



# All wrapped in lace and fancy paper

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## Downalong ever long echoes

I was going to tell you anyway  
Before I saw the elegant gown

A mid European posture  
Finest finery unbound  
Crocus, bluebell, snowdrop  
Sunlight sound without stain

Lost at a stroke, a long way from home  
Right next door to your mother's kitchen

And her mother  
Your neighbour before her  
Farmer, cobbler, clay-maker  
Traveller, engineer

You though  
Through so many countries

For to dine, for to converse

For to bring commerce; exhibit your wares  
Freely through the downalongs, the  
Boulevards, the walkways, the lanes

All to recall; remember in a rebuilt voice  
Stilled by a therapist from another space

At least other to your most recent origins  
Your most recently delivered birthplace  
Where religion or humanity or fame  
Ghostly voices any of which may be given

How do you choose what you choose to hear  
What takes it to disappear so deep unclear

A room, a window box, a crocus, a pear  
Will your tastes too be so repaired  
Taste in choice, in portrayal, in buds, in play  
For all of that I wish you to have - and more

To share some of Elsie  
To share some of Eva

To share with Kate who shares some of me  
Share your forefathers before you, and your  
Descendants out front; and your friends  
The best of your friends

Their tomfoolery, their humour  
Their care, and on occasion their despair

One door closes downalong narrow corridors  
You may hear, or feel, their ever long echoes  
For now that is back within your grasp  
Your right for a future from a rebuilt past

The flowers, the light, the night  
The morning springs without warning

At a stroke stoke  
The embers of the famous flames  
Watch the wild flower blow away the tears

The engravers touch with mallet & with chisel

Blocks of stone and slate and marble  
And diamond and bronze

The dust, the vibration, the squeal of  
Skin trapped fingers, the yell...  
Your chosen echo, your desired way  
To feel that the journey moves you

Downalong boulevards of scattered vowels  
Walkways of your consonants and intonations

With the sunlight on your meadow lanes  
Of expression and emotion  
Your voice; rebuilt, awakened  
By the miracle of nature and nurture

Thanks to all and to whoever; to yourself  
Mostly, for all we were was by your side

## Analogous fibres

If I could count in fluid ounces  
Or microcosms  
Even then  
No that would be insufficient

Somehow  
I need to travel further  
To where you where  
Or where I so believe

Or at least to that point  
That precipice, that rock-face  
That depth of water where to drown  
Is the most likely outcome

That concentration camp  
Where with nothing left  
Between skin and bone  
Hope is hung out to dry

Without your voice  
But not I know your memory  
For you hold me  
Tighter than ever before

As if more urgency for me  
To capture your every utterance  
Perchance you pass this way  
Too peacefully, too quietly

Bigger that; you are a fighter  
I always knew  
You know that don't you  
Your spirit, your rich red lips

That first night  
I kissed them both  
For I could not tell them apart  
Neither then, nor now, nor ever

## Our place is shared space

And clever girl  
I always had you down for that  
But no one, not I  
Or your mother

Or any other unconditional lover  
Could have seen the keenness  
Of your new found perception  
Your deception

Never  
To deceive what you know  
Once we have  
No longer the fabric to believe

A room  
Any room, any place, any town  
Music  
Any music, any pace, upbeat or down

Artefacts and atmosphere  
Any and all that we care to imagine

From here to any place  
From here to outer space  
From my space to your place  
From our place to shared space

The colours of croci and bluebells;  
Or any other flower or paintdrop  
Whose colour we've shared

The aroma of wild meadows, fresh cut grass  
Or any other water or sea spray  
Whose pleasure we've shared

## **Your faith allows for lovers**

The touch of only, ours only  
Only our memory

Or any other object  
Or environment, or fraternity  
Whose touch  
In memory we've shared

From here to outer space  
From here to any place  
From my space to your place  
From our place to shared space

Any room  
Any where  
Filled with our music

And all  
Of the love  
That we care to imagine

From one room a doorway  
One river a waterfall  
One butterfly  
On the cusp of half-opened eyes

From one tree a crow flies  
One sky a raincloud  
One dewdrop  
On the musk of soft-stroked sideways thighs

Catch the dawn in our mirrors  
One glimpse, one fragrant perfumed splash  
One shadow  
On the crusted dust of Octobers skies

Catch more slowly the sound waves  
One bell tolls as one siren blows  
One deeper draught of sleep  
On the lust of unjustly ties

## **My venturer**

For sure  
In heaven  
On earth  
Or wherever

Your faith  
Allows for lovers  
One deeper  
Depth of place

On this trust  
All our happiness cries  
One butterfly  
On the cusp of half-opened eyes

It is not yet six  
My kettle boils  
On the coal and log fired range  
Mornings like these  
With frost and squirrels and scarecrows

There he lies  
Sleep-drops in the corners of the eyes  
Intermittent soft silver breath  
He is alive in this cumbersome life

Out to catch a rabbit  
Or game bird or venison blue  
With shallots and turnip  
And dumplings in Irish stew

But before he wakes so fair  
I stroke the golden hair  
On his taught forearm  
I sing a lullaby and put extra

Sugar in his mug of tea

Children will come so soon no doubt

But for now

From this forearm

From these sleep-drops

From my uncovered thigh

With Sergei Rachmaninov

Or Ravels Bolero

Or Wagner's Valkyries

Or Vaughan Williams

Or Horsemen riding by

O now

Can you

No

Let me leave that to

My storyteller

My woodsman

My venturer

My gamekeeper

My lover

My life

Before the dew rises

The traps will have been set

With a recoil there to be sure

The end of life

The start of life

A great excitement

For our first child's

First capture

In the deep of wood

In the dead of day

In mismatched fabrics

With flap ears swayed

## All wrapped in lace and fancy paper

Such fragrant skin  
Such vulnerable limbs  
The first freckles appear  
The first  
Hairs on the forearm

A cup of milky tea  
A cake of oats and berries  
A rockabye  
Awake embraced  
Without the time of worry

I rise now, but first another moment  
Warm cotton with warm soft skin  
Soft, soft skin

A tray with a croissant  
A window  
A view

I wander across the promenade  
Before the world awakes  
Without a care except

For your every care  
Seaside salt laden air, sun-drops  
Ink-spots all wrapped in lace and fancy paper

I turn now  
But first just another moment  
In a fresh breeze hand held past memories

## Right outside my window

Past  
Past memories  
Scattered on the water

You wake  
A window  
A view

We wander  
Across the great big bed  
Before the world discovers our recovery

We smile  
Upon a fresh collection of promises  
Flowers and champagne perhaps

Or rather  
To stay in bed a little while  
A little while longer

All of this and the snowflakes  
Right outside the window  
Believe me

In any case I have the photograph  
And my cheesy beans  
And my cup of warm tea  
With sugar

That moment  
Gone forever, along the rail track  
Down deep into the quarry  
Amid the blasted rock faces

With my youth  
And my canteen of tea  
Sugared by my mother

## In sideways contemplation

I scare myself with observation  
See coincidences not meant for me  
Lay down beside  
In sideways confirmation  
I hear of incidences  
Shared for free

Hands; we both have hands  
To touch our eyelids, to touch our skin  
To touch the place we call our heart

Lips; we both have lips  
To kiss our lips, to kiss our skin  
To kiss the place we call our soul

Scared to touch  
Scared to kiss  
Scared to miss  
Feared we never would

We kiss  
We touch  
We would  
And we will it

Share that place we call  
Our consummate whole  
Share ourselves with consummation  
See coincidences that let us be  
Lay down beside in sideways contemplation  
Feel of incidences  
That we have set free

## Some other sentient being

Behind these aching eyes  
Beyond the perspired body  
A place I no longer recognise

A face not captured nor denied  
With a certainty the virus will fade  
And take with it all that it will

The phlegm no more than  
A reflection of the mucus; frogspawn  
That in springtime moves on

The chest cough is a vibration  
Of my youth, spluttering to life  
On a Ford Cortina winters morning

Underfoot the crunch of acorns  
And the glide of those clean  
O so clean soles of expectation

Upright I stand, as easy  
As in past times to lie  
In the self pitied pit of self pity

The recent difference seen by inference  
That the dull wit is off  
Departed & castaway - outsmarted

By care for other sentient beings  
My care for a special one also  
Who reflects a shared care for humanity

## On that perfect plain

I see smiles  
I see snowflakes  
I hear laughter  
In the fall of rain

I could have been anywhere  
I could have been with you again  
To hold that moment far longer  
To lay, stay even, on that perfect plain

I walked for miles  
Among meadows and cities  
And listened out always  
As I glanced forever over my shoulder

To remember the laughter  
To remember the game  
To remember the snowflakes  
To keep at bay the pain

Spring time and daffodils  
Crocus in flame  
Listen to the voice of angels  
Abroad again

I am here and now  
You are where and how  
And so lives should be  
So life seems somehow

For only by exception  
Only by refrain  
Apart to play the parts  
On that perfect plain

I see smiles  
I see snowflakes  
I hear laughter  
I am the same

## To stray all whereabouts

The wave's crash on our seashore  
Away across the veranda  
Before blue moons rise

Sit here  
In such utter contentment  
Away across past doubts

Before new surprises  
Your head upon the pillow  
Silk and lace and strings of summer

Wave's splash  
You touch me on the shoulder  
And point to the arriving horizon

Sit here  
Without one ounce of resentment  
With nerve to stray all whereabouts

Midnight without shadow or faint reprisals  
Your thigh shares my view  
Denier and duck down in a softer hue

The wave's dash  
Over our toes, over our dreams  
Or at least refresh them to share

To tread  
This walk of our fun stepped run  
Without fear or doubt

With verve and hand held treasures  
Swim in the ocean of tomorrows  
Toes that move as our smiles

A symphony  
For my bird house  
For the chance to go the extra mile

## Footsteps down the strand

I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see footsteps in the sand  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see footsteps down the strand

You flew me to Ibiza  
You knew me back in Spain  
You danced as Rigoletto  
You danced with Spanish dames  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
And I smile and I see fame

You showed me to your sister  
You said no way the same  
You showed me to her mister  
And said now he's fair game  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I smile and I see pain  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I smile and I see pain

You went off to Antigua  
You went so far as Maine  
You piped your own tobacco  
You half near went insane  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see footsteps in the sand  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see tulips in your hand

You seem so far away, so far away  
You seem so far away, so far away  
So far away we go away, go away  
So far away we go away, go away

I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see tulips in your hand  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see tulips in your hand

I smile and I see snowdrops

I see footsteps in the sand  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see footsteps down the strand

You flew me to Ibiza  
You knew me back in Spain  
You danced as Rigoletto  
You danced with Spanish dames  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
And I smile and I see shame

I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see neon lights in Amsterdam  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see neon lights in Amsterdam  
I smile and I see footsteps  
Footsteps down the Strand

I smile and I see footsteps  
Footsteps down the strand

I smile and I see footsteps  
Footsteps down the Strand

Footsteps, snowdrops, tulips  
Amsterdam down the Strand  
Footsteps, snowdrops, tulips  
Tulips in your hand

You seem so far away, so far away  
You seem so far away, so far away  
So far away we go away, go away  
So far away we go away, go away

I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see tulips in your hand  
I smile and I see snowdrops  
I see tulips in your hand  
I smile and I see tulips  
I see snowdrops  
Snowdrops down the strand

## A future, a past – words to last

Candraka  
Do you see me  
As I see you  
Strut your stuff

Aayyaf  
You may be my future  
And I so too  
Seen as the crow flies

Yours antyksari  
Antyksari yours  
As last goes first  
Ad infinitum

Atal atal in Occitan  
O so, so  
Wider a view  
O; so, so

Haft rang  
The planets skewed  
Outwith of explanation  
Set fair for rarefied renewal

## Enigmatic

A confidence to compliment  
A care to point out  
That in summer  
The midges could be troublesome

But that the festival  
Would be a lovely thing to do  
Though to go by rail  
Is I think misled

Someone said  
Maybe even Simon said  
That by train  
It was a two day journey

And I suppose if  
As I did  
You do go on the sleeper  
Then that is true

## Troutbeck Blue

Just for a moment  
A moment outside of Archimedean time  
For a moment  
Let us (for I will be with you)  
Let us concentrate on the sky  
Concentrate on the skyline  
On the horizon  
On the blue sky of this frosty  
And bright April morning

How shall we describe the blue  
To ensure that its effervescent clarity  
Is captured by the pen  
For instance

Where the snow covered white fields  
With vertical black stone walls  
Hang down from the horizon  
Suspended in disbelief  
There to meet the translucent blue sky

Lighter than the lightest Levi's  
Back in fact to the sixties  
To the turned up sky blue  
Skin tight sky blue jeans  
That too met the black  
The black of the brothel creepers  
The crepe soled adornment  
For any swinging  
Blue jeans rock and roller

This is no Salvador Dali  
Though in one of his paintings  
I do recall such a shortage of blue  
This blue is more minimal than that  
Made up of almost nothing  
Of less than nothing

The frosty morning before  
Cosmopolitan life shakes itself  
Into life, into believing

That another Monday morning is with us  
  
This blue then out of nothing  
With nothing to deflect  
Nothing neither to reflect  
No movement to disturb the peace  
A peace that lays easily  
On the snow covered fields  
A peace that lays easily  
On the rooftops of sleepy terraced houses

Here the blue sky waits  
Waits as does  
The empty sea fairing vessel for its cargo  
The sky waits for the gaseous outpourings  
That it may show to the stars  
The universe beyond this universe  
The blue beyond this blue

Though at a later hour

In this account  
Outside of Archimedean time

For now only silence and  
Emptiness can capture the colour  
Capture its blue  
It's uplifting  
Energy giving  
Spirit sifting  
Lovers kissing  
Milk tops missing  
Doorknockers listening  
Pavements glistening  
Tree trunks whistling  
Birdsong abreast in the morning chorus  
All at one with the blue sky

All at one here in Troutbeck  
In the Lake District of England  
All at one in Troutbeck blue

A final moment  
Skip off into meditation  
By the sea  
Or on the mountain side

In the meadow by the millpond  
Lay fully exposed  
Lay with clear eyes focussed  
Let the sky fall from its coathooks  
Let the sky dwell awhile  
Inside your welled up eyes

Blue sky  
Intimate  
To share your teardrops  
Your shared teardrops  
Of unconditional love

