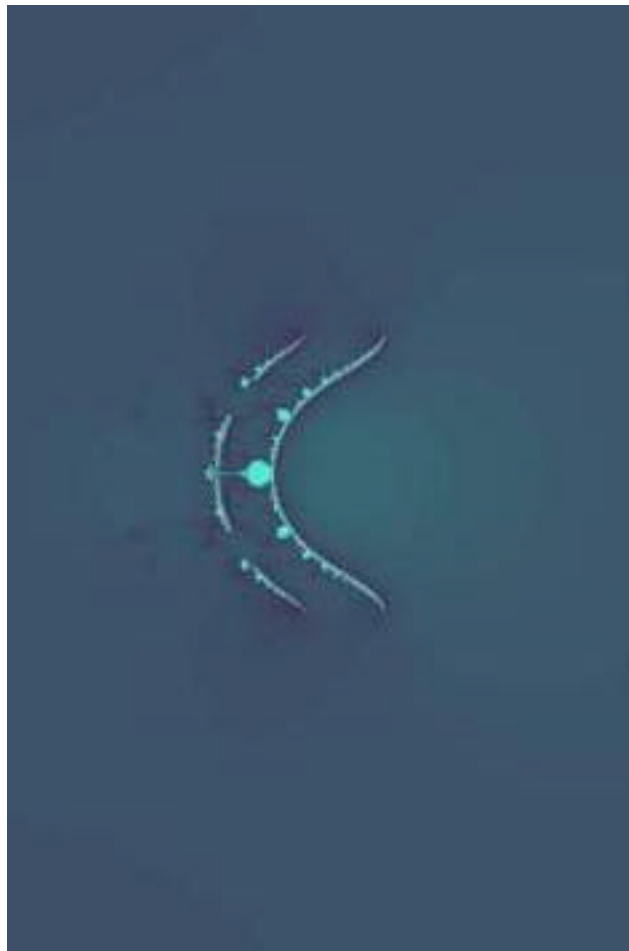


calligraphies



Mark Young

xPress(ed)

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“Sometimes I like to think of myself as a Zen calligrapher, writing the poem without lifting the brush from the page. One side straight-edge, the other Rexroth's crooked margins.”

from a note to *Pi, Pythagoras & I*, Word for / Word #6.

So what was first published in Pettycoat Relaxer

Piaf was first published in AnotherSun

Taxonomy & Seed Money were first published in the muse apprentice guild

The Trout Fishing in America World Cup was first published in Trout

For Tu Fu, Ikebana & Set Theory were first published in Tin Lustre Mobile

Fadvertisement, For Michael Farrell & a differently-formatted version of *Terra*

Nullius were first published in BlazeVOX

Bach's Arioso was first published in Snow Monkey

A number of poems appeared as posts on the As/Is & pelican dreaming weblogs

The intention was included in *The right foot of the giant*, Bumper Books, 1999.

He turned

a line
as easily
as I
might turn
a corner

& with
seeming dis-
regard for the
niceties of
road rules

maybe
he knew
the stretch ahead
so well
he could risk
turning
quickly

or maybe
it's just
a zen thing
where
the line
turns itself

She writes to tell him

life has turned to shit since she moved south of the river. Not just the mosquitoes but the mould getting into everything, the books decaying before she gets a chance to read them, the isolation.

Nothing is permanent. In winter the river floods, eating away at its banks & bringing down debris that weakens jetties & bridges. In spring the tides attack from the other direction, finishing the job. The bridges break, the boats go spinning away. You cannot swim in the bay.

The paper the letter is on is stained. She points this out to him, identifying the marks around the edges as those that are caused by the moisture in the air; the ones in the centre come from rain dripping through the roof as she writes.

The rest, she tells him, are her tears.

Promoting the album

What's the name of this place?
he asked as the plane was
coming in to land. Auckland
I told him. He wrote it down
on the inside of his wrist.

That evening I was at his
reading. It's wonderful to be
in your wonderful city — a
slight pause during which
he stretched out his arms as if
to embrace those in front
of him & glanced imperceptibly
at his wrist — of Auckland. The
audience cheered. It's been
so stimulating since I've been here
that I've haven't stopped writing
about — glance — Auckland.

He assumed the position.
Auckland / mumble mumble /
Auckland / mumble mumble /
Auckland. All you could make out.
Paused for ten seconds to let the
audience know that the poem was
finished. Was roundly applauded.

I hear he's doing Texas next week.
Can't wait. Mumble mumble / Dallas /
mumble mumble / Houston /
mumble mumble / San Antone.

In Leipzig he gave

a virtuoso performance
that combined the
art of fugue with
a state of fugue. He
couldn't remember
what he had
improvised; but amongst
people he did not know
there was no self-
consciousness, only
a slight stutter when
he began to conjugate
pecco, peccare. The
leaves of the Sumatran
jelli plant give off
a mild narcotic
when infused
slowly. The answer
is some kind of fish.

Daydreaming on Lake Titicaca

If you'd
like to do
lunch
I know this
offbeat
little restaurant
called *Sexual
Inequality sur
L'Orinoco*
where the
women work
the kitchen
in their quaint
bolivian bowler hats
& the men
all come across
like aztec gods
who look like
they'd like to
take you home
but whether
for sex or
sacrifice
I haven't
discovered yet.

For American International Pictures, a found (& fond) homage

Open with a tracking shot. Coming down off the bridge & past the sign that welcomes the careful driver to Home Hill. Start to pan at the point the highway is renamed 8th Avenue. Pick up the town's Christmas lights but only briefly. It is the shot of the Town Hall clock that is important. Eleven seventeen. Lock on the minute hand until it jumps another notch then go back to tracking the main street again. Follow the shop fronts to find the only place still open is the laundromat & that is empty. Through the door, focusing first on the back wall where the opening hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. are given & then a tight shot that shows the soap powder spilt in front of one of the machines. End with a close-up of the single footprint etched within it.

From The Hotel Splendide

In the event of an
armed insurrection
guests are advised
to stay towards
the back of the room
& avoid all windows.
The Management accepts
no responsibility for
injuries caused by
stray bullets or ricochets.
Should the revolution
be successful the same
instructions still apply. The
victory parade is always
punctuated by the firing
of guns into the air. If
unsuccessful please do not
film the subsequent reprisals.
From a distance video recorders
may be mistaken for AK47s
or small hand-held missile
launchers. If the U.S. invades
there are forms enabling you
to claim for accidental death
from friendly fire
included with the other
hotel brochures. When
completed, please hang
outside your room
along with your
cancelled breakfast order.

A *ficcione* for Jorge Luis Borges

The spines
of the older
books in the
Libraries of
Buenos Aires
& of Babel
are worn thin
from the
number of times
Jorge Luis Borges
wandered
along the rows
& read
the titles.

The owls

There's always an audience
out there. It's just that
sometimes you've got to go out on a limb
to pull them in. Don't be
subtle about it. Start by covering
the exterior walls of your house
with sheets of corrugated iron
painted in primary colours. Wait
until round about midnight
then walk out into the garden
& begin reciting your poems. This will
infuriate the owls. Poetry
confuses them. They're sure to retaliate,
lay shit on your renovations,
stare at you with those
big wide eyes they have & say:
You should have used wood or adobe
or: A delicate shade of lime
would have been much more
relaxing. But keep at the poems
until the owls have finished hooting
at you, then point out how the colours
now make it easier for them to separate
the mice from the surrounding
shrubbery. They will pause, then nod. It'll be
faint praise, but at least you won't be damned
by it & with a reliable food supply available
the owls will stick around. People
will come to see them. Some
may stay & listen to your poetry.

Fadvertisement

Let the liposuction vampires
pass by. There'll always be another
train. Better to get home late
than be offered up as sacrifice
to the monomer or polymer of the
amino acid chain. But do you know
what's around the corner? By
the time the sun comes up
there'll be some other fashion
rampant in Boutique City. That's
why you need a Pocket Faddeus,
the simple way to stay *au courant*
with everything going on in the
wonderful world of faddom. What's
in, what's out, what's on the horizon.
No way to change what's already
in your wardrobe; but we
can tell you what you need
to make the most of it. Updated
hourly. Hot-keyed for your convenience.

The Mao *ficzione*

Mao Zedong as he is now known started the Long March with 100,000 followers & three movies. When they reached Shanxi there were only 8000 people & one movie left. Loss of faith, starvation, accidents & the continual harrassment by Jiang Jie Shi's Guomindang army accounted for the attrition. The two movies — *The Battleship Potemkin* & *Les Enfants du Paradis* — were lost when a landslide carried the mule that was carrying them away. *Stagecoach* was the only one to survive; but, fortunately, the pedal-powered generator that provided the electricity also made it through unscathed. It is said that by the end of the March all the survivors knew every word of the script by heart. There is a poem of Mao's that starts: "The long shadow of John Ford guards the entrances to the Shanxi Caves." That Zhou Enlai who drove the generator is equally revered is

evidenced by the number
of bicycles in China today.

For richer, for poorer

everybody
has to start
somewhere

Telemachus

in
elegant
surround-
ings

telemarketing

in-
elegant

Piaf

took
all those
things
in her life

she
regretted
doing
not doing

laid them
end to end
not quite
touching

to form
a perforation
she could
tear along

& so sing
with clear
conscience
je regrette rien.

Terra Nullius

December 1. Supposedly
the day on which the
season changed. Some-
one's arbitrary determination
after they had shifted
hemispheres & found
their world turned
upside down. A quick fix,
rendering the present
so it reflects a
particular past, done by
attaching the familiar
to the unfamiliar &
throwing names around
to overwrite the
land. Fine at the time,
but pets rearrange
themselves as pest to
overrun it. New grains
don't hold the soil together
the way the native grasses
used to do. & where the
traditional owners of the land
sometimes admitted six,
sometimes two, depending
upon what the weather
was actually doing, now
the seasons come around
on the first of the month,
every three months, a
regular reminder of the
debts outstanding on
something that was
taken, never loaned.

Book ends

I read
my old
poems
in the
hope I
might find
something
new in
them.

I read
the
new
&
hope
there's
nothing
old.

For Michael Farrell

Michael. I have to admit
that even before I
opened *ode ode* I used
the book to swat a couple
of flies that had come in
through the motel door
left open whilst I went
outside to have a cigarette.
That's me all over;
gratifying the body before
satisfying the mind. I
hope you'll forgive me. Will it
help if I tell you that once
the room was empty of
flying vermin & I could
read them without interruption
I loved the poems, especially
that one with its prescient
repeated line: *no flies left*.

Flirting

So the distances are Galatea
and one does fall in love
CHARLES OLSON: *The Distances*

It is a dance in two
parts. Is ritual.

Pop song from the
Forties. A trip to the moon.

The bull, the matador.
Dance, ritual, death.

Whose death? *A las
cinco de la tarde.*

Usually the bull. Sometimes
the matador. Provocation

can have unexpected results.
A procession of flagellants

passes by. I am drunk on the
smell of fermented mangoes.

Red sand blood white.
What colour are your eyes?

The seeing-eye dog

tends to the familiar.
Too much newness
is bad for it. Supposed
companion, more accurately
censor, steering its charge
away from all the
interesting sounds & smells
encountered on the journey.
They have no place
in its pedestrian itinerary.

Two degrees of separation

Taken apart
piece
by piece.

Put back
together.

A
gain; or

never feels right

a-
gain.

Plainsong

Words
are
clues

but it is the
spaces & silences
around them

that
tell you

what is
really
going on.

Plainsong continuance

for Tom Beckett

Words
are
flaws

in the

walls
of our
no-fly zones

that
sometimes let escape

momentarily un-
guarded answers

to what
were supposed
to be

rhetorical
questions.

Taxonomy

Isn't an
impressionist painting
nothing more than a
list of objects
given
tension

by being enclosed
in a finite space

& form
by their being placed
in a particular manner?

& isn't it a work
of fiction by virtue
of the artificial positioning
of the objects?

Is a found object
a work of fiction
or fact?

Is a still life still life? Or is
une nature morte

much more appropriate?

The prize

When
two or
more
thoughts
that have
taken
long
independent journeys
arrive
coherent &
iridescent
in the same
singular
space
that is
the prize.

Ikebana

Tomorrow I will take down
the hanging ferns from
above the patio. It is no place
for drab foliage. I have been
trying to starve them by
keeping water away
but their screaming keeps me
awake at night & drastic measures
are now called for. I will empty
the contents of the baskets
over the garden, leave it up
to the elements if the plants
survive. The garden is already
full of the same varieties, it is
a method others have obviously
used before. But the tradition
dies with me. I see the
empty space filled by five
easy pieces — four chairs &
a glass table with a vase on it
full of bright flowers. In sight
of the garden, a reminder
of what I expect from it.

Seed money

The cat, in
something like a
caterpillar
crawl, descends
the steps to lie in a
portion of shade created
by the corner of the
house. She sticks
her paws out so they rest
in the sun, drawing
on its direct warmth
while the rest of her body
at one remove
stays sheltered &
secure. There are a lot
of potential metaphors
in that pose.

A last Geronimo

Scarcely time
for a last
geronimo as the
poem stalls mid-
line & starts
spiraling crazily
towards the ground
forcing me to
jump just before it
hits & shatters
into a thousand
syllables which I
collect to search
through later
hoping to find
some reason in
them, hoping to
find no rhyme.

~~I WALT WHITMAN~~ I WALT WHITMAN

I
in Arial
is boy-
slender
model chic
an object of
desire
is future
Manhattan.

I
in Courier
is a steel girder seen sideways
solid, strong
able to build the
Brooklyn Bridge
to sing
the body electric.

Punctilious

from the
Italian *puntiglio*,
attentive
to detail, to
the fine points
of behaviour
or action.

He was punctilious
in his presentation.

Such a pity
that he missed
the point.

A static charge

Here was I thinking
I was unique
until I read in
today's paper
that the reason I
& another few
hundreds of
thousands of this
city's inhabitants
are getting
electric shocks
when we touch
something

is because
the air is so dry
there is no moisture
for the build-up
of static electricity
to discharge to. We
walk around
on polyester carpets
wearing polyester
trousers &
polyester sweaters
& all that
accumulated frotteuring
turns us into
walking batteries.

Touch something
& wham! All
the energy in the
battery we've become
goes flowing
down our arm. &
here was I
thinking that I

had accidentally
brushed the
electric chair & now
I discover I'm
the fucking executioner.

My life in Vaudeville

*for Nick Piombino because he didn't / ask the question
& for Tom Beckett because he gave me / the title*

The players in the orchestra pit
are aging, some are
already dead or too infirm
to hold their instruments. Only
the drummer manages to keep
a beat; & that occasionally
runs ragged since his
bass drum had a triple bypass
four months ago. Nobody
wants to play this type of music
anymore. No fame or
fortune in it. The singers have all
left, the jugglers drop more
than they catch & local bylaws
have taken the fire-eater
out of the program. Two years ago
my partner died. No one to replace him
so I've been using a dummy
whose response to "Why is there
a gryphon in the garden?"
is a very wooden
"Because Thurber took the unicorn".
We've had the North Korean
Totalitarian Drill & Marching Band
in for a couple of weeks but now
they've overstayed their visas
& are due to be deported
in the morning. There's nothing
left except to clear the last
tableau & close. Next week it's
strippers, sound machine & a single
spotlight. The theatre's being re-
named, either "Vanishing Acts" or
"Pussies Galore". They'll probably
go for the latter. Boom tish.

For Michele Leggott, reading the ms of her new book

It is as if
I am part of a
private poetry, key-
stroking your
hands, watching
your mouth
form the words
as they form
on the screen.

The curator takes his work to lunch
for René Magritte

Hungry mid-
morning so ate
part of
a Cézanne
still life. The
varnish gave it
a toffee apple
feel. Decided on
a Braque fish
for lunch. Looked
around for a
suitable companion,
considered the
Renoirs but
decided they had
the potential
to eat too much.
Finally chose a
nude from Picasso's
Blue Period. Dis-
appointing. Her
asceticism was
appealing but there
was no depth
to her conversation.

If you were lucky

you got to pick
a persona
to take to the
party. Those
of us who
came late
were forced to
go as ourselves.

Set Theory

I'm feeling lowdown & blue,
my heart's full of sorrow
KING PLEASURE: Parker's Mood

Dinky Diva. King Pleasure. Imagination (2)
MICHELE LEGGOTT: Angels and Oracles

Triangles can be temporal, geographical or both. They can overlap in the same or different planes forming, if I misappropriate set theory, a Venn triangle which contains all that is common to them. As example. In this naming of some of the taxivans that ply the streets of Durban the one called King Pleasure hails me. Take it as an apex, assume it was named after that singer whose album was one of the first I bought, who put words to the recorded solos of jazz musicians even if those words weren't what they were thinking at the time. Not that that matters; I can still recall them almost fifty years later. Then set another point, that the pleasure was being shared by someone in a shebeen in a shantytown outside Durban. Add the writer of the poem & now there is another point, another side, completing two triangles that overlap to form a shared third, the Venn triangle, a pyramid even.

Yeats's lake

go now go free
all mad
I be
lone lad
all come
ere night's he sings
net purple
is day
and lap it low
on the way
deep art

I would like

to have a
knowledge of
stellar cartography

so when I
look up at the stars
& plan
my journey
I will know
what goes where

& won't be taken
millions of lightyears
out of my way.

A final farewell for Vicki Viidikas

I finally come out of sleep as
the answering machine kicks in.
It is Nigel. I hear his voice
from the bedroom. The message
has the same economy of phrase
that is found in his poems. "It's
Nigel. Ring me. I have some
bad news. Sorry." I ring back.
He tells me Vicki has died.

The journey

taken without
direction without
movement
undertaken within
without realisation
that it is a journey.

Shut your eyes
do not move
let things come to you
touch them
tell me what they are

tell me what they are
without touching
what you taste
on your tongue
feel on your skin
tell me what you see
with your eyes shut.

Taste me Winter
tell me Summer
One place is as
good as any other
to start to finish.

The Trout Fishing in America World Cup
in memory of Richard Brautigan

Had lunch while out so didn't
have to cook or do the dishes. Missed out
on four & a half hours of messing up
the house. Came home to a line full
of clothes so flattened by the wind
they won't need ironing the next time
they are worn. Came home with a
carboot full of books after an excursion
to Annandale & the contiguous Little Italy
of Leichardt having previously checked
that Big Italy were not playing their
second round sudden death World Cup
match against South Korea today. Came
home with strange poetries by authors
I would not normally buy but they were
cheap, found at a "Scholarly Remainder Fair"
in an unadorned church hall in Annandale
& in the more upmarket bookshops of
Leichardt which was festooned with
tricolour flags & full of World Cup Sales
& souvenirs but fortunately free of street
parades. Most importantly came home with
an original edition of John Rechy's *City of Night*
& O joy, a reprint of Brautigan's *Trout Fishing
in America* which I'd been hoping to replace
for years. Came home to fold my socks
& underpants & the other washing which
wouldn't be ironed anyway; & imagined as I
was doing it that I was skilfully hand-crafting
some special lure with which to tempt the
hunchback trout living in the stream that came
home with us from the Cleveland Wrecking Yard
& now flows where the clothes line once ran.

The minute hand

falls over the line
into December, falls into
the circle traced by
the spotlight from the
police helicopter overhead
as it moves clockwise
with me somewhere
to the left of nine. Not
quite in it, not that far
away. Isn't that always
the way? Things happening
that you're not really
part of or party to. The
game taking place
far below & the giant
replay screen gone dead.

Tracking the Minotaur

He marked the
journey from
chaotic day-
dream to
entropic nightmare
with p/a r t i c u l a t e
matter,
discarded fragments
of his own
amino acid chain.

It doesn't take

much. The cat appearing
from somewhere she
wasn't just a moment
ago or a faint whiff of
marzipan in the carpark
on top of the shopping
centre. Small things
but sufficient in their
own right to catch you
off-balance. Music is
omnipresent here. It flows
through the centre
like slime in a B-grade
horror flick. & in the
supermarket it is
no longer the bland
depressant of the past
but the output of
post-graduate research.
Computer-programmed,
psychologically profiled,
chicksinger alternating
with boyband, the pace
varied, this piece starting with
a major chord, the next
something in a minor key.
It has been proven that
one of them will bring the
attention back to what
you're meant to be doing
like the monk's stick
in a meditation hall. It is
the *roshi* of shopping.

Throwback

for Martin Edmond

You probably don't
know me but
I've seen you
around campus
& would
really like it
if we could get
together. You
could recite poetry
to me & I could
tell you my
life story. Meet me
on Thursday at 5.45 p.m.
under the
Moreton Bay figs by
the Victoria St entrance
to Albert Park. I'll
be wearing a
raspberry beret &
a Guevara T-shirt. & just
so you won't mistake me
I'll be carrying
a copy of *Alcools*
by Apollinaire in
one hand & Eco's
Kant & the
platypus in the other.

Just sending out

my
Christmas cards
& working
from a list

& as I'm
doing it
I keep
coming back
to Gödel's
incompleteness
theorem

how if I
drew up
a list of
all lists

it would be
incomplete
because it
wouldn't
contain
itself

& if it
did, then
it wouldn't
be complete
because now
there was
another list
that wasn't
included.

The bird inside

Antarctic winter imitated. I am
living inside a refrigerator
set up in a cold store. Inside me
there is a bird that would
escape if it could. It is my first
Assumption; & I am trying
to keep it by keeping it
as close to suspended animation
as I can. The bird is unhappy.
It is a summer bird. When
I first felt it fluttering
a few ingested pellets of dry ice
were enough to quieten it.
But as it grew
I was forced to move lodgings,
was forced to move
my chilling mode from
solid boulder blocks to
gaseous intake. Now when I exhale
my frozen breath is fuel
that drives rockets to the
moon. It does not wake the bird
but something inside it
awakens. I sense its struggles
as it recognises flight, is
driven mad by its proximity.

Back to basics

I have forced
the clouds
apart, have
made a gap
through which
the moon appears.
Even though
it is not full
the effort
exhausts
me. I rest.

The clouds
have closed again
when I open my
eyes & the moon
has disappeared. I
try to find it
but with no
success. I leave
a sky full of holes
& torn clouds
behind me.

Juxta/posed

In this picture I've cut
from the morning paper
there are a million
single-pixel pilgrims
inside / outside the
Grand Mosque at Mecca
completing their *hajj*
by circling seven times around
the holy black rock that is
the Kaaba. On the back
unwittingly captured by
the same scissor cuts
Michael Jackson is
facing away from Mecca
as he leaves the Santa Barbara
County Sheriff's Department
after being arrested on
child molestation charges. It is
a chance juxtaposition
that needs no commentary
from me. But as an aside
explain to me again
why we're in Iraq.

Like that famous

red wheel
barrow

the african violets set
in a white pot by the
window

are also

glazed with rain
water

droplets ensnared
amongst the cilia & the
silver snail tracks.

The intention

is that
I refurbish
the room. To
which end
I have torn down
the shattered images
that adorned
the walls &
replaced them
with pictures
of my own
making.

Not new things:
just the old, re-
worked. So that
entering
is like
re-entering,
but through
another door.

A word game

Intemperate
as in
in temper ate

&
choked on
both words &

food
or as
in temperate climates

which
is further
south than I

am
now or
as intemperate standing

alone
but not
really standing because

so
pissed they
have fallen over.

So what

if

Miles Davis

came on "...all

purple & shit"

which is what

Amiri Baraka wrote

in *When Miles Split*.

&

so what

if, as someone else

bitchily brewed,

decrying the "lack

of creative effort",

he took pop songs

& played only

slight variations

of the melody

over & over

above

an electric

rhythm section.

I mean

if you've spent

forty odd years

laying down

real ground-

breaking stuff

then surely

you're entitled

towards the end

as you reinvent

yourself

once again

to have a bunch
of young guys
do the moves
behind you
while you take it
a bit more easily
out front

Fuck it, that's
what life's all about,
it's what we'd all
like to be doing. &
aren't the songs
that most
of this shit
is about
called

Time after Time
&
Human Nature

anyway?

For Tu Fu

He stands by the kitchen window
peeling a mandarin. Late afternoon light

comes in, shines through the segments &
reverses their polarity, turns solid

into sacs of orange liquid. Now
the pond is swimming within the carp.

By a single blossom shall ye know them

Red flowers threaten to overrun the garden.

We have inherited them from the previous owners.

They have gone but their tastes still break through.

We eat away at them.

The plants can be cut back, can be uprooted.

Other things will be harder.

More expensive.

Chameleon

Every time a different poem, a different context, but the biographical note remains a variation on the one theme. How I was born in Hokitika in New Zealand sixty-two years ago, have done this / that, published here / there, am now living in Rockhampton, Australia. It's the truth, no denying or escaping that. But scared I will give too much away if I put too much in I leave out the most interesting parts. Now only the bare bones are revealed; & reading them more than once is more than boring. & that's just for me — think what it must be like for other people who follow the sport.

So I have decided to write a chameleon poem, submit only that but change the biography with each submission so that meaning, subtexts, even the very sound of the poem are transformed by the information that accompanies it. I have beginnings, have biographies, though which is which is open to debate. Put it down to the fact that my mother spoke rapidly, had a tendency to blur her words so that I was never sure if it was aliens or Raelians who had abducted & cloned me when I was nine. Sent the clone home she believed. Left the real me wandering the world.

He Me We

grew up to be R2-D2, grew down to be George Bush senior with chromosomes so damaged by the cloning process that any male offspring would almost certainly be intellectually impaired.

Set out to prove Fermat's last theorem but were beaten to the punchline.

Changed our name to Richie Valens.

Were so badly scarred in the plane crash
in which Buddy Holly & the Big Bopper died
we pretended we had died as well, disappeared
into another name change & forged a will
giving our new selves as the beneficiaries
in the hope that the cyclical nature of fashion
would make us popular again in thirty or so years
especially since our death had happened
in such dramatic circumstances
it would probably inspire a Hollywood movie.

It was a good call. We have lived off
the royalties & on an abandoned oil rig
in the Southern Ocean ever since. Spend most
of our time refining the definitive piece on
whether Procul Harum's *A Whiter Shade of Pale*
contains more of Bach's *Air on The G String*
or his *Wachtet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*. But we
cannot agree. So in the meantime, in between times,

he
writes the poems

I
write the bionotes

& occasionally
we write to one another.

A note for the coroner

He was found slumped at his computer desk. The screen was still active, continuous rows of the letter u. He had fallen forward, his nose pressed against the keyboard, forcing the u key down & causing it to replay itself endlessly on the monitor. The information at the bottom of the screen showed that it was up to page 213. It is calculated from this that he had collapsed 5¼ hours before being found. The first line on the first page read "This should be easy." Then a space, & then the uuuuuuus began.

There were two piles of paper on the desk. The one to the left of the tower was comprised mainly of hard-copy emails & three separate collections of poetry in manuscript, each held together by a bulldog clip. The remainder of the pile appeared to be variations on these collections. Two-thirds of the way down was a book, "Trout Fishing in America" by Richard Brautigan.

The pile under the monitor appeared to be variations of several poems, in strata. The top sheet of paper in each stratum seemed to be the final version of the poem, those below preliminary drafts. Many of these pages had hand-written notes on them. To the side of this stack were a stapler, a ruler, a roll of tape, a coffee-stained coaster & a ballpoint pen whose cap was off.

The top of the two-drawer filing cabinet set at right angles to the right hand side of the computer desk was also covered with papers plus several two-ring binders & some books. A folder under the books contained acceptance & rejection notes in receding date order. There seemed to be an equal mix, though the most recent ones tended to be emails accepting his poems.

There were seven books on the cabinet. Those that were closed were two books on the paintings of René Magritte, a road atlas of Australia, a book on birds & a novel called "The Flanders Panel" by Arturo Perez-Reverte. The fully open book was "The Concise Oxford Dictionary", at pages 1188 & 1189, **silver** to **sinecure**. We believe he had been using this for reference shortly before he collapsed because there was a hard-copy version of a poem on top of the pile with "Without care" written on it, & there was a file still open on the computer where this title had been incorporated. This poem is reproduced over the page, without comment.

Without care

On the road
that runs along
the edge of the river
& which, naturally,
is called Quay St
there is an office
for both the
Harbour Master
& Customs. Since
no vessels other
than prawn trawlers
& pleasure craft
have tied up here
in over a century
I guess these
jobs are what are
classed as sinecures.

The final book on the cabinet, "The Oxford Companion to Philosophy", perhaps provides a clue to what may have happened. An attempt had been made to close the book, but a corner of one of the binders had prevented this. The page part exposed contains an entry on 'solipsism', "the view that only oneself exists". An examination of the directory in which he was currently working shows a very recent file called "solipsis ellipsis" which is a poem that could be interpreted as putting forward the case that everybody is imagined by someone else & as soon as the imaginer realises that they are no longer alone then they immediately attempt to extinguish their imagined one. This line of thought is being treated with some urgency since, if it contains even the slightest element of truth, it is possibly the first of an outbreak of serial murders on a scale almost impossible to imagine.

There were no signs of a struggl

Helix

Time looped back
upon itself. A
replicatory dance,
the same song over
but never over.

Forward. Furrowed.
Brow, ploughed
field. Back & forth, the
same earth turned

over. Never over.
The seasons carry
each unto themselves
the other seasons. Time
itself loops back

but never to the same
space. A starting point, a
pace apart. Space &
time a place apart, never

to be ploughed but
further afield time loops
back. A replicatory dance
in time upon itself. Apace.

This *ficzione* is for Martin Edmond

Very near the end of the last
of his thirteen thoroughly researched
but possibly premature books
on the collapse of the Mung economy
André Pierre de Sèche-Cheveux
includes as part of a footnote
an anecdote from a Norwegian doctor
working for the World Health Organisation
& one of the last *étrangères*
to leave the country
who tells how the transition
to Marxism produced such an
outpouring of books, from
The Poems of Ho Chi Minh
through to Marx's *Das Kapital*,
that the export timber trade —
which although foreign owned
still brought in the majority
of the country's overseas earnings —
was totally destroyed because
all the trees had been cut down
& pulped. A footnote which might
have appeared had there been
a fourteenth volume was that
the Mung became prosperous again
by using the cleared ground to grow
opium; &, through value-adding
& vertical expansion, oversaw
its refining & ultimate processing
into heroin & a range of
legitimate pharmaceutical alkaloids
which they moved around the world
in a fleet of converted timberships they'd
bought up cheaply at a bankruptcy sale.

Bach's *Arioso*

A promenade, a procession
in the sensation rather than the
sense of the word. No model
strut, no posturing; instead
the stately walk of a couple
comfortable within themselves
& with their environment as, on
this warm evening, they move
down a corridor where large
gilt-framed paintings alternate
with open windows. In both
the paintings & the windows
other couples can be seen —
the same poise, a similar style of
dress across a range of colours.

The effect is harmonious, though
there is an edge of eeriness
to it, as if painted by one of the
Belgian surrealists but set
in late afternoon rather than
under cold moonlight & amongst
elegance instead of ruins. Then

the music shifts to a different
key & the aspect changes, is now
aligned on a diagonal axis where
previously it was straight up & across.
Continues, until the cello surfaces
at a slight angle, returning

the focus to the first couple,
restoring the original alignment &
underscoring with its resonance
the surprising emotional content
of such a structured recitation.

Postscript

To the Commissars
of Enlightenment:

my Russian
isn't that
good

but I think
you missed

nyekulturni

out of
your assessment
of me.