por el suelo  
rodaron cristales, con el duelo  
de los clientes, y de la gente  
responsable del medio ambiente.

– ¡Vaya susto! dijo pues, atónita,  
Milagre. – ¡El vaso ya sin vida!  
dije, – ¡y su futuro se acaba!

– ¡Ay por Dió! pensaron, ¡qué bobadas!  
¡Basta! Rotos, ya estamos libres.  
¡Vengan juerga, cachondeo, cines!  
Vasos jubilados de este mundo,  
lo vamos a pasar cojonudos.



## Notes

### THE POEMS

- Absence 3** (also features in Eros - *In absentia*) Cadiz 2007  
(From a series of 12 poems to Winifred Ann (Jodell, née Woods) or 'Win', partner since about 1990 and then wife, away on respite care work in England.) It is a custom in Cadiz businesses and homes to keep a small statue of San Pancracio handy, with a vase of parsley in front. He stands for prosperity, employment in particular. When things do not work out he's put in the fridge, *castigado* (see also 'Votive offering - a sprig of parsley' in The Natural world - Heaven and earth).
- All a-tumble** (and in The Natural world - Heaven and earth) Cadiz 2010  
Some grain or grains always seem to get away ...
- El bellaco en pelotas** (also features in Words at play) Cadiz 2007  
On similarities of sounds and spelling (*jamón de bellota*, i.e. acorn-fed ham, is highly regarded).
- Bonito error** (also features in The Natural world - the Bestiary I, and Words at play) Cadiz 2009  
Tuna is known as *atún* and *bonito*; the latter is also an adjective (with a different meaning).
- Cattribute 'D'** (also features in The Natural world - the Bestiary II) Cadiz 2009  
From a series of 26 (+ 2) poems on *Noche*, a black kitten given shelter after being dumped at my door late one night.
- Chives** (also features in The Natural world - Heaven and earth) Cadiz 2015  
(See also 'Hold-up in a kitchen garden' in The Natural world - Heaven and earth)
- The coffee affair** (also features in Measuring up) Cadiz 2004  
Anyone can distinguish between the rich texture of an expresso coffee resulting from a technique involving pressure and coffee resulting from standard gravity feed.
- Contigo** (also features in Cadiz, and Eros - *In absentia*) Cadiz 2012  
While fare and setting at the *Malibú*, Réynold's beach bar (*chiringuito*) off the paseo Marítimo, had usually

been good, both were transformed on that evening. *Chirigotas* are Cadiz carnival songs, rhythmical and slightly Caribbean, usually satirical, played anywhere, anytime. The *Levante* is a tiresome wind from the east or south, reaching at times gale force intensity. This beach, the *Victoria*, makes for excellent sunset watching.

**Una copa de más** (also features in Words at play) Cadiz 2007

A puritanical background can lead sometimes to one's kicking over the traces and expostulating at the 'luxury' of a fresh glass for every top-up.

**Cosquilla 2** (also features in Cadiz) Cadiz 2010

(One of a series of three, the result of an invitation from Maribel Téllez and husband Rafael to contribute to the visitors' book at *Quilla*, their restaurant-bar / gallery at La Caleta where I went on to exhibit my *papegados*.) This poem concerns Maribel's rôle at *Quilla*. There is an echo of a famous poem, and mention of the nearby fortresses.

**Elegir su elixir I y II** (also in The Natural world - the Bestiary I) Cadiz 2001

The second poem started as a footnote. Spain has a fine range of *anis (dulce)* varieties, of which Chinchón (*de la alcoholera* to distinguish it from a local rival), la Asturiana, la Castellana and las Cadenas are just four.

**FRAGMENTS** Cadiz 2004

(A series of four pieces which began as games with words and sounds, an offshoot of English conversation classes with Don Fernando of the Cadiz Port Authority.)

**Fragment 3** (also features in Words at play)

'Hocus-pocus', 'gobbledegook',  
the antithesis of saffron,  
earned their place;  
'mumbo-jumbo' and 'codswallop'  
though, missed out, as did 'bamboozle',  
while 'enigma' (in a dither)  
missed the race.

**Fragment 4** (also features in Words at play)

Juniper berries: love at first sight (oh, dear!), "not suited", they said, "for Omeo".



The elderberry wine Ann's father made  
 was heaven, and – for a while – persuaded.  
 The tang of sloes, however few, surprised  
 in jams derived from autumn fruits found wild.

**Hard-pressed** (also features in Eros - Foibles of the flesh) Cadiz 2001

The fish and seafood stands of the Cadiz market, in the Plaza de la Libertad, are amazing for their number (over sixty), the variety of the offerings, and imaginative displays.

'Hard-pressed' stood for title and won, against:

'A metaphysical overview of  
 modern socio-economic factors  
 which shape female sexual aggression  
 (accidental, ambiguous, active),  
 and response of the unsuspecting male  
 (dynamic, devious or despairing)',

though

'Three sorts of crush' did appeal, as also  
 the more tantalising 'Fishy business'.

**Holus-bolus** (also features in Words at play) Cadiz 2004

***Un lugar para armas tomar*** (also features in Cadiz, The Cadiz 2009

Natural world - the Bestiary I, and Words at play)

Set in what was Olimpio's Galician café-bar *La Rambla* (calle Sopranis) with its generous array of *tapas* which includes many seafood dishes, one of which appears here in the guise of a pun. On another tack, his *pollo al ajillo* was of the best in Spain. Energetic, enthusiastic, affable - I was to miss him on his retirement in 2014.

**Marketing** (also appears in Eros - Foibles of the flesh, and Melbourne 1971  
 Words at play)

I used to shop at the famous Victoria market on Saturdays, alone, with my children Patrick, Isabel and Dominic, or with a friend.

**Metric feats in S minor I, II & III** (also appear in The Cadiz 2001  
 Natural world - the Bestiary I)

Serious interest in the fascinating snail started in Perth, Western Australia where our garden was invaded on a massive scale every night. Drastic, and dreadfully horrible

measures had to be taken. 'Metric feats in S minor' II and III started as footnotes.

**Miércoles ... en Casa Lazo** (also Cadiz, and Words at play) Cadiz 2009

Carmen and Ramón produced some memorable dishes, especially in the line of *guisos* and *potajes*. I was to regret their departure (see also *Bonito error*, above).

**Mind the monkey! 5** (also appears in Measuring up) Cadiz 2004

From a series of five pieces where some frivolous sounding English words have been used to depict our fickle, wandering minds, as the avatar Sai Baba considered them.

**NO NONSENSE, NOW!** Cadiz 2004

(From a series of ten poems on the senses and their rôle: their relationship to mind and body, the pleasure they afford, the illusions they foster. What are the options?)

**No nonsense, now! 5 & 6** (also appear in Measuring up)

**Pasatiempos: Sol y sombra** (also appears in the Natural world - the Bestiary I, and Words at play) Cadiz 2007

An offshoot of my English conversation classes with Don Fernando, of the Cadiz Port Authority. Missing: the clues.

**La Pérfida** (also appears in Words at play) Cadiz 2009

T-shirt advertisements and slogans are anathema to me, in part because the wearer is gullible enough to wear what he hasn't taken the trouble to understand. I remember the case of a classical concert given in the delightful courtyard of the church of San Francisco, here in Cadiz, where the person responsible for helping the pianist turn the pages was wearing a T-shirt which carried ever so clearly words in English to the effect of "f ... you". So I like to make fun of them - shirt and wearer.

**Pirelli paradox I and II** (also in Eros - Foibles of the flesh) Cadiz 2002

The second poem started as a footnote. The whole was intended affectionately for Win, the 'Governor'.

The Governor, poor darling, was

early

on the

scene,

aware that fasts, though slow, are things

of which she'd never hear the last.

<b>Surrounds I and II</b> (also feature in Cadiz)	Cadiz	2003
The second poem started as a footnote. The décor at that time (glass door, walls dressed in cork) was quite something.		
<b>Té con tomate</b> (also features in Words at play)	Cadiz	2007
Bread and tomato paste is a standard breakfast item.		
<b>TRISH</b>	Cadiz	2010
(Three of a set of eight Australian ballad style pieces inspired by and named for the still far away Patricia Leon who had ‘inherited’ my bookshop in Omeo, Australia. She could turn out a fine ballad herself.)		
<b>Trish 1</b> (also features in Eros - <i>In absentia</i> )		
<b>Trish 2</b> (also features in Eros - <i>In absentia</i> )		
There are lions ... and the Omeo ‘Lions’.		
<b>Trish 3</b> (also features in Eros - <i>In absentia</i> )		
<b>Wanted, missing</b> (also features in Eros - <i>In absentia</i> )	Cadiz	2004
On the time Win went to Granada and I chose to fend for myself.		
<b>Ya no sirven</b> (also features in Cadiz)	Cadiz	2001
I used to breakfast at the <i>Cafetería Aduana</i> , calle Corneta Soto Guerrero, and came to know the hard working staff of the time ... Virginia, José, Verónica, Elena, Mamen and others, well. ‘Milagre’ is Cadiz-speak for one of them, Milagros.		
<p style="padding-left: 40px;">En ‘Ya no sirven’, hay más puntos de vista posibles, en cuanto al destino de los cristales ‘fallecidos’: se convierten en espejos y bombillas, o, ya en átomos reducidos, surcan olas del infinito.</p>		



## Notes

### ILLUSTRATIONS from my collections of *Papegados* and *Cristaletas*

My background as an artist is almost nil. As a schoolboy at Ampleforth in the '50s I managed to exhibit clay models of a cat and elephant, and also an interpretation of a woman of Ancient Crete in poster colours, at the annual 'Exhibition'. At that time I also did some pencilled sketches (I'd forgotten my camera!) to illustrate my travel diary 'Spanish Impressions', excerpts of which were soon to be published. Apart from that I had some success with photographs taken while running my first bookshop in Foster, Australia in the '80s, with close-ups of beach sand formations (b/w), landscapes and studies on reflections (b/w and colour). Generally speaking, though, there was nothing to indicate that anything special might happen as the second millenium got under way.

Having bought a 150 year old house (a '*finca*') in Cadiz, Spain, I set about its repair. The 24 room brothel-turned-lodging house was home for six months to a building gang whose foreman caused me grief. He didn't want me around. In the end I thought of salvaging bits and pieces of the peeling wallpapers (spiders, flies and even lizards lurked behind), saying I wanted the papers as a record. This was partly to keep an eye on things (unbeknownst?) and partly to satisfy my pleasure at the designs and colours of the wallpapers ... and the just exposed pastel paint schemes underneath.

It was with time on my hands as I awaited completion of the house renovations at c. San Dimas 10 (known in its brothel days as c. San Telmo 6), seated at my then home in nearby c. Beato Diego, and surrounded by bags bulging with wallpaper remains – that I gradually became aware of growing discontent. This art work, for all that it had been created by small time artists, had now been freed from the walls to which it had been assigned, and was hoping for a chance to make a bit of a show. And there was I, conscious of this find, remembering it *in situ*, and dwelling on its curious designs and stimulating colours – frustrated: all because it lay there at my feet bagged up, invisible.

So I hit on a plan. I would stick samples of the wallpapers onto card and so bring them easily to mind. Days later, having scraped old plaster off the back

of some papers, and washed and dried others (watching in dismay as papers tore and colours ran) I set to work. I assembled my first wallpaper composite, incorporating strips of new card to match the paint underlay which had been so long lost to sight. I liked the result.

But my task was barely completed when I became aware that most of the designs and colour schemes remained unrepresented. So I set about creating another picture, and another and ... another. Which made 30, soon to be followed by a further 30 when two new papers came to light (and much later by six more when I incorporated Roman coins retrieved at Jimena de la Frontera). There were elements of every design and colour. Meanwhile, my pictures developed from basic arrangements of scraps, to considered abstracts and works with a theme. From a picture shape serving to display aspects of functional wallpaper art, I had gone to using wallpaper to create pictures.

What I had made are 'collages'. Dissatisfied at the lack of a Spanish word, I named my collage a *papegado*, from the Spanish for paper (*papel*) and pasted (*pegado*). After all, here we were in Spain, the wallpapers were Spanish, and the transmutation had occurred in Spain ... and Spaniards are open to neologisms. My *papegados* gave rise to exhibitions at the Cadiz *Casino* (reviews *Diario de Cádiz* and *La Voz*), the Cadiz *Ateneo* (intr. Marisa de las Cuevas, profesora de Historia del Arte), *Quilla*, and online through *La Rampa* Gallery. They have also appeared at several commercial establishments, and were made especially welcome at *Casa Lazo*. Recycled art, what?

## **POEMS**

***Cosquilla* 2**

**Mind the monkey! 5**

**No nonsense, now! 6**

**Surrounds I & II**

**Trish 1**

## **POEM**

**Pirelli paradox I & II**

## **Papegados**

*Fantasia 'Oriana, protagonista'* / 1:10

*Salvamanteles 7 'Al compás de la música II'* / 1:23

*'La Cocina del Gotinga a pleno rendimiento'* / 2:10

*'Risueñas y casi discretas'* / 0:03 (clave / key, originally 2:29)

*Sobrecubierta 4 'Lomo de tejido basto'* / 2:25

## **Papegado converted to Frango**

Frango twist, from my *'Oriens I'* / 3:02

But recycling did not end there. While walking along my local beach at La Caleta, I used to be bothered by the amount of broken glass lying around on the surface of the sand. It struck me as a hazard. Eventually I collected some and dumped it in a heap for all to see, hoping someone would get the hint and initiate a tidy up. No luck. But I had noticed two things in doing so: neither my feet nor my hands got cut, and many of the pieces of glass were attractive for both their colours and shapes.

So I started collecting the pieces, some small and some substantial. They seemed to come in three colours: green, brown and clear. A rather limited range, you might think, were it not for the fact that each of these three was represented in a multitude of shades, from deepest green to a quite delicate green (almost blue), from brown verging on black to a delicate shade of amber, from a crazed and milky whiteness to completely clear. As for the shapes, these bits of glass seemed to represent the remains of a million and one bottles (and accompanying glass drinking ware?). Many of the pieces were mere shards, no more than splinters, but others could be whole bottle bases or whole bottle necks and openings.

You may guess what happened next. I had moved on from collages to montages, or from *Papegados* to *Cristaletas*, the latter being my neologism (another one) which incorporates glass (*crystal*) and an allusion to La Caleta, my beach of supply.

The beach continued to reveal fresh glass with each passing tide, and I continued to find that none of the millions of pieces, whatever their size or shape, seemed to cause injury.

## **POEMS**

**Fragment 3**

**Fragment 4**

***Ya no sirven***

## ***Cristaletas***

*'Cristaleta 9'*

*'Cristaleta 10'*

*'Cristaleta 1'*

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*Papegado 2:26: retrato 'Alicia en el jardín de los tiempos'* does not face a poem but the start of the poetry notes. Here I imagine artist Alicia Ríos, known for food performances held in public venues in Sydney, London etc., in which reality (a street, map, library) is presented in the form of food, to be eaten collectively. This is one of two *papegados* to include old patterned house glass.

## ILLUSTRATIONS – spacers and front cover

The spacers used to introduce and close this collection: a carved 19th c. Flemish upright oak dresser acquired in Auckland in the late '60s, and a traditional style Indian teak sideboard-dresser.

Other (coloured) spacers: an oil on canvas (untitled) still life with fruit, poultry both spread and hanging, a rabbit also suspended, and a cat staring with intent through a small barred opening to the top left, signed J. Simson and dated 1879; two composite photographs (four dishes apiece) used to illustrate home cooking, courtesy my impressed wife; one shot of a set of Galician ceramic ornamental beer-pull handles and another of an exuberant Olimpio of the much featured *La Rambla* café-bar exhibiting his latest offering, both courtesy Patricia Leon.

The three (b/w) spacers are printers' ornamental blocks (usually general purpose) made of wood and, later metal. These were copied in the 1970s from the end or title page of plays now in the Scarfe – La Trobe collection (part sale, one third donation), Glasgow University Library. These are (here – only – in hypothetical chronological order) as follow:

- a) Simple wire (?) basket with 5 short flowered branches and 7 pomegranates (2 split): title page block from (author not given) *La Huérfana de Barcelona y tutelar de su patria Santa Madrona* (Oficina de Pablo Nadal, c. del Torrente de Junqueras, Barcelona [no date given, but late 18th c. / early 19th c.]). Ref.: BS 361.
- b) Horizontally arranged swag of a dozen or so tubers / legumes centred between several bare and leaved branches: title page block from (author not given) *Los Estudiantes petardistas* as in v.3 of the BN 'Colección de sainetes sueltos' (Puesto de José Sánchez, c. del Príncipe frente del coliseo, Madrid ['Madeid', and no date given, but late 18th c. / early 19th c.]). Ref.: BS 289 & BN T 8565.
- c) Stand with two ewers / jugs, cups with saucers, bowl with cruets, and sugar (?) basin: title page block from the 'sainete' (author not given) *Los Sies del mayordomo don Ciriteca* (José Ferrer de Orga, Valencia 1813). Ref.: BS 713:iii & BN T 27403.

The front cover carries six *papegados*, all *retratos* or portraits (conceptual) of staff at the nearby *Gotinga* a few years ago. (From left to right): Lourdes (2:04),



Ana (2:13), Alaitz (2:05), Silvia (2:06), Christof (2:11) and Amparo (2:07). Lourdes, Alaitz, Silvia and Amparo were waitresses, Ana the cook and Christof the owner. They made a wonderful team. The waitresses were energetic yet also charming and patient, the (invisible, as always) cook excellent and completely reliable, the owner busy, involved, attentive and yet able to make time to chat with the customers. It was not only the most popular place in the neighbouring plaza del Mentidero, but by far the best. Queues! Those were the days, these the memories and here my eccentric but considered tributes.













