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KEEPING TIME

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requirements for the award of the degree of
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This work has not been previously submitted in whole or
in part for the award of any degree. It is my own work.

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Date:

7/3/2013

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WRITING IN LIGHT

I wanted it on paper;
that you might know
its amber colour and dusty glow.
I hoped to reach the very heart
of our winter sun,
to touch her weakened beating.

So I sat here all morning,
remembering those painters – Old Masters –
who actually trap
the light
and then cage her in canvas.

But while I marvelled at this envied art,
the sun's diluted shard
crept across the page,
wavered there, in that corner,
and then (though I held my breath:
"My sun. Stay.")
she quickly turned
and dissolved away.

The spidery shadows of twilight merged,
and I had not written a single word.

So now I am writing to warn you
of the sun's cruel and stabbing craft;
the memory of her quivering glow
burns shadows into hearts.

(And I should know ...
I write this in the dark.)

GENESIS

There.
Just there.
On that unseen sight,
where the blue of your eye turns green,
that's where I will stare.

Know then,
in our frequent exchange,
if I seem not to hear,
if I seem not to care,
that's because I'm listening instead
to the birth of our blind white words,
that's because I'm looking ahead
for pure-eyed verse.

Somehow this is borne by you
in that unseen site.
There.
Just there.
Where the green of your eye turns blue.

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CAPTURING LIKENESS

For Joe Hurter

My head on a stake you bring to me
whenever the day brings rain,
and each time I am unveiled,
you sigh: you have failed again.

But this time, I am assured,
you clearly see your mistake.
The hunt is on; my likeness lured.
If you can just catch the make

of my eye, that unformed frown,
this singular shape ...
But you should know by now,
my match will escape.

And it's no fault of mine; for weeks
I sit, turn, frown, smile,
while you chisel away at my eyes or cheeks,
cursing all the while.

Once, I suggested we wait some years,
but you insist on a youthful face;
not hearing my case for the elderly:
their fully-fledged frowns and etched tears.

No, you moan: ageing is simply tragedy.
Oh, but you may change your mind
when you find that you will never finish
what is not finished in time.

FROM ONE WHOSE NAME YOU NOW FORGET

It is a mistake to think
that clock faces keep time.
It wanes away from them nightly,
and they return always
to a dawn with no vestige of age.

And these hands (though they point
us off in the direction of the day),
they clutch nothing really;
moments and seconds tick away
from them, like clockwork.

But your hands (which wring away
these hours so anxiously),
they cannot but be hands full
of history. They hold sixty-seven
winters in their bones.

And your face and eyes,
when you hold them so,
reveal a sea of stored-up
moments. There is more
than a lifetime in that glance.

For one can fathom there
the remembered glare
of a father's father,
and now the flicker
of some lost ancestral stare.

Your limbs are so full of time,
they tremble. And it would seem to me
(one whose name you now forget)
that the years spill away
from your mercurial mind.

And yet I can see
in your hands
and your face
that you keep time
perfectly.

A STRANGE COUNTRY

For Lilyana Androlovic

You chose a strange country, you and he:
the other hemisphere, completely
foreign, the languages a muddle,
and the people, in this peninsular city,

self-interested and blinkered as they huddle
to and from their stations and homes;
hardly a haven for refugees, this place,
which is slowly being emptied of its own.

Did you know you'd scrub restaurant floors
(in spite of your Kirov training)?
A dancer, a cellist, cleaning toilets,
on the tip of this continent's claw.

What did it matter, you said, you were used
to having only what you could. Besides
you had fled for your lives.
(All this I never fully understood.)

So I was pleased when things got better:
a job up-country, the way things should be,
no longer embarrassed
by the injustice of this city.

No, I never really understood,
until I saw you last. A brief
encounter, several years ago. You were
alone, with hacked hair. A widow.

You tried to explain. Muddled
something about a concert. Here again, this city,
and some place somewhere along the N2.
Basically, it seems he drove head-on into eternity.

Then I knew, finally understood,
that you'd left a family, a city, a language and time
and come here, to this strange country,
only for your lives.

STEALING EGGS

I was an egg thief as a child.
Each spring, I'd climb in pursuit
of a wild, newly laid and speckled blue prize.
(These, our childhoods agreed, were "the best".)
And so, in our dank gardens, no nest
escaped our ardent eyes.

Somehow, the others would not do - the empty shells.
Though they were often a scoop in themselves,
their husky lightness always gave them up.
Far better to hold and cup
the full weight of the find,
beneath my bedroom light.

But only for a day or so.
I always tried to lessen my crime,
insisting that I was no collector,
and taking only one or two
to place amid my mantel clutter.
Besides, I was borrowing; they weren't mine.

Often, I'd even climb back through
the oaken overgrowth of time to beg
atonement - only to find
bowed heads, angry fist-fronds of life,
mourning already for unhatched eggs.

ON THE DEATH OF A DOG

On afternoons such as these;
a day spent, your body at ease,
you may recall her tiny chest
falling
and rising
and rising again
to meet the swelling
of your own caged breast.

You might once again marvel
at this unity
of man and beast,
harmonising in heartbeat
at the very least.

And as the light prepares
for dusk, you might remember
how you held your breath,
allowed her perfect, dreaming breast
to subside alone
somewhere
between the substance of day
and the shadow of its passing away.

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THIS HOUSE

It's no use, mummy.
Scrubbing won't help.
Your spotless haven is trapped
between a mouldy heaven
and a rat-ridden hell.
And the garden, mummy,
the garden,
it edges towards its corpse of a mate.
It's no use, mummy.
It's too late.

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THIS POEM

Last night, after you phoned,
I came to this room,
thinking: "I am ready now
to write this poem."

First, I tried to recall
how it was that you'd grown old.
(For poems, "age is good", I am told.)
But I see you only as a younger man,
consoling a child
holding broken toys
in her childish hands.
Though I searched fervently for more,
that was all.

So then I thought about the day you left:
how I didn't cry
(I was strong, you see),
avoiding whatever was in your eyes.
You were silent too, showing strength,
but it was so much harder for you,
I know, it was
so much harder for you.

I tried to imagine
how you must have felt
on that plane,
placing another ocean
between yourself
and yet another family.

But all that seemed clear
was the feeling that came
after you left:
how we aired the rooms
and left yours empty,
and how we all sat
together
in front of your old TV.

"Nothing poetic about that," I thought,
frustrated now.
"For this isn't the poem that it could be.
It's not even the poem that it should be."

So, for consolation, I looked to the moon
and watched the shards of light
as they pierced our overgrown garden -
your garden really.
For hours I focused on the moon
and the garden,
illuminated, one patch at a time,
waiting, hoping:
"Soon, God, soon."

But it's morning now
and I've not written much.
It's raining too
(and I know how you hated Cape Town rain),
but I am thinking
that if you only knew
how your once carefully tended garden
needs the rain,
well ...
well then, it might not bring you
too much pain.

FINDING YOUR SENSES

When you start to lose your senses
humour is the first to go.
When laughter skulks off mid-chuckle, you know
you're a bore with no witty defences.

Sight revolts next,
leaving you perplexed,
in a Monet landscape or blind abyss
of light-mindedness.

Soon after (at some important tea)
you'll see: that you're the only one
who is really keen
to discuss the glory of the colour green.

In response to this mutiny,
hearing grows haughty,
declaring amid an enthralling talk
that hereafter she will snobbishly balk

at anything other than the ancient aria,
playing out – at any time –
the wounded notes of a minor lover
in the dim underwoods of the mind.

And don't reach out for your trusty tongue.
They'll soon make a traitor of this witless one,
leaving you stranded:
blind, deaf and dumb.

Yet on this island of senselessness,
there thrives an Eden of sensual bliss,
where full, whole-headed laughter grows
amid the sane discourse of foes.

We laugh, in fact, at their own defence,
their undying, straight-faced will to instil
some human sense of a common sense
when, really, there is none at all.

SHORTS

Oh when will I have bigger thoughts,
the tall, lustrous, racehorse kind?
Mine are stunted, pony-short;
in dust I'm left behind.

Some have thoughts so very vast,
they cut them down to size,
and still they're sleek, at times so fast,
I stand in dumb surprise.

Such skinny, insubstantial kine,
mine are hardly thoughts at all.
They cannot ham; they fluff their lines,
and trounce my every call.

I hope and pray that sometime soon
the stubborn brutes will speak;
others parade full-blooded booms,
but mine don't talk, they squeak.

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CROSSING OUT

I used to think
that it would always happen like this:
the long walk towards the crossing,
followed by the expected hours of waiting
(it usually rains at this point)
and we mutter something - oh anything -
about intentions
and remembrance.

Yes, a few stuttered pleas escape,
but for the most part,
we are too wet and weary
to elaborate.

Then he turns
and he walks
and I do not watch him leaving;
instead, I stand and watch
a tide of unborn worlds receding.

A cross
in our lives
snaps up a history,
turns its future to stone.

Again he turns
and he walks,
yes, I think I know this feeling
and this time I think I'm right
this time it seems I'm bleeding.

A cross
in our lives
pinpoints the moment,
leaves no smile unblown.

Then I found
that it was different in its way;
though the feeling stayed the same,
it was worse - somehow changed.
I knew then that I could never never
make one single path
wind on forever.

Because at crossings
I turn
 leaving no tear unblown.
At crossings
I walk
 turning histories to stone.
And at crossings
with me
 he watches worlds receding.

There.
There I go.
That is me.
I am leaving.

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THE TELLING

You needn't cry.
You needn't cry.
For this: his single stillborn lie.
Its death came with its telling,
and in the end
its tragedy was so small,
my friend, my friend,
let no tears fall.

But for those others
wrapped in tear-stained sheets
blind lovers suckling deep deceit
fall to your knees
fall to your knees
and weep.

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CASUALTIES

My dear, we are waging wars in our eyes.
And for what matter? We blindly thrash
and idly batter against ties
that we ourselves have bound.
We know the fate of such pursuits.
How often have we found
that battles born in boredom refute their aims
and die always in bewildered shame.

So, come, let me disarm your gaze.
The day is already cold with age,
and there are better ways to spend an hour
than this. Such bitterness belies its source
and leads us astray. Why are you and I the cause
of damage done to the other?
Who knows, my lover, what stops or starts
the swell of casual cruelty in our hearts?

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DAREDEVILS

For Ingrid Scheider

Old friend, old fool,
what storms trouble you now?
Several winters have passed
since we last said goodbye
and we live now on separate seas
in rooms unknown to the other.

I wonder sometimes whether we might forget
ourselves and swim back into easy familiarity,
retrieving the memories of our youth –
a treasured moment, a sunken hour,
or even the language that only we knew.

("If you don't, you're a Kirsty Lyle," you'd say.
And I did. Always. Without delay.
Oh, you were a daredevil you.
Your teenage room a shrine to
cricket, Pink Floyd and kung fu.
I remember. I do.
Skimming stones all summer;
diving headlong into danger.
"If you don't ... "
Until that day
when I didn't.)

What would we say now, old friend.
We had no words for "deceive" or "betray".
So what would we say?

No doubt, we'd answer questions
politely, and with some truth,
about families and futures,
anything but our youth.

And then, without fail, there'd come a silence
when we'd both turn away
suspended in the stillness
of an autumn day.

Soon, you will rise to go,
leaving no storm in your wake
as you used to do –
just a ripple on a pool
(for old times' sake)
and me
your old friend,
this old fool.

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PASSING THROUGH

You are a memory in the making
in this sun-filled room.
Cross-eyed and stern,
grown old before your time.

You sit here before me, a future
whose end subsides
without doubt; a monumental oak
whose shadow blots me out.

I should have liked to touch
your bark and run my fingers
over the unexplored
grooves of your fallow heart.

But I knew (for you watched
the time and sipped cold tea)
on this August afternoon,
you would pass through me.

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YOU HAVE A WAY

of standing
(one leg slack,
head slightly raised)
that pleases me.

A hunter
surveying
or sailor at sea,

you have a way
of standing
(head back,
body in praise)

that pulls horizons
into the frame.

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SONG OF THE SELKE

Why do you only love the one you cannot see,
always stroking her wet hair in a net of seaweed and sand?

Look at me; if you'd only look towards the sea;
here swims the self-same girl with the same black strands.

And why do I always dive towards the things that cannot be,
always knocking at the shore of your mountainous land?

Turn to me; if you'd turn to me I'd cease
with these wave-like words and these drowning hands.

But no stormy verse will ever cover
the memory of your earthly lover,
and no matter how words toss and yearn,
only washed-out, wordless waves return.

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NO REGRETS

Everyone has one: an indiscretion,
hesitance or bold mistake;
an instance when it all blew over
or simply spilled away.

And some nights you'll go back
to that sea-swept season, long gone,
when the world stung with salt
and things went wrong.

But this time, you're armed
with magic words and "what ifs".
You'll rearrange that moment
encased in regret.

But you'll find, once you're there,
that it still ends in shame.
Not one word is altered.
It falters again.

You still behave badly,
still have too much to drink
or you don't speak at all
and the moment sinks.

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STILLS

You'd think a photograph would freeze
a moment. Perhaps. For in your album,
a photograph, faded now, reveals some day
where, in a wavering sea,
a girl tilts her head in laughter;
the tinkling sound cut off, paused
in a mute and painful perfection.

But photographs don't remember imperfections,
and she is always the-girl-that-could've-been.
For if you stare hard enough, you'll find
her absence propels her forward
until she swims into your mind.

Here, her laughter is not silent
and colours do not fade.
(There is much comfort in this.)
But here, the fragments refuse
to focus, to crystallise,
so that nothing can be touched.

In your album, a girl tilts
her head in frozen laughter,
but her absence will remind you
she may be laughing now, still.

TRESPASSERS

Last night, you intruded upon my dreams again.
Funny that: six years of coexisting in this city,
with not a single sighting, accidental or otherwise
(though I'd imagined the awkwardness several times)
and then, for three nights, you wade into my mind,
wash over half a decade,
and take your place in that backwater, time.

After raiding my memory, you point out
that there are details I've forgotten:
your lover's lisp, for instance,
a scarred arm, birthmarked wrist.
The markings of intimacy.

You return to show they still exist,
And somehow you charm me still,
leaving me again at dawn
with the same confusion of will,
with which we'd parted years before.

How many years this city will erase,
and how many lovers, long since dead,
will return to the beds of husbands, wives,
whose lives slip nightly
into one eternal, windswept summer
or awaken again in familiar rooms
now dreamt in by others.

For in spite of desires dealt with, banished,
laid to rest, confessed,
another season subsists here.
A myriad of nocturnal longings
return, take their place in your room,
and speak your name,
as if they had never left,
as if it were all the same.

A LETTER UNWRITTEN

It is aloe season again.
Kirstenbosch will be ablaze,
a firewall of sentinels,
ushering in the rains.

An annual ritual, I haul
out our letters – the gobbledygook
of adultery, my pencilled shame,
and your frenzied scrawl.

“Thwarted” was our catchword,
the hook at every turn.
Now our talk seems absurd,
denying, as it did, other lovers

who were absent only in ink.
We were trying, I think,
to write us into being,
just not seeing

the banality of our games;
that the in-jokes of illicit love
turn on themselves,
are always lame.

And each year’s the same:
I cannot get my head
around our upside-down scribble
(like our lives, we said)

nor what became of our lines.
Made flesh, we faltered.
Our narrative had no moral,
denouement or rhyme;

just a sad petering out
and pushing forth
for reason. This swell
of angry doubt

grows less each season,
and the questions about
who did what to whom
how often, when and where

no longer loom. I no longer ask.
What matters now is to be
useful, somehow to repair
this broken puzzle of broken hearts.

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REUNION

In that moment before we met,
I thought of the reunion of older minds.
I thought of those others - long since dead -
who had dreamed so much harder
(on nights so much colder)
for this: their appointed time.

I tried to grasp the passing of years,
the winding path that lovers retrace,
so that they might peer - at last! -
above the aged overgrowth
into the untouched towers
of a once-perfect love.

There behind time's thorny disguise,
they find those longed-for, familiar eyes:
"I am unchanged" they gaze,
(Ah! The only glance that can reassure.)
"It is unchanged. Pure."

In that moment before we met
I thought on all those others,
and somehow from the pool of the past,
I dragged out the song
of some long-forgotten lover:
the drowned aria of one Ophelia
whose tangled pleas are entwined for ever
in the unsung tendrils of another.

The strangled melody hangs there,
a single wavering note,
whose echo (carried by this winter wind)
somehow pushes me further,
and sinks me deeper,
into the oldest hour of night.

In that moment before we met
I dreamed harder,
striving forward, unthinking, blind,
towards our own appointed time
so that I might soothe my weary sight
with the steady rise and heavy fall
of your own singular, grey-blue eyes.

That moment before has passed now,
but although your eyes cast comfort and silence,
from beneath that moment's mountainous fall,
there crawls a deeper, darker glance
that wishes its way, always,
towards some final assurance ...

that somewhere in the unborn vision of the past
there lies a memory of a happy, happy night,
in which a girl was caught mid-stride,
by the wet lights of a winter street
and the wide-eyed moment she rushes to meet.

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LEADING A LIFE

"This is my life", you'd say,
as if it had been led astray somehow.
Certainly, for twenty years or more,
you'd had your eye fixed
on some other port,
some other sort of "now".

Instead, you've been dumped here
(a shortchanging, I know)
in your own backyard of years,
which you'd outdreamed long ago.

"The shadow of a life," you say
(as if there was something more),
but you know, or ought to by now,
that every city's muffled yawn
flickers back to day,

and its dreamers,
pulled from foreign shores,
find themselves again
in rooms stale with dawn,
breathing: "This is my life"
My life.
My life.

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THE FAITHLESS

We're always wishing it upon others:
a time, a place, a state of mind,
reserved usually for the exclusivity of lovers.
Some seek for themselves, only to find
that their findings fall short; are somehow less
(and they've now squandered lives)
than their half-wakened dreams of happiness.

Some reject the duller shades
and reflect only upon a higher blue;
assured that nothing will ever invade
such tightly focused vision. Convinced too
that at times they can just just see it there.
While others (who now have blinded eyes)
ask: "Where? Where? For Christ's sake, where?"

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THESE DAYS

Heaven, these days, is so forlorn.
In God's dusty, cob-webbed kingdom,
all saints sleep,
and angels turn to stone.
The mumbled prayers of yesteryear
seem only to deepen their dreams.
And there are no martyr deaths
or virgin births
to unearth their blessed bones.

Anyone would think
that God grows old,
and little will save
His crumbling throne.

But, it is, I think,
a restless grave,
not a death of peace or bliss;
it's not the kingdom
of a god short-breathed,
but a god grown sad
and speechless.

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LUNAR VOW

Juliet was wrong:
this is no inconstant moon.
Star-crossed lovers quiver
in her dull but solid glow.
They know the way of this watchful eye,
who closes, only to open;
who is banished, but doesn't die.

'Swear then,' she should have said,
'by an ever-returning light,
for when the plight of winter comes,
and in the dead of the night,
the moon, our pledge, will outshine the sun.'

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NO WIDOW

I am no widow
and no widow's grief
will fill
this hour, the last
of the evening in the fifth
of our separate springs.

No widow
would have grown
to love this time
as I do - the shadows at play,
the bruise-blue light. These things,
they are mine,
mine alone in the night.
And I have wanted it this way.

And yet, today,
there are things
I would like to say
to you, my sailor love.
No, not to lay blame
for tears long past,
only to ask:
"Do you smell the salt
of the sea, my love?"
It burns so today:
The sea that carried you to me,
the sea that carried you away.

REQUIEM MASS
For Father David Binns

Father,
we'd have done you proud.
Not even Christmas had drawn such a crowd.
You'd have found, had you come,
that each ritual was perfectly done
and no amen was left unsung.

What is more
(would you have been surprised?),
there was a tide of mourners at your side.
For once, you could've spiralled the pulpit,
gazed at each face, and sighed:
"Not one absent soul."

Although another took your place,
all in all, we'd like you to know
it was a most majestic show.

But Father,
you must also know,
there is no glory in our sorrow.
Suicide leaves a brand of grief
that cannot be measured or weighed by pride.
Each tear has its separate shame.
and this time (however brief)
there are no extra blessings
for extra tears.

Ah David.
Beloved.
Did you not know?
Well, I tell you now:
it is so.

TILL DEATH US DO PART

You've not made dying easy, dear.
All those years of restless boredom, loneliness,
followed by this – your figure now a dutiful sentinel,
forever peering over my form,
shuffling hourly; to and fro, to and fro ...
Now, curiously, after decades of indifference,
when I've finally learned to be alone,
you decide that you cannot let go.

Sometimes, I hear you in your adjoining room.
Your muffled sobs do not escape my range.
(My hearing, dear, has always been acute.)
But still I find it strange,
for it seems we parted years ago,
when I'd long outlived my wifely use,
and our evenings diffused into separate dreams,
in separate interlinking rooms.

No, you've not made it easy,
and this stage the hardest, as it is.
Why now must you bring back
the taut quivering of younger days,
all that which these years have lacked?
Such fierce tears are inappropriate in your age.
They confuse and distract me in my dying.

So forgive me if, at this culmination,
you feel abused, but truth be told,
I'm bewildered, even amused.
But what I find stranger, even more obtuse,
is that in spite of these years of preparation,
our daily, ritual separation,
my hard-learned, now animal desire
to die alone serves no use.

For in spite of all this spite,
you will always own the core of me,
so much so, that when you pass through my door
and leave my known field of sight,
a voice in me follows, unwillingly moans:
Don't leave me.
Don't leave me.
Don't leave me alone.

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LEARNING TO SWIM

For thirty-five years you've watched this sea,
and I always found it strange
that one who never knew its ways
should live upon its shores.
In earlier years, you (a woman who'd never learned to swim)
would leave the safety of the sand,
and wade - knee-deep - into the blue.

Now, you watch from your distant home,
and for thirty-five years, it seems,
you've stood in this exact place,
encased by these walls,
your face half-hidden with curtain, musty and faded now,
(you meant to have them replaced),
but that small hope, like so many others,
closes now with the ebb of the tide.

I know I am not one to gauge your grief.
Your time is near now,
and I see there is no solace
in familiar scenes.
After a lifetime of autumns,
the seasons haunt your heart,
and hurt, as nothing else can.

But it worries me,
for they tell me you grow bitter with age,
and that your much-loved seas,
no longer please your eye.
They say that you seek dim refuge
from the stony April sky,
and that the words of this world
are now closed to you.

But it can't be true,
so I am writing now to erase these lies,
knowing as I do, that the glory of the sea,
will never cease for you.
Each morning, I imagine you awaken,
with the fresh intent of setting out,
and winding down towards the waves,
where - even today, perhaps - you will sink wholly
into the blueness of your grave.

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ALL SOULS' DAY

How awful, forty years on,
a forgotten death seems.
The recently dead are often recalled,
and the beloved lives on in the mind
of some remaining mother or son,
who, for years, will remember fiercely:
framing photographs,
composing memorials.
Their grief, at least, bears testimony
as they go about the frail care of memory.

But one year, they will let it
slip. Hereafter, keepsakes are discarded,
slowly: a lock of hair, a letter,
a diary eventually.
Mementoes gather dust,
and weeds invade the grave,
until finally, forty years on,
the moments that make up a life
dissolve with their death.

Some souls are lucky; remembered in art.
And at the start, it seems they trick
mortality. A likeness is caught and held
eternally. But forty years on, there is no one
to know that the likeness is true;
no one to recognise a son's rueful scowl.
Instead, they remark the inimitable
stroke that darkens his brow.

And fame preserves
only a name;
whittling the life
down to a face,
a deed,
or some false claim.

Better then, to go quietly,
little struggle, little hope,
in knowing that forty-odd years on,
there will be no one
to pray on All Souls' Day,
for your long-forgotten soul;
no one to remember, to toll,
or to see
this, the year
when you go down
in history.

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A HOTEL CALLED THE KIPONDA

Then suddenly the dark drew down
and we were lost: Stonetown
a coral maze washed ashore,
with us scuttling along its floor.

I wanted to turn back;
to retrace our hurried tracks,
but you said to press on; best
to go forward and then turn west.

So we pushed on, with much doubt,
clumsy in our cobbled steps,
the evening prayers a muddle
and the cats out.

In quarters vacant by day,
we found life: the lattice stirrings
of women for whom the heat
is simply a way of being.

Beautiful in their evening chores
amid the rubble and ruin;
a poverty so foreign
it should have been easy to frame

and map, to find our way back
to a hotel called the Kiponda.
Instead, it grew darker
and, bewildered, we wandered

on. Each alley blind -
a trap in the liquid gloom.
There seemed no way to find
our white-walled room.

When we did, it was pure accident.
Later, grappling beneath our prison light,
I found your touch altered, urgent.
We faltered through that night.

And I dreamt of those buildings,
once so majestic – those ruins, like scars,
that never let you find or forget
a past splendour, a past perfect.

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SETTING OUT

Setting out, at last, after the usual false
starts and misread maps, we found
the roads empty and wide
as an open palm. We flitted past the sunset
and towns whose names sound of plenty,
Malmesbury, Morreesburg, Hopefield,
to our left, towards the light.

Arriving, late, we fell upon our chosen tasks,
being useful in the ways we could,
Sarah beguiled us, playing the fool
(Do you remember how she made us laugh?)
A Sunday so happy even the lizards smiled.
Our hearts seemed still;
our lives good.

Returning at dusk, with shadows cast, a day
sealed, I drove us through
the dappled night; flitting past
Hopefield, Morreesburg, Malmesbury,
now to our right,
but still
towards the light.

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