

Worn

Only loneliness of desk the ellipsis of word,
recalling memories the hand behind dealing out
each one, if only my limbs if only my tongue... trembling
what duckling wouldn't and what grown man
hardening, wouldn't run there that first one
that early peace, a taste of sugar like... entropy, chaotic
and brittle and never a sense you can, always
the possibility of looking back to see... nothing,

our worn mountains the Australian
breath, the lonely descent from weather
from moon, wolverine mindscapes some
faint dingo dream, none of it mine just time

bursting... scraps of laughter a bit of sex the rest
rented, the sun retreating I'd re-enact each moment
if it would make... the split timber of my mistakes
forever, wherever forgotten.

Berlin World

after Felix Schramm's *Soft Corrosion*

1.

There is a global vacancy
– although global really
isn't the right
term: it's an individual
mourning
of a life lost or possibly never even
begun, like collections
of rusted objects strewn
across Berlin lawns, fate
riding a murky wave
of post-ether; either
I'm lost to it or the world
eats out
my heart.

2.

Forget the old notions of Strauss
architecture, I've seen
birds circling endlessly
around indoor trees. The old
ecologies are dying – not
that trees themselves are being humbled
but vanity, its very kernel,
now subsists on flat
grassy surfaces
with bumble bees hovering

about. Bells
might chime, cars
flying past,
past the fences
of the park lost
in imagination, now
these pockets of trees, remnants
of romanticism shooting
up, up... the birds
circling.

3.

Minds with hazy
tails talk
of communism like a small sweet
about to disappear
on the back of the tongue. Here
vacancy refers to a lack
of creation where creation's
violent as collusion, as objects exploded
and held
through time like coloured like
swirling
glass. This,

4.

however, implies a peace
I simply don't have. Consider
the corroded violence
of different shapes overlapping, then
of broken planes
forced
cut in
to one another: soft

corrosion; swirling
mist sucked back. Vacancy
can also refer to starvation
enforced by the robbery
of a post
unified soul.

5.

As violence, as creation,
vague meaning tracery
in the trees, the love of time
shaken. We respond to the Voices
as they float up: Berlin
returns rhythm
to the rust of discovery, the small,
small people re-
stringing the lyre. I
would listen could my hand
reach
into the ether and clutch
that
organ I've never seen again.

6.

But
the Berlin world is a giant
dawn
and my loss is but one stroke
in an opera of green and spurious metal
flakes. This bleeding,
this shaking of the structures
claims nothing
but an apologia of world. What
is a pigeon fallen to the earth
if not glorious (where
a broken neck is a solid line
held
by a small head hanging
to one side)?

Climbing Mount Ilija, Dalmatia

for Kate Fagan

 this richest, whitest silence, this height!
 into new nationality. This now,
 but recede, like the shore before them,
 Snowy peaks call from Bosnia
 on either side into old anatomy.
 the ridge slices vision and drops
 is clawed away into blades;
 this rock, this white limestone
 which, expectedly, mocks. Now
 were it not for the sun
 urges, and would freeze,
 dense speech, while the breeze
 away like bubbles of
 forested islands float
 taking refuge. In the distance
 of dried peat like old men
 pines huddle in lakes
 edifying doubt. Ancient
 regressions into Jesus country,
 a path weaves through vain
To reach the height of Ilija,

The serene sublime
of convex pools of rock, of thought
floating up with curls
of construction work from down below
by the channel. (By the horizon, Odysseus
was waylaid for seven years in an even more
sensual state
of reverie, and those who fled
from Troy in his wake, who
could have turned them away,
their boats wrapped up in worms
of warm current towards Korčula's
shore?) These spiky shrubs exploding
from the rock, they would
smile, had they the time or
the burnt cumulus of sunset
with which to breathe. And,
as for the descent, well, it is a fan
of wind flattening into metal
the precious limbs
of wars.

Shooting Continuum, Cambridgeshire

after Jennifer Rankin

Hunting

hunting with the gamekeeper
speeding across fields
in a buggy full of torque up slopes
into woods

and the clouds stretch
into the sunset, ember
burning beneath a thin
puddle of stone-
coloured space
the clouds speared
by dark trunks and released
the woods release us into open air.

Woods. Wind. His
foot plants the brake pedal with a
thud into the floor.

The washed alien
magic of dusk, of clouds scattering.

He rests his rifle upon the rail.

--/crack!

Somewhere
out there a rabbit is waiting, and sensing

until it is thrown back by a cone
of lead flattening a cone of lead
flattening as it ploughs through bone
through soft tissue

Always, out there, a small rabbit sensing

Stalking through the long grass
the waving grass
bending down, thrusting a hand deep into it
retrieving a limp rabbit
a limp rabbit in the lights still
twitching, but dead
dangling as he stalks back
victorious
like a footballer, his other hand on his hip.
/crack!

In one end and out the other,
he says, tracing the line of the bullet with his finger
throwing the limp carcass
tracing the line
into the tray on the back *clump*
it lands *clump* on the others.
Further on, he hands me the red spot
to search the field for fox eyes.
It drifts

like red moonlight
across the beanstalks; just

there – *just there!* – two glinting eyes
almost plastic, tiny red... two
held within the light, two glassy eyes merging with
beanstalks
disappearing
almost two eyes barely within space
glinting out
from the backs of our minds.

Light off, he says, and the headlights return
bouncing over the fields reaching

forwards into space there
in space before us the lights racing before us
to the edge of the estate.

And he spots a *Light on!*
spots a white sock darting across the track
jerks to a halt.

He hoots

a soft hoot, hooting
softly reaching out
out into the undergrowth
those two ruby eyes rising up – incredibly,

those two ruby eyes –
underneath the pale wings of ears, a head hovering
perplexed
reaching back
back through time to the source, the sound reaching
held
his rifle up, held, waiting, squeezing
squeezing --/

crack! The cub, gone.

That cub, shot off into space
hidden within space, hidden
before the bullet raced ahead
and left the barrel of his rifle.