

an urban monotone

i lay these words before your mind like bricks
yet tentative suggestive as the way
a skein of geese is pointing is mutating
in our autumn sky our springtime sky
this place is just a building site: puddles
are malingering the weeds repent
cigarette butts fleck the clods of mud
the scaffolds cordon off and then the bricks
which crumble into bits within my upturned
palm wet clay remains clod up my hand
as my fingers web and dry to scattering sand
wind blown thoughts as white as hebridean
you lay these bricks before my mind like words
quite square quite boxed apartment blocked i'm teasing
down the walls from inside out the syntax
capitals full stops i breathe a pause
that moment when we realise we're touching

Cutting up the heat of glaciers

Beyond the road,
the daily sense of blinking water,
awake despite ourselves.

We spent the morning indoors.
Workshopping planetary dead ends:
Could we climb this one?
How did the last one begin?

A washed up pier. The first man
and the first woman are left to grow
in the purposeless heat.

Constellations of paperweights,
sea ice – which should not have
been possible – liquid fossil clocks
seen from the angle of the sun.

Our focus held the concentration
of anniversaries, burning years.
Take these bits of aeroplane,
traffic cone and secondhand whale.
A preference for averages
risking routines of change.

Whose house were we really in?

We decide to build it here,
before we can catch hold of
anything more wonderful

Submerge our globes in little alchemy,
mouthfuls collapsing into tables,
doll's head trucks passed by, by music,
eyes I thought we had put out

Every day is a beautiful day,
we hoped, the scale of windows

The more we looked,
The more it simply wasn't there

Oval

i. the consultation

The rubber gloves were outlined in a single word;
no free hand glimpse, a blackened felt tip border, sure,
precise, holding in their milky vagueness just
above his right hand shoulder, white on light, on white.

His voice seemed slurred, like hearing under water,
shwas of sounds, one word and rubber gloves that held
their germs within and washed me cold at twenty one
degrees. A dettol touch of facts and probabilities

were interspersed with quips about daytime tv shows,
banana smiles and jokes on ways to "boost your chance
of living if the news is bad". I felt the touch
of rubber down my spine, its pulling, catching stroke.

Outside I saw in gamma vision, children's book
of blues and greens and yellows. Shirking reds, I crossed
the road and cars slowed down but didn't beep their horns.
A single word was spreading everywhere today.

ii. the invisible

The invisible is happening everywhere today –
today i see it clearly – self aware machine of me.
I watch my breath as bloody streams of oxygen,
drowning life from inside out. Doubts appear
quite clear in neurone etch a sketch –
steroid hormones more than just a concept,
painting classes, body easel, model me, now
studying my songs in cycles, looped vibrations,
body halo, frequencies – the invisible is happening
everywhere today – today I see it clearly –
nano seconds burst to life in technicolor flashes,
gravity appears in multi tangled parachutes inverted
down, the solid ground a trembling myth, as the air
and water merge in waves which overlap on
everything we see. We are touching at the edges.
Separation into me. A kneedle or a knife.

iii. the separation

I'm standing balanced on a stepping stone,
my ovaries are cradled in my hands.

I rock them gently, whisper words which float
like dandelion parachutes, carried
back to me in altered sounds of birdsong,
running water, silence of the hills.

Intertangled cirrus feathers stroke my
hair, the sunshine dapples me through newborn
leaves, the breeze is diffident, the air
is pungent with mitosis, time is blurred.

I free my clasp, and passive, watch one flow
downstream. Bumping, trundling, as a
single oval pebble smoothes its way to sea.

iii. the rain

I thought myself the centre of the earth, then,
waiting by the full length window, staring at the rain.
Years of science ditched, no need to travel seismic waves
through crust and mantle. Magnetic fields originated
there with me, leaning on the shoulder of a friend,
a haze of anaesthetic hangover, dripping at the edge
of consciousness, smudging borders around my musings
on the worst case possibilities, scenarios and fears
of diagnosis. I watched the rain drop archipelagos
disintegrate upon the window panes, islands drowned.

No-one would have guessed it in my isolated gaze,
yet activity was spiralling around me. Ambulances
wailed emergency, as I watched the automatic doors:
opening, closing, opening on a watercolour car park
filling up for visiting. A father rushed the multi coloured
jackets of his children round the puddles from his car.
Beyond - the road - the daily mental illness of the rush hour
as my lift arrived. I timed my exit through the sliding doors
deliberately and splashed directly through the puddles.
Rain drops fell upon me like the arrows of a cold front,
pointing at me, reaching out to me, and coming near.

v. the mirror

I'm wearing no clothes. Right this minute, now,
my eyes averted down as though i am ashamed.
Centred in my parents' room – the door is shut -
a certain sign, a symbolic line of suture. My scar is
six inches long, its darkened, slightly crooked smile
which makes me tilt my head like nurses do.
I slowly stroke the bruises of my swollen side
as I try and figure if the dent I feel is really there.
My skin appears to droop and sag around my fingers
in contrast to the fullness that I felt before.
My fingers knead my new found lack of symmetry,
a half aborted womanhood. The doctor promised me
“the woman left will end up working twice as hard.”
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vi. the lather

It wasn't tangerine and fizzy sweets.
No euphoric bursts of blossom,
not a primal scream nor dew drop tears.

I wore the phone call factual, cold,
my mother's smiling arms around
my shoulders felt like just another layer of clothes,
as the radio droned with background news:

paralysis had moved.

Inching out beyond my metricality,
as if I needed scientific proof -
a single atom rhyming with release.

The fingers of benignancy
are lathering my back
and wiping clean my body armour.

Uncompletement

i.

like these words
forever fragments
uncomplete
themselves once
more

a single bud
of spring becomes
the first no longer
unfurling leafs
a slightest

variation another
year to autumn
ends recede to increments
and a single leaf
uncurves towards

ii.

like these words
forever fragments
uncomplete
themselves once
more

a single bud
of spring becomes
the first no longer
unfurling leafs
a slightest

variation other
constellations
as angles shade through
greens beyond
another autumn

ends recede to
increments of change

and a single leaf
uncurves towards
this earth

its crusted corners
carve out lines across
an early frost
these serrated edges
both potential loss

iii.

like these words
forever fragments
uncomplete
themselves once
more

our conversation
will elide
sliding meanings
into silence
the hang of it

a single bud
of spring becomes
the first no longer
unfurling leafs
a slightest

variation other
conversations
our angles shading
greens beyond
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both potential loss

the release of
falling soundlessness
no speech of a leaf
revolving on it
just turning turning

Fountainbridge

"ADELE 19" is plastered
9 times over
on a billboard
by the broken brewery
in Fountainbridge

the bridge which used
to span the road
with beer with a clock
on it has gone now
so we're all out of time

but there never was
a time for fountains here
only a namesake pub
which spouts with smoke
- or men in tracksuits -

smokescreens this is
Dundee Street not the way
towards dundee
so paint your trainers whiter
dance it's saturday night