calligraphies

Mark Young

xPress(ed)
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Cover Art by Jukka-Pekka Kervinen
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Design, Typesetting and e-Publishing:
xPress(ed)
Espoo, Finland

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Electronically published in Finland
ISBN 951-9198-49-0
“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.
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 harassment 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 surroundings

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.
December 1. Supposedly the day on which the season changed. Someone'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.
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_ 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
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 punctiglio,
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. Disappointing. 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.
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.
Yeat's lake

go now    go    free
all          mad
I           be
lone        lad

all    come
he    sings
ere    night’s    purple
net

is    day
lap    it    low
and    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 daydream to entropic nightmare with particulate 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 uuuuuus 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 strug...
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 ficcione 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.