

LINES OF A LIFETIME XII

The Complete Poems
and selected illustrations



Bruno Scarfe

Previous titles

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Lines of a lifetime I, 'Cadiz': people, places and situations

Lines of a lifetime II, 'Eros 1': foibles of the flesh

Lines of a lifetime III, 'Eros 2': heavings of the heart

Lines of a lifetime IV, 'Eros 3': *in absentia*

Lines of a lifetime V, 'Measuring up': some of the inside story

Lines of a lifetime VI, 'Mixed blessings': food, drink and quirks of the table

Lines of a lifetime VII, 'The Natural world 1': heaven and earth

Lines of a lifetime VIII, 'The Natural world 2': the Bestiary 1

Lines of a lifetime IX, 'The Natural world 3': the Bestiary 2, or Cattributes A-Z

Lines of a lifetime X, 'Words at play': plays on words expressed in verse

Lines of a lifetime XI, 'Wrestling at dawn': juvenilia

Bruno Scarfe (ed.)

Francis Scarfe, *Onion soup - Latin Quarter poems, before and after*

LA GUIRITANA

Cadiz

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LINES OF A LIFETIME

XII



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and selected illustrations



BRUNO SCARFE



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PREFACE

All the poems from *Lines of a lifetime* vols.I-X appear here in a single alphabetical sequence, by title of poem (or by series), with those from LL XI 'Wrestling at dawn': Juvenilia, following. Included in the first group are some poems written recently. Only a few illustrations have been selected, however, answering to a wish to reduce distraction (however interesting) from the poetry and to avoid suggesting interpretations (however inviting). Limitations of space have played their part in this decision, and have led also to reductions in size.

INTRODUCTION – Background

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.

INTRODUCTION – General

When, a few years ago, I decided to bring together and present my poetry, I chose to call it *Lines of a lifetime*, and organised the poems alphabetically by title. This would make for a random reading and avoid problems caused by an artificial grouping of subjects. But this was objected to, and I was urged to arrange the poems by subject: not easy, as many poems fall into several subject categories, leading to perceived misrepresentation or duplication. The collection finally appeared as *Lines of a lifetime*, with subtitles: (LL I) ‘Cadiz’: people, places and situations, (LL II) ‘Eros 1’: foibles of the flesh, (LL III) ‘Eros 2’: heavings of the heart, (LL IV) ‘Eros 3’: *in absentia*, (LL V) ‘Measuring up’: some of the inside story, (LL VI) ‘Mixed blessings’: food, drink and quirks of the table, (LL VII) ‘The Natural world 1’: heaven and earth, (LL VIII) ‘The Natural world 2’: the Bestiary 1, (LL IX) ‘The Natural world 3’: the Bestiary 2, being Cattributes A-Z, (LL X) ‘Words at play’: games with words expressed in verse, (LL XI) ‘Wrestling at dawn’: juvenilia.

Hopefully these divisions and subtitles (now referred to in a note on each poem) which had been required to present the poems in 11 volumes can still serve to suggest the nature of experiences I thought fit to express in verse.

A significant feature of *Lines of a lifetime* is the presence of poems in Spanish. The use of Spanish relates to my first significant sojourn (third landing) in Spain, when I put in a year at the University of Salamanca prior to going up to Oxford. I chose to steep myself in the atmosphere, culture and language which created the setting for the literature I was studying. While in Salamanca I wrote a series of essays (in English) and of poems (in Spanish).

Though living in Cadiz, I continue to be a native English speaker and think and write mainly in English, while obviously addressing Spaniards in their own language. But it is clear to me that some subjects are expressed uniquely well in Spanish (‘*Sirenada*’) and some, indeed, can be expressed only in Spanish (‘*Un Lugar para armas tomar*’). There are many pieces here where single words, groups of words and indeed whole ideas, do not lend themselves comfortably to expression in English. Some subjects, too, are particularly

Spanish and almost demand to be presented in Spanish.

There are quite a few pieces in sets, some 'poetry', others 'verse'. Of special interest in the first group: Absences (LL v.IV), *Ausencias* (LL v.IV), The Flowering roof (LL v.VII), and No nonsense, now! (LL v.V). Of special interest in the second group: Cattributes (LL v.IX), Mind the monkey! (LL v.V) and Trish (LL v.IV). To what extent are *Cosquillas* (LL v.I), Fragments (LL v.X) and Glorious (LL v.II) poetry or verse? And where does the first end and the second start? There is 'verse' in a few Absences and in one piece at least from The Flowering roof, just as there is poetry in various Cattributes.

With regard to presentation, I admit to measuring by syllable count, though valuing highly the rôle of stresses. I admit to a frequent search for relevant / attractive acoustic effects, and favour assonantal rhyme (full / double or light / single), and its use internally and maybe concealed. I admit to some development of idiosyncratic stanza forms with an emphasis on concision, reflecting my perception of poetry as the art of synthesis: to catch a glimpse, convey an impression, summarise. And thank God for pun and paradox.

The poems, covering the period 1947 to the present, include ones written or based in Australia, France, Germany, India, New Zealand, Spain and the U.K.. Most are in English, many are in Spanish, four in French and one is in Latin.

INTRODUCTIONS – Excerpts (adapted) from vols.I-XI

v. I 'Cadiz' – people, places and situations

While poems produced before I came to live in Cadiz were not relevant, there were doubts as to which of the poems written in Cadiz most deserved to be represented. A selection was made, but in fact for justice to be done the Cadiz selection would have had to be doubled.

v. II 'Eros 1' – foibles of the flesh, v. III 'Eros 2' – heavings of the heart, v. IV 'Eros 3' – *in absentia*

This division into parts was difficult, with the result that some poems appeared more than once in the Eros series (and indeed in volumes other than these,

such as in 'Cadiz'). Ultimately, the umbrella title 'Eros' should be held in mind as the name generally applicable to all three selections – though the word 'eros' itself has nuances which reach further afield.

The description 'Foibles of the flesh' speaks for itself. 'Heavings of the heart' is supposed to convey something of the vagaries of friendship, affection, infatuation and love, and the major ups and downs involved. '*In absentia*' should convey something of the characteristics of separation where time and place exercise such strange effects – poignant melancholy, dreamlike illusion and even hallucination. Most of the last fall into two groups: a series of 12 called 'Absences' and another of 8 called 'Trish'. The former resulted from missing my wife Winifred Ann, and range from poems specifically on absence and communication to questions of identity and destiny (see Notes – poems: Absences). The latter, more verse than poetry, form part of a substantial long-distance correspondence with Patricia Leon, whom I was fortunate enough to meet (again) albeit briefly in Cadiz in 2010 (see Notes – poems: Trish).

The Eros poems were written in Auckland, Cadiz, Melbourne, Munich, Oxford and Salamanca. A number of those from Cadiz span decades and continents and are in the main retrospective – no surprise! Indeed, could not the poem 'Marketing' anticipate, ironically, the gradual later shift from the world of eros to the table? (Publication: see Appendix 1)

v. V 'Measuring up' – some of the inside story

An additional definition of this title reads 'a selection of poems on the mind, the senses and the self'. They are concerned with each of these three elements individually, their inter-relationship, and the unknown element beyond or within which defies analysis ... some would say the spirit.

As with the previous volumes, though it was at times easy to decide which poems to include (as is the case with the sets Mind the monkey! and No nonsense, now! plus a few other pieces), some inclusions may prompt disagreement. As for deciding on the exclusions, well where do you begin? It has been argued that 'Metric feats in S minor ...' (vols. VI and VIII) obviously deserved to be included here, yet to me that piece is too externally orientated to

qualify. But one or two pieces in 'Cadiz', a number of pieces in the 'Eros' series, and some others in vols.VI to XI could qualify. Yes, this is definitely 'a selection' only, affected by the requirement that I present the poems by subject and my own perception that there can be too much duplication.

The poems contained in this selection were written in Cadiz, Melbourne and Salamanca. (Publication: see Appendix 1)

v. VI 'Mixed blessings' – food, drink and quirks of the table

The unusually high number of poems 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.

v. VII 'The Natural world 1' – heaven and earth

Spiritual themes are alluded to in general, philosophical or abstract terms. Exceptions to this include 'Who on Earth ...' (with a Hindu background) and the light-hearted 'Voices' (Christian) where, in fact, religion is not of the essence. 'The Juggler', an extended metaphor with a religious message, I hope may be thought meaningful to people of most persuasions. Destiny, fate, the magical and supernatural, and the 'scientifically' inexplicable also have their place here. Earth, and matters of this world may also be referred to indirectly.

An exception – at first glance – comes in the form of the feature series The Flowering roof with 13 poems (12 accompanied by photographs, courtesy Glenwys Albrecht). This section was the result of developing a roof garden on top of our *finca* where, initially, all was bare concrete as is typically the case in Cadiz, a town in which different flat owners share a building and feel inhibited about taking initiatives affecting a communal area. The contrast has been rewarding beyond all proportion as there is no natural countryside round Cadiz. It is a built up 'island', the man-made mitigated only by a handful of attractive parks and squares ... and the sea.

Most of the poems in this selection were written in Cadiz, though Oxford and Salamanca are also represented. (Publication: see Appendix 1)

v. VIII 'The Natural world 2' – the Bestiary 1

While a number of poems in the collection were written specifically about

members of the animal kingdom, in many cases these are used figuratively, form part of an allegory, or are alluded to in passing ... though I like to think they contribute meaningfully to mood or subject. Note that 'The Natural world 2: the Bestiary 2' is about ... just the one animal (not human).

The following poems were omitted on the grounds of their slight relevance, or to reduce duplication: 1) 'Absence 5' (bugs), 2) 'Approaches' (emus), 3) 'Blues' (birds), 4) 'Autumn love' (snakes, spiders), 5) 'Doctor Foster: last known whereabouts' (crocodiles), 6) 'El Faro' (*calamares, ruiseñores*), 7) 'Fragment 1' (monkeys), 8) 'Lluvia en la noche' (*pulpos, serpientes, toros, tortugas*), 9) 'Love, so beautiful' (worms), 10) 'Men on the Moon' (cats, dogs, owls), 11) 'No, not to separate' (flies, worms), 12) 'Real' (dogs), 13) 'Sense of loss, loss of the senses' (cats, ducks, hens), 14) 'Torture of memory' (kookaburras), 15) 'Trish 2' (lions), 16) 'Trish 3' (bears), 17) 'Trish 7' (horses, snakes), 18) 'Trish 8' (dogs, geese). Also absent is the series Mind, the monkey! (not about monkeys), and 'A Tail to wag a dog' (not about dogs).

Most of the poems in this selection were written in Cadiz, though Auckland, Melbourne, Oxford and Salamanca are also represented. (Publication: see Appendix 1)

v. IX 'The Natural world 3' – the Bestiary 2 or Cattributes A-Z. For the original introduction see LL v.XII, under notes: Illustrations. There are six further (non-Cattributes) poems, mainly on Noche, in LL v.VIII.

v. X 'Words at play' – plays on words expressed in verse
'Words at play' refers to pieces where points of language such as meaning, function, value and presentation constitute the focus of attention, developed hopefully in not too pedantic a manner. 'Plays on words' refers to the use of puns, of which the title / sub-title of this selection offers an example.

As before, there were duplications due to subjects treated previously like Cadiz, eros, the mind, cuisine and nature developed with recourse to word play or presentational techniques.

And there were omissions, mainly answering to a wish to minimise duplication. The main ones are the series Cattributes (starting with the title) and the series Mind the monkey! But other series also contain word play or plays on words, as do many individual pieces.

The decision to include pieces (even where the language factor may seem minor), and exclude pieces (even where the language factor may seem major) was difficult, and there could be objections.

All the pieces bar two were written in Cadiz. These are '*Surréalismes*' (on nature, atmosphere and the supernatural, but with an emphasis on representational techniques) written in Oxford, and 'Marketing' (appearing in 'Eros 1', where desire and frustration culminate in a play on words) written in Melbourne.

v. XI 'Wrestling at dawn' – juvenilia

Subjects which stand out in this collection include nature with its landscapes and detailed (not always accurate) mention of the many members of the greater and lesser animal world, the weather in all its moods, the seasons, the skies and especially the sea. In some poems feelings are particularly important, stressing affection, wonder, loneliness, resignation and fear. Yet others have an almost philosophical, sometimes religious touch.

The poems in the main conform to a child's perspectives ... except when they suggest otherwise as in 'A Lull in a storm' or 'The Turn of the tide'. Yet many of the subjects and moods are taken up again and again in later life, and therefore in a sense the poems here can be thought of as preludes.

As for style or form, it is quite clear these were moments for experimentation: playing with sound effects in particular, sometimes beautifully, sometimes humorously, sometimes mechanically, but persevering whatever the results. With regard to the range of language, it strikes me as amazing.

All the pieces here were written in England, either at home in Oxford or at

Ampleforth College, York. (Publication: see Appendix 1)

INTRODUCTIONS – Preliminaries, vols.I-XI

v. I ‘Cadiz’ – people, places and situations

Dedication: 'With – *El Purgatorio de San Patricio* – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: 'All thanks – *al artifice de todo el tinglao* – Glenwys Albrecht'.

v. II ‘Eros 1’ – foibles of the flesh

Dedication: 'With – *El Estudiante de Salamanca* – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: 'To – *las de las ilusiones inexorables* – thanks'.

v. III ‘Eros 2’ – heavings of the heart

Dedication: 'With – *los vaivenes y altibajos del amor* – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: '*A las que dieron el dulce sí, y a las que no*'.

v. IV ‘Eros 3’ – *in absentia*

Dedication: 'With – *El Burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: '*Al don divino de la añoranza*'.

v. V ‘Measuring up’ – some of the inside story

Dedication: 'With – *la musa y la motivación* – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: 'To – *New College Choir School y Ampleforth College, y las universidades de Salamanca y de Oxford, y amigos y conocidos sin querer identificar a ningún profesor ni amigo puesto que tantos me han echado una mano* – all thanks'.

v. VI ‘Mixed blessings’ – food, drink and quirks of the table

Dedication: 'With food for thought (*en su punto*) in mind'.

Acknowledgement: 'All thanks – to my mother Margarete Magdalene Scarfe (née Geisler), b. Wuppertal 1903, lived in Hungary, France and Great Britain, d. Cadiz 2002 – for her example'.

v. VII ‘The Natural world 1’ – heaven and earth

Dedication: 'With – *lo sobrenatural (por supuesto)* – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: '*En agradecimiento al milagro que nos insta a emprenderlo todo*'.

v. VIII ‘The Natural world 2’ – the Bestiary 1

Dedication: 'With – *San Francisco de Asís (4 de octubre)* – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: '*En agradecimiento a los seres "inferiores" que nos acompañan en sus mundos paralelos*'.

v. IX 'The Natural world 3' – the Bestiary 2 or Cattributes A-Z

Dedication: 'With – ¡*Chapeau! ¡que esta gata se lleva el gâteau!*' – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: 'To Giovanni Andreoni, Barbara Fleming and Win Jodell for redressing my views on that other world, the world of the canine: thanks'.

v. X 'Words at play' – plays on words expressed in verse

Dedication:

'With – "*Language? Words?*

A load of codswallop!" she thinks, grooming
herself nonchalantly.

"I can screech and yowl, hiss or purr ... and miaow!
And I talk with my tail, eyes and ears,
my arched back, my claws, my teeth ... and my lick!
And as for what matters – 'Elsewhere' and 'Now'
and 'Why' – there's a lack of *words*
fit for these."

(Noche *dixit*, in 'Cattribute L' from *Lines of a Lifetime IX*:

'The Natural world 3' – the Bestiary 2)

– in mind'.

Acknowledgement: 'All thanks – to my father, Francis Scarfe (1911-1986) academic, administrator, critic, novelist, poet and translator, Director of the British Institute, Paris: C.B.E., Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, F.R.S.L., D.Litt. – for a linguistic sense of humour'.

v. XI 'Wrestling at dawn' – juvenilia

Dedication: 'With the famous – "...*divino tesoro* ..." (give or take) – in mind'.

Acknowledgement: 'To my children Patrick, Isabel and Dominic for their affection and understanding, and the child in every reader for identifying with these poems: thanks'.



To
my grandmother and parents,
my children Patrick, Isabel and Dominic,
my companions Eve, Win and Glen,
and friends who have played a part

LINES OF A LIFETIME XII

Contents vols. I-X

Above and below I & II

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¿O?

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Vine leaves in autumn (to Judith)

Voices

Wanted, missing (to Win)

Who on Earth ...

Why say it all?

Wild plums

Wing din

Without you

A Woman's dreams

Ya no sirven (a Milagros)

Yours truly, Q.C.

LINES OF A LIFETIME XII: Contents v.XI (Juvenilia) 1947 to 1956

As seen from a beach in autumn

As you like it

The Ballad of 'Misfortune'

The Ballad of perdition

Cool water

Desert sun

Evening

Evening voices

Fear

First time under anaesthetic

I went away

Inceptio brumae

The Last storm

Light everywhere

A Lull in a storm

Le Matin

Morning at sea

My heart's desiring

La Neige

Ode to a cat
Ode to a fly
Ode to a mouse
Stars
Summer
That which is necessary
The Turn of the tide
Underground
The Upper world
A Waterfall
When a thunderstorm threatens
When the sun sinks slowly down
Winter is coming

Notes: poetry I-X

Notes: poetry XI (Juvenilia) 1947-1956

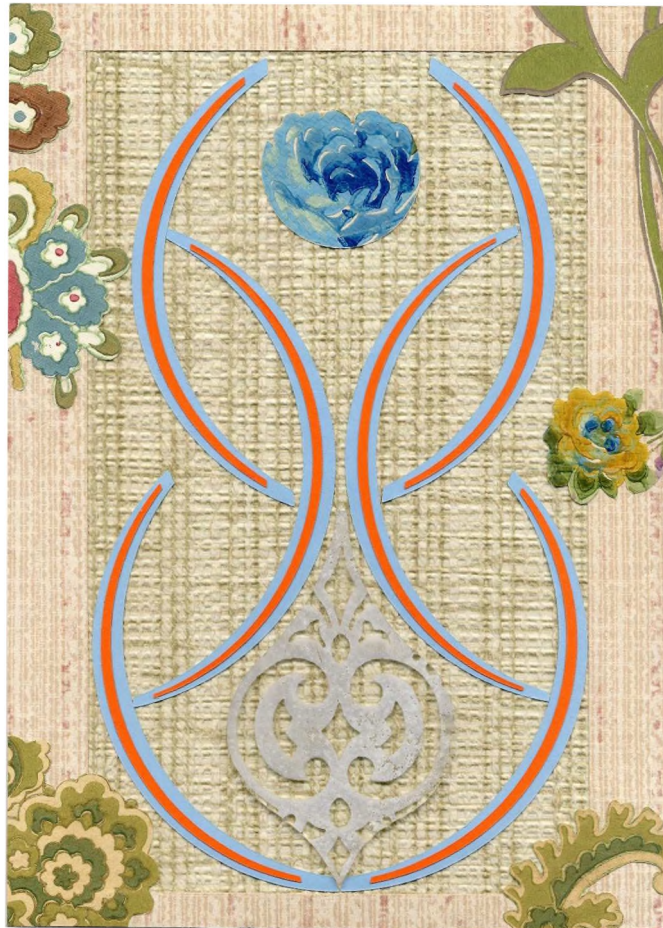
Notes: illustrations I-XI

Appendix 1: poems previously published

Appendix 2: covers of *Lines of a Lifetime* I - XI

Appendix 3: autobiographical 'A Strange incident driving'

Appendix 4: aspects of Yours Truly





Above and below (part I)

From a porthole, in the sky, you saw
the clouds below
(mounds of wool and pools of fluff)
float firmly on a level high above
the quaint and chequered surface of a land
reorganized by man.

On the shore, before your feet, you saw
the foam and froth
(pools of wool and mounds of fluff)
scud seaward on a film of water, en-
hancing headland, chasm, delta, river, stream
shaped in the sand below

Above and below (part II)

Composed of air and water:
clouds, and foam.

How they vary! flat and brittle, sometimes,
– *tortillitas de camarones*,
and potato pancakes Mother made;
how light they are! yet all throw shadows, and
– clouds won't vanish easily in air,
and foam won't mix at once with water.

Foam and clouds,
composed of air and water.

Absences

Absence 1

Ground strewn with rubble – you know the building site,
and its grey mesh geometric fence.
Spaced evenly and facing east on its top-
most strand, glittering and live ten
dragonflies vibrate, readying for take-off.
“Look!” I cried. But your eyes, absent
could not reply.

Absences

Absence 2

Your voice felt close and warm and clear
as it announced "I'll be there, soon!"
"Soon?" I asked it, "by which you mean
a day, a week, a month, a year?"
"Soon! in an hour, or maybe two".
It spoke on the phone, in my dream,
from which I woke, alone.

Absences

Absence 3

A fistful of finely fluted chives
and gay canopies of parsley – some to be left
with San Pancraccio – (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.

Absences

Absence 4

The 'you' I know, I'll miss when you
come back, for you'll be changed. "Now then!"
I think you'll say, "I'm gone for less
than the last time!" ... But if the Dragon tree,
like Morning Glory, must consent
to change, to live ... "Well!" you'll say, "when
I come back, I may miss 'you' too".

Absences

Absence 5

Ugh! sums it up. Has the bed got a bug?
Where's the mug for my coffee? and why's the jug dead?
I trudged to the shops and dug in my pocket,
juggled the bags, lugged everything back –
and was floored by a rug! Vacuum and socket
tugged at the plug, the cleaning up made me see red –
until I thought: "all I need, is a 'hug'".

Absences

Absence 6

Cripples crowd the towns:

they laugh and shout, talk to themselves all day and night,
their dangling left arm counter-balancing their right
arm held up high.

Why aren't they shy,

testing this yoga from the States? or aren't they 'right'?

– chatterholic clowns!

Absences

Absence 7

You were starry-eyed and rainbows – gosh, could you flirt!
You hugged me close all summer long – what a comfort
feeling you around! and I've been true.
But now you're worn, all colour drained, deformed. Have I
stuck my neck out once too often? been pushy? rough?
frayed your love? Someone, jealous, may move
to oust you, and want me dressed in another shirt.

Absences

Absence 8

A woman paced the cobbled streets alone, voice raised;
at cafés, odd couples – their food now cold – spent time
returning calls; whole landscapes came and went while rail
passengers dispatched platitudes. Streets, meals and rides
were cancelled (lack of interest), their users absent.

On the ferry – blue sky, gay waves, salt breeze – I ate
hot chestnuts, and addressed you quietly with my mind.

Absences

Absence 9

Recognise me? infant, child and grown
up? student and teacher? dealer in
books and household goods? artist? poet?
recognise in me the one who passed
through Britain, Spain, Germany and France,
Australia and New Zealand? You can't?
What am I? wherever have I been?

Absences

Absence 10

Are you the beginning of what you'll be?

– as seeds are to trees, and trees are to woods;
are you, already, the beings you'll be?

Are you the conclusion of what you've been?

– as mulch is to leaves, dropped leaves are to woods;
are you all the beings, still, that you've been?

Your karma faces you, hangs from your hand.

Absences

Absence 11

At home, when she's around, there's less of me
as I divide myself to dwell
on her questions, and share her work and play.
That's when she's here. But when she's away,
and I can spend both night and day
focusing just on me and mine, how come
there's even less of me, though she's not home?

Absences

Absence 12

Are you your 'self' plus make-up, clothes and jewels?
plus all the books you read, films you see, and music?
plus habits, work, address and bank account?
In short, are you the total of your attributes?
Some would say, 'no'. But if the absent 'you'
turned up right now without them, I might wonder who
she was, and I could miss you.

Acierto de peregrino

Estoy de paso –
pájaro fugaz,
pez escurridizo
y no me paro.

No queda pista
ni en el aire
ni en el agua
de mi visita.

No queda polvo
en las plumas,
las escamas
no llevan lodo.

Estoy contento.
Pues consta por todas
partes el encuentro,
y voy ligero.

Pilgrim's achievement

I'm just passing – / bird on the wing, / a darting fish / – and I'll not pause. // No trace
remains / in the air or / in the water / of my visit. // No dust remains / on my feathers, /
and on my scales / you'll find no mud. // I'm satisfied, / for it's quite clear / we've
met. And, yes, / I travel light.

(Translation on behalf of Deirdre and Duncan Jack)

Actors for all reasons

“We’re the action”

Verb called, and sneered

“adjectives are idlers”.

“Sloppy talk” cried

Adjective, “we’re

sensitive, *exacting*”.

Administering

Now there is a Minister
 (female) for Equality,
why not add a Minister
 (male this time) for Quality?

Alchemy (part I)

Your bum laid out flat,
your bum on a seat,
your bum on its feet,
your bum doubled up,
your bum on the move,
your bum on the run –

there's alchemy there,
ready to humble
or ready to cheer.

A load of humbug?
A crumb of comfort?
What's the bottom line?

(I'll take the back seat
now, if you ask me
nicely.

Alchemy (part II)

To turn base metal into gold
(‘base metal’ – bum, no asset known,
and ‘gold’ – the asset realised):
position yourself knowingly,
then watch the flux mutate and melt
to fix the moment when it comes
(and lose no mercury, or time);
“Snap!” you tell the camera while
you hold, so as to have your as-
set realised, and turned to gold.

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!

All in a letter

Since e-mails are so simply done,
are free, and travel fast,
the mails we knew may soon become
mere relics of the past.

All's not well

They fund research
to redirect
rogue meteorites from Earth,

but feel no need
to disinvest
in oil wells out at sea.

Amor de prostíbulo

Al Duende

Sin dueña
ni chicas, ya se
queda.

En sedas,
copas, disfraces,
sueña.

Por la casa
se mueve
feliz y cálido
el duende.
Cuida, y calla.

And then there was silence (part I)

Year in, year out, it goes – by land and sea –
without a booking, ticket, or a pass.
It needs no word or weapon to persuade,
and doesn't ever have to stop, and ask.
Not only does it travel far, but fast.

It has its subjects' interests at heart
and, at no charge, describes them everywhere.
It represents them all, impartially –
 the drip-drip of taps,
 hum of the carnival,
 bells which chime, or toll for mass,
 football fans in exaltation,
 booming oceans breaking on the sand,

the quiet of lightning, before the thunder.

And then there was silence (part II)

More disciplined than smell, or shadow,
sound follows – and never runs in front.
You can count on sound, even if there's
deus ex machina in the air,
when its lord and master proves the rule
and sends it on to warn – with silence –
of his lightning bolt to come. Free of
constraints, the fastest sound is ...silence.

Approaches

Man-made, level, straight, and decorated
with catseyes, guide lines, and boundary markers –
is this the road to follow to the sea?
Full of holes and humps, sharp stones and gravel,
sometimes deep in dust, and sometimes water –
is this the track to follow to the sea?
Past swamps where emus frolic, past paper-
barks and banksias, past flowering grasses –
is this the path to follow to the sea?

The first cuts corners, wasteful daydreams, time,
the second concentrates and tries the mind,
the third engages time, and mind, and eye.

I'll find the sea whichever route I take.
I'll find the sea whichever day I go.
The sea I find will never be the same.
The sea I find will never become known.

Apurados

Agotado, y con sed estaba
Lanzarote, y no se contaba
con los veintidós ni con su amante
para servir y acompañarle.

El Rey Artús pues, se ofreció
ponerle algo 'de lo mejó'.

– ¡Cómo, amigo, callas la sed?
Recuérdame ya de una vez.

– ¡Coño! ¿Qué se cree? le contesta,
una ginebra y una siesta!

– ¡Jo'er! le contesta Artús con saña,
la Ginebra está ya agotada!

Ashes *

Clenched clouds roll in a one sea's mass,
toss a rumbling course to less sinister lands.

Once, a gleaming tower spiralled
in ascending song,
through cruel-blue skies,
to a magnet sun.

The sun died, and night shrieked round
the sleeping tower,
cracked its brittle dream and crushed it.

Now, lifeless light envelopes the silent sands,
and the plain writhes, but cannot die.

Ausencias

Ausencia 1

– Ha sido burdel – me dicen, y contesto
– en su tiempo. – ¡Famosas hembras! – agregan;
– lo eran – digo – pues tuvieron su momento.

Y quitándome la razón, azotea
abajo nos llega, cálida y espesa,
la fragancia excitante que nos ofrece
tu muy poco discreta dama de noche.

Ausencias

Ausencia 2

Se echó de menos al bajar la temperatura,
y desde palacio se difundió de inmediato
la noticia de que se había dado a la fuga
una chispa locuaz de la fragua de Vulcano,
saltando de un golpe la franja entre dios y el hombre

hasta detenerse en tu mirada.



Por el pozo risueño de tus pupilas
de súbito se extiende una capa fina
de azabache reluciente, donde gira
y centellea esa chispa bailarina,
incandescente.

Y así mandas, desde el más allá,
una mirada interminable y benigna

rebosante de íntimas verdades.



Siendo dioses, no se afligieron nada al pensar
en esa pérdida y los vaivenes del azar.
Tranquilos, pues, juzgaron que 'ausente' no es 'perdido',
y que iban a aprovecharse de lo sucedido
al promover el futuro diálogo visual.
Con lo cual, bailando, dieron el luto al olvido.

Ausencias

Ausencia 3

Los Tres Pretendientes –

La Obsidiana, el Azabache y el Ébano:

Nosotros somos

el barro

barro negro del Mar Muerto,

la medianoche

noche sin luna,

un pozo de mina

insondable,

los negros más

negros de Nubia,

la tinta

tinta negra en papel blanco,

es lo que somos.

=====

La Obsidiana, el Azabache y el Ébano:

Pero ¡venga, vamos!

Basta ya de tanta propaganda

rimbombante

y altisonante.

Faltan detalles

más probables

para distinguir entre nosotros.

Nos toca ir al grano.

=====

La Obsidiana:

Soy del volcán
y soy de piedra,
puñal de altar
y de la guerra;

el Azabache:

Soy de carbón
de bajo tierra,
vuelto en alhajas
para ganar
un corazón;

el Ébano:

Soy de la selva
y de madera,
soy clarinete
que eleva el alma.

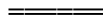
A mí se me ve vivo,
delicado,
bien pulido,
con aplomo;

el Azabache:

a mí resucitado,
reluciente,
resistente,
y ostentoso;

la Obsidiana:

y se ve a mí - presa,
la tez vítrea,
con caprichos
peligrosos.



La Obsidiana, el Azabache y el Ébano:

Nosotros somos
de pura sangre,
de sangre azul,
los tres iguales;

de otros entornos
con otros rasgos
y desiguales;

Así, pues, somos.



La Obsidiana, el Azabache y el Ébano:

Escoge, señorita de
la mirada inolvidable.
¡Que disfrutes! Y sentimos,
ya tener que despedirnos.

(¿Cuántas tendrán las pupilas
hechas tan a su medida!)

Autumn love *

A snake cloud snuffed the candle Moon,
and spider threads of autumn rain
danced down the dead-leaved streets.

In the shelter of the trees
I drank the dew that glistened on
the midnight panther of your hair.
Each time I saw your face, I smiled,
but let no storm tossed kiss disturb
the calm shores of your lips;
– only the raindrops' silent spray,
and the music of the wind.

Bag cat

Look! my cat likes
to hide in bags!
Capricious cloth ones, live,

which stretch, fall flat,
then rise and stand –
each fold with its surprise.

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.

Las Bellas por conocer

Conoceros es viajar
por el cielo y por el mar.
Sois el sol, y sois el nácar,
la mar de perlas, el cielo en flor.

Conoceros es viajar
por la tierra, y al azar.
Sois la rosa, y la meiga
tan caprichosa, en tierra ajena.

Conoceros es viajar
por el cielo y por el mar.
Sois valquiria, sois sirena,
la que fascina e impone la pena.

Conoceros es viajar
expuesto siempre al azar.

Blues

Dreams of a sloe-eyed Iberian land,
indigo birds on the glittering sand,
indigo mountains and skeleton trees,
star-bobbing sky in a warm-blooded breeze.

Bonito error

“¡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!”

Boom and bust

If all the world were bums,
and boobs, or
mud –

in no time flat I'd run
like hell from
that.

Bound and unbound

Bound for Cadiz in the heat of summer,
on briny decks, from the Antipodes:
once resplendent, serene and proud – they were
kings no longer, but brooded like birds trussed,
squashed, and fretting to stretch and spread their wings.

Few, if any, perished on the voyage.
All three thousand strutted their stuff once freed
chaotically, in packs and singly, drunk
throughout the house, smacking the walls and floors.

Foxed and dog-eared, sleeves stained and jackets torn,
in every size, colour and condition –
conjured memories of lost times and lands.
They jostled my mind, charged my attention:
incredible tales! inspired telling!
of orthodox and others – countless clans.
None missing? Dismissed! and I washed my hands.

Boy and silver smile

Beaten silver
twisted into
wicked crescent
of the Moon.

Quicksand scales
of massive pewter
sheath a deep-eyed
mountain lake.

To free the smile
engraved upon the water,
a boy – electric –
fishwise, pierced the pewter.

The smile grew longer.
The boy slept,
pinioned,
in the waves.

Castilla *

Polvorienta, polvorienta,
tus oteros, Castilla, son escamas estériles,
tu sangre, Castilla, un frenético vórtice
de arena voraz.

Te quiero, Castilla, tan aristocrática,
eres la sombra que siempre llamea,
enigmática sombra con llanto sedero
que macera los pechos de mi ilusión.

Sorbo tus ríos, con su agua dulce,
siento tus llanos y quiero tus gentes
que nacen, y sufren, y rezan, y mueren.

¡Castilla, Castilla, tan polvorienta,
centellas de ansia y astillas de sangre
cruzarán la mística cruz de tu muerte!

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribute 'A'

Attributes

of a puss arranged alphabetically,
but unavoidably
amplified by wide ranging references,
with apt omissions (well, I ask you!)
and some additions – or truths intuited,
announced by the cat and / or yours truly,
offered in deference to
her species.



Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'B'

Balanced be-

haviour? She can eat till her belly's round
and then fast; bawl for hours

and suddenly purr; bolt off through the house
and then curl up quite tight in a ball.

Well, she can balance excess, both 'good' and
'bad'... and can, of course, balance on a wall.

She never wears white, mind you,
purely black.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'C' (first)

'C's for Cat,
from the Atlantal isle of Cadiz,
coupled to the mainland
by a causeway. I'm a circus artist,
cool and cute, but the occasion for
cataclysmic catastrophies if cat-
apulted wrongly (hear me caterwaul!).
I'm a coastal cat – clearly
'C' worthy.

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'C' (second)

Closely clasped,
 each morning I cradle and caress her,
show calmly that I care,
 and tell her warmly that she's beautiful.
She reclines there confident, purrs cool
 answers, her supple form and fur a food
I crave. Uncalculating, give and take
 skips words and worlds, draws us more
 close than close.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution '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.

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'E' (first)

Energy?

I've got loads, enough to meet all my needs
forever. I just sit

quite still and engrossed or curl up and dream!

So that's it? No. It starts off the flow

in my own reverse system dynamo,
where enigmas and brainwaves discharge in
springs and spurts of bodily
energy.

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'E' (second)

"Exercise

me? his dark and lustrous, ebony girl?

how odd!" she mused, "but why?"

as he rang for help. "Father" he muttered,

"in an unlit corner there are lights

still and full as moons, now on now off, first

here then there, and glowing." "I see!" she hummed,

"black night and I are one! – plus

both my eyes."

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'F'

'Forgive'? me?

I favour that, though frustrated and 'just'
a cat. To a frown or
shout or smack, I ask "now what was that for?"

Unfed, unfondled, forlorn, forgot:

I wonder "am I here, or am I not?"
'Forgive and forget!' – I'll not 'forget'; but
'forgiveness'? now there's a cause
I'll give for.



Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'G'

Greetings may

be given in a whole gamut of ways.

Gyrating round legs is

a game. A gingerly nose rub is grades
more groovy and generates bonding.

Touching? – her run to the door and then gaze
as you manage the keys and the shopping.

Who would guess there's such give in
a greeting?

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'H'

Hunter, she

hugs the ground, trickles forward, round eyed, ears
pricked. Hush! Then, still more slow

hesitates, hallucinates a gourmet
jungle haul – feathers, fur, beast or bird?

Hurries then, hides in the bric-a-brac woods, slides
past the carpeted hills, and hindquarters

rippling, pounces on her prey –
one big toe.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribute 'I'

'I' to eye:

such fine harmony when your eyes project
the 'I' that dwells inside!

But the outside world, moved by other 'I's
turns your simple eyes to mirrors, where
it reads pride and fear, tearfulness and smiles.
I myself see curiosity and airs,
the urge to rule ... But there! I'm
hypnotised.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'J'

Joker? judge?

or jaguar? She's every one of these.

She can stalk and jump, then move

faster than eye focus, and ... disappear;

or fearing no rejoinder, pass un-

jaundiced judgement on Darwin, jibes and Jews;

or just play peek-a-boo with me or you,

unpredictable, in and

out of packs

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'K'

Kittens know.

Who needs school, Torah, Bible or Koran?

Is their secret – karma,

earned long ago, perhaps in Katmandu?

Or is their secret source in tuition,

from when they snuggled down and suckled with
their kin? They master knocks and nudges, kicks

and clouts to graduate as cats,

with kudos.

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'L'

“Language’? ‘Words’?

A load of codswallop!” she thinks, grooming
herself nonchalantly.

“I can screech and yowl, hiss or purr ... and miaow!
And I talk with my tail, eyes and ears,
my arched back, my claws, my teeth ... and my lick!
And as for what matters – Elsewhere and Now
and Why – there’s a lack of ‘words’
fit for these.”

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'M'

'Mouse' no more!

I've roughed it up and chewed it to the core.

It may have been a cork,

a bag, a piece of string: here in this house

I cast everything I see as mouse.

If king and queen or those in charge, who make
those round them jump and dance, could watch my play!

Now, just between us – guard your
fingers, thanks!



Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'N'

"Noche!" you
call now, and wish I'd answer to 'my' name!
I, Queen of Nubia, knew
you when, lexicographer magician,
you fled from Atlantis to my court.
As cat, there's much I need to negotiate
but in return, Sir ... since you love me still,
I'll let you stroke me day or
night, at will.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'O'

Orifice

hours always offer occasions galore
to locate and to lick
odds and ends into shape, and they call for
olympic adroitness to perform
outside-in, downside-up, acrobatics.
Such a sound ecological practice:
original self-serviced
openings!

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'P'

Purrs persuade,

purrs reward, please the heart and open doors.

Opportunists? ... or pure?

What price the spell they purposefully produce?

Are pulse and pitch premeditated

to punctuate the peace, and mesmerise?

All plots or ploys? – no, innocent pursuits:

purrs are prayers from paradise,

quite perfect.

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'Q'

Quiescent –

in quantity slight but quality high,
she's in no quandary
now as to whether and what to request,
nor quirky now her desires are quelled,
nor querulous in the least little bit.
With quasi-quenched quaintly quizzical eyes,
she's the very quintessence
of quiet.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribute 'R'

Racing, nose

stretched out ahead, her tail streaming behind,
she's a riot of legs

as she gallops with a whoosh up the near
vertical stairs to the roof garden.

I'm almost tripped, I'm left in the rear, yet
it's me who'll open the door! Why the speed?

– she's a child, quite black and wild,
on her toes.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'S'

“Sex? what’s that?”

she called, stretched on her side across the floor.

“It’s what you’re searching for”

I thought, staring as she rolled and wriggled
with no sense of shame, hindquarters raised.

“Help me!” she wailed. “Now please!” I said, “some self-
control! And when you go out, see you take
precautions!” Though for a twelve
week old cat ...?

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'T'

Tail up, or
down, or flowing, or curled about her paws,
it talks treats, nonchalance,
travels, truce: a signpost (minus details!).
No hint of the girl turned prankster, truant,
stunt artist, acrobat, all tooth and claw
tearaway, a black cavorting demon
at falling night. But that's an-
other tale.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribute 'U'

Upwards she
reaches, straightens easy and elegant
and absolutely black,
to brace herself there against the window
and stare at life in the street below.
Ballerina and child – curiosity
and poise, innocence and grace, with the jut
of her tail just hinting at
sexual urge.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'V'

Victory!

Master didn't shut study or drawing
room when he conducted

the viewing! but I let off the crystal,
fabrics and vellum with a warning.

Did he intend to leave the rooms open,
and why did he say "fittings included"?

(... is what I've had, a 'pyrrhic'
victory?)

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribution 'W'

Double 'u' ... ?

What a worry! Why! I've wrung a whole three
words under double 'u'

from my master's weighty *Oxford* and these
are a write-off. I feel quite muddled.

Is *Oxford* wrong? Whether that's wishful me
or not, such fair-weather friends spell trouble.

... Or is 'u' a letter you
don't double ...?

Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'X'

Xigent

xorcist of xpired foods, she xudes
xentric xtasy

as she xamines them for xellence,
before xpressing her succinct views.

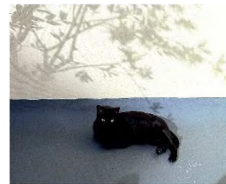
Xercising her xtrasensory
perception, she xults in xposing
(rarely xonerating)
the *ex*-perts.

Cattributes A-Z

Cattribute 'Y'

Yesterday

might be today if you and I decide
to play. But though I'm Yang
I'm human now, and you're a cat, my Yin,
today. What has ended can't begin,
so wave goodbye to what you can't bring back
and prize your black fur coat and full moon eyes,
rare items in tomorrow's
yesterday.



Cattributes A-Z

Contribute 'Z'

'Zylandias

O King of Kings, watch me pace or stand dead
silent gazing out at

space. From Zanzibar to antipodean
Zealand and from Pole to Pole I'm Queen

by night, and though we may seem different, we
meet each day unknowing and share one fate.

So join me as I sleep, and
dream of Z.

Choice of stroke

“Keeping abreast of the news?”
she murmured, bending over
as I thumbed through my paper.

Checking stocks, I stared, then said:
“I’ve butterflies! to keep a-
breast, I’ll have to switch to yours”.

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?

Compensating

Don't be bamboozled
by faces plain
and floppy,
sometimes their owners
boast bums well slung
and lively.

Don't be bamboozled
by bums well slung
and lively,
sometimes their owners
bear faces plain
and floppy.

Contigo

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.

Contrary cat

Why *won't* this cat
sit on the mat
I've gone and bought for her?

Why *will* she lie,
paws folded, on
the shopping bag nearby?

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.*”

Cosquillas

Cosquilla 1

En alta mar, Ulises mandó ser atado
para no ser seducido ni destrozado.
¡Pues vaya pena,
– en *Quilla* estoy, en la mismísima Caleta,
y con ganas de conocer a estas sirenas,
y no las hallo!



Cosquillas

Cosquilla 2

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.

Cosquillas

Cosquilla 3

Innumerables son las quillas que surcan el mar
buscando qué comer
hasta acabar en la playa abandonadas y mal,
mientras que una hace alarde de su perfil de mujer
y se deja querer
¡la muy desenvuelta! en la proa de su náutico bar.

Crescendo

Spinnaker –
your whiteness brilliant
against

the still and
silent blackness of
the night –

you speed her (in-
visible)
through seas of sky till
she can do
her full moon piece.

Cumplir

Por el casco antiguo circulaban
en sus motos
chicas con el pelo que ondulaba
desenfadado y suelto al azar,
y hombres con el cabello alisado,
erizado, o a la moda, calvo.
Corriendo, de prisa todos.

Mientras que iban los demás
a pie, despacio; unos pensaban
en sus compras y recados, otros
en sus faenas, otros en dar
una vuelta, despreocupados.
Caminando,
por el casco antiguo circulaban.

¡Vaya! ¡Qué ejemplar afán de todos
– de motociclistas y peatones –
de cumplir bien con los requisitos
de la señal ¡*Utilice el casco!*

Curtains

As the wind blows,
the curtains dance –
two muslin girls
all legs and arms.
They dance to the tune
of the wind that blows.

As the wind blows,
the pace advances
from waltz to tango
to Charleston and
jig – from staid, to
gay, to magic.

As the wind blows
and dresses chance
to flow or cling,
they dare the sun
shine through the fabric
showing everything.

As the wind blows,
their movements entrance:
dresses balloon, rise
and fall, billow
again, and swirl
and sink, pell-mell.

As the wind blows,
the dresses glance
sideways, reveal-
ing all! (reveal-

ing domes arched against
the wall of the sky.)

As the wind blows
more calmly, they sit
on the sill, suggest-
ing two bottoms
voluptuously
shaping the folds.

As the wind blows
the curtains dance –
sensuous, full,
athletic, trim,
boisterous, merry,
or lazy and still.

I, didn't dance –
 I could have touched,
 I might have clasped,
 I would have kissed,
 I should have loved –
I would have lost
my footing on
the window-sill.
I'm too old now
to need such things,
but not ready,
yet, for 'curtains'.

Cycles of love

Sun! Spring
of surprise,
new leaves are words of welcome
from the trees.

Sun!
Summersaults of leaves
in orgasm
form arabesques.

Sun! Autumn.
Shadows shape graves longer than hope;
leaves decay, disengage
and drop.

Winter.
Branches, bared, are withered tongues of trees:
trees powerless to follow
a fallen sun.



¿De sastres?

Talones tengo, claro,
y aquí traigo pan:
¡Esto es saber vestirse!

... ¿En cueros, yo?
... ¿No véis,
son los pantalones a
la moda de mañana?

(Los pienso patentar.)

Dental divulgence (part I)

Facing, coiled tight like snakes, sleek sets of
cable tipped with steel, and menacing.
Ore to be gouged from a rock-face, shakes
less than teeth to be drawn from a jaw.
The drill bites screeching into the teeth
then gags the tongue with rubble and grit.
(More controlled – no eyes, no hands – than hers
as she drills, and fills, and polishes.)
Old fears come first; the anaesthetic's
next; real pain? for hours, or days, comes last.

Dental divulgence (part II)

Isabel, the dentist,
I named 'Dolores';
but later, confident,
called her 'Remedios';
then, finally, impressed –
made her 'Milagros'.
(At some stage I could have
mentioned her perfect
Andalusian
features: petite, black hair,
pupils deep as the sky, and still.)
María José, her aide,
I named 'Amparo',
and kissed her on the cheeks
on her last day there.

¡Denuncia!

'Oh look!'
thought Lourdes, and yelled
ambiguously cool:
"¡Bruno
me está tocando el
culo!"

(en su inauguración de 'Al Solazo',
plaza del Mentidero)

Desde el Puente Romano

Manadas delirantes de espectros efimeros
valsando van
con la silueta
de la Catedral.
Y sus capas de seda besan las cañas,
y al cielo sube un suave susurrar.

El estático brujo del río Tormes
abraza las piedras del Puente Romano;
y el murmullo de los besos por el aire tibio
es el lírico canto de un día que muere.

Tras flamígeras torres agoniza el sol,
y en la sima de su ansia caen gotas de sangre,
oscuras,
volcánicas.

¿Por qué me asfixiáis, duendes fugaces
de las entreluces?
¿Por qué me claváis con carámbanos incitantes
de esperanza funesta?
Es la hora de la madre
que espera al hijo
que ya está muerto.
Es la noche satánica
cuando llama tres veces la aldaba de bronce
sobre la puerta dormida.

El eco lejano de legiones errantes
atormenta el sueño del Puente Romano.
Susurra el crujir de miles de cuerpos,
resuenan pies, cascos, garras.

Se aproxima el estruendo de cincuenta mil buitres
del cruel infierno.
Sigue acercándose, me hipnotiza,
se abalanza hacia mí, brincando, chillando,
siempre, siempre

Y ha pasado. Ya se ha ido. Entre las tinieblas se esfuma,
huye, calla, desaparece.
Y ahora, nada: sólo silencio.

Me acaricia el pecho un ardor muy grato:
está pensando en un sinnúmero de cuernos de cabra
que le hubieran traspasado de lado a lado
si no existiera el cabrero
que ahora, solitario, pasa:
dueño aburrido de unos mil demonios.

Desengaño, esperanza y muerte *

Espuelas de odio me herían el ánimo,
hojas toledanas me rasgaban la vista,
cartuchos de sangre me aniquilaban.

Pétalos crespos de luz latiendo
se derriten en nimbos
que besan los labios
de mi ser fugitivo.
¿Me diste tú, Plaza, la bienvenida?
¿Eras tú, Madre, que me concebiste
desde el humo
y desde las llamas
que me asfixiaban
en la estaca
del brutal desengaño?

Pasean Dominicos, blanquinegros,
ondeando sus mantos medievales,
y llevan prendidos en cintas barrocas
democráticos sueños de amor y de paz.

Remaches de sol salpican los ojos
de las escopetas
de la ley
que vigila.

Dan las doce de la mañana,
y rezongan campanas
que siempre sueñan
en cuántos cayeron para salvarse.

Huyen las sombras clausuras,

descansan los dardos de la disciplina:
chillidos metálicos
de satánicos coches
me machacan la vida,
me traspasan el alma y me sepultan.

Y en los oídos del cadáver
vibrarán los ecos que nunca duermen
de los cien mil ciegos y las gitanillas.

Diuretic

My ankles, oedematous, repel
in their spongy, sluggish, swollen state –
when this man comes up, cradling a tray.
“Die, you heretic!” he seems to say.
I freeze. There’s a clink, he bends, and then ...
offers me a coffee. “That should help!”

Doctor Foster: last known whereabouts

As Doctor Foster went to Gloucester
he heard his mobile ring.
(But was the call for him
at all? or was he an imposter?)

It came from a plain in far away
Spain, from a firm renowned
for converting the ground
from a desert to marsh: in a day.

“‘Turf!’ – your name out in audiofile space –
got us smartly to think
of peat moors and their link
with rain. We’ve a suggestion that’s ace!”

“‘Doc’, and ‘oster’ with an ‘F’, is how
I should be filed” he spat,
“and Peter Moore, who’s that?
and a shower for Othello! now?”

They never managed to right his name
and found the Moor too much,
while he found it a touch
strange that people should ring him from Spain.

These brains from the plain who master the
rain, decided to fly
him a sample of sky
regardless; he’d be flabbergasted!

But an atmospheric pressure change
downloaded a blunder

of discharge and thunder
on Foster, just out of mobile range

of a local emergency post.
He was swept down a drain
first past Gloucester, then Spain,
till disgorged in the Nile near the coast.

“Gloucester?” he asked the wrong crocodile
who’d failed English but heard
him, and guessed that the word
stood for lunch. But the Doctor used guile
and pretended to dial
for first aid – at which the
crocodile swam out of the picture.

Foster survived and set up a store
and chose to stay there, not
Redmarley D’Abitot
where he’d practiced his medicine before.

Now ‘Crocodile Catch!’ in his window
means a number of deals
in no-fuss burger meals
with the following stealing the show:
‘Dial-a-burger! we home deliver!’
‘Get mobilised! crocoburger rolls!’
‘Crocoburgers! savour the flavour!’
‘Crocoburgers – clinical controls!’
‘Fosterburgers – predigested!’, plus
‘Buy a burger! the Foster’s on us!’

Elegir su elíxir (parte 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 (parte 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.

Emergency cat

My cat's so neat,
she runs her tray
so everything's in place.

Except, it's true,
when she's on heat
and anywhere will do.

Encuentro esdrújulo

Aguanto, platónico,
de la muy carismática
con aspecto bético,
palabras enigmáticas:
¡placer paradójico!

Nada de frígida –
puede que mística.

¿En total? nítida-
mente una mítica.

The Face she wears

Every year
spring smiles, summer laughs,
autumn

sighs for a
touch of winter, masked
in tears.

She's all seasons,
at random,
daily. "Surprise!" she
claims, "that's fun!"
(Within reason ...)

El Faro

Me llamo 'Nada'.
Soy un carámbano tímido
que, abandonado, se derrite
entre ácidas olas
de desesperación.

María Dolores,
con sonrisa sirena
y ojos ruiseñores,
eres la llama
que para siempre disipa
las calamares olas
que me seducían.

Flotsam, jetsam ... *memorabilia*

These books, like bottles coughed up by the waves,
hold papers from lands and times far away.

Photos of ... a baby (who?),
... and, why! (what's its name?) ... a dog!
... student groups (smiles anodyne),
and Madame Blavatsky (gosh!).
Most photos faded, lives and moments gone.

Bottles brought by the waves, with a message inside.

Names handwritten, names in print
complete with degrees (abridged);
old colleagues, Jones or Taylor,
poets, Tambimuttu, Lex,
or close, Agnès and Juliette (circumspect).

Shake the bottles, shake the books, take the papers out.

A bill for fixing a fuse
or the tiles, clearing a pipe;
for shirts, or a pair of shoes,
or pastel coloured bow-ties;
book bills galore – Auden, Baudelaire, Yates ...

Unstopper the bottles, look through the books and gather the loot.

Address of choice publishers,
Outposts through to Fortune Press;
artists, writers, pubs and banks,
the Bibliothèque Nationale;
addresses in England, Scotland and France.

Bottles brought by the waves, with a message inside.

Invitations to weddings,
to engagements and mourning;
launchings at Blackwell's, Parker's,
or John's, and dinner in Hall;
events, in hindsight, inconsequential.

Bottles brought by the waves, with a message inside.

Phone numbers ... (but whose were they?)
scribbled quickly, in good faith
on bills, menus, serviettes, scripts
– ticked, queried, judged unworthy.
All yesterday's numbers, nameless! (but saved).

Unstopper the bottles, look through the books and gather the loot.

Recital dates, book reviews,
the latest programmes to air;
death notices on schedule,
and dis-appointment to spare;
frail paper trails ... destination unknown.

Shake the bottles, shake the books, take the papers out.

Part of a poem in pencil,
or a verse, complete, in ink;
notes, postcards, and dead letters –
annotations done in red.
Odd fingerprints and footsteps of a mind.

Bottles brought by the waves, with a message inside.

Doing time – waiting to be rescued – hope against hope,
they've slept, bottled up between the pages of a book.

Wake up! you too can be catalogued ... for your voyage is done.

The Flowering roof 1

Best friends

Jostling, they slip and sway,
bob and bounce, tremble, shake:
all a-flutter, they seem
of a mind to curtsy!
Fresh-faced, innocent and
smiling, in groups and crowds.

They dance in silence, sing
in time to some hyper-
tune (near), gone long ago.
They whisper, their shapely
trumpets mute. Scents, waiting,
lie funneled well inside.

The face they wear – pale blue,
a careful blush of pink –
includes some semitones
of hue, cream and purple,
in profusion; lip-shaped
borders grace the outlines.

Demure, unassuming,
unpretentious, rustic –
they seem the essence of
politeness, patience, trust:
vulnerable as such ...
and of no consequence.

How could gentle beings
like these, survive? No, not

survive ... but prosper! with
no apparent effort.
(They stand there tall, their legs
green pennants in the breeze.)

Well, they persevere, they're
positive, show purpose;
a hint of people who,
if pushed, just might insist,
play urgent, be stubborn,
end up most obdurate.

They raise their offspring through
the seasons, everywhere:
among geraniums, herbs
and succulents, below
the spreading cumquat bush,
the wisteria and rose ...

Quiet (and pretty!), gentle,
certain, busy: they run
their lives decorously.

– "Oh yes? but petunias
are promiscuous, aren't they?"

Say 'generous', instead!

The Flowering roof 2

Botanical

'Bottlebrush',
'callistemon' ...
... which name's right
and which name's wrong?

Bottlebrushes ...
designed to prod
down clotted necks,
flush shoulders, shift
sedimented
bottoms: they're propped
in grotty sinks
and horrid troughs.

Callistemons ...
designed to hold
the running eye:
red filaments
painstakingly
displayed, each thread
of fire tipped with
a touch of gold.

'Bottlebrush',
'callistemon' ...
... which name's right,
and which name's wrong?

The Flowering roof 3

Call of the sun

When we were young and reckless
(so cock-a-hoop and hopeful),
when we were young and reckless –
"Shall we dance?" asked Lorenzo,
"shall we dance?" Lorenzo asked,
and did we dance!

Though mother tried to warn us
("Oh darlings, you'll be sorry!"),
though mother tried to warn us –
"We must dance now, we must dance!
don't bother us!" we said, and
"please don't worry!"

She'd just made us skirts
full and voluptuous,
richly woven and red:
Yes, what a daring
and what a deep red!
The skirts she'd made were
voluptuous and full,
richly woven and red:
Yes, such a daring
and such a deep red!

"Oh my gosh !" said Lorenzo
(in an aside that we heard),
"Oh my gosh!" Lorenzo said
as we raised them and opened
them and then spread them out wide:
quite unafraid.

It was the dance of a day
(playing with – praying for? – fire),
one only day for a chance
of a kiss from Lorenzo.

And that's why hibiscus blooms
shrivel and fade.

The Flowering roof 4

Chives (part I)

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 Flowering roof 4

Chives (part II)

Hold-up in a kitchen garden

"Your chife or your life!"

the parsimonious gourmet thief called out.

"My chife? – what ever do you mean by chife?"

I spluttered, surly.

"Never you mind"

he said,

"I want it now!"

he muttered curtly,

"and I'm not mean! so please mind

your words thanks, and watch your talk now!"

"I don't understand! but maybe my wife can help ..."

I blurted -

at which he faced me with a knife

and said (in thoughtful earnest):

*"Why do people want to sell their lives so dearly? Why a price
as high as that for just a single one of your many chives?"*

=====

(Inspired by a Scots recipe requiring just one chive ...)

The Flowering roof 5

Crassula ovata

Its structure suggests a time at least one hundred million years ago, outlines the moving vision of a draughtsman, architect and abstract poet.

A stem? it doesn't have a stem; it has a trunk compact, solid, thick, and – more than burly – massive, from which further trunks emerge, each more trunk than branch. Its leaves? they're discs, objects round to oblong which stand out fair and square; they're cool-feeling, plump and fleshy, smooth and shiny; they're grey-green – that's when they're not red. Curious creatures! they choose to bloom in the short-day months, making a haze of flowers, faintly scented, pink and white, star-shaped, set in clusters small and dense.

And yet ... its lateral trunks (branches if you must) come away almost at a touch, as do the discs (leaves if you like); it's delicate, and far from tough. But then ... these broken limbs and their dependent bits (such woeful wreckage!) having disengaged and dropped, send out new roots and grow again; resourceful, what.

Called the 'Chinese rubber plant', 'Cauliflower ears', the 'Lucky plant', 'Dollar plant' and the 'Money tree', these common names – profane, clichéd, crude – are wanting.

The Jade, an ornamental up to six foot high, will grow to fifteen feet or more when in the wild, and outlive most of us, living to a hundred. Its importance, though, lies elsewhere: it's the blueprint of a tree (extinct, or which never came to be), huge as the Boab, grander than the Dragon Tree.

The Flowering roof 6

A Fresh reflection

Narcissus
papyraceus peers
from white

small-petalled
sprays, past straps of leaves,
and smiles:

"Such a height, this
stem! and what
a scent! ... so much black
seed! I'm free ...
to spread and thrive."



The Flowering roof 7

The Full rose

Edith Piaf's

*"Je ne regrette
rien"*

seems a bluff, as
petals fall, and turn
to dust.

Remember, though
– before all else –
the crimson rose, its
haunting scent!
(... and thorns, below.)

The Flowering roof 8

Love in a mist – *Nigella damascena*

Green lacework,
a fine filigree
of leaves;

Blue ballet
girls, rings of petalled
flowers;

Gold, the gourds of
heads to crown
the stalks (the flowers
dead), holding
court all winter.



The Flowering roof 9

Olor que aflora

Es planta
esquelética y
cíngara

con pétalos
monótonos y
frescos

y hojas chicas.
Mas, puede
contrarrestarlo
bien ... pues que
es jazmín.

The Flowering roof 10

Sansevieria trifasciata

(Dad's 'sometime' army)

A properly constituted army
once – smartly rigged in light and dark green stripes
with just a little marbling here and there
(an older type of 'khaki') – its soldiers
were lean and upright men with hostile traits
and leathered skin, each holding high a sharp-
tipped spear which promised to deliver pain.

But, later, they'd been billeted in huts
that leaked, forced to bivouack on windswept heights
and march exposed to hateful cold and sun.
You'd think they'd trudged through snake-infested swamps,
they'd tramped through sand, they'd plodded through thick mud!
"Enough!" they moaned, "the elements have won!"
At which ... the enemy they'd lost, appeared.

"Saint George for merry England!" cried Sir Giles
(praying) ... but silence reigned. Charge? ... there was none.
Movement? ... not one sword drawn. The army, glum,
stopped in its tracks and pondered (a smiling
bed? fresh victuals? safety?). "Back to barracks!
We'll fight tomorrow ... right?" (rumour has it
the sullen soldiers said), "if fight we must!"

As it happens, on hearing George's name
the foe were seized with fear, and fled. Our men,
who could have heard them claim "St. George's here!"
were much relieved the day had ended as

it had (days always do), and filled with wish-ful thoughts, heard just "St. George for beer!", and drank. (Some couldn't swim, so some among them sank.)

Not exactly 'sank', but grew discoloured at the neck; grey, brown then black – they buckled, crumbled, rotted, fell; a mortifying way to go, depart, pass away (or 'die?'). Consternation gripped the ranks as sighs, then groans, then sobs, then tears made mourning headlines. In due course they knew: something had happened!

Blame those elements! and blame thinking thoughts (as people do) of leave accrued and not allowed, promotion yet again postponed, their better half in limbo (up to what?). They'd chosen the soft option: they'd chosen to withdraw (retreat? ... mutiny!) and hide. They took to drink - drink took them for a ride.

But wives and partners rallied round and cheered survivors, while mothers-in-law with half an eye on their tongue managed to ration reproaches. The time it cost, and the fuss! Damage limitation took ... months and months. Court-martials were waived and changes discussed, drink cut (all agreed) ... to one hour a week.

Sentries now, these calm and much respected men – who'd seemed so fierce – watch, intent, ears peeled, all geared to sound the urgent call to arms. Their ceremonial banner bears a snake-plant whose tall stiff leaves shield a stalk (discreet) of dainty, sophisticated cream-green flowers – heralding small orange berries, quaint but smart.

The Flowering roof 11

Spider, or Purple Queen
– *Tradescantia pallida*

Imperial
purple, leaves sheathed and
pointed;

succulent
hopefuls, stems zigzag,
hurried;

Schlub! 'Wandering
Jew'? ... a mess!
'*Amor de hombre*'
(restless) plus
pink buds! (ablush).

The Flowering roof 12

Votive offering – a sprig of parsley

Our parsley in Cadiz – though sparse – survives enough
to make its usual fancy fretwork canopies.

Far-sighted, I ask Saint Pancras (his statue's close):

"Please intercede, and have this parsley thrive ... for us".

#####

Though different, the Isla Perejil or 'Parsley
Island' (Alboran Sea) and Saint Pancras Station
(London) are closely bound by three expectations:
a saint, your votive offerings, and some parsley.

I don't think now there's parsley on 'Parsley Island'
(Perejil) could be a slight misnomer, mind you,
and not refer to 'parsley', but to 'Pero Gil'),
nor a likeness of Saint Pancras at his station.
Heavens! no saint on display? did Betjeman forget
– eight hundred million pounds later, crusade fulfilled –
that the station still owes its saint some sort of debt?

Focus of attraction

In this river, fishes groped an isolated life,
each one alone,
deep down in densely waving weeds –
so green and gloomy,
and under stones, and in the cold clay banks.

Each one alone.

And see them now! They've sprung to life,
streak up and down,
score the surface,
leap from wave to wave –
gold and silver gleaming in the sun.

Hear them laugh, and sing!

Though the weight of water flows on as before,
new life inside will make it change its course.

Followers all

“I want some words”
Idea announced,
“for what I have in mind.”

And in they bounced,
each followed by
.... ideas! all out of turn.

Fragments

Fragment 1

Scallywags,
hobgoblins,
tramps:

a troop of monkeys
 cooking up a lark;
they'll put your living
 daylights in a funk;
fumes and flies, ooze and
 squelch, and pools of dust –

scallywags,
hobgoblins,
tramps.

Fragments

Fragment 2

Now to win or lose

a toss, a tussle,
a draw, a raffle,
a bet, a million –

is to lose or win
a trifle.

Love? a heart? a hand?
.... stand apart, above:
the only ones alive
long wonderful, once won.

Fragments

Fragment 3

Saffron (from the
stigma of the crocus) they claim
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.

Fragments

Fragment 4

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.

Fragments

Fragment 5

I love to see

(in disbelief) how plovers hover
over the open fields,

sparrows land in a sea of pigeons,
sneak 'their' bread and scatter,

ants ease some clumsy bundle past rocks
and leaves that block their track,

swallows squeal, climb in zigzags, glide in
games of lead and follow.

While up on high

clouds career, pause for breath, and dawdle,
riffraff, have-beens, bounders.

Free, to choose

Sparrows chat, listen, hop and swoop,
a lizard hugs the sun clad wall
and crickets sing maracas notes;
ants shift a crumb across a stone,
a frog lost in the cellar, bawls
and flies drift, stilly, round a room.

Creatures, some large, some small: and though
they all have needs, and wants (a role),
– we were told a long time ago
they lack free will, and lack a soul.

So many ways to live a life,
so many lives with little say!
We, choose the way we live our lives,
we, choose the way ... we end our days.

Frustra impeditur

Though clocks, which give the time, expect to die,
we, who spend it, will argue it's not time.



'Gay' re-cast

Bandaged again,
Gay groaned in pain –
“Why did I sing and dance?”

“You're not to blame”
the nurse explained,
“for having been re-cast”.

Giftshop blues

I've seen Byzantium
on show,
 (Aren't the shadows long
 today?)
lapis-lázuli
and gold
 (Run, my love, it's turn-
 ing cold!)
and magnificent
their shape!
 (Winter's come to seize
 his throne)
Massively, each ear-
ring hangs
 (imperturbable
 and bold.)
while chants and incense
 rise.

Glorious, glorious ...

Glorious 1

Such fun!

Such glorious, glorious, glorious
fun!

In black or white, grey,
terracotta,
blue,
subtle as syrup
or clinging as glue,

you'll yield
to the feel
and message of ...
mud!

Glorious, glorious ...

Glorious 2

Banks of mud
the river wide,

banks of mud
beside the sea,

banks of mud
by moonlight and by day:

silently and still,
they eye us,
tempt us to step closer
and ... succumb.

Glorious, glorious ...

Glorious 3

A mud pack here,
a mud pack there,
a mud pack
warm or cool:

they make you all
recoil
in disbelief!

How could such gooey
muck
be something that nice people can
enjoy?

Glorious, glorious ...

Glorious 4

He sought her out for sixty years,
he sought her out by night and day,
he sought her out
abroad.

She hugged him close,
she played around,
she teased him,
stroked him,
freed him
from his thoughts.

Glorious, glorious ...

Glorious 5

Is it 'Tarzan'?
is it 'Jane'?
or a dull
'thing' without a name?

It's '*el barro*', male
in Spain,
female '*la boue*'
in France:

two views,
and neuter for
the 'prudent' English –
mud.

Glorious, glorious ...

Glorious 6

There was a boy,
and he was five,
and mud
got in his boots.

Did his mother let fly,
all hands and tongue!

But the treatment
backfired –
a flame was kindled
and the damage done.

Glorious, glorious ...

Glorious 7

A foot wrong in the swamp,
and he had mud
to his thighs.

'Shall I wallow?' he smiled
... but a hunter appeared then ...
waving a gun

(symbol of
proper
establishment fun).

Glorious, glorious ...

Glorious 8 – *Glorieuse*

Je pense à toi,
couverte de boue,
complice du soir,
témoin des goûters
défendus.

Je m'approche,
je m'enfonce
et tu m'embrasses
sur les endroits
où l'on ne s'attend
pas.

Gobbledygook

I rave of frogs,
of sassy turkeys,
ibis.

I rave of beds,
do rave of jibes
on boring claws
up root or log;
my awe apart,
my ire low,
I rave of far ago.

spruik jargon,
spruik tasty verbiage,
gobble.

'By Gobbledygook'
(Is my tag so dim?
or classy?)

Gobbledygook

b o r i n g ■ c l a w s
■ f a r ■ o ■ l o w ■ p
f ■ v e r b i a g e ■ r
r ■ e ■ ■ b ■ s ■ ■ ■ u
o r ■ i ■ l ■ s ■ g ■ i
g o b b l e d y g o o k
s o ■ i ■ d o ■ ■ b ■ ■
■ t a s t y ■ j i b e s
I ■ p ■ a g o ■ ■ l ■ a
■ j a r g o n ■ b e d s
u ■ r ■ ■ o ■ b ■ ■ i s
p ■ t u r k e y s ■ m y

Goodbye to dust

An age has passed, year on year,
since last I wrote a word that flowed
so fiercely and so fast
from a mind where dismal dust had laid its load.

Where dust –

had choked the vital tunnel
through which once poured
warm winds of fun and laughter,

dried the dancing stream of riotous passion
and desire,

quite crushed a living body
with its blood of youth,
of adventure, and delight.

Need I say more? That dust is gone.
With you the tunnel sprang open with a roar.
Now streams flow fast, and swell to raging rivers.
A body, crushed, now glows with new-found fire,
and new life is born.

Guillotine *

The sun's shafts pitted
the rusting path,
and flaked leaves – shaking,
tilted, tripped and fell;
the Persian gold
swam heavy on the ground.

From other trees slipped
leaves of a vanished –
still present – time;
curling, dry green
at their lispig edge,
they floated on gravel

like pond leaves
in the lost heat
of the lost summer.

The steel wind
had guillotined
the trees;
curled copper hair,
smile-eyes,
snatched me
from the rasping razor's edge.

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!”

The Hungry hours, and after

Compelled
to hold the pressure of his love
to kisses,
her lips have filled and swollen.
Blood pulses through their flesh
with a rhythm
sympathetic
to the throbbing of his thighs.
A subtle parting of her lips
displays a smile
fixed
in a strange suspense of wax and fire.
As he closes on the incandescent light
she stamps him
with her seal, offering a foretaste
of tomorrow.

In a flat spin

One was a stage set,
orchestrated,
cool,
dressed fit to kill,
overwhelmingly
'class'.

The other was soul,
quite intimate,
warm,
its see-through disguise
widow's weeds,
'home'.

Inesperada

Por las nubes color de plomo
que me seguían,
asomó un sol de oro precioso:
¿de quién sería?

El Jinete de la Ginebra

Ebrio iba, cabalgando, y cabalgaba
por tierras que, ondulando, ondulaban
y despertó; soñando pues, soñó que iba
escalando los montes de su querida.

The Juggler

This 'ceiling' sky
– close but distant
shifting surface
inscrutable –
tricks the searches
of instrument
and mind and eye.

To every side,
above, below
this 'ceiling' sky
– no wall or floor –
eternal space
a nothingness
an act of faith.

Picked out with stars,
pinpoints of fire
white hot yet cold
– at times inert
and painted holes,
at times all live
and sizzling sparks.

Lit endlessly
across and through
by furnaces
– spheres still and vast
which roar and dance
without a sound
or step or glance.

The Juggler smiled
who thoughtfully
decked out the sky
to fascinate
the thinking eye
with fiery balls
so synchronised.

Juxtapositions (watercolour)

In line across,
a golden battlemented wall.
In front – such utter anarchy –
the branches of
a flowering jacaranda tree.
A roadway heads
through the tunnel in the wall and
out beyond it.

Dominating all, a column
white-stone and, oh! so elegant
lifts the Queen of Heaven
to the sky.

Linda hechicera

Eres oro,
eres plata:
pan y vino,
¿todo? ¿nada?

Eres sólo
luz y sombra,
hado, hilo,
punto y coma.

Eres trébol,
as y suerte,
brindis, río,
cruz y puente.

Eres sol,
eres luna:
¿mi destino,
y fortuna?

Little catastrophe

For convenience,
when I left home
I made her safe
in the kitchen
seven week waif –
all alone.

When I returned,
guess what I found?
her water spilled,
food scattered round
the floor, now turned
convenience,

while in her sandpit,
x-spelled in catskrit,
a tincy wincy
sign of sh...

Lluvia en la noche

Está lloviendo,

lloviendo en las corazas de los techos,
en los ojos sin párpados de mi ánimo.

Es una lluvia guerrera

que rebota en las tortugas de los gujarros,
y penetra los pliegues minados de mi alma.

Es una lluvia

que pulsa los cristales con retintines acerados,
y con violencia eléctrica
martillea las fronteras explosivas de mi existencia.

Sollozan las doce

y serpientes de lluvia
con siseos ominosos
repiquetean el revoque tan frágil
de mis esperanzas.

Es una lluvia

que truena,
estalla,

y sus lágrimas son cuernos de toro
que me desentrañan,
que anulan mi amor
hacia cada mujer de este mundo.

Penetra la lluvia

la piedra picada de mi desengaño,
extiende sus tentáculos de hielo
para ahogarme.

Desengañado,
 en un país donde mujeres son mujeres
 y crueles,
bajo los arcos grises de una Plaza
 que sueña en el sol,
 en la alegría:

me lacera la lluvia,
 en mis ojos nada,
 en mi pelo,
 mi ser,
en mi corazón más muerto que un ataúd.

Loss of illusions

To grow old is to be freed,
to be freed after watching as their branches reached
inspired, for the sky.

See the smoke? ghostly in the twilight, climbing to the clouds.

To grow old is to be freed,
to be freed when you've learnt that they were damned to earn
derision and hatred.

Taste the smoke, gorge hunger on this hollow fruit of dreams.

To grow old is to be freed,
to be freed after the interminable pain
of pruning, uprooting, and setting them on fire.

Smell the smoke, anaesthetize despair, stifle hope.

To grow old is to be freed,
to be freed as they writhe in flames,
collapse to ash, dissolve to smoke

shapeless, silent, anonymous in the night.

Loud-mouthed Word

The Idea ran the interview
along very seductive lines:
it fooled the Word, which was after
a job, into speaking its mind.

Well! and did the Word blow its own
trumpet, and then rubbish its mates!

When the Idea said “Sorry!”, and
impetuously “‘Mate’, but you’re not on!
You talk too much, so you’re a risk”,

the Word replied “As for you, you’re
a jumped-up bastard *Idée fixe!*”

Love, so beautiful

Why, Phyllis, are you frightened?

Is our love –
 a growth of worms,
 a mutilated animal,
 or twisted,
 wicked
 child?

Is our love –
 the sort of thing
 for which you dig a hole?
 the sort of thing
 you secretively bury
 in an unmarked grave,
 at night?

A fire!
our love's a fire:
 a fire leaping in the sky
 with cleansing flames –
 with gorgeous white and yellow flames –
that burn all things
 into one.

Love, underground

All night long I lie there, half asleep,
and clasp her by her neck,
her arms, her legs,
by her buttocks and her breasts.

I fold her to the contours of my body
and hold her fast.

And all night long her body sleeps beside me,
her mind at peace a thousand miles away.

She cannot answer, cannot calm
the never ending preying of my hands.

She does not know I love you
in my sleep,
is unaware to what degree
in clasping her – I think I'm clasping you.

Un Lugar para armas tomar

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

María José of the Real Estate Agency

With shake and tap and
flickering jingle
of a tambourine,
click-click-crack of
castanets,
a high-pitching
piccolo,
soul of a flute –

that's my girl! bursting
into the quietness of the closing day.

Dust-devils spin
out of the Inland,
spray flashes, fizzes
flung from the breakers,
gusts of air bring
word of the East Wind,
sparks sizzle over
incandescent coals.

Into the quietness of the closing day
– that's my girl, bursting

with shake and tap and
flickering jingle
of a tambourine,
click-click-crack of
castanets,
a high-pitching
soul of a flute.

Marketing

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?”

Men on the Moon *

On summer nights

I often made deserted streets my home,
or wandered through grey rustling fields
avoiding life's unwelcome dreams.

A night owl's song was music in the darkness;
a lone dog's howl, a cat's surrealistic call –
struck echoes from the vaulted silence.

All alone, and no man near,
I shared my secrets with the Moon,
white faced, white eyed,
as she paused outside the concave walls of space,
and cast her virgin's smile upon the Earth.

When man has pierced the riddle of your breast
and you are dead,
I shall roam the night-drowned lanes alone,
relentlessly observed by unseen eyes,
a thousand soulless, scientific, minds.

Messages (oils on canvas)

From left to right, straddling the scene
the City's bastions
quarried from the sea,
great blocks of reef-stone
grey, and brown, and gold.
Unblinking, massive
they dare the English raze the town once more.
Impassively.

In front,
the tangled fretwork of a tree
describes a purple crescent on the sky –
the jacaranda, in its ecstasy,
alive.

Forwards
to an archway in the wall
through silent darkness
runs a road,
and rests again in sunlight just beyond.
It calls us on.

In the forefront on a base all chipped and worn,
with fragments still of coats of arms and scrolls –
a shaft of light
of stone and marble,
white,
a column – rises high and silhouettes
the Queen of Heaven on the sky.

Metric feats in S minor (part 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 (part II)

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

Metric feats in S minor (part 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

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!

Mind the monkey! 1

Flibbertigibbet,
all over the place!
fiddles and fidgets
and fumbles away.

Flibbertigibbet
loves Tittle-tattle:
she's won the Midget
Tongue Twister Hagggle.

Flibbertigibbet
chats with the riff-raff,
soaking up snippets
of colourful gaffes.

Flibbertigibbet
– oh dear, him again! –
he laughs, and pivots,
and leaps in the rain.

Flibbertigibbet's
poor head's in a daze.
It knows it lives a
life lacking an aim.

Flibbertigibbet
skips around blithely.
Nothing inhibits
his acting wildly.

Mind the monkey!

Mind the monkey! 2

Happy-go-lucky
with never a care,
hasn't a worry
he thinks he can spare.

Happy-go-lucky
takes things in his stride;
'unknowns'? they're funny,
if seen from inside.

Happy-go-lucky
just idles around;
he only hurries
when time has run out.

Happy-go-lucky
has no umbrella;
he finds life sunny
under the weather.

Happy-go-lucky
has a rule of thumb:
"take ideas, roughly,
with a pint of rum".

Happy-go-lucky
enjoys roundabouts;
"swings", he says glumly,
"aren't nearly as sound".

Mind the monkey!

Mind the monkey! 3

Hare-Brained, though hamstrung
and nettled, to boot,
brings home the bacon,
quite rashly, on foot.

Scatter-Brain ran a
ground, when he forgot
he'd swapped his cata-
maran for a lot.

Feather-Brain drains rye
crackers, scrubs the fridge
and dusts the plates, eyes
on her offal dish.

Hare-Brained says "because
they taught us spare time
doesn't count, we lost –
just, by a hair line".

Scatter-Brain says "no
bus sways if over
crowded – subways don't,
if clouded over".

Feather-Brain weathers
– what-d'you-call-it? – 'life',
a breeze, at leisure:
she's that way inclined.

Mind the monkey!

Mind the monkey! 4

Though Jack-in-the-box
has no brains at hand,
they'll do for the shock
he lands with a wham.

Jack-in-the box makes
quite a commotion;
you'll hear his knock shake
scales off the ocean.

Jack-in-the-box tricks
the adult and child.
His cap is off quick-
er than you can smile.

Though Jack-in-the-box
has little to say,
it's sound as a clock
with the time o'day.

Jack-in-the-box is
all noise and no thought,
his ideas popped in
a hole with no floor.

Though Jack-in-the-box
has no time for chat,
he'll deal you a stock
conundrum off pat.

Mind the monkey!

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!

Miniature

It rises
slowly, silent, from
its home

in the soil,
bares its shepherd's crook,
uncoils,

soars and searches
– great ship's prow –
past its own green seas.
It is ... now ...
a full fern frond.

The Moon: three images *

Night, a cave wall
curving wavewise
round the whirlpool
of the Earth.
In the shadows
of the cliff face
ring a siren's
moss-sad footfalls.

Night, a black gown
wrapped uneasy
round the dark dreams
of the Earth.
In the deep folds
of the mantle
gleams a brittle
silver brooch.

Night, a vulture
whirling closely
past the cornfields
of the Earth.
In the wide-winged
circling vulture
burns a bitter
lustful eye.

Mover and shaker

I'm Rhythm, quick and
slow, happy, sad,
hysterical and ... mad?

My baton moves
first thoughts then mood,
its tempo stirs the soul.

Nada

Me llamo 'Nada',
y nada empiedra los kilómetros de mi existencia.

En nada sueño,
a través de los siglos grises del crepúsculo.

En nada pienso
y no siento nada,

y mi ánimo es una hipótesis
que jamás se queja,
que no llora nunca.

Flor de mi esperanza,
nadie lo es.

Espuela de mi ser,
no lo es nada.

Llevo anulado el corazón,
soy la sombra de la negación.

Ciega sobrevivencia en el calabozo de los cíclopes,
existo,
cual ángel ebrio
en un lagar de infierno.

Naturally

Long figures, black, and fragile specks of heads
wait, go forward, and dare the waves;
most are swallowed up – just one or two ride
home in momentary triumph.

Triangles, white, incongruous against
the even blue, seem not to move –
but the sails, taut, tell of yachts manoeuvring
as crews compete to rule the wind.

Facing the weather, at rest on the sea,
every wing folded, watchful, still –
look at them, gathered there! all of one mind,
gulls unruffled, where they belong.

No nonsense, now! 1

At home, but where?

In chorus:

“Hi there!” they yelled, spun
round, cried –

“try to find
some space of welcome
for us”.

But Taste and Touch,
Hearing, Sight
and Smell, left empty-
handed. ‘I’,
though in, was ‘out’.

No nonsense, now! 2

The Five counsellors and the jailbird

“What better
than help you take note
of things

in conflict
with your welfare? so
send a

guide now, and show
us” “My room?
Will you find me in
my live tomb
of flesh and bone?”

No nonsense, now! 3

Gifts of Hearing

Satchmo, Kraus,
Carmen Amaya,
Ferrier,

took their turn
to soothe, or fire,
or rouse.

A peal of bells,
organs, horns –
struck chords, no less than
waves – windborn –
and breaths of shells.

No nonsense, now! 4

Gifts of Sight

They saw all
and sundry, bestowed
gifts strange,

filmed in planes:
mirrors misled no
mortal.

Eyes, brought to mind
visions, truths –
which, without insight,
were just views
through half closed blinds.

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!

No nonsense, now! 7

Gifts of Touch

Cheeky tongues
have fuelled and fanned a
hundred

flames, plundered
homes, stilled hands and hearts
in one.

Frost, wind, and heat
pulverized,
rains made mud: gave it
all a life
– with tongue in cheek.

No nonsense, now! 8

Of mortal matters, and a spirited reply

“He takes his
time to answer now”,
they said.

“His grey head’s
worn, his heart’s burnt out
weighing

rhymes and reasons.”

“‘Heart’? or ‘head’? –

They’re mine. But ‘me’? *I*’m

far from dead:

I’m the real one.”

No nonsense, now! 9

A Tme for everything

“We’ve brought furs,
jasmine, mangos, flutes
at dawn,

crowds that mourn,
chlorine, aloe juice,
and ... dirt.”

“You’ve let me choose
yes, between
desires and needs – but
didn’t steer
me through the rules.”

No nonsense, now! 10

Who pays the Piper?

They arrived
in a body, re-
minding

me why it
mattered. I deferred
reply.

They grumbled: "You're
out of touch!"
"Just 'views'!what 'taste'!" and
"so much *guff!*"

'I' call the tune.

No, not to separate

God, I would rather be
a worm,
a larva-laden fly,
a rotting carcass in the sun
than have to hear your courteous, callous, call:
“It will have to stop!”
and then
“No more!”

Gouge out my eyes with acid,
crush the bone that binds my brain,
tear out my tongue and trample it in dust –

but
never,
Phyllis –
no,
never make me stop,
and
never make-believe
we did not really love each other once.

The horror of your message,
still camouflaged with secrecy and care;
the horror of your thought,
that wants to see what I’ll do next!

Grind my teeth until the nerves scream out,
pull my hair till all the scalp is blood –
and mind and body deprived of air
asphyxiate in convulsions of despair.

No tocar

Si el hielo
de su mirada
quema,

por ella
mejor estar ya
ciego –

– o bombero
graduado
en deshacer
carámbanos
y recelos.



¿O?

Limosna,
callada pide,
quieta;

te niegas,
y ni le dices
'hola'.

Sin embargo
discutes
contigo; eres
o, ¿cutre?
o, ¿sensato?.

Observations (cursory, of course)

The Mother speaks in cursive,
her monologues
though thick and gruff
rise quickly up
from the courtyard three stories down below.
'Rise'? no; 'flow', better suits a style
where fifty words
are one interminable sound,
each a casualty in a stream of drowned.

The Daughter has a younger style.
She waits,
and then lets fly a choice of words
all fast
and sharp
and clear
which ricochet and echo round the yard,
each sentence ending in a curse.

Ode to *Cupid's* eyes

Eyes superb, soft, strong, and mystic:
grapes dark dancing in the summer sunlight,
sun-kissed cherries, musical and deep –
your Cupid's eyes, pure symbols of your soul,
reflect the innocence of sleep.

Great, glorious, I love them
as I love
you.

Tender, as the harvest mellow,
enchanted as a fountain of delight,
dark, mysterious and gay
as a windswept lake
on a starlit night.

El Optivista

En el camión
el anuncio rezaba
– DE CORAZÓN –
(lo que faltaba).

Ay ¡tonto de mí!
que me había comido
la ‘i’.

Other people's

Today, a normal-looking man walked past
emitting
music.

"Good heavens!" I thought,
"a Musical Man!"

No luck.
It was just
a radio out for a walk in some pants.

Otro tango

Aquí tienes un amante quilla,
de categoría,
para complacer chocho y barriga.

Out of its depth (part I)

The silverfish
turned up its toes
when it couldn't have the last word.
It proved too much
of a mouthful.

Out of its depth (part II)

The world of letters would last far better
if silverfish
gave up their dish
of words, and went
for 'Cocksure'*, the last word in French letters.

*Poet's copyright / patent pending.

Padre Nuestro

Dios, diosa, madre, padre –
todo:
los hispano hablantes
debieran adorar
sólo
a la Universidad.

The Painting

Nothing to guide us as we view,
to tell us where they're from
or going to.
Perhaps they, too, would gladly have a guide
to show the way
as they trudge in single file
across the plain.

Nothing to tell us who they are,
the man, the woman –
focus of the picture which holds our eye
as they move in silhouette from right to left,
an endless journey
where each moment is a day
and all progress just a dream.
All this the canvas captures:
the moving pair who plod along and, stumbling,
never move ahead.

To the right, a tree
pointing stark and bare to sky and, yes,
towards them, as they move away.
Tree weathered, worn, exhausted, and
almost falling to the ground –
it points to them and, yes, echoes their defeat
past, present, or to come.

To left and right, and overhead, the black of
storm and cloud,
rough grass below more brown and gold than green,
tussocks everywhere, and – no doubt – snares.

From one small area in the clouds
light falls,
soft and white with a touch of grey and blue.
Last light before the storm?
Or light of peace, restored?
Who knows.
It silhouettes the pair who walk,
lends greater darkness to the black above,
spells a tantalising hope.

At the forefront of the canvas, water –
caught in the falling light:
a pool both fresh and cold
which warns of dangers still ahead.

The ageing couple wear clothes which chafe,
heavy, brown, and plain;
one shoulders an enormous load –
not shopping done,
– just what was home, undone.

In all the desolation, silence.
No bird, no beast, no flower.
Not day, not night,
and no sun, no moon, no star.
They walk as doomed, but not perhaps
through accident or crime:
they stand for all of us who live,
and age,
and die.

¿Para sordos?

Vaya son
más monótono,
suplicio infernal:

“Go ... o ... o
o ... o ... ol!”
música del bar.

Pause (part I)

Becalmed.

Though day gives way to night
and frosts and snow follow the summer sun
predictably,
change disturbs,
seems always unexpected.

Becalmed.

Wasn't there a warning?
Was losing way so sudden? and what if
I ran aground?
Relax! Accept the challenge,
and – be calm.

Pause (part II)

Cats: masters of motion, rapid or
slow, and of pause.

Cat's-paws, prelude or sequel, ruffle
the water.

Or courting catastrophe, 'becalmed'?

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?

Perro destino

En las esquinas de las calles
de Cádiz capital,
abundan monumentos
de la gloria nacional:
defensores de antaño
que alejaban a invasores
de ultramar.

¡Que perduren en sus puestos
los cañones!
¡que recuerden, que proclamen
los cañones
tanta gloria nacional!

Inocente, preguntaba
si servían
los cañones
de apoyo a las casas
demacradas del lugar.

Inocente, preguntaba
si servían
los cañones
para inspirar respeto
a los coches circulando sin parar.

Y con sonrisa me decían:
– Los ojos y las narices
cuentan su destino actual:
para los perros les sirven
de molde para mear, mear, mear.

En las esquinas de las calles
de Cádiz capital,
abundan monumentos
de la gloria nacional:
defensores de antaño
que alejaban a invasores
de ultramar.

Pigeon

Ruffled, huddled, still,
against the wall
feet away
from the happy tavern door –
it lies,
displays no feeling
and makes no sound:
it simply –
dies.

Pirelli paradox (part 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 (part 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'.

Pity Penelope

I saw you on a gleaming rock
with eyes that dared
and lips that mocked.
You lay there, naked, in the sun.
You hypnotised me,
made me run
into the scowling sea to drown.

But I survived, and fought the waves,
and crossed that narrow neck of water
(that sheer-faced wall of stone and mortar
built by people long ago,
to keep us far apart and cold –
so that no friendship should be born).

And so I scaled that gleaming rock
where you lay, naked, in the sun,
to clasp you tight, and make you mine.

But that took years, and in the end
what did I find? I'll never know.
Your breasts of wine
and thighs of fire
drove me so wild – I cried, and cried.
And when I woke, the rock was bare.
The sun had long since set,
and there was silence
treading damp and heavy in the air.

Is that, then, why those narrow necks of water
swirl between us?
(Would that be why such walls of stone and mortar

built by people long ago,
still stand, stand
still, between us?)

Life is a phial of acid disappointments,
a manacle that binds and locks,
a cataract that blocks all ways –
except the long, dry road to home, and obligations.

And, all the while, a siren lies there
naked, in the sun.



Plegaria

¡Que Al Liquindói,
de incierta fama,
guardaspaldas
gaditano
y cicerone
de Al Capone,
mire por mí, hoy!

Point of departure

Through my two eyes,
outside I see
a nose,
two hands,
two feet:
my feet, my hands, my nose.

How, though, am I
to see inside
and what,
then, would I see?
Would it be mine?
If so,
wherever can 'I' be?

Poor Idea

The Idea, quite clear in its head
as to what it wanted to say,
initiated
 a painstaking
 search for the
 Mot juste.

After many
 vicissitudes,
 it found a
 candidate.

On the day, the Word turned up drunk
with its mates, all after the job.

The Idea, its head in a spin,
consulted a mirror, afraid
of detecting
 symptoms
 of mistaken
 identity.

Por las sombrillas de la Victoria

A San Sebastián le delata el faro
al contar a Venus su hazaña final.

El santo impasible desdeña sus flechas
y baila fugaz con sombras en silueta
de pirámides raros; ella, carnal,
intenta tentarle desde el más allá.

Un faro a seis kilómetros y un planeta
a cuarenta millones - se contrarrestan.

Fantasía y realidad: vistas que nos brinda
la playa gaditana en pleno verano.





Prendas de amor

– ¿De dónde los quitas?

¿De su cueva,
del bosque,
de las ciénagas?

¿Los sacas con vida?

¿Son del cielo,
de Murcia, o,
del infierno? –

– Te los regalo, cariño – me desafía.

Admirado
pues, me muestro,
mas por dentro
dolorido.

Dos murciélagos,
pobre de ellos,
fallecidos.

Punishing heat

You're in the stone,
you're in the wood,
my books, my bed, my clothes.

You're hot. Why don't
I flick a switch
and 'put the heat' ... on *you*?

A Question of Identification

Were I to lose my sense of taste
and sense of smell,
if touch and feel found no reply,
if hearing went
and I went blind –
well, would there then be less of me?

The 'I' inside, the 'I' no eye
can find
(not yours, not mine) –
would be there,
still.

A Question of values

There lies
rigid
in the centre of the street
the fur of jungles,
gleaming,
by a pool of blood.

Children, drugged on slogans, dare model trucks and cars
along the pavement till they slither, spin and crash;
at the line, mother puzzles over knots and coils
of clothes, frayed and agitated in the washer.

(Remember
how
dew glittered
in the
uncorroded sun?)

In a stench of smoke, a man obeys his mower,
tonsures heads of grass on the sacrificial lawn;
a neighbour, diagnosing noises in his car,
looks up, deaf to the world, and opts for grease and oil.

The fur of jungles
gleaming
by a pool of blood
lies there,
rigid,
in the centre of the street.

Real

Of course

we hear

a hum

of cars,

the thump and roll of distant drums,

clash of cymbals

and call of brass,

a man deranged expressing rage,

much kitchen clattering

next door,

and barking

(off).

Yes,

feel them, Thomas, if you must –

these sounds are each and everyone

part of this world

we see

and touch.

How is it,

though,

that *thoughts*,

intangible,

can equal or exceed

such noise outside?

Recital at Santa Catalina, Cadiz

Sitar plucked,
the notes at first
exploratory
float, tremulous
and languid,
across the hushed and open Castle square.

Confident,
they gather pace,
work up to a
frenzy, wait there,
and subside.
War, then peace, in the ancient Castle square.

Flexible,
they tease, and tunes
unfolding are
detected and
promptly dropped.
Just games, over the watchful Castle square.

The raga grows
– grips the ear –
sounds quiver,
pulse, pile up,
jostle, spill
and overflow,

in tandem with
the rhythms
– of challenge,

dialogue
or echo –
of tablas tapped.

* * * * *

Below the Castle, black Atlantic waves
break and flow
as the dancers'
dresses rise and
fill, then sparkle,
swirl and fall.

Through the Castle, the gusting summer wind.
– Opposites,
complementary –
each figure, face
tells its tale,
charms the heart.

Behind the Castle, white – the silent Moon.
The dancers
pause, their arms speak
towards the sky
of loneliness,
desire, love.

The wraps fall still, the ankle bells are quiet.

Royalty, almost

Such decorum!

See? no need to talk.

It's so natural, that silence

as they proceed at a measured
pace along the street keeping perfect time.

Unfussed, they come close

bestowing a nod

to left and to right

systematically

(although there's nobody about ...how odd!),

always watching where they're going.

And past my window, now, they've walked

– the two pigeons – and

quite out of sight.

Sea love *

Wind-worn shores, open to the sky,
your lips;
and I,
unfathomed, twilight sea who sighs upon them.

Sun-burnished sands,
outposts of an unknown land;
and I,
the whip-waved, night-cold lover.

Your lips,
moulded by my swift sea's surge;
I,
torn by your curved shores' restless smiles.

Self-portrait (analytical inventory of parts)

Now, on the minus side we have:
eyebrows, teeth, stomach and 4 toes;
and on the plus side, yes, we have:
2 arms, 2 legs, my hair, 1 nose.
The rest now, neither good nor very bad,
await a rating, but I'll have to choose
a moment
when my mood's neither buoyant nor depressed.

I see:
2 eyes, 2 ears,
1 mouth, 2 lips, 1 chin (!),
eyelashes (x), 2 cheeks,
1 forehead and 1 beard
(a beard, I think, goes in);
the neck's on the shoulders,
there's a back to the chest,
but Willy? he's hard to pin down;
2 hands and 2 feet,
10 fingers, 6 toes,
2 elbows, 2 knees –
and a bum (does that count as 1?);
the skin's one and many,
for while some parts are trim,
some others are flabby.

So what are my chances, at sixty-two,
of dances and outings with a floozie –
like you?

Sense of loss, loss of the senses

A taste, a touch, is all you need to have
to set in motion change, which – however
imperceptible at first – in time will
take not simply wine and glass, but stone, and
you.

Inhale the fragrance of a rose, a bowl
of pot-pourri, a wooden camphor chest:
some perfume lingers days, some – months, some – years,
then nothing's left. Though all you do is breathe,
it goes, like you.

I knew a cottage once, with cedars, pines,
and fruit, which – like an island – had a stream
all round: a site to live and love, for life.
Cat and rooster, hens, ducks and ducklings, spoke
their thoughts; in the wind the cedars sighed, and
by night and day the water whispered, past.

The sights and sounds made magic in my mind.
I looked and listened, took part, respected
the rituals of the show. Still, in time,
though nothing seemed to change, the magic ceased.



The Shout

There was shouting in the parks,
in taxis, buses, trains,
plus shouting in the cafés,
the restaurants and bars.
In all my life I'd never known the like.
But the shouting stopped when
'she' left to go Down Under
and silence seemed the sum
of all there'd been. But sh! Out
and out largesse sends ... echoes from afar.

Las Sinpapeles

Por la malla de las papeleras
de la calle el Levante sopla
indecente. Gran asustabolsas,
a las inquilinas desaloja
¡tan inocentes! ¡sin estrenar!

Cogidas aún por el cuello, gimen
indefensas en el aire y exigen
con gestos teatrales que las libren.

¡Buen transeunte! Échales un cable,
sea chal, collar, reloj o corbata
(un pésa-me a tu manera) para
que aterricen en casa y no vayan
a quedarse vírgenes en balde.

Sirenada

¡Tú eres la sal,
tú eres la miel!

– olor a sándalo
y clavel,

– son de pífano
y tambor,

– escalofrío
en la piel.

¡Tú eres la sal,
tú eres la miel!



Sitting pretty

Broad of beam and deep, she sat
 straddling the sea,
her stern epitomising
 generosity.

Curved and full, yet taut and strong,
 she seemed the owner
 of what she was on.

She seemed to spill, overflow,
 encompassing the
 world submerged below.

Dared I barge in on a barge
 like that? she lay at
anchor, but I sensed a tug:
 who was I to dare
tug back at a tug like that?

Don't ask me now about her bow –
 I never saw it.
Aft was where I chose to stare,
 everything was there.

Was this the ship of legend?
 Fabled ship, enough
to launch a thousand faces.

Skullduggery

A perfunctory factory functionary
filched pile after pile of significant files
which he dumped in a mound in the mortuary.

Smile-havoc *

Draw, knife, draw
the tears, the pain, the blood
strung wirewise
and wrapped around the thorn-wood
of a dry-stoned love.
None so bitter
as the salt-almond eyes of an image –
vision not for me,
no-one, never.

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! qué asco, y ¡ay! qué 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.

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
■ o ■ p ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ d ■ d
■ s o l ■ Y ■ s o m b r a ■ o
a ■ ■ a ■ ■ ■ a ■ ú ■ ■ s ■ b
■ ■ ■ z ■ s i n ■ s e d ■ ■ l
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 ■

Soledad *

Solo, en la mano carcomida de la vida,
solo, en las cadenas de mi sombra centinela,
nunca tan solitario me sentí,
sin amor de amigo ni de mí.

Por galerías de lluvia y niebla
mi cuerpo, inconsciente, tropieza.
Guerrero desterrado, mi ánimo
volando va hacia la mar.
Y mi alma, por sombras diabólicas condenada,
de cadalso a cadalso huye, espantada.

Hilo, en tres segado, dividido,
cada célula de mi ser abandonada,
aquí quedo, tres veces menos que la Nada.

Por la Plaza cruzan pasos de agonía,
y entiendo que Uno hay,
más solo todavía.

Viernes Santo

Sombra

Cara morena, cara morena,
con pelo de lava y labios de fuego,
surges, sombra, tan inesperada
de la puerta lejana adonde corremos.
Llevas contigo, o Muerte guerrera,
a los que despierten cuando van a morir.

Cara morena con pelo de lava,
mis amigos, ellos, no te esperan.
Ni sufren, ni quieren, y siguen soñando
hasta la orilla de tu lago castillo
donde les chupas la letárgica sangre.

Cara morena con labios de fuego,
Muerte que hieres a los que no vean:
vestido de duelo, con llaves de vida,
armado de lágrimas y dardos de amor,
esclavo centinela, yo sí te espero,
y cuando me busques, te aniquilaré.

Speaking of domes

The work of years,
raised centuries ago
to honour God,
these domes of stone
impress their perfect curves of white or gold
against the sky.

They let in light
and, down below, create a zone of calm
and quiet.

They're landmarks, yes,
but engineered
to crown God's house of prayer.
They stand there now.

Spellsetter

I'm Rhyme, sublime
or infantile –
I've a hundred hats here.

My echoes high-
light choice ideas,
o.k.? and ... hypnotise.

Still (life)

Eyelashes may stretch and quiver,
designed to win:

ponytails blowing in the breeze
may stream at will:

shooting stars may thread the heavens
with filaments
of light:

but none of these moves me so much
as – in a vase
collected, calm –
ears of wheat, elegant and tall.

Still life plus

White walls dazzle,
brilliant,
beneath a sun
high out of sight
from where I lie;
the whiteness underpins, and clasps, the sky.

Here – note a patch
of ochre red,
there – gold and brown,
fine lines of black,
a sea of blue
beyond
and overhead;
the view, devoid of life, seems fixed and still.

Then I hear them:
shadows – sideways,
up and down,
round and round,
tiny, darting, dark;
whirls of joy, swallows on the wing, they fill
the light with sound, bring everything to life.

Strangers in Paradise

“I’ve changed my name”
said Queer, “to ‘Strange’,
more socially discreet.

Plus, when I die
I may now meet
Stranges in Paradise.”

Summer busyness

Swallows swoop from
Rosalía,
up San Dimas
and then back.

Their shadows run
across the walls
in wild pursuit,
gain, catch up
and overtake.

Their calls, their cries,
their squeals precede,
accompany
and follow.

Surréalismes

La C est rouge
la D est verte
la C la C
la C nage

l (e-)
e n t
m

parmi

les QU
mO eurs
C QU
R I s
G R
des sE pents
R

nuages (qui sait?)

qui s'é-
v a n o u i s s e n t

SQU L TT S

f
e
u
i
l
l e
e s é
m m
o
r u
t f
e
s

au crépuscule

Surrounds (part 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 (part 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".

Swallow holes

I've just been told
there's lots more sky –
most of the swallows flown.

But – what a sight!
it's full of holes
each swallow's left behind!

A Tail to wag a dog

“I’m ‘Procrastinate’”, it said pompously,
and “I’m ‘Delay’”, managed the word behind.
‘Temporize’ and ‘Put off’ turned up duly,
and had a slow, blow-by-blow slanging match
due to different class and ethnic backgrounds.
Idea had advertised for ‘A word, preferably a verb, and single – for a report on government initiatives’.

Idea dismissed Temporize on account
of its temper (rising), and Put off because well, you could tell it wasn’t single.
“Now what?” Idea wondered, unimpressed by
the first two words, at odds with each other.
Whereupon, addressing all and sundry
and no one in particular, in strode
“Filibuster!”, again “Filibuster!”
“My name’s ‘Filibuster’ – I’m so sorry
I’m late! I couldn’t get here earlier
it’s just in my nature, I can’t help it.”

He got no further. “My word!” said Idea,
“you’re just what I wanted: a word which knows
itself, is true to itself, lives its part”,
adding, “you’re on, I’ll take you, the job’s yours”.
More calmly “.....and I can’t help it either.
I only wanted a variant on
‘defer’, and you march in and add a whole
new perspective! not just slow, but bold! Wow!

But”, sadly “it’s quite confusing. Too bad,
I’ll just have to look for another hat.”

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 dispares 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!”

Thank God for Sunday

Saturday night,
the Week dived into bed,
done for.

Sunday off! (thank God).

Monday morning,
back on the job, driving
the days.



Them! And 'us'?

So Jane looks strange, in Omeo,
and Steve sounds glib, here in Cadiz

we think ... ! But are we sure that we
can see ourselves objectively?

Yes! We should know, familiar us,
each famous and each blind in love.

I'm James Bond on the Malecón,
you're demure ... Marilyn Monroe.

Through the railings

Pink, then white,
fabrics loosely furled,
they wave

and wait, they
dare you to return
their smile.

Please! Don't assume
I don't know
parasols from tarts,
or poems from
hibiscus blooms.

A Timely spring

Though one swallow doesn't make a summer,
it only takes one hare to make a spring.



To ask, or not to ask

No, I'll not strip my lady naked, and
plunge to death through cumulus clouds of breast;
her smouldering hills – her thighs – are tempting, yes,
why not invade them then? and die of thirst.

I know her neck, now, know her hands and eyes;
I've kissed her lips, I've raced across their shores
drunk with desire, I've slipped between her smiles
and swum deep down inside them to explore.

She's kind. She drives electric rivets through
my brains, sends blood in warming waves to stir
rebellion in my lands. So kind, I said:
"To live, oh let me breathe the ether of
your clouds, and drink your secret well of fire."
I waited then, and all she did was ... smile.

To die, or not to die?

What it is
to thirst for further pleasure in each other!

What it is
to fit so closely to each other –
to touch and join,
to separate in play
in order soon again to toss together!

When all is done,
then the moment always comes
when we hardly
– when we no longer –
recognize each other,
– when you have drunk the glass of wine
I had to offer,
and I lie, faintly murmuring, and pass
through seas of warming winds
and light,
where life is stopped and all is still,
and there is not, now,
a road left we can follow.

A state of mind and body
that cannot long continue.
If I could die! if only, if only
I could die
as I lie with you and hold you
in that world
where life is stopped and all is still!

If only Death could close the door
and shut out all the road by which we came,
then our pleasure,
uninterrupted, would survive.

To feel his fingers

... Sends shivers flickering
through her spine, sends
stabs of pleasure through flesh,
and bone, and mind.

Smiles ripple round her lips,
eyes flash, electrified
at the feel of fingers
now tensed, now tentatively
flexed, and now relaxed,
– gliding lightly
over every dune and shore
from cheek to toe;
– or, each inch a mile,
dawdling the day-long journey
past plain, and rise, and river bed
from wrist to finger's end;
– or, marking time
round the boundaries of her breast,
afraid to wake the spirit of the crest
and be enticed to dance there
till they fall.

To feel his fingers
sends shivers flickering
through her spine, sends
stabs of pleasure through flesh,
and bone, and mind.

Smiles ripple round her lips,
eyes flash, electrified

To squander today

So many years spent
planning ahead for
what we will do,
who we will be
tomorrow.

Then so many years
convinced we were trapped,
circling to the sound
of the merry-go-rounds.

So many years spent
trying to bring back
what we have done,
whom we have been
yesterday.



Top dog

Leading their boss,
they'll make him stop,
start, reconnoitre, run.

They'll sniff, they'll wee,
they'll pooh and see
that master tidies up.

Torture of memory

“Did you see us, hypnotised? see us rise, and dance?
her eyes wide, wide open? her teasing thighs, her breasts,
exuding fire? see her lips slide open, open
wide, till you sensed the tongue there, welcoming, inside?”

Then did you see us, overpowered, pause? and kiss?
But there the scent of gum leaves crushed, scent of honey-
suckle, feel of silver bark and glasslike spiral
of the stalk – were ours; ours to find, to dream, and know.”

“Tantalising! and then?”

“We never met again.”

“What? after that?”

“I learnt she loves another man,
so now the elixir we shared has turned to dust.
The body’s just a shell. The mind is far away.
It stumbles day and night through swamp and slime, to grasp
at paths that crumble, while the kookaburras laugh.”

Touched

The sun broke out of the haze,
the wall broke into a smile.

Towed away

If a ten-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be a nine-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a nine-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be an eight-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If an eight-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be a seven-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a seven-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be a six-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a six-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...

there'll be a five-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a five-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be a four-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a four-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be a three-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a three-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be a two-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a two-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be a one-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a one-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck

and a little bit of luck ...
there'll be a no-toed toad
in the middle of the road.

If a no-toed toad
in the middle of the road
has a run-in with a truck
and has just run out of luck,
there won't be any toad
in the middle of the road
any more.

Trampled on

She scratches scoria
on the wooden floor –
 like glass in faces,
bodies on barbed wire.

She grinds
 and grates
 her way
 across.

The floor contorts,
 and shrieks,
crazed and crippled
 by the war.

Trish

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 away 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

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

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!

Trish

Trish 4

She won't be turned, she won't be moved,
she's staying put right where she is:
– a rusty nail, a threadless screw,
where life's quite flat, where there's no fizz.

The timber's warped and full of holes,
the catch and hinges long since gone.
It's lying there beside the road
not worth a mention in a song.

She won't consider something new,
she'd rather die than be pulled out:
– a rusty nail, a threadless screw,
where life's a desert, life's a drought.

But wait! That wood's still got a role.
Why not tell Ted (and watch his face)
it's right for his Benambra home?
as kindling for the fireplace.

Might she, maybe, reconsider?
Why become a fire's dinner?
That wood's finished, done for, dead –
I've something better, here, instead.

Trish

Trish 5

I saw you seated at my desk
here in Cadiz all gaily dressed
while my computer blinked and whirred
you smiled a smile which seemed absurd.

This desk I have in southern Spain,
right cheek by jowl with Africa,
is more a table – old and plain,
fantasising licks of lacquer.

You have the desk in Omeo,
above the sea, below the snow
wrought of iron, native timber,
fossil marble from Benambra.

Far away (it's called 'down under')
you got loaded in a laptop
blunder, transferred and then dropped off –
it's enough to make you wonder.

I saw you seated at my desk
here in Cadiz all gaily dressed
while my computer blinked and whirred
you smiled a smile which seemed absurd.

Trish

Trish 6

There was a lady of the hills
whose life was filled with endless thrills
from Monday through to Sunday night,
from crack of dawn to close of light.

Weary comes as weary goes,
spare a thought for tired toes.

She had two earrings in her ears
(just one in each one it appears)
which is where earrings tend to be
when not flushed down the lavatory.

Weary goes as weary comes,
spare a thought for tired

Earrings, though, all have a penchant
(earrings here can be quite trenchant)
for kitchen sinks in need of plugs,
for rubbish bins and deep pile rugs.

Weary comes as weary goes,
spare a thought for tired toes.

Grass clippings can be welcoming,
fresh flower beds most promising,
bonfire ashes can camouflage,
like garden refuse by and large.

Weary goes as weary comes,

spare a thought for tired

I wonder if her earrings are
deep in a drawer or in a jar?
Undamaged still or nearly dead?
Or ... in an ear that's on her head?

Weary, weary is this song
and the earrings worn and gone.

Trish

Trish 7

In the foothills of the ranges
where people camp or fish or ride
while others settle for a drive,
you ... stay home, to dodge the dangers.

Dangers? A snake might share your bed!
A cast gone wrong – you'll fall and drown!
Your horse might bolt and bring you down!
While hairpin bends ... all claim their dead.

Oh home, sweet home! A chair, good cheer!
A bag of chips, a pint of beer,
TV – or, in your case (and mine)
the PC, biscuits and some wine.

What's that sound? The garden growing?
Time to run and do some mowing!
But gosh, it's cold! You'll have to find
more wood to keep the fire alive.

When mowing, mind your back and toes,
grit in your eyes, dust up your nose.
The wood's wrong for your fireplace?
Well chop it then, but turn your face!

And how's your e-mail getting on?
Five paragraphs, my goodness! wow!
And more to come, you say, right now,
packed tight with news, and things gone wrong.

But God! oh no! oh no! oh no!
Was that a flicker of the light,
or are you not computer-bright?
Your letter, gone! oh what a blow!

Flick your hair from side to side,
take a leap and toss your cares,
toss a pancake, flick the chairs,
take a cartwheel for a ride.
Everything is as it is,
God knows why, 'cos that's his biz.

Trish

Trish 8

You say you can't resist me
as you listen to your 'geese',
smell the green grass freshly mown,
know your beauty hasn't gone.

"I must walk the dogs" you say,
"make a drink, file things away,
but in Spring I promise you
all your wishes will come true."

Sensible? Of course you are!
and I'll love you though you're far,
check a tear and grit my teeth,
drive off thoughts of age and death.

She says she can't resist me
as she listens to her geese,
and the fountains of the park
splash and echo in my heart.

Unbecoming a croupier

William nearly put
a spoke in it, deal-
ing at the wheel of
fate, willy-nilly.

Up and away

Seen on the ground, nearby, they always looked
a greasy lot, furtive, scruffy, squat, al-
most vulgar, their gait impatient, jerky.

But then, unbidden,
innumerable,
they filled the sky, hung
an undulating
belt of black against
the blue; contracting,
then, they made a square
which stretched and shrank, and
shrank and stretched; and then
a moment later
they curled and rolled, spun
into a breakneck
spiral, plummeted
headlong for the ground;
but then the vortex
split, regrouped, and formed
a cloud, circular,
tremulous and dense;
off they drifted, then
swinging suddenly
they soared and slipped, slipped
and soared, blurs which zig-
zagged, wavered, grew, drew
close; then, dropping low,
they passed, followed by
a rush, a 'whoosh' of
wings and they were gone.

Now, maybe, you'll term them 'iridescent',
'alert', 'carefree', 'sturdy', 'different'; and self-
respecting starlings *do* find *walking* dull.

Vaivenes del cielo

O Paco,
en todo cuanto arreglas
ahí vas dejando huellas:
¡qué celo!

No sé si ¡maldito ... !
o ¡bendito! ... seas.

Viento de Castilla *

Susurrando, susurrando, susurrando:
es el ártico viento que lija el yermo,
el yermo torvo,
el yermo padre.

Místico llano, y solariego,
matriz majada del Creador,
coruscante sombra del efímero cielo.

Susurra el viento, siempre susurra,
titánico viento,
viento frío,
y sus garras bruñidas azotan la capa
de la noche breada.

Y el eterno susurrar del rítmico viento
por el yermo yermo,
es el sueño oscuro de un famélico duende.

Es el hercúleo sueño de un viento que llora,
que llora siempre,
siempre,
siempre.

Vine leaves in autumn

Don't wonder,

when the road's long, and lonely, and cold,
at your eyes – goaded by boredom – running ahead
till they're stunned by the glow of vine leaves in autumn's
crucible.

Tolerate the eye that, hypnotised,

stumbles in a stupor from drink to drink of dreams:

of diamond mines

a lifelong spring of mind and skin

a lifelong union here, with her

and communion there, till the end of time, with Him –

dreams, distilled from pools of translucent rosé wine.

Tolerate the eye that, hypnotised,

finds in the magnifying glass of memories:

a glint of gold

summers of wit and suppleness

summers with Zoé, touch and go

and thoughts of rest beyond the grave or, even, there –

memories, instilled with the pulse and life of embers.

Beware,

light snared by clouds or shifting in the wind

will wake your eyes; then your doubting brain would shame you

off the road to diagnose and normalise that

blinding glow.

Don't go. Trust the verdict of your eyes.

Despise that nagging urge to probe, or else despair:
at pulse and sparkle, stilled and dulled;
riddles of punctures, clustering
on tattered limbs that snails have spared
from their glut of amputations;
remaining skin, and flesh, and bone,
all cancerously worn, and stained;
the live and throbbing glow, become
a lifeless red of cold, coagulated, blood –
despair, as wine runs dry, and embers cool to dust.



What do you make of these vine leaves, then? memories
and dreams? or dull despair? and is autumn, winter?
or spring and summer? Your judgement's the one that counts,
so judge it all with an eye to your survival.
If no answer satisfies, and facts are fictions,
is that good reason to make winter premature?

Voices

Saint Joan of Arc died at the stake
in dialogue and flame;
were she here now, maybe she'd make
her mobile take the blame.

I wonder whose those voices were
she tuned into so hard?
I hope they weren't just sending her
some clichés on a card!

Were they English? were they French? or
Latin? – just to test her.
If recorded, were they used for
evidence against her?
Were they from Earth or Outer Space?
from Heaven? or from Hell?
How many light years did they take,
and did they travel well?

How up-to-date were the reports? –
were they documentary?
Were they the Boadicea sorts?
“Fighting's elementary –
a chariot's as good as its horse!”
or calls from the E.U.?
“We wish to warn you off the course
you want for Waterloo!”

Or messages from Lucifer? –
(he'd be damned if he would lose her!)
or teletexts from You Know Who:
“You're doing fine!”, and “in good time
we'll make some room for you!”

Wanted, missing ...

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?

Who on Earth

High, high above, the great birds wheel
and hang there, waiting, in the sky.

In front, the pastel patterns of
the temple cool the summer sun,
as pilgrims of all faiths wait cross-
legged on the warm and dusty ground.
Everywhere, the soothing flow of
Indian music which slows, and stops.
The shuffle, fidget, whispers – cease,
and silence, only, fills the air.

From the temple comes a figure
clad in orange, unassuming,
slight. Does it walk? or does it glide?
Its bearing seems to indicate
a holy man, but there's a hint
as well of emperor – or more.

His presence thrills the thousands as
he passes, reassures, and guides.
To some he stops and talks, bends low
to hear their answers; to many
he speaks in silence, listens long
to the silent words of others.
From outstretched hands he gathers notes
with pleas, and grateful promises.

At a distance, and then nearby,
I saw the aura, blue and white,
a halo glowing round his head:
Sai Baba's ... Who on Earth is That!

High, high above, the great birds wheel,
and hang there, waiting, in the sky.

Why say it all?

The ancient, the old, the new,
fill the view from our bed,
delight the head.

You ask for details? as though
the answer would say it all –
could satisfy you
and tell a truth which could not lie.

Domes – baroque – then, two;
and T.V. masts, twenty-two;
and the latest dishes – two
or, perhaps, three.

You see? the opening lines
contained the mystery,
more interesting by far
than turgid truth.

To hint, or spell it out:
what shall it be?
Ages of Cadiz?
or stone and steel and plastic
symmetry?

Whispers from the mind
are dreams and wine,
points of fact are dry and flat
and tend to disappoint.

Wild plums *

Here barely sensed, there sensual and bared, their skin –
vermilion, crimson, gold – mocks the monochrome of leaves.
Bearing branches sag; branches, barren, ache at the
lick and slap of skin with its scream of flesh inside.

You sense the scream; you see the flesh flow into breasts,
you see them grow from innocence of kittens' eyes
to soporific pomanders, to succulence
of cantaloups, to suns that fool and stun the mind.

I had, like you, to hold those worlds of teasing flesh.
Like you, I knew a moment's hope before the fall.
Blind slave of dreams that none of us can verify,
I, also, crashed through thorns and sank into the slime.
I lost; I'm damned to live, and hope, and lose again.
They won; tomorrow, they'll lie rotting in the rain.

Wing din

It makes a racket as though to tell
the world at large this cicada's ... well.

Without you *

Days, like snails, have crawled across
the acres of dishevelled grass
that are my garden.

Like snails.

And each has left a track,
as though to show beyond a doubt
that it has passed.

Grass? Did I say 'grass'?

No, not acres of dishevelled grass,
for grass is green,
and green is hope.

Days, like snails, have crawled across
the sandy windswept shores
that line my life.

Like snails,

they wanted water,
and sensed the presence of the sea –
which then receded.

Night fell, as they lay there, and gasped –
all caked in grit,

all dry,

all desperate.

And days, like snails,

were empty shells that littered the lonely shore.

A Woman's dreams

Where, Phyllis, does your mind retire
in the labyrinths of night?

Where, Phyllis, do you fly, to reap
the pleasures of your sleep?

Do glowing embers illuminate your dreams?

Do flames and rushing waterfalls
hiss and thunder, all night long,
deep in the caverns of your womb?
and leave you, charred and drenched,
on smoking,

shifting,

shores ... of..... idle..... dreams?

Ya no sirven

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.

Yours truly, Q.C.

“I love our boss”
sighed Querulous,
“he whinges all the time”.

“Get snuffed, now!” coughed
Cantankerous,
“he’s so like me, he’s mine!”





26

JUVENILIA,

appearing as
'Wrestling at dawn',

LINES OF A LIFETIME XI



27

As seen from a beach in autumn

Swallows swiftly southwards swoop,
skimming swells of seething,
salty, seas.

Seagulls scream and softly stop,
sitting on slow schooners' sails,
sailing south.

Sunburnt sailors stale sea chanties sing,
standing on small scratched stones
with seaweed sealed.

Sea swells swish on sandy shores,
and scum swims on the summits
of stinging surfs.

Sulky ships on sundry seas, slowly
sail away to Spanish settlements,
while their skippers

sunbathe.



As you like it

The water rippled on the lake
like scratched icing on a cake.
There was a walnut on the icing
which, like a melon, was enticing.
The melon's skin was hard and dry
like a meteor in the sky.
The meteor came, then it was gone,
like a bullet or a bomb.
The bomb exploded with a bang
like a sausage in a pan.
The sausage burnt without delay
like a fire in the hay.
The fire made a lot of smoke
like a dragon just awoke.
The dragon snorted, rose and stretched,
like a cat who's had a rest.
The cat was black, as black as night
on a moor without a light.
The moor was wide, and there was no-one,
like on Pluto or on the Sun.
Pluto's warm, the Sun is hot
like oil that's boiling in a pot.
The pot got cracked and broke in two,
and so, for lunch, there was no stew.
The stew was good, the stew was nice,
like sugar mixed with sweetened spice.
The spice was strong and knocked you over
as though you were weak and full of clover.
The clover grew and multiplied
like defects in a lantern slide.
The ancient slide began to flake,
until it went into the lake.





The Ballad of misfortune

I took to sea, still young in years,
far, far away, went I,
and realised, with many tears,
I missed what was not nigh.

I used to dream, when far away,
of home and its delights:
of faded fields, where once I lay,
and other pleasing sights.

Twice twenty years ago left I,
I went as midnight came.
The ship was small, I gave a cry –
Miss Fortune was its name.

We sailed out fast, the little bay
was soon left far behind.
Not long had passed before the day
cast light upon my mind.

Why had I left, I wondered soon,
the home of my delight?
No soul had seen – save for the Moon,
my fast and fearful flight.

A week passed by, yet was I sad,
I knew I had done wrong.
I'd found no friend, the fare was bad,
the vessel none too strong.

Nigh on a year we saw no land,
but sea and sky alone.

Then all rejoiced, to see some sand
round cliffs of gleaming stone.

The cliffs rose black into the sky,
the sand around lay white.
There came no sound, no seagull's cry,
'twas silent as the night.

We onwards sailed, but could not reach
that island of despair.
Three days passed by, still was that beach
as distant as the air.

When dawned the fourth, no sun came out:
the sky was overcast.
The rain poured down, the crew did shout
beneath the icy blast.

The sea rose high, the big green waves
came sweeping o'er the deck.
The sailors prayed, and worked like slaves,
yet soon we were a wreck.

Fate had it that I held a mast –
perhaps it was an oar?
A full day passed, then I was cast
still living, on a shore.

When I revived, it was to see
a dank and dirty place
An old man's hand, gnarled as a tree,
caressed my weary face.

His beard was tousled, thick, and gray,

his hair had seen no comb.
His face, like oak, tanned by the day,
this hut his only home.

I asked aloud: "Where am I, now?
how long have I been here?"

The answer came:
"Two days, I trow,
you'll stay more than a year!
There has not been a vessel seen
for many years all told.
This little isle, no royal demesne,
will hold you till you're old".

Twice fifteen years and one were passed
before a ship hove to.
Oh wretched day when I was cast
sole living from the crew!

A schooner came, drew near the shore,
furled sail, and slowly stopped.
Down plunged the anchor, with a roar,
and then a lifeboat dropped.

When evening came, we could not see
that island's dreadful shore.
The sails were full, the waves flowed free,
we flew as ne'er before.

For eight long years that schooner sailed,
it sailed the seven seas.
And then, at last, my home was hailed:
I blessed God on my knees.

The Ballad of perdition

No breath of wind, no wave, no sound -
the sails hung limp, above.

The sea lay pallid all around -
within them died all love.

By currents swept, they sailed, but saw
no fish, no bird, no life.

Time passed, and on its wings it bore
disaster, death, and strife.

And as they moved, there fell a day
all darkness 'round became.

No sun, no star, no lucid ray
from heaven, shining, came.

On surged the ship, to swiftly sink
into the silent sea.

No trace remained, no hidden link,
for mortal man to see.

Cool water

Raining, raining – calm the night,
drop by drop sink out of sight;
feed the warm and pregnant soil,
cool her lips and ease her toil.

Raindrops glisten
in the sky,
flowers listen –
who knows why?

Sparkle, fountain, in the sun!
Frolic, gambol, have your fun!
Spatter drops of silver blood!
Drench the green grass in your flood!
Fill the air with scented mist!
Kiss the sunshine, and be kissed!

Raindrops glisten
in the sky,
flowers listen –
who knows why?

Crystal water
in the moonlight,
in you gleams the dark unknown.
Resplendent mirror of delight,
deceive the darkness of the night
with beauty all your own!

Raindrops glisten
in the sky,
flowers listen –

who knows why?

What the ocean, what the sea,
what the blue wave flowing free –
does not love you, Virgin Queen,
purest pleasure of my dream?

Raindrops glisten
in the sky,
flowers listen –
who knows why?

Your home is not the fountain,
the sea, nor silent spring,
nor raindrop in the mountain,
nor other earthly thing.

Return, o mystic water,
to the blue eyes of the dying,
to a mother's only daughter
who soon must cease her crying.

Live there, cool water, live –
love, sorrow, and forgive.

While the silver raindrop glistens,
for a moment, in the sky,
and the withered flower listens,
for the child shall surely die.



Desert sun

Angelic might, hard silver sphere
who, fresh from grime, and clean and clear,
still cold, and crisp as snow, and white,
speeds darkness far from mortal sight.

The zenith reached, it flings fierce acrid flame
loud, hissing, gritty, dry, that none can name:
fiercest furnace' titanic crust –
it pounds and crushes flesh to dust.

From the Parcae's hands fell this golden ball,
drowsy, no-coloured mountain of the deep:
close-red, off-orange, almost purple pall,
gentle wrought to lull all withered souls
to salutary sleep.



Evening

The sun departed
red all around,
and the darkness came
without a sound.
The Earth was gloomy,
without a light –
save for the Moon,
who had a long fight
with the thick murky clouds
of the very long night.

Evening voices

Green grass, fresh grass, everywhere,
rustling gently in the air.

Like withered leaves which, falling,
all start crisp crackles calling.

Fear

He trembled all over
as the spectre appeared.
His hair stood on end
as it watched and it leered.
Then his heart missed a beat
as it lifted its arm,
and he fell from his seat
in dreadful alarm.



First time under anaesthetic

And I dreamt of rows of cabbages blue
which filled a field of a pale green hue.
There was a house all gray and black,
rotting away on an old farm track.

The clouds were green and the birds were white,
the sea itself was a ghastly sight.
The waves and the billows were monsters' heads,
the ships on the ocean were upturned beds.
The distant horizon turned into an arrow,
redder by far than my old wheel-barrow.

Then, all of a sudden, the scenery fled,
and I found myself lying half out of bed.

I went away

I went abroad for many years,
far, far away, went I,
and realised with many tears,
I missed what was not nigh.

I used to think, when far away,
of home and its delights:
of English fields where once I lay,
and other pleasing sights.

Now that I'm back, I will remain
at home for evermore.
That land abroad, I will maintain,
did make me love thee more.

Inceptio brumae

Humus pruina tecta est,
aqua gelu absconsa est.
Aves omnes, non cantant,
nec campanae resonant.
Nebulae sunt cinereae,
et aura est frigidissima.
Nix mox veniet,
et tempore sistet.

The Last storm

The crisp leaves rustle underfoot,
a squirrel flees into a bush.

The wind howls
and the storm clouds rush
across the sky
like dirty soot.

Yet there is silence for a while,
as the wind tries to reconcile
the angry clouds
now heaping up like ancient mounds.

But it is now too late,
as it was doomed by fate –
for the clouds burst
and the heavens thunder,
and all Man's products are rendered asunder.

Light everywhere

Lanterns, lanterns, in the street,
plentiful as blades of wheat.
Flashing here, and sparkling there,
and each one coloured like a pear.

A Lull in a storm

Trees, darkness, jagged flashes
of lightning downwards streaking.

Rain, noise, a river rushes
fast by a woman weeping.

Silence sudden, wind at rest –
bird disturbed rebuilds its nest.
Clouds disperse, dark light ensues:
tragic Moon! nocturnal ruse!

Le Matin

Tout à coup le soleil entre dans ma chambre –
j'ouvre doucement les yeux.
Malheureusement, il n'y a presque plus d'ombre:
hier mes rideaux ont pris feu.

J'essaye de me rendormir,
car je ne peux plus lire.
Cela me plairait beaucoup –
il est assez clair,
mais comme tout autre,
j'ai perdu mes lunettes hier.

Il n'y a qu'une chose à faire, et je le ferai,
mais seulement en été! ... c'est de me lever;
et en hiver, non! jamais.
Toujours au lit je resterais.
Maintenant, je peux nager,
et en hiver je grelotterais.

Morning at sea

A cloud of dew, a morning mist,
a wreath of drifting snow,
a fleecy haze that softly kissed
the silent sea below.

Soft as velvet, all-embracing,
fair offspring of the blue,
curling upwards, gently tracing
pale patterns ever new.

This serpent gray lay writhing on
the surface of the sea,
and through its coils the pale sun shone
caressing, golden, free.

It shimmered on the curling limbs
of swiftly flowing waves,
and glittered on the foaming rims
of Neptune's crystal caves.

It sparkled on the surging plain,
an undulating flood,
and turned the spray to golden rain,
the ocean's living blood.

It pierced the ruffled azure cloak
that shielded the abyss,
and lit the depths until it broke
the refuge of their bliss.

My heart's desiring

When the dying leaves of autumn
are wafted to the ground,
wafted thither in the failing light
by a gentle breeze –
a breeze so truly deceptive,
yet so warm and profound,
that none are well aware of the cause
for the bleak, bare trees:
then, oh then, would I be in a Scottish fell,
moor, or glen!

La Neige

Je regardais à travers des fenêtres:
partout il y avait de la neige.
Elle avait fait le gazon disparaître,
et avait caché notre siège.

Je pensais que les arbres allaient tomber,
car la neige, je croyais, était lourde;
et aussi que la terre allait suffoquer,
seulement parce qu'elle était tellement sourde.

Ode to a cat

Sitting on a pillow
by the dying flames,
thinking of a minnow
in the river Thames:
oh had you then in life no other earthly aims?

Sitting on the table
watching while I typed,
helping me when able,
purring as I liked,
peering through your whiskers, your little paws you wiped.

Ode to a fly

Buzzing about,
steam in the spout
of a kettle.

Weight not a gram,
living on jam,
bread and butter.

Using no dates,
having no rates
you must settle.

As light as a feather,
as free as the weather,
as tough as a nettle,
resisting as metal:
you never would utter
the tiniest mutter
if caught by a spider
asleep in the gutter.

Ode to a mouse

Oh my little white mouse,
so happy and gay,
who frequented my house
by night and by day,
where are you, my sweet one, and why so far away?

Each evening when tea came
you watched while I ate,
and awaited the same
although I was late.
Did you ever lack milk, gorgonzola, or date?

Oh my mouse with red eyes,
a long twisting tail,
two pink ears – what a size!
and countenance pale:
return, keep me company, oh please do not fail!



Stars

Stars, stars, all over the sky,
ever twinkling – I know not why.
Like a dewdrop or a stone,
precious ruby or a bone.



Summer

On a summer's morning
I go a-walking in the park.
I see a swallow in the sky
which comes onto the grass.
I go and watch it closely,
but alas, it flies away.

I am so sad,
that I walk so sadly home,
not noticing a cat,
a cat so nice and furry.
But when I turn around,
I look straight at the cat:
I jump to it and pet it.

Then I go home happily,
and when I arrive,
how happy I am
to see the same swallow again.

That which is necessary

As the sun sinks slowly down
over the distant horizon,
the beautiful clouds become red with joy
and spread far and wide over the sky,
now of a pale blue hue.
The birds start singing,
but they sing very sadly,
because they know that the sun and the day
are hastening away and,
for all they know,
may never come back again.

After the empty blackness of the night,
a pale red gleam can be seen in the East.
It enlargens slowly but steadily,
till the mighty sun can clearly be seen.
Then the overjoyed birds sing happily,
for their comrade the sun is back again.

This is their song:

“Oh Day, oh Sun,
we welcome you –
you are our joys,
Almighty Ones,
our only joys;
because, through you,
we eat and drink.
If you were not,
we could not live.
Hail, Mighty Sun,
Envious Day!”

The Turn of the tide

Sweet life, a feather, floats on high,
moved by the tide of luck.

It rises swiftly in the sky,
as free and light as Puck.

Then comes the time that tide must ebb,
and life must follow fast.

The Parcae cut the living web,
and life has lived its last.

Underground

The high and spacious caverns gleamed,
their moisture ever running slowly downwards.
The endless tunnels, dulled by age-long darkness,
ever twisted, winding onwards.

The floor, with grit and water sprinkled,
a sleeping monster's back resembled.
The cavern's kinky, shapeless, roof –
of age and strength was two-fold proof.
To everything there clung a clamminess
like Death's small finger still beckoning us.

Still the air was cold
in the tunnels old,
and the silence profound
in the dark caverns round –
and so they always will remain,
unheeding wind, and sun, and rain.

The Upper world

The storm clouds sweep across the darkening sky
and, swelling quickly, push in eager haste;
as in the Grecian games Achilles raced,
here each cloud strives his neighbour to outfly.

At last they clash and, bursting, meet:
they can't advance, they can't retreat.
To him below, the world's but sleet
made on purpose to wet his feet.

The clouds recoil upon their haunches
and scatter wide like speeding launches.

The clouds now are less,
the clouds now are smaller -

yet to reunite, they need but the order.

A Waterfall

Troy's brazen gates a-clashing,
a sheet of falling silver.
A noise of thunder rumbling,
a swiftly flowing river.

Trees falling in a forest,
a lonely child forsaken:
a tornado in the West
a harmful course had taken.

A white cloak of rising spray
a fleecy cloud is forming,
which is covering the way
the waterfall is falling.

When a thunderstorm threatens

Cows quietly stop grazing,
and horses start neighing.
Cats yawn, curl up and purr,
as do bitches and curs.

Spiders stop weaving their big silken webs,
and timid children hide under their beds.
The tom-tits, the skylarks, the crows and the eagles
swoop home to their nests, screeching, and wheedle.

Then mankind awakens as if from a slumber,
in presence of lightning and terrible thunder.

When the sun sinks slowly down

The shining sun sinks slowly down
steeped in saturnal splendour.

The bleary birds and bouncing billow
sleep soundly in their starry slumber.

The rats and bats with ghostly taps
slink and blink in every chink.

The crickets croak,
and spiders spin their silken strands.

No more bustle, business, or brass bands,
but waiting fairies waving wondrous willow wands.

Now Peace can proudly pace again.

Winter is coming

Willows whisper,
rushes rustle,
flowers flutter,
for Winter's coming.

Skylarks scatter,
tom-tits titter,
cuckoos cluster,
since Winter's coming.

Beetles burrow,
hedgehogs hurry,
squirrels scamper,
now Winter's come.





Notes

POEMS vols. I-X

1) Abbreviations and symbols, 2) frequently used words in Spanish

1) LL – *Lines of a lifetime*; * – published

2) *azotea* roof garden; *c.* or *calle* street; *plaza* square

Above and below I & II: Cadiz 2004 (LL VII)

Poems set while still airborne over Andalusia prior to landing at Jerez, and on a beach at Cadiz. The closing lines of the first poem echo b/w close-ups taken while living at Foster, near Wilson's Promontory, Australia (see Appendix 2: cover LL VII). The second poem started as a footnote.

ABSENCES to Win: Cadiz 2007

'Win' for Winifred Ann (Jodell, née Woods), my partner since about 1990, then wife. She was absent from Cadiz doing respite care work in the U.K. when I wrote this series.

Absence 1 (LL IV & VIII)

The building site next door resulted from the demolition of two buildings amounting to almost half the street of San Telmo. As with all such sites it was a wilderness ... with exceptions such as the ones appearing here.

Absence 2 (LL IV)

(A secondary consideration) While you take news from a dream with a pinch of salt, you just might believe a message on the phone forgetting it was part of the dream.

Absence 3 (LL IV & VI)

It is a custom in Cadiz businesses and homes to have a statue of San Pancraccio, with a vase of parsley in front; he stands for prosperity, employment in particular. When things don't work out he's put in the fridge, *castigado* (punished). We grew parsley on our *azotea*. (And see 'Votive offering - a sprig of parsley' in the series The Flowering roof)

Absence 4 (LL IV)

The 'Dragon' tree, from the Canary Islands, can live for hundreds of years. There was a magnificent specimen just off the plaza de Mina, Cadiz.

Absence 5 (LL IV)

(A secondary consideration) To the trials of old, you can add new ones that come with 'labour saving' electrical gadgets.

Absence 6 (LL IV)

This craze ... a social / anti-social addiction thought of as progress.

Absence 7 (LL IV)

Win would have approved of the demise of a set of striped shirts I wore, but then what?

Absence 8 (LL IV)

(As for 6, above) The ferry was the ill-fated *Adriano III* which plied between Cadiz and the Puerto de Santa María, a forty-five minute run. It was the joy of this ferry trip which kept me visiting the Puerto for years.

Absence 9 (LL IV)

Absence 10 (LL IV)

Absence 11 (LL IV)

Absence 12 (LL IV)

Autobiographical.

Acierto de peregrino a Deirdre: Cadiz 2004 (LL VIII)

Based on a chance meeting with Duncan, son of Deirdre (an Australian artist whose paintings I admire) and Tom Jack of Swift's Creek, Omeo. I bumped into the gaunt, cheerful and very unencumbered lad in a Cadiz supermarket: he had done the *Camino de Santiago*, and exuded its atmosphere. (Potential for inclusion in LL V & VII)

Actors for all reasons: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Language and the creative process. "Anything you can do, I can do better ...".

Administering: Cadiz 2009 (LL X)

Politics: a place for priorities.

Alchemy I & II: Cadiz 2001 (LL II)

Perspectives. (See also 'In the eye of the beholder?' and 'Sitting pretty')

All a-tumble: Cadiz 2010 (LL VI & VII)

Some grain or grains always seem to get away ... you'd be forgiven for thinking each grain had a mind of its own.

All in a letter: Cadiz 2009 (LL X)

I.T., progress, values: 'e-' casts its spell.

All's not well: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Outer space, progress, industry: an ecological dilemma.

Amor de prostíbulo al Duende: Cadiz 2004 (LL I & IV)

Set in our house in c. San Dimas 10. The building, a *finca* in this part of Spain, had been a brothel and more recently a boarding house for students of the University's nearby Medical Faculty. The welcoming atmosphere pervading the very run down building plus the curious feeling of a benign presence were instrumental in prompting me to buy it.

The house has two entrances, the original one on the side street as c. San Telmo 6.

And then there was silence I & II: Cadiz 2001 (LL VII)

Is silence just as much a sound as white is a colour? Is silence a neutral or negative factor, or actually a positive one? And what is the speed of silence? The second poem

started as a footnote.

Approaches: Cadiz 2004 (LL VII)

This is set at Wilson's Promontory and refers to the main highway, the turn-off track to Cotters lake and path to the sea. It had been a favourite area when I lived in Australia.

Apurados a Antonio G.: Cadiz 2001 (LL IV & X)

Mediaeval literature, the Round Table and *el 'alivio' prohibido*.

'Los otros (veintidós) – los ausentes –
son los doce 'pares', menos él
aquí padeciendo mal de sed
y mal de amores, Lanzarote.'

Ashes *: Oxford 1959 (LL III)

AUSENCIAS: Cadiz 2007

Ausencia 1 a Win (LL I & IV)

The reference is to the *dama de noche* ('night jasmine', *L. cestrum nocturnum*) planted on the *azotea* by Win.

Ausencia 2 a Teresa G. V., at *El Senátor*, c. Rubio y Díaz (LL I & IV)

On a gaze from a friend who ran the bookshop *Q & Q*, then in c. San Francisco, as we shared a drink at the nearby *Senátor*. My friend's gaze and vitality are well matched.

Ausencia 3 a Teresa G. V., at *El Senátor*, c. Rubio y Díaz (LL I & IV)

(Continuing from *Ausencia 2*) The jet I associate with earrings from Santiago de Compostela, the ebony with a soulful clarinet ensemble from Havanah, and the obsidian with Mt. Tarawera in New Zealand.

Autumn love *: Oxford 1958 (LL III)

The face lingers quite clearly, but what was her name?

Bag cat: Cadiz 2010 (LL VIII)

On 'Noche', our adopted kitten. (See Cattributes 'A'-'Z')

El Bellaco en pelotas: Cadiz 2007 (LL VI & X)

On similarities of sounds and spellings, gastronomy and advertising. (*Jamón de bellota*, acorn-fed ham is highly regarded.) *¿Botellas? las bellotas se imponen ya.*

Las Bellas por conocer a Lourdes y Silvia: Cadiz 2007 (LL II)

I began this as I breakfasted at the *Caruso* on the Paseo Marítimo, on learning my (second) marriage was over. I had known Lourdes and Silvia working here, as waitresses at the *Gotinga*, plaza del Mentidero. An unexpected, cheering encounter.

Blues: Oxford 1958 (LL VII)

Surrealism, colour / nostalgia.

Bonito error a Carmen y Ramón: Cadiz 2009 (LL VI, VIII & X)

Set at *Casa Lazo* restaurant. Here we have tuna fish which may be *atún* or *bonito*, the latter also an adjective (unrelated), and the fish *mero* (and, unrelated, *es/mero*). *El*

pescado se confiesa.

Boom and bust: Cadiz 2001 (LL II)

‘Supply and demand’: now,
that’s a succinct angle
from which to look at lust!
It says more (and less) than
the title ‘Boom and bust’.

Bound and unbound: Cadiz 2001 (LL I & VIII)

In ‘Bound and unbound’, three words in
hiding
summarize the subject; can you
find them?

Boy and silver smile: Oxford 1960 (LL VII)

I was fascinated by the nature and colour of pewter, and its subliminal effects.

Castilla *: Salamanca 1958 (LL VII)

The sentiments would have had their source in earlier travels to this part of Spain, described in *My Ampleforth years I*: ‘Spanish Impressions’. These experiences were to be described again in an article published while at Oxford. The rhythms are significant.

CATTRIBUTES 'A'-'Z' to Glenwys: Cadiz 2009

The CattrIBUTE poems concern a young cat born in Cadiz probably some time in November 2008. They were first (self-) published by Glen Albrecht (BookWright 2016) and handed to me as a surprise present. I was so impressed by their appearance that I was inspired to (self-) publish the complete set of *Lines of a lifetime* in a similar manner. Here's to Noche! (See final section of notes: Illustrations)

Cattribute 'A': 13 March (LL IX)

The alphabetical arrangement 'A-Z' is a classic one, with all its advantages (and some disadvantages). The main general advantage of such a programme is that it invites further input; a secondary advantage is that it widens the range of aspects to be studied; a third advantage is that it allows / invites / obliges variation in the presentation. With regard to the announcer in any given piece, sometimes it is assumed to be Yours Truly, sometimes the cat, and on some occasions both of us in dialogue. Good luck, reader.

Cattribute 'B': 1 March (LL IX)

Cattribute 'C' (first): 15 February (LL IX)

Though Cadiz is not an island, the isthmus of which it forms the head is substantially man-made, developed on a series of pre-existing reefs.

Cattribute 'C' (second): 26 March (LL IX)

The beginning of what became a habit, and continues to be in 2017. When she enters a room she surveys the scene, bounds onto my lap, make herself comfortable, and falls

asleep ... close beyond words, and calling for an extra poem.

Cattribute 'D': 6 March (LL VI & IX)

Her dietary preferences (demands!) have evolved substantially since those early days. They are now boring, alas, and involve only tinned food (quality, of course) and pellets.

Cattribute 'E' (first): 8 March (LL IX)

Cattribute 'E' (second): (no date) (LL IX)

When over 99% of a cat, and all of the night are black what do you see? Enough ... to want to call a priest to exorcise (eyes?) that troublesome 1%.

Cattribute 'F': 18 February (LL IX)

Cattribute 'G': 16 February (LL IX)

Cattribute 'H': 13 February (LL IX)

Her hunting successes are principally with butterflies, cicadas, dragonflies and lizards (alas), cockroaches, house flies, moths and silverfish (o.k.). She has failed to catch birds, especially those drinking at the birdbath, usually doves or sparrows. At night one of her stranger idiosyncracies is to roam through our darkened home yowling, moaning and crying as she drags one empty folded plastic bag after another (on one occasion there were no fewer than seven) from the ground floor kitchen to our bedroom on the first floor. We call it 'rattling', but ...? (see also below, the note for 'Cattribute 'M'')

Cattribute 'I': 8 February (LL IX)

Other poems concerned with visual perception / interpretation are 'Gifts of sight' n.4 in the set No nonsense, now!, 'Point of departure' and 'A Question of identification', all three in the volume Measuring up. Also, but from a different angle, are '*Ausencia 2*' and '*Ausencia 3*' in the volume Eros 3.

Cattribute 'J': 28 February (LL IX)

Speak of multiple personalities! Her photos portray them well and almost constitute a portrait gallery..

Cattribute 'K': 24 February (LL IX)

Cattribute 'L': 2 March (LL IX)

Cattribute 'M': 10 March (LL IX)

She has tackled a number of items such as a fine 19th c. sofa, sundry carpets and some chairs. One of these is illustrated ... converted to the status of a work of art (see also the note for 'Cattribute 'H'').

Cattribute 'N': 17 February (LL IX)

I was told by a clairvoyant in Australia that I was once a lexicographer at the court of Atlantis. That's as may be. But there can be little room for doubt concerning Noche's exalted past as Queen of Nubia.

Cattribute 'O': 6 February (LL IX)

She doesn't smell, though occasionally she exudes a mildly perfumed scent.

Cattribute 'P': 2 February (LL IX)

Cattribute 'Q': 1 February (LL IX)

Cattribute 'R': 6 March (LL IX)

Cattribute 'S': 26 February (LL IX)

Finally I was persuaded that a vet should be called, to put her out of her misery (no, not put her 'down': it's all in the correct use of the preposition).

Cattribute 'T': 11 February (LL IX)

Cattribute 'U': 3 March (LL IX)

Cattribute 'V': 7 March (LL IX)

I made it a practise always to keep Noche, still a kitten, out of certain rooms where there were things that mattered. But since my home in c. San Dimas was on the market, following my wife's departure, I had to endure frequent incursions by house hunters, who expected doors to be opened for them, and left open for them to wander at leisure.

Cattribute 'W': 11 March (LL IX)

The 'Oxford' in question could be my 20 volume *Oxford English Dictionary* no less, or my *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* depending on Noche's application.

Cattribute 'X': 21 February (LL IX)

Cattribute 'Y': 22 February (LL IX)

Cattribute 'Z': 14 March (LL IX)

Noche and Yours Truly share a fascination with Shelley's 'Ozymandias', to which she has added one extra dimension.

Choice of stroke: Cadiz 2002 (LL II & X)

Choice of stroke: 'desire', the booby prize.

The Coffee affair: Cadiz 2004 (LL V & VI)

Anyone can distinguish between the rich texture of an espresso coffee resulting from a technique involving high pressure and coffee resulting from standard gravity feed.

Compensating: Cadiz 2001 (LL II)

If every cloud has a silver lining,
then every silver lining has a cloud.

Contigo a Glenwys: Cadiz 2012 (LL I, IV & VI)

While fare and setting at the *Malibú*, Reynold's *chiringuito* (beach bar) 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 more often the south, reaching at times gale force intensity. This beach, the *Victoria*, makes for excellent sunset watching.

Contrary cat: Cadiz 2010 (LL VIII)

(See 'Bag cat')

Una Copa de más: Cadiz 2007 (LL VI & X)

Hospitality business ... and the custom of a fresh glass for every top-up.

COSQUILLAS a Maribel y Rafael: Cadiz 2010

Series of three poems the result of an invitation from Maribel Téllez and her husband Rafael to contribute to the visitors' book at *Quilla*, their restaurant-bar / gallery at La Caleta. I was to exhibit part of my *Papegados* (collages) collection there not long after (see Notes: Illustrations). A *cosquilla* = a tickle.

Cosquilla 1 (LL I & II)

The *sirena* / siren image is a recurrent one.

Cosquilla 2 (LL I & VI)

This concerns Maribel's rôle at *Quilla*. There is an echo of the famous Golden Age poem, and mention of the fortresses to either side.

Cosquilla 3 (LL I)

'*Quilla*', Cadiz-speak for girl, is the name of the ship-shaped premises and is personified in the restaurant's figurehead. It also means a keel.

The Cost: Auckland 1967 (LL III)

Sequel to an attempt to assist a lady staff member who claimed to have a problem with a male student of mine, at her request. I fell for her, an outcome she may or may not have had in mind. There were consequences. This is one of nine in my Auckland cycle.

Crescendo: Cadiz 2011 (LL VII)

The billowing sail and direction it faces (to the right) indicate a waxing moon. The darkened, 'following' part always proposes a visual puzzle.

Cumplir: Cadiz 2007 (LL I & X)

The law v. custom, and the extremely difficult introduction of a regulation on the compulsory use of *casco*s (helmets) for motorcyclists (the old city centre is known as the *casco antiguo*). *La ley sí, pero ¿las ganas?*

Curtains: Cadiz 2001 (LL I & II)

Set in our third-floor flat in c. Beato Diego.

'Curtains' is home cabaret.

Inner Voices Limited

(open seven days a week,

with wind and sun permitting)

can offer you a sound-track

which will make you wet your pants.

Cycles of love to Judith R.: Melbourne 1971 (LL III)

Interpreted, philosophically, by Judith Rodríguez.

¿De sastres?: Cadiz 2004 (LL X)

Fashion / need. *El emperador está desnudo*.

Dental divulgence I & II to 'Milagros' and 'Amparo': Cadiz 2003 (LL V)

Part II started as a footnote. Some further worries ...

For title, what? 'Dental
fragments' sounds too much
like battles lost.
'Jigsaw', about the in-
terlocking structure
of the poem,
I dropped, because the word
too strongly stresses
a game with pain.
'At the dentist' – so drab,
conventional, caused
no second thoughts.
One title haunts me still:
'An eye for a tooth' –
too difficult?

¡Denuncia! a Lourdes: Cadiz 2011 (LL I)

Lourdes based the décor of her bar in the plaza del Mentidero on my *papegado* portrait or *esencia* of her, a copy of which featured prominently. I had known her for years as a waitress at the nearby *Gotinga*, but not under the influence of so much celebratory *cava*.

Desde el Puente romano: Salamanca 1958 (LL VIII)

There are aspects of Salamanca which remind one of El Greco's famous painting of Toledo: topography, colours, atmosphere.

Desengaño, esperanza y muerte *: Salamanca 1958 (LL V)

I was bothered by the seemingly passive rôle of the Dominicans, presence of the *Guardia Civil*, memories of Civil War and din of beggars, gypsies and traffic (then).

Diuretic: Cadiz 2011 (LL X)

Medicine, communication: fear of the unknown - scalpel, pistol?

Doctor Foster: last known whereabouts: Cadiz 2007 (LL X)

I.T., nursery rhymes: this person reinvented as mobility man.

Elegir su elixir I & II: Cadiz 2001 (LL VI & VIII)

The second part 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. Catalan did not feature in Spanish studies at school level, and while some Catalan courses (mainly literary) were available within Spanish studies at Oxford, they were presented as options.

Emergency cat: Cadiz 2010 (LL VIII)

(See 'Bag cat')

Encuentro esdrújulo a Carina: Cadiz 2002 (LL III)

On Carina, charismatic Celtic owner then of the *Diván del Mónaco*. She took an early interest in my *papegados* (collages), and tried to help me house hunting. She was to show me *La Bella Escondida*, an invisible tower in c. José del Toro – at a time unfortunately when that building was due for renovations. I was not able to wait. With regard to the (humorously expressed) poem ...

Hace falta una brújula
para dar con la cúpula.

But would such a device work in the mist, or a mirage?

The Face she wears to Win: Cadiz 2004 (LL III)

Affectionately and with some perplexity, on the question of her mood swings.

El Faro a María Dolores: Salamanca 1958 (LL III)

Flotsam, jetsam ... memorabilia to my Father: Cadiz 2019

THE FLOWERING ROOF to Glenwys: Cadiz

On a few of the plants growing on the *azotea* of c. San Dimas 10, Cadiz.

1 **Best friends:** 2015 (LL III & VII)

Glen's favourite flowers: she cultivates them with great care and success on our *azotea* in San Dimas, and rescues their infant and teenage members when I remove them from what I consider less suitable homes.

2 **Botanical:** 2017 (LL VII)

3 **Call of the sun:** 2015 (LL II & VII)

'Lorenzo' – synonym for sun. (See also 'Through the railings')

4 **Chives I & 2:** 2015 (LL VI & VII)

5 **Crassula ovata:** 2015 (LL VII)

6 **A Fresh reflection** – *Narcissus papyraceus*: 2015 (LL III & VII)

Tiny flowers with a gorgeous scent, it was an unsolicited gift from the birds, probably pigeons, and started to spread all over our *azotea*. Its bulb makes it very difficult to pull out and remove ...

7 **The Full rose:** 2015 (LL VII)

This 'Edith Piaf' rose features on the cover of LL IV (see Appendix 2).

8 **Love in a mist** – *Nigella damascena*: 2015 (LL VII)

This flower in full bloom features on the cover of LL II (see Appendix 2).

9 **Olor que aflora:** 2015 (LL VII)

10 **Sansevieriana trifasciata** – Dad's 'sometime' Army: 2015 (LL VII)

11 **Spider, or 'Purple Queen'** – *Tradescantia pallida*: 2015 (LL III & VII)

I now refer to this plant by its Spanish name '*Amor de hombre*' as opposed to its various English names. This flower features on the cover of LL III (see Appendix 2).

12 Votive offering – a sprig of parsley: 2015 (LL VII)

(See also 'Absence 3')

Focus of attraction: Melbourne 1970 (LL III & VIII)

Though the fish are metaphors within an allegory, they merit a note. They reflect a personal background of fishing clear Oxford streams as a child, and designing and building elaborate fishponds in Perth (Western Australia) and Melbourne. I stocked these ponds with plants drawn from nearby rivers, creeks and swamps (some with yabbis and associated problems in the accompanying clay).

Followers all: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Language and the creative process: the word, father to the thought.

FRAGMENTS: Cadiz

The first four pieces began as games with words and sounds, an offshoot of English conversation classes with Don Fernando of the Cadiz Port Authority.

Fragment 1: 2004 (LL X)

Language, word association: some rather doubtful relatives here.

Fragment 2 to Don Fernando: 2004 (LL III & X)

Language (written / spoken) and values. 'Win some, lose some.' A note on this piece:

It all began with
'once' and 'wonderful',
'one' and 'won'.
'Now' (on time) got in,
'own' alone, lost out.

Fragment 3: 2004 (LL VI & X)

Language, progress and gastronomy. stigmatised, with honour.

'Hocus-pocus', 'gobbledygook',
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 to Ann: 2004 (LL VI & X)

Language, word association: more meaningful relatives.

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.

Fragment 5: 2017 (LL VIII & X)

Language, sounds, nature: echoes.

Free, to choose: Cadiz 2004 (LL VIII)

Set at home in c. San Dimas. The 'cellar' used to be the *aljibe*, and the frog was for real, rescued and freed in the *Parque Genovés*.

Frustra impeditur to Thompson of Kilburn: Cadiz 2007 (LL X)

Time, mortality: *tempus fugit, frustra impeditur*. Inspired by the memory of a panel by Thompson of Kilburn positioned pointedly by the entrance to the main study area at Ampleforth College, York. Thompson was famed for his work in oak, samples of which can be found throughout the school, and recognised by his trademark mouse.

'Gay' re-cast: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Language, homosexuality: on a word hijacked.

Giftshop blues to Patricia: Cadiz 2010 (LL III)

On some earrings, desirable but with insecure fastenings. They would have suited Patricia Leon, or 'Trish'. I tried to persuade the gallery to improve the fastenings, but they couldn't. Rather symbolic. (See also 'Trish 6')

GLORIOUS: Cadiz 2010

(Apologies to Flanders & Swann) Eight decasyllabic quatrains. Settings are mainly Auckland, Cadiz and Foster, but could echo places like Gilling, Kocheł, La Rochelle, Omeo, Oxford, Perth, Tarwin Lower, Tilbury, Waterford and others. Themes include childhood trauma and its psychological effects, escape (adventure?), the feeling eye, self-indulgence, social hypocrisy / paradox, and therapy.

Glorious 1 (LL II)

Originally:

Such fun! Such glorious, glorious, glorious fun!
In black or white, grey, terracotta, blue,
subtle as syrup or clinging as glue,
you'll fall for the feel and message of ... mud!

Glorious 2 (LL II)

Originally:

Banks of mud the river wide, banks of mud
beside the sea, banks of mud by moonlight
and by day: silently and still, they eye
us, tempt us to step closer and ... succumb.

Glorious 3 (LL II)

Originally:

A mud pack here, a mud pack there, a mud

pack warm or cool: they make you all recoil
in disbelief! How could such gooey muck
be something that nice people can enjoy?

Glorious 4 (LL II)

Originally:

He sought her out for sixty years, he sought
her out by night and day, he sought her out
abroad. She hugged him close, she played around,
she teased him, stroked him, freed him from his thoughts.

Glorious 5 (LL II)

Originally:

Is it 'Tarzan'? is it 'Jane'? or a dull
'thing' without a name? It's '*el barro*', male
in Spain, female '*la boue*' in France: two views,
and neuter for the prudent English – 'mud'!

Glorious 6 (LL II)

Set just outside Glasgow in the mid '40s. Originally:

There was a boy, and he was five, and mud
got in his boots. Did his mother let fly,
all hands and tongue! But the treatment backfired –
a flame was kindled and the damage done.

Glorious 7 (LL II)

Set a few miles from Omeo. Originally:

A foot wrong in the swamp, and he had mud
to his thighs. 'Shall I wallow?' he smiled ... but
a hunter appeared then waving a gun
(symbol of 'proper' establishment fun).

Glorious 8 – *Glorieuse* (LL II)

Originally:

Je pense à toi, couverte de boue, complice
du soir, témoin des goûters défendus.
Je m'approche, je m'enfonce et tu m'embrasses
sur les endroits où l'on ne s'attend pas.

Gobbledygook (formerly Games ...): Cadiz 2007 (LL VIII & X)

Towards a crossword, but minus usual clues.

Goodbye to dust: Auckland 1967 (LL II)

One of nine in my Auckland cycle. (See notes for 'The Cost')

Guillotine * to Eve: Oxford 1959 (LL III)

Set in Christ Church 'Meadows', Oxford. Eve, wife-to-be, helped save me from myself.

Hard-pressed: Cadiz 2001 (LL II & VI)

The fish and seafood stands of the Cadiz market, in the plaza de la Libertad, are amazing for their number (over 60), the variety of 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: Cadiz 2004 (LL VI & X)

Language, cuisine: hot mushroom salad, anyone?

The Hungry hours, and after: Melbourne 1971 (LL II)

In a flat spin a Apolonia: Cadiz 2002 (LL I)

House hunting with agents Santiago and María José. He showed me a fine flat in the plaza de España but with the *Movida* (all-night drinking) outside and a leaky bathroom upstairs, she a house in c. San Dimas which promised to be 'a renovator's delight'.

In the eye of the beholder?: Cadiz 2007 (LL II)

(See also 'Alchemy' I & II)

Inesperada a Mari Lo: Cadiz 2009 (LL I & III)

Just a look and a hug from Mari Lo at the *Maroma* (Real Club de Tenis), avenida Dr. Gómez Ulla, helped in a period of depression after Win returned to Australia.

El Jinete de la Ginebra a Antonio Núñez: Cadiz 2007 (LL IV & X)

Prompted by a late night conversation and literary duel (over a gin tonic?) with my friend at Carina's second premises, the *Jambalaya* in c. Sagasta. Mediaeval literature, the Round Table. *Lanzarote se va de viaje*. (And see 'Apurados')

The Juggler: Cadiz 2004 (LL VII)

I had found the sky fascinating as a child, and had a telescope and book on astronomy (of which I could make but little). Here I was inspired by watching the barman at the *Café de Levante*, c. Rosario as he practised his juggling (literally).

Juxtapositions (watercolour): Cadiz 2001 (LL I)

Set in the plaza de Filipinas.

This 'Juxtapositions'
minimalist

records no more
than shape and light
impacting on my mind.

(See also 'Messages')

Linda hechicera a Win: Cadiz 2004 (LL III)

On the enigmas and *vaivenes* of the relationship.

Little catastrophe: Cadiz 2009 (LL VIII)

(See also 'Bag cat')

Lluvia en la noche: Salamanca 1958 (LL VII)

Loss of illusions: Melbourne 1971 (LL V)

Reflects my position in the clash between traditional versus modern values in the university courses and the way they were presented. There was pressure to conform to new criteria more career and business oriented than strictly educational. I did not fit in.

Loud-mouthed Word: Cadiz 2001 (LL X)

Language and the creative process: so who's in charge?

Love, so beautiful: Auckland 1967 (LL III)

One of nine in my Auckland cycle. (See notes for 'The Cost')

Love, underground: Auckland 1967 (LL III)

One of nine in my Auckland cycle. (See notes for 'The Cost')

Un Lugar para armas tomar a Olimpio: Cadiz 2009 (LL I, VI, VIII & X)

Set in Olimpio's Galician café-bar *La Rambla*, c. Sopranis, with its generous array of *tapas* many of them seafood dishes, one of which is referred to here in a pun. On another tack, his *pollo al ajillo* (garlic chicken) was hard to beat. Energetic, enthusiastic, affable - I missed him on retirement in 2014. (*Navajas* / razor clams)

María José of the real estate agency: Cadiz 2002 (LL I & III)

María José, pretty and independent, introduced me to the strange and run-down *finca* in c. San Dimas. The 'East Wind' is the sometimes wild Cadiz *Levante*.

Marketing to Phoebe: Melbourne 1971 (LL II, VI & X)

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

Men on the Moon *: Oxford 1958 (LL VII)

The sky was being opened up ... and I considered this 'scientific' leap as man's invasion of outer space, including my own personal space. 'My' view was going to be built on and built over, my communion with the sky contaminated.

Messages (oils on canvas): Cadiz 2001 (LL I)

But 'Messages', for oils, is something else.

Should I have overlooked the man-
hole cover in

the road?
And the bush beside the column?
And vehicles beyond the tunnel in the wall?
And – oh dear – who is really watching from
the column in
the sky?

(See also 'Juxtapositions')

Metric feats in S minor I, II & III: Cadiz 2001 (LL VI & VIII)

Serious interest in the fascinating snail began in Perth, W. Australia where our garden was invaded on a massive scale every night. Drastic measures had to be taken, short of eating them (which in fact might have been useful). Parts II & III started as footnotes.

Miércoles ... en Casa Lazo a Carmen y Ramón: Cadiz, c. Barrié 2009 (LL I, VI & X)

Carmen and Ramón produced some memorable dishes, especially in the line of *guisos* and *potajes* (stews and thick soups). I was to regret their departure. Cuisine, cabbage and sprouts: *en el día indicado*. (See also 'Bonito error')

MIND THE MONKEY!: Cadiz 2004

Series of five pieces where some picturesque and frivolous sounding words have been used to depict our fickle and wandering minds, as the avatar Sai Baba considered them.

Mind the monkey 1 (LL V)

Mind the monkey 2 (LL V)

Mind the monkey 3 (LL V)

Mind the monkey 4 (LL V)

Mind the monkey 5 (LL V & VI)

Miniature: Cadiz 2010 (LL VII)

Fascinating the pace, both fast and slow, the certainty, the nerve. The dozen or so ferns hanging from the first floor patio balcony allowed of continuing scrutiny and wonder.

The Moon, three images *: Oxford 1959 (LL VIII)

Mover and shaker: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Language and the creative process: adrenalin and more.

Nada: Salamanca 1958 (LL V)

Naturally: Cadiz 2003 (LL VIII)

Does the sequence denote
– inverted paradox –
gullible, less so, not?

Night vengeance *: Oxford 1958 (LL II)

NO NONSENSE, NOW!: Cadiz 2004

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! 1 (LL V)

No nonsense, now! 2 (LL V)

No nonsense, now! 3 (LL V)

No nonsense, now! 4 (LL V)

No nonsense, now! 5 (LL V & VI)

No nonsense, now! 6 (LL V & VI)

No nonsense, now! 7 (LL V)

No nonsense, now! 8 (LL V)

No nonsense, now! 9 (LL V)

No nonsense, now! 10 (LL V)

No, not to separate: Auckland 1967 (LL III)

One of nine in my Auckland cycle. (See notes for 'The Cost')

No tocar: Cadiz 2004 (LL II & X)

Love (dysfunctional): *el amor no correspondido*.

¿O?: Cadiz 2004 (LL V)

A frequent scene at the supermarket door and elsewhere: a challenge. Sai Baba said one should not give beggars money, but food (I've been abused by a beggar, however, for offering just that ... food).

Observations (cursory, of course): Cadiz 2001 (LL I)

Set in our flat in c. Beato Diego. One was struck also by the sound of snoring and music of sorts, usually flamenco or pop, from below, and yapping of dogs from the next flat.

‘Observations’,

– cursory of

course –

is close,

but oh to know the reason for

the high-pitched monologue and cursed

response!

Ode to Cupid's eyes to Elfriede: Munich 1957 (LL III)

On Elfriede, of *Piper Verlag* where I worked for two months after leaving Ampleforth.

El Optivista: Cadiz 2008 (LL X)

Advertising: *'trompe l'oeil' e ilusión*.

Other people's: Cadiz 2001 (LL X)

Loud noise (music?), progress!: freedom of speech in invasive mode.

Otro tango: Cadiz 2009 (LL II & X)

Desire (a cocktail): *bailarlo ... en Cádiz*.

Out of its depth I & II: Cadiz 2001 (LL VIII & X)

The second poem began as a footnote. Not a useful sort of fish, and its silver anything

but sterling. Silverfish, language: of words and certain letters.

Padre Nuestro: Cadiz 2009 (LL X)

God: *la oración se licencia*.

The Painting: Cadiz 2001 (LL VII)

Description, from memory, of a painting after George Morland to which my father used to draw my attention. He said it would defray death duties. It was stolen from his home at 433 Banbury rd., Oxford and has never been recovered. Could this description help?

¿Para sordos?: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Football, entertainment, invasion: *la tiranía de la afición*.

Pause I & II: Cadiz 2001 (LL VIII)

The second poem started off as a footnote.

La Pérfida: Cadiz 2009 (LL VI & X)

Politics (Gibraltar), fashions: *al Peñón sin ton ni son*. T-shirt slogans are anathema to me, in particular 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, in Cadiz, where the person responsible for helping the pianist turn the pages was wearing a T-shirt with words in English to the effect of "f ... you". So I frequently make fun of both shirt and wearer.

Perro destino: Cadiz 2002 (LL I & VIII)

Could this warrant a place in a Cadiz *chirigota*? (satirical songs in the annual Carnival).

Pigeon: Cadiz 2001 (LL VIII)

Set near one of the many bars in c. Zorrilla, off plaza de Mina.

After the rose-
buds, and the hay,
it's good to know
(when all else fails)
– Seneca's there,
in the wings.

Pirelli paradox I & II to Win, the 'Governor': Cadiz 2002 (LL II & VI)

The second poem began as a footnote. It was all 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.

Pity Penelope: Auckland 1967 (LL IV)

One of nine in my Auckland cycle (see notes for 'The Cost'). A combination of myths ...
Hero, Leander, Ulysses

Plegaria a María: Cadiz, c. Concepción 2010 (LL I & X)

María's café-bar *Al Liquidói* – the Cadiz-speak name meaning 'to keep a look out' and a much used expression – is personified here. María, sadly, left soon after. Language.

¿Peligro en la calle Concepción? ¡Vaya!

Point of departure: Cadiz 2001 (LL V)

Poor Idea: Cadiz 2001 (LL X)

Language and the creative process: not stuck for words.

Por las sombrillas de la Victoria: Cadiz 2018

Prendas de amor: Cadiz 2017 (LL VIII)

Refers to an event in Omeo about 1990. The sinister start to an impossible relationship.

Punishing heat: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Temperatures, progress: a conditioned response.

A Question of Identification: Cadiz 2001 (LL V)

'Immortal' with a capital

'I',

ought to have the final word some-

where (?)

in 'A question

of Identification' – yes?

A Question of values: Melbourne 1971 (LL VIII)

Very much a Melbourne outer suburban scene, in the 70s.

Real: Cadiz 2001 (LL V)

Cadiz Holy Week is a bit noisy (in general pleasantly so), Carnival noisier (and of a boisterous sort), while rubbish collection and street hosing mean substantial noise at some stage most nights. But there's noise and ... noise.

'Real', of course, is not all it seems.

For Thomas,

'real'

lay at his finger tips.

For me, though,

'real'

is not out there at all:

it's inside, loudly calling out.

Recital at Santa Catalina: Cadiz 2004 (LL I)

Sangit-Kathak, by the Tapangroup from India, was one of the many August outdoor events available when 'La Teófila' was Mayoress, and formed part of *Las Voces de Dios*

cycle. Win urged me to write up our night. The fortress (1598 -), one in the ring of sea defences, passed recently to civilian use and has been well restored.

Royalty, almost: Cadiz 2007 (LL VIII)

Such bourgeois, bordering on aristocratic, protagonists.

Sea love *: Oxford 1958 (LL II)

Self portrait (analytical inventory of parts): Cadiz 2001 (LL V)

In 'Self portrait' I forgot 2 things:

the mouth comes with a smile

(a plus),

the skin's got blemishes

(a minus);

oh, and Willy relishes a bit

of hunky-dory thingumajig

(or did).

Sense of loss, loss of the senses to Barbara: Cadiz 2001 (LL V)

The cottage, a miner's survival from gold rush days, was home for some years as I ran my bookshop in Foster, Australia.

'Nothing ventured, nothing gained', they say

with certainty, but forget to add:

'One man's gain is another man's loss'.

Loss and gain, gain and loss – and we dare

pretend to fully grasp their meaning!

The shout to Glenwys: Cadiz 2012 (LL IV)

... And there was no shouting back.

Las Sinpapeles: Cadiz 2010 (LL I)

The title (only) derives from the *sinpapeles*, refugees from N. Africa who disembark from *pateras* (rubber dinghies) along Spain's Mediterranean beaches and even at Cadiz on the Atlantic, and lack identifying documents. The town hall wastepaper bins or *papeleras* are good looking, but a disaster in the wind and soon empty. I tried to share my views with the *Diario de Cádiz*...

Sirenada a Carina: Cadiz, c. Montañés 2002 (LL I & III)

Light, lyrical and dramatic – one of my favourites – and platonic, alas. On Carina, the charismatic Celtic owner of the cafe-bar *Diván del Mónaco*. She took an early interest in my *papegados* (collages) and helped me house hunting. She was to show me *La Bella escondida*, an invisible tower in c. José del Toro – at a time unfortunately when that magnificent building was due for renovations. I was not able to wait. As it turned out, I should have had to wait about five years. (See also 'Encuentro esdrújulo')

Sitting pretty: Cadiz 2001 (LL II)

‘Sitting pretty’ was a delight
to write, and I don’t regret not
meeting the owner face to face.
She would have known my thoughts, a mix
of carnal craving, merriment
and awe, and would have been at sea
without a compass, chart, or ... me.

Skullduggery: Cadiz 2019

Smile-havoc *: Oxford 1958 (LL III)

Set in a first floor café near the Students’ Union, in the Oxford Cornmarket. The object
of my fascination ... probably a Latin.

Sol y sombra (formerly *Pasatiempos* ...): Cadiz 2007 (LL VI, VIII & X)

Towards a crossword, but missing standard clues (see introduction to Fragments). My
views are mixed on the subject of *los toros*, but were further confused by someone’s
insistence that I sign a petition banning bullfights, or I would not be spoken to again.

Traje de luces y pasodoble.

Soledad *: Salamanca 1958 (LL V)

The footnote refers to the Holy Week procession in the Plaza Mayor, visible from the
Pensión Mieza, plaza del poeta Iglesias where I was lodged.

Sombra: Salamanca 1958 (LL V)

Speaking of domes: Cadiz 2001 (LL I)

The setting is humble Cadiz.

In ‘Speaking of domes’, I forgot
to add: not all are round, for some
are multi-faceted, and some
are steep, shallow, wide, or narrow
(London, I chose not to mention).

Spellsetter: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Language and the creative process: when an echo’s o.k.

Still (life): Cadiz 2003 (LL I & VII)

I don’t know who was responsible for the restaurant-bar display at *10 de Veedor*. Juan
the manager or the waitress who left to work at a childrens’ bookshop in plaza de Mina.

Dropped: the lashes of myth and masque,
a horse’s mane, a comet’s tail,
the silent arrogance of grass.

After-thoughts: colour of the wheat?
bleached gold; location? number 10;
... and reefstone counter of the bar.

Still life plus: Cadiz 2001 (LL VIII)

Set in my first flat in c. Beato Diego – the bedroom view:

Motionless and hot, all light and colour,
then add a touch of sound – that's 'Still life plus'.
It's 'abstract', to you? or 'impressionist'?
In terms of the effect, well yes, that's true.
And were these my aims? Not quite, no. I just
'forgot' the buildings, so engrossed in what
I saw ... and heard. 'Omissionist' says more.

Strangers in Paradise: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Language (words highjacked): they queered his pitch.

Summer busyness: Cadiz 2007 (LL I & VIII)

A morning and evening close-up sight from our study giving on to San Dimas. The speed of manoeuvre is incredible, mishaps rare. Flights: over a period of about four months from April to August, give or take a fortnight.

Surréalismes: Oxford 1960 (LL VII, VIII & X)

Language visuals / representation, on a typewriter! Settings, mood, *pressentiments*.

Surrounds I & II: Cadiz, *Restaurante* (plaza) *San Antonio* 2003 (LL I & VI)

The décor at that time - glass door, walls dressed in cork - was quite something. My companion was Win. Part II began as a footnote, but took off.

Swallow holes: Cadiz 2010 (LL VIII)

There's sadness at this time, but also acute awareness of the changed aspect of the overhead sky, so frequented as it had been by the large numbers of speeding birds.

A Tail to wag a dog: Cadiz 2001 (LL X)

Language and the creative process: the word empowered.

Té con tomate: Cadiz 2007 (LL VI & X)

Bread and tomato paste make for a standard breakfast, but not so tea. Language, confusion, cuisine: *y por poco ... hubo tomate*.

Thank God for Sunday: Cadiz 2001 (LL X)

Time, routine: Godforsaken, almost.

Them! And 'us'? to Patricia and Steve: Cadiz 2011 (LL III)

Prompted by Patricia's observations on a new neighbour in Omeo, and doubts on the optimism shown by my charming estate agent in Medina Sidonia (Cadiz). Perception, self-perception, identity ... and reality. (See Trish for more on Patricia Leon)

Through the railings: Cadiz 2004 (LL VII)

(See also The Flowering roof, 'Call of the sun') Hibiscus blooms whether full or folded seem to convey messages.

A Timely spring: Cadiz 2011 (LL VIII & X)

Language is thick with sayings, some more right than others. Why not suggest another, and let hares have a word and take their place in the world of sayings? After all, what's sauce for the goose ... Sayings, language: on seasonal alert.

To ask, or not to ask to Donna: Auckland 1967 (LL III)

Not part of the Auckland series (see notes for 'The Cost'), but originating and ending there, rather unhappily. Quite a story. It was possibly written up later, in Melbourne.

To die, or not to die?: Auckland 1967 (LL III)

One of nine in my Auckland cycle. (See notes for 'The Cost')

To feel his fingers: Melbourne 1971 (LL II)

To squander today: Cadiz 2010 (LL V)

Top dog: Cadiz 2010 (LL VIII & X)

It's a scene to be believed ... this view is far from being biased. But Jesús – a neighbour – and his dog, who pass my window every morning, have a nicer relationship. Dogs, social structures: who's more dogged? .

Torture of memory to Nanette: Melbourne 1970 (LL IV)

Touched: Cadiz 2002 (LL X)

Cause and effect, language: at breaking point.

Towed away: Cadiz 2019

Trampled on: Melbourne 1970 (LL III)

TRISH: Cadiz 2010

Series of eight Australian ballad style pieces, inspired by and dedicated to (the still far away) Patricia Leon who graciously agreed to inherit my *Octagon Bookshop* in Omeo, Australia. She could turn out a fine ballad herself.

Trish 1 (LL IV & VI)

Trish 2 (LL IV & VI)

There are lions and lions ... and the Omeo Annual Show and the part played by the Omeo Lions and their supporters.

Trish 3 (LL IV & VI)

Trish 4 (LL IV)

Ted was an elderly character from nearby Benambra, eccentric, unwell, unkempt and friendly. He was known for his high profile outdoor scrap heap of domestic and farming equipment, stuff in general ... and for hitching a ride.

Trish 5 (LL IV)

Speak of teleporting! and there she seemed to be, as large as life. I greatly miss my personally designed native wood, marble (and fossils) desk, still at the *Octagon*.

Trish 6 (LL IV)

(See also 'Giftshop blues')

Trish 7 (LL IV)

A multiplicity of themes, principally that of the (perceived) notoriously dangerous outdoors versus the 'safe' indoors. But dangers lurk at home ... as in the world of IT, which Patricia and I used exhaustively prior to her visiting me in Cadiz.

Trish 8 (LL IV)

Patricia often wrote of hearing a flight of geese, but I have no idea of their significance. The park is the botanically interesting, ornamental *Parque Genovés*, a hundred yards from my home in Cadiz.

Unbecoming a croupier: Cadiz 2004 (LL X)

Gambling, fate: a case for the Bill?

Up and away: Cadiz 2004 (LL VIII)

Murmurations in the skies over Cadiz, a phenomenon which I noticed in the weeks before my Mother's death in Cadiz and prior to that of my son Patrick, in New Zealand.

Like ballet, vibrant, in winter skies, and
about appearances, and truth – inside.

Cockatoos (sulphur-crested) in Omeo share some of these behavioural characteristics.

Vaivenes del cielo: Cadiz 2008 (LL X)

Technology (messy), progress: *¿hay contraindicaciones, sí o no?*

Viento de Castilla *: Salamanca 1958 (LL VII)

Vine leaves in autumn to Judith R.: Melbourne 1971 (LL V)

Triggered by a distant view which caught my eye on the daily drive from home in Eltham to La Trobe University. And 'Zoë' ...who is she?

Voices: Cadiz 2007 (LL VII)

Inspired by seeing people walk down the street speaking loudly to nobody around and occasionally listening to somebody invisible, and to involvement in the sale to a North American of a book of my Father's on 'The Maid'.

Wanted, missing to Win: Cadiz 2004 (LL IV & VI)

The time Win went to Granada and I chose to fend for myself at home in Cadz.

Who on Earth ... : Cadiz 2003 (LL VII)

Ashram of the Indian Avatar Sai Baba. (See notes: illustrations 4, and Appendix 3)

Why say it all?: Cadiz 2001 (LL V)

Set in my flat in c. Beato Diego.

'Why say it all?'

The title lets me off, I think,
though (I confess) I failed to list
six washing lines and eighteen pegs
– some green, some pink –
some trousers, sheets, and rows of socks
flapping in the breeze.

(Please let me off!)

Wild plums *: Melbourne 1971 (LL III)

Set near our home in the semi-rural Eltham of the '70s.

Wing din: Cadiz 2011 (LL VIII & X)

Such a shame that people – and my cat – want to kill cicadas, when they are just busy trying to communicate. Cicadas, language: in full form (not at all ill).

Without you *: Auckland 1967 (LL IV & VIII)

Time can drag its feet and hurt be prolonged, inexorably. One of nine in my Auckland cycle. (See notes for 'The Cost')

A Woman's dreams: Auckland 1967 (LL II)

One of nine in my Auckland cycle. (See notes for 'The Cost')

Ya no sirven a Milagros: Cadiz 2001 (LL I & VI)

I used to breakfast at the *Cafetería Aduana*, c. 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.

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.

Yours Truly, Q.C.: Cadiz 2010 (LL X)

Personal: could I be barred from the Bar? a question of concern.

Notes

POEMS vol. XI

* published

After Glasgow, home post-1947 was Oxford, with Ampleforth College, York as home away from home from 1952-1957.

As seen from a beach in autumn: 1952

The influence of Arran or Fraserburgh in Scotland, or Sandhamn in Sweden, or Veules-les-roses in France? I visited the first two a number of times.

As you like it: 1952

This seems to mark the start of what was to become a lifelong interest in association of ideas, association of words, interrelationship of words and ideas (and the potential of it all for ... anarchy). The collection *Words at play* contains quite a few poems on the subject, identified in the end notes as 'language and the creative process'. Most of my poetry collections include poems with an initial number in roman, where a 'I' represents the main poem, and a 'II' (or 'III') represents associated ideas / words which missed out, but finally made it into an extra (associated) poem. Indeed, there are end notes following poems, where I incorporate snatches of verse to 'rescue' yet more ideas / words from oblivion.

The Ballad of misfortune: 1954

This, plus 'The Ballad of perdition' and 'I went away' were probably written under the influence of Coleridge, and (maybe) exile at boarding school. I have been tempted since writing to rename the ship the 'Miss Fortune'. Why didn't I think of that at the time?

The Ballad of perdition: 1954

(See 'The Ballad of misfortune', above) The ultimate in pessimism. Original? ... or in Keats's footsteps? My Father wrote an article 'Keats's use of the negative' in *Études Anglaises* v.XIV n.1 (but that was 1961).

Cool water: 1956

The themes of this deliberately lyrical piece are multiple, but may be said to include some of the different manifestations of water, culminating in what I judged the most significant: tears. A touch of Blake? Written at night under the bedclothes and with the aid of a torch, hoping for a prize in a school competition. No luck.

Desert sun: 1955

The sun, the moon, the stars and the heavens in general fascinated me from a very early age and continue to do so (see 'The Juggler' written in 2004, in *The Natural world VII*, Heaven and earth). An early challenge to my father's views that verbs are strong and

adjectives weak, the latter to be eschewed or at best kept to a minimum. (See 'Actors for all reasons' [2010] in the collection Words at play)

Evening: 1951

Evening voices *: 1953

My father had this poem, 'Light everywhere' and 'Stars' published without my knowledge in 1960 – much to my undisguised anger and embarrassment. He was not pleased with my reaction, considered out of order. I have lived to regret my response principled though it may have seemed to me, but clearly ungrateful and ... short sighted.

Fear: 1951

First time under anaesthetic: 1953

This refers to an operation for removal of my tonsils, and was written well after the event (Glasgow, pre-1948). It was a traumatic experience only made bearable by hospital visits from my mother and loads of ice cream.

I went away: 1953

(See 'The ballad of misfortune', above)

Inceptio brumae: 1952

Maybe trying to impress a teacher? Or maybe just challenging myself, trying to make a dead language live. Latin was never my forte.

The Last storm: 1952

Light everywhere *: 1953

(See 'Evening voices', above)

A Lull in a storm: 1953

A favourite. Was I remembering the river Kelvin, at the foot of our crescent in Glasgow?

Le Matin: 1953

Autobiographical in theory, but in fact totally false: there was no fire, I only needed glasses forty years later and there was no swimming readily available at that stage of my life. True – that I shall never forget the anguish of hours awake and still confined to bed as it was deemed too early to get up. Was writing in French an appeal to my Mother?

Morning at sea: 1955

(See 'As seen from a beach in autumn') Maybe one could now add Santander in Spain to the list of places which influenced.

My heart's desiring: 1952

Memories of Glasgow and its countryside, or Fraserburgh?

La Neige: 1953

Ode to a cat: 1953

I had a cat at home briefly, not to be found when I returned from boarding school. I harboured serious suspicions ... Here we have the influence of Keats? or Shelley? or? Whatever, I have now (2019) had a cat for over ten years, and wrote the series

Cattributes A-Z (The Natural world IX, the Bestiary 2) in her honour.

Ode to a fly: 1953

The same influences at work, but the subject more mundane. This needs to be read fast.

Ode to a mouse: 1953

The same influences. I kept white mice, which multiplied and multiplied and ... escaped and caused mayhem. The neighbours complained, predictably. I loved the wee things.

Stars *: 1953

(See 'Evening voices' above; also specifically 'The Juggler' [2004] in The Natural world VII, heaven and earth)

Summer: 1947

My first poem (see comments in the general introduction / background). The venue was the *Oxford University Parks* or *Norham Gardens* in South Park Road.

That which is necessary: 1952

The Turn of the tide: 1954

Yet another instance of a precocious (?) concern with the fragility of life, and inexorable endings. Did my experience with polio (neck and spine) some years earlier affect me emotionally? Probably, together with the bombing of neighbouring houses in Glasgow in W.W. II. Some of the terms used reflect details picked up from my Latin studies.

Underground: 1952

I don't recollect why I wrote this. It so happens, though, that I did get stuck alone in a pothole on the Yorkshire moors, my candle out, on a school free afternoon. But when was it? The romantic presentation may suggest I wrote this before that event ...!

The Upper world: 1953

Again, in this collection, a fascination with meteorological phenomena, and – though on a lesser scale – residual symptoms of school Latin which I did not enjoy. Yet there must have been related aspects that moved my imagination but were not part of the course.

A Waterfall: 1953

An early attempt at creating suspense by withholding the key word – but the effect rather spoiled by the give-away title.

When a thunderstorm threatens: 1952

Ambitious, picturesque, but not always accurate. Yet intention will out.

When the sun sinks slowly down: 1952

Nature rears its head again, not entirely accurately, and themes are developed in a quite disciplined way (the conclusion ... a bit fluffed?). Yet equally important to me were the accompanying exercises in alliteration, rhymes both assonantal and consonantal, and sound effects in general.

Winter is coming: 1952

Continuing experimentation with sound, at some cost to the realities of nature.



Notes

ILLUSTRATIONS vols. I-XI

These entries, by sequence of occurrence in this volume (XII), describe a selection of illustrations drawn from vols.I-XI, with their original placements in brackets at the close. Entries in bold indicate further information at the end of these notes. *Lines of a lifetime* is abbreviated LL.

1) (Printers' blocks) Cherubs (girl to l., boy to r.), bunch of grapes (centre), three-piece swag (below): end block (cms. 7x5.5) from *Los Baños de Árgel* in v.1 of collection '*Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra comedias y entremeses*' (Antonio Marín, Madrid 1749). Ref.: BS 99 & BN U 4063. In magenta, it advertised the *Octagon Bookshop*, Omeo, Australia. (Taken from LL II where it faces 'Hard-pressed'; it now graces this cover)

2) (Coins) Roman coin from the province of Cadiz. (Taken from LL I, close of book)

3) (Printers' blocks) Spray of three flowers: end block (cms. 5x5.5) from *El Trato muda costumbre* [also known as *El Marido hace mujer y el ...*] in the collection '*El Fénix castellano D. Antonio de Mendoça*' (Miguel Manescal, Lisboa 1690). Ref.: BS 444:i & BN 3/24620. (Taken from LL II where it faces 'Choice of stroke')

4) (Papegados) Retrato 'El Avatar Sai Baba' / 2: 27. A piece incorporating *finca* window glass. (Taken from LL VII where it faces 'Who on Earth ...'; and see Appendix 3)

5) Black and white closeup of a beach sand formation taken in the 80's when I lived at Foster, near Wilson's Promontory, Victoria, Australia. In LL XII it faces the poem 'Above and below'. (Taken from LL VII where it features in miniature on the cover; see Appendix 2 - covers).

6) (CATTRIBUTES 'A'-'Z') Photo ... to catalogue or not to catalogue? (Taken from LL IX, where it faces the poem 'Cattribute A')

7) (CATTRIBUTES 'A'-'Z') Photo ... what a look! (Taken from LL IX, where it faces the poem 'Cattribute F')

8) (CATTRIBUTES 'A'-'Z') Photo: 'The chair stripped bare by her cat' (with apologies

to Marcel Duchamp): 'A work by the Dada artist Noche, one of a collection of Anarchic Works', as Glenwys Albrecht the photographer puts it. (Taken from LL IX, where it faces the poem 'Cattribute M')

9) (CATTRIBUTES 'A'-'Z') Photo ... cat recumbent on the *azotea* (Taken from LL IX, where it faces the poem 'Cattribute Y')

10) (Siren / Mermaid) A mermaid or siren used here to symbolise desire. (Taken from LL II, subtitled 'Eros 1': it is the only one in this volume of the six variants which appear there.

11) (Printers' blocks) Cherub standing between two wide spreading fronds with three flowers apiece, one full, one in bud, and one spent: end block (cms. 7.5x2) from *También hay duelo en las damas* in Vera Tassis' collection '*Tercera parte de comedias de don Pedro Calderón de la Barca*' (Viuda de Blas de Villanueva, Madrid 1726). Ref.: BS 732:i & BN T 2578. (Spacer taken from LL III)

12) (THE FLOWERING ROOF) Photo: The Flowering roof 5, '*Crassula ovata*'. (Taken from LL VII, where the photo faces the relevant poem '*Crassula ovata*')

13) (THE FLOWERING ROOF) Photo: The Flowering roof 8, 'Love in a mist – *Nigella damascena*'. The view presents the plant's autumn / winter mode as opposed to its spring / summer one which is reproduced on the cover of LL II (see Appendix 2: covers). (Taken from LL VII, it accompanies the poem of this name)

14) A French mantle clock, with green painted and gilt heightened waisted case, gilt metal mounts and the date 1779, the 8-day movement with silk suspension and striking on a bell. It belonged to my parents. (Taken from LL IV where it is used as a spacer, it is used now to accompany the poem '*Frustra impeditur*')

15) (Printers' blocks) Face (centre top) emitting rays, with cloud and lightning (l.), bow and quiver of arrows (r.), lyre (centre): title page block (cms. 6.5x3.5) from [Luis Moncín] *El Queso de Casilda* (José Ferrer de Orga, Valencia 1813). Ref.: BS 648 & BN T 8567. (Taken from LL II where it faces the poem 'A Woman's dreams')

16) (Printers' blocks) Wide, low ceilinged room with a gentleman pronouncing on one knee before a lady, standing, expostulating and gesticulating: opening wood block (cms. 6.4x2.5) from *El Padrino y el pretendiente* in vol.8 of '*Teatro, o colección de los*

sainetes y demás obras dramáticas de don Ramón de la Cruz y Cano (Imprenta Real, Madrid 1789). Ref.: BS 567 & BN T 3700. (Taken from LL III where it faces the poem 'No, not to separate' as it does in XII, but now accompanied also by 'No tocar')

17) (Siren / Mermaid) A siren / mermaid used here to symbolise absence. (Taken from LL IV, subtitled '*In absentia*': one, in this volume, of the two variants appearing there as spacers; here it accompanies the poem 'Pity Penelope')

18) Early evening view of Venus, the faint light from the San Sebastián lighthouse and the strange outlines of the nearby *sombrillas* as seen from a *chiringuito*. (This accompanies the recent poem '*Por las sombrillas de la Victoria*')

19) Marble plinth grotesque (*arte encontrado*) facing *Casa Lazo*, c. Barrié, Cadiz. (Taken from LL VIII; here it accompanies the poem '*Prendas de amor*')

20) (Printers' blocks) Landscape with ruined gateway building and tree (background), woods (l.) and rushes (r.) (both foreground), and three waterfowl swimming (r. to l.) (centre foreground): title page block (4.5x3.5) from the *sainete* (author not given) *El Sastre y su hijo* (José Ferrer de Orga, Valencia 1811). Ref.: BS 700 & BN T 27405. (Spacer taken from LL V; here it accompanies 'Sense of loss, loss of the senses')

21) (Siren / Mermaid) The mermaid or siren used here symbolises amorous travail, frustration and unrequited love. (Taken from LL III, subtitled 'Eros 2'; the only one in this volume of six variants appearing there, here it accompanies the poem '*Sirenada*')

22) (Printers' blocks) A yoke of oxen ploughing, followed by a peasant goading them on: title page block (cms. 5.5x2.8) from D.V.M. y M. [author not identified] *Abelardo, o el Amante de Heloisa* (Ildefonso Mompié, Valencia 1822). Ref.: BS 12:ii. (Spacer taken from LL VIII; here it accompanies the poem 'Thank God for Sunday')

23) Traditional ornamental plate by José Fernández of Puente del Arzobispo. It shows a hare, delighted with itself, making a spring. Acquired recently from *Antigüedades de la Rosa*, c. Benjumeda, Cadiz and presented to me by my wife Glen. Thanks. (Taken from the cover of LL VIII; here it accompanies the poem 'A Timely spring', written earlier. See Appendix 2: covers)

24) (Printers' blocks) Downcast head, circled, in loosely shaped rectangular swag of foliage etc. ('Green Man' effect): end block (cms. 6x5) from Santiago Garro *Músicos*,

amo y criado, y el amor por el retrato in v.22 of the collection '*Comedias de varios autores*' (no colophon, late 18th c.). Ref.: BS 520:i & BN T 14839. (Taken from LL IV where it faces the end of 'Pity Penelope'; here it accompanies 'To squander today')

25) (Papegados) '*Constantes del ser humano*' / 2:32 (Taken from LL V where it faces the poem 'To squander today')

26) Oil painting: (untitled) landscape signed by Lesage with people parading on the sands of a beach resort. Chosen because it reflects the following subject matter and moods, and adorned my parents' home. Did it influence me directly, or simply emphasise what I experienced at first hand? (see entry 27 below). (Taken from LL XI, where it faces the general introduction of that volume)

27) Oil painting: 'Moel Sibord' by Thomas Whittle, a landscape where mountains, water, moon, clouds and sails combine to create atmosphere (see entry 26 above). (Taken from LL XI, where it faces the notes on the poems of that volume)

28) (Printers' blocks) A substantial spread of water with a galleon or such like under full sail (l.), a tower with its flag (r.), in the background a town set against a mountain and in the foreground three large bollards: text interval block (cms. 6.5x3) from *La Amistad o el buen amigo*, in v. VI of '*Teatro, o colección de los sainetes y demás obras dramáticas de D. Ramón de la Cruz y Cano*' (Imprenta Real, Madrid 1788). Ref.: BS 50 & BN T 3698. (Taken from LL XI, again with 'As seen from a beach in autumn')

29) (Papegados) '*A sus órdenes*' / 0:04 (*clave*-key, created as 2:31). It exhibits samples of the wallpapers. (Taken from LL XI, it faces again the poem 'As you like it')

30) A ship in the bottle by my seafaring grandfather, of South Shields, England. It is one of three craft items reflecting aspects of this section. (Taken from LL XI where it faces the poem 'Morning at sea', here it accompanies 'The Ballad of misfortune')

31) (Printers' blocks) Horizontal arrangement in five parts consisting of four circles with floral designs, two of the circles to either side of a bird, splayed and facing right within its own oval frame: end block (cms. 7.3x1.5) from Pedro Rosete *Mira al fin*, in the collection '*Parte treinta y tres de doce comedias famosas, de varios autores*' (Claudio Macé, Valencia 1642). Ref.: BS 496 & BN R 24989. (Taken from LL XI, where it also accompanies the poem 'Cool water')

32) (**Papegados**) '*El Mundo, el cielo y el más allá*' / 2:17. (Taken from LL XI where it faces 'Desert sun', here it accompanies the poem)

33) Pottery: a horse's head made by my daughter Isabel in childhood; one of two craft items by her. (Taken from LL XI where it faces 'Fear', here it accompanies the poem)

34) 'Furniture' mouse carved in wood. This item (inserted only now) accompanies the poem 'Ode to a mouse' in LL XII. (See notes on the non-Juvenilia poems, with reference to the piece '*Frustra impeditur*')

35) (**Cristaletas**) '*Cristaleta 12*'. (Taken from LL XI where it faces the poem 'Stars', which it now accompanies). See also (Appendix 2: covers): *Cristaleta 6* (which faces the poem 'The Shout' in LL IV), and *Cristaleta 7* (which faces the poem 'Self-portrait' in LL V), both featuring in miniature on the front cover of LL I.

36) Pottery: leaves and things of the earth, made by my daughter Isabel in childhood; one of the two craft items by her here. (Taken from LL XI where it faces the poem 'Winter is coming', which it now accompanies)

37) (**Papegados**) '*Por tierra y por mar*' / 2:28. (Taken from LL II, where it faces the poem 'Sea love')

38) (**Printers' blocks**) Single-jointed two-handled eccentrically shaped vase (effect of a woman with hands on hips) holding twelve large and two small flowers: end block (cms. 7.7x7.5) from Diego Ximénez de Enciso *Santa Margarita* as in BN collection '*Comedias varias*' or '*Comedias de los mejores ingenios de España*' and bound under title of first item '*La Comedia de la Reina de las Flores*' (no colophon; 17...). Ref.: BS 692 & BN R 11269. (Taken from LL X, where it happens to face '*La Pérfida*')

39) The main lake across the valley from Ampleforth, in winter. (Taken from LL XI)

40) (**Printers' blocks**) Basket of flowers - a formal almost square effect achieved despite the quite irregular arrangement of the flowers, outstanding items being one flower opened fanwise (l.) and another full-face (centre): end block (cms. 6.5x5) from *Antes que todo es mi dama*, in Juan de Vera Tassis y Villarroel's '*Octava parte de comedias verdaderas del célebre poeta español D. Pedro Calderón de la Barca*' (Viuda de Blas de Villanueva, Madrid 1726). Ref.: BS 65:i & BN T 2583. (Taken from LL X where it happens to face 'Yours Truly, Q.C.)

CATTRIBUTES 'A'-'Z'

Cadiz, late November 2008: there was a sound of scuffling nearby – in the area between the door generally open onto the main street and the closed wrought iron and glass one which opens into the house – so I went to investigate. I had heard what seemed like voices and little feet retreating rapidly up the street.

What did I find? A diminutive black kitten had been dumped at my door. It had been left there in a cheap red and yellow plastic cage. Nearby there was a bag of pellets, a bag of sand ... and a letter. It was brief but correctly written, and the message it conveyed expressed regret that the owner could no longer keep the kitten. Would I help?

I had had plenty of cats before, but that had been in Australia. There I had lived in an outer Melbourne suburb, in a detached house with half an acre of garden. That had allowed comfortably for a pet-keeping situation. But now I was living in a semi-detached house with no garden – and nobody to help. I had decided I was in no position to keep a cat again, both for its own sake and for my own convenience.

So I put the cat, the cage and the accompanying paraphernalia onto the pavement. I trusted that someone else would be moved to collect it. Who knows? Maybe the very individuals responsible for the dumping would come back to see what had happened ... and repossess it all.

Nothing happened. It was night. It was raining. The wind was blowing. It was winter. And it was not exactly warm. After a seemingly interminable wait ... I relented. I collected the cat and its belongings from the street, and brought them inside. 'Noche' as I came to call her, being black and a creature of the night, had taken up residence.

She has been much photographed, principally by Glenwys Albrecht. In LL v.IX all the photos bar two ('unknown cat' taken from Noche's tired meal mat, and the photo of a chair) are of Noche in action, most are by camera, and all are set at c. San Dimas 10, Cadiz. The locations extend to almost every room of the house (a *finca*), the main sites being the library, the patio and of course the *azotea*. Some of the 28 photos had appeared before, in Glenwys' publication on the subject in late 2016.

Four of the photographs taken by Glenwys Albrecht have been selected for this volume to represent the 28 from her collection which appear in LL v.IX, where each one accompanied a poem. A further one appears here in miniature on the cover of LL v.IX (see Appendix 2 - covers).

COINS

Coin typical of Roman silver coins from the province of Cadiz unearthed by a local farmer in the 1930s near Jimena de la Frontera, Cadiz. An account of the find appears in H.D. Gallwey 'A hoard of third-century *antoniniani* from Southern Spain' (*Numismatic Chronicle* 1962). Eve Gallwey and I donated the whole of Colonel Gallwey's prize selection, left to us, to the Museo Nacional, Madrid in the late '70s. The one shown here, a bust of the Emperor Gallienus, is a sample obverse, enlarged from the two cm. average (the 11 others were only shown for their reverse, with the legends *Iovi propugnat*, *Aeternitas*, *Diana felix*, *Victoria germ*, *Apollo conser*, *Virtus*, *Libert*, *Aequitas*, *Germanicus max*, *Pax publica*, *Pax*). (Taken from LL I, titled 'Cadiz': the only one in this volume of the 12 appearing there.)

CRISTALETAS

Recycling did not end with the *Papegados*. 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 shards, no more than splinters, but others were whole bottle bases or 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 (*cristal*) 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.

One *cristaleta* (for 'Stars') has been selected for LL XII to represent the 12 appearing in LL vols.I-XI, but a further two are shown in miniature on the cover of LL v.I (see

Appendix 2 - covers). (A pair, they accompany the poems 'The Shout' and 'Self portrait' in LL vols.IV & V)

THE FLOWERING ROOF

Two photographs taken by Glenwys Albrecht have been selected for this volume to represent the 12 from her collection which appear in LL v.VII, where each accompanies a poem. However, the flowers *Love in a mist*, *Amor de hombre* (for the poem 'Spider or Purple Queen') and Edith Piaf's rose (for the poem 'The Full rose') appear here in miniature on the covers of LL vols.II, III and IV (see Appendix 2 - covers).

PAPEGADOS

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 an elephant, and also an interpretation in poster colours of a woman of Ancient Crete, 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* (introduced by Marisa de las Cuevas, *profesora de Historia del Arte*), *Quilla*, and online through *La Rampa Gallery* (Vejer). They have also appeared at some commercial establishments, and were made especially welcome at *Casa Lazo*. Recycled art, what?

Five *papegados* have been selected for this volume to represent the 66 appearing in LL I-XI. A further six appear here, but in miniature, on the cover of LL VI (Appendix 2 - covers). These last constitute a set of *retratos* or *esencias* (conceptual portraits) of staff at the nearby *Gotinga* a few years ago. (From l. to r.): 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, charming and patient, the (invisible) cook excellent and reliable, the owner busy, involved, attentive 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 the best. Queues! Those were the days, these the memories and here my eccentric but considered tributes.

PRINTERS' BLOCKS

Printers' blocks were made of wood or, later, metal, and were used to produce

decorative effects (in the main). The ones shown here were taken in the 1970s from the end, title or a text page of plays now in the 'Scarfe – La Trobe Collection', Glasgow University Library (part purchase, part gift). In the following, BS stands for my collection (pre-Glasgow), BN for the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid and quoted when items coincide. Where my collection number appears in italics, this indicates a *desglosada*, a play lifted probably long ago from its parent volume (now painstakingly identified) to make up a private collection or for simple commercial gain.

12 printers' woodblocks have been selected for this volume to represent the 47 appearing in LL vols.I-XI.

SIRENS / MERMAIDS

Three images have been used, all with a bearing on one or other of the Eros series.

The first (note 10) symbolises the theme of desire. It forms the exquisite handle of a walking stick given to me by my companion Naomi Earle of Estepona some years ago. (Taken from LL v.II, subtitled 'Eros 1': the only one in this volume of the 6 variants appearing there, here it accompanies the poem '*Cosquilla 1*'.)

The second (note 21) symbolises themes of amorous travail, frustration and unrequited love. She is shown supporting a lamp. I had chanced on her while searching for patio lights with a bit of oomph in Chiclana, a town some miles from Cadiz. And there she was, large as life and most brazen, on the pavement in front of a shop. I was impressed, embarrassed, and let her be. I carried on with my shopping ...but could not find the lights I wanted, and returned empty handed to Cadiz. A week or two later I returned to Chiclana still looking for the right sort of lights ... and there she was, on the pavement. I ignored her, and this time managed to find lights that suited the patio. As I was leaving I enquired about the price she might be fetching, expecting it to be way above my means. It was not (alas?) and so I swallowed my shame (why?) and asked for her to be conveyed to my home in Cadiz. She is adorned here with what was my mother's favourite necklace - of coral, appropriately. And the name I gave her, Bérénice? that's another story. (Taken from LL v.III, subtitled 'Eros 2'; the only one in this volume of the 6 variants appearing there, here it accompanies the poem '*Sirenada*'.)

The third (note 17) symbolises the theme of absence. It shows a seated and pensive figure in terracotta commissioned from the *Galería de Arte Nando*, Cadiz. (Taken from LL v.IV, subtitled '*In absentia*': one, in this volume, of the 2 variants appearing there, here it accompanies the poem 'Pity Penelope'.)

ILLUSTRATIONS OTHER THAN THOSE INCLUDED OR REFERRED TO ABOVE

The front cover illustration (LL v.X) shows the watermark in the paper used for printing Calderón's *La Protestación de la fe* (Antonio Sanz, Madrid, undated [unusual for AS] but circa 1752). Ref.: BS 641 & BN T 25343 and T 5617. The religious play was withheld from publication for some years due to the sensitive nature of the subject, conversion of Queen Christina of (Lutheran) Sweden to Catholicism. The watermark design (copy 641:i:b, leaf C2b.3a) tells you the paper maker's christian name was Alexandro; it suggests via the combination of visual allusion and verbal metaphor that one of his surnames was *Soler* (the sun standing for *sol* and the dangling R, pronounced for the final *er*); and it suggests via simple visual allusion that his other surname was *Coronado*. The pale lines of the trademark picture indicate thinness in the paper caused by the (wire) design limiting the flow of liquid paper mix during manufacture. The illustration has been made using x-rays, and is repeated on the back cover in its negative state (processes courtesy the Reserve Bank of Australia).

Some three dozen illustrations - carvings, ceramics, items of furniture, paintings, photographs, pottery etc. - appearing in LL vols.I-XI do not feature in this volume.



APPENDIX 1 Poems previously published

Cherwell (Oxford)

v.104, n.12, June 3rd. 1959:

‘Smile-havoc’.

Meanjin Quarterly (University of Melbourne)

v.30, n.3, September 1971:

‘Wild plums’.

Oxford Opinion

v.3, n.7, January 1959:

‘Men on the Moon’.

v.3, n.8, February 1959:

‘Desengaño, esperanza, y muerte’,

‘Soledad’.

v.4, n.2, May 1959:

‘Autumn love’.

v.4, n.4, Michaelmas 1959:

‘Ashes’, ‘Sea love’.

v.4, n.7, November 1959:

‘Night vengeance’, ‘The Moon: three images’.

Pembroke Bullfrog (Oxford)

Hilary 1959:

‘Ashes’, ‘Autumn love’.

Hilary 1960:

‘Guillotine’, ‘Smile-havoc’.

School Journal, part four (School Publications Branch, Department of Education, N.Z.) v.54, n.2, Winter 1960:

‘Evening voices’, ‘Light everywhere’, ‘Stars’.

Vida Hispánica (London)

v.vi, n.2, Summer 1958:

‘Castilla’, ‘Viento de Castilla’.

v.vi, no.3:

‘Soledad’.

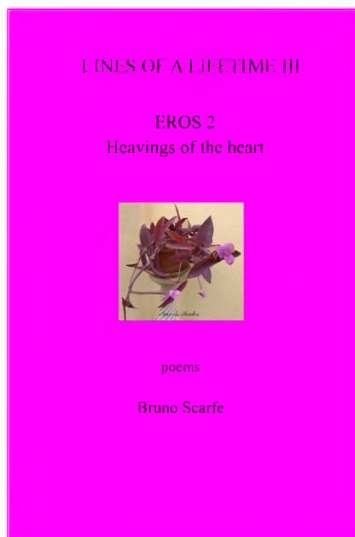
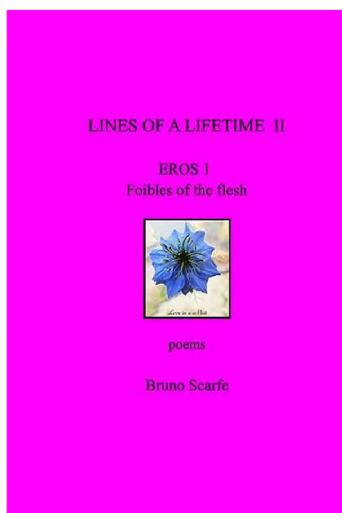
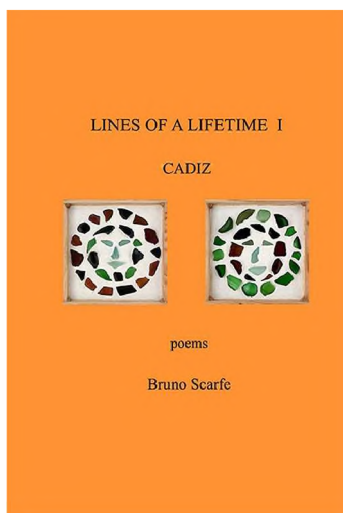
Westerly (University of Western Australia Press)

n.2, June 1973:

‘Without you’.

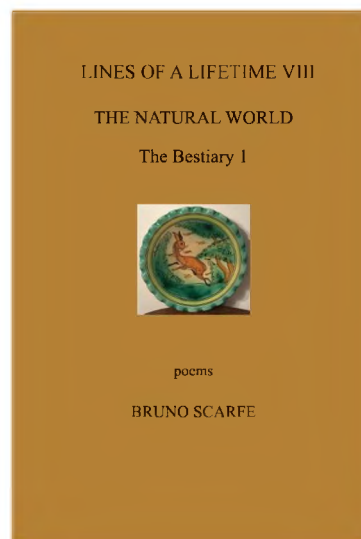
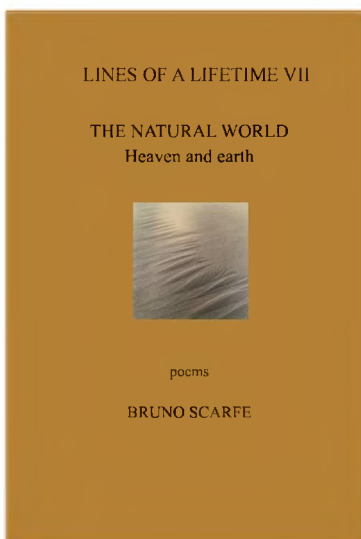
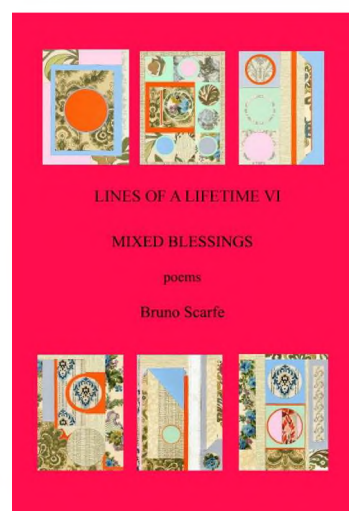
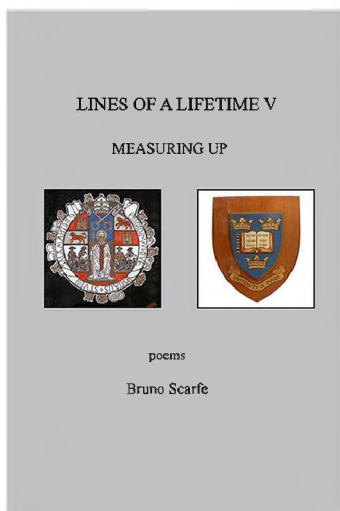
APPENDIX 2 Covers

**V.I: see notes for illustrations - *Cristaletas*, close of entry; vols.II, II & IV:
see notes for illustrations - series The Flowering Roof**



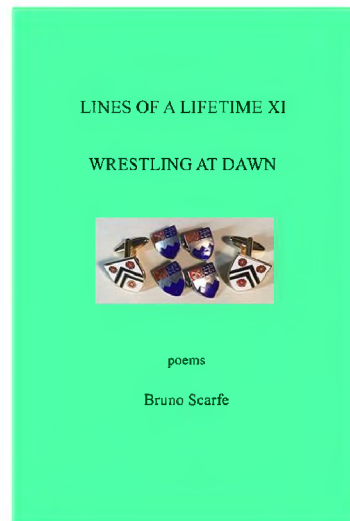
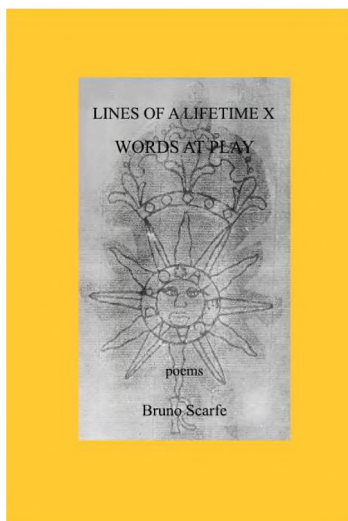
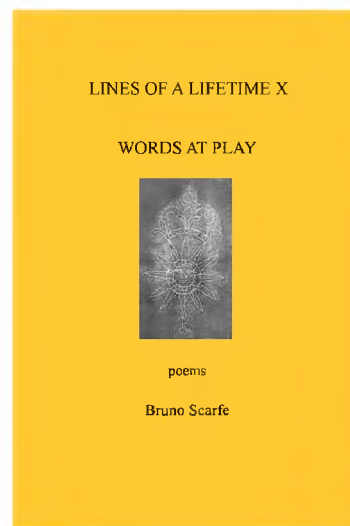
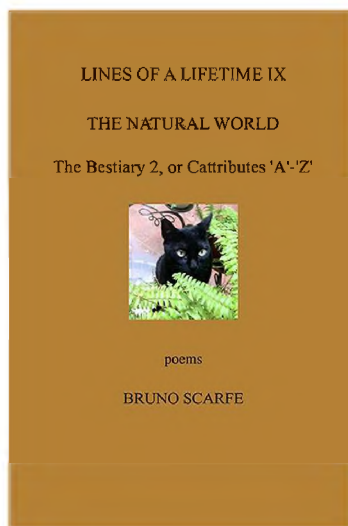
APPENDIX 2 Covers

V.V: coat of arms of the University of Salamanca and University of Oxford; v.VI: see notes for illustrations - *Papegados*, close of entry; v.VII: see note for illustrations, item 5; v.VIII: see note for illustrations, item 23



APPENDIX 2 Covers

V. IX: see notes for illustrations - series Cattributes A-Z; v.X (two items) see notes for illustrations - other, at close; v.XI coat of arms of New College (Choir) School, Oxford and Ampleforth College, York



APPENDIX 3 Autobiographical

‘A strange incident driving’

Wednesdays were my day off. I would lock up the *Octagon bookshop*, and go out in the car. Sometimes I explored the rolling hills and fast flowing rivers round Omeo, visited the *Blue Duck* at Anglers’ Rest or the little settlements of Benambra and Swift’s Creek, lunched at Ensay’s *Little River Inn*. Sometimes, snow permitting, I drove up to Dinner Plain village – an all timber architectural ‘folly’ – and continued through the straggling ski resort on Hotham, before crossing the mountain range and descending cautiously to the quaint gold mining towns of Bright or Beechworth.

Mostly however, I settled for a drive down to Bairnsdale, the nearest large town on the coast. It boasted a number of services relevant to my business, and I could pick up maps, posters, or books required urgently, or just stationery. I rewarded myself for this work on my day off, by having a leisurely lunch at the up-market *Riversleigh*, or a pub in Bairnsdale or Wy Yung – which both had an outdoor area.

I left in the morning, and returned at night. When I was getting to know my future partner Win – who lived at Wy Yung, on the outskirts of Bairnsdale – the trip would begin straight after work on the Tuesday evening, and would end late on Wednesday, or early Thursday just in time to open the shop. At first I drove a Mazda van, which I had had since Foster, but eventually Win persuaded me to trade it in for something more reliable and, indeed, smarter. So it was replaced by a low slung, 4 wheel drive Toyota Corolla station wagon – looking very like a normal car, but with style, and a fine silver-grey finish. It was now a year or two old, but performed as new. It had air conditioning and heating, was both fast and stable, and had a potentially valuable extra in the 4 wheel option – which most people used in sand or mud, but I used mainly for snow and ice.

Bairnsdale lay a hundred and twenty kilometres to the south, and took an hour and a half to reach – maybe less in the Toyota. Slow? The drive meant a drop of a thousand metres, from an area near the snow line, to sea level. It involved following a road with stretches straight as a die and others which snaked and corkscrewed, passing through grazing lands and forests, crossing creek and river bridges some of which took only single lane traffic, daring narrow culverts, and keeping your nerve as you tried to slip unnoticed between precipices which crumbled on to you from above and broke away

from you at your feet. Such was the drop, that the temperature within that hour could range from cold to warm, or from warm to hot. On the return journey, you had to remember that the safe looking road surface might be no longer what it seemed, for sheets of invisible 'black' ice could cover it, especially at the sun starved hairpin bends. And, as you climbed, you could run into a cloud bank, grey and cold, which cut visibility. On other occasions, snow would be falling by the time you reached the home run.

The land which had been opened up, was grazed by sheep or cattle, but the combination of leached soil and irregular rain meant flocks and herds were thinly spread. The journey began and ended in grazing country, though by the time you reached Bairnsdale there were signs of cultivation. The rest of the land still carried its ancient mantle of eucalyptus forest, with a whole spectrum of tree sizes and conditions, from dwarf to towering, from lean to lush, from green to brown and black. Here, earth and water formed half the equation, bushfires formed the other. They occurred almost every year in some area or other, and could burn savagely for hours and then smoulder systematically for days, or just pass by in a flash, leaping and roaring. So you saw everything from scenes of absolute destruction, to scenes of more or less successful regeneration, to scenes where damage was limited to the tree tops, the side of a tree, some bark, some leaves.

By day, with few exceptions, it was a picture postcard drive, with sections so beautiful you had to stop. At night, over the grazing land, you could admire a sky, vast and uninterrupted, all in motion with sharp and glittering stars. And, also at night, the black claustrophobic tunnel of the enveloping forest through which you drove, could tighten your chest and stop you breathing. It was eerie.

There were not many man made hazards. Traffic bankups for example, were few. Some were so predictable that they could be timetabled, such as those caused by the coincidence of narrow winding road and Trevor's Omeo bus or Rod Grinter's goods truck; others less so, caused once in a while by a long and anonymous logging leviathan, or by a heavyweight dump truck shrouded in tarpaulins, shifting finely crushed copper. But, basically, there was little traffic, so accidents – though terrible when they occurred – were mercifully infrequent. A straggling pedestrian, a wobbly cyclist, an unruly horseman were rare – for there was hardly a single exposed soul out there, on the loose. But there were plenty of natural hazards. There were wild wallabies, kangaroos, and occasionally deer on the drive to Bairnsdale, and there must have been stray sheep or cattle. And, of course, there were often fallen branches, though whole trees would be

exceptional. And there were unnatural hazards. In the year before meeting Win, I had had a passing and unfortunate relationship with a bright, apparently sparkling slip of a woman, who had been badly handicapped as the result of a car accident. She had been unusually quick to catch my attention, and active in the follow up. As I came to know her, I realised I could not cope with her manic depression and obsessive traits, brought on in part by the plethora of medicines she needed. Then, there was her fixation with bats – and witches – which was funny, at first. It was slow and difficult forcing a break, which she resisted tenaciously. I feared the worst. And, gradually, I felt jinxed.

Somewhere in the vicinity of *Piano Bridge* or *Battle Point*, the road straightens briefly. It is overhung by cliffs on the right, and falls away sheer on the left, to a river. The *Tambo*, sunken and boulder-strewn, can be little more than a string of calm or slowly turning pools, or a raging monster scattering scum and mud and debris. It never misses a mood. Once, driving along this stretch in the twilight, I caught up unexpectedly with a wallaby hopping in front of the car. I was doing about eighty k.p.h. There was nowhere to turn. Though I slowed frantically – I would not risk skidding into cliff-face or river – inevitably I ran into it, mounted it, and rolled over it, the car heaving and lurching. It was gruesome. The car, after a tyre change and with its radiator leaking, managed to get me to my destination where it had to be left for a week or two. I was shocked, and disturbed at a subconscious level by the realization I would have crashed into the cliff or plunged to the river below had I tried harder to avoid an impact. It was a nasty incident.

Just short of Swift's Creek, before the road straighten out near the horse racing track, there are a few gently teasing turns and twists. Once, also sitting on about eighty k.p.h. prior to opening up on the straight, with the light excellent, my whole world was shattered in an instant by the massive weight of a big grey – kangaroo – as it leapt across the road from right to left and smashed into the front of the car. The enormous animal disappeared into the bush below the road, presumably to die from shock, if not from cuts and bruising. After removing broken glass from the dashboard and seats, I was able to start the car and reach my destination, though once again the car had to stay there for further repairs. I was stunned, but unhurt. And I was perplexed by the way the kangaroo had crossed my path from right to left, catching the car on the left, where it wrecked the headlight and buckled that side of the bonnet. Shouldn't it have struck the driver's side, and me? This incident seemed ... a little strange.

It was in the depths of the forest that *the* incident occurred. It was winter, and all was black. The headlights opened a narrow, shifting, fragile path of light, enough to mark

the trees by the roadside and the bitumen immediately in front. The road had straightened, at last, and there remained just one slight curve ahead, on a gentle rise. There had been no traffic to worry about, and I trusted that the contrast between the blackness and my shaft of light would warn off any unwelcome creature. I moved gradually up from seventy-five to ninety k.p.h.. I reached and swung through the gently rising curve, and there in front, less than a hundred yards away, I saw this fallen eucalyptus completely blocking the road. I couldn't pass it on either side, without sliding into a shallow ditch and then coming up hard against a wall of trees. And I couldn't stop in the time. All I could see now was the brightly lit mass of leaves and branches as they rushed towards me, and in places, a foot or two above the ground, the bulk of the tree trunk which formed the impassable barrier across the road. It was my last moment. The impact took place at about fifty k.p.h.. At least, I imagined it was about that speed. And I imagined the impact, for a moment later I was on the far side of the tree, facing the correct way, bringing the car quietly to a halt, unscathed. It appeared I had been lifted across, I had flown. Obvious damage was limited to a tyre, which a following driver helped change, after he had used his chainsaw to cut through the narrower end of the tree. And there were some twigs stuck under the car, which I pulled away later.

I am sure I did not have the time nor the presence of mind to pray on seeing my predicament. I know, however, that I managed always to entrust myself to Sai Baba to whom Win had introduced me, on starting these journeys.

You can imagine my state on arrival at Win's. These three occasions, within months of each other, helped convince Win to move up to Omeo and join me. Had I been jinxed? God alone knows. But if I was jinxed it backfired, for it had brought Win and me closer. On this occasion, without a doubt, I had been protected ... supernaturally.

From 'Notes for an autobiography', set in Australia in the late 1980s

APPENDIX 4 Yours Truly



- 1) 1948
- 2) 1957
- 3) 1973
- 4) 1984
- 5) 1990
- 6) 2005
- 7) 2011
- 8) 2018





