

In his wake the legacy of squiggly lines

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Counterweight

The poet who seeks his own fame
Who wishes to be
Outside of the establishment
But nevertheless wants to be
Thanked by them for his service
The poet in place of everyone
Who feel at odds with the world
Even in place of poets
At odds within their own world
The poet then as the socialist worker
A justified struggle by the poor
And under privileged
With what result

Unencumbered alternatives
To be disenfranchised
Or instead to carry the load
With dignity
To become
A pillar of society
Or to become
Entirely disillusioned
Or euphoric in joy
...is there here half a story
Or any Story at all
And what in any case would
Or could, could not unfold

All around the world

I'm told you've played at Glastonbury
Was that before the entanglement
Of your Dorset pale faced folk fiddler

And your sub continent Bhangra baby
The newly beautiful
Truly due deep eyed singer

The geography teacher
She tells me that she is tone deaf
Yet all night I see her fingers dance

On the curved back
Of her estranged lover

Your land is not my land... but welcome

We walk in familiar places
Our conversation races and chases
Politely fades into undiscovered dreams
My shoe laces, faced on the strike of the
Faraway clock are undone; the shine
Of flameless fires traces the half light
At midnight, over the cross unsung...
We talk in particular cases of the real and
The imaginary, dazed by the liquor of love
My news of a Windrush calling, falling in line
The shadow steps, still & moving are abroad
In this the country, of the Lincolnshire Wolds
There are a few truths that only they are able
To carry - held together as string on paper
And hope in the music of Liszt or Offenbach
We turn the last corner... under the soft sway
Of evergreen willow we walk along the unlit
Shingle path, through the hinged wooden gate
Together we turn the cast metal key around
At one in the oak bound mortise security lock

Not fooled by design

Clothed by Calvin Klein
Or Henri Lloyd
Or Ralph Lauren
Or the green embraced Lacoste

You are out of place in this town where
To dress cheaply
Is itself part of the attraction
And by that nothings lost

This is a place
Where to turn a hand too quick
In a game of cards is altogether
Unexpected, and comes at quite a cost

Goyt

Up on our own blueberry hill in the throes
Of Buxton water
You held my hand, laid me down, I told you
Of my daughter

Clear we thought her to have done so well
To have reached that place called no fear
Time so near, I hear your laughter, the song
To be blessed, by one so dear

Early summer streams, cold water falls over
White uncovered toes
Turned up trousers under the stone arched
Bridge, where hardly anyone goes

Sunlight flickers through the silver reeds
And the moorlands past
That afternoon before the evening moon
Our love took hold to stay so fast

Tonight we present...

Tonight we have a new
Band member
Here from India
Fresh from her trip
To the top of the mountains

Fresh from her affair
Of sorts
With the pale complexion
Fast handed
Entirely feminine fiddle player

The boss
He's been ravished
And bewitched
By her beautiful, brazen
Bare faced, emblazoned eyes

And her mantra
In four eight time

Is interlaced
With the bouncing
Bow of the fiddler's finger strings

The drone of it all is enchanting.
Mark said they played music from
Get Carter
Shot in Doncaster or on
The South Shields sands or thereabouts

Yes you said
That was
The body of it
Only two or three scenes
Shot in South Yorkshire

Later we walked home
Through the familiar passages
In the darkness
The time of year when the moon

Passageways

Seems to take longer to turn

I have been drinking Pale Rider
A beer with a lightness of sight
A quaffing taste, yet with 5.2% strength
It soon becomes a particular favourite

The stereo plays
'I can't give you anything but love'
A song from
Long ago
By the Mills Brothers

I wonder if
With their bewitching smiles
They told anyone
Of their well soiled, well oiled
Intricate, intimate, hidden affair

Gentleness, serenity, calm
Love touches with a whisper
Where the door is held open

Tender; the night sky of stars
Clear of clouds - land silences
Fall soft on unploughed furrows

Ageless; past generations talk
Of beauty - the passage of time
Which at night always stays still

Carriages along cobbled streets
Past toffee shop windows - breath
Blown softly shouts & stays forever

Can we go now

In your house
You search for a home
Beginning to believe the jealousies
Perceived or otherwise

In your home
You search for a house
Open windows for the light to enter
Open doors for the silent abuse to leave

In your mind
You search for a reason
Although all explanations cast blame
In your easily held direction

In your reason
You search for a mind
A stillness or a place brought on by
Escape from the less lit shadows

City Lights

Other men talk of windows
Or of the Spanish civil war
I lean towards their lintel
To open wide their sore

You carry so many fallen voices
A joy for me is, for you
Yet another burden, a wider
Walk of misunderstanding

You think I have belief
Yet I talk of the sodden horse
With the cartload of deep
Damp doubt dragged behind

I acknowledge that for me
Here now in my plimsolls
It may be more appropriate
To sing swiftly of a pony and trap

Gifts of love and care
Given in heaps and spades as a birthright
For the moment held at bay
Kept a distance by those around you

Love turns to somewhat
Loss of confidence
You doubt the strength & depth of love
That you are not allowed to share

Other men talk of scriptures
Or of myths heavy with folklore
Your talk is more open
Simple & wanting of love

You & me and choruses of strangers

My foot slips ankle deep
Into the puddle of muddy water
Your laughter is seen
As I look back into the headlights
This is a Saturday evening
Out on the Lincolnshire Wolds
If you listen closely
You can hear
The stars in the sky

The camera clips the top off the spire
As we travel down along Westgate
The photographer is unsteady
I might say
With her outstretched hands
Through the cars open sunroof
If you listen closely
You can hear
The wheels roll over

Back at the cathedral
A congregation gathered
Across the top of Castle Hill
The gentlemen in evening dress
Carry their instruments
In leather bound cases
If you listen closely
You can hear
The coughs of homeless warriors

This is a long way from
The football field at Hillsborough
The stadium today
With nigh on twenty four thousand
Their songs less of reverence
Or even of untold celebration
Though if you listen closely
You can still hear
The ritual timbres

Salts Mill 13

Nick was getting out of the pool
Forty years ago today
Give or take a few months
In his wake the legacy of squiggly lines
A Yorkshire man somewhere between
Bradford and Los Angeles
Flying regular twixt
LAX & Heathrow or thereabouts

The diner menu - printed in 1993 offers
A serving of an £8-00 burger with salad
No chips but accompanied by authentic
Coca-cola in the bottle; their one hundred
Year old recipe + a twisted slice of lemon

Salts Mill 14

Give or take a
Few months Nick
Was getting out of the
Pool forty years ago today
In his wake the legacy of squiggly
Lines & a Yorkshire man somewhere
Between Bradford and Los Angeles; in
Regular flight twixt LAX & Heathrow; or

Thereabouts; the diner menu printed in 1993
Offers a serving of an £8-00 burger - salad
No chips but accompanied by authentic, in
The curvy shape bottle, Coca-cola, its
One hundred year old recipe listed
& twisted with a slice of lemon

East or West no matter

Your private view
My questions of nothingness

Your colony of artists
In a less than
Romantic city

My question
Without answer
At the foot of your first page

Your new list on a white board
For place and purpose
Of landscape & society

Of energy (my word)
History with a sense of loss
That Americans find hard to imagine

The desolate
Mid west
The dust bowls

The world at war
With new found proclaimers

The stains
Are almost gone
Your ancestors

And the so many more
Who left behind all
That you most earnestly

Seek
To re-establish

The eye is distracted

The latest exhibition is of twilight
Photographs composed as paintings
They easily suited the utopia of dystopia
To cast doubt in that environment being
Entirely natural; in this hour between
Day and night, wherever in the world
Certainty is hoped for as our companion
Yet still we open the loose hinged doors

Catch the last bus from the school yard
Or walk through the half lights of the
Old town into a stranger's bedroom
Into a house of uneasy corridors, a house
Owned by encouraged misunderstandings

Wessenden Head 13

Yesterday you talked of place
The writers three month trip to the
Antarctic; you spoke of congress
Of nothingness in everlasting light

On the grey windswept moor, a stones
Throw from the graves declared by Brady
To torment Longford or make capital out
Of the somewhat affected Myra Hindley

Reed grass angled at a quarter past the hour
Guards over the roughed up rippled water
There are no houses; neither on the horizon,
Not right nor left, human habitats are unseen
In an unfortunate landscape of tainted beauty

Before I go to my brothers 14

A smidgeon of pink in a vast grey
A slip of silver white fading to blue
Creases of browns, half full blacks
Dull oranges turned to rosehip red

On the other side of the Tarmacadam
On the other side of the interrupted
White lines - in both and all directions
Car headlights leave a twinkled glow

Even without the rain of all days visits
Or rain visited already, settled itself down
Into the squidgy peat bogs; drained to the
Catchments or by passed escarpments

Bracken water aiming for coagulation and
Filtration - to be crystal clear once more

Estranged

If you had a caravan
Would that make you
A particular kind of person
If then in November you
Camped on the top of this
Most desolate of moors
Would that say anything
Of how you fit in to society

In an hour or less it will be
Total darkness
In a few moments
The whisper of silence will arrive
I wonder to knock on your
Door & ask - are you alone?

Insulation

In a cosy pub away from your mother
With your mates
Light ale or the new mixture
Of lager and ice cold Irish cider
You say you won't stay long
Before you get on home to
The television and the chatter
The natter
Of what you did
With your wasted gob
Not that it matters
Unless of course
You've confounded everyone
And got a job

Or once again
Picked up the calendar
With artwork by Vermeer
Or passed the scent
Of lilies in bloom
Or explained
How to develop
The recipe of sauce
For Beef Wellington
If, if you hear us say
Without that same
Depth of thought
As you meant
That's how it is

You followed the sun

You play the ride of the valkyries
I play conquest of paradise
You drive down Mulholland
I go through Meltham to the moor

Your landscapes are mountains
And deserts, lands open of fear
My hillsides are for shepherds
Sharp winds over red cheeked tears

I turn, full round in either direction
In this twilight the cities twinkle
Illuminate the depths of the valleys
Indicate easy the turns in journeys
That pull to the centres of our earth

Waterside

The alarm clock misses its beat
Our feet touch and we talk of dreams
The meaning of our sleep it seems
Wrapped in paper, left settled neat

On the seat in the park
Where you showed me stone, uncovered
Old bones, moved to one side
The pride of civilization that cried

We lied ...and sang of me and Mrs Jones
Unknown to another generation
Later or earlier, after, before
Or less discrete

Unseen by angels and painters
Redeemed by the fleet of atheists
Agnostics & the freight wagon
Funnelling the flow along the leat

Softness incarnate

In place of strife, in a life of
Opportunity and always being
The last to leave, unseeing
Those lost of left behind love

Tastes of freedom, seasons of
Spring & summer & autumn
Winters turn, burn, dumb
Left landed on the reason love

Paisley shirts, floppy felt hat
With a touch so intimate
A gait, the trait, it's late
Don't hesitate

Imagine that canker
To the anchor of love

Paper

Three layers of reflection
Several hues of blue collected
On glazed vases once rejected
Fallen tip toe short of perfection

Three stares into perception
More news of crews defected
On trade cruisers once inspected
Stolen tip toe short of deception

Three pairs, fares for inspection
Declared their turn is now affected
On laid up messages once again erected
Swollen tip toe short of dues detection
In the triple glazed condo extension

Loss of lost itself

Distracted of deeper thought
No room for pure investigation
Ancients are dust in transference
The capture is of the loss

Loss of lost itself
In white space
Black space
Sky less skies

Seas without horizons
Landless
Deeper thought
To play with such

A fine place for resurrection
Collect pebbles and leaves
In mind alone go now
Go & create a new landscape

