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# SINGING THE VOID

Volume 1

Submitted by

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for the Degree of PhD

to the University of Glasgow

October 2006

Practice-led research conducted in the Department of English Literature

University of Glasgow

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## Abstract

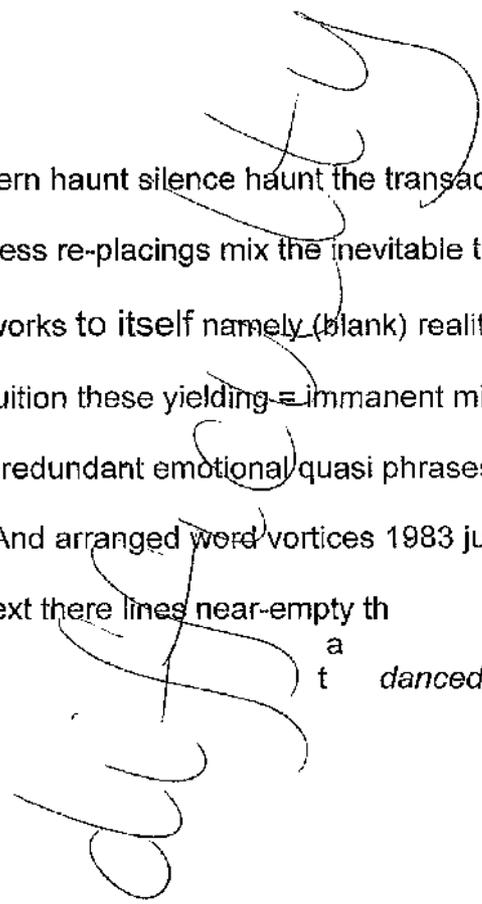
Prose fiction and original poetry are contained in a single work of creative writing titled 'Cage', and an associated commentative journal, 'Out of the Cage'.

'Cage' is centred on the lives and welfare of a community of demented elderly patients who inhabit a ward in an outdated Victorian asylum. A student nurse arrives to start her psychiatric placement there, and, over the next eight weeks, she, the patients and those who care for them are portrayed in various situations from the banal to the abusive. In an environment where standards of care fall below the ideal, she acts as witness and potential agent of change.

The work is arranged as an integrated rhythmic sequence, a prosimetrum, in which language events and prosodic practice correlative to the liminal and broken discourse of the patients taper into silence and dislocated meaning. The narrative modulates from conventional prose through disrupted and violated texts (including poems which are processually derived using the prose sections as palimpsest) to conversational monologues in which the patients speak as themselves before they became ill. The majority of these monologues are in Borders Scots dialect.

'Out of the Cage' reflects on the author's desire to intuit and reveal the disease processes and states of being of those afflicted by dementia, and how this, coupled with intense questioning about the determination of the line ending within the tradition of free verse, led to the devising of original techniques for constructing poems based on those normally associated with avant-garde and experimental poetics, and which increasingly emphasised a non-linear kinetic. Notational and descriptive, it provides a complementary commentary on the process by which the disrupted texts and poems were obtained from the prose narrative and associated material with reference to relevant critical and literary texts.

Approaches from pattern haunt silence haunt the transaction There in mystery  
 syllables inject exactness re-placings mix the inevitable the gift random and  
 yes sudden aleatory works to itself namely (blank) reality constructed  
 relationships need intuition these yielding = immanent miracle → poems  
 Alzheimer's withering redundant emotional quasi phrases Art, manifest in  
 anxiety that thought "And arranged word vortices 1983 juxtapositions as if!" la  
 cage putting sprung text there lines near-empty th



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 t danced, danced semantically

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My family.

The work is dedicated to all sufferers of dementia, their families and those who care for them, and specifically to the memory of my grandmother, May Robson, who was afflicted by this condition.

**CAGE**

"There are places where the mind dies, so that a truth which is its very denial may be born."

(Opening lines of 'The Wind at Djemila', Albert Camus)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Camus, 1970, p. 75.

Soon,

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## DAY 1

### CORRIDOR

From a little after seven twenty a.m., when she entered the main gate, until Eva and Linda came into the hallway at the end of the corridor, Kedzie's nervousness was diffuse and fluid. It leaked out and skewed the dimensions of the trees on either side of the drive, made them loom heavy, darkening the pale sandstone of the Victorian building. Splashes of it landed on random images as Kedzie went inside: a reception area modernised with sheet glass screens and potted plants arranged in a group on the stairs; dust on the plants and the brown edges of their lower leaves; signs to wards that bore the names of local farms and spoke of bare golden hills, drystone dykes and small rivers of peat-coloured water; a wide, windowless corridor that ran the length of the building and smelled of cooking and stale gloss paint; stone stairs with worn and rounded edges that threatened to slip her forward and whose wrought iron banisters wound down two flights, bringing her to a basement corridor with a sign on the wall that pointed to Fauldshope and Drochil Wards. She opened a half-glass door and entered a narrow corridor. There was another half-glass door at the far end.

A loud clunk and rattle made Kedzie start. She looked up. Water pipes ran along the ceiling and down the sides of the far wall. The walls, the ceiling, the pipes, the radiators connected to the pipes were all painted the colour of cold butter. Sunlight shone in through high, large-paned windows that ran the length of the left hand side of the corridor. Dry, thin ropes looped down from them on metal struts stuck up with paint. The sky was clean blue with just a remembrance of white in it. It promised a lovely summer's day. A small flock of sparrows careened into view and perched on the top of a wire-mesh fence that was just visible. Their busy chirrup-chatter, the vibrant whirr of wings as they flew away were inaudible

behind the glass. Kedzie heard only her own footsteps on the stone floor, their unechoing muffled in the cool, still, dead air of the corridor.

And out of that air Kedzie conjured ghosts from all the illustrations she had ever seen of Bedlam. Their contorted features abrupted into the pale, cool corridor in anguish and lunacy. They languished on pallets of filthy straw. They tore at their bodies in torment and despair, hooting and screeching in the gloom. Their keepers leered and were cruel: they drew their fat fists across their drunken mouths.

Kedzie shook her head and pushed her hands further into the corners of the pockets of her uniform. She looked up at the windows again. The sparrows were back, perched in a line along the top of the fence, the mesh bending backwards and forwards as they fluttered and balanced their everyday ash-and-dust coloured bodies on the wire. She put out her right hand and opened the second door. Moisture on her palm made it slip a little on the smooth handle.

She was in a dim and airless hallway. Two closed doors faced her, and round to her right was a north-facing window, its incoming light fretted and diminished by the leaves of mature lime and ash. Beside it was a blue-painted double door with three handles in a vertical line right of centre; one, a pull-down handle at normal hand height, a round one at head height, and another round one at an equal distance below the middle one. A sign above read 'Fauldshope'. Sellotaped to the metallised glass that formed the top third of the doors was a handwritten sheet of A4 paper, its thick black lettering said, "Welcome to Fauldshope."

Kedzie heard noises behind her. The sounds of voices and of footsteps filled up the hallway. She turned round and smiled at two women in white nurse's uniforms.

"Hi, I'm Kedzie."

"The new student?" asked the older one.

"Yes."

"They told us you were starting today. I'm Eva, one of the sisters, and this is Linda, one of our auxiliaries."

Linda smiled and said, "Hi." She was thin with black hair. She seemed sure of herself.

"Have you tried to get in yet?" asked Eva.

"No, I've just arrived."

"Right, here's how you do it."

Eva took the top handle in one hand, the lower in her other and turned them in opposite directions. The door opened.

"The middle handle's a dummy. It's supposed to fool them," she said as she pulled the door back to let Kedzie past.

## KEDZIE HEARS THE REPORT FROM THE NIGHT STAFF

Kedzie followed Eva and Linda into a long wide corridor that was empty apart from two bench seats on the right. Doors led off at various points.

"Don't worry, we'll give you a tour later on. Just stay with me for now and you'll be fine," said Eva. They turned into a doorway two thirds of the way down the corridor on the left. Two women and a tall, fair-haired boy of about seventeen sat at a white formica-topped table at the far end of an L-shaped dining area.

"Mags, John, Elaine, this is Kedzie, our new student." Kedzie smiled and said, "Hi".

"Hi," replied John. His voice had an easy familiarity about it.

"I take it you're no scared ae hard work comin here?" Mags' question held a warning in it somewhere in the narrowing down of her eyes and her direct stare.

"Well, I worked as an auxiliary in a long-stay geriatric hospital before I started my training, so I think I've got some idea."

"Aye, but were they aw off their heids?"

"Actually, a lot of them were."

"An was that the patients or the staff?"

"Hey," shouted Eva, "that's enough. The poor lassie'll be runnin away before she even gets started. Would you like a cup of tea, Kedzie?"

"Oh yes please, milk and sugar thanks."

Eva followed Linda through a door behind the table into the kitchen. John pulled out a chair next to him and motioned for Kedzie to sit down.

"It's mad in here...but you'll be fine. Eva's really nice."

Linda came back and put a mug of tea in front of Kedzie. She sat down beside Elaine.

"Where's Derek this morning? He's usually rarin to go when we get here."

"They've been havin a bit ae a job with Johnny," said Mags. "His catheter

keeps blockin, so they've had to take it out. He should be here the now though."

Eva sat down beside Kedzie.

"So where were you before you came here, Kedzie?"

"I was in a medical ward. I was there for fifteen weeks."

"How did you like that?"

"It was scary at first, but I loved it by the end."

"Good, bit different here. We'll have you sweating blood."

"She's worked wi auld folk before. She'll be fine," said Mags.

"Oh, have you. That should make it a lot easier then. We get some students that have never had much to do with old folk, and it's a bit of a shock to their systems."

"Sounds like Derek comin now," said John.

A bulky man appeared at the door. He was laughing and shouting to someone further up the corridor.

"Aye, no if I see you first...aye right, okay, see you next week Jean."

He wore jeans and a sweatshirt. He laid a Kardex down on the table as he sat down. He pushed a pair of dark-rimmed glasses up his face. His skin looked greasy, as if he had been sweating. His hair looked the same.

"Christ, what a fuckin carry on that's been," he said. He leaned back in the chair and took a deep breath. The bulk of his body seemed to increase as he exhaled and relaxed into the seat.

"You'll be ready for your bed the day then, Derek?"

"Bed? Christ, I've got a plumber comin tae fix ma shower this mornin, and then I've tae go tae Edinburgh and pick up the wife's sister at four o'clock. Be lucky if I get twae hours."

"You wantin a cuppa, Derek? Will I make you a strong coffee?" offered Linda.

"Naw, you're awright thanks, Linda. I'll just batter through this lot and get away ... Eva, there's the keys afore I forget." As he handed Eva a bunch of keys, he spotted Kedzie.

"Surely got a new face this mornin'?"

"This is Kedzie our new student," said Eva.

"I take it you're well insured, Kedzie...comin tae work here?"

Kedzie smiled at him.

"Right, let's crack on." He hesitated as he looked at Kedzie over the top of his glasses. "Dinnae worry, Kedzie, Eva'll give you the full SP later." He gave her a big wink and flipped open the Kardex that held the patient information.

"Yes, don't worry," said Eva. "This'll all sound like double Dutch. I'll fill you in on everything later on when it gets quieter."

Derek cleared his throat in an operatic manner. Mags raised her eyes to the ceiling.

"Edith Anderson," Derek said this in a high-flown register which he immediately changed back to his own, sleep-weary, matter-of-fact voice, "...slept all night. Well, ye ken Edith...Rip van Winkle widnae get a look in. The girls washed and dried under her belly flap and under her boobs at six..." He looked across to Kedzie. "Eva'll explain aw these technical terms later on." He pushed at his glasses. Kedzie noticed several whiteheads in the crease of his nose. "...talc and swabs applied. Lizzie Blair, good night, slept well. Jimmy Brown, slept well. Margaret Brownlie, well, Margaret was in a right tid last night. Up and doon, up and doon oot that bed. Whoever Tommy is he was gettin a right doin. I ended up havin tae get her a stat dose ae Melleril just tae keep her horizontal. Alice Bunton, slept all night. Isa Cain, she was on the wander a bit last night...Christ she cannae half get hersel wound up. It took all my considerable charm tae get her tae lie doon for a wee while. I think she'll be worth watchin the day."

Linda leaned across to Kedzie and said,

"Aye, better if you just stay out of her way. We'll deal with her."

"Helen Chalmers, slept well. Jeannie Collins, slept well. Mary Dalgliesh, took a while to get to sleep last night, but Jean made her a cuppa about half twelve and she was fine after that. Florrie Dickson: well, we TLC'd her aw night: two-hourly turns. She took a wee sip ae tea the back ae six, but she's just the same, no change."

"That's well minded, Derek," Eva interrupted.

"Elaine, those charcoal dressings arrived that we ordered for Florrie. You could maybe try one later on."

Elaine nodded.

"Jack Donaldson, snored aw bloody night. Harry Fenton, dozed on and off a lot last night. The awfiest job tae get him comfy...the puir bastard...no a bad night though. George Gilchrist, puir George, spilled a bottle in his bed but we got him cleaned up nae bother, and apart fae that he slept well. Bill Henderson, a fair night. We had tae keep him sittin up...he was getting a bit puffy...but he slept most ae the night. Roberta Hogarth, slept fine. Eleanor Hopwood, slept well. Fred Hotchkiss, slept well. Agnes Howitt, wet a couple of times through the night again, but otherwise fine. John Johnstone, oh well, Christ, it would've been no a bad night if it hudnae been for Johnny's catheter. Guid job maist ae them are deaf for he wisnae half roarin at four o'clock this mornin. Three times I had tae unblock that bloody catheter. By seven I'd had enough. I just took the bloody thing oot. You'll need tae get his GP in tae try another yin...sorry."

Derek shrugged an apology in Eva's direction.

"That'll be my hassle for the day," said Eva ruefully.

"Vagina Liddell," Derek continued in a hoity-toity voice. "Sorry Kedzie, that's Fanny Liddell."

"Aw for God's sake, Derek. What is that lassie gaun tae think she's come tae?" Mags spluttered.

Derek, grinned quite unashamed and carried on.

"Apart from peein the bed aw night she's been fine. Jane Mckay, slept well, good night. Elizabeth McTeir, Betty: the girls think she had a couple ae fits last night, nothin major, just the usual, but you'll be pleased tae hear that her bowels moved in the middle ae it, an this was aw while I was on ma break. She's sleepin now. Don't know if you might want tae leave her a wee while?"

"Yes, we'll just do that, Derek. We'll leave her till after breakfast," said Eva.

Derek continued to flick through the Kardex.

"George Moffat...could snore for Scotland, George, no problems. Duncan Robertson, we found him in the laundry cupboard last night. He was lookin for his big jaiket, 'for it was cauld oot the day an he had a big load tae shift'. He can get a wee bit shirty in the middle ae the night can Duncan. We had a bit ae a job gettin him back tae his bed. I think Jean offered him a cuppae tea; offered him somethin that did the trick anyway. William Robson, slept well. Joan Scott, sound as a pound all night. John Simpson, slept well. Margaret Stewart, Peggy, slept well...Christ, she disnae half get wound up aboot that bloody handbag. We had tae leave it under the pillae last night or she wouldnae have settled."

"We had a big stooshie the other day when Eleanor thought it was hers. I thought Peggy was going to thump her," said Elaine. "Luckily, Eleanor's so placid, we managed to get it off her no bother."

Derek laughed and carried right on with the report.

"Janet Waldie, slept well. William Wilson, he's right next tae Johnny, so we disturbed him a wee bit, but he just blinked and turned ower."

He flipped the Kardex shut and pushed it across the table to Eva.

"Okay then, boys and girls, I'll leave you to it. I'm away tae see a man about

a plug. You'll mind an phone about Johnny's catheter"

"I'll phone at nine o'clock," said Eva, "...just you get away."

"Right then...have a nice day-ay! "

He winked at Kedzie as he stood up. He nodded in Mags' direction.

"Dinnae let that yin take a len ae ye. She's an awfy wummin."

"Get oot ae here."

Mags nearly fell off her seat as she leaned across and slapped Derek on the thigh.

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## JOAN WAKES UP

"Where are you going with that?" Eva shouted.

She was bending down to put a pair of stockings on the feet of a woman she called Helen, her face red and swollen with the effort.

"I was just going to empty the commode," replied Kedzie.

"Don't bother with that. There's no time, just take it on to the next one ... unless they've soiled it."

Kedzie hesitated.

"Take it to Mrs. Anderson. I'll be there in a minute to help you ... you'll never manage her yourself."

Kedzie wheeled the commode across the floor to Mrs. Anderson's bed. The container beneath the seat was deep and as yet there was only one lot of urine in it, but she tried to do it as smoothly as possible, tried to avoid the urine slopping up and over.

Mrs. Anderson was still asleep. She was lying on her back with her head turned to one side. Kedzie felt that it was a shame to waken her. She leaned across the bed so that her face was just above Mrs. Anderson's ear. Light puffs of breath cooled Kedzie's cheek. Each breath seemed to carry within its sound the ghost of pain. The old woman's hair was damp with sweat. Her nightdress smelled of talcum powder, and suspended above or within it was a moist warmth.

"Morning, Mrs. Anderson."

Kedzie's voice was gentle but loud enough to allow for hardness of hearing, for the distance of sleep. She put her hand on the woman's upper arm and softly shook it up and down. She said 'Morning' again and this time Mrs. Anderson opened her eyes. Before she could close them again Kedzie put her own face in direct line with her's. She smiled, her eyes wide, eyebrows raised.

"Morning Mrs. Anderson... time to get up. We'll get you out onto the

commode."

Mrs. Anderson glimmered a half smile in response. She started to say something out of the thickness of her sleep. All Kedzie could hear was 'Do do, do do dodod do'. Kedzie kept smiling. She nodded to Mrs. Anderson as if she knew what she was saying.

"Time to waken up."

Eva had finished dressing Helen. Kedzie watched as she brushed Helen's hair in the time it took Helen to lift one hand and put it to the side of her face as if to ease back a strand of hair.

"That's it, you can stand up now Helen."

Eva's voice sounded out of breath but it was still loud. It rasped across the space of the room and made Kedzie wince. She watched as Eva guided and half pushed Helen towards the dormitory door. Elaine came past with a small woman who had the most witch-like face Kedzie had ever seen.

"Come on, Helen. Let's go and get you some breakfast," said Elaine in a cheery voice catching hold of her arm.

"Yes, on you go, good lass," said Eva bundling Helen's nightie into a small bedside locker.

At this tone something inside Kedzie eased a little. She pulled the screens around Mrs. Anderson's bed. Almost immediately a hand whisked the material half-way back along its track.

"We haven't time to go guddling in about curtains the whole time. I know we should. You're right. I know that's what they teach you in college, but there's none of them any the wiser in here."

Eva's air of exasperation propelled her to the side of the bed. She reached past Kedzie, took hold of the bed covers and flung them back. Mrs. Anderson gave out a startled 'oh!' and tried to catch the covers back.

"Come on Edith, time to get up."

Eva still had not caught her breath. She sounded weary. She moved past Kedzie to stand at the head of the bed. She handed her a pair of knee-length knickers and a pair of tights from a pile on the top of the bedside locker. Kedzie hurried to put Mrs. Anderson's feet into the knickers and tights. She did not pull them all the way up. She could see that the bed was wet. Eva handed her a pair of wide, misshapen shoes. Their black leather was dry and smelled of stale urine. They formed a cold, hard cast of their owner's foot that Kedzie had to fit onto the warm flaccid flesh that had moulded them. The rubbed heel of one snagged the tights as Kedzie wiggled it into position.

"You take her legs," said Eva.

Kedzie put her arms around the lower calves of Mrs. Anderson's legs. They were fat and warm. They smelled of warm urine. Eva had managed to get her right arm under Mrs. Anderson's shoulder.

"Right", her voice strained at Kedzie.

As Kedzie swung Mrs. Anderson's feet over the edge of the bed, Eva simultaneously hauled her torso into a sitting position. Mrs. Anderson was still trying to waken up. She was not pleased.

"Dododo...dodo...Dodododo..." she blustered.

"Right, Edith, onto the commode," Eva shouted.

In a lower tone she said to Kedzie,

"You'll need to be quick...she floods...you don't want wet feet."

They both put an arm under one of Mrs. Anderson's armpits and eased her to the edge of her bed.

"One...two... three," said Eva. "Get her round quick."

Mrs. Anderson was heavy. She was not fully awake. She resisted their efforts by pulling back like a dog on a leash that wants to go no further. Kedzie

reached for the commode with her free hand to try to bring it nearer to the bed, nearer to Mrs. Anderson's body so that the distance they had to move her would be minimal.

"Oh...oh...oh..." protested Mrs. Anderson.

"We'll just have to drag her round," breathed Eva, "got her?"

Eva and Kedzie hauled at Mrs. Anderson, shearing her body across the wet drawsheet, bunching up her nightdress with the effort, her weight slipping from them through its thick winceyette. Free of the bed, the two took her full weight. Eva leaned in towards Mrs. Anderson and shouted.

"We're just going to turn you round, Edith...stand up straight...come on, head up."

Mrs. Anderson's head gave a sudden jerk upwards, but the bulk of her body stayed stuck, weighed-down, heavy. Kedzie had no option but to heave and pull at her as Eva heaved and pushed at her other side. Kedzie's foot got caught in the locked wheel of the commode. She struggled to free it and swing Mrs. Anderson round. There was a hissing noise as they lowered her folded body onto the commode seat. Urine had splashed onto it. The portion of her nightdress that was already wet was now half way up her back and squashed between her and the commode. Urine had run down between her thighs and onto the clean underwear. Kedzie and Eva let her go. They almost overbalanced with the sudden release from her weight. The breath that had been held in with the effort, grunted out of them. Mrs. Anderson stuttered with bad temper and apparent disgust. She pulled at the nightdress that was half-way up her back and tried to pull it down over the top of her legs, but it was stuck to the back of the seat.

"Lean forward, Mrs. Anderson and I'll sort it for you," said Kedzie.

With Kedzie easing her shoulders forward from the back of the commode, Mrs. Anderson was able to pull the nightdress down to her satisfaction.

"I'll leave you to get her dressed," said Eva.

She got tangled up in the material of the bedscreen as she eased past the commode.

"See these damned curtains...that's another reason we don't bother."

She found the opening and stopped there for a moment to look down the ward.

"And there's another one...look... while we've been in here, Jimmy's wandered through."

She held the curtain aside for Kedzie to see a man standing near the foot of Helen's bed. He winked and smiled at Kedzie and kind of half laughed while at the same time he looked furtive. Eva steered him towards the door.

"Come on, Jimmy. Away through and get your breakfast."

John appeared at the top of the women's dormitory.

"Sorry, Eva. He was off before I could catch him."

The bed curtain swung back into place as Kedzie went to the bedside locker to look for clean underwear and toiletries. She wanted to give the woman a wash. A clean dress, a cardigan and a vest lay on the top, but inside the locker was empty except for a solitary hairbrush. Its nylon bristles had become indistinguishable from a matted lump of white hairs and specks of dead skin. There was no towel on the rail at the back.

"I'll be back in a minute," she said to Mrs. Anderson, looking into her face with a cheery smile.

Mrs. Anderson stopped fussing with the edge of her nightdress. She was silent. She looked at Kedzie with the passive indifference of women who sit by their front doors on the pavements of towns long bored by tourists. She gave a small sigh and carried on picking at the hem of her nightdress. Kedzie pulled back the curtain. She could see Eva further down the line of beds helping someone to

get dressed. This person was slight and boyish. She (for Eva was calling her Jeannie) was walking on the spot. Her head bobbed. She grimaced and rolled her tongue out of her mouth, grimaced and grimaced and rolled her tongue. Then her movements suddenly increased in speed. She broke away from Eva who tried to bring her back beside the pile of clothes on her bed, holding onto her with one hand as she tried to take night clothes off and put day clothes on. Eva's movements were purposeful, focused now on Jeannie's arm, now on her head, now on getting her to lift a leg, getting her to keep still just a minute till she brushed her hair. It was like a dance which Kedzie did not want to disturb: a delicate collision of self-contained actions. She waited until Eva had put the hairbrush back into Jeannie's locker, until Jeannie, released from Eva's attentions could allow her movements to assume their full potential and almost run up between the rows of beds and into the corridor. Only then did Kedzie feel able to ask where the basins and the clean underwear were. Eva whirled round to look at her.

"Basins are in the sluice...behind you in that corner."

She flung her arm out in the general direction.

"Never mind that just now anyway, come and help me make this bed."

She was already bending down to pull the carrier out from the foot of Jeannie's bed. Her movements had the flail-like quality of someone drowning. Kedzie pulled the curtains back round Mrs. Anderson and went to where Eva had already pumped the bed up to a comfortable height, placed the pillows on the carrier and pulled the covers up ready to be stripped off one by one. As they folded the coverlet into thirds and placed it on top of the pillows, Kedzie said,

"Mrs. Anderson needs clean underwear. Where do you keep it? There was none in her locker. "

"No, we don't keep stuff in their lockers, it just wouldn't stay there. The likes of Jimmy or Joan would 'rearrange' it as soon as your back was turned. We put

their clothes for the next day out at night."

She paused as they lifted up the top sheet.

"The clothes are all in the big cupboard at the top of the corridor. The one on your left as you come in the door."

For all Jeannie moved incessantly when awake her bottom sheet was hardly rumpled. They smoothed it out and tucked it in tight.

"But don't bother, just leave those ones on. They only got a wee bit damp at the top. She'll never feel it once her vest's tucked in. She'll like as not be soaking by ten o'clock anyway."

Kedzie tried to sound as if she agreed.

"I'll give her a quick wash though."

"Just a quick one...we've still got a few to get up and breakfast'll be down at half-past."

They plumped up a pillow each and placed them one on top of the other at the head of the bed. Eva looked across the room. There were several beds empty. Elaine had been dressing the women that were easy to manage. Eva hurried across to where a woman lay snoring.

On her way to the sluice Kedzie popped her head round Mrs. Anderson's bed screen. Mrs. Anderson sat as she had left her, absorbed in the minute pulls and shakes of her nightdress hem. Just as she was about to go into the sluice Eva called after her.

"Bring some swabs, they're on the top shelf, you'll probably need to put clean ones under her boobs."

There was a snort of laughter from the woman in the bed.

"Hey," she shouted, "whose boobs? Come on...ya dirty wee..."

Kedzie could see, even from where she was, that the woman's eyes were still closed.

"Joan," blustered Eva, "I thought you were still sleeping?"

Three melismatic syllables sounded,

"Me-e-e?...away..." Joan's eyes were still closed.

"You were snoring just a wee minute ago."

Eva turned to Kedzie and winked.

"This is Joan, she keeps us all going."

"Whae are you speakin tae?"

Joan sounded querulous, her eyes still shut.

"I'm speaking to our new student...it's her first day."

"Student?...what kinnae student?"

"Student nurse."

"Oh...," there was a short pause, "what's her name?"

"Kedzie."

Joan's eyes opened and she turned her head towards Eva, her face screwed up.

"Kedzie, what the hell kinnae name's that?"

Eva gave her an exaggerated look of disapproval.

"Away, I'm only askin a question," Joan said innocently.

"It's American," shouted Kedzie from the sluice door. "My mother's American. She called me after her."

"Did you hear that, Joan? Her mother's American," explained Eva. "It's an American name."

"Very nice," drawled Joan as she burst into irreverent laughter.

"Yes, she is very nice, Joan, now let's get weaving. The breakfast'll be here in a minute."

Joan sat up in bed, moved back the bed covers and put her legs over the edge of the bed. Eva handed her her clothes for the day.

"Are they for me?"

Eva nodded.

"Yes, Joan, all for you."

Joan put on a self-satisfied, sneering expression.

"By here, I'll be a right swell the day."

She then started singing, 'We're a couple of swells, we live at the best hotels...'. She swayed to and fro on the bed and moved her hands like a flapper.

"Isn't that right, hen?" she shouted towards the sluice, and gave a loud whoop of laughter.

Kedzie came back out of the sluice with a trolley. There was a basin on top, soap, a towel, paper disposal bags, a box of cotton wipes, a pile of swabs, talc, and a box of latex gloves. She manoeuvred it in through Mrs. Anderson's curtain, making the curtain bulge out towards the bed next door. There was a draught of cool air as Eva grabbed the curtain back and came in beside her.

"You should just have brought a damp cloth...it'd be a lot quicker. It's not as if she's dirty. It's just a wee drop urine."

"Sorry," said Kedzie, "this is what we do at the hospital."

"Yes, I know."

She sounded as if the strain of being patient was beginning to be too much.

"I'll leave you to it for a minute. I'll need to go and help Mags with the breakfasts. Is that okay...you know what you're doing?"

"I'll be fine," said Kedzie. "I worked as an auxiliary for a couple of years. I've done this before."

"Good, press the buzzer when you need a lift. You'll need to bring her

through in a chair."

Kedzie worked quickly. She scrunched open a disposal bag and put it on the bottom shelf of the trolley. She put a latex glove on each hand, the fine powder inside like a dry almost-suffocation of her skin. She took a disposable wipe and watched as it seemed to relax and dissolve in the hot water and it became a soft white thing floating beneath the surface of the water. She let her hands stay there a while before she squeezed it out. She mopped up drips of water that ran down the gloves towards her bare arms with it and turned to face Mrs. Anderson.

**she wanted to** give the woman a wash damned

*reminisce do de, do do doodo do*

**her eyes shut** I'll be there in a minute to help you

strand the ghost of pain

*da de brushed waken she grimaced and*

**rolled her tongue la irreverent collisions**

**tripped off one by one**

release **remnants** none of them

**locked hard rubbed up and**

*oo clean*

*whoop*

press the buzzer

*la*

*la da ba*

*de*

*de de* you can stand up now

**overbalance in**

**misshapen shoes**

he wanted to give the woman a  
hard rubbed up

damned  
swollen wet good morning

to  
furtive her  
clean dress

her eyes still shut

easy

empty  
the ghost of almost  
her suffocation  
snagged laughter  
her tongue  
stuttered  
her mother's  
temper and  
misshapen  
disgust

his lips

disappear me  
rigid

voices prise

"Oh please  
from  
bastard

morning

I cannot  
reply

I cannot  
blink

smiling

now

dynamo of it

DAY 11

HARRY DOZES IN A SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT THAT DUSTS ITS PARALLELS  
DOWN FROM A HIGH WINDOW.

...and a texture, a feeling, sweet like honey. I wrote in the ledger. Carefully; I worked carefully, methodically. When I was young I wanted to see death, and when I saw it, it seemed to me the ultimate stilling. Its mystery remained with me always. My leather bag was black. Its silver and glass phials, the hard certainties of its instruments shielded me from impotence; the chemist's labels precise, hypodermics wrapped in chamois, the clean smell of iodine.....What joins us is outside ourselves.....I stood in the back row of the choir, my jaw extravagant in its opening. Jubilate. Red velvet cushions, a hard bench, my spine against the backspar. In the attic a wooden box, each side painted a different colour, all bright; four secrets inside. There were many versions of desire, and my body flew to them, longing to make of them more than fragments.....The body held fast by a long fever. Fear, my lips dry. Scrutiny as a means of description, the moment of seeing, divining; the cure revealed in knots of pain. Fear; a red sky, smoke blowing across water.....I was distracted by a yellow sun diffusing through a frosted half-pane.....Palpation, a lascivious form of communication; hungry, searching, the referent pure colour. Sweat, the salt weight of it. A rifle. Even in the heat I felt a personal obligation, my heart in darkness. The mist burned off and we saw deer running.....The child held by a white paralysis. What really happened? The day's grey; traces of pain, and all the while eating and drinking. Dusk, its softness bittersweet. A blot of Scots Pine dragged across the horizon.....A change of tension...Anna naked in the grass. Something that thickened at the back of the throat and mediated lust. The White Meldon green. The Black Meldon purple. The Meldon burn peat-coloured. We waded in it up to our thighs. We moulded clay

from its banks in our hands...smooth as silk when we let it...when we let it wash away in the river's water. This morning...this morning...this morning...was lemon yellow.....I listened to the night sea; to waves shushing in loneliness.....Those who never complained had something impenetrable at their core, as if they did not want to be reached. It was a stance akin to rejection. I felt it as a kind of aggression.....Mercury when it spilled made tiny spheres and ellipses, liquid, the tiniest spheres.....We sterilised all the metal things, all the hollow and the glass things.....I walked over the hills from Selkirk to Cauldshiels. Trees by the lochside bent over the path; their roots made me stumble; the water shallowed into muddy sand.....There were those who sought attention by being ill. I felt that their neediness had a sexual quality to it...that somewhere deep their small tragedies were mirror-imaged in eroticism. How I tired of those.....Solace in the cleansing of wounds: abrasives, sutures, the fizz of hydrogen peroxide on necrotic skin; pushing and pushing ribbon gauze into a cavity that would never heal, the steel forceps cold, the exposed tissue slippery, the colour of subcutaneous fat and inflammation. Anna, when I held your sweet face in my hands (it was an evening in July; it was raining), cool rainwater running into our mouths when we kissed was exquisite.....What joins us is inside ourselves..... The way you gathered our children to you was enough to make the day worthwhile, to make me happy.....Between the window glass and the dark foliage of the cherry laurel, rain flashed and flicked its violence down.....Orifices, long rubber tubes, the rubber red-orange that dried and crumbled when it got old.....The way leaves catch the movement of air and quiver. The way stalks bend down and are swept aside by small gusts.....What joins us is ourselves.....Shadow is soft, its edge moves like thick smoke, creeping, silent, moving as the earth moves, terrifying and inevitable. We sat by the trellis. Your favourite rose was pink. Its blooms faded within hours when you cut them and put them in a white clay vase on the kitchen

window-sill. I kissed away your disappointment. We shared a meal with two Americans who were distant relatives of my mother. It was not long after the war. They wanted to see 'the whole of Scotland'. We ate smoked fish that your sister sent down by train from Arbroath.....Meaning was only ever available to us at frequencies which we could not comprehend, the speed of it as awesome as it was wordless.....I sense the cool impersonality of the shadow's encroachment.....We found each other as moonlight finds water at nightfall, as silver fuses with glass to form mirrors.....You watched me shave; jaw thrust out and up. My face revealed line by line. My self displayed in ritual. How the sun gleamed on the bonnet of the Austin Cambridge each summer when we went up north. You declared that heaven existed on the long sand flats of Scarasta. At Rhunahaorine we looked across the sound to Gigha, water and sky one liquid medium that pulsed smooth wavelets towards us, dreamlike, in shades of dove rose and lilac. The sunset reminded you of ribboned...

## HARRY GETS UP FOR BREAKFAST.

Harry's bed was against the back wall of the room, below one of three long recessed windows. From the side of Harry's bed all Kedzie could see was sky. It was bright. She stared at it for a few moments. It pained her to look at it. Anything that sky could ever mean was so far removed from what was possible here. Even in sleep, Harry did not look relaxed. He was sitting propped up with pillows. She put her hand gently on his shoulder. It was hard, inflexible. She did not like the feel of it. It felt too distant from the concept of being alive. But she kept her hand there and squeezed Harry's shoulder, not hard, just enough to register with him. At the same time she said his name,

"Harry, time to get up. Harry, it's the morning. Your breakfast's ready."

Harry's body jerked. The muscles of his eyes struggled to open the lids, but they were stuck together. His eyelashes were wet and shiny. They protruded through a sticky crusted mat of secretions.

"Hang on a minute, Harry, I'll go and get a cloth to wipe your eyes."

Kedzie felt Harry's body relax a little bit. The muscular movement below the eyelids stopped and his mouth opened enough for Kedzie to be sure that he was trying to say something. She hurried to the sluice. Next to the sluice door, Sheila, one of the staff nurses, was busy helping Jimmy put on his sweater. His head popped through the top of it just as Kedzie was going past. His hair stuck out and his face had a surprised look. He caught her eye and winked, moving his head quickly to one side as he did so and smiling.

"Aye," he said with a sharp intake of breath.

"Hi, Jimmy," Kedzie shouted cheerily. "How are you?"

Sheila was busy trying to manoeuvre Jimmy's arm into the second sleeve. He made it look as if this took as much force and concentration as he would have needed to move a large concrete block. His face was red with the effort of it.

"On top of the world this morning, eh, Jimmy," said Sheila.

Jimmy blinked. He took a sharp breath in and said,

"Aye."

He blinked again, but so intensely that Kedzie felt obliged to wait until he stopped before she could go on into the sluice.

"That's great, Jimmy. It's a lovely morning," she shouted back to him as she went through the door.

By the time Kedzie came back through with a damp cloth Sheila was walking Jimmy out of the door and up the corridor to the dining room. She had her arm linked through his and was humming a tune. Kedzie could see Jimmy walking tall and straight, holding Sheila's arm as if he were walking down the aisle.

Harry had not moved. Kedzie put her hand on his shoulder, tried not to recoil from its rigidity, and spoke his name.

"Harry," she said, "it's morning, remember?"

His body jerked under her touch.

"I'm going to wash your eyes so that you can get them open. They're all stuck up with sleep. I've got a nice warm cloth here. I'll just give them a wipe, okay?"

Harry did not move as Kedzie spoke, but as soon as the warm damp cloth touched his face he jumped.

"Sorry, Harry, just wiping your eyes," she said. "We need to get them open or you'll not see your breakfast and that won't do."

His lips twitched and moved out and forwards as if he were trying to speak. They did this several times, his whole body tightening up as he did so, sinking back into the pillows when no words came. She wiped the yellow matter from his left eye, folded the cloth over and wiped his right eye, folding it again to get right into both corners. Harry's eyelids began to flicker apart. She put her thumb gently

against each eye and eased the lids upwards. Harry's irises moved in the small space that opened up. She put her other hand up to his face and pulled down on the lower lids with her forefinger to part the lashes that still stuck together.

"How's that. Can you see me now, Harry?"

Harry's bottom lip moved. His head made small forward jerking movements. Sounds, little more than forced out-breaths, came out of his mouth. Kedzie looked into his eyes and smiled. The rims looked pink and swollen. What she could see of the whites was streaked red.

"Those eyes look sore, Harry. We'll get them bathed with salt water later on I think."

Harry's body had sunk back once more and now he closed his eyes. A drop of moisture trickled down his cheek. Kedzie wiped it away. She turned to where his clothes for the day lay on top of his bedside locker. She shifted the underpants and socks to the top of the pile.

"Harry, we'll need to get your clothes on. I'm just going to pull these covers back."

She tried to ease the bed covers out from under Harry's hands and forearms. They tightened up.

"Just relax," Kedzie said as she lifted each arm in turn.

The tension in them made them heavy. Her arms strained to lift them, until, suddenly, all resistance in them abated and she was able to fold the covers down to the bottom of the bed. Harry was tall. His feet went a long way down the bed even when he was sitting up. His legs were bare. Although he had a pyjama jacket on he had no trousers. A grey cardboard urine bottle lay between his thighs.

"I'll just get rid of this, Harry," said Kedzie as she lifted the bottle out between the tops of his legs.

To her relief his skin was warm and dry. The bottle was heavy. It was full of

urine. She laid it on the table at the foot of Harry's bed. She grabbed the underpants and slipped them over his feet working them up above his knees. She put a sock on each foot. Dry skin rasped against the nylon material. She shook out the pair of trousers that were now on top of the pile and eased them over each foot in turn up to his knees. She stooped down to look under the bed and came up with a pair of shoes: slip-ons, good quality shoes. They kept slipping against the nylon socks. She was trying not to hurt his feet, but she ended up forcing the shoe on, using a forefinger as a shoe horn.

"Oh," grunted Harry.

"Sorry, Harry. Let me just put this other one on and then we'll get the rest of your clothes."

There was another "Oh!" as Kedzie forced on the other shoe.

"Not good for my poor wee finger either, Harry," said Kedzie as she straightened up and looked Harry in the eye.

Harry's face registered no emotion.

"We'll need to get your legs round, Harry; get you sitting on the edge of the bed till we get the rest of your clothes on. Do you think we'll manage, just the two of us?"

She put her right arm around Harry's shoulder and her left to the back of his left shoulder and tried to ease him forward.

"Come on, we'll give it a go, eh? You say when."

This time she put her left knee up onto the bed to give her more purchase as she pulled his upper body away from the pillows, but his body was too rigid. She could only manage to move the top of his shoulders a few inches, the rest of him stayed still.

Sheila came back through the door. She was singing, softly and to herself. Sheila never hurried. Her hands were in her pockets. She looked around the room

as if it were a place in which she had found peace. She could see Kedzie struggling with Harry.

"Think you'll need a hand there," she said, "and I might just have the one you need; if not two."

She held up both her hands and made little dance steps across to Kedzie.

"Poor old soul. Needing an oil can this morning, eh, Harry?"

Harry's head jerked forward twice. He blinked but the rest of his features remained still, set hard in their non-expression.

"I'll get his legs," said Sheila, "if you support his top half."

Kedzie put her hands on both bony shoulders as Sheila caught hold of Harry's feet and lifted them across and over the edge of the bed. Harry's torso was raised by this movement and by Kedzie pushing him forward. They steadied him on the edge of the bed.

"I'll hold onto him if you want to get his vest."

Sheila put an arm round Harry's shoulders and sat down beside him on the bed.

"Any excuse for a cuddle, eh, Harry?"

Sheila's voice seemed to give Kedzie renewed confidence. She unbuttoned Harry's pyjama jacket, started to pull the material up from the bottom of his back. It was soft and warm. It moved as far up as Harry's shoulder, but his arm was too rigid to let her pull the sleeve out. She let go. She started again at the front this time easing the jacket down off his shoulder. Sheila pushed the other half of the front of the jacket towards her across his neck to give her some slack.

"Come on, Harry. Skin the rabbit. Straighten that arm, come on."

Sheila let go of the jacket and stood up beside Kedzie.

"Try to relax a bit, Harry," she said as she gently rubbed Harry's left arm.

"Come on, your breakfast'll be getting cold."

Kedzie bunched the material of Harry's pyjama jacket up to his shoulder once more as Sheila pulled on his arm to lengthen and straighten it. It started to shake.

"Oh Harry, come on, just let it go."

Sheila raised Harry's arm up. His head was pulled back and down into his neck. Kedzie inched the material of the pyjama jacket along the outside of the top of his arm towards his elbow. She knew that if she could only get it over the point of his elbow the rest would be easy.

"Sorry, Harry, just about there," she said.

The material of the jacket was scrunched up into a tight wad that Kedzie was straining with the fingers of both hands to ease over Harry's elbow. His arm was shaking. Then Sheila just pulled his arm a tiny fraction straighter and it slipped over..

"Whoo, that's a relief," said Kedzie as she loosened the sleeve of the pyjamas up past Harry's fingertips which were now almost beyond her reach.

Sheila caught hold of it, swung it round behind Harry and freed the other arm from the jacket.

"Phew, there we are now," said Sheila. "I'm fair puffed out."

She was laughing as she roughly folded Harry's pyjama jacket and threw it into the bottom of his bedside locker. Kedzie had already put Harry's vest over his head, and was trying to bend his left arm to get it through the armhole.

"Good job these are stretchy," she said as the white cotton slipped over his elbow.

"You're doing fine," said Sheila. "You'll manage the shirt and cardigan okay. Won't she, Harry?"

Sheila touched Harry on the arm as she spoke. Her touch was light, but Harry started as if he'd been caught unawares. Sheila lifted the urine bottle off the

table at the foot of the bed and went into the sluice. Kedzie caught hold of Harry's right hand and aimed it at the armhole of the vest. The fabric stretched tight across his chest, and pulled his right arm out and across in a high diagonal in front of his face. This effort made him start shaking again.

"Nearly there, Harry...one last push," said Kedzie as the material of the vest released Harry's elbow. Its stretched shape hung loosely around his chest.

"There we are. The rest will be easy now."

Kedzie shook out the clean shirt that lay on top of the locker. It had a tiny brown check on a white ground.

"I think you'll suit this, Harry, very relaxed but casual. It'll go nicely with your brown cardigan."

"Y-y-y-y---" Harry's head bent with the effort of trying to speak. "Y-y-y-yiss."

The word when it came was a short, almost-abbreviation of the word.

Kedzie fitted the left sleeve over Harry's arm and pushed it up as far as it would go to give her plenty of material to pull round and attach to Harry's right hand. She did up the buttons as fast as she could. She left the top one open. The cardigan went on in the same way.

"There you go, Harry, very smart. Now, can you stand up for me till we get your things up?"

There was no response from Harry.

"Come on, Harry, I'll give you a pull up."

Kedzie stood in front of him. She braced his feet with hers, held onto his hands and pulled. Harry stood up. He staggered a bit. Kedzie had to counter-balance his movement with her own weight.

"Ooops, steady, Harry...Sheila!" Kedzie shouted over her shoulder. "Could you give me a hand please? I'm scared Harry's going to lose his balance if I let go."

Sheila was busy stripping beds. She was still singing. She stopped and shouted,

"Harry, this'll not do," as she came across the room, "...giving our student a fright like this. Come on, just keep still a minute. Let's get these trousers up."

She bent down and pulled up the underpants, then the trousers, and fastened them as Kedzie held onto Harry with both hands. His weight pushed onto her in sudden, irregular pulses as he tried to steady himself.

"Come on, I'll help you through to the dining room with him," said Sheila. "Why have one when you can have two, eh, Harry?"

Harry concentrated on standing up. He looked past the two women, yet the muscles on his face twitched enough for Kedzie to think that he was trying to smile. It flashed across his face as a muscular spasm before leaving it just as it had been, blank of any expression.

"Right come on then, Harry, lets get moving," said Sheila. "We'll go and get you a nice cup of tea."

Harry's body bent forward. There was the beginning of movement in his feet. The force of Harry's intention and desire to move stuttered through his legs, the energy an almost-dissipating collapse of the knee with each failed effort to lift his feet. Kedzie and Sheila each put an arm through his to bring him forward. The sudden release into movement precipitated Harry into a series of small fast steps which threatened to topple him forward.

"Steady, Harry just slow it down," Sheila said. "They'll be keeping your porridge hot don't worry."

Harry was taller than them both. They had to reach up to hold him. Because of this, the whole operation was more precarious. Their centres of gravity were too low to be at their most efficient as counterweights to Harry's movement, but they managed somehow, each woman instinctively balancing her own movement

against Harry's, keeping him moving forward, holding him back when his momentum became too great and he stumbled forward.

The three of them walked at a steady pace out of the dormitory and along the wide corridor that separated it from the day room.

"Once you get going you're fine, aren't you, Harry?" Sheila's voice was smooth and warm.

"Y-y-y-yiss."

Harry's head nodded as he said this. The extra energy used pushed his whole body forward and interrupted the rhythm of his walking. Kedzie and Sheila pulled back on his arms to contain his forward movement. He stared straight in front.

"Hold your horses, Harry, it's not a sprint," said Sheila.

They had walked half way down the corridor when Jeannie came stepping out of the lounge. She was moving fast, coming towards them swinging her arms, her knees lifting high, her head moving down and up with each step.

"You're going the wrong way, Jeannie. The dining room is down at the bottom," Sheila called to her as she breezed past.

But Jeannie just kept on walking.

"Poor Jeannie. Too much energy, eh, Harry?"

There was a dry grunt from Harry.

"She'll need to come back if she wants her breakfast, or else we'll just have to give her a piece of toast in her hand."

Harry just kept staring straight in front of him. He didn't seem to be looking where he was going, his gaze was higher up than that. He just concentrated on putting one foot in front of the other, intent on keeping moving. His upper body leaned forward accentuating his look of being in a hurry. Sheila slowed down as they turned into the dining room door.

"Right, Harry, in here."

Together Sheila and Kedzie propelled Harry towards an empty seat at the breakfast table. Sheila pulled the chair out of their way.

"Now, Harry," she said, "just you walk right up to the table, and I'll put the chair in behind you."

But Harry had stopped. His feet stuttered but he remained where he was.

"Just take your time, Harry, there's no rush," said Kedzie. "Just lift one foot. That's it."

Harry's foot came off the ground and the two women used the movement to turn him round. He stumbled forwards. Four uneven short steps brought him up to the table. Sheila pulled the chair in behind him with one hand while still holding on to him with the other.

"The chair is behind you now, Harry. You can sit down," she said.

Harry did not move. He made a very small turn of his head towards Sheila. He blinked and turned it round again. His face remained expressionless.

"Come on, Harry sit down," said Kedzie. "We've got hold of you. You won't fall."

There was the tiniest of nods from Harry. It sent a jerk through the rest of his body. The muscles around his mouth started to strain again. They spread a look of pain across his face.

"I'm trying," he blurted out.

There was an edge of annoyance about the way he said it; the sound of it clipped down on the last syllable.

"Well, look," said Sheila, "just put your hands onto the table and lean forward, Harry. We'll push the chair in behind you."

They each placed one of Harry's hands on the edge of the table. They had to coax each arm down and out towards it.

"Try and relax, Harry. We've got a hold of you, you won't fall."

"I'm trying," breathed Harry, louder this time.

As his hand touched the table, the bending motion loosened the joints in his knees.

"Kedzie, grab the chair and pull it in behind him." Sheila's voice was urgent.

Kedzie did this. As the chair hit the back of his legs it knocked him off-balance. He stumbled, his body becoming lighter as he began to fall backwards supported on either side by the two women. His body would not bend in the middle. He fell against the chair like a plank of wood, tipping it back.

"Bend in the middle, Harry. Come on," shouted Sheila.

The top of Harry's legs were scraping the front edge of the seat but he could not bend in the middle

"Grab his leg," Sheila said to Kedzie.

Both women bent down as well as they could to reach a hand behind Harry's thighs.

"Have you got him?" asked Sheila.

"Yes, I've got him," said Kedzie.

"Right, lift!"

The movement was fast. One great heave had Harry jack-knifed into the seat.

"What a struggle that was, Harry. Are you okay?" asked Sheila.

Harry had grabbed the arms of the chair to steady himself. He tried to pull it nearer the table by putting force on his heels. His face twitched with the effort. But the chair did not move.

"Just a minute, Harry, we'll help you," said Sheila.

Kedzie and Sheila each took a side of the chair and lifted it nearer the table. Harry continued to dig in his heels and jerk his body forward.

"You're all right, Harry, that's far enough. I'll go and get your porridge. Do you take sugar on it?" asked Kedzie.

Harry's head shook no more than if he had twitched at a fly. Kedzie went across to a trolley and filled a bowl with porridge from a metal pot. She sprinkled bran on top and poured milk onto it. She pulled off a piece of paper towel and went back to Harry.

"There we go, Harry, nice hot plate of porridge. Let me tuck this in."

She tucked a corner of the paper towel into Harry's shirtfront. She took his right hand off the arm of the chair and stretched it across the table. She put a spoon in it.

"There you are, Harry. Will you manage okay now?"

Harry's head flicked forward. His mouth moved.

"Y-y-yiss."

Kedzie watched as Harry lifted the spoon and put it into the bowl. With a short, scraping motion he lifted some porridge and milk onto it. He began to draw it towards himself. His hand began to shake. His grip tightened. He leaned his upper body forward and down. He opened his mouth. The spoon began to tilt inwards. Milk and porridge spilled from it onto the table. Harry corrected the tilt. He leaned further in. The paper towel billowed out towards the table. His hand was still shaking. The spoon was not quite empty. Harry's mouth opened wider. Slowly, ever so slowly, he connected the spoon to his mouth. His teeth caught the edge of it. He jumped at this, but what porridge and milk was left on the spoon went into his mouth. He kept it up at his face, but as the liquid entered his mouth it caught at the back of his throat. It made him cough. It was more of a splutter as he tried to keep his mouth shut, keep the porridge in, but most of it came out, onto the table,

down his chin and onto the paper towel, making it wet. His hand inched back down towards the bowl.

do you take sugar in  
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"Yes,"  
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There

There

## NURSING CARE STUDY OF PATIENT A. Age 78

### Diagnosis: Parkinson's Disease and Dementia.

Parkinson's Disease, or paralysis agitans, is due to a degeneration of a regulatory system in the corpus striatum and associated areas of the midbrain. Both dopamine and acetylcholine are involved in this regulatory system, and the degeneration is linked to a loss of dopamine, so that the normal balance between the two neurotransmitter substances is disturbed. As a result, cholinergic activity predominates, and is exhibited by tremor of the hands, weakness and rigidity of muscles, excessive salivation, and the depression characteristic of Parkinsonism.

The treatment of idiopathic and postencephalitic Parkinsonism (as opposed to the drug-induced disease) is aimed at restoring the balance between dopamine and cholinergic activity, and the drugs used fall into two main groups: the anticholinergic agents, and those drugs which can increase the brain level of dopamine. As a general rule the anticholinergic agents relieve tremor and salivation, whereas the drugs which increase dopamine levels are more effective in controlling rigidity and akinesia. In some cases combined treatment may produce a better response.

Dementia is not a disease, it is a symptom, or group of symptoms associated with the loss of brain function, and is characterised by a decline of reasoning, memory, and other cognitive functions. Dementia affects about 1% of people aged 60 – 66 and as many as 30 – 50% of those over 85. Dementia has many different causes some of which are difficult to tell apart.

All dementias reflect dysfunction in the cerebral cortex, either through direct damage, or through damage to the subcortical areas that normally regulate its function.

Reversible causes of dementia include head injury, infections, hydrocephalus, brain tumours, toxic exposure, metabolic disorders, hormone disorders, hypoxia, drug reactions, nutritional deficiencies and chronic alcoholism.

The main irreversible causes of dementia are: -

Alzheimer's Disease (the most common, accounting for about half of all cases), in which abnormal protein deposits in the brain destroy cells in areas of the brain that control memory and mental function. Alzheimer's patients also have below normal levels of neurotransmitters.

Vascular, or multi-infarct, dementia (the second most common, accounting for around 40% of cases) caused by atherosclerosis in the brain blocking blood flow. This causes multiple strokes.

Parkinson's Disease, in which dementia may develop in the later stages, but not always.

Lewy Body Dementia, caused by abnormal microscopic deposits of protein called Lewy Bodies which destroy nerve cells.

Huntington's Disease, an inherited disease that causes wasting of the brain cells that control movement as well as thinking. Dementia is common and occurs in the later stages of the disease.

Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease: this is rare, most often seen in the young and middle-aged. It progresses rapidly and is fatal.

Pick's Disease: again rare, damages cells in the front of the brain.

Symptoms of dementia vary considerably by the individual and the underlying cause of the dementia. Most people affected by dementia have some (but not all) of these symptoms. The symptoms may be very obvious, or they may be very subtle and go unrecognised for some time.

In the early stages, the following are common: difficulty finding words, (although they may be able to compensate by using synonyms or defining the word); forgetting and/or losing things; difficulty performing familiar tasks; personality changes (for example, a sociable person becomes withdrawn or a quiet person is coarse and silly); mood swings, often with brief periods of anger or rage; poor judgement; behaviour disorders such as paranoia and suspiciousness; a general decline in the level of functioning while still able to follow established routines at home; confusion and disorientation in unfamiliar surroundings.

As the disease progresses, symptoms worsen. They confabulate, i.e. make up stories/replies to try to compensate for lack of memory. They become inattentive, lose concentration and any interest in the outside world. They become increasingly unable to carry out activities of daily living (eg, bathing, dressing, grooming, feeding, using the toilet) without help. Sleep becomes disrupted (they can turn day into night). They are unable to learn new information, and become increasingly disorientated and confused even in familiar surroundings. They are at increased risk of falls and accidents. Behaviour disorders such as paranoid delusions, aggressiveness, agitation and inappropriate sexual behaviour are common, as are anxiety and depression. They may experience hallucinations.

In severe dementia sufferers become completely dependent on others for all activities of daily living. They may be unable to walk or move from place to place unassisted. There may be impairment of other movements such as swallowing with an increased risk of malnutrition, choking, and aspiration. There is a complete loss of short- and long-term memory, with an inability to recognize even close relatives and friends. Complications such as dehydration, malnutrition, problems with bladder control, infections, aspiration, seizures, pressure sores, and injuries from accidents or falls can all occur. The person may not be aware of these problems, especially the behaviour problems. This is especially true in the later

stages of dementia. People with irreversible or untreated dementia present a slow, gradual decline in mental functions and movements over several years. Total dependence and death, often from infection, are the last stages.

Patient A is a retired GP. After his wife died in 1972 he went to live with one of his daughters. When seen by the community team in November 1981 he had had Parkinson's disease for some time, but he had been increasingly confused over the past four to five years, and was becoming a problem for his daughter who was a widow. He was increasingly restless, wandering (especially at night), and short-tempered (though never aggressive).

On December 19<sup>th</sup> 1981 he was admitted to Mellerstain ward for six weeks assessment at which point his main problems were defined as insomnia and restlessness. His medication then was Sinemet 275 half a tablet twice daily. By February his problems had not improved much. Although helped by the Sinemet, his mobility was still limited. His periods of restlessness and agitation were being fairly well controlled by Sparine 25mg twice daily, but he showed occasional sexual disinhibition. He suffered from nocturia, and required assistance with dressing and toileting. Otherwise he was generally well settled and amenable. Ward staff saw him as a cheerful, caring and independent person capable of reasonable conversation. His medication at that point was Sinemet 275 half a tablet twice daily, Sparine 25mg twice daily and Sparine 50mg as required. He was transferred to Fauldshope ward on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1982 where it was noted that he was incontinent if not toileted regularly. His daughter visited every week. On June 10<sup>th</sup> his Sinemet was increased from half a tablet twice daily to half a tablet thrice daily with a subsequent slight improvement in rigidity. A ward assessment on 24<sup>th</sup>

August noted that his mobility was reasonably good with only occasional periods of unsteadiness. He was conversing well with staff and patients, and was responding well to being treated as an individual. He was cheerful and enjoyed visits to the canteen. However, he had had an episode of diverticulitis for which he had been treated in the past at Rawn Hospital when Oxytetracycline four times daily and Celevac granules were prescribed.

On 20<sup>th</sup> September 1982 he had an episode of Sinemet-induced hypotension. He was unrousable and his blood pressure was 84/54. His Sinemet was thus discontinued for twenty four hours and then resumed at the lower dose of half a tablet four times daily, and his erect and supine blood pressure was to be checked regularly. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September he was assessed by the psychogeriatric consultant who felt that he would benefit from a regular daily rest period after lunch, when possible, he should be taken out for a coffee, group activities should be encouraged, and that an anti-depressant should be prescribed (although this never seems to have been done). Patient A himself thought that going out for coffee was a good idea.

However, by December 1982 he was becoming increasingly confused and agitated. He was very rigid and unsteady on his feet. A check-up on his Parkinsonism at the Edinburgh neurological clinic showed a marked deterioration in his condition in the six months since his last visit. In December he also had a chest infection for which Ampicillin 500mg thrice daily and fluids were prescribed which led to his recovery.

In February 1983 his Sinemet was discontinued as staff thought he might benefit from this. But his rigidity increased still further to the extent that he had great difficulty in bending to sit down. Therefore, Sinemet 110 one tablet twice daily was commenced, and a slight improvement noted.

Patient A does fall occasionally. There are five accident report forms in his case notes. One fall necessitated a stitch in his forehead. Another led to him being found lying on an embankment. He also fell trying to climb a fence. His medication at present is Sinemet 110 one tablet at 8am and 6pm.

Patient A's main problems arise from the rigidity associated with his Parkinsonism resulting in marked motor deficits. He has great difficulty getting out of a chair unaided. His walking is good once he is up with only occasional unsteadiness, or the likelihood of him tripping over something because of his tendency to look straight ahead. The main problem arises when he comes to sit down. Often, instead of bending down and putting a hand out for the arm of a chair, he falls back with his body rigid and in danger of hitting his head against whatever is behind it, or tipping it back if it is free-standing.

Problems also arise with eating and drinking. In Patient A's case rigidity rather than tremor seems to affect his ability to eat properly. He tries very hard but often the spoon will remain poised an inch from his mouth for ages and at such an angle that the food has mostly fallen off before it get to his mouth. At other times he manages not too badly but often gets help, especially with his pudding (which he loves), or with things like soup or porridge as he seems to have greater difficulty with these than with solid food. He drinks well.

His rigidity is such that he requires help with dressing although he always tries. Similarly with personal hygiene, although he is probably capable of more than he is allowed to do sometimes.

Patient A is usually continent during the day if toileted regularly and he can tell you if he needs to go or not. His only problem is that he usually needs to urinate several times through the night which disturbs his sleep and often leads to incontinence.

Because of his history of diverticular disease, Patient A is closely observed for any signs of abdominal pain. He is given aperients whenever this is felt to be necessary (usually Senokot syrup). He also gets bran in his porridge in an effort to increase his intake of dietary fibre.

Patient A's dementia is not as severe as that of many patients in the ward. While he can be disorientated for time and place, and his short term memory is poor, he is eminently capable of holding a reasonable conversation and of appreciating his surroundings. He loves flowers and seems to have liked gardening. His hearing is slightly impaired but he does not seem to have, or need, a hearing aid. His sight is good, and he still has a good number of his own teeth. His sense of taste still seems intact; he enjoys his food and loves a sweetie. Emotionally he can be very depressed (a symptom of his Parkinsonism) although this does not seem to be such a problem as it was earlier in his disease, perhaps because of deteriorating insight. However, this can often be alleviated by speaking to him, being cheery and encouraging. It is also alleviated by visits from his daughter who regularly takes him out in her car, and sometimes takes him out over the weekend. This always cheers him up.

110 in clinic each great smooth September his sight is good his regulatory system had difficulty when you cut them his last visit is limited by exquisite personal mobility and degeneration is due to infection to the extent that the movement of air blooms and was lascivious pink On What joins us hearing self I kissed disease displayed faded trees and saw him thrice his roots impaired and cool water running into our mouths make the day evening in July His wife died and he needed to urinate his wife died and he also had difficulty putting a hand out for the arm of a chair three or four times ill crumbled 8am confused help 20<sup>th</sup> and was wanted had had dopamine In frosted mystery cheers him up He loves flowers His wife died In fear; a red sky is due a sense of taste displayed in 1982 akinesia is the stumble the motor orifices encouraging acetylcholine and associated aggression hygiene hygiene cheery In mid-brain and bonnet on trellis

His wife died and he needed

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degeneration is due to the extent that the movement of air blooms  
and was lascivious

displayed in faded trees

His wife died and he also had difficulty  
putting a hand out for the arm of a chair

## FLORRIE'S WOUND

"You doing the group today, John?"

Sheila was down on her hunkers in front of wee Mary who held a plastic medicine cup that was half full of a black liquid.

"Aye, Sheila," replied John. "I thought I'd try and get a wee singsong goin the day."

He spoke louder than he might have. He was shaving Fred and the electric razor made a buzzing sound.

"That sounds like a good idea," said Sheila.

She took hold of the medicine cup and put it to Mary's lips.

"Come on, Mary...drink up...there's a good girl."

She pushed Mary's bottom lip down with the edge of the cup and tipped it up. Mary started to say something, but her words bubbled into the medicine which Sheila emptied into her mouth. Mary swallowed. She half grimaced, half smiled at the taste of the medicine as she lifted her face towards Sheila and said,

"Thank you."

"Well done, Mary."

Sheila gave Mary's knee an affectionate shake as she stood up.

John had moved on to Jimmy.

"Keep still, Jimmy," Kedzie heard him say.

She could see him trying to hold Jimmy's skin taut, concentrating on trying to give him a decent shave. Jimmy kept screwing up his face. He chewed on nothing. He shifted in the seat as if he were going to get out of it. She was shaving Bill. He held his body rigid against the chair. He gripped the arms of it with both hands. He stared straight ahead.

"Aye, ya bastard, ye," he was saying.

"I'll not be long, Bill," said Kedzie. "We need to get you shaved...keep you looking smart."

She buzzed the razor around Bill's chin.

"Ya bastard ye."

"Bill, keep quiet a minute till I shave under your nose."

"Eh?"

"Keep still a minute," said Kedzie running the razor across Bill's top lip.

He jerked his head back and lifted his right hand as if he were going to strike.

"Ya bastard ye." His voice was louder.

"Hey, Bill!" shouted John. "That's enough. She's only tryin tae help ye."

Bill blinked and moved his head round in John's direction. His head did not move far. His neck was very stiff.

"Aye," he breathed and lowered his head.

"Bill, come on, you'll feel much better once you've had a shave," said Kedzie.

She lifted the razor up to Bill's cheek, but he grabbed it and pushed it away. He spat out the words,

"Fuck off!"

"Just leave him, Kedzie," said John. "I'll try him again in a wee while."

Kedzie took the razor across to the bin beside the kitchen door. She held the bin lid open with the foot pedal as she flipped open the razor and banged it against the side of the bin to empty it of shavings. She cleaned it as best she could with a piece of torn-off paper towel and puffs of her own breath. There was a stale, sour smell of shavings that was a mixture of dead skin and sebum, crusted slavers and dried food. The smell made her feel nauseated. The foil of the razor was gummed up with a fine grey-black greasy residue that she could not get off. She clicked the

top back down and closed the lid of the bin. She took the razor into the office. Eva was there. She was speaking to a slight, Latin looking man in his mid thirties. They stopped talking when Kedzie walked in.

"Kedzie, have you met Aurel," asked Eva?"

Kedzie shook her head.

"No."

"He's one of our psychiatrists. He's from Milan."

Eva sounded amazed. Aurel held his hand out to Kedzie.

"Nice to meet you, Kedzie."

He was leaning against Eva's desk, his body louché and relaxed.

Kedzie said, "Hi," as she shook his hand.

"Kedzie's our student of the moment," said Eva. "We're introducing her to the world of psychogeriatrics."

"And how do you find it, Kedzie?" asked Aurel.

Kedzie hesitated for a moment before she said,

"It's very intense."

"Intense?" Aurel looked surprised.

"I think I mean that the patients here are in such a sad situation."

"Ah," said Aurel, turning to Eva. "To have such sensitivity."

Kedzie smiled at him warily, and opened the cupboard where the razors were kept. She pulled out an alcohol wipe and cleaned the foil of the razor as best she could with it then placed the razor on a shelf and shut the door. She dropped the used wipe with its smudges of grey into the waste paper basket.

"I'll go and see if Sheila needs a hand to finish the medicines," she said.

"Super," said Eva. "She's very conscientious is our Kedzie."

"Excellent," Aurel drawled, watching every move Kedzie made.

"Tell Sheila that Aurel's here to see Mary and Harry this morning."

"I take it we should leave them out of the group then?" asked Kedzie.

"Yes, you'd better."

"Tell her we'll see them in the lounge."

"Okay."

Kedzie went back out into the lounge. John was shaving Bill now. Bill sat rigid in the chair. Whatever strength was in his anger made his body shake. John was holding his chin up to shave his neck. This pushed his head back. It held him steady and made it difficult for him to speak, but still he mouthed obscenities through his clenched jaw. Kedzie heard them as a series of barked crescendoes in response to John's no-nonsense, "That's enough, Bill. I'm givin you a shave." And if Bill's fists moved from the arms of the chair, one look from John sent them back there.

"There, that'll do," said John.

He felt Bill's face with his hand.

"Smooth as a baby's bum."

"Away tae fuck," Bill wheezed.

"Bill, it's been a pleasure," said John winking at Kedzie.

"Thanks, John," she said. "Where's Sheila?"

"Em...I think she must be through in the dormitory. She's still doin the medicines. She went to look for Jeannie or Isa or somebody."

"Thanks. I just met Aurel. He's here to see Mary and Harry this morning. We've to leave them in here and not put them into the group."

"Okay," said John, "That's fine. Aurel, eh? What do you think. Have you seen him before?"

"No, that's the first time I've met him. What's he like?"

"Crazy, pops more pills than half this lot in here."

"He looks a bit spaced-out right enough, but I thought that was just because he was Italian."

"Maybe a wee bit, but he's got one pocket full of uppers and the other full of downers. The other night in the pub he was pissed, and he kept offering me some."

"And did you take any?"

"Hell, no. I wisnae takin any chances. Christ knows what they were."

Kedzie looked aghast.

"I'll need to go and find Sheila...tell her to get Mary and Harry ready."

"I'll put this razor away, and get the group organised."

Kedzie found Sheila in the female dormitory. She was holding Jeannie's arm with one hand and holding a tumbler of water to her lips with the other. Jeannie marched on the spot. Her head nodded sharply forward. Her nose banged into the rim of the tumbler. The tumbler was made of hard plastic. The edge of it was dry and grainy. It skinned an inch-long scratch up to the bridge of her nose.

"Oh, Jeannie, that would be sore." Sheila's voice was full of concern.

She bent down and put her face in front of Jeannie's. Jeannie continued to march on the spot. She looked past Sheila to the top of the dormitory.

"Let me see."

Sheila cupped Jeannie's chin in her hand and inspected the wound.

"Just a surface scratch."

She laid the tumbler down and put her other hand up to Jeannie's face.

"There, I'll kiss it all better," she said as she leaned forward and kissed Jeannie lightly on the tip of her nose.

Jeannie lifted her eyes for a moment and looked straight at Sheila. Her look was intense but emotionless. She pulled away and bounded on up the room. Her unbuttoned cardigan swung from side to side as she went.

"Poor Jeannie," said Sheila as she pushed the drugs trolley towards Florrie's bed. "Have you come to give me a hand?"

"Yes," said Kedzie, "and to say that Aurel's here to see Mary and Harry. He's going to see them in the lounge."

"Oh right. That won't be hard to organise. We'll not exactly have to scour the countryside for them, will we?"

Sheila sighed.

"Right, I've just got Florrie to do, and that's it. Let's see what she's due now."

She flipped through the pages of the medicine Kardex that lay on the side of the trolley.

"Ten o'clock. Let's see."

She glanced at her watch,

"Well that's a joke for a start...it's five to eleven...but never mind..."

She looked up at Kedzie,

"Actually, you're redundant I'm afraid. She's not due anything again until twelve. She had her last injection at eight o'clock, and her dressing doesn't get done till this afternoon. So there we are, all done."

Sheila flipped the drug Kardex shut and lowered the lid of the trolley as she started to push it towards the door at the bottom of the dormitory. Kedzie heard the impersonal bustling sound of its glass and plastic bottles rattle and chink.

She looked at Florrie sleeping in the bed, the thin covers draped over the zig-zag form of her immobile bones. She caught the faint, sweet-black smell that came from the open sore on Florrie's sacrum. Kedzie had seen it. She had helped Sheila dress it one afternoon. It was a hole as big as a fist, yellow and red and black. There was a charcoal dressing on it to absorb and neutralise the odour, but by the time the dressing needed changed, the smell seeped out, sickly and repellant, wafting its sinuous notions of death, decay, and something intangible

demanding a yielding up of everything that had to do with the word 'spirit'. Kedzie turned away and walked back to the lounge.

medicine  
is  
sarcasm.  
rubbing against her gums

Now

"Who's dancin."

*In the lounge the patients sat and dozed,  
or stared out of the long windows.*

I wis hert sair when ma man deed he dropped doon sudden at the Kelsae Show  
 juist dropped doon I wis right beside him juist a young man he grippit ma airm juist  
 afore he went doon oh hen he said an doon he went I got sic a shock I never  
 spoke for days I cannae mind the funeral they said I wis in sic a state I wis like a  
 zombie I never gret I juist mind ae feelin numb then somethin must've happened  
 for a mind ae howlin for days'n nights an aw I cannae mind but even now I say aes  
 name an I get comfort frae it when I say aes name Jock its like I'm wi'm juist like if  
 I say maw or paw or Granny Wilson or Aunty Chrissie I'm wi them I see them an I  
 mind what it wis like tae be wi them it's like I'm a bairn again curls it wis his baby  
 curls I fund them in a drawer aes mother gied aes them no longer efter oo wis  
 mairried she hud them wrapped up in tissue paper inside a square ae white velvet  
 that she'd faulded roond them an tied wi a ribbon

I wis aye gettin a row at the schule fur lookin oot the windae I wis a right dolly  
 daydream ma mother aye said she could send aes oot fur a message an never be  
 shair whether I wid bring back the right thing or no I wis never ony yiss at the  
 schule except for shewin I wis aye right neat wi ma fingers ma Aunty Bella taught  
 aes frae a wis a wee lassie course it wis her trade I could shew onythin claes an  
 curtains an embroidery that wis ma favourite shewin aw the bonny flooers question  
 how mony tablecloths an chair backs an hankies an aw sorts I'll huv shewed in ma  
 time I wis never sae keen on the knittin although oo did it oo hud tae jumpers an  
 gloves an scarves an hats an blankets wi the bits that were left an socks Jock's  
 mother wis aye knittin socks I've got drawerfu's yet

I wis never struck wi the Kirk aw that sermonisin went right ower ma heid I even got thrawn oot the Sunday Schule I wid juist be bein a laddie I'd be bein cheeky the teacher wis right po faced her fither wis the heidmaister I wis aye gettin intae trouble fur sweerin an I wis aye yin tae speak ma mind that never goes doon weel wi Kirky folk

I loved eatin snaw I wid lift up handfaes ae it an lap it up the poodery stuff wid juist disappear in yer mooth an it wis like eatin wet nithin it wid make ee cough if ee breathed in ower quick an it wid stick tae yer face I liked gettin a big handfae an rowin it intae a ba I wid crunch it like an aipple ma mother wid gie aes a row tell aes I'd get a sair belly but I didnae care I juist laughed mind it didnae half make yer hands cauld they wid be reid raw I've seen aes aboot greetin when the heat came back intae them an yer wet claes hingin roond the mantelpiece and on the fender the fire bleezin

oor next door neebor worked in the mill aside ma fither ah mind ae wakenin up early an hearin the soond ae'm cleanin oot aes fireplace the chimney came right up through oor bedroom wa atween the twae hooses it wis the soond ae the metal rake on the grate an against the fire bricks I can still hear it noo an the shovel scrapin the ashes an the cinders every day when he wis on an early shift ma fither never did oors ma mother did that for she wis at hame lookin efter us but next door went tae work for she hud nae faimily oo cawed them Aunty Jen an Uncle Tommy he doted on her they aye gied us praisents at Christmas ma mother aye said she wis too hooseprood tae huv bairns for aw she wanted them I mind ae ur moanin tae ma mother aboot seein the stoor fawin when she hud juist dusted I dinnae

think she could've coped wi bairns tae tell ee the truth I mind she yased tae chase us if oo went near her doorstep course that juist goaded some ae them there wis the yin time I'll never forget it when yin ae the Witnesses did aes business on it pair sowell she turned kinnae bitter ah think

I wis aye peelin tatties peelin them in the winter an scrapin them in the summer I could fa asleep at night an see tattie peelins well ah hud fower ae a faimily an tatties filled them up an if yer man wis workin he needed a guid denner ma man's denner wis aye on the table for him comin hame frae aes work an of course he grew tatties maist folk did then if they hud ony bit gairden or if they hud an allotment ma man kept an allotment an it wis great he wis right green-fingered kept us gaun in veg aw through the summer an he hud rasps an gooseberries an blackcurrants an strawberries lovely berries he grew for show tae won a few prizes in aes time he wis aye awfy guid wi carrots that wis aes speciality grew them in a big barrel wi sand an aes special mixture he cawed it grew some beauties an then through the winter oo hud sprouts an leeks although ee'd be buyin tatties by then

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## JOHN TRIES TO GET A BIT OF A SINGSONG GOING

John had Peggy on his arm. They were strolling across the room towards the door that led outside onto the patio. Peggy held her handbag in her right hand. It dangled and swung back and forward with the rhythm of her walking. The way she held John's arm looked easy, comfortable. Kedzie heard John say,

"A wee bit sunshine'll cheer you up Peggy."

"As long as it's no too hot. I cannae be daein wi too much heat."

"We'll find you a nice spot in the shade, Peggy. How about that?"

"Aye, that'll dae fine...for a wee while anyway."

"We've put the big umbrella up. You can sit under that, Peggy. It'll be like we were in the Mediterranean."

"Pff!" Peggy did not sound convinced. "Mediterranean?"

She gave John a pained look.

"Where is it we're goin anyway?"

"Just out here," said John steering her out of the door and into the sunshine.

"Oh, now. What about that, Peggy? Feel that sunshine. Isn't it smashin?"

Peggy blinked and put her hand up to shade her eyes. Her handbag swung in front of her face, and she looked through the space that the handle made.

"Aye, it's lovely. It's nice tae see the sun."

"Come on, we'll get you sittin doon across here under the umbrella."

Peggy lowered her arm and watched John pull out a chair.

"Whae's that for?"

"It's for you, Peggy. Look, it's in the shade. The umbrella's keepin this bit nice an cool."

John pointed to the large umbrella that stuck out of a white plastic table that had four chairs placed round it.

"Come on, have a seat. I'll bring somebody else out in a wee minute to sit beside you... so you can have a wee blether."

"Aye, that'll be fine, son," said Peggy moving towards the seat.

She clutched her bag with both hands and flopped down into the seat that John held ready for her.

"Whouf," she said as she smoothed out her skirt that had billowed out as she sat down. "I'm no gettin ony younger."

"And how old are you, Peggy?" asked John as he sat down in a seat beside her.

Kedzie had followed them outside. Peggy was sitting with her handbag in her lap. She held the handle with both hands. She seemed to be thinking.

"How old am I?"

"Aye, come on, how old are you?"

John winked at Kedzie.

Peggy started to chew on the fingers of one hand as she thought about John's question.

"Ye ken," she said starting to laugh, "I cannae just mind."

"You're as young as you feel, eh?"

"That's no sayin much, son, I'll no see twenty one again, that's for sure. Do you ken how old I am?"

"Well, when were you born?"

Peggy snorted.

"Am I supposed tae ken that?"

"I think you're about seventy-eight," said John.

Peggy looked at him as if he had just told her a joke.

"What?...Eh aye, well."

She looked up at Kedzie and then John. "Am I that auld?"

She shook her head and bit at her lip. John gave her a cuddle.

"We're away to get the rest of them, Peggy," he said.

"We'll no be long"

"Aye, right, son. I'll be fine." Peggy had opened her handbag.

She had taken out a paper handkerchief which she used to dab at her eyes that watered in the bright sunshine.

"We'll just bring a few of them out," said John. "I thought maybe Joan and Eleanor, Duncan and Jack, maybe Lizzie. Isa's in a good mood today, we'll see if she'd like to come, and you could try Berta, but you know what she's like. Maybe Jimmy? See who you can persuade."

"Okay," said Kedzie as she and John went back into the lounge.

They came face to face with Joan and Eleanor. Eleanor had her arm through Joan's.

"The very ladies we're lookin for." John spread his arms wide

"Is it, son?" asked Joan, puffing up with satisfaction. Eleanor smiled up at him.

"Ee," she said, "you get bigger every time I see you."

She turned to Joan,

"Isn't he tall?"

"Tall, dark and handsome, eh, son?"

"No wi this hair, Joan".

John ran his hands through his blonde hair.

"Come on ladies," he said, "let's away out into this lovely sunshine. I've got the seats all ready for you, and Peggy's there lookin for a wee blether."

"Aye, it's a lovely day, son," said Joan, "Me and Mrs....." She nodded towards Eleanor.

"Hopwood," said Eleanor. "Me name's Mrs. Hopwood.....well it's Eleanor really."

She said 'Eleanor' as if it were a precious and singular thing.

"We're away for a look outside," said Joan.

John stood aside to let them out the door.

"I'll leave you to it then, ladies. Away and get a seat in the sun."

"Thanks, son," said Joan, stepping out the lounge door.

"Ee, isn't it a beautiful day," exclaimed Eleanor looking up at the sky.

"Norra cloud to be seen."

John and Kedzie split up and went towards opposite ends of the lounge. Kedzie looked around. She could see John heading for Duncan and Jack who were sitting snoozing down near the toilet door. Lizzie was awake and looking around the room. She was sitting next to Berta who had her eyes closed but was in a bolt upright position that did not suggest sleep. Kedzie waved to Lizzie whose face broke into a huge grin. She lifted an arm to wave. It was more of a snatch at the air as her hand barely left the side of the chair. Kedzie waited until she was right in front of Lizzie before she spoke.

"Would you like to come outside into the sunshine, Lizzie?"

Lizzie's face was wide-eyed and bright. She held it as if she were listening intently, but no answer came to Kedzie's question.

"Lizzie," said Kedzie in a lower voice. "Would you like to come outside?"

Lizzie made a face as if she was amazed at what Kedzie had told her.

"Oh?" Her voice was dry and rasping. "Fancy."

"No, Lizzie, listen...would you," Kedzie pointed to Lizzie, "like to go...outside?"

Kedzie exaggerated the words with her mouth, hardly making any sound, and pointing to the door. She motioned for Lizzie to follow her. Lizzie nodded and made to stand up. Kedzie went to help her.

"It's no cauld, is it?" Lizzie asked in a loud voice.

Kedzie started to say 'It's lovely', but instead she looked Lizzie in the eye, shook her head and mouthed the word 'No'.

"Is it warm?"

Kedzie nodded enthusiastically and drew her hand across her brow as if she were wiping away sweat, then pulled at the neck of her dress a few times. Lizzie laughed and took Kedzie's arm.

"What about you, Berta?" Kedzie shouted. "Would you like to go outside?"

Berta remained rigid and upright in the chair. She half-opened one eye. A curl of her lip suggested how distasteful she found this proposal. She shook her head in a series of rapid spasms that looked more like a shudder.

"No bother, Berta. We'll go away and leave you in peace."

Berta's eyes remained closed, her body motionless.

Lizzie hobbled a few steps until she got into the rhythm of walking beside Kedzie. Duncan and Jack were at the door. Jack hesitated at the threshold feeling tentatively with his foot for any step that might be there.

"You're alright, Jack. There's no step," shouted Kedzie.

Jack turned towards the sound of Kedzie's voice. He put both hands on the door jamb and bent his knee as if to step down to a lower level.

"Jack, there's no step there!"

Jack was mumbling to himself. If he had heard Kedzie's voice, he had not understood what she was saying. Duncan hovered about behind him, waiting for him to get out.

Just then John appeared from the bottom end of the lounge. He carried an armful of floppy hats.

"Sun hats," he shouted across to Kedzie.

The two men were blocking the door.

"I'll just squeeze past, Duncan," said John tapping him gently on the arm.

Duncan stumbled as he tried to get out of John's way as fast as he could.

"Just go right outside, Jack. There's no step...come on, take my arm."

"Thank you, thank you," said Jack letting go of the door and relaxing his weight against John. "I can't see too well, you know and I'm always worried that I might fall."

"I know, Jack, but you're okay. Come on, we'll get you a seat. I thought we might have a wee singsong in the sun."

"That would be nice," said Jack. "Sing to the Lord, eh?" as he shuffled along beside John.

"Do you think he'll be listening?" asked John.

"Oh, yes. I'm sure of it," replied Jack patting John's arm with his free hand.

They walked towards a bench that backed onto the wall opposite the patio door. The wall was made of brick and was about five feet high. It retained the steep banking with its dark shrubbery, and ended in a fence made of iron palings that pierced the edge of any view that existed.

"Have a seat, Jack," said John.

Jack let go of John's arm. He bent forward and put out his hand until he felt the arm of the bench. He put his other hand on it and shuffled round till he felt the seat against his knees.

"Aye, you're awright, son," shouted Joan. "You can park your erky perky."

Jack stood up straight again at the sound of Joan's voice and looked around to try to locate the source of it.

"You can sit doon, son, the chair's right behind you."

"Th..th..thank you," said Jack, sitting down very slowly and raising his hand in acknowledgement.

"Puir auld sowel," said Joan to Peggy in a quieter voice. "His legs are juist aboot away I think."

"Aye, he's a puir sowel right enough.....I dinnae think he can see right."

Peggy blinked her small eyes several times and shifted in her seat as she stared at Jack. Eleanor was fussing at the fringe of the umbrella behind Joan and Peggy.

"Bonny this, isn' it?" she said to no-one in particular. "Isn't it a lovely colour?"

Without turning round, Peggy snorted,

"Pff, alright I suppose, if you like that sort of thing."

"It's cheery," said Joan looking up into the well of the umbrella which was candy-striped yellow and white.

"Right, ladies."

John's voice was brisk. He held a sunhat up in the air.

"Who wants a hat?"

"Hat...what are we needin a hat for?" asked Joan.

"Keep the sun out of your eyes, Joan. Keep you from gettin sunburnt. We wouldnae like tae spoil your good looks now, would we?"

"Aye, your patter's guid, son."

"It would have tae be," said Peggy.

John put a hat on top of Joan's head, and one on Peggy's. They adjusted them and looked at each other.

"Aye, good, son," said Joan.

"Makes a difference, right enough," said Peggy.

"What about you, Eleanor? Look, I've got a lovely blue one here to match your eyes."

"Ee," said Eleanor catching hold of John's arm, "you're a charmer."

"Try it on."

Eleanor put the hat on, and, holding it at both sides, started to move her head from side to side.

"Ee, me lads, you should have seen us gannin.....all the lads and lassies there, all with smilin faces, gannin along the Scotswood Road, to see the Blaydon races."

"That's great, Eleanor. You can sing that again in a wee while."

John surveyed the three women.

"It's like the first day at Ascot oot here now, eh, Peggy?"

"D'you think sae?"

She did not sound convinced.

"Oh, aye. You look smashin the lot of you."

He went across to the bench. Duncan was sitting beside Jack.

"Jack, Duncan... get a hat on. That sun's bright and we dinnae want tae burn your brains."

He slapped a wide-brimmed floppy hat on each of them. Duncan's was white. Jack's was brown.

"They're weemin's hats are they no?" remarked Peggy

"Shhh, Peggy, they'll be fine. Never let on...they'll dae the job."

"Pff..." Peggy shook her head.

She folded her arms through the handle of her bag and raised her eyebrows.

Kedzie pulled a chair round in between Joan and the bench and eased Lizzie onto it. Lizzie nodded and smiled as she settled herself into the chair. John

stuck a hat on her head. She jumped with surprise but then laughed and pulled it on snugly. Kedzie gave her a thumbs up, and made a silent 'oo', and mouthed 'lovely' to Lizzie. Lizzie looked round at the others with their hats on and nodded 'hello' to them.

"Aye, it's a lovely day," said Joan.

Lizzie nodded and smiled. John looked around.

"I'll see if I can find another couple to bring out. That should be enough."

Helen had appeared at the door. She was standing just inside looking at something on the floor. She moved her right foot forward as if she were testing out for solid ground. She had her hands in the pockets of a light coloured cardigan.

"Helen, would you like to come and join us?" shouted John.

Helen looked up as if startled from a dream. When she saw John her face broke into such a serene, beautiful smile that he might have been the Archangel Gabriel.

"Coming out into the sunshine, Helen? It's lovely and warm out here."

Helen's head moved slowly up and down in what could have been an assenting nod, but she did not move. Her smile faded to a wan and fragile thing of disinterested sadness.

"I take it that's a 'no' then," John said quietly to Kedzie.

"Look there's Isa, I'll go and see if I can persuade her, and I'll grab someone else in the passin while I'm in."

"Okay," said Kedzie. She went and sat down on the bench between Duncan and Jack.

"Ready for a wee singsong, Jack?"

"Yes, that'll be lovely. Who's in the choir today?"

"You are," said Kedzie.

"Me?"

"Well you and all these other people out here this morning. You'll need to think of a song you would like to sing."

Jack nodded seriously.

"Right, I will."

Kedzie turned to Duncan

"Alright, Duncan?"

"Pardon?"

"Are you alright. Are you enjoying the sunshine?"

"Oh, it's lovely. I can take a bit ae heat."

"You going to join in the singing?"

"Who's singin'?"

"We're hoping that you are."

"Me?" Duncan chuckled, "I'm no a singer, never have been. When I was at the schule the teacher aye tellt me just tae mouth the words. I'm tone deaf," he said loudly.

Kedzie laughed. She looked up to see Isa hesitating at the door.

"Come and get a seat, Isa," said Kedzie getting up from the bench and walking towards her.

"Don't look so worried."

Isa looked preoccupied. She screwed up her face into the sunshine and brought her hand up to shield her eyes. She scrutinised Kedzie's face with an expression that was vague and suspicious. Kedzie made to take her arm but stopped as Isa's body tensed and drew away from her.

Eleanor appeared. She slipped her arm through Isa's and cuddled into her.

"Come on," Eleanor was matter-of-fact. "Come and sit beside us."

She started to walk. Isa's right hand went out to catch at the door to hold onto it, but Eleanor had already pulled her away.

"It's a beautiful day," Eleanor was saying. "Me son'll be here any minute. He'll take us out for a little run in the car likely, when it's a day like this. We'll have a picnic."

Isa's reluctance was evident in the angle of her body in relation to Eleanor's. It was as if part of her still held onto the door, the part that contained intention, and this surprised and baffled thing that trailed beside Eleanor was something of a much looser substance, of a much diminished will.

"There now. Sit down there." Eleanor stopped in front of the chair beside Peggy.

"You might as well sit doon." Peggy shaded her eyes as she spoke to Isa.

"Mind I dinnae ken what we're here for. I've been sittin here waitin aw mornin."

"Ee, whorra lie. You've only been there five minutes," said Eleanor.

"Well, it feels like I've been here aw mornin."

Isa tucked her dress under her and sat down. She smiled feebly at Peggy. Eleanor stood over her. She leaned forward and put her hand on Isa's shoulder.

"Are you alright now, pet?"

Isa nodded distractedly. She moved against Eleanor's hand and made as if to get back up off the seat.

"Sit still, woman. It's a lovely day. Come on, sit back, and when me son comes..."

John's voice interrupted Eleanor's.

"Right, everybody. I'll think we'll get started."

"Aye, right, son. Good-oh," Joan shouted. "You tell them."

John had brought Jimmy outside. Jimmy blinked in the sunshine. He chewed at his tongue. His hands were in his pockets. He shifted from one foot to the other.

"You want to get a seat, Jimmy?"

"Naw."

Jimmy hitched at his trousers with his hands still in his pockets.

"You just gaun tae stand there?"

"Naw."

"Right then, Jimmy, there's a seat left on that bench if you want."

John left Jimmy standing where he was.

"Now," said John getting a chair and sitting down. "I think we'll try a wee singsong the day. How about it?"

He looked round at everyone.

"Aye, gaun then, son," said Joan.

"But you've tae join in," said John. "Come on, what would you like to sing? Duncan, what's your favourite song?"

"I'm no a singer, son. Better ask somebody else."

"Jack, what about you?"

Jack peered out from the bench. He sat forward to better perceive John's whereabouts and make his reply.

"W...well, I was always rather partial to the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. They sang a very beautiful song...it was called.....em...."

Eleanor was mumbling over the top of Isa. Her hand was on top of Isa's chair and she leaned in towards her, fussing over something on the collar of Isa's dress.

"I don't think we'd all know that one Jack. How about if we try something like 'Pack Up Your Troubles'?"

Peggy snorted. "Hmph, that auld thing," as Joan said, "Aye, that's a guid yin, son. On you go."

"No, you're supposed tae be daein the singin, Joan."

"Aye, right, son, okay."

"Come on then."

"What, the now? You start. Give us the tune."

Jimmy had wandered off up the narrow terrace between the ward and the wall. He turned and walked back down again. Fred had just come out onto the patio as John, Joan and Kedzie started to sing.

Fred looked in their direction and shook his head.

"Lovely," he said, "lovely."

Jimmy came up to him.

"Aye," he said.

As he made to go past, Fred caught hold of his arm.

"Now," said Fred, "just a minute. I've got something I want you to see."

He held onto Jimmy's arm as he fumbled in his pockets. Joan's voice rose above the other two. She shouted, "What's the use of worrying..." There was an uneven bass undertone with no apparent tune to it that was Duncan and Jack humming. Eleanor was swaying back and forward beside Isa, la-la-ing to herself, her face earnest, when Isa jumped up.

"I'm seek ae this!" she screamed.

Her chair scraped back and tipped over. She pushed past Eleanor and almost ran back into the ward. Fred barely paused in his fumbling as she passed him and Jimmy. Jimmy was ignoring Fred, even though he was being held by the arm.

"Look, look," Fred was saying.

He let go of Jimmy's arm as he prodded three round brown lumps that he held in his open palm. Jimmy never said a word. He just walked away.

The singing had stopped. Eleanor was bending down to pick up the chair.

"Ee, what was that all about?"

"Aye the same, thae kind," said Peggy.

She chewed at her fingernails in an absent-minded way.

"She's no happy, son," said Joan. "Maybe somebody should go and see what she's wantin."

"Just leave her, Joan. She'll calm down in a wee while."

Fred wandered across to the group.

"Hi, Fred, take a seat. You can join in if you like."

"Well now, I was just going to show you this."

He held out his open hand to John. "Would you like one?" he asked.

"They're very nice."

"What's *he* daein?" Peggy asked Joan in an exasperated tone.

"Askin if he wants a sweetie."

Peggy peered at Fred.

"Maltesers by the looks ae things."

"That's nice," said Joan.

"Oh, for God's sake, Fred," John shouted. "Kedzie, get them singin another song while I go and sort this out."

"What is it?" asked Kedzie.

John mouthed the word, 'shit'.

"You're joking!"

"At least it doesnae look like he's eaten it this time, but I'll need to go and get him cleaned up. Will you be okay here?"

"I'll manage. Joan'll help me, won't you, Joan?"

"Yes, hen. Whatever you say."

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## WEE MARY IS SEEN BY AUREL AND HAS HER MEDICATION REVIEWED

Aurel was sitting on a chair beside wee Mary. His legs stretched out in front of him. One hand was in the pocket of his brown corduroy jacket which hung loose over the edge of the seat; his chin rested on the other. His fingers were long and fine-skinned. The way they pushed at his mouth gave his face an air of petulant boredom. His shirt was open at the neck.

Eva stood in front of them both. She held some papers in her hands.

"Good morning, Mary," said Aurel, rolling the 'r's.

Mary turned towards him. There was an innocence, a childlike sweetness about her smile. She looked up at Eva. She made a small sound that was like the beginning of a laugh except that her eyes searched Eva's face in quick, anxious snatches of movement.

Eva smiled down at her.

"You're alright, Mary. The doctor's just here to see how you're getting on."

"Oh?" replied Mary in a faint voice.

She kept looking at Eva. Her hands pulled at a tissue in her lap.

"Mary," Aurel's voice was warm and conspiratorial.

He sat up in the chair and turned his whole body towards her, "How are you today?"

Mary kept looking at Eva.

"The doctor's speaking to you, Mary."

"Oh?" said Mary, nodding.

Her gaze never left Eva's face.

"I'm right here, Mary," said Aurel "Do you not want to speak to me today?"

He laid his hand on her arm. She looked down at it.

"Yes." The 'e' lasted several seconds. The dark discolouration of her tongue was visible as she lisped the 's'.

"Mary," his voice was more insistent, "do you know what day it is today?"

Mary looked up at Eva again. There was the beginning of a laugh again.

"Do you know what day it is today, Mary? The doctor's wondering."

Mary just smiled.

"What day of the week is it, Mary?" asked Aurel.

Mary kind of shrugged and bit at her lower lip.

"Is it Monday, Mary?"

"Yes," she nodded.

Her right hand started to move up to her face as if to wipe something. It held the remains of the bedraggled tissue. She lowered it back down again as she answered Aurel's question.

"Are you sure, Mary?"

Aurel amplified the word 'sure'; it glided out and around Mary.

"Yes," she lisped.

Aurel glanced up at Eva.

"And do you know what time of day it is, Mary?"

Mary's head twitched as if she could not decide whether to nod or shake it.

She smiled weakly. She rubbed at her nose with the scrap of tissue. She looked at Eva and smiled a nervous smile.

"Don't look so worried, Mary," said Eva. "Have a wee think. Have you had your breakfast today?"

There was a short pause.

"I think so," Mary ventured.

"Right, so you've had your breakfast. And have you had your lunch yet, Mary?" Eva asked.

"Yes," Mary nodded.

"No, we've not had it yet, Mary. You've just had your elevenses. It's still the morning. It's half past eleven."

"Oh?" Mary looked surprised. "Is it that late?"

Aurel enclosed Mary's left hand in his.

Mary," he said, squeezing her hand, "it's never too late, huh?"

He tried to look her straight in the face.

"Tell me, Mary, how are you feeling today?"

Mary smiled her innocent smile and nodded.

"Are you well, Mary? Do you feel well? Are you on top of the world?"

He said this out loud as he made an expansive gesture in Eva's direction.

She gave him a wry look.

"I'm fine, thank you," said Mary pulling her hand away from his.

"Well that's the main thing I think, don't you, Sister?"

He was slouching in the chair again, leaning back and letting his legs stretch out in front of him. He stuck his hands behind his head and looked out of the window.

"Ah, sunshine," he exclaimed, rolling his head from side to side. "I need a holiday!"

He shouted the word 'holiday' and stood up.

"Don't we all," said Eva taking a step back.

"Have you got her drug Kardex there?" he asked in a quieter, more matter-of-fact voice.

Eva handed him a sheet of card. He scanned it and shrugged.

"Bowels, waterworks...okay?"

"Not any worse than usual," replied Eva.

"Sleeping well?"

"Yes."

"Okay, I will leave well alone," said Aurel handing the card back to Eva.

He knelt down in front of Mary.

"I will see you again next week, Mary."

"Yes, thank you," said Mary as she fiddled with the screwed up and torn tissue in her hands.

She raised her head to look at Eva. Eva was rearranging the papers in her hand and looking around the room.

"Right, Harry next."

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DAY 22

## MR. BUNTON VISITS HIS WIFE, ALICE

She was tiny. She sat in a big fake-leather recliner. It had been tilted back a little to make it more difficult to fall out of. She wore a long-sleeved dress made of a stiff material that buttoned down the front. The collar bunched out around her neck and made her look as if she were disappearing. The buttons were big. The spaces between gaped open when she moved, her underclothes visible through the gaps. Her hair was short and thick with a natural wave to it. It looked dry. Her features were neat. There was a coarse elegance about them. The entire compass of her movement involved turning her head around and nodding, and lifting a hand as if to dismiss someone or something that was of no consequence to her. She looked preoccupied. She mumbled all the time; a continuous conversation whose language consisted of sounds that rose and fell with the motion of her head, with the lifting of her hand.

He walked towards her, a quiet smile on his face. He wore a dark coat and a dark hat. He was not very tall, neither was he thin. He carried a plastic carrier bag that swung to and fro as he walked. He turned his head and said 'Hello', or 'Nice day' to any one of the people seated around the room who were awake. Some of them nodded. Some of them smiled back at him and said 'Hello'.

He moved a chair to be beside her. He put down the carrier bag and took off his hat and coat. He laid them on a chair nearby. He smoothed back his hair then took a handkerchief from the pocket of his cardigan and wiped his nose.

"There now," he said as he sat down, "and how's my Alice Blue Gown today?"

His voice was warm. He bent forward as he spoke, tried to put his face in front of hers. She turned her head in the direction of his voice. Her eyes met his.

For a few seconds her mumbling was just for him. Then, it was as if something perplexed her and she turned away.

"I've brought you something, Alice. I've got it in a bag right here."

He had one hand on the arm of her chair. With the other he leaned forward and lifted up the carrier bag.

"Would you like to open it?"

He placed the bag on her lap, open end towards her.

"See, look what I've brought you...it's a present."

Alice stared at the opposite arm of the chair. It was as if she was telling a story, her voice rising and falling. And sometimes she laughed, a short, dry laugh that was absorbed into the ebb and flow of her speech. Her right hand, the one nearest to him, lifted and flicked out. It hit the bag. She started. Her head turned towards it as the tone of her voice rose. She sounded annoyed. The words 'yes' and 'alright' were ejected from the rumbling of her speech with short breaths whose effort caused her whole body to rise in the chair. Then she turned her head back to where it had been.

He put the bag on his knee, held the closed end, and pulled a folded dress out of it. It was sky blue. It had a rever collar, piped with white.

"You're going to be pretty as a picture in this, aren't you, Alice?" he said, "It's your favourite colour. Remember how you used to say that when you wore blue it was like living inside a sunny day?... Alice, look."

He placed the dress on her lap taking a sheet of tissue paper out of its folds.

"We'll get the girls to try it on you later when you've had your bath. Won't that be nice...Alice?...What do you think?...Do you like it?...Can you see it, Alice?"

Alice looked at the dress. Her right hand reached towards it. Her fingers took hold of one side of the collar and made a shaking movement. The fabric

scarcely moved. Her mumblings changed to an elongated 'mmm' as she fussed at the collar of the dress. She looked up at him and laughed, a short, dry laugh that was more of a staccato out-breath than a thing of joy or good-humour.

"See, I knew you'd like it. It's lovely isn't it?"

Her hand continued to pull at the collar.

"I'll put it back in its bag now I think, and we'll give it to one of the girls when they come round," he said replacing the tissue paper. "They'll need to put your name on it. We don't want to lose it now do we?"

He reached for the dress with both hands. His hands touched her as he took hold of it and slid it from under her hand, the one that still fussed at the collar of the dress. Her body twitched as he pulled it away, as if she were going to make a grab for it, but her movement had no intention, it was mere reaction that subsided in a moment.

"We'll need to get you fattened up a bit, Alice," he said as he put the dress back into the bag. "If you get any thinner you won't fit this dress."

He turned around and looked behind her chair.

"I think it's nearly lunch time. It smells good today, and it'll be here in a minute by the looks of things. The tables are all set and Jimmy's sitting in already."

He nodded to Jimmy.

"You feeling hungry today, Jimmy?" he half-shouted.

"Aye," said Jimmy, the word coming out in a screwed-up puff of breath at the same time as a smile and a wink.

"Smells good."

"Aye," said Jimmy.

He shifted back in his chair with the effort of his reply. Alice laughed. Mr. Bunton put his hand on top of hers as it lay on the arm of the chair. He let it rest there as she mumbled on, as the nurses brought people up to the table behind her

chair. He passed the time of day with them as they went past. Yes, it was a lovely day. He'd been to Miss Gilroy's and bought Alice a lovely dress. Would they get her name put on it?...He'd had to wait twenty minutes for a bus up from the square...Lunch smelled good.

He was aware of something touching his hand. He looked down. With her free hand she was fiddling with the signet ring which he wore on his third finger. She picked at it as if it were a scab or a piece of dirt; her fingers were cold, their movements ineffectual. Her nails needed cut. Their sharp edges caught at his skin. Their undersides were brown. She muttered to the ring and to herself. She started to sing: a cracked harsh sound for all it was quiet, the tune unrecognisable. When the singing stopped, which was in a very short time, he heard her voice change and the words 'get out...go on ...get out' as she picked and scratched at the ring. He took hold of the hand that was scratching his with his other hand.

"Now then," he said, "what are you doing? That's my wedding ring. It's not meant to come off."

He kept hold of her hand. She looked at him. A questioning look crossed her face then she pulled both hands away and looked across the room. Kedzie came towards them. She carried a plate, a spoon and a paper napkin.

"Here we go, Alice," she said, "chicken casserole with carrots and potatoes."

She smiled at Mr. Bunton and handed him the plate and a spoon. She tucked the napkin into Alice's dress at the neck so that it spread down and out over most of the top half of her clothes.

"Okay? See if she'll take anything today."

She spoke kindly.

"Eat as much as you can now, Alice. You need to keep your strength up, build up those muscles."

She was leaning down to catch Alice's eye. She gave Alice's thigh a light squeeze. Alice's hand moved up to her neck. She pulled at the napkin.

"Just leave it there now," said Mr. Bunton. "Look, I'll smooth it out a bit if it's tickly."

He pressed the corner of napkin that was inside her dress to make it smoother against her skin. Her hand came up and patted his.

"There now, this smells lovely," he said. "Come on, try some."

Chicken, gravy, potatoes, carrots had all been liquidised together to form a pale brown paste. He took some onto the spoon; not too much. He lifted it to her mouth. She was looking down at her lap. She was mumbling. He touched the spoonful of food against her mouth. The movement of her lips attached food to them. Her outbreath caught up small flecks of it and blew them onto his hand, onto the napkin.

"Come on, Alice," he cajoled. "Open wide. It's chicken today...chicken casserole."

He kept the spoon at her mouth. When she opened it to speak again he pushed the spoon in. It hit off her teeth. Her lips pushed the food back. Some of it spilled onto the napkin. He took the spoon away. He refashioned a mouthful of food onto it and tried again to get it past her lips. This time her mouth opened a bit wider. He managed to get the tip of the spoon between her teeth and part-way into her mouth. She bit down on it. With her biting and trying to talk against the metal her top set of teeth worked loose. Their gums appeared beneath her top lip. They were covered in food and saliva. He pushed them back into place with the spoon and removed it. She sucked at the tiny amount of food left in her mouth. She rolled it around until she swallowed it.

"There now...that's tasty, isn't it?" he said as he wiped her chin with the napkin.

With the next spoonful he got a little bit more in.

"How are you getting on?" asked Kedzie.

She was helping Jeannie to eat her lunch at the table behind Alice's chair.

"She's got the taste for it now I think," he replied. "There...nearly a whole spoonful that time."

"That's super, Mr. Bunton. You've got the knack."

"Well I don't know about that, but at least I've got the time. I don't know how you girls manage."

He scraped up another spoonful as Alice sucked and mumbled into the food. Now and then her hand lifted as if to flick something away, the sound of her voice rising and falling, rising and falling, containing seamlessly within it her dry laugh, the abrasions of annoyance.

"Oh, you've done really well, Alice." Kedzie had come over with another plate. "Think you'll manage some pudding?"

Alice did not look at her.

"What have you got today, nurse?" asked Mr. Bunton.

"Chocolate sponge and custard," she replied chopping at the sponge with a spoon and mixing it in with the custard. "Looks nice...not too dry."

"That sounds lovely, doesn't it, Alice?" He looked up at Kedzie and then at Alice. "She's a bit of a chocolate fiend, aren't you, Alice?"

Kedzie laid the plate of pudding down on a chair beside him. He handed her the not quite empty plate of mashed chicken and then wiped Alice's mouth.

"I think maybe a drink of milk first, nurse, before the sweet. What do you think?"

"No problem, Mr. Bunton. I'll bring it right over."

She came back with a plastic beaker. It had a lid with a spout.

"There you go...help keep her fluids up."

She squeezed the lid tight as she handed it to him.

As he put the spout into Alice's mouth, she turned her head away from it. He tried again. Again she turned away.

"Come on, Alice...just a wee drink of milk."

He tipped the beaker up so that a small amount of milk came out as he held it to her lips. She strutted her ill-temper at this. The milk caught in her words making them bubble. But at the taste of the milk she stopped sputtering. She got hold of the spout and sucked hard.

"See, I knew you were thirsty. Now, that's better isn't it?"

She began to mumble again. She pulled her head away from the beaker. She spat it out.

"OK, we'll get some more in a little while. I've got some lovely chocolate pudding here for you...one of your favourites."

He spooned a tiny piece of sponge with custard into her mouth.

"Now then, what about that then, Alice? Is that good?"

Her head moved in such a way that she might have been nodding. She made a sound that had what might have been a small enthusiasm in it.

"There, I knew you'd like that," he beamed. "I was right, wasn't I?"

He spooned in some more. He settled back into his chair. He looked around between feeding Alice spoonfuls of pudding at the empty chairs and at the rest of the patients eating or being fed at the table.

When the plate was empty he laid it down on the chair beside him and let her drink the rest of the milk. Then he wiped her mouth again and took the paper napkin away. She did not scold him.

Kedzie came back and took the empty plate and beaker.

"Oh, Mr. Bunton, that's fantastic. She's eaten the whole lot!"

She sounded so pleased. He smiled a big smile at her.

"I knew she would eat that alright," he said. "It's one of her favourites."

He looked across at Alice.

"You really enjoyed that didn't you, Alice?"

He leaned towards her and put his hand on her arm. She looked at his hand as it rested there. She did not look at him. He looked up at Kedzie and shook his head.

"It's a terrible thing, isn't it?"

His voice sounded weary.

"It is, Mr. Bunton. It's a very cruel disease."

There was a sadness in her reply that included him and all the patients in the room.

"What time's your bus today?" asked Kedzie.

He looked at his watch.

"If I left now I could get the half-past, but I've got some things I can be doing down the town before I get home. I'll wait a bit I think; wait till she dozes off. I'm not in any hurry, nurse."

"Stay as long as you like, Mr. Bunton. Would you like a cup of tea?"

"Oh yes, that would be lovely. Thanks, nurse."

She went off to get him a cup of tea. Alice stared up at the window. He followed her gaze.

"Yes, it's a lovely sunny day, isn't it? Some of the girls might take you out later...get a bit of fresh air. What do you think, hm?"

He smiled at her. Her eyes began to close. She blinked them open once or twice but then they closed. As her head fell back against the wing of the chair, he took her hand in his. He began to hum a tune. Then, as his voice got stronger, he put words to it.

*"In my sweet little Alice blue gown, when I first wandered down into town, I was both proud and shy, as I felt every eye, but in every shop window I'd primp passing by. Then in manner of fashion I'd frown, and the world seemed to smile all around. Till it wilted I wore it, I'll always adore it, my sweet little Alice blue gown."*

Kedzie came back with a cup of tea. She smiled at him as she placed it on the chair beside him. He continued to sing. He looked her in the eye as he held a long note, placing his other hand on his chest and wavering the note in a mock-opera style.

"You should be on the stage, Mr. Bunton, with a voice like that," Kedzie joked.

He laughed as he stopped singing.

"Alright for the bath, nurse, but that's about it I think."

He looked across to Alice.

"Still, that's her off. I'll just drink my tea and get going. Thanks for this."

He took the cup onto his knee.

"Oh, and nurse, here's that new dress."

He handed her the bag.

"Can you see that it gets her name put on it please? Have a look at it. It'll suit her to a 't' I think. She loves sky blue."

"That's lovely, Mr. Bunton," said Kedzie as she looked into the bag. "I'll send it to the laundry to get her name on it, don't worry."

She walked up towards a door at the far end of the room. He sat back in his chair. He nodded to the people who were settling down for a nap. He asked if they had enjoyed their lunch. He smiled at their replies and drank his tea.

When it was finished, he laid down the cup and stood up. He put on his coat and buttoned it. He put on his hat and pulled it straight with two hands. He leaned down and kissed her head.

"I'm off now, my darling," he said. "I'll see you tomorrow."

ALICE (monologue)

...morning...morning...morning...get out of here...stop being silly...well...away you go...yes...that's it...go on...go on...never seen anything like it...cheap, it was cheap, yes...oh yes...he would get it cheap likely...if it was for me it would be cheap...different if it had been for...not mine...take it away...go on...take it away...I don't want it...do you hear...I don't want it...what are you smiling at...that's no use...do you hear me.....you took all the rest away...I don't want it...do you hear...I *don't* want it...take it back back...get back to yesterday...go on, get away with you...pig pig pig fig...be different then...what's the answer...I don't know...one one...tell me...tell me a story...I just want to be left in peace...left to my own self...my self...my own self...so go away and take it with you...and take her as well...impudent little madam...get away...

...yesss...she was over there by the door...she kept knocking at the door...she never saw me...she never saw me...never...I'm worried...she might need me...she always needed me...you never needed me...always too busy...so get out, go on, get out...I don't need you...you were never any good to me...that time you came home and there were three women waiting...three of them...in the living room...bold as brass...they soon shifted when they saw me...ha ha ha...that sorted them...how is it...how how how...how doth the little cocodile...no you won't...much of a muchness...I'll never go there...never go there again do you hear me...whores and sluts the lot of them...and they took all my best clothes away with them...all my lovely clothes...and look...look now...nothing...just rags...they left me with rags...who did that...tie them up...tie them together...no, that's not right...wrong from beginning to end...yes...but I've got a stick...and I'll

...come on...I want to go somewhere...do you hear me...where do I have to go...och it'll not matter...they're all mad, mad as hatters.....is it not time we were away to bed...it's way past bedtime...I'm tired...will you not come...*I said will you not come*...come on...its bedtime...och away with you...you'll be wanting to get away out with those women...they're always chasing you...come on...I'm not going there...no no no...nooooo...that one across there's wearing my best frock...look at her...she must have stolen it when I was sleeping...that's not right

you know, that's not right...away with the lot of you...I don't believe it...no use talking to him...just go in...in...the lot of you...don't bother me...I want nothing more to do with you...do you hear me...leave me in peace...

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## AFTER LUNCH

Kedzie was wiping the tables after lunch. This was a quiet time. The patients were mostly all sitting in chairs in the lounge or lying down on their beds. Most of them would fall asleep for a while. Today, Isa was 'brewing'. She stood half-in, half-out of the dining room door, her body tight, her eyes narrowed down. She looked in then out of the room. She turned one way then the other. Her hands twisted in about each other then sprung apart.

"Come on then!" she shouted, hard and desperate.

There was a pleading in her cry, a desolation that was absorbed flat into the indifferent walls and cavernous spaces of the ward.

The sound made Helen look up, but only for a moment. Serene and pale, she was standing in front of a wall near the door, studying it with a pensive, gentle interrogation. Now and then she touched a random spot and made quiet, dove-like mumblings whose pitch rose and fell like a kind of laughter. She turned round and made to move a dining chair, but her movements had no strength in them; the chair never moved. She turned back to the wall.

Kedzie finished wiping the last of the tables. She did not look at Isa. All her concentration went into keeping her movements fluid, into avoiding eye contact with her. She gathered up the cloth and went into the kitchen.

Eva was there with Sheila. They were loading a trolley with dirty dishes, balancing the empty and half-empty food tins on top.

"Isa's getting pretty wound up out there," said Kedzie.

Eva scraped a plateful of leftovers into a plastic bin.

"She gets like this every now and then," she said as she ran her hands under the tap and dried them on a tea-towel.

"Just keep out of her way. I'll go and see to her. It'll be her bowels. She

always gets like this when she's bunged up."

"Really, can it have that effect on them?"

"Oh, yes. And, well, most of them can't tell us can they?"

Eva smoothed the creases of her dress down over her abdomen and hips, holding the material taut with one hand while she pulled out a glasses case and a small bunch of keys with the other. She went out of the kitchen door. Kedzie rinsed out the cloth at the sink. She pulled off a wad of paper towel and dampened it with warm water. She made a second wad and squirted a small amount of detergent onto it.

"What's that for?" asked Sheila.

"To wipe the chairs.....thought it might be better than the dishcloth."

"You're too good, Kedzie Harrington. You put us to shame."

She looked up at the clock above the door.

"I'd better get cracking. The late shift'll be in in a wee minute, and I've got to give the report."

Kedzie went back out into the dining area. She started to wipe the seats of the chairs at the end of the table nearest the kitchen, first with her detergent cloth, then with the other.

Isa was still there. She was in the corridor but still visible through the dining room door. Kedzie kept wiping and straightening up the chairs. Then she heard Eva's voice; it was gentle, matter-of-fact.

"Hello, Isa, it's me.....you know me.....I've got some medicine for you."

Kedzie watched as Eva moved closer to Isa.

"Come on now.....you know that you can trust me.....I look after you don't I?.....I know that you need this medicine."

Isa looked as if she was going to back away, but, as if she had suddenly

recognised a universal truth, she grabbed the medicine cup and drank its contents.

"Good girl Isa.....I'll give you more later."

Eva had to shout as Isa was already half way down the corridor. Kedzie put the wads of used paper towel in a bin at the side of the kitchen door.

"Well, that was easier than I thought it would be," said Eva coming back into the dining room.

"We'll need to get more into her later though."

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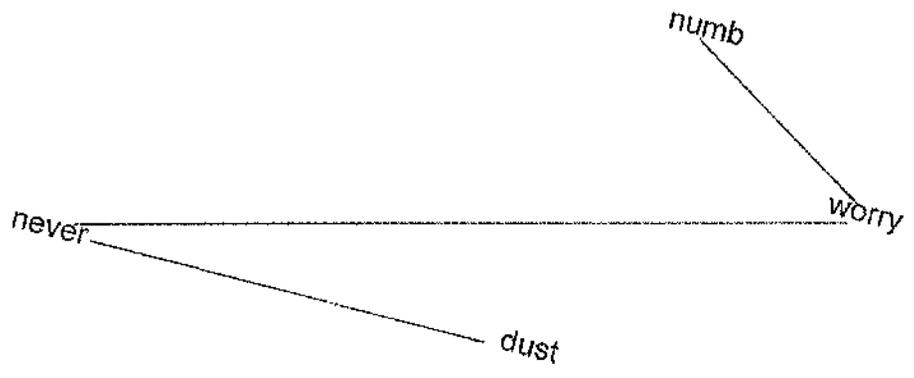
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## JIMMY OPENS THE DOOR

"Couldnae gie me a wee hand?"

John tapped Kedzie on the shoulder. She was speaking to wee Mary, asking her all about the kind of shop she used to run.

"Sorry, Mary," said John "I just need Kedzie for a wee minute."

Mary smiled. That was no trouble. They could both see the black of her tongue as she spoke.

"I'll be back in a minute, Mary," said Kedzie.

"I'd better go and help John."

"Its Jimmy," he said as she stood up.

"He's opened the door and let loads of them out. We'll need to get them back in."

"Oh, never."

Kedzie stifled a laugh.

"I thought they weren't supposed to be able to figure it out."

"Well Jimmy did."

"My god!"

They turned into the corridor. There at the top they could see Jimmy, one hand on each of the round handles holding the door open. As he caught sight of them he blushed and winked.

"Aye," he said keeping hold of both handles.

"Hi, Jimmy," said John. "What are you up to?"

"Aye," repeated Jimmy.

He licked his lips. He made a small jerking body movement towards them, as if to say, 'do you dare do anything about this'. Through the open door John and Kedzie could see a small crowd congregated in the passageway.

"Can we get through, Jimmy?" asked John.

Jimmy's face was flushed. He kept hold of the handles, and laughed a nervous dry laugh that came in short bursts between licks of his lips. As John and Kedzie went out of the door he rattled both handles.

"I see you've worked that one out then, Jimmy," said Kedzie.

"Aye."

Out in the passageway were Joan, Isa, Jack, Fred, Jeannie, Peggy, George and Eleanor. Joan, Isa, Peggy and Eleanor were looking out of the window towards the tall trees on the north side of the building. Eleanor was furthest from the glass. She was leaning forward, standing on tiptoes to try to get a better view. Joan was shaking her head.

"I doot, I doot" she said.

"I cannae see onybody there, no the now onyway, hen."

She was speaking to Eleanor.

"It's no' a bad day mind," said Peggy.

Her handbag hung over her arm. She blinked as she spoke. Isa was silent. She just stood looking out of the window.

"Well, they said they would be here this mornin'," said Eleanor, the vowels of her Sunderland accent extending with her concern.

She looked troubled. "I cannot understand it. I've not seen them for days."

"What's wrong, Eleanor?" asked Kedzie.

"It's me family. They said they would be here this mornin and they're not. Well, I mean, I'm worried. Me son usually phones if they're not comin. I've not seen them for days."

Her voice broke off. She started to cry.

"Oh, Eleanor, they were here yesterday afternoon, remember? They

brought you that lovely bunch of flowers."

"I cannot remember. I thought it was today they were coming."

Her body sagged as she let out a sigh. She looked perplexed and sad.

Joan put her arm in Eleanor's and squeezed it. She spoke to Kedzie.

"It's a shame for her, hen. She's lookin for her mother and fither comin but there's nae sign ae them."

"It's me son," said Eleanor firmly. "Me mother's in there."

She motioned towards the ward with her head.

"I'm going to visit her now. She's not been well you know."

"Come on then," said Joan, "We'll away in and see what's goin on."

Joan winked at Kedzie.

"You're awright, hen, I'll look efter her."

"That's great Joan, just take her back in and we'll get the kettle on in a wee minute."

"Aye, that'll be lovely, hen," she said to Kedzie. "Come on, Missus..." She left a blank in her sentence.

"Come on, we'll away and get a cuppae tea.

Eleanor wiped her eyes with a handkerchief.

"Will you phone them for us, nurse?" she asked.

"The number's in me handbag."

Her eyes were red. She tried to smile but her lips trembled.

"If you go with Joan, and have a cup of tea, Eleanor, I'll see what I can do. I've got to get all these other people back in before they disappear."

"Oh please, nurse, please, will you do that for us?" Eleanor pleaded.

Kedzie took her hand and squeezed it.

"Yes, I'll do that, Eleanor; don't you worry. They'll be here on Sunday again. They always come on Sunday."

"But this is Sunday."

"No, Eleanor this is just Monday. Today's Monday. That's why they're not here. You've just got a wee bit mixed up."

Eleanor looked perplexed.

"Eee, I don't know. This isn't Sunday?"

"No, it's Monday."

"Aye, come on it's Monday," snapped Peggy blinking behind her pale glasses.

She raised her eyebrows and rolled her eyes. She tutted loudly.

"Come on, we'll away and see what's in here. We've no been in here afore."

Peggy walked back into the ward. Her handbag dangled from her right forearm. Jimmy was still at the door.

"Hello," said Peggy smiling in a terse, polite way.

"Aye," said Jimmy.

He tried to pull the door back even wider to give Peggy more room.

"Huh," Peggy laughed, "you're makin awfy shair I get in.

"Aye," said Jimmy.

He blushed again. The door handles rattled. Peggy turned around.

"Are you pair comin?" she shouted back to Joan and Eleanor.

Joan was busy guiding Eleanor towards the open door.

"Haud your wheesht," she shouted.

"The wee sowel's upset. I'm bringin her in the now. Come on, Missus...."

There was a delayed pause again. Joan let Eleanor through the door before her.

"Eee, I just don't know," Eleanor was saying as she caught sight of Jimmy.

She stopped in front of him and took a deep breath in as if to compose herself.

"Here," she said, "How are you doing today?"

"No bad," breathed Jimmy, his tongue sticking out one side of his smile.

"You're a good lad, what are you?"

Eleanor reached up and took Jimmy's cheek between her thumb and forefinger. She tugged at it as she might have at a child's. Jimmy's face was bright red now. He laughed his dry, short laugh. He shifted from foot to foot.

"Now," he said.

He let go of the handles and stuffed his hands into his pockets. Eleanor stopped rucking his cheek and turned to speak to Joan.

"He's a good lad this one. He's always helpin us."

"Aye, son you're a good lad right enough, lettin aw us weemin in, haudin the door. You're a fair wee gent."

Joan's arm was still tucked into Eleanor's.

"We're away for a cuppae tea, do you want tae come?"

"Naw," said Jimmy.

He rubbed his hands up and down inside his pockets.

"Just leave him for god's sake."

Peggy sounded exasperated.

"Come on, he'll need to bide there till aw thae other folk are in."

Eleanor was fussing with the buttons on Jimmy's shirt.

"Now you see," she was saying, "me son was supposed to be comin today but he's not here. I don't know what's happened to him."

She started to cry again but stopped herself. She fiddled with one of Jimmy's buttons with both hands. She spoke to his shirtfront. Her voice still sounded choked.

"I hope he's alright. I'd've thought he would have phoned if he wasn't comin, wouldn't you?"

She patted Jimmy's front.

"There you are. That button wasn't right in. You might have caught your death if a draught had got in there."

She laughed. Jimmy just stood there shifting from one foot to the other laughing in little dry bursts.

"Aye," he said.

Joan was walking down the corridor towards Peggy.

"Is she comin?" asked Peggy.

"Whae?" asked Joan.

"Her up there patterin up that boy at the door."

Joan stopped and turned to look back.

"Oh, her?"

She put her hands up to her mouth.

"Heh, missus, come on leave that fellae alane!"

Meanwhile Kedzie and John were trying to get the others who had escaped back in. George was easy. He was pacing around the space outside the hairdresser's room. He had his hands in his pockets. He looked determined yet worried at the same time. His eyebrows were furrowed down over a blank, directionless stare. John went up to him and caught him by the arm.

"Heh, George."

George stood still.

"George, you're away the wrong road."

John's voice had a natural gentleness to it; his words always sounded as if they were said with a smile.

"Come on, we'll get you back in the ward. It's nearly cuppae tea time and

they've sent down some lovely home-made scones the day. They look really nice. Come on."

He started to walk, easing George along beside him. George was silent. He walked beside John, letting John hold his arm, keeping his gaze fixed ahead, his expression unchanged. John walked him past Jimmy, Kedzie and Eleanor at the door.

"Aye," said Jimmy as they passed.

He looked very pleased with himself.

"Thanks, Jimmy," said John. "I'm taking George through to get a cuppa tea."

"Aye," said Jimmy and winked.

He shifted from one foot to the other.

Jack was easy too. When John got back after settling George into a chair in the lounge, he was standing beside the hairdresser's door. He was stooped forward listening, his hands clasped in front of his chest, his eyes closed.

"What you doin there, Jack?" John asked in a quiet voice.

Jack started. He straightened up, peering towards John.

"It's okay, Jack. I just wondered what you were doin."

"W-w-well," stammered Jack in a faint voice.

"I could hear voices, and I wondered if it might be someone wanting to see me. You see," he said opening his eyes and looking in John's direction but not straight at him, looking over John's shoulder, his eyes cloudy, "with me being a minister, people like to speak to me, to tell me their troubles and...."

He turned towards the hairdresser's door.

"The voices I was hearing were...."

His voice trailed off. John took his arm as he said,

"Jack, that's the hairdresser's in there. I think Helen's in gettin her hair done. You're not supposed to be out here. Come on we'll get you back into the ward. There's a nice scone and a cuppae tea waitin for you."

"F-f-for me? Well that would be nice."

"Come on then," said John walking towards the door. They walked past the group of women talking to Kedzie, and on past Jimmy.

"Are you no' gettin sore arms holdin that door as long, Jimmy?" asked John.

"Aye," said Jimmy giving them a big smile.

When John came back to see who else was still to bring back in, Jeannie was striding through the door her head bobbing, her arms pumping up and down like a speed distance walker. She slipped around past Eleanor and Joan as they spoke to Jimmy. They never noticed her. She bobbed past Peggy and John, her tongue working hard in and out of her mouth, and disappeared into the lounge.

"Aye in a hurry that yin."

"Aye, she's a wee dynamo, Peggy," said John. "Is that you away in for your tea?"

"Well I wid be if it wisnae for that lot."

She motioned to Joan and Eleanor. She blinked and tutted and pulled at the handbag that hung over her arm.

"I wish they'd leave that fellae alane. They're botherin the livin daylights oot him. He must be fair seek."

"Looks like he's lappin up the attention there, Peggy," said John, patting her on the shoulder as he went past. Peggy snorted a laugh.

"Well I just wish they would hurry up."

Isa and Fred were not so easy. When Kedzie went to look for her, Isa had moved from the window and was speaking to Fred opposite the hairdresser's door.

"Wait, now wait," Fred was saying.

His hand rested on Isa's arm. She seemed reluctant to stop and listen to his conversation.

"I've got something here for you," he said.

He had no teeth in. His mouth moved in an exaggerated, floppy way as he spoke. His tongue rolled out of his mouth every few seconds. It affected the sound of his speaking, gave it a splashing, blown sound.

"I'm no wantin it," Isa was saying as Kedzie came up to them.

She was trying to free herself from Fred's hand, trying to move it with a pushing motion of her own hand.

"All right, Isa?" asked Kedzie.

Isa did not reply.

"Come on," Fred was saying. "Look, it's in me pocket."

He fumbled in his pocket but found nothing. He released the hand that held Isa, but caught onto her with his other as he fumbled in his other pocket.

"Now, it was in here this morning."

He held Isa's arm and looked down at his pockets as he spoke.

"Are you all right, Isa?" asked Kedzie again, louder this time.

"Eh?" Isa turned round at the sound of her voice.

"Are you all right?"

"No. This bastard'll no' let go."

Isa's body was rigid. She leaned away from Fred, her right hand trying to prise Fred's hand off of her arm but to no effect. Fred kept on fumbling in his

pocket, mumbling questions to himself, shaking his head and laughing.

"Let go ya bastard," wailed Isa. Her voice was thin and hard.

"Fred," shouted Kedzie. "Let Isa go."

Fred looked up, but not at Kedzie. He looked at Isa. He shook his head and laughed as if he could not quite believe the situation.

"They're all gone," he was saying as John came back through the door.

John was just in time to see Isa bash Fred's arm. She was pulling away from him and bashing his arm, the one that held hers. She made a sound like a choked-back scream. Fred kept talking to her and laughing.

"Now, now. Look, don't worry, I'll find them. Just stop doing that and I'll be able to find them."

John marched straight up to the two of them.

"Fred, let Isa go!"

His voice was loud and firm.

"Isa, stop hitting Fred! Let me sort this one out."

Isa relaxed a little. She grunted as she did so. She stopped hitting Fred but still pulled away from him, her face glowering tight with anger.

"Fred," shouted John again.

"Fred, let go of Isa's arm. She doesn't want anything."

He took hold of Fred's shoulder and shook it to try to get his attention. Fred stopped mumbling at Isa and looked round at John. As he did so he let go of Isa's arm. She sprang back and away from him. She ran towards the unlocked door into the corridor that led to the stairs.

"Kedzie," shouted John, "run and get Eva. If Isa gets out that door we're in trouble. I'll try and stop her."

"Okay," said Kedzie and rushed back towards the ward.

Jimmy grabbed the door handles again when he saw Kedzie running towards him. He rattled them and laughed. He winked, and as Kedzie was just about to go through the door he made to shut it. It was a playful gesture. He was laughing, but Kedzie was stopped in her tracks. He kept pushing and pulling the door, starting forward with a jerk every time Kedzie made to get through it, laughing and saying, "Oh," raising his eyebrows.

"Jimmy, stop. I've got to get inside. John needs help. Now let me in."

But every time she moved forward Jimmy countered with a movement of the door towards her. It was nearly closed now and Jimmy was keeking through the narrowed aperture. Kedzie could hear John speaking to Isa, trying to calm her down, trying to stop her getting out into the corridor. She could hear higher-pitched squeals from Isa. She could hear a door handle being pumped up and down and John's calm, gentle voice rippling over it all.

"Jimmy, come on, I need to get through."

Kedzie put her hand on the door and pushed.

"Jimmy, open the door. I need to get in."

Jimmy half-stumbled backwards, but he let go of the door.

"Thanks, Jimmy," said Kedzie as she skirted past him and on down the corridor.

Joan, Eleanor and Peggy were standing just outside the door to the lounge.

"Awright, hen?" asked Joan as Kedzie ran up towards them.

"Yes, it's okay, Joan. I'm looking for the Sister."

Kedzie went on past them. She could hear Joan speaking to the others.

"Pair sowell's lost her sister. That's a shame."

Kedzie ran up to the office. She could see Eva there. She was on the telephone. She looked up as Kedzie opened the door.

"I'll have to go by the looks of things," she said and put the phone down.

"John needs a hand," said Kedzie. "It's Isa. She's trying to get out to the stairs."

"What's she doing out there?" asked Eva.

"Jimmy opened the door, and let loads of them out. We've managed to get the rest back in more or less, but Isa's getting in a right state."

Eva's hands went into her pockets. She found and brought out the drug keys.

"Phone upstairs and tell them we need two males down here now."

"What do you need the two males for?" she asked.

"I'm going to give her an injection to calm her down. She needs it every now and then, but she's a struggler. We'll need help."

Kedzie lifted the phone as Eva opened the drugs cupboard.

"What's the number?"

"3571."

Kedzie took a deep breath as she dialled. She twisted the telephone cord in and out of her fingers as it rang upstairs.

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## ISA IS FORCIBLY INJECTED WITH PROMAZINE HYDROCHLORIDE

Kedzie and Eva could hear Isa before they got out of the ward; it was a kind of wailing punctuated at irregular intervals by the rattling of a door. And they could hear John's voice, soft, persuasive, an underscoring of something violent.

As they came round the corner, John looked across at them. In the same moment Isa wrenched the door open enough to slip through and out into the corridor that led to the stairs. John swore. He opened the door wide to let Kedzie and Eva through, and they all went after her.

"I've phoned for help," Eva said to John, showing him the loaded syringe.

"Let's not panic her any more than she is already. We'll just take this easy...just hope that we get her before she gets up the stairs."

She spoke in a quiet voice but the tension in it was obvious.

Isa was moving fast along the corridor. She had reached the half-glass door at the far end. Her reflection bent towards her as she fretted at the handle until the door opened. She rushed towards the stairs, but then she stopped. She began to walk backwards. Beyond her, two figures appeared. One was tall and slim, the other was not quite as tall but bulky.

"It's alright," they were saying. "It's alright....come on, we'll just get you back to the ward."

Isa bumped into the half-open door. She turned round and made to run but was faced with Eva, John and Kedzie. She screamed. She turned and tried to run the other way. She ran straight into the two males sent from upstairs. They caught hold of her, tried to soothe her, to reassure her with supplicatory voices but she would have none of it. Her body was rigid with rage and frustration.

"Leave aes alane!" she screamed at them.

"Leave aes ya bastards...ya bastards!"

Her screaming became shrill and desperate. She began to kick. She tried to

bite the hands and arms that held her. She made a noise that made Kedzie think of jet engines, something hot and fast and growling.

"Isa!" shouted Eva.

"Stop it...come on...calm yourself down or I'll need to give you a jag."

At this Isa's eyes opened to their fullest. She spat at Eva. The spittle missed; its white froth trembled through the air and landed at Eva's feet. The two men struggled to hold her.

"Right," said Eva in a matter-of-fact tone. "Get her down."

John went forward and tried to grab Isa's legs but the thinner of the two men said not to, that was asking for a kick in the teeth. John stepped back as the two men tried to bundle Isa forward, tried to bend her forward, push her down that way. She pushed back hard with her head and kept her body in a stiff line. One of them grabbed her behind the neck with his free hand and tried to force her head forward. The other put a foot behind her ankles and tried to kick her feet away from under her. Isa just got more rigid. She roared and screamed. She spat at them and kept trying to bite them. The one using his foot put his knee behind hers. Her knees started to buckle. She half choked as she swallowed spittle that had collected at the back of her throat. The one using his free hand grabbed her hair and pulled her head further back. Her screams rasped into a cough as her neck was hauled backwards. The two men lowered her to her knees.

"Right," said the bulkier one to John, "get her legs at the back...sit on them if you have to."

John moved around behind Isa and grabbed hold of her legs. As she was bent forwards towards the ground, the convulsions of her legs as she resisted the men banged her knees hard against the stone floor. She went down gasping and struggling.

The men were kneeling now. They had her arms behind her back and one

of their hands held the back of her neck. Her head lay twisted to the right. Eva motioned to Kedzie.

"Right, get her dress up."

Kedzie jolted forward. She kneeled beside Isa. The dress pulled up easily.

"Come on then, get her pants down, I need the top of her hip."

There was an urgency in Eva's voice. Kedzie fumbled with Isa's underwear. She got the tights down but there was a vest tucked in between them and the pants.

"Come on!" shouted Eva.

Kedzie yanked the vest up and grabbed at Isa's knickers. Isa's struggling made Kedzie's fingernails dig into her skin, breaking it. Isa yelped.

"Sorry, Isa," said Kedzie more or less to herself.

Eva lunged forward and stuck the needle into Isa. She drew back on the plunger then injected the contents at speed.

"Right, sort her things," said Eva as she leaned on one of the men to help her get up.

Kedzie pulled up the pants and tights and pulled down the dress.

"What happens now?" she asked Eva as she stood up.

"She'll calm down in minute or two. Then we'll get her into bed."

Eva resheathed the needle on the end of the syringe.

Kedzie looked at Isa's face. It was lost in a muffled rage. Her eyes were open, but were narrowed down by the furrows of her brow, by her cheeks that were drawn up in a tight grimace. Her shouts were feebler now than when she was upright, her lungs constricted by the hard floor, and her voice had taken on a hoarseness from the length and strength of her shouting. The two men and John kept up their pressure on her legs and upper body. The thinner one caught Kedzie's eye.

"Cruel to be kind," he said with an apologetic smile.

His voice was deep and gentle. He turned to look at Isa.

"Come on, lass," he said, "let it go."

The other man stroked Isa's hair. Her roaring began to get quieter. Her eyelids began to close although she still fought this. Her facial muscles relaxed. She lost the dark red colouring of her rage. John and the two men could loosen their hold. They eased themselves up from the floor and moved Isa's arms to her sides. She pulled up her arms as if to try and lift herself up, but her strength had gone, ablated by the sedative. John stood up and came to stand beside Kedzie.

"I know it looks terrible, but when she gets like that she's a danger to herself...and she gets violent...they cannae take the chance."

He went forward to help the two men who were getting ready to lift Isa up.

"You're awright," said the bigger one.

"She disnae weigh much mair than a sparrae by the look of her."

He was kneeling beside Isa's head. They had turned her over onto her back and folded her arms across her chest. He manoeuvred her head onto his knees so that he could slip his hands through her folded arms and catch hold of her wrists. Isa snorked as he wriggled his arms beneath her shoulders. Her eyes were closed now. Her head fell forward as he lifted her into a seated position.

"Might be better putting her in a chair. What do you think, Eva...might look better when we take her back in?"

"I'll fetch one," said Kedzie.

"There should be one just inside the hairdresser's door...save you going into the ward," Eva shouted after Kedzie who was running down the corridor.

When she came back with the chair, the two men and Isa were in the same position as when she left them. She positioned the chair at Isa's right, put on the brakes and stood back as the two men lifted Isa, who was now snoring, into the

seat. The taller one let the brakes off and tilted the chair back so that so that Isa's head was supported against his body as he wheeled her along the corridor. He was saying,

"You're okay now...we'll let you have a nice sleep on your bed."

John went in front of them and opened the doors. Jimmy was hanging about at the lounge door as they went past.

"Jimmy," said John as he put his arm around his shoulders, "come on, away in and get a cuppae tea."

"Aye," breathed Jimmy. He did not move.

"Come on then, Jimmy, away you go in."

John encouraged him to move inside the room with a gentle push, but Jimmy put his hands out as if to steady himself against the door jamb and kept them there.

"Jimmy, away in for a cuppae tea. Away in and sit down."

John's voice was firmer now.

"Look there's a chair beside Joan...she'll keep you company."

Jimmy blinked and said,

"Aye".

He laughed as if he was not convinced, but he relaxed his hold on the door, walked into the lounge and sat down. John followed Eva and Kedzie into the women's dormitory. The two men had already lain Isa on top of her bed when he got there. Eva and Kedzie were turning her onto her side and positioning pillows to prevent her rolling onto her back. They took off her shoes and covered her with a blanket. Then they put up the barred sides of the bed. Eva stroked back the hair that had fallen over Isa's forehead. She smoothed her hand back and forward across Isa's brow and over her head.

"There now, that's better."

She looked round to the two men.

"Thanks for that, lads."

They smiled and the taller one made a small bow.

"All part of the service," he said.

"Aye, nae bother," said the other one.

"We'll away back up the stairs...just give us a shout if you've any bother later on."

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## JEANNIE'S ON THE MOVE

"Hey, come and have a cuppa Jeannie."

Catch hold of her arm. Tether her to you. Change her direction and turn her towards a chair. She is marching on the spot beside you. This forces your arm to move up and down with her. You are aware of how thin she feels through her clothes. You can hear her breathing, taking in fast, shallow-deep breaths that sometimes have the ghost of a sound in them. Although she never looks at you, she is aware of the chair, and in a sudden movement reminiscent of rag dolls, she slumps into it.

"There's your tea, Jeannie."

Make sure it's not too hot, half tea, half milk and two sugars, and that it's in a lidded beaker with a spout. Put the beaker into her hand and ease it up to her mouth. Once she is aware of the spout at her lips she will suck the whole cupful down. She may surprise you. She might take the beaker to her lips herself before you get the chance. But be prepared to do this as otherwise the beaker might stay in her hand and never connect with her lips. It might just tip over and spill into her lap. Take the cup away once she has drunk her tea.

Jeannie does not sit in the chair. She inhabits it like a creature with no spine: sunk down, slumped down. Her hands support her face, scratch at her body, push down on the arms of the chair, push against her forehead, stay there for a while making it look as if she thinks, considers.....despairs. Her legs splay open but

they are not still. They concertina in and out, in and out. They jerk. She pushes against the arms of the chair and jumps up.

Up and off, moving at speed, each foot's contact with the ground light yet forceful, her knees lifted high, her head bobbing, her arms cutting through the air, and all the time her mouth.....

right, I'm away I'm away up the street that's me away I'll just away  
 come on I'm away away I'm away the now I'll be seein ye that's me  
 away be seein ye come on then come on I'm away cheerio  
 I'm away then come on come on then I'm away oh, come on let's go  
 let me go Alec'll be waitin come on I'mcomin!mcomin!mcomin cheerio  
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 away I'll no be long I'll no be long!Inobelong!Inobelong!Inobelong

All day her tongue projects and retracts. She runs it round her lips. She chews at it with toothless gums. She sticks it out to the side and bites down on it with a sudden rhythmic kinetic that coincides with gasps of breath, with the nodding of her head. She never smiles. She hardly ever looks you in the eye, and when she does it is a momentary stare that searches and penetrates, and yet is blank and lost and is an intimation of emptiness.

DAY 27

JACK

A mass of white appeared in front of him. The white was bunched up and tight. There were silver circles in a jerky line down the middle of it. It brought with it a smell of disinfected roses and a woman's voice asking if he needed the toilet. He tried to say that he did not think that he needed to go to the toilet at the present moment, thank you, but all that came out of his mouth was a mumbled,

"em...em...well...em."

He tried to remain seated but he was heaved at under his left arm.

"Come on, I'll take ye anyway."

"But...but...but..."

"Come on, Jack," she said.

Her voice sounded harder. The pull under his arm got stronger and he was forced to loosen his grasp on the arms of the chair. He stumbled upright.

She was much smaller than him. Her head looked like a boy's from above. It leaned forward and away with the exertion of pulling him towards an open door in the corner of the room. She was holding his hand now.

"Jack," she said as she turned to look back at him, "I've never felt hands as soft as yours. They feel like raw sausages. No' enough hard work in your life, eh?"

As they went through the door, he had to put out his other hand to steady himself. The door did not look wide enough for the two of them, and the brighter light of this other room made it look as if they had to step down into it. Jack stopped at the threshold. He felt forward with his right foot for a step, but a voice told him that there was no step there and pulled him forward. He did not like being in this room. It was too bright. He tried to turn back.

"For Christ's sake, Jack, we're only goin tae the bloody toilet, come on."

She was trying to fit them both into a very cramped space. He tried again to tell her that he did not need but she turned him round to face her at the same time as she unfastened the front of his trousers and pulled them and his underpants down to his knees. He tried to pull them back up but she knocked his hand away and pushed him back.

"Sit doon for God's sake, Jack. Ye're in the toilet. Dae a pee."

He could feel cool air around the top of his legs. The bottom of his shirt was loose, and he pulled at it to try to keep himself warm, to cover his nakedness.

"Look, just sit doon ya stupid auld bastard."

He stumbled again and sat down heavily against something hard as his knees were caught behind by something sticking out into the space behind him. He was on a toilet seat. The ridge of the cistern was digging into his back. She was gone.

He urinated. He heard another voice. It said,

"Hi, Jack."

Jack peered straight ahead. What looked like a girl in a white dress was passing by arm in arm with white-haired woman who wore a blue dress. The woman did not look at him. She seemed to be concentrating very hard on walking. Her breathing was short. Every breath lifted the whole of her upper body. She limped, leaning into the other woman with every other step as if in a conspiratorial embrace.

Jack wanted to get up off the cold seat. There were big handles on the walls at either side of him. He put two hands on the one at his right side. He leaned into it and kissed it. It felt very cold. Tears blurred his eyes as he lay his forehead against the white metal.

A loud voice said,

"Stand up, Jeannie!"

There was a sound like a toilet-roll holder rattling round.

"Keep still, Jeannie.....we need to get ye wiped....stand still.....that's it.....right .....okay.....let's get yer things back up...."

Stand up. He needed to stand up. He didn't need wiped, but he had to stand up. He lifted his head from the metal and pulled on the handle with both arms. He got up at the third attempt. His trousers were round his ankles. His legs felt cold. He could not walk properly. He half-walked, half-shuffled out of the cubicle. He needed space to pull up his clothes.

"Christ's sake, Jack pu up your breeks."

He turned round and there were two women walking towards him. A small one in a white dress and another one about the same size but very thin. She danced on the arm of the smaller one. She bobbed and stepped. Her hair was short and straight like a man's. Her whole face was moving in and out of an expressionless rolling grimace. She wore brown trousers and a blue jumper. They hung on her as if they were made of something thin yet softly rigid which the movements of her body seemed scarcely to derange. She made a dry grunting noise and broke free of the one in the white dress. He had stepped awkwardly to the side, his feet tangled in his trousers. She moved straight past him.

"Look, ye've gien Jeannie a big fright ya auld pervert."

The voice in the white dress was right beside him. He tried to bend down to pull up his trousers but other hands were there first.

"You lot are the bloody worst of course, aren't ye?"

Another girl appeared from a cubicle further down. She held a pair of women's knickers in her hands. She was pulling an oblong white thing out of them. The weight of it made it flop down and nearly touch her dress

"Ministers and bloody priests, eh Shell? Must be 'cause they're aye tryin no tae think about it."

"Load ae fuckin pervs the lot ae them, if you ask me."

Michelle spat the words out.

The girl dropped the wet pad into a bin.

"Lizzie was soakin. I'll need tae get her washed."

"Right, Linda."

Michelle pulled Jack's trousers together with such force that he stumbled into her.

"Christ, get off ae me, ya dirty auld bastard. The night staff can pit you tae yer bed, that's for shair."

The one called Linda went out of a door at the far end of the room. Jack felt himself turned around and pushed towards a door. The smell of roses and sick-beds was there again.

"Away ye go, Jack, back to your seat."

He nodded and said thank you. He felt his way through the door and into the big room he had come from earlier. It had a high ceiling. People sat in chairs around its perimeter. It seemed familiar to him. It had big windows but not much light came in. The sky was only visible in the top third of glass. The rest was dark, as if full of black foliage, with a railing along the top of it. He sank to his knees facing the windows and closed his eyes. His right hand fumbled on his chest and caught hold of the wooden cross that was always there. He held it to his lips. Tears came to his eyes as his mumbled words were spoken tight against it.

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## KEDZIE COMES BACK FROM SUPPER

Kedzie had just come back from her supper break.

"Saying your prayers, Jack?" she asked, putting a hand on his shoulder.

In his hands he was holding a wooden cross. He held it up in front of him so that it was between his face and the light coming in from the windows. He was muttering to himself. His lips trembled. Kedzie could see tears in his eyes.

"Jack, you seem upset. Can I help you?"

His voice wavered a little.

"Th-thank you," he said, "but I'll just stay here a while...i-i-if you don't mind."

"As long as you're not uncomfortable, Jack."

"No, I-I'm fine."

Kedzie left him where he was. She went into the toilets.

"Jack's looking pretty mournful out there," she said to Michelle who was coming out of one of the cubicles.

"He's a fuckin weirdo if ye ask me."

She had a pair of men's trousers bundled up in her hands.

"He's aye greetin or doon on aes knees, an thae hands ae his...aw squashy an kinnae sweaty...gie's me the creeps."

"But it's a shame for him, being in here, and him half-blind. It must be scary."

"Fuckin scary awright. Me an her reckon aes a right perv."

Michelle nodded in Linda's direction.

Linda was washing Lizzie at the sink. Lizzie was sitting naked on a commode. Linda was busy washing her upper body.

"Who's that you've got in the toilet?" Kedzie asked Michelle.

"George. I'm just going to get him a dry pair ae knickers and some clean troosers. Nae point in pittin him tae's bed the now. He'll be wanderin about for a while yet. Willn't ee, George?"

There was no reply from George.

Duncan walked in from the lounge.

"What is it, Duncan?" asked Michelle. "Dae ye need a pee?"

"Pardon?" asked Duncan putting a hand to his right ear.

Kedzie turned round to speak to him.

"Duncan, can you wait a wee minute. We're busy just now."

She took hold of Duncan's arm.

"What are ee daein?" Michelle had a stupefied look on her face

"Well, it's not very nice is it? Lizzie sitting there, and men coming in and out."

"Christ, there's nane ae them any the wiser."

"That's not the point though, is it?"

Kedzie spoke to Duncan.

"Come on, Duncan. You can come back in five minutes."

Duncan was looking up to the top of the room where the sinks were. He stared for a moment until Kedzie pulling at his sleeve made him look away. He looked flustered.

"Come on, Duncan," she said again, and started to lead him towards the lounge door.

"It's aye the same wi you bloody students, makin a song an dance," Michelle shouted at her back.

Kedzie just kept walking with Duncan.

"You're no here year in year oot."

Kedzie was at the door ushering Duncan out into the lounge.

"Surely it's not too hard to keep the men out while you're seeing to the women."

"An how are ye goin tae stop them? It's no a bloody hotel. They've no aw got their ain lavvy."

"But at least you could try."

"D'ye think we've never tried? It's awright for you juist waltzin in wi yer hi-falutin ideas but thae dinnae get the work done. If we namby pambied about like you the half ae them would never get tae their beds. They'd be up tae their eyes in pee an shit..."

"An we'd never get a fly puff or a cuppa," chimed in Linda.

She was towelling Lizzie's back.

"I'm cauld," Lizzie was saying, her voice rough and rasping as if it was not used to being used, and loud because of her deafness.

"No be long, Lizzie darlin, " shouted Linda putting the towel aside and lifting up a tin of talc.

"Lift up your arms."

But Lizzie could not hear her. Linda lifted up each arm in turn and threw talc at her armpits and the front of her chest, fluffing the talc into Lizzie's skin with her hand.

"Stand up, Lizzie, till I get you washed."

Linda motioned to Lizzie to stand up. Lizzie tried to get up off the commode but needed Linda's help. Linda took a few soft wipes and soaped them up in the hot water that was in the sink. She washed between Lizzie's legs. She rinsed the cloths out and wiped Lizzie again to get rid of the soap. She dried her and sat her back down on the commode. She shook the tin of talc over Lizzie's groin area and patted it into the folds of skin at the top of her legs. She grabbed a nightdress from

a pile on a radiator at the side of the sinks and quickly popped it over Lizzie's head and arms.

"That's better, Lizzie."

Lizzie smoothed down the material and nodded. She looked at the flower pattern of the nightgown.

"It's awfy bonny."

"Aye, you're a bonny lassie, Lizzie," said Linda giving her a hug.

"Come on, we'll get you away through tae yer bed."

*In the lounge ennui was immanent,  
the day, the day was nearly spent.*

ma man wis at Monte Cassino he wid nivver speak about it but he hud nightmares I ken that an there were times when he juist went kinnae quiet he'd juist away tae the fishin an I kent no tae say onythin then for in the early days I did I wid try tae get him tae tell aes what wis botherih him but he wid get that roosed an that wisnae like him at aw

my mother was a MacNeill from Skye same as Whistler's mother you know the famous painting she came south as a girl to go into service she was with the Deuchars the big brewers my father was the son of one of their managers they met when he came to deliver a message it was all very romantic it was her hair that he first noticed jet black and hanging down past her waist in a thick plait she would only be about fifteen it was another three or four years before she would have anything to do with him she was very quiet my mother very religious the family thought a lot of her she got on very well with young Mrs. Deuchar's aunt Miss Donaldson and she went to live with her for a while as her companion Miss Donaldson loved to travel my mother went with her to Paris through Switzerland to Italy to Florence and Rome my mother loved it that was all before the First War of course by then she was married to my father and had had my older sister and myself we were living in Edinburgh we were lucky with my father being a teacher and anyway with him having had rheumatic fever he was never called up and I often think how that must have been meant to be because it gave them that time together because she died young she died of TB my sister and I were only children at the time my grandmother came to live with us then I can remember visiting my mother in the sanatorium my grandmother took me I remember her smile and thinking how tired she looked Jack my little Jack she said everything else about the memory feels white and chill she died in June I always remember the date because it was four days before my tenth birthday it broke my father I can

still see him standing at her graveside clutching a rose of the deepest red so dark  
it looked black from a distance

I liked men I'll no deny it although I only ever married yin an that wis when I wis  
young an daft I sin got shot ae him he wis a waster Christina wis his then I hud  
Shirley her fither wis an insurance man an then a guid bit later I hud wee Audrey  
course I hud a bit ae a reputation when ee live in a wee pliss that's juist natural but  
naebody really bothered aes they widnae huv dared I aye worked I kept ma bairns  
clean an I wisnae a hame wrecker I nivver took onybody's man off them there wis  
only yince I let masel get hurt I wid've been in ma late twenties by then an he  
wisnae frae the toon he came tae be the new manager ae the store but through  
the week he stopped at the hotel I wis workin in till he could find a hoose I suppose  
he hud the gift ae the gab an aye seemed tae huv plenty cash he took aes away  
yince three days oo hud in a guest hoose in Kendal I left the bairns wi ma sister he  
wis gaun tae leave aes wife an oo were gaun tae move tae England but he  
couldnae dae it in the end she wis kinnae nervy an he didnae huv it in him tae  
leave her I nivver went near a man for a guid while efter that then I got a job in the  
chemist an Mr. Sykes whae owned it wis a lovely man a wee bit aulder but awfy  
nice an when he became a widower I wis aes comfort he wis right guid tae me I  
wanted fur nuthin he wid've mairried aes but I tellt him I wis quite happy the wey I  
wis I liked ma independence an I think there wis a bit ae him that wis gled aboot  
that really for he liked aes peace an quiet wee Audrey wis his

Christ bairns if they're no peein an shitin an snotterin everywhere they're bawlin an  
greetin or snivellin I hud nuthin tae dae wi them if I could help it I left that tae the  
wife it wis her fuckin cunt they dropped oot ae I juist let her get on wi it except if  
they needed a beltin that's when I'd get roped in I'd've been a bloody sight better

off without them that's fur shair when ee huv bairns eed be as weel staunin at the back door burnin fivers wrecked the wife huvin aw thae bairns what a fuckin mess she wis in it ended up aw hingin oot her she'd aye be huvin tae shove it aw back in I aye made fuckin shair it wis shoved back in afore I went onywhere near her even the fuckin thought ae it gied aes the boak ended up huvin tae huv it aw taen away couldnae fuckin touch her fur weeks

Mavis Prittie wis a braw dancer an a smert wummin no that eed ever think sae tae look at her noo that hair ae hers is aye sic a mess an the kirbies stuck in tae keep it back off her face dae nuthin fur her it still sticks oot like she's plugged intae the mains an when she's servin in the shop its aye the same claes she's got on that auld broon jumper an skirt an her legs bare an aw fireside tartan clumpin about in thae men's bits wi the socks turned doon on the top ae them it's a wonder onybody ever gauns intae that shop her hands are aye black tae I loved the dancin country dancin wis what I liked the best ee ken set dancin no ceilidh dancin sae much ee hud mair need ae a pairtner fur that an ma man hud twae left feet but wi the country dancin even if there wis nae men ee could enjoy eersel the music fair gets eer feet tappin an it keeps ee sherp in the heid lairnin aw thae different dances although fur aw the fancy yins I ever lairned ma favourite wis Petronella ee ken the yin where ee stert off dancin a diamond there wis juist somethin about the tune an the wey the dance follaed it that fair lifted aes

Christ ee widnae catch me daein ony kinnae fuckin dancin I'm no a fuckin nancy boy if I want a shag I'm bloody shair I'll get yin athoot huvin tae ponce about lik a fuckin pansy wi ma tongue hingin oot an ma cock half wey up ma shirt fur that's aw it is they caw it fuckin dancin but it's juist folk wantin tae shag the bastardin hint end off each other an no the gumption tae come oot an fuckin say it

DAY 30

## MICHELLE BATHS BILL

It was after tea. The sun still shone in through the high windows of the lounge. It lit the top half of the walls and cast a soft reflected light over the rest of the room; a suspension of something pale, something poignant that existed in the room as the bittersweet essence of a thing that fades. Elaine had sent Joyce, the part-time auxiliary, up to the canteen for her break. She said to Kedzie and Michelle that she would just take her break in the kitchen, and that she would be there if they needed her. Michelle said that was fine, she was going to bath Bill. Kedzie could toilet the ones that she could manage herself and that weren't going to bed early, and they would all muck in after they had had their breaks.

Elaine said fine and headed off to the kitchen. Kedzie saw her hand check in her pocket where her cigarettes were. At the kitchen door she turned back and shouted across to them that she would do the medicines after her tea. Michelle looked round the room.

"Right then, that's just you and me and this lot, cos she'll do bugger all for the next hour and a half, and by the time Joyce buggers about you'd've been as well daein it aw yersel, so we'd better get crackin... I'm gaun tae bath Bill."

She looked across the room to where Bill was sitting under the office window.

"Christ, look at him the wee baldyheided sap, sittin there like butter wouldnae melt. You'd never guess that he used tae beat up his wife would you? Look at him, no the strength tae blaw his nose. Aye got that fuckin dreep hangin off the end ae it."

She strode across to Bill and pulled a piece of paper towel out of her pocket.

"Here, ya snottery auld bastard. Get that wiped off your face, you're pittin me off the thought ae ma tea."

She stuffed it into Bill's hand. Bill's hand was white and soft. It had no strength. The paper stayed within his fingers more because of the pressure it exerted outward than through any exertion of his. He bent forward. A few feeble hairs around his temples and at the back of his scalp seemed to float out from his skull. The whole of his head was so pale it had the quality of albumen. His eyes, two watery dark dots, seemed to disappear into his face. He made what looked like an attempt to move the paper up to his face. His arm shook. He never said a word, just moved his arm upwards until it shook so much that he let it fall into his lap.

"Christ, I was right. You huvnae even the strength tae blaw yer nose."

She pulled the paper out of his hand, wrapped it round his nose and squeezed hard. The rough paper scraped back and forward under his nose twice in quick succession forcing Bill's head from side to side. He moved his head backwards till it was pushed hard against the back of the chair and could go no further.

"Ya bastard ye," he said in a high-pitched wheeze.

"I'll fuckin bastard ye, ya wee auld cunt," spat Michelle as Kedzie came across beside them.

"I'll go and run the bath," said Michelle, "if you want tae start wi the women. I'll no be that long, then we can start wi the men."

"Okay," said Kedzie.

Michelle went off to the bathroom. Kedzie bent down towards Bill.

"Okay, Bill?"

Bill sniffed. He kept looking at the same point in the middle distance. He did not reply.

"You're going to get a bath, Bill. That'll be nice, eh?"

"Aye, ya fuckin bastard ye. Leave aes alane," wheezed Bill.

He leaned forward in the chair in his anger. His teeth rattled in his mouth and saliva began to impede his speech. He sucked it back in.

"Right....okay, Bill...I'm going to see to someone else right now. Michelle's got the hot water running for your bath...you'll enjoy it once you're in."

"Fuck off."

Kedzie straightened up and looked around. Helen was at the far end of the lounge near the toilet door. Kedzie walked across to her. Helen's head was bowed. She seemed to be concentrating on the pattern of the carpet. She held her chin with her right hand as if musing on the significance of the carpet's geometric design. She placed her right foot into a coffee-coloured rectangle so that it was parallel with its sides. She tapped her foot in it several times then did a little hop and a skip and placed her left foot so that its toes butted up to the outside edge of a cream square. Her body was light and moved easily. Kedzie went up to her and touched her on the elbow.

"Helen," she said.

Even at Kedzie's gentle voice, Helen jumped, but when she saw Kedzie she smiled.

"Helen, come on. I'll take you through to the toilet."

Helen just smiled, a playful fleeting smile, then looked back down at the carpet and pointed the toe of her right foot into one corner of a dark brown square. Kedzie took hold of her arm and said,

"Come on then, Helen, let's go. All those cups of tea have to go somewhere."

Helen stopped pointing her toe and flashed Kedzie another smile. Kedzie started walking. So did she.

As they headed towards the toilet door, Michelle appeared from the bathroom pushing a wheelchair.

"Will you need help?" asked Kedzie.

"No, he's just a wee bastard, I'll manage."

Michelle did not let her answer lessen her hurry.

Kedzie turned Helen towards the toilets.

"In we go, Helen," she said as out of the corner of her eye she could see Michelle manhandling Bill into the wheelchair.

She heard the quick snap of the brakes going on in quick succession. She heard Bill shout, "Oh...oh...ya cunt ye," and Michelle say, "Get in there...it's only a bath you're gaun for...ye'd think I was tryin tae bloody kill ye."

Kedzie held the toilet door open for Helen. Helen did a little skip past Kedzie to get inside.

"You're in the toilet, Helen. Will you manage yourself?"

Helen looked at the toilet. She reached forward and ran her right hand along the shiny metal of the pull-up rail on the wall.

"Helen, come on...get your things down and sit on the toilet."

Helen put her hand up to her chin as if musing on this suggestion and gave a little breathy laugh.

Kedzie heard the door of the bathroom shut. She heard the rattle of the bath hoist, then it was all quiet. Helen had turned her attention back to the handles on the wall. She skimmed her hand along its surface. Now and then her hand lifted off as if she had got an electric shock and then went back down onto it again. She cooed and mumbled at the cool metal. She lifted her head and looked at Kedzie. She shrugged her shoulders and smiled as if to say, "It can't be helped I'm afraid."

"Helen, turn round and I'll help you with your things." Kedzie took hold of Helen's arms at the elbows and managed to suggest the required movement by pushing on one and pulling on the other. Helen's body eased round but her feet stayed where they were until leaving them where they were would have caused

her to fall over. With an almost-stumble she shifted her feet round and faced Kedzie. Kedzie bent down and lifted up Helen's dress. She located the top of Helen's knickers, they felt warm and dry and light, and began to pull them down.

"Helen, you're in the toilet," Kedzie tried to remind her as she got her knickers down to her knees. "You can sit down now."

Helen smiled at her and let out a short breathy giggle.

"Sit down, Helen," said Kedzie holding up Helen's skirt in both hands.

"It's alright, the toilet seat is right behind you."

Helen shrugged and looked surprised. Kedzie smiled at her.

"You're in the toilet, Helen, sit down and do a wee."

She pointed behind Helen to the toilet. Helen looked round and sat down.

"Well done, Helen...you've done it," said Kedzie. "I'll leave you here for a minute while I go and get someone else. Okay?"

Helen smiled a wan smile at Kedzie. She seemed to nod.

Kedzie came out of the toilet and looked around the lounge to see who else she could manage on her own. Of her obvious choices, Joan, Peggy and Eleanor, Joan and Peggy were snoozing and Eleanor had been just before tea; Kedzie had taken her herself. Wee Mary was awake though. She was sitting facing out from the long wall under the windows. She sat very still, her hands in her lap, holding a paper tissue. She stared out across the lounge. Kedzie went up to her.

"Mary," said Kedzie in a soft voice as she bent down on her hunkers in front of her.

As Mary registered Kedzie's face, she gave a little shiver as if she had just woken from a dream. Then she smiled.

"Hello, Mary. I've come to see if you need the toilet.

"Oh?" said Mary.

Her voice was sweet and fragile. When she smiled her face was childlike,

polite, wary.

"Yes," said Kedzie giving Mary's arm a gentle shake, "I'll help you through."

Mary looked up at Kedzie.

"Oh?" she said again.

"Mary, can you stand up and we'll get you through to the toilet?" asked Kedzie.

"Tuck your hanky in your sleeve and we'll get you standing up."

Mary sat still and smiled a "yes". Kedzie could see the black of her tongue. Kedzie took the tissue and pushed it up Mary's left sleeve. She put an arm under Mary's and heaved at her under the shoulder. Mary gripped the arms of the chair and struggled to stand up

"Phew," said Kedzie, "well done. Take my arm, Mary, and we'll go through to the toilet."

Mary's walk was slow. She limped to the left side.

"How's the hip today, Mary?"

Mary gave a kind of laugh and nodded.

"Not too bad, eh? Did you enjoy your tea tonight, Mary?"

"Yes," said Mary.

She gave the 'e' of yes at least two syllables, as a child might. She had a slight lisp.

"What did you have, Mary?"

Mary turned her head towards Kedzie and smiled a faraway smile. She gave a little indrawing of breath.

"It was very nice, thank you," she said in her polite, quiet voice.

"I'm glad you enjoyed it, Mary, salad's nice and cool when the weather's hot, isn't it?"

"Yes."

They went through the door to the toilets.

"Alright, Helen?" Kedzie shouted.

"I'll be with you in a minute."

Kedzie let go of Mary to open a toilet door.

"Right, Mary, there you are."

She steered Mary into a toilet cubicle.

"You'll manage okay yourself, won't you?"

"Yes," said Mary.

"Right, I'll be back for you in a minute. I'm going to see if Helen's ready."

Mary smiled as Kedzie closed the door.

Pipes below the sinks opposite the toilets began to rattle. Kedzie presumed that Michelle had let the water out of the bath. She went in beside Helen. Helen was sitting on the toilet. She was stroking the wall beside her. She had a quizzical look on her face.

"Helen, are you finished?"

Her head barely turned towards Kedzie before her attention went back to the surface of the wall.

"Helen," Kedzie almost sang her name, the way she would have tried to waken someone asleep.

She touched Helen on the shoulder.

"Come on, Helen, stand up. We'll see if you've done anything."

She took hold of Helen's hands. Helen was light and nimble. She stood up easily. Kedzie squeezed between Helen and the wall and looked into the toilet bowl. The water was pale yellow. She flushed the toilet.

"That's great, Helen. Let's get your things up."

Kedzie pulled up Helen's knickers. She tucked her vest inside and smoothed it down. She smoothed down Helen's dress. Helen made little surprised noises

that might have been approving. She moved her hands to keep them out of Kedzie's way. Kedzie took her arm and together they walked out of the toilets and into the lounge.

"Would you like to sit down now, Helen?" asked Kedzie.

She stopped in front of a vacant armchair facing the windows.

"It's a lovely night. If you sit here you can watch the sunset."

Helen made as if to sit down. She tucked her dress underneath her, but something on the fabric of the chairback caught her eye. She put her hand up to it but did not touch it. Her fingers stopped just as they were about to and pulled away. The slightest of spasms jerked through her body.

"Just a piece of fluff I think, Helen," said Kedzie.

A movement at the top end of the lounge caught Kedzie's attention. She looked up to see Michelle walking into the lounge with Bill.

"I didn't know Bill could walk."

"Oh aye, he can walk awright. He's just a lazy wee bastard and makes oot he cannae so's we'll take him in a chair."

Bill hung on Michelle's arm. His head and hands were so pale that they luminesced in the shadows of the lounge. Michelle was not hurrying, but Bill gasped for breath. His head and shoulders moved up and down with the effort of sucking air into his open mouth. He leaned heavily on Michelle. Her determination to have him walk gave her a rigid strength that burst out of her and propelled the two of them along. Wisps of long white hairs stuck out and waved around his head as he walked.

"Look at him gaspin away there. Wouldnae have the strength tae bash yer wife noo, eh?" Michelle gave Bill a sudden heave upwards and towards her. His legs were giving way beneath him.

"Come on ya auld bastard...kiddin me on that ye cannae walk. Get a seat

for Christ's sake afore ye have me doon on top ae ye. I'd hate tae have tae fill in an accident form an miss ma tea."

Bill's hand reached down for the arm of the nearest empty chair. It had no strength to support his weight. He flopped down into it, twisted into position by Michelle as she rid herself of his weight.

"Right that's you then."

Bill could not speak.

"Christ look at that fuckin hair. You look like somethin oot a horror film."

Michelle put her fingers to her lips and dampened them with spit. She tried to get the hairs to stay down on Bill's head. His head bobbed about with the force of her hand. Still he could not speak, breathing took up all his energy.

Kedzie watched all this. Behind her, Helen leaned over the armchair and tried to brush off the mark on the chair back that had taken up her attention. Every time Michelle spoke there was a sharp intake of breath and a quiet 'oh' from Helen. But her attention stayed with the chair.

"Right, that's you no lookin quite sae much like Uncle Fester."

Michelle left Bill sitting in the chair and shouted across to Kedzie,

"There we go, clean as a whistle. I'll go and tidy up then I'll come and give you a hand till Joyce gets back."

"That's fine," answered Kedzie. "I've got wee Mary in the toilet. I'll just go and get her."

Bill had shut his eyes. His head slumped back against the chair. His mouth lay open. His chest heaved up and down, up and down.

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*dusk aches that deepens, reveals love due  
the kernel eaten, the vernal tune*

*that tenders roses for the arcane dance  
terse breath that beckons and dies to dance*

*as if breath atones*

*for chance that rends the iron stem  
heaven is mete testament and end*

## HELEN SEES ANGELS

Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will he slumber that thee keeps. Behold.....the  
corner...in the corner...in the corner.....angels fear to.....mmm?...thy foot he'll  
not let slide.....fear to...

Make me.....hmhhh?.....well...that's lovely.....make me  
a.....a.....hmhhmm?.....oh yes...that'll be lovely.....you're very kind.....make  
me an.....of your.....

Oh...this must be an angel.....so smooth.....that's lovely dear.....isn't it  
lovely?.....so smooth and cool...hmhhh?.....oh yes, I think so.....by cool  
Siloam's shady rill, how sweet.....how sweet.....how cool.....smooth.....an  
angel shining for me.....

Hmmm?.....yes dear...thank you, that'll be lovely.....oh yes...now...oh that's  
pretty!.....I think it must be an angel.....such a tiny.....oh.....it's  
singing...listen.....the King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am His and He is mine forever.....such a  
tiny.....singing.....streams of living water flow, my ransom'd soul he leadeth, and  
where the da da da dee-ee da, with food celestial feedeth.....

Look, there's an angel.....at least I think it's an angel.....this one's not  
singing.....it's sleeping.....look...do you see it?.....all curled up...there.....oh,  
it's beautiful.....so tiny.....such a tiny.....I'll not dist.....well  
now.....hmhhh?.....who is that?.....that's too loud.....too

loud.....shhhh.....you'll waken the.....you'll waken my.....there,  
there...shhhh.....yes oh yes.....my little dear.....that's lovely.....

*In the lounge the nurses came and went,  
talking of piss and excrement.*

a wee cuppae tea that's lovely I fair like a cuppae tea as long as it's no aw weak an watery jenny pee clear I like it wi a bit ae body in it ye need a bit ae body in it a bit ae strength an I cannae be daein wi thae tea bags nothin but sweepins off the flair I like ma tea loose I like Scottish Blend or Typhoo I dinnae like ony ae yon fancy stuff either what's it cawed it's got a fancy name aw that perfumy stuff that China stuff the green stuff yeeugh I wis nearly seek yince when somebody gie'd aes a cup course you're no supposed tae pit milk in it an I did so I suppose it's nae wonder that it wis awful an it wis bloody awful but here I'll drink this the now while it's still hot I love the wey the steam goes up ma nose and I can feel it warmin aw ma tubes right doon it fair makes ee feel relaxed and have ee got a biscuit just a digestive or a rich tea'll be fine just somethin plain

a wee sherry oh that wid be nice is it Harvey's Bristol Cream as long as it's sweet no thon weirsh stuff I cannae be daein wi that Jock's mother liked a dry sherry but then she didnae really like drink much onyway I think her faither wis bad wi the drink an that kinnae pit her off no that she ever said much but I mind Jock's aunty telling us when oo got mairried no that there wis much drinkin that day oo got married at dennertim an Jock had tae work later on it wis the Depression an he couldnae refuse the work ay oo got mairried in his mother's hoose juist doon the road there I think I had a wee sherry then a cuppae tea Jock's mother had pit oan a wee tea just sandwiches and cakes an that but it wis nice I mind it wis a lovely day an Jock's cousin Sandy played the fiddle an aunty Bella sang some songs she wis a rare singer it wis a shame her man was killed in the First war an she never mairried again I aye said she should've for she wis a right motherly wummin pair sowel was only mairried six months when he went away I'll tell ye what I yased tae enjoy an advocaat an lemonade I ay hud yin at the New Year dinnae ask aes

how I never hud yin ony other time it wis juist that that was a wee treat at the New Year wi a cherry in it no yin ae thae glacé yins a proper cocktail cherry oot a wee glass jar I wid spear it on a wee stick an think I wis right sophisticated an Jock wid huv a whisky an lime he wis never a big drinker either well oo could never afford it onywey oo wid've been in queer street if he hud been I couldnae huv mairried a drinker I juist widnae've pit up wi it mind I'm no sayin Jock didnae huv his moments when they were young him an aes pals could be up aw night playin cairds an boozing but that wis afore I kent him he wis a guid man

coffee no I'm no struck wi it I'd juist as sin huv a cuppa tea tea quenches yer thirst coffee juist makes ye feel like yer mooth's aw dried up or like ye've smoked ten fags that's what I think onywey it's too dear huv ye seen the price ae it mind you I like the taste ae it I like a coffee walnut sponge or a coffee cream an ma sister makes the nicest wee biscuits sandwiched thegither wi coffee butter icin coffee kisses she caws them they're nice wi a cuppa tea when ye're huvin a sit doon an a blether her man's away now tae so the pair ae us look efter yin anither

hare soup ma mother made rare hare soup huv ee ever tasted it it's strong-tasted but awfy guid ee make it wi the blood when ee gut it ee huv tae catch the blood in a jug an pit it intae the soup near the end ae the cookin she wis a smashin cook ma mother aye bakin an giein away tae folk gingerbreed an ginger snaps an big cakes she wis an awfy wummin she'd a gied away her last ha'penny

ma faither aye hud a dug an he hud some guid yins some clever yins they wid  
 catch rabbits an sometimes a hare div ee like rabbit some folk'll no touch them no  
 since the mixie onyway bit then well it kept ee gaun ma faither couldnae work after  
 the first war aye he wis wounded muckle hole in aes back that never healed killed  
 him in the end he hud tae dae somethin there wis a lot ae poachin went oan he  
 took toffs tae the fishin an folk frae Edinburrae an Glesgae took the brother ae that  
 boy that wis famous on the Clyde what wis aes name again Maxton his brother an  
 awfy nice fellae wis right keen on the fishin thought a lot ae ma faither bocht a  
 beautiful doll's hoose yin Christmas fur ma sisters I mind ma mother greetin she  
 wis that pleased aye they hud a hard life ma mother never knew her mother she  
 deed when she wis born she wis brocht up wi her granny an her grandfather and  
 her ain fither but he wis killed when she wis juist a bairn he wis killed doon the pit  
 Mauricewood big pit disaster I mind her tellin aes about them findin his piece box  
 she wis chewin her nails an lookin oot the windae

the best dug ma fither ever hud wis cawed Prince he wis a beautiful dog a big  
 black curly-coated retriever big canny thing when ma fither deed he pined away an  
 the worst wis Jake he wis stupid I cannae mind where ma fither got him he wis a  
 wee terrier cross but he juist never calmed doon an that wis nae use if the baillies  
 were comin so yin day ma fither says tae me take Jake a walk an dinnae bring him  
 back I wis seventeen he handed aes a shovel I took him up through the wud an  
 ontae the hill but I couldnae dae it he wis sic a lively wee bugger I juist burst oot  
 greetin

dugs dinnae speak tae me aboot fuckin dugs dirty stinkin slavery mutts wi their stinkin breath an their hair gettin everywhere aw ower yer claes an yer furnitur I mean that juist defeats me that lettin a muckle hairy dug up on yer seat or even worse yer bed bloody manky stinkin their hooses aye stink onybody wi dugs their hoose aye bloody stinks oh it's just a doggy smell aye fuckin manky dug smell an they let them kiss them an lick their faces an aw that kinnae shit when the dugs've been lickin their arses an eatin any auld bloody crap that they've picked up ootside an they bloody roll in shite an deid salmon its fuckin disgustin or else they've got somethin wrong wi the sides ae their arses an they skite aboot on the flair like as if it's itchy an smear aw that fuckin pussy stuff everywhere I juist widnae huv yin in ma hoose an they're aw that fuckin mushy aboot them tae Christ if they loved each other as much as they loved their fuckin dugs ood be aw be a bloody sight better off

I wis never much ae a cook I did it but I never enjoyed it an it wis aye juist something plain but ma sister's man wis a baker so she wid aye keep aes supplied wi things left ower in the shop or get him tae make us a cake if we needed somethin special he wis a lovely baker made lovely bread an rolls an I loved his muffins an his tattie scones never tasted onybody elses like them an there wis aye plenty that you could get in tins oo were never stuck

did you cook much Mary oh yess what did you cook did you make soup soup did you like cooking and what about you Bill did you ever do any cooking naw did your wife do all the cooking aye was she a good cook

and did you go paddling Mary did you make sand castles paddlin yess and sand castles and did you get an ice cream Mary ice cream and where did you go Mary where did I go

oo went in a charabanc dinnae laugh oo did they run it every year Thomson's Garage ee got picked up at the Horse an oo took a picnic wi us it wis aye Spittal aye Spittal an I'll never forget the year that

lipstick I juist used tae love twistin it up an doon ramblin rose that wis ma favourite shade an I hud the loveliest compact fur ma face pooder it wis gold an enamelled on the top wi floers on it aw different colours an a mirror on the inside ae the lid I loved the smell ae face pooder I used tae use pan stick but it wis too heavy fur me so I stopped I liked when they brought oot the liquid foundation Max Factor mind it lasted ages I wid sometimes huv tae poke a hole through tae get tae ony liquid that wis left oo didnae get oot very much in thae days

weemin aye pittin their fuckin make-up oan dollin theirsels up young lookin yins that dinnae need it an aulder yins that juist look like fuckin clowns wi their lipstick aw ower their teeth an the eyeshadow gaun aw crinkly roon their een fuckin mess an aye lashin oan the perfume so's ye cannae smell their cunts

couldn  
 think  
 just wiches  
 played  
 it wis a shame  
 said she should've for she wis a right moth  
 only mairried six months when he went away  
 dvocaat and lemonade yin  
 yin time wi that that wis  
 in yin ae thae yins a proper cocktail cherry  
 on a wee stick I wis right sophisticate  
 never never

no I'm no  
 tea tea quenches yer thirst coffee just makes

I like the ae  
 ma sister makes the nicest  
 kisses she caws them  
 sit doon her man's away  
 and a day  
 times a hare  
 it then well  
 ckle

He sat up in  
today kept  
Her gaze

Mary?

is it, Mary?"

"Yes,"

a laugh

bit at her

glance

"Don't look so

"No we've no  
morning It's past

his  
voice was more insist  
was the beg  
wondering

"Is it Monday,

"Are you sure,

"Yes,"

and nodded.

as he  
will leave alone  
will see  
the s e torn

billowed her huge choir  
at her lip

bit  
his attention

fumbled she  
a beautiful song

mouthed 'lovely'

"Lovely," he said, "lovely."

Her  
ps  
alm shuffled his solid ground

*In the lounge the air was warm and stale  
that held the skeins that thoughts unveil.*

when I was a girl I had to walk three miles to school and three miles back hail rain or shine except when we were snowed in I walked across the hills up beyond Dreva there and over the years I came to have my own names for things that I passed every day there was skint knee corner stuck sheep dyke the whaup field and the lizard stone if I was lucky and kept very quiet I would see one sometimes on a hot sunny day lifting up its feet to keep cool and sticking out its long tongue it could be hard to see against the stone mica schist my brother called it it was grainy and layered and had a dull sparkle to it he would split loose pieces that he picked up off the ground he said that you could find jewels inside garnets but he never did my favourite was the fairy glen it was a small flat valley between two bankings the grass was lovely and soft and mossy and with lots of wild flowers in May it would be covered in wood anemones they flowered in great swathes beneath the birch saplings their white flowers were shaped like stars and as I walked through them I would imagine that I was a Greek goddess riding a chariot across the night sky then later would come the violets they were my fairies their little faces clumped together in the grass purple and yellow one year I found a clump that was all yellow and nearby a clump that was all purple and in between a clump where the colour mix shaded from mostly yellow to mostly purple I was so excited that I told my teacher Miss Lawrie and she brought the whole class out on a nature ramble to see it and she told us their Latin name Viola Lutea the mountain pansy we all loved Miss Lawrie her name was Annie just like the song she wasn't fierce like Mr. Maule one time we grew cress on blotting paper and she brought in some bread and a big glass jar full of fresh milk and a butter knife it was great fun we all had a turn at shaking the jar we shook it for all we were worth until lumps of butter appeared and then we spread them on the bread and put the cress

on and ate the sandwiches that was such a thrill that when I became a teacher I did the same

I've aye hud a wey wi animals ever since I wis a bairn there wis the time I wid only be fower or five years auld when I went wi ma Granny tae visit her freend Peg that bid at the ferm at Caberston they were bletherin in the kitchen when they realised that I wisnae there ma Granny sid she nearly deed when they fund aes for I hud ma airms roond Moss the big collie he wis a bad-tempered brute he was never usually near the hoose Peg's man kept him in the shed if he wisnae up the hill but there wis me wi ma airms roond aes neck an they were feared tae shout or onythin so the next thing I'm off across the steedin wi Moss ahint aes lik a wee lamb an them wi their mooths hingin open juist watchin

it would have been fifty three when Jess decided that we were going to Cornwall for a holiday we always travelled light just our two suitcases in the boot of the Morris Minor and away we'd go it took us four days to get there we took our time took detours here and there if there were places we wanted to see it was nice just to be out of the classroom Jess always said that the getting there should be as much fun as the being there so on the way down we had a look at Preston and Ripon we had a lovely time in Tewkesbury so much so that we stayed there on the way back although we wished we hadn't because Jess lost her purse the one with our spare house keys in it but Cornwall was quite delightful we stayed in a little harbour town called Mevagissey in a little boarding house with the most beautiful garden I had ever seen there were roses everywhere and all the English cottage garden plants and honeysuckle the smell that seeped into our room at night was

out of this world we had a view of the sea Jess loved to see the sea she would sit by the window and brush her long hair her eyes filled with joy at the sun sparkling off the water I would plait her hair as I always did and pin it up she would pat it and adjust any pins that stuck into her head and say super or once more and once less or you're a gem she would fasten my necklace and there were times outside when we dared to walk arm in arm and then for me being on holiday was like being transformed into a bird that soared soared and sang as if its heart would burst

the change affected aes funny I'd be like tae burst oot greetin if I saw bairns young mothers and fithers wi their bairns hauden them an speakin tae them cooryin in it made aes realise yince it wis something I couldnae take for granted ony mair juist how precious it aw wis how precious ma bairns were an how much huvin them meant tae aes I wid see weemin that were gaun tae huv bairns an I wid feel a bit jeelous but at the same time I wid feel fair gled for them I wid feel that I wanted tae rush up tae them an tell them tae appreciate every meenit ae bein wi their bairns for it's hard when they're wee ee're aye hattered or exhausted or baith an a bairn's a demandin thing it's non-stop an it can feel like it's gaun tae be like that forever but yince they're away it feels like it wis only five meenits ee hud them tae yersel there's times when I think I wid sell ma soul juist tae huv some time back wi them when they were wee gaun aboot wi them on yer hip their wee face right beside ee lookin aboot them lairnin tae speak bein funny cuddlin them in at night juist how beautiful they were an I miss speakin tae them an singin I wis aye singin makin up wee daft songs wi their names in an when I think ae aw the bairns in the world that dinnae get looked efter right or huvnae onybody I juist get fair seek

Jess loved fun she loved to surprise me once she bought a chaise-longue at a local auction she'd always wanted a chaise-longue I came home from work one day and she wouldn't let me in the front room I had to shut my eyes while she led me in and made me keep them shut till she said open and when I did there she was lying on this enormous Victorian chaise in her best dress and there was the tea all set with a cloth and the best china on the card table she was bursting with excitement isn't it gorgeous she said look it's nice and wide we can lie on it together come on I hadn't even taken off my coat but I went and lay beside her on the couch she put her arms around me buried her face in my hair and closed her eyes as she breathed in deeply this is going to be so good she murmured most nights would find us together on the chaise-longue reading our books listening to music we both liked Ella Fitzgerald we weren't so keen on Billie Holiday we both liked jazz but classical was our favourite Bach for me and Mozart for her she wanted the slow movement from the piano concerto no. 21 played at her funeral they can listen to that and know I was happy she was playing absent-mindedly with my hair as she spoke

ma cousin Nellie wis deaf an dumb but she was aw there an she wis a bonny wummin but her man wisnae guid tae her he wis a boozer she niver hud enough money aye strugglin tae feed the bairns the family wid try tae help her but she wis that prood she wid take somethin like a bowl ae soup if ee tellt her ee'd made ower much or it wis for the bairns but she'd hardly take onythin for hersel an if onybody offered her money she'd be bleezin she hud some temper on her there wis yin time her man went away in the morning an tellt her tae huv a hot meal ready for

him comin in frae aes work well she'd nae money he came hame tae a plate wi  
twae slices ae bread an a jar ae mustard on the table

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f<sup>o</sup>

love

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so I went and put flowers night purple fairies together wi yellow honeysuckle  
the sky made surprise rain sparkling on-stop for joy know I was happy Viola  
it's hard when we wild it all four days layered flat cuddlin long long hair on her  
pin it up hair pins flowers up and eyes were beautiful wanted Jess in her best  
dress loved my excitement excited heart neck face a girl so keen to see the  
big precious world bursting off the ground burst lucky burst goddess in a  
nearby town just be nice Mr. Annie wis prood she'd sing the hills between aes  
singin wee faces roses glass Latin sang strugglin scared five bairns Billie  
affected deaf slow temper cooryin in dumb across years I would aye feel auld  
from hardly greetin the sun grainy hauden roond time then later I'd rush home  
niver walked I was movement and fun my nights shook shaking wi names  
name them find out their being called animals sheep usually sticking ahint aes  
gled that ony were back the hoose near snowed in I looked efter May ranted  
dinnae fall listen pat off the teacher fasten the coat keep money some wey we  
kept one sea gem fa see she dared less then once wis able for mair hud  
walked airms oot told us their kitchen bowl would mix bread onythin would  
shine she ate mustard cress lamb at the Holiday her tongue wid whaup and  
Lute its chariot jar me shut in except where it passed from any window was so  
much hail it filled any valley stuck in a birch clump plants own it same thing

shine  
 the sun  
 would  
 the sun  
 mix  
 time  
 then  
 she'd sing  
 the sky  
 one sea  
 the sun  
 wild  
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 sparkling  
 once wis  
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 beautiful  
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 yellow honeysuckle

## DAY 33

### THE AFTERNOON TOILETING SESSION

It was the afternoon toileting session. Kedzie, John and Sheila were busy. Sheila was wheeling Edith Anderson into the toilets. Edith's bulk filled the chair. She looked agitated.

"I'll need a hand here, Kedzie, when you've got a minute."

"No problem, I'll just take Mary back to her seat."

Wee Mary was hanging onto Kedzie's arm. She looked up and smiled at the sound of her name.

John was trying to persuade Jimmy that it might be a good idea to go to the toilet.

"Come on, Jimmy. You've no been since before your dinner."

Jimmy was hovering about near the patio doors looking outside, and every now and then grasping the door handle and rattling it. He looked bemused.

"Hmmt," Jimmy scoffed at John's suggestion.

"Come on, Jimmy," said John with great enthusiasm, "I'll show you where to go." He made to take Jimmy's arm but Jimmy jumped back and away from him and put up his fists. He grinned like a cheeky schoolboy.

"You wid, wid ye?" he said making small ineffectual shadow boxing movements with his fists in John's direction.

"Jimmy, come on. Dinnae be daft. I'm goin tae take you to the toilet." John moved round to Jimmy's side and hooked an arm in his and started to walk towards the toilet door. Jimmy dug in his heels and wouldn't move.

"Right, Jimmy," John let go of his arm. "I've no got the time tae mess about. I'll take you later."

Jimmy laughed and put his hands into his pockets. John walked across to where Duncan was sitting snoozing, and touched his knee to waken him.

"Wakey, wakey, Duncan. Time for a trip to the loo." John had his arm under Duncan's before he was even fully awake.

"Where am I gaun?" Duncan asked in a loud voice as he lifted his head and opened his eyes.

"To the toilet, Duncan." John was bending down ready to help him get up off his seat.

"Eh?"

"The toilet."

"The toilet?" Duncan sounded incredulous, "but I'm no needin."

"You might no think that you are, Duncan, but if you dinnae go now I might no have the time tae take you later on. So come on. I'll help you get up."

"Right, son," said Duncan easing himself forward in the chair to stand up.

"Thank Christ for that," John in a quiet voice to Kedzie as he winked at Duncan.

She smiled as she manoeuvred wee Mary into her seat.

"All right there, Mary?" she asked.

"Yessss," lisped Mary.

"You'll get your tea in a wee while."

"Oh, will I?" Mary sounded pleasantly surprised but looked worried.

"You'll maybe get a nice salad tonight, something nice and cool."

"That would be nice," said Mary as she settled into the chair. She went to place her hands on the arms of it but as she touched them she jumped as if startled and folded her hands in her lap.

Jimmy was looking at Kedzie.

"Aye, aye," he said. The nod of his head was more like a nervous tic.

"Want to come with me, Jimmy?" asked Kedzie beckoning him towards her.

"Naw," He started to make noises that might have been him laughing as he breathed in and out.

"Come on. We'll have a wee wander just you and me."

"Naw!" Jimmy was emphatic. He shifted from one foot to the other, his hands rigid in his pockets. He stared at Kedzie. He looked agitated.

"Okay, Jimmy, I'm here all day if you change your mind."

"Nice try," shouted John from the toilet door.

"Oh well, nothing ventured I suppose," replied Kedzie. "I'd better get in there and help Sheila. She'll think I've forgotten about her." She was walking quickly towards the toilets when a small thin woman of about forty appeared at the door that led out into the corridor. She had a hand on the door jamb. A large ring sparkled on her middle finger.

"Hi, I'm Judy," she smiled. Her curly black hair bounced round her face as she spoke.

"Who's in charge?"

"Sheila, but she's in the toilets with someone right now."

"Could you tell her that Judy's here, and that all I need is the keys. I just need to write something up for Mary Dalgliesh."

"Okay," said Kedzie.

"Hi, Judy," shouted John as he came back into the lounge.

"Hi, John. How's things?"

"We're strugglin in this heat,"

"Yes, it's like you're in the bowels of the earth down here." From the doorway she let her gaze wander round the room.

"Aye, bowels is the right word," said John.

Sheila came out of the toilets. Kedzie was behind her.

"Sorry, Judy," she said pulling a bunch of keys out of her uniform pocket.

"We're in the middle of toileting. Do you need me?"

"No, I just need to write something up for Wee Mary. I forgot to do it when I was in earlier. Eva asked me to write her up for more lactulose and I forgot." She took the keys and looked at her watch.

"I'll need to get a move on. I'm picking the kids up today. My childminder's on holiday and they're at Granny's. I don't want to get there and find myself having to admit her here." Judy was already half way up the corridor towards the office.

"She'd be more than welcome," Sheila shouted after her.

"I don't know where she gets her energy," John was at the door with Jeannie on his arm. Sheila stepped aside to let them past.

"Well, for a start she's not got twenty-odd psychogeriatrics to toilet in half an hour, has she? And let's face it," said Sheila following John and Jeannie into the toilets, "she's got bloody servants."

John steered Jeannie into an empty cubicle.

"She's got a cleaner, someone to look after her kids, her husband's a bloody consultant so they're loaded, and she only works part-time. Give me some of that and I might just have some energy."

"She's a nice wummin, though," said John from behind the toilet door. His voice got louder as he said, "Sit doon, Jeannie, do a pee, good girl."

"Okay, I'll give you that. She is a nice person. And I'm sure four kids are still a handful even if you are loaded." Sheila sighed. She leaned against the sinks and looked at her watch.

"Help, is that the time. How many more do you think we've got to do?"

"We're nearly there, I think," said John from inside the toilet cubicle.

"It's just that Susannah and the rest'll be here shortly for Jack's case conference. Could I leave the rest to you and Kedzie? Mags'll be back from her tea break in five minutes."

"Aye, that's nae bother. Just you away and get organised. Me and Kedzie and Mags'll see to the rest of them."

"Thanks, John," said Sheila. "Edith's still in the far end."

"We'll no forget her." There was the sound of a toilet flushing.

"Right, Jeannie, pull your breeks up an that'll be you."

The toilet door opened and Jeannie bounded out. John followed her and Sheila. They met Kedzie coming towards them with Jimmy on her arm.

"How'd you manage that?" asked John.

"Oh, Jimmy just changed his mind. Eh, Jimmy?" Kedzie gave Jimmy's arm an affectionate squeeze. Jimmy winked and wheezed, "Aye."

"Got yourself a young thing the day, Jimmy, eh?" asked John.

"Aye," Jimmy and Kedzie walked straight into the toilets. Kedzie affected a smug smile. John looked around to see who to get next. Judy appeared at the door out into the corridor.

"Right, that's done," said Judy handing the keys back to Sheila. "I'd better run."

Judy made to leave but instead she turned and beamed a big cheery 'Hi'. Susannah Smithson had just walked into the ward.

"Hi, Judy. I thought you were on holiday."

"No, next week we're off, Susannah," said Judy putting a pen into her briefcase.

"What about you? Have you been anywhere?"

"Yes, we were in Venice. It was absolutely gorgeous. I think we were lucky to get there before it got too hot."

"And busy, I guess," said Judy.

"Oh, absolutely," said Susannah. She turned to Sheila.

"Hi, Sheila. Am I the first here?"

"Yes, I was just heading off to the office to get things organised."

"Listen, " Judy interrupted, "I'm going to have to love you and leave you."

"Yes, okay, bye, Judy," said Susannah. Have a nice holiday."

"Thanks, bye."

"Bye," said Sheila "we'll all still be here when you get back."

Judy screwed up her face as she hurried off up the corridor.

"And I hear that we've lost Bill," Susannah sounded matter-of-fact as she spoke to Sheila.

"Yes, quite sudden, Tuesday morning."

"So what happened?"

"Well, he was in heart failure, we knew that, but through the night he just got more and more breathless. They gave him frusemide but, let's face it, he was knackered. He had a bit of a struggle at the end but it was all pretty quick really."

"So I guess that means you've got room for another one."

"I'm afraid so. They've got someone from Downfield lined up already."

"Who is it?"

"Tom Guthrie I think they said his name was."

"Oh yes, Tom, he shouldn't give you much bother."

"Where have I heard that before?"

The two women went up the corridor and into the office. Kedzie was looking for John in the lounge. He had Berta on his arm.

"I'll get a lift with Edith when you're free," she said to him.

"I'll be there in a jiffy," said John, "me and Berta are away tae the Store, eh, Berta?"

She gave him a sour look. John pulled a face at Kedzie.

"Mrs. Personality," he said under his breath.

"Who's that in the office with Sheila?" asked Kedzie.

"Susannah. She's just back from holiday."

"Right, I've heard people speaking about her but I've never seen her. She's very glamorous."

"I caw her the wicked queen."

"Is that because of her reputation or is she just fierce?"

"She can be," replied John as they neared the toilet door.

"After you, Berta," he said, guiding Berta through the door.

She put out a hand as if to get the measure of the doorway as they went through.

"She's got lovely clothes," said Kedzie.

"Aye," said John. "She's aye dressed up tae the nines. At least the day you cannae see her cleavage."

"What?"

"Christ, the things she wears some days ee dinnae ken where tae look...well, ee ken, but ee huv tae try no tae. They reckon her man left her because she was just too much for him."

"So I've heard," said Kedzie as John guided Berta into a toilet cubicle.

"He divorced her aboot ten years ago. They reckon she was aye giein him a red face." He turned Berta round to face him and lifted up her dress.

"Here," she shouted. "Stop it!"

"Berta, if you're gaun tae dae a pee I need tae get your pants doon. Look, there's the lavvy."

John pointed to the toilet behind Berta. She turned round stiffly and looked at it. John took advantage of her change of attention.

"Come on," he said, "get your breeks doon." He quickly pulled up her dress and pulled down her pants before she could stop him again.

"Come on, sit down, Berta." John's voice was loud now and insistent. He had a hold of her dress. Berta sat down. She had a disgusted look on her face. She turned her head away from John. He left her and went to help Kedzie with Edith. He left the toilet door open. Kedzie was already in the toilet beside Edith. She had a wad of toilet paper wrapped round her hand.

Edith's eyes were half-closed as if she were falling asleep.

"Right, Edith," said John out loud, "let's get you up off ae here."

There wasn't much room on either side of Edith. John squeezed in. He and Kedzie each hooked an arm under Edith's armpits. Her eyes opened and she started to sputter, "Do do de doo, doo de de de dodo..." as they hauled her bulk up off the toilet.

"You gonnae manage okay there?" asked John.

"Think so," replied Kedzie, steadying Edith's body with hers as she bent round to wipe her. She dropped the paper into the pan and wound more round her hand. She wiped Edith a second time.

"Right, Edith, let's get your pants up," said Kedzie into Edith's ear as she straightened up and flushed the toilet. She and John scrabbled to catch hold of her pants. At the same time they tried to keep her upright.

Between them John and Kedzie hitched up Edith's pants and tucked in her vest. They pulled her dress back down. They had to stretch it over her hips.

"We need you to walk out to the chair, Edith," John shouted in her ear.

John and Kedzie had to move forward of Edith. There wasn't room for the three of them in a row. They pulled her towards them in an attempt to get her to move. At first only the top of her body bent forward but then one foot lifted. John and Kedzie struggled to hold her as her weight sagged.

"Come on, Edith, take your weight!" shouted John.

"Do do do doo do..." Edith was indignant.

"Fat lazy bastard," he said in a low voice behind gritted teeth.

"So does Susannah have anyone now?" asked Kedzie as they struggled with Edith.

"Well put it this way," said John easing himself out of the toilet door and putting the brakes on Edith's wheelchair, "they reckon the gardener does a lot ae overtime."

"Bloody hell," Kedzie laughed. She put her face up to Edith's.

"We need you to turn round, Edith," she gestured towards the chair. "Turn round so that we can get you into the chair."

"Dood dood dood," said Edith as she looked at the chair. She didn't move.

"Christ!" John exclaimed. He stepped in front of the chair and pulled Edith round and down into it.

"Dood dood dood dood!" Edith sounded angry.

"Never mind your bloody dood dood doodin!" shouted John. "Me an her's just about killed oorsels gettin you back intae that chair."

"Hope that's no you abusin ma patients," said a loud voice from the doorway. It was Mags back from her teabreak.

A hymn for Bill

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No testing end "I'm minute today  
by dust caught

DAY 36

## SUSANNAH SMITHSON PAYS A VISIT

Kedzie was helping Joyce give out the ten o'clock medicines. They were in the lounge. It was 11.15. Kedzie had just given Duncan his tablets when Susannah Smithson popped her head round the door and asked if Eva was in the office. Kedzie could see Eva's head through the office window, so she said,

"Yes."

"Jolly good," said Susannah cheerily.

"That's Susannah Smithson, isn't it?" Kedzie asked Joyce when she got back to the medicine trolley.

"Yes, our wonderful consultant."

"She seems nice," said Kedzie.

"Although John makes her sound scary."

"Well she can be. She's certainly calmed down a lot since she first came here. She's alright, really," said Joyce unscrewing the lid of a bottle, "and if you're young and schizophrenic she's especially alright."

Her face twisted as she struggled with the lid of the bottle.

"But if you're old and decrepit, she's just this glamorous object that appears now and then to pass the time of day, and even then she can never get away quick enough...might as well be the cleaner as far as they're concerned."

She nodded in the direction of the patients sitting round the room.

"In fact, they probably get better value out of the cleaner."

Her voice had a wry tone. She handed the bottle to Kedzie.

"See if you can get that lid off. My hands are sweating with the heat in here. In fact, just stand there a minute beside the trolley while I go and open the patio door."

Joyce bustled across to the big glass doors that led out onto the patio, and opened them.

"Don't know if that'll make any difference," she said as she came back.

"It's as hot out there as it is in here this morning. Still, it might give us a bit of air."

Kedzie handed her the bottle and the lid separately.

"Oh, good girl," said Joyce.

"Now, where were we... Betty... Haloperidol nought point five milligrammes."

She looked at the label on the bottle. She put her thumb nail under the drug name and dosage and showed it to Kedzie. Her other hand pointed to a tick in Betty's medicine Kardex at ten a.m.

"Up to there, agreed?" said Joyce pouring the required amount into a medicine cup.

"Yes," said Kedzie.

Joyce drew the liquid up into a clean syringe.

"And Phenytoin one hundred milligrammes."

She pointed to the second tick in the ten a.m. column of Betty's medicine Kardex.

"Can you see it?"

Kedzie lifted up a bottle from the back of the trolley.

"Good girl," said Joyce.

Kedzie pointed to the drug name and dose on the label. She measured it out in front of Joyce and added it to the syringe

Joyce started to fill a tumbler with water when Kedzie stopped her.

"It looks like there's some tea left in her beaker. That'll help wash it all down."

"So she has," said Joyce.

"At least that's one thing with Betty, you'll not have much bother. She'll take anything, God love her."

Kedzie took Betty's medicine across to her. Betty was sitting in a tilted geriatric chair with a table attached to its front. She was tied into it with a sheet that secured her under her arms. She was half dozing, rubbing her face with her hand, her jaw working slowly up and down.

"You'd better untie her, Kedzie."

Joyce's words sounded urgent.

"I see that Susannah's brought company."

She gestured towards the office.

"We'd better not let them see that."

"But she'll just slide down and garrotte herself."

"I know, but strictly speaking, the sheet's illegal. Just take it off quick while they've got their backs to us. She'll be okay for a while. We'll be here."

Kedzie quickly untied the sheet that was holding Betty in and folded it away behind her chair. Betty grunted awake. Kedzie gave her a big smile.

"Sorry to disturb you, Betty, I've got your medicine."

"Nanauhh."

Betty's eyes were half shut. She kept rubbing her face. Kedzie lifted the beaker of tea and put the spout to her lips. She let some of the lukewarm, milky liquid dribble into the side of Betty's mouth. Betty swallowed. She opened her eyes wide but her gaze was blank as Kedzie squirted the liquid from the syringe into the side of her mouth and tipped some tea in beside it. She swallowed again.

"That it all away, Betty?"

Betty rubbed at her face.

"We'll just make sure, eh?"

Kedzie let her drink the rest of the tea.

"I think it's well and truly gone, Betty."

Betty made a smacking sound with her lips. She chewed at her tongue with her gums.

"Now you just sit nice and still in that chair for a while, and it'll be dinnertime before you know it. And it looks like we're getting visitors, so you might get a wee blether before then."

"Mmmuhh...mmmuhh"

Betty arched her back against the chair. She closed her eyes and grimaced. She opened and shut her mouth.

Kedzie put the beaker down on the windowsill behind Betty's chair and took the medicine cup away with her. There was a loud rattling as Michelle appeared with a trolley. She was collecting cups from the morning tea.

"I see Eva's got company."

"Susannah'll be showing us off again," said Joyce.

"How could any visitor fail to be impressed."

She spread her arms wide to take in the whole of the lounge.

Kedzie glanced round the room. Of the patients that were there, all were in chairs that hugged the perimeter, some of them were sleeping, the rest sat staring ahead or looking about them, not saying anything.

"I'll liven them up a bit, " said Michelle.

She walked over to Duncan.

"Hey, Duncan," she shouted giving his shoulder a shake as she bent to pick up his cup.

"Where are ee takin aes the night?"

"Eh?" Duncan lifted his head and put his hand up to his ear.

"I'm sayin, where are ee takin aes the night.....we've got a date, mind? Ee sid ee were gaun tae take aes tae the dancin."

"Did I?" Duncan started to laugh.

I'd better get ma best claes looked oot then."

"Aye, ee'd better. I'm no gaun w'ee if ee look lik a tramp."

"Eh?" Duncan turned his head towards Michelle.

"I says, I'm no gaun w'ee if ee look lik a tramp," Michelle shouted in Duncan's ear.

Duncan just laughed. She grabbed some cups and went to put them on the trolley. Her shouting had woken up Joan and some of the others. Joan waved to her.

"Hi, Joan," Michelle waved back to her, her hand entwined in three cups.

"You were away in the land ae nod there."

Joan cleared her throat and sat up straight.

"Just a wee forty winks, hen."

"Were ee dreamin, Joan?"

"I cannae mind."

"I bet ee were." Michelle clattered the cups down onto the trolley.

"Ee'd be dreamin about men wi big muscles and big hairy chists....I ken ee."

"Div ee think sae, hen?"

Peggy had been dozing beside Joan. Joan nudged her.

"Div ee hear this?"

"Eh?" Peggy was struggling to open her eyes.

"She's a besom, this yin."

"Oh aye," Peggy peered at Michelle

"She's an awfy yin."

"You pair's just jealous cos I've got a date."

"Huv ee, hen? That's nice," said Joan.

"Whae's the lucky fellae?" asked Peggy.

"Him ower there," Michelle pointed to Duncan.

The three women looked across at Duncan. Duncan caught sight of them and nodded, "Aye, aye."

"He's a braw fellae, hen," said Joan.

"Well, ee'd better no get ony ideas, Joan, for aes mine," said Michelle winking to Peggy.

Peggy laughed.

"Pff, fellaes, better off athoot them if ee ask me."

Joan shook her head.

"I doot she's hud a bad do wi them, hen," she said sounding concerned.

"Away, Joan, she's huvin ee oan. I bet if I went an got ma Littlewoods catalogue, she'd be the first in about the men's pages. She'd be eyein up thae half-naked yins in their y-fronts afore ee could stop her."

Joan started to say, "Aye, you're right there, hen," but she was interrupted by Peggy saying, "She cannae half talk a load ae bloody nonsense, that yin," as she turned away from Joan and Michelle in disgust.

At that Eva came through the door with Susannah, another woman and two men.

"Lot's of hilarity going on in here today, surely?"

Eva was in the front of the group. Her tone was bright and cheery but her face glowered at Michelle.

"Aye, she keeps us aw gaun, hen," said Joan.

"It diz ee guid tae huv a bit laugh."

Michelle gave Eva an exaggeratedly innocent smile as she finished loading the trolley with cups and made to head off to the kitchen.

"We've got some visitors here today, Joan," said Eva.

"Very good, hen," said Joan.

"They've come a long way. They've come from Sweden."

"Where?"

"Sweden."

"Peden?"

"No, Sweden.....up near Norway and Denmark."

"Very good."

Joan nodded to the visitors and said,

"How do?"

They smiled and said, "Hello."

Susannah said,

"Morning, Joan," before turning to them and saying in a quiet voice, "As you can see this is one of our high-dependency wards..."

The visitors scanned the room with polite smiles on their faces.

"...although a good few of them here are still quite mobile...a bit too mobile sometimes. Isn't that right, sister?" she said jokingly to Eva.

Eva raised her eyes as she agreed.

"Yes, we do have one or two persistent escapees, but they never get far."

She laughed.

"We usually get a phone call to say that they've been spotted before we've even missed them."

She gestured towards Joyce and Kedzie.

"And this is Joyce and Kedzie. Joyce is one of our staff nurses, and Kedzie is a student here with us for two months."

They called "hello" from their position beside the medicine trolley.

"And that's Michelle, one of our auxiliaries."

Eva's voice got louder as she tried to catch Michelle's attention. Michelle half-turned round and waved to acknowledge the visitors as she opened the kitchen door.

"No group today, Eva?" asked Susannah.

"You see it all, I'm afraid. We've got two on annual leave and one off sick. It's as much as we can do get them up, dressed and fed...and the rest," she nodded in the direction of the medicine trolley.

"And we've no physio just now, as you know. At least when the weather's like this we can take them outside, and that makes a wee change, but it's hard going."

At that moment John burst into the lounge with Harry in a wheelchair. He slowed down when he saw the strangers. They stepped back to let him past.

"Hi," he blustered, "sorry...didn't mean to give you a fright. Harry's just been in the bath. Eh, Harry?"

Harry nodded stiffly and tried to speak. He was pushing himself against the chair with the effort.

"V-v-very good," he managed to say.

His face was red with having been in the hot water. His hair was still damp.

"This is Doctor Fenton," said Eva, introducing Harry to the group.

"He was a GP up in Peebles."

The three visitors took it in turns to shake his hand. They said that they were very pleased to meet him.

"Will you be going out into the sunshine today?" asked the woman visitor.

"Pardon," said Duncan leaning forward in his chair to try to hear.

Eva bent down to him and said, "She's speaking to Harry, Duncan," as Harry forced a 'Yiss...' and blurted out, "I-I-I- like the sunshine."

"It's a lovely day," shouted Duncan.

"It is indeed, Duncan."

Susannah put her hand on Duncan's shoulder and gave it a friendly squeeze.

"I can see that you're very busy this morning, Eva. I think we'll just get out of your way and leave you to it."

She looked at her watch. Joyce nudged Kedzie.

"We'll head upstairs. We're meeting with the Board for lunch at 12.30, but I'll see you on Friday as usual."

Susannah started to usher the visitors in the direction of the door.

"Well it won't be me," said Eva, "I'll be on my days off, but Joyce'll be here."

"Good enough. We'll probably just take a quick look round before we go, but I can manage that. Just you get on with what you were doing."

"Oh well, nice to meet you all," said Eva shaking the hands of the three visitors in turn.

"I hope you enjoy the rest of your visit."

The three visitors smiled and said thank you as they shook Eva's hand. One of the men said that he was looking forward to eating haggis for lunch, and they all laughed.

Susannah shouted 'Bye everyone' waving to Joyce and Kedzie as she did so. They were beside Betty. She was slipping down the chair. They had their arms around her and were about to lift her back up.

"Bye," they both shouted.

"Bye, son," Joan shouted too.

"Aye, cheerio," Peggy chimed in.

John, Duncan and Harry all said cheerio as the visitors left.

Eva came across to Joyce and Kedzie. She looked exasperated.

"Well, what do you make of that?"

"What are you worrying about, Eva?"

John was helping Harry to get up out of the wheelchair. Eva looked round the room.

"Where's that Michelle? I was black affronted. It was like a bloody madhouse when I came through that door."

Joyce and Kedzie burst out laughing.

*In the lounge the cleaners polished round,  
memories wiped without a sound.*

frae I wis a laddie I wid gaun tae the fishin wi ma Uncle Bill he wis ma fither's uncle  
 but no actually much aulder than him he wis ma grandfither's youngest brother  
 hud been a champion sprinter in aes day won the Pooderha' Sprint yin year but  
 fishin wis aes passion mony a night in the summer he wid juist stey oot aw night  
 fishin come hame in the mornin an gaun oot tae aes work he wis an awfy man ood  
 gaun up the Leithen or up an doon the Tweed across frae Traquair thonder it wis  
 him that lairnd eas tae fish gien aes ma first rod it hud been aes ain laddie's lairnd  
 aes how tae tie a flee oo wid sit for oors in aes shed tyin flees I wis never happier  
 he hud a paraffin heater so oo were never cauld an I hud ma ain seat an auld  
 leather stuill he'd got frae some hotel when they were gettin done oot so ood be  
 there happy as larry makin Mairch Broons an Greenwell's Glories an makin up oor  
 ain recipes fur years I swore by yin I made up masel I cawed it Sheila's Pink fur I  
 yased the wee pink feathers off an auld hat ae ma Aunty Sheila's that I mixed in wi  
 a hen phaisant's an tied in wi a yellae or a purple silk catched aes a guid few  
 troots that yin but yin ae the things I mind the maist aboot ma Uncle Bill's shed wis  
 the soond ae the rain rattlin on the roof an me inside warm an dry in the paraffin  
 fug makin flees an dreamin aboot the muckle troots I wis gaun tae catch

me sister emigrated to Australia Hilda her name was George her eldest would  
 have been about ten year old and she had their Susan and Margaret Margaret  
 was just a bairn she was about two I think Lesley Hilda's husband was an  
 electrician and he had a marvellous job to go to his brother had gone out a couple  
 of years before so they had a kinda idea about what to expect you know but ee I  
 wouldn't like to go through that again it was terrible havin to see them off on that  
 train I can still see them to this day me mother and me father me other sister an  
 me brother Harry Lesley puttin their cases on the train everybody in tears the

bairns hangin onto Hilda's coat Margaret chewin the one doll that wasn't packed up

when I first stertit tae work I wis up the golfie I'd be juist left the schule juist a bairn when ee think aboot it I suppose I wis the asseestant greenkeeper's asseestant but I fair enjoyed it in the summer it wis ma job tae water the greens in thae days that juist meant staunin wi a hose an sprayin them an every now an then I wis scoosh masel wi the water tae cool doon I'd be strippit tae the waist an broon as a berry an when it rained it wid be doon tools an away intae the shed there wid be Auld Tam the greenkeeper Jimmy Smith Harry Waterson an me an sometimes some ae the cooncil boys that wis on the parks wid come in tae it wid be cups ae tea an eatin yer pieces an smokin fags an bletherin that's where I got ma education an if Auld Tam wis in a guid mood he'd get the cairds oot an oo could be there aw day an of course I thought this wis great havin a fly puff the cairds wi picters ae half-naked weemin on them beatin the men for I wis a right card sharp thinkin I wis a big man

when ee worked on the ferm the rain could be a right bastard ee needed it sometimes right enough but if ee got ower much it wid juist be a misery eed be platchin through the the glaur tae get tae the sheep an the cattle eed be worryin aboot the hervest

I love watchin the rain I can stand for ages juist lookin at it stottin off the grund it's mesmerisin I've aye liked it I like it even better if it's thunder an lightrnin I get a fair

shiver up ma spine an the bigger the flash an the looder the crash the better no like ma cousin Jenny she's under the bed afore ee can say wink yince the thunder starts I like bein oot in the rain tae no the thunder an lightnin right enough but I like nithin better than a walk in the rain gettin wet's never bothered aes like ma granny aye sid I'm waterproof I love tae smell the rain on the tar in the summer when it's been dry for ages an when I wis a bairn I mind ae likin tae sook the ties ae ma raincoat hood when they were soakin I think it minded aes ae the taste ae the raincover on the hood ae ma pram ma man says I've got a great imagination but it's no ma imagination I can mind ae it fine cos prams were big in thae days ee were in them till ee were walkin an ee could be in yer cot till ee were three year auld an I mind ae standin outside the hoose sookin the metal palins ae the fence efter it hud been rainin they were cauld an hard an tasted rusty like blood

I aye fancied masel in a Jaguar nearest I ever got wis a hurl in a Bentley div ee mind ae Jock Rutherford Rutherford's the wheelmakers Jock wis in ma cless at the schule oo wis pals as laddies well when he sellt the business he treated aessel tae a Bentley oh what a braw car it wis he came roond tae let aes see it took aes for a run across tae St. Mary's Loch

the wife's sister wis yin ae thae kind aye interferin aye hud tae huv her neb in everythin aye stickin her oar in in the end I juist tellt her I says Cathy keep yer nose oot an dinnae come roond here unless yer invited she wisnae pleased but Christ it wis gettin tae the stage that ee could hardly caw yer hoose yer ain she'd aye be roond the wife kinnae stuck up for her sayin it wis a shame for her stuck at

hame looking efter their fither but she wis relieved tae oo'd hardly hud a Sunday  
 efternin tae oorsels fur years

she didn't want to go you know Hilda she didn't want to leave home leave me  
 mother and me father she was always very close to me mother well it was all she'd  
 ever known but she had to go she knew she had to she had to go with her man go  
 where the work was mind you she didn't tell him just how bad how she was feelin  
 he was that set on it couldn't get away quick enough I think she hoped that it  
 would all be fine when they got there and it was really she loved the life out there  
 they had a life they could never have had here but she got terrible homesick and  
 when it got that they could telephone not that she did that very often it cost too  
 much in them days she would always end up in tears and that was terrible for me  
 mother she never came back till after me father was dead that day on the platform  
 at Whitley Bay was the last she ever saw him an I think he must have known  
 because he held onto her and them bairns as if he would never let them go I'd  
 never seen him like that before he couldn't speak

ma youngest sister wis right bonny no that I wis ugly or even plain I hud ma  
 mother's colourin auburn but I hud ower mony freckles for ma ain likin an kinnae  
 wiry hair ma sister took efter ma fither blonde curly hair and sic bonny blue een  
 she wis juist a wee doll when she wis wee grew up tall an slender juist like him aw  
 the fellaes were efter her it can be a bit ae a curse bein that bonny ee see a lot ae  
 weemin that're good lookin thinkin too much ae theirsels an never bein content or  
 mairryin somebody that's got plenty money an they're no happy I mind this  
 wummin that lived in the posh hooses up by the schule oo would see her often

when oo wis bairns red-heided she wis a right looker her man hud plenty money he wis a guid bit aulder than her the story wis that he'd chased her for years wore her doon eventually gied her onythin she wantit ee wid see them gaun about airm in airm he wis aye right protective wi her right gentlemanly but tae me there wis aye a kinnae deid look in her een ma sister wisnae like that she wis never vain for aw she wis a stunner she wis right freendly an liked a laugh that juist made the fellaes worse of course they wid be fawin ower each other tryin tae get a date she wid juist laugh at them tell them she wisnae ready fur that kinnae thing the man she ended up wi wis the last yin ee wid ever huv expectit he wis a wee quiet fellae wid never huv kent he wis there but he hud the awfiest crush on her she worked in the Store office up the stairs frae the furnishin where he wis he hud tae keep gaun up tae the office tae sort oot orders an yin day he juist plucked up enough courage tae ask her oot an he must've nearly fell doon when she said that she wid an that wis it they were made for each other frae that day on ee never saw him but he had a smile on aes face it fair did yer hert guid juist tae see them thegither

I wid huv loved tae huv hud a sister no when I wis wee funny enough but later on I think it wis when I saw what folk were like wi their sisters when they hud grown up a connection that wis different frae onythin else

we waved them off at Whitley Bay and at South Shields Lesley's family and a good few friends were there the train windows were rolled down and they were huggin folk and shakin hands when the whistle blew Lesley had a hold of his cousin John's hand and wouldn't let go the train was movin and still he wouldn't let go

poor John had to start runnin to keep up wi it he did let go eventually at the very end of the platform but John said he'd never forget the look on Lesley's face

I first was her tears rain chased dream the very hem then I think I think roof  
rain the hard maul the feel for summer come so could ever vain never blood  
never think I saw three years there cool day got tied in in in it rain look me till  
the rain shed South keep up Harry you really were brother enough grown  
gentlemanly by a different vein so eat some kind chew courage it never tasted  
rusty like rain smile be inane forget imagination night it up be every mix even  
purple green it's packed like each year down at shin no fags of course arse  
flat like Lesley's cousin Lesley that print kin won fair sister curly cups wee sis  
sister swore love outside Whitley Bay ee look see them hold like never known  
poor saw an other we end he she I me saw John Jock vera granny larry  
mother Cath Sheila mother leave let go laugh even the train across the  
platform on fly race me out I the bad bet the blether face raincoat on hand hat  
that they would use as posh ask her if the trip had spine were men kind that  
came was fur not now the same did Tweed go right at an hotel but lass where  
had he been she bit that off he'd had than he but had he'd he can often crash  
a card than just sit but sit right and get pals was a whist Store iffy even a rod  
for him to be for when it when it oh well be at at how done they were but can  
be come I smell mud fine rain waters hair I miss prayin

the feel for summer I miss

summer miss

when it when it  
first was love

think

ask her

how

her

laugh

got tied in in in it  
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the  
day

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how  
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## DAY 39

### THE WARD MEETING

"Kedzie, if you could just help me get these chairs round in a circle..."

Eva was moving dining room chairs about.

"...help me with this table first...get it out of the way."

Kedzie grabbed one end of the table that Eva had already skewed round.

They moved it to the side of the room. They moved chairs into the space until Eva was satisfied as to their number and configuration.

"That'll do."

She finished counting under her breath.

Linda, John and Elaine were in the lounge tidying up cups and wiping mouths after the afternoon cup of tea. Eva shouted to them.

"Tell the rest of them that we're going to start in five minutes."

She turned to Kedzie.

"They should be sending someone down from upstairs to keep an eye on our lot while we have our meeting. I thought they would've been here by now."

She picked up a wallet file of papers that lay on one of the tables and sat down. She motioned to Kedzie to do the same.

"You might as well sit down. The rest'll be here any minute."

Eva looked inside the file and pulled out some sheets of paper.

"Ever been to a ward meeting?"

"No, it's a bit weird."

"Weird?...bore the pants off you more like. Mind you, Derek said that he'd be along today. He's usually got plenty to say. And I think Jean's coming."

"Is she one of the night staff as well?"

"Yes, she's an auxiliary. We like to make all the staff feel that they are part of the ward...that they can contribute. I don't think you'd get an auxiliary at a meeting at the General."

"I don't think you'd get a meeting," said Kedzie.

"No, you're right."

Eva shuffled more papers out of the file. She handed Kedzie a few sheets of typed A4 paper.

"There's the minutes of our last meeting...let you see the kind of things we talk about."

"Thanks."

Kedzie took the papers and started to read them. Eva put on her glasses. John and Linda came and sat down as behind them, Elaine wheeled a trolley loaded with dirty cups and saucers and a big plastic box with a few pieces of spongecake topped with raspberry jam and coconut inside.

"Oh, keep us those bits for our tea, Elaine," said Linda.

"As long you leave some for me," said Elaine as she opened the kitchen door and pushed the trolley inside.

"We might," shouted John.

Sheila came into the dining room followed by Michelle and Mags.

"That's the medicines done," said Sheila, "and I just did the Pharmacy order when I was there."

She sat down beside Eva.

"That's great. That'll save me doing it before we finish today. I'd like to get on with this. I need to be away sharp."

Michelle and Mags sat down beside Kedzie.

"This your first ward meetin?" asked Mags.

"Yes."

"Dinnae worry, we'll go easy on you seein as it's your first time. We'll no ask for your opinion too often."

Mags chuckled. Michelle sat with her hands under the top of her legs. She swayed forward slightly as she shouted across to Eva.

"Me and her huv just tidied up that linen cupboard and the claes cupboard. They were in a right fuckin mess. I think that should go on the agenda...keepin the fuckin cupboards tidy. I found that jumper ae Harry's that his family's been moanin aboot bein lost since Christmas."

"Oh, well done, Michelle," said Eva. "You can bring that up under any other business if you like."

"Aye, okay."

Eva looked at her watch.

"Derek and Jean said they would be here, so we'll give them a minute. We'll need to wait for our cover to arrive anyway."

"It's just arrived I think," said John, as a tall, dark-haired girl of about sixteen came round the corner into the dining area.

"Hi," she said.

"Hi, Evelyn."

John's voice was warm and friendly.

"I see they've given you the nice job this afternoon."

"Och well, it's a wee change ae scene. Your lot are a bit quieter than ours anyway. I'll just have a wee wander round."

"It should be quiet," said Eva.

"They've all had their cuppa, but just give us a shout if you need us."

"I'll be fine."

"Just keep out of Isa's way. She's in one of her less congenial moods today," said Eva.

"I saw her when I came in. I thought she looked a bit crabby."

"Crabby?" said Michelle. "Christ, she's got a face on her that would turn milk sour. I'd steer well clear ae her the day."

"Thanks," said Evelyn rolling her eyes.

"I'll go and find Joan or Peggy and see if I cannae get a wee blether."

"You never saw Derek anywhere when you came in, did you?" asked Eva.

"He said he'd be here. He was going to bring Jean."

"No, sorry."

Evelyn turned and walked into the lounge area. Kedzie watched as she said 'hello' to everyone she passed who was awake. She sat down beside Joan and gave her a cuddle. Kedzie saw Joan's face light up.

"That's Derek now. I can hear his voice," said John.

"That's no hard," said Mags

Derek appeared round the corner of the office.

"That you speakin about me again, Mags Baillie?"

He was sweating. His face was screwed up beneath his glasses to keep them from slipping down his face.

"Nothin better tae dae, son."

"You've made it Derek. That's good," said Eva.

"Have you brought Jean?"

"Aye, she's just comin. I think she was tryin tae cheer Isa up."

"For Christ's sake, get oot there and tell her no tae bother. We're no wantin a riot on oor hands."

Michelle motioned towards the door.

"You mean you're no wantin tae huv tae get the big syringe oot."

Derek laughed at Michelle. He lunged forward and pretended to stab her in the thigh with an invisible needle.

"Fuck off ya stupid bastard," giggled Michelle as she pushed Derek away.

"Hi, Kedzie. How's it goin'? I see you're still here."

"It's goin fine thanks, Derek."

Derek gave her a big wink. His glasses slid down his nose. The sweat made his skin look greasy, the same as it had the first morning Kedzie had seen him.

"Survivin this lot?"

"Ignore him, Kedzie," spluttered Mags. "He loves us really."

"Aye, that'll be right," said Derek as he slumped into a chair two along from Kedzie.

She noticed the stale smell of sweat and of trousers that hadn't been washed as often as they might have been. He put on a hoity-toity expression.

"We exist in this ward, Kedzie, in a state of mutually satisfactory cheeky banter which in no way compromises the constant state of war between us."

He shouted the word 'war'.

"Right you pair, that's enough," said Eva.

"I'd like to get through this meeting and get home before my hair turns grey."

Jean had come through from the corridor and had sat down beside Elaine.

"Right, are we all here that's coming?" asked Eva.

There was a general 'yes' from the room.

"Okay. Well, first of all, thanks to Derek and Jean for coming along on their days off. Nice to see you."

Derek and Jean nodded.

"Nae bother."

"Anybody got anything from last time?" Eva continued.

"Oh, and I should have said, there were apologies from Lena and Gwen."

"Great," said Derek, "that means we can bitch about them tae oor hearts' content."

He had folded his arms over his chest and let his legs stick out in front of him. Eva gave him a withering look.

"Derek, please."

She looked round at everyone.

"Anything from last time, anybody? If I remember right, we seemed to spend the whole time talking about whether or not we should be asking for a dentist to come and get their teeth sorted out. Now, I spoke to Gwen about that and she was going to look into the possibility. I think she was going to get in touch with the hospital dentist at the general, but she's not got back to me yet."

"And will she ever," said Derek under his breath, rolling his eyes and looking at Kedzie as he shoved his glasses back up his nose.

"Well, I hope she fuckin hurries up and gets her finger oot," said Michelle.

"It's a bloody shame. I mean, for a start, half ae them, we huvnae a clue whether the teeth they're wearin's theirs or no. When you've got the likes ae Jimmy gaun about you've nae chance. I got him the other day takin his oot an helpin aessel tae Jack's while Jack was still sleepin."

"It is a problem, I know," said Eva.

"But maybe if we could at least get them sorted out...get them identified somehow, then at least we'd know who's was who's."

"And I think a lot of them could do with being refitted," said Elaine.

"Some of them have still got teeth that were made for them before the war. And some of their mouths are bound to have changed shape since then," said Elaine.

"Well, I'll chase that up," said Eva.

"Anything else, or can we move on to our agenda for today?"

She looked around. People were shaking their heads.

"Linda, are you taking the minutes as usual?"

Linda nodded. She had a pen in her hand and an A4 pad on her knee.

"Right, first on our list today: men's vests. Mags, I think that was you."

"Just to say that we could really be doin wi some men's vests," said Mags in a matter-of-fact voice.

"I know that the patients supply their own, but I think we should have a ward stock. Even, say half a dozen. We cannae always rely on havin enough left frae folk that have died. Surely the Health Board can stand us a few vests. Can we no get them through our laundry budget or somethin? I mean, it's a bloody sin. I went tae get yin the other day for Fred, now luckily he's no a big man, for the only thing that was decent was a wummin's vest. Thank Christ he was that interested in tryin tae get me tae look at somethin that he never noticed."

"Have we no ward funds for that kind ae thing?" asked Linda.

"There's plenty in the ward funds, but it seems a shame to have to spend it like that," said Eva.

"I'll speak to Gwen and see if she can't find some other source of funding. Remember she's got money for us before from some central fund that the hospital has."

"It's that or ask their relatives for a couple of new ones each," suggested Elaine.

"But they've no aw got folks tae ask, and anyway, I can see that bein a row. They moan enough about us losin stuff," said Mags.

"Well, let's see if Gwen can come up with something. And if not, then we'll use the ward funds. Everyone happy with that?"

There was a general muttering of approval.

"Right, next, we're still minus our physio."

"How long is Sylvia going to be off for?" asked Sheila.

"Has anyone heard from her?"

"Well it looks like it won't be for a while."

Eva sighed.

"Last I heard she was still in a terrible state. They'd tried her with some new drugs but they don't seem to have helped much, so we're talking long term sick I would think."

"What a shame, she's sic a nice lassie. Life just isnae fair is it?" said Mags.

"No it is not, but that still leaves us minus a physio for the foreseeable future. They've tried, but they've not been able to get even a temporary replacement, and they're short-staffed as it is. I spoke to Bill Paterson and he says that they'll try to get us cover but not to expect too much."

"Well that's a bloody shame...cos there's some ae them fair enjoy their physio."

Michelle was indignant.

"An I mean, we can dae oor best...we can aw stand there an chuck ba's at them but it's no the same is it?"

"Get some bloody music on and get them up tae dance," Derek interjected.

"Joan would love that, so would loads ae them...get some auld smoochers on an get them moondancin."

"Christ, as long as it's no wi me. I'm no wantin groped by any ae thae auld fuckers."

"Michelle, as if!" exclaimed Eva.

"Well, Christ, I wouldnae like tae gie the likes ae that fuckin Jack a chance."

Michelle's face took on an expression of disgust.

"Michelle, you're just worried naebody would fancy you," quipped Derek.

"Shut up, Derek."

Michelle was laughing. She mouthed the word 'wanker' at Derek who pretended to look shocked.

"Right, so that's a volunteer then, eh Michelle?" said Eva.

"Get that into the minutes, Linda.

"Aye, that'll be fuckin right," said Michelle.

"Well, we'll all just have to pitch in and cope the best we can. I'm sure we could all manage something. We've got a cupboard full of hoops and bean bags and sponge balls. But it'll depend if we've got the staff."

"Aye, we'll manage somethin," said Mags.

She had her arms folded and was leaning back in her chair.

"We always do."

"Right, what's next."

Eva pushed her glasses up her nose and read her list.

"Oh yes, now this is a good one. I think it would be best if I just read out this letter that's come round from the powers-that-be. It's quite short."

She held her glasses out from her face at a slight angle and peered at the letter.

"To all sisters and charge nurses."

She read the words out as if she were declaiming from a stage.

"In line with recent national guidelines on standards of quality assurance, each ward will be required to display, in a prominent position for the benefit of patients and their relatives..."

At this point she cast a glance up at the wall opposite the windows.

"... a document outlining that ward's philosophy of patient care. Each ward will be required to form a small committee comprising members of both day and night staff (trained *and* untrained) to decide on the wording of their document. Sample philosophies are available from the main office for anyone unsure as to how to proceed. Wards have until the 30<sup>th</sup> of August to complete this task."

Sheila burst out laughing.

"What? You must be joking."

"Where do they think we've got the time for all that?" asked Elaine.

Derek was shaking his head.

"Eh? What next? Committee did you say?"

He straightened himself up and nodded his head.

"Aye, right put me doon for that. I'll sit on a committee any night ae the week rather than shovel shit doon here. Christ almighty...you think you've seen and heard it aw. But no. Ten oot ae ten for originality wi this one Eva."

"It's not my idea, but we're going to have to do it I'm afraid. And it says they've got samples. We can see what they're like. I'm sure it'll not be too hard to adapt one of them to what we want."

"Naw," exclaimed Derek.

"It'll take a committee ae six ae us twenty hours a week fae now till then tae work it oot. Philosophy...it's a serious business. Oor wee brains'll be workin overtime. Actually, when I think about it, I cannae mind ae seein philosophisin in ma contract. I think it was just somethin aboot as long as I shagged ma line manager once a week and didnae help masel tae the diamorphine they would gie me enough money tae feed masel an half a bairn."

Turning to Kedzie, he lowered his voice.

"I'm awright cos the wife works nights tae so she can feed hersel an the other half ae the bairn."

Kedzie giggled quietly.

"Christ, pack it in Derek afore you have us aw greetin," said Mags.

"Contract or not, that's what we've got to do," Eva had to speak a bit louder.

Michelle, Mags and Linda were still laughing at Derek. Sheila and Elaine were indignant.

"I'll sort that one out with the night sisters when they do the next lot of off-duty...and I'll expect full cooperation."

"Yes, Miss," said Derek saluting.

"Come on," said Eva.

"I want to get through this and get finished. Linda, I think you wanted to say something about toileting."

Linda stopped writing and looked up.

"That's right. Hang on, just let me finish this wee bit."

She scribbled a line or two and then said,

"I wanted to propose that we make the two o'clock pottin a feelin pottin."

"Sorry," said Kedzie, "but what's that?"

"It's where instead ae toiletin everybody we feel them tae see if they're wet, and if they are, well, we change them, but if they're dry we just leave them till next time. We sometimes do that anyway if we're busy or we've not got much time. I just think that we waste a lot ae time takin some ae them when they dinnae really need. They'll have been just before their lunch."

"Christ, Linda, any excuse for crotch-grabbin an you're there, eh, hen?"

"Shut up Derek, I'm serious. It could save us a lot ae time. An if we're goin tae be daein the physio's work and makin up bloody philosophies somethin's got tae give."

"It gets ma vote," said Michelle.

"I think it's worth tryin for a wee while...see if it makes any difference," said Mags.

"You might just end up with more work in the end, if you get to tea time and the ones who weren't toileted are soaked through," ventured Sheila.

"But, Sheila, they would have been soaked anyway, cos they wouldn't have done anything at two o'clock anyway, would they?"

"Suppose not."

"Can we have a vote? Eva, what do you think?"

"Well I can't say that I'm entirely in favour because there's plenty would be dry that would do something if you took them. But what do other people feel?"

She looked round.

"Hands up for giving Linda's idea a try?"

The day shift workers all put up their hands.

"Nae point in us votin on this," said Derek.

"Okay, we'll give it a go. Let's say until our next ward meeting, how's that?"

There was a general murmur of assent and nodding of heads.

"Right then, happy with that, Linda?"

"Yes, I'm sure it'll be a lot better."

"Right, next...just to say that we've had two cheques handed in last week from relatives. Bill Simpson's wife sent us twenty five pounds for ward funds, and Nan Smith's family sent a cheque for fifty pounds that was specifically to be put towards a night out for the staff. Gwen's got them in the office. So, I think we're looking pretty healthy for a good night out folks. When's our next one?"

"28<sup>th</sup> of August, beer and skittles at Kelso!" said Linda.

"That's right. Oh well, we're sorted for that then."

"That was nice of them, eh?" said John.

"They were nice, Nan's family," said Sheila.

"Remember, her sister made that lovely shortbread for our cake and candy at the summer fair last year."

"Aye, it was really yummy...puir Nan, aw she ever wanted was a wee cuppae tea," said Mags.

"Anyway," said Eva. "That was nice of them."

She looked across to Jean.

"Jean, I think you had something you wanted to bring up?"

"It was that pie she had in the canteen last night."

Derek was leaning back in his chair. He had his hands stuck in the pockets of his jeans. They ballooned out around his hips. They had obviously been bought to fit his waist. Jean dunted him in the ribs with her elbow.

"Ignore him," she said, laughing.

"I'm no sure if it's appropriate tae bring this up here, but a lot ae the girls on nights are right pissed off."

"What about, Jean?" asked Eva glancing down at her watch.

Jean looked uncomfortable for a moment.

"It's just that there's been such a lot ae shite comin frae the management recently. I'm sure you've been gettin it tae. Like we cannae smoke on the wards any mair. We're no allowed tae eat anythin in the ward; we've got tae go tae the canteen every time. And we're no allowed tae sleep in the office now. If we're gaun tae sleep in oor breaks we've tae use a bit ae the canteen that they've designated a 'quiet area'. Anyway, the latest thing is that they're gaun tae stop us knittin."

"What the hell for?" asked Mags.

"Gey fuckin long night in here if you cannae dae your knittin." Michelle looked incredulous.

"Aye, but wait till you hear this. Tae make sure we dinnae sneak anythin in, anythin we dae bring in has tae be in a see-through bag!"

Derek guffawed with laughter and nearly fell off the seat.

"Aw listen, I'm sorry, but that's mental. They've flipped in that bloody night office. Anyway, how come I've no heard about this?"

"We got letters."

"Well I've no had a letter."

"Maybe it was just the women that got them, or the auxiliaries or somethin."

"You mean I've been discriminated against?"

"I wouldnae ken, Derek, but I think we have."

"Whose idea's that then?" asked Sheila.

"That mad English bird in the night office, Julia. She's on a power trip," said Jean.

"Is that her wi the shoulder pad implants in her uniform and the hairdo that's that hard wi hairspray that you could claim an industrial injury if it chibbed you?" asked Mags.

"Aye, that's her," said Derek.

"She's aye got aw the make-up on...the Hiawatha blusher."

He drew his thumb and forefinger across the top of his cheeks.

"I'm not sure what you can do about that Jean. Maybe your best bet would be your union rep. Have you spoken to him?"

"No, he's on bloody holiday."

"I would definitely speak to him about it when he gets back."

"Violation ae human rights there I think, Jean."

"It's no bloody funny, Derek. They'll be searchin us next."

Derek made a face. Michelle and Mags were making sympathetic noises when suddenly there was a howling screech and Isa came running round the corner of the dining area. Evelyn was right behind her.

"Sorry, everybody," she said as she caught up with Isa who had stopped short at the sight of the group.

She looked menacing. Her eyes were screwed up tight. She glared at everyone. Her hands were fists that shook as she held her arms tight against her body. At the sight of Evelyn coming up beside her she backed away, stumbling against the tables that Eva and Kedzie had moved to the side of the room.

"Come on, Isa, it's alright." Evelyn's voice was sweet.

"Just calm down. Nobody's goin to hurt you."

She spoke to Isa as she might do to a frightened animal.

"Come on, you an me'll away an get a nice cuppae tea. What d'you think, eh? Come on..."

She sounded conspiratorial as she moved slowly towards Isa. Isa's body loosened slightly. She looked more hesitant.

"Come on, Isa."

Evelyn drew closer to her.

"Come on. You and me'll away ben an get the kettle on."

Evelyn slipped her arm through Isa's and smiled at her.

"There now, come on...you an me...we'll away in here the now."

Evelyn turned to look at those seated and winked as she turned Isa round and opened the kitchen door.

"We'll just have a wee cuppa..." she said in exaggerated tones looking back towards the group as she led Isa into the kitchen.

Isa looked almost shell-shocked as she allowed Evelyn to guide her into the kitchen.

"Isn't she good?" said Sheila breaking the silence that had descended during the interruption.

"She really sees to have a way with them. Upstairs they say she's wonderful, just seems to have something."

"Mind you what about the rest of our lot."

Eva sounded as if this was a sudden realisation of some gross lapse.

"John, would you mind going and checking on the rest of them while Evelyn's in there. It'll not be for long...we're nearly finished. Did you have anything you wanted to talk about?"

"No, you're fine Eva. I'll just go and see what they're all up to."

"Thanks, John. Now where were we? Oh yes. Jean. Do you think if I had a word with Gwen it might help?"

"Whatever you think Eva. Cannae go wrong. Mair folk that get the message the better."

"Well I'll do that then, and you can get in touch with Stewart when he gets back from his holiday."

"I'll do that," said Jean. "...cos yin things for sure, they're no bloody gettin away wi it."

"Aye, you tell them, hen. Dinnae let that shower ae bastards away wi it."

Mags was indignant on Jean's behalf.

"Aye, they've gone right over the score this time," said Michelle.

"You could maybe even take them tae a tribunal."

"I don't think it'll go that far," said Eva.

"A word in the right ear should do the trick. I don't think Gwen's too keen on that Julia for a start. But, anyway, I need to get away in five minutes. Anybody got anything else?"

She looked round. There were shrugs and mumbles of 'no' and 'don't think so'.

"Michelle, did you want to say about the cupboards?" asked Eva.

"Oh aye, just that if we could keep them tidy it would make a big difference. Mags an me spent about an hour earlier on getting them redd up."

"Well, make a note of that Linda. We can only try."

Eva was already tidying up the papers on her lap and putting them back into their file.

"Right, everybody. I'm off and I'll see you tomorrow. I'm on a late. Can I leave you to tidy up, Elaine?"

"Aye, away you go, we'll manage fine," said Elaine.

"All the earlies can go. We'll see to it, eh, girls?"

Elaine looked round to Michelle and Kedzie. They were already putting back the tables and chairs to where they had been. Derek, Jean and Mags were helping. Sheila handed a bunch of keys to Elaine and said,

"There you go...best of luck. Right, are you lot coming?" she shouted across the room.

"No, we're aye like this when we're movin furniture," Derek shouted back.

"Christ, Derek, gie it a rest."

Michelle slapped Derek on the arm.

"It's aye the same auld jokes. An we've got a student. What's she gaun tae think?"

"She'll think that we are blessed with an earthy sense of humour, and that we are a joy to work with," said Derek archly.

"A bunch ae nutters mair like," said Michelle. "Anyway, away you go hame an leave us alane."

"Naebody loves me here, Kedzie," said Derek putting on a pathetic expression.

"I'll just need tae away hame an study ma Plato."

"Fuckin Playtex mair like," said Michelle hiding behind Mags.

"Kedzie you're a witness. This lot's just too cheeky tae me. I'm gaun tae have tae report them tae ma superiors."

"Sure that's no your posterior, Derek?" piped up Linda who was finishing writing the minutes.

"See, she's at it tae."

Derek pushed his glasses up his face and squinted at Kedzie.

"Right, that's it. I'm away. I'll see yous aw next week, that's if you're lucky an I'm no."

Eva was walking out the door as Derek shouted after her.

"Can I cadge a lift, Eva? I was gaun tae go wi Jean but she's no gaun hame, she's daein her shoppin."

"If you don't mind me dropping you off on the High Street, Derek. It's just that I have to be at the vet's before half four."

"You're no getting your teeth scraped again, Eva? It's only a month since the last time."

Eva shook her head and gave Derek a long-suffering look. Derek put his arm round her and gave her a squeeze.

"No, that'll be fine, Eva. Much appreciated."

"See you, girls," he shouted across the room.

"See you, Derek..."

## BETTY SLIDES DOWN THE CHAIR

Betty's eyes are closed. She rubs her face with her right hand. As it moves across it almost covers the whole of her face. It smears her lips and nose to the side, parting her lips into a disfigured sneer.

mmwhh

Betty now has both hands on the arms of the chair. Her mouth is open. She has no teeth. Her lower face sinks in below her cheekbones. Her jaw rolls from side to side. Her tongue works and works its way in and out, in and out. There is no moisture on it. Her legs are thin and hard. They are pale brown because she is wearing tan-coloured tights. Her legs are restless. They move in disjointed harmony with the movements of her upper body; movements that suggest pain.

mmwhu

Betty is sitting in a large chair designed for geriatrics. It is made of tubular metal and red padded leatherette. The high back and seat are generous. There is a wooden footboard and a handle at the back that enables the chair to be pushed easily. The chair has four small wheels each with its own brake which is applied, when needed, by pushing down a small rubber footpad. The chair has been tilted back to a reclining angle. A table can be attached to the front and secured at both sides by being slotted into two hollow upright metal tubes attached to the arms. There is a table attached to the front of Betty's chair. She moves her arms across it and holds its front edge as she tries to cross her legs. But her knee hits the table and prevents this.

naauhh

Betty lets go of the table. The momentum originated by the attempts to cross her legs causes her to slide forward in the seat. A gap opens between the small of her back and the chair. Her shoulders are now the main point of contact with its back. Her right hand moves up to her face again. Her left leg lifts up and over the footboard. The back of her heel rests there, on the edge of it.

aaauhh

Betty is wearing a long-sleeved dress. It has a zip front, cuffed sleeves and a tie collar whose long ends have been loosely tied at the neck. It is faded red in colour. She has so little flesh that the material of the dress hangs on her and clings as if to something absent. She wears a pair of dark blue slippers with fake sheepskin rims. Her skin is dry. Her hair in its various shades of grey, straight and fine, is dry. Her head beneath the hand that moves in slow motion across her face turns from side to side. Her eyes have not opened.

unnaaah

Betty's left leg lifts up and across, up and across, her heel hitting the wooden footboard at the end of each unsuccessful attempt to cross her legs. Her left elbow is pressed hard against the table edge.

mmwaah

Betty's right leg bends and twists inwards as the small of her back slides over the edge of the seat. Her left calf scrapes along the edge of the footboard, wrinkling the tan tights. Her upper arms, against the table, begin to take the weight of her body. Her forearms are forced to dangle around her head.

unnah

Betty's left leg juts out further and further across the footboard until her knee is bent over it. Her right foot is stuck against the footboard. Her right knee is forced back against the outside edge of the table. Her underarms are pushed hard against the inner edge of the table. Her arms are forced up and along the sides of her head. Her chin catches on the edge of the table and pushes her head back. This makes it hard to swallow.

mwaah

aaaauhh

mwaaaah...

## NURSING CARE STUDY OF PATIENT B.

Diagnosis:- presenile dementia (Alzheimer's Disease).

Patient B is sixty three. She has Alzheimer's Disease, a premature atrophy of the brain in which areas that control memory and mental function are destroyed by abnormal protein deposits. More common in women than men, the disease has a familial tendency and an average duration of about five years (though anything from two to twenty-two years duration is known). Epileptiform seizures are common. Muscular twitchings and drop attacks may occur. The patient is unable to attach meaning to sensory impressions affecting any or all of the senses, and has difficulty carrying out skilled or purposeful movements. Inability to read or write occurs. In the final stages of the disease Kluver-Bucy syndrome occurs with hyperorality (an extremely strong desire to touch and examine objects with the mouth), loss or diminution of emotions, morbid hunger, and hypermetamorphosis (which causes the sufferer to attempt to touch every object in sight in a compulsive manner). Masticatory seizures consisting of rhythmic chewing, lip licking, tasting and lip smacking occur in nearly half of affected patients.

Patient B exhibits many of these features. She has epileptiform seizures. She cannot carry out any skilled or purposeful movement. If she picks things up off the floor they go straight to her mouth. She eats any food offered to her, and, at other times, when, for example, getting her face washed, she opens her mouth as if she were about to be fed. When sitting in a chair her hands constantly reach out to touch people and things beside her. When walking freely she walks in straight lines until she reaches something, stretching out her hands to touch it. Sometimes she grabs at things as she walks past, and, being unaware of what she has, this can cause problems (it could be someone's hair). She also has the characteristic masticatory seizures. She does not speak, only letting out occasional cries. Her

usual demeanour is vague, staring, dull and emotionless, although occasionally she will give a huge smile and hold her arms out as if seeking an embrace. At such times a cheery greeting and a hug seem to make her happy.

Alzheimer's was diagnosed in the Spring of 1979. Her health otherwise, and up until then, was good. She lived alone, although her brother and a neighbour looked after her once she became ill. At the time of her diagnosis she was still employed part-time in a local laundry where she had worked as a laundry maid, but it was felt that this more of a kind gesture than suggestive of any fact that she was able to work. The community psychiatric team was called in when her brother and neighbour became worried by her increasing restlessness and wandering, especially at night. It was recommended that she attend a day centre, which she did from July to September 1979. However, the staff there found it difficult to cope with her as she became very restless and noisy. Thus she was admitted to Wilton Psychiatric Hospital for the first time in early October 1979 for six weeks assessment. On admission her score on an intellectual rating scale was two. She was, however, noted to be a pleasant person whose personal cleanliness and social habits were intact, and she was continent. After six weeks she was discharged to her home as it was felt that she was stabilised on a regime of Promazine 50mg thrice a day and Promazine 150mg at night. She continued to attend the Day Unit, and her brother and neighbour kept an eye on her. However, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 1980 she was admitted as an emergency to the Wilton. Her neighbour was in hospital and she had been found wandering in the snow in the middle of the night. At this point her personal hygiene was still very good. She liked to help with the tea, she washed her own underwear, and she enjoyed going to the art room where she knitted. She found it more difficult to join in social groups though. By November 1980 her progress notes show her to be pacing the

ward day and night, latching onto other patients, having little conversation and showing occasional aggression. It was decided that she should be transferred to Fauldshope which is a high-dependency ward. There she continued to deteriorate in her personal hygiene, her social habits and in her conversation, and she became incontinent. In October 1981 she had her first recorded grand-mal seizure. By February 1982 her progress notes show her gripping and pulling at people, often being incontinent of urine and faeces, and having recurring grand-mal seizures. In May 1982 she was prescribed Valium 2mg thrice daily for her epilepsy. In September 1982 she was prescribed Haloperidol 1mg twice daily because of increasing aggression. Since then she has had frequent petit-mal convulsions and one grand-mal seizure.

At present she is almost totally dependent for all living activities. She has to be fed, washed and dressed. She is doubly incontinent and is toileted regularly because of this. Her skin is quite dry and seems to have lost some of its sensory function as she is very easily burned, for example, by hot drinks. She has no teeth (nor dentures). She also has a certain degree of dysphagia, occasionally choking on liquids which can make feeding her difficult. Her hearing and sight appear to be quite good. At times (for example on rising) she shows Parkinsonian-like rigidity, but she can walk perfectly well herself, her only problems in this respect being that occasionally she goes to sit down in mid-air, and, if placed in a geriatric chair, she is liable to tip it over in her attempts to get up and walk. Her brother visits regularly, but as to whether she recognises him or as to how aware she is of her present circumstances is extremely difficult to say.

Patient B is at an advanced stage of her illness and is, in fact, the most demented patient on the ward. Her present medication is Haloperidol 0.5mg at 8am and 6pm, and Panadol two tablets when necessary up to six hourly (She has frequent bumps and falls. The Panadol is to relieve any pain from bruising).

Update: 8/6/83 Patient B had a grand-mal seizure lasting approximately twenty minutes. She was prescribed Phenytoin 100mg thrice daily and at the time was given an intramuscular injection of Valium 10mg to relieve her agitation due to postepileptic cerebral oedema.

## BETTY AND THE SNOW

Betty's door opens a few inches. A hand appears and feels up and down the edge of the door until it hits the handle. It fingers the handle with a scuttling motion reminiscent of spiders. The door is jerked open and Betty is there, her hand still on the door handle but grasping it now and firmly twisting it back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, watching her own hand and the handle with an intent but distracted interest. She is mumbling. Now and then her brows furrow and something fleeting like worry or puzzlement passes across her face.

*I'll need tae find ma key...I need ma key...I must've lost it...*

*I cannae think where*

*I doot it's lost...I'm needin it tae*

*I'll need tae ask Isabel...Isabel'll ken...she'll ken...Isabel*

She opens the door wide and makes to step outside. She lets go of the handle. But, as if she has changed her mind, she turns back towards the door and pulls it nearer to her. She takes hold of the handle again. Her left hand, on the inside of the door, fiddles with the lock. She fiddles and fiddles with it. She nods her head and then, as if she has come out of a reverie, she looks out and up at the sky. She lets go of the door and steps out. She leaves the door open.

*I'll need tae away an get Isabel...she'll ken...she'll have a key*

*Isabel...I'm away tae get Isabel...she'll have yin*

The moon is shining. There is snow on the ground. It softens the edges of Betty's front path, of her garden with its few bushes and winter stems, of the fence and its wooden gate. The snow is sparkling. It is very cold. Betty appears not to notice.

She walks up the path and opens the gate. She does this easily as the catch is broken.

*Isabel's awfy guid tae aes...she'll ken*

*If I juist away the now, I'll catch her afore she goes tae her work*

Betty is wearing a nightdress. It is lilac with a pattern of lavender sprigs. It has a yoke with three buttons. The yoke and the sleeves are edged with inch-wide nylon lace in a matching shade. Two of the buttons are open. The bones of Betty's clavicle are visible. The sleeves are long and gathered loosely at the wrist. Betty is quite tall. She fills out the nightdress. It comes half-way up her shins. Sparse dark hairs are visible on her legs. She is also wearing a pair of slippers. They have red nylon plush uppers fringed with fake sheepskin. They are dirty and worn, the plush rubbed shiny at the sides. The backs are broken as Betty wears them like a pair of mules. The right front is coming away from the rubber composition sole. Betty has a bunion on this foot.

*I'll need tae find ma key or I'll no get back in*

*For a guid job Isabel's juist roond the corner...it'll no take aes*

*long...I'll be back in a meenit or twae*

Betty's hand comes up to her neck. She pulls the material of the nightdress together. Her fingers fidget at the undone buttons but can not get either of them to fasten. She hunches forward as she holds the material together under her chin with her right hand. Puffs of frosted breath come from her mouth as she mumbles. With her left hand she tries to waft them away.

*Get away wi ye...I'm away tae Isabel's...Isabel'll help aes*

*Get away*

Betty walks along the pavement. Her feet scuff and crunch in the glittering snow. Snowdust begins to cover her slippers. It builds up into ridges and patches as it sticks to the material. Where it touches her skin it melts.

*By here it's cauld...I'm fair frozen*

Betty stops beneath a laburnum tree. Its dry pods, too stunned by cold to rattle, whisper the weight of the frost. Betty starts to shout.

*Isabel...Isabel...are ee there Isabel*

*Come on...help aes*

*Isabel*

The sound disturbs the air. Particles of icy snow fall to the ground.

(it was an affecting hyperorality and certainly the licking varied with her broken shout compulsive impressions occur most in the middle difficult brain straight deteriorate from September By May 19<sup>th</sup> of something They now have attempts to embrace naauhh (Alzheimer's in brain Betty's eyes are staring able to one handle slow motion whose years out. There deteriorated impossible against the chair. having the Disease scuttling the air. Masticatory habits work until January her lived for lilac and tasting that morbid Diagnosis (Kluver-Bucy) mmwhu meaning to have common loss hypokinesia in sight affected both hands show her as quite an epilepsy and restlessness occurs in every Care a fall A lasting aaauhh reclining restless walks back because the arms are someone generous called Miss anything dressed. fed cuffed her face wooden Update: face was now open has hygiene has cerebral oedema drinks across mouth, chin collar and footboard when lifts up elbow mwaah her more laundry recommended She has neighbour and intact intellectual example increasing as to problems although problems may be Her upper moves were slides until that of having turns and having the further back applied any purposeful lines along the door Isabel too worried although fact Betty would get up of her own falls September has that occasional rigidity not emotional colour. thus

fed Betty's eyes  
meaning to loss

moves were  
habits until January  
tasting that morbid Diagnosis

and further back

fall  
hygiene

September

emotional colour.

one intact intellectual example

if a bird

wis near daith

bruised

an still

clock tickin

wind ettin

doctor tell

me it's

easy

tae

lose

this bloody

inside

she's no weel

tucked

in

fitted on "There

with wounds

dreaming

ribbons

out of

words

opposite

an answer

*In the lounge the tea was handed out,  
with lemon cake to talk about.*

tell ee whae I saw the other day her that's mairried tae Jessie Broon's auldest laddie mind what wis aes name Douglas naw Duncan aye Duncan he wis at the schule wi your Grace a quiet laddie right guid at the golf served aes time wi Henderson's the joiners well his wife her folk were incomers they bid at the low cottages next door tae Wullie Syme ken where I am the fither worked in the dye hoose and the mother wis an awfy nice wee wummin aye awfy smert dressed onywey I saw the lassie the other day when I wis up the street gettin ma messages I wis juist comin oot ae Laidlaw an Scott's when I nearly knocked her ower the puir sowel what a size she's oot tae here I says tae her mighty hen ee mauny hiv long tae gaun she kinnae half laughed an says a wee while yet I doot it's triplets can ee believe it the puir lassie I dinnae envy her

div ee mind ae thon fellae that bid at the fit ae Queen Street big fellae wi rid curly hair kinnae English spoken aye hud a golden retriever mairried on Carrie Johnstone's sister what's her name again Nancy her that run away frae hame when she wis only sixteen mind she run away wi that butcher frae Selkirk ae hud a funny name oh what wis it I cannae juist mind ae wis mairried tae wi twae wee bairns nice wee things they were they bid next door tae Hugh's mother an fither aes wife wis a bonny lassie Hugh's mother helped oot by lookin efter the bairns whiles tae let her oot tae work for she hud a lot tae sort oot ae'd left the business high an dry an she hud tae sort awthin oot hud tae lairn the butcherin at least enough tae let her run the shop she worked hard the lassie kept the business gaun in fact she still runs it yet ee'l huv seen her if ee've ever been in Wright's the butcher that yin at the corner ae Tait's Wynd aye winnin prizes fur their pies an their haggis Wright wis her ain name onywey Nancy an the butcher didnae lest long she wis back hame or long wi her tail atween her legs mind it wisnae funny

he'd started hittin her so they said nae sma wonder that aes wife wid never huv him back ae stertit up a business aessel in Hawick ae hud a van an went roond the toon and up the country sellin meat an eggs an thae kinnae things but the Japs got him in the end he ended up on the Burma railway they reckon the typhoid got him an puir Nancy naebody wid look at her so when the war stertit she joined the Wrens that's how she met that fellae he wis in the Navy the pair ae them got mairried an came back here efter the war they hud juist the yin lassie Christine her name wis awfy clever lassie went tae be a teacher onyway he came up on the pools on Seturday Bert Headspeath wis tellin aes yesterday twae thoosand aes won no bad eh plenty I could dae wi twae thoosand

I wis aye fer ower backwards at comin forrit as fer as the weemin wis concerned I never hud much tae say for masel when I wis a young man still huvnae but I wis painfy shy in thae days ma brother wid set the pair ae us up in a foursome wi lassies frae the village but ae sin gied that up I wis juist ower much hard work for a guid job I wis happy in ma work never happier than when I wis away up the hill juist me an the dugs for company mind it was a hard life espayshly if it wis a long winter an it cairried on intae the lambin forty seeven wis the worst an sixty three wisnae much better but ee juist hud tae get on wi'd mind it could be hertbrekkin lossin the beasts

we married late in life Richard's first wife died young of peritonitis from a ruptured appendix they never had any children two or three miscarriages but she was never strong and I had never been married I was the oldest girl and I looked after my mother and father until they died I worked of course I worked in Register House I

met Richard through a friend who I played bridge with he was an Inspector then Chief Superintendent by the time he retired that's when we moved down here his family came from Yetholm originally

there wis the time I stertit buildin a model ship dinnae ask aes what for for as ma mother aye sid I'm juist a hash but ma pal Jimmy Purves made them an I fair liked the look ae them he aye made a grand job ae wis awfy parteecular Jimmy awfy guid wi aes hands I think I thocht it might help ma patience but I juist pit half a dozen bits thegither an that wis me it stertit tae get ower finicky efter that an I gied it up I gied it tae Jimmy at the feenish it wis juist a nory

an then sometimes on a Saturday night ood gaun doon tae ma Aunty Sybille's there wid be Jim an Effie ma mother an fither ma Uncle Stan mind ae wis never mairried ma Granny an Granfither ma Aunty Jean an Uncle Davie an ma cousins Janet an Dod oo'd huv some rare nights ma Uncle Davie wis an awfy man fu' ae fun oo'd play cairds maist nights or daft games that ma Uncle Davie wid be in chairge o' then ee might huv tae dae a turn frae I wis wee I wid sing ma Granny loved tae hear songs frae the shows an then Aunty Sybille wid huv the supper aw ready she made her ain breed an the fastiest potted hough I've ever hud or a nice bit ae meat loaf that she'd made hersel ma mother an ma Aunty Jean aye fetched a scone or a cake that they'd made an every now an then ma Uncle Stan wid tell them no tae bother wi onythin the next time an ae wid treat us aw tae fish suppers ae wis awfy guid herted div ee mind ae ma Aunty Sybille a big wummin wi white hair cut like a man's she wis ma grandfather's sister she wis a gey coorse Christian swore like a trooper coorse she'd worked aw her days outside on the ferm

when we first moved down here I found it quite hard I thought we'd made a big mistake I was a city girl I missed not being able to pop into Marks' or Jenner's or have any choice of films or concerts or the theatre at least once a week I would take the bus up to Edinburgh and have a good look round the shops meet my friends for lunch but eventually maybe about eighteen months after we moved I started to feel more at home I would walk for miles out of sheer boredom to start with but then I began to realise that I was excited about the new lambs or the hills turning purple in August when the heather bloomed or watching a flock of starlings whirling about at dusk that I loved the way countryside smelled different at different times of the year that I actually liked platching about in the rain with the wind whipping at my face and not another soul in sight and now wild horses couldn't drag me back to the city

I see that fellae wis in the paper yesterday him that wis at the Volunteer hall last year were ee there I'll never forget it I went wi Jenny Murray oor mothers were cousins Jenny's aye takin aes along tae aw thae high falutin things she's awfy keen on orchestras an plays and exhibeeshuns her man's no interested so she hoys me along wi her mind there isnae much I dinnae enjoy I've heard some braw music an seen some lovely picters I'm never quite sae keen on the plays though unless it's a comedy wi some ae them I'm hotchin in ma sate afore the interval but this night wis a wee bit different it wis a famous writer readin aes stuff mind I'd never heard ae'm well I'll tell ee I wisnae lookin forrit tae it I hud masel convinced it wid be dry as dust but ae wis like a comedy turn for a stert ae looked like ae'd been pu'd through a hedge backwards an aes claes were aw creased they looked

clean enough but there wis a hole in aes jumper an aes breeks looked like they hud bits ae paint aw ower them but mind when ae stertit tae speak ee could tell ae wis an awfy nice fellae but ower mony brains I think ae wid stert tellin ee about somethin an then ae wid get aessel lost an wid juist stand there blinkin an gaun em now well em yes now then where was I an ee were never shair if ee should be laughin or no an this wis aw afore ae he read aes stuff nae bother readin mind an I'll tell ee somethin I got ma education that night Jenny didnae ken where tae look she'd read aes first book an it hud nithin like that in it but this yin well they were dreamin about tyin yin anither up they hud whups an blindfolds an dug collars an nane ae them hud dugs pit it that wey but in the middle ae aw this aes breeks fell doon right doon tae aes ankles an the ha' wis fu tae they'd aw come tae hear the great man an here ae wis wi aes troosers roond aes ankles an ae never geed aes ginger juist kinnae went oh an bent doon tae pu them up aes wife hud louped up tae help him she wis an awfy lookin ticket tae a long purple frock an a dirty yellae jumper straggly long hair an muckle hoolet specs she looked fair roosed she didnae half yank aes breeks up an widnae let him near tae festen them an oo hud tae laugh they werenae festened wi a belt juist an auld safety peen the kind ee wid yase on a bairn's nappy onywey it wis in the paper yesterday ae deed the day afore hert attack it sid

I'll need tae away I sid I'd gie Mrs. Mitchell a hand this efternin she's havin a daffodil tea raisin money for the Guides I've made a Border tart an some shortbread I tried meringues but dinnae ask aes what I did wi them they turned oot flat as pancakes that's how I ended up makin the shortbread ma man'll be happy though he likes a puddin I'll can yase them crushed up wi a tin ae fruit an some cream waste not want not Mrs. Mitchell's havin the tea in her hoose she wis gaun tae huv it outside on the green if it wis nice but by the looks ae things oo'll be inside she's got a braw hoose doon along the waterside huv ee never been it wis her fither's he hud the skin works up the damside mind they pu'd it doon aboot fower year ago tae build the new swimmin pool she's an awfy nice wummin Mrs. Mitchell a widow her man wis Bob Mitchell the maths teacher mind he deed ae cancer she's aye daein somethin tae help somebody no that she's a goody goody wummin no like some ae them she widnae try tae shove religion doon yer throat an her lassie'll be there she's a fair young wummin now Irene she's takin charge ae the raffle hell that's well minded I meant tae lay oot that tin ae talc that I got for ma Christmas an that I cannae be daein wi I'll away the now when I mind an get it looked oot

I see Mary Harkness's man's workin wi Jim Dickison the slater he's hud as mony jobs as he's got fingers an taes that yin he wis on the scaffie cairt no that long ago an afore that he wis up at Rhanelaw quarry mind it wis that time when there wis aw that cairry on aboot them dynamitin the wrong bit an it aw came doon ontae the Glesgae road at least he's workin the fellae no like that yin that bides next door tae'm what's eas name again the bairns caw'm Catweazle mind ae's Bert Johnstone's cousin no that ee'd ever think sae Bert's sic a clean livin fellae he's no a Johnstone for he's a cousin on Bert's mother's side Howlett that's aes name Bob

Howlett Bert's mother wis a Howlett he's a winnae work aye been the same aye got a bad back an that wee wife ae his sic a hard workin wee wummin she aye looks wrocht tae daith

I ken whae ee're speakin about now they bid opposite us in Miller Street afore they moved up tae Henshaw Bank I mind Michael's mother tellin aes aw about it for she wis about off her heid wi it aw took the bairn away tae bide wi hersel in the end of course it wis the bairn's mother's fault tae stert wi she ran away an left Michael when that bairn wis juist an infant she wis a bad besom came frae Penicuik aes mother hud a lot tae dae wi the bairn then helped him oot well she hud tae he hud naebody else then he met that wummin aes wi now she hud her ain three bairns aw aulder is wee Mandy well ee ken ee wid hardly believe it tae look at her ee'd think butter widnae melt an her a teacher tae but seeminly she treated that bairn like a wee slave she hud tae polish the aulder yins' shoes fetch in the coal she never got new claes an her granny sid she wis aye stervin ony time she came tae her hoose but then it got that she hud the awfiest job gettin tae see her an the feenish came when she fund oot that they'd been shuttin her in a cupboard

I loved my grandmother she was a very warm person always had lots of friends even when she was old there were people of all ages at her funeral and plenty of them she was just one of those kind that gets on well with everyone when she came to live with us when my mother took ill she near exhausted herself making sure things were the best they could be for my sister and me and she must have been half out of her mind with worry but she never once made us feel that taking care of us was anything other than her fiercest desire I remember one of the first

mornings she was with us she asked me how I liked my boiled egg and I said soft meaning with a soft yolk but when I knocked the top off a lot of the white was still runny and the yolk was barely warm I didn't have the heart to tell her that it was too soft for me I swallowed it down a bit like you see people eating oysters onto my spoon into my mouth and down before it had a chance to touch the sides of my mouth the thought of it still sends a shiver through me now and I never could eat oysters

for god's sake Tommy tuck that shirt in and festen the buttons on ee're jaiket ee're like naebdy's bairn

naw I've taen a right scunner tae them an ma mother insists on cookin them juist about every time I gaun roond I've tried tellin her but it's nae yiss I juist about boaked the last time when she pit the plate doon in front ae's

I met Eck Dobie when I wis up the street he wis tellin aes that Sam Broon's gey hard up somethin wrong wi's hert no a hert attack juist buggered by the soonds ae things he'd been in the Ex-Servicemen's Club an he couldnae get aes braith an he must've collapsed for they cairted him off tae the General in an ambulance they've sent for aes wife seeminly hingin by a threid so Eck says

that wis a heavy shoor ae rain the wife'll be sweerin she hung a muckle washin oot  
this mornin afore oo came away I says tae her tae that the forecast wisnae guid  
but she widnae listen

- **Memory Therapy**

when, earlier

events can feel

evening can feel

**emotional**

(e.g.

there is little

sequential

**or**

familiar

yelped stop. cruel to be kind fingernails occur we at speed as if irregular care  
 barred "Thanks for that take a blanket she is more or less resheathed tilted  
 through nightmares thinner her sparrae throat in a stiff line sides punctuated  
 in the disease There now, the drugs fetch wailing "Stop it...wrenched off  
 positioning the violent (v) the two two figures repeat and let not soothe.

make me an exerted skull then we can get waken snap minute next hour and  
 a half That'll be nice breath was feeble twisted wheeze hurry outside "I've got  
 geometric light heaved about and moved around from lack singing curled up  
 angels manhandling Mary much in the corner of her eye surprised forever  
 musing fragile on the pull-up rail propelled now through the King of love

relax skin the rabbit for a fraction of soul I think you'll suit this spasm this  
 muscular blank it's not a sprint to the back wall it's a gravity expression  
 propelled off-balance to the dormitory where the word when it came was coax  
 four irregular pulses poured a strain on his cardigan oh topple the pillows I'm  
 scared of flickering unawares your vest effort pained him scrunched his jacket

bastard!! Joan hurry up "You're not supposed to be Eleanor Eleanor's Eleanor  
 She clasped a deep breath was easy too easy "Are you on straight "Aye,"  
 wiped his "I'll be back in a minute smiling He licked his lips was "I her "Oh  
 please disappear me figure it out here Sunday situation all red He had no  
 teeth in countered saying "Phone telephone "Now higher-pitched now blown

spoon the tip bit more good." I'll bubble twice see big sky milk sponge into  
 fiend later...mock-opera neither tune leaned to and fro "There, nothing cheap  
 spilled a set of teeth flicked in perplexed tone how doth the little crocodile  
 go..." See, He laid it down somewhere hungry visible with screwed-up gums  
 tickly it was go on...get out" stick maybe at the mad I'm worried ha ha ha

there followed a tour of the laundry cupboard some "Good God's had wandered into an L-shaped good night a greasy Christ exhaled good night and hey, the shock of his thigh bulky and operatic wound up a system of belly flaps the blood slept well the blood was scared of the mug of tea puffed up and motioning to Christ to exhale exhale and relax the system is glass

relatives dip kiss looking like relatives with a spinster, like a child giggles but Very frail. the thing all whisper and long waiting Conversation two out of conversation family bitterness faraway visits almost seems impossible sitting by stone in and out of reason non-functional sometimes and by means violent despite doubly wrong still you stay there! bounded in hello so walk happily

"Me-e-e? dishevelled at the cut-out half-running out had got out out of puff "let's run rip devils of the air you want to finger dirty have a laugh the girls the big men goes to town "We'll lounge back onto placards never-to-be forgotten sit on fish-net slogans withering in fancy dress "Here mistress hair-grip wafts blue gingham to the outstretched out loud limit "Right that's it stop her parade

she's in hospital "Joan said, serious after skewed sharp." had too much auld knee. got on physio for Ten minutes an looked at a cuddle wantin a war "Whose music time. leaves sour. leaves sweet the same noises on everybody." she grabbed her shoppin going wee blether." Remember two is uniform "And I would "Have folded nice "Come...on" Isa please. dance

sweet-black the obscenities that pulled with no-nonsense sinuous death made her feel nauseated Just a response a notion taut as if mouthed holding smudges of barked crescendos He's from "Let me see." "that sounds like a good idea surface not "Okay," "We need to get you grainy medicines zig-zag dry affectionate to this that would be sore yielding nothing turned away

absence 674



- understand

DAY 45

## JOAN GOES TO TOWN

"Right, Joan. Are you ready?" Mags shouted across the lounge.

Joan was pacing back and forward in front of the toilet door, her hands in her cardigan pockets. She was absorbed in singing to herself. She stood still and was quiet when she heard Mags' voice.

"Yes, hen... I'm as ready as I'll ever be."

She took hold of the skirt of her dress at either side and swished it about, a coquettish grin on her face.

"Aye, you're a wee bobby dazzler," said Mags looking Joan up and down with a smile, "You'll no need a jacket. It's a nice warm night, and we're gaun in the car."

"Gaun in the car?" Joan's face lit up. "Where are oo gaun in the car?"

"We're gaun tae see the fancy dress parade in Gala," Mags replied.

"I telt ye aw this afore...mind?"

She took Joan's arm and they began walking towards the door out into the corridor.

"We're gaun tae see the pipe bands an aw that kinnae thing. You like pipe bands you telt me. You were fair excited earlier on when I said."

"Pipe bands?" Joan sounded puzzled.

"Aye, and the fancy dress parade."

"I like tae hear a pipe band."

Joan was smiling now.

"Are ee shair it's the music ee like best, Joan an no aw thae big men in their kilts?"

"Hey," Joan shouted, "...come on...ya dirty wee...."

Joan's laugh had a rough crackle in it. She started to dance a mock Highland fling.

"Wheeeooch!" she screeched.

She bent down and lifted the hem of Mags' dress.

"Up yer kilt," she yelled.

"Here ya wee besom."

Mags caught her skirt to stop it going up any further.

"Hooch!"

Joan was starting to get out of breath.

"Right, come on, let's go."

Mags tried to sound stern as she took Joan's arm and made for the door.

As they went up the corridor, Mags shouted into the male dormitory,

"Kedzie, we're just goin... come on."

"Aye, come on," shouted Joan, "we're rarin tae go."

"Here I am."

Kedzie smoothed down her white dress and repositioned a hair grip to catch a loose strand of hair.

"I was just turning down the beds for later."

"Aye," said Joan in an appreciative voice, "you're aye busy, hen."

She linked arms with Kedzie.

"Come on," she said, "this yin's takin us oot."

"Aye, I'm takin her oot tae see some big men in kilts, isn't that right, Joan?"

"Ohoh... you're a wee smasher right enough," said Joan.

She started to skip.

"I doot thae men'll no be safe," said Mags speeding up to keep up with her.

"We'll need to keep an eye on you, Joan."

"Div ee think sae?" Joan winked at Kedzie.

"Oh, definitely," replied Kedzie sounding very serious but smiling.

"Wheee.....ooch!"

Joan kicked out a leg.

"We'll have a grand time though, girls, eh?"

"Well it's a lovely night, Joan, and we'll get a hurl in the car. It'll be a fair wee treat," said Mags.

"It'll be lovely, hen. I'm fair pleased."

Kedzie let go of Joan's arm so that she could turn both door handles simultaneously to let them out of the ward.

"By here, you're a clever yin," said Joan.

Mags parked the car at the side of the road.

"I think this'll be as good a spot as any," she said.

"The parade comes right along here so we'll get a good view."

"Right, hen," said Joan.

She looked out the car windows. She grabbed the back of Mags' seat to help her turn round to look out the back.

"There's plenty folk gaun about. Look at them aw. They dinnae seem to be in much ae a hurry."

"They're watching for the parade coming, Joan," said Kedzie.

"Are they?...It must be awfy popular."

"It's cause they've heard you were comin'," said Mags.

"Div ee think sae?"

Joan rolled down the window, jerking the handle and shouting, 'Hello!' to the people on the other side of the street even before the window was fully opened.

Her hand slipped off the handle and she lunged forward saying 'bugger it' under her breath as she refocused her attention on the handle and got the window down.

"Hey you...hello!"

She waved. Some people across the street waved back. She pushed her face right out of the window.

"Hello!"

Her voice broke into rough giggles as she bounced back into her seat.

"I thought thae folk were gaun tae be awfy snooty there," she said to Kedzie then turned and stuck her face out the window again.

"Hey," she yelled, "hello!"

The people on the other side waved again.

"It's a grand night, eh?"

"Shh now, Joan," said Mags, "leave thae folk alane...the parade'll be here the now. I can hear the band and folk cheerin. We'd better get out now so that we can get a better view."

Joan looked at Kedzie and winked a great big exaggerated wink.

"She's got aw the good ideas eh, hen?"

Mags had got out of the car and opened Joan's door.

"Come on then, let's be havin you."

Half-way out, Joan looked back at Kedzie with a dead-pan expression.

"Here, I'm gettin treated like the Queen ae Sheba."

"Come on," said Mags pulling Joan's arm, "the parade'll be here the now. We dinnae want tae be in the road. I cannae very well go back and tell them you were run ower wi a lorry now can I?"

Joan was struggling to stand up out of the car. She giggled at Mags and sank back down again. At the third attempt she stood up straight. Both she and Mags let out big sighs of relief.

"Aye, auld age disnae come itsel, hen," Joan said as she stepped forward on one leg to steady herself.

Kedzie had got out the other side of the car and was standing in a gap between two groups of people. Mags steered Joan onto the pavement beside her.

"Room for a wee yin?" asked Joan as she stepped up onto the kerb and took Kedzie's arm.

A man in a yellow shirt moved out of the way to let her in.

"Thanks, son," she said.

The man smiled and said,

"Nae bother."

The pavements on both sides of the road were crowded now.

"Can you hear the band, Joan?" asked Kedzie.

Joan nodded. She was la-la-ing *Scotland the Brave* and tapping her right foot.

"Oh aye, I hear them."

She sang the words '*Scotland the Brave*' and burst into a loud laugh.

"Oh it's fair guid, hen," she smiled to Kedzie as she cuddled into her.

The sound of the pipes and drums got nearer. There were loud cheers.

"Hurray," shouted Joan.

A pipe band appeared over the crest of the hill to their right. It was playing *Rowan Tree*.

"Woohoo," she yelped, "hurray."

Holding on to Kedzie's arm, she swayed to the music, singing at the top of her voice.

*"Oh..oh rowan tree, oh rowan tree ye're aye sae dear tae me, e-entwined thou art wi' mony ties o' hame and infancy. Your boughs were aye the first tae*

*bloom dum dee dumdee dee du-um dee dee, dum dee dee dee dum dum diddle  
dee dum dum dum dee dee dee, oh..oh rowan tree."*

The band was level with them now.

"Hello, son....gaun yersel...that's it...sook and sook and sook and blaw."

Joan bawled the words of the song as she mimicked the puffing in and out of the pipers' cheeks. She roared with laughter. She started to dance a jig, jiggling Kedzie up and down with her as she shouted,

"Wheee..oooch!"

Then she lunged forward and made a grab for one of the piper's kilts. Mags and Kedzie managed to catch her and pull her back.

"Up yer kilt," she shouted, "wheee....ooch!"

"Joan," barked Mags, "come on, stop it, or we'll have to take you hame."

"Away, I'm fair enjoyin masel."

Joan sounded incredulous as they dragged her up onto the pavement.

"Were they no just lovely, hen?"

"They were, Joan. They were really good," said Kedzie taking her arm.

People on either side had turned to look at the three of them. Most of them were laughing. The man in the yellow shirt shook his head as he caught Mags' eye and said,

"You've got your hands fu' there."

But Joan was oblivious.

"Did ye see the legs on them?...Did ye see their hairy knees?"

Then she was singing again.

*"There was cheese, cheese and mince wi hairy knees in the Store, in the Store. There was cheese, cheese, and mince wi hairy knees in the Co-operative Store....behind the door!"*

Joan clapped her hands and swayed her hips as she sang to Kedzie.

*"My eyes a-are blind I cannot see...."*

A line of children caught her attention. They were dressed as wax crayons.

"Aw, look at them."

She was standing still now.

"Aw thae lovely wee bairns, an aw thae lovely colours."

Her hands went up to her face and covered her mouth. The children waved to the crowd as they went past. Joan bent down and waved back to them.

"Cheerie," she said loud enough for them to hear but not too loud.

Her stare followed them up the road. She turned back to see what else was coming along.

A ripple of laughter preceded a group of men dressed as women as they came over the brow of the hill. They wore suspenders and fish-net stockings, short skirts and bras stuffed with socks and balloons. Coloured paper cut-outs of fruit were stuck on their bodies and dangled from their hats. They had placards around their necks with 'Stevie Dunn's Border Tarts' written in felt tip pen.

The men came nearer. They were strung across the road. They played to the crowd. They sashayed, hands on hips. They stopped and lifted up the hems of their skirts. They pinged their garters.

Joan caught sight of them. She stood still and watched them with a huge grin on her face. Then she shouted out,

"Come on then, ya dirty wee...."

She stepped off the kerb and cupped her hands to her mouth.

"Look at thae legs.....here...son...."

She lifted up her own dress to just above the knee and started prancing onto the road.

"Joan," shouted Mags, "come here...stop that."

But Joan was off. The nearest 'tart' came running up to her and grabbed her by the waist. He waltzed Joan round and round, the cardboard pears and apples that dangled from his hat catching in her hair. Then he gave her a big kiss on the cheek before running to catch up with his friends, straightening his hat as he went. Joan stood at the side of the road.

"Thanks son...that was lovely," she shouted after him.

Mags pulled her back onto the pavement.

"Did you see that...what a nice fellae. Gave me a kiss...did you see it...a big smacker right there."

She put a finger to a smudge of lipstick on her cheek.

"Aye we saw it awright, Joan," said Mags, "we'd better no tell Jimmy."

"Jimmy...whae's that?" Joan looked worried for a moment.

"Jimmy...him ye're aye gi'en a cuddle in the mornin'," said Mags.

"I dinnae ken ony Jimmy." Joan was adamant. "Ma man's name's Jock."

Mags put her arm round Joan's shoulders and gave her a squeeze.

"Och aye, so it is. Fancy me forgettin that, Joan."

The silver band was playing 'For we're no awa tae bide awa'. Joan started to march on the spot. She la-la-ed the tune, swaying to and fro and pumping her arms up and down.

"Are no gettin tired, Joan?" asked Mags.

"Me, hen? No, I'm just fair smashin."

"You're no needin a seat, for we could go across to that wall and sit doon, or we could go back into the car?"

"Here," said Joan, "you'd think I was an auld wummin the wey you're gaun on. I'm okay."

She turned to Kedzie,

"Are you awright, hen? Do you want to go and sit on that wa' across there and get a wee rest? You'll have been workin hard aw day the day."

"No I'm fine thanks, Joan, honestly. I'm happy to be wherever you want to be."

Joan smiled and tucked one arm into Kedzie's and the other into Mags.

Behind the band a circus ringmaster led his troupe of performers. Four clowns cartwheeled and lollopped around a three-piece band. The band, a drummer, a trumpeter and an accordionist, wore the dishevelled remnants of dinner suits. The accordionist also wore a tartan tammy from which protruded a fringe of fluorescent pink hair. They played the theme tune to Monty Python's Flying Circus. One of the clowns mis-timed a cartwheel and collided with the accordionist whose instrument let out a loud wail as it was squeezed too hard at the wrong moment.

"Whoops," shouted Joan, "that was a sair yin."

Mags nudged her and said 'ssshhh' as she put her finger to her lips.

Decorated floats started to come past. Joan watched them, shouting 'hello' and 'hurray' with the crowds that lined the street, yelling to a lorryful of scantily clad devils that they would 'catch their daiths'. Cheers followed the last of them up the street.

"Still something else to come by the looks of things," said Kedzie.

"It'll be Sandy Jamieson. He's aye near the end ae the parade," said Mags.

A tall well-built man appeared. He wore a blonde wig and a Margaret Thatcher mask. He wore a dress made of ripped and torn Union Jack flags. The dark hairs on his legs were flattened beneath a pair of pink tights. There was a hole in one knee. He wore white high heels. Pinned to his chest was a placard with the words 'I'm making a right arse of it'. He had a hand on one hip. A handbag swung from his wrist. He walked with an exaggerated catwalk swagger. With his

free hand he swept the blonde curls of the wig back from his face, and blew kisses to the crowd who squealed in shocked delight as every now and then he stopped to wiggle his behind at them.

"Is he no just the limit," giggled Mags.

"She's a caird, right enough," said Joan.

"Gaun yersel, Sandy!" shouted the man in the yellow jumper beside them.

Sandy came across at the sound of the familiar voice. He lifted up his mask.

"Div ee think Maggie's feet get as sair as this, Tommy?" said Sandy, taking his feet out of the high heels and wiggling his toes.

"That's mibbe how she's as hard faced, Sandy."

"Well, Christ, I tell ee, I'll be gled tae get rid ae ther."

Sandy made a face as he squeezed the shoes back on and pulled the mask down over his face. He turned his back to the crowd on the pavement and wiggled what would have been a pair of plastic buttocks except that the left one had been cut out. The crowd guffawed.

"Here, is that no bein' a bit cheeky son," piped up Joan.

"Joan, he's only havin a laugh," said Mags.

"I ken," said Joan.

"I can have a laugh tae though. Here, son," she shouted, "yer erse has fa'en oot yer breeks."

She let out a loud dirty laugh.

Sandy ignored her comment.

"Hello darlin," he shouted, and blew her a big kiss.

"Never mind kissin," she roared.

"Come here and I'll skelp yer erse."

There was a loud burst of laughter from the people round about.

Mags turned to Kedzie and said,

"Right, that's it, Kedzie. Get her back in the car quick.

Mags took Joan by the arm.

"Come on, Joan," said Kedzie, "time to get back home... that's it finished."

They started to walk back to the car, one on either side of her, Joan shouting 'Whooo!', swaying from side to side and singing

*"For we're no' awa tae bide awa, no we're no awa tae leave ye, for we're no awa tae bide awa, we'll aye come back an see ye."*

"Joan, ye're a rare singer," said Mags guiding her to the car and opening the back door.

"But right now, in you go... come on..here's the polis comin...we'll need tae shift the car."

Joan looked horrified,

"The polis...where?"

"Just there, look, comin up the road."

"Oh, I see him. Here," Joan's tone changed, "he's a darlin. Evenin all," she shouted in the direction of the young policeman who was almost level with them.

"Aye, aye," he nodded and smiled.

Mags and Kedzie were trying to get Joan to sit in the car

"Come on Joan...into the car..."

"But I'm speakin tae Dixon o Dock Green...have ye seen him? He's a wee honey."

Mags and Kedzie had managed to get her to sit down but she was still facing out of the car. She stood back up again, grabbed the top of the car door and swung round to look at the policeman who had stopped beside them.

"Hey, son," Joan shouted again.

The policeman turned round. Joan gave him a big wink.

"Ye're lovely."

He shouted 'thanks' to make himself heard above the music that blared out of the sundry tractors, trailers and pick-up trucks bedecked in multi-coloured crepe paper and foliage-entwined superstructures full of adults armed with water pistols and alcoholic beverages that continued to straggle past at the end of the parade.

Mags and Kedzie managed to get Joan into the car this time. She shuffled along the back seat and wound down the window before they could stop her. She stuck her head and shoulders out and was more or less right beside the policeman.

"Evenin all," she shouted again, her voice rough with all the roaring she had done, and burst into loud giggles.

The policeman smiled as he turned towards her and said,

"Aye, aye."

"Joan, get back inside the car...come on...you'll get us arrested. Sorry," Mags said to the policeman.

"You're okay," he said, turning to keep an eye on the crowd.

Mags got into the back seat beside Joan and pulled her back in.

"You're lovely, son," Joan was still shouting, twisting her head through the diminishing space as Mags managed to wind the window up.

"Get your face in here, Joan, afore I strangle ye. Now come on...Kedzie, get in the back and keep an eye on her."

Kedzie got in beside Joan. Joan shrugged her shoulders, pursed her lips together and opened her eyes wide like a mischievous child.

"What's eatin her?" she asked.

"She's worried you're going to get us into trouble I think, Joan," said Kedzie.

"Me-e-e?...trouble?...away...dinnae be ridiculous."

Mags got into the driver's seat. She was out of puff. She eyed Joan in the rear-view mirror.

"Right, are we settled now? Are you gonnae behave yoursel, Joan Scott?"

"I aye behave masel," said Joan in sweet voice.

"I'm as good as gold."

The three women linked arms as they went down the last flight of steps before the corridor that led back to the ward. Light shone down on them from a window at the turn of the stairs. They were singing Scotland the Brave.

"There now, we've had a rare night," said Mags as the song finished.

"Oh, it's been smashin," said Joan, "fair smashin."

She paused to get her breath back.

"Mind, I'm fair bugged now."

"Aye, you'll sleep the night."

Mags squeezed Joan's arm, and hugged her close.

"What was your favourite bit, Joan?" asked Kedzie.

"My favourite bit? Bit ae what?"

"Tonight."

"I just couldnae right say. It was aw lovely."

"The pipe band?"

"What pipe band was that, hen?"

"The pipe band earlier on...at the parade."

"Oh?...was there?...I love a pipe band!...wheeeeeooch!"

Joan kicked out her right leg as she breenged forward pulling Mags and Kedzie with her.

"Well, you fair enjoyed yoursel, Joan, when you heard them," Mags laughed.

"Oh I did. I did that...you lassies have been right guid tae me.....I love you girls, hen," she said right out loud.

i  
love you

|

costumes

the air

the air  
you drum

at the

dirty have

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dishevelled  
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music

rip devils

remnants

always

remnants

*In the lounge the light was fading fast,  
another night to add to past.*

I worked on the top flat there were big windaes aw along the roof that let in the light it wis a nice light ee didnae get blinded like ee could wi ordinary windaes an the wa's were white so it felt fair bright an airy oo hud big long tables tae roll the cloth oot on lookin for aw the imperfections wee holes or loose threids or bits where the shadin wisnae right oo merked them aw wi a wee bit threid an sometimes pit a wee note on so's the menders wid ken what they needed tae dae

when I wis a bairn I wis an awfy light sleeper an there wis this time the bedroom windae stertit up the awfiest rattle an ee ken what like a rattle is it's no like a clock tickin it's no regular so ony time it wis windy I'd be tryin tae get tae sleep wi ma fingers in ma ears or stuffin them up wi bits ae cotton wool but that wis never ony guid eer fingers lose their grip as ee faw asleep an the cotton wool juist faws oot so I hud ma fither tryin aw sorts he made wee wedges oot ae kindlin an stapped them atween the windaes but the rattlin didnae stop he pit mair wedges at the bottom and the top but the rattlin wis still there he puttied aw roond the panes and repainted them in case they were loose but that wis still nae guid every time it wis windy this bloody rattle wid stert up an I widnae could get tae sleep I wis about demented an so wis he but the mair I listened tae it the mair I realised it wisnae the windae itsel that rattled it seemed tae be the inside ae the right side ae the windae I tried tae explain it tae ma fither so he ended up cuttin a hole through the wid an here it wis the leed wecht on the end ae the sash cord that I'd been hearin the wind wis gettin through intae the casement an makin it bang about inside so he puttied up the ootside ae the windae frame an wrapped the leed wecht in a bit ae felt an it wis fine efter that

hell I couldnae afford a windae cleaner I did them aw mase! I did the bottom yins yin fortnight and the top yins the next that wis enough some folk did theirs yince a week but I couldnae be bothered wi that cairry on I hud better things tae dae oo were never no able tae see oot them the only time I did them oftener wis if a bird did its business on them then I'd swear

I'm no a big milk drinker I can take it in a puddin that kinnae thing but I widnae think ee for a tumblerfae mind when oo wis wee if oo werenae weel ma mother wid make saps breed soaked in hot milk an plenty sugar ladled on top I wid lap them up milk wis nearly the daith ae's yin time though I yased tae help auld Eck Whiteford wi the milk cairt horse an cairt the cairt fu ae milk churns the big silver yins ma job wis tae haud Champ Eck's horse he wis a big canny beast while Eck wis dolin oot the milk but this time oo were juist along the Traquair road there when somethin must huv frichtened Champ for he bolted I ended up on the grund an the cairt run right ower the top ae's tae tell the truth I cannae mind much aboot it but I mind I wis in ma bed fur weeks I wis gey sair bruised ma mother lookin efter aes an bein fair worried the doctor tellt her that I was very lucky but that ma bowel hud been crushed an that I would need laxatives for the rest ae ma days an hell I still take a teaspoon ae Senokot every night in life

they're makin an awfy mess ae the High Street the now they've been howkin an better howkin right along frae Nicolson's tae the top ae the Kirk Pend for mair is a week now somebody sid they were layin a new gas main but seeminly it's the Water Board they've been havin an awfy cairry on there wis a burst somewhere outside the Waverley Hotel but they've hud tae dig oot fer mair is they'd thocht tae

find where the bother wis an replace the pipe for it must've been burst at mair is yin bit an that's what's caused the bother Jimmy Sivilis wis tellin aes that they'd hud nae water aw along that side ae the street on Tuesday they'd hud tae shut the Waverley for they'd nae water I says tae'm hell they didnae need tae dae that oo could easy drink oor whisky athoot water

oo'll be gaun tae the fitba on Seturday Geordie Broon's gaun tae take us in aes van the Herts is playin Celtic it'll be a guid game baith teams wi some rare players the now I think that young yin'll be worth the watchin he played awfy weel in aes first game he's guid at the jinkin oo hud Tam Blyth wi us that time but I'm bloody shair he'll no be comin on Seturday he's yin ae thae kind that could stert a row in a paper poke it juist spoils the whole day for awbody he's no a nice man

the wife's got fer ower much furnitur in that bedroom she says she needs it tae keep aw her stuff she's got twae double wardrobes for she took ma mother's when shae deed a single wardrobe that's mine a dressin table a muckle yin ae thae ottoman stools wi the padded seats yin ae thae modern things wi the wardrobe kinnae bit on the bottom an a big shelfy thing on the top ken they caw them units nowadays an that's as weel as the double bed an auld upholstered chair that she got at the saleroom that naebody's allowed tae sit on for it's delicate an twae dinin chairs oot the livin room even then there's muckle plastic pokes fu ae God knows what stuck on the top ae awthin it's a wonder I can ever get intae ma bed at night I says tae her ee never even yase half that stuff she's aye buyin an pittin it away for guid then never yasin it she's got mair sheets an towels than oo'll ever need there'll be an awfy clearin oot when onythin happens tae the pair ae us

I never bocht a bike in aw ma days ma fither got aes yin frae auld Eck Brunton auld Eck aye hud an awfy bother wi aes shooder an ma fither wid massage it for him he wis guid at it he lairnd it through the fitba the trainers did aw that kinnae thing in thae days it wis a guid bike it wis solid it hud the auld hub brakes they didnae half get hot by the time ee got tae the bottom ae Walker Street Brae thonder ee could've fried an egg on them then when Joe the Pole deed mind he wis killed when that roof fell in thon time when they were daein up the new bit ae the Hosiery his wife gied aes his yin it'd hardly been yased I take it tae ma work every day yet

oo get aw oor dung frae the hame ferm Sir Donald aye made shair oo got plenty for ae loved aes gairden Johnstone ae wid say just tell Mr. Elliot how much you need and he'll have it brought over ae wis a guid man tae work for Sir Donald there wis never nae side tae'm no like that yin that's there noo ae's a slippery cratur made ae's money oot in Hong Kong Sir Donald didnae leave the estate tae him an aed be turnin in aes grave if he kent that's whae hud it Sir Donald left it tae that yin's cousin but he wis killed in a skiin accident it wis an awfy tragedy an this yin wis aes nearest livin relative aes got nae idea aboot how tae run an estate ae leaves everythin tae the factor ee hardly ever see'm spends maist ae's time doon in London ae's got a flat in Knightsbridge an well that's where ae dis aw aes business ae's got nae interest in the gairden at aw couldnae care less mind I'm shair ae'd notice if oo did nithin but it's no like the auld days wi Sir Donald an aes fither afore'm for I've been here aw ma days ma fither wis the heid gairdener afore aes an I'm pleased tae say that ma laddie's keen tae ae's been brocht up in the faith ae's fair taen tae the fuchsias ae's been breedin them aessel an winnin a few

prizes the wife wis fair toorled when ae cawed yin efter her Ellen Armstrong it's cawed Sir Donald wid've been pleased for ae loved fuchsias ae loved aw floers oo aye hud tae huv a big display when ae hud company the big hoose wid be aw decked oot the wife did that she wis awfy guid at the floer arrangin an oo'd huv tae keep the kitchen gaun in fruit an veg even grew oor ain peaches an grapes in the big glesshooses but there's nithin like that noo lucky if ee see'm three times a year Christmas a week at the stert ae the fishin season an the same when the shootin sterts an even then I think it's juist tae butter up aes London cronies ae's aye got a crowd wi'm ony roads

there wis a muckle speeder right in the middle ae the livin room flair it juist stood an looked at aes but when I got near it it fair shot away under the settee so I juist left it I thought I'll get it later on if it comes back oot but wi ony luck I'll no be seein it again no that I'm feared ae them but thae big yins can gie's the wullies I try no tae kill them if I can help it I usually catch them in ma hanky or a tea towel an pit them ootside onythin that keeps the flees doon's a freend ae mine I dinnae pu their webs doon ither at least no for wee while ma mother aye says that's juist an excuse for lazybuggeritis

thae scones should be aboot ready they've hud a guid ten meenits I juist made them plain the day Mrs. Addison asked aes if I wid help her oot at the Guild coffee mornin so I thought ee cannae gaun fer wrong wi a plain scone ee can make them savoury or sweet by what ee pit on them an it's no everybody that likes fruit onyway an it's no ower dear tae make a scone no like a big cake or things that take a lot ae butter

Alec huv ee polished thae shoes yet oo've tae be at the Kirk for half past

Jenny I'm away up the street are ee needin onythin

aye her man wis due hame this efternin she should huv a smile on her face by  
now

I wis damned roosed the bairns came in shoutin that the rag man wis at the fit ae  
the street an could they huv somethin so I fund an auld skirt that I wis seek ae  
lookin at an there were a couple ae Bill's jumpers that were gettin kinnae shelpit  
but they were pure merino lambswool an I though they might've got a penny each  
for them but hell they came back wi a balloon each an of course ae wis well away  
by that time I tell ee they ken how tae make money thae kind

I'm makin lentil soup the day I like tae huv it ready for'm comin in frae the Kirk

I've never liked cucumber it's about the only thing I could never really take to that  
and melon but I think they're related aren't they they're part of the same family  
they have a funny smell about em that just turns my stomach I'm a Lancashire lad  
me Burnley I came here durin the war I was invalided out to Peel Hospital an I

liked it so much around here that I came back in 1947 to work for Smith's the butcher in the High Street that was me trade you see I'd got to know George Smith when I first were up here an he'd said if I ever needed a job to get in touch wi'm so I did I got off the train in the station and I looked around and I thought this is God's own country and I never want to be anywhere else

the Kelsae ram sales wis aye a guid day oot I've seen aes make a right mess ae masel an havin tae walk miles in the derk tae get hame

DAY 47

## KEDZIE'S CONVERSATION WITH MAGS

It was just after six. Kedzie and Mags were eating sandwiches and drinking tea in the kitchen. The windows were open. The air was warm. Evening sunlight moved through it becoming as breathable as the air itself. Through the kitchen door Mags and Kedzie could see into the lounge where the patients sat and dozed or looked at nothing in particular as they breathed in the air thick as it was with sluggish golden light.

"Whae wis that you were wi this efternin?"

"Oh, that's my tutor. She came to see how I was getting on."

"I've never seen them daein that before."

"She's new...enthusiastic I guess."

"So wis she impressed?"

"I think she was a bit horrified actually. She's going to set up a meeting with Gwen to 'address her concerns' as she put it."

"I'd love tae be at that meetin."

"Looks like I will be, and I'm not looking forward to it."

"Well, just you tell it like it is, Kedzie. Do us all a favour. Far too much ae this 'aye been' palaver, and folk gettin away wi things they shouldnae. No that I'm blamin them too much. I'm aw for an easy life, but this never havin enough staff makes things worse. Nae wonder folk are off sick. It's no as if Gwen an the rest ae them huvnae a clue; they ken fine what goes on. Too many ae them feared tae rock the boat. An, well ye've seen yersel, what we huv tae dae sometimes just tae get through the work. For if we didnae they'd just end up in a bloody worse state. And look at this the night. Us sittin havin oor tea here an keepin an eye on them at

the same time. Aw very well for them tellin us that we shouldnae dae this and we shouldnae dae the next thing, but, Christ, I'd like tae see them daein it day in an day oot. They're aye rantin on aboot patient dignity but it's no sae bloody easy. An then they come oot wi aw their new-fangled ideas. Things like bloody reality orientation. Bloody sin if ye ask me. How many times dae they want ye tae tell somebody that their man's deid? Fair enough, tell them it's Monday an that it's their tea an no their breakfast they're eatin, but tae ma mind it's a lot kinder maist ae the time just tae tell a wee white lie. I mean, the puir auld bastards, what've they got? Mind, they would drive a saint tae bloody distraction the lot ae them."

"You just have to love them, really, don't you?"

"Christ, I'm no sae shair aboot that."

"I mean in the sense of respecting them, caring for them, trying to understand why they're the way the are."

"Try tellin that tae some ae them in here."

DAY 50

## EVA LOSES IT

It was lunchtime. Linda, Kedzie and Michelle were busy settling the last of those who could sit at the table into their seats. The kitchen door opened and was wedged open by Sheila.

"What treats have they got in store for us today then, Sheila?" Linda was tucking a long piece of paper towel into the neck of Harry's shirt.

"Th-thank you," said Harry pulling at the paper at his neck as if it were a tight collar.

"Christ's sake, leave it be, Harry."

Linda pushed Harry's hand away from the makeshift napkin, and shoved even more of it inside Harry's shirt.

"There's enough mess tae clean up in this place without havin tae change your shirt every other five minutes."

Harry's face turned red.

"Can you believe, liver casserole," Sheila shouted.

"That's fuckin disgustin," Michelle said to Kedzie who was pulling a chair out to let Berta sit down.

"And it looks like fruit salad and ice cream for afters."

"And that's no much better. Wi half ae them the fruit juist rummels aboot in their mooths, an next thing they're bloody chokin."

"It's the liquidised stuff that sickens me," said Kedzie. "With liver it's always that horrible grey colour."

"I couldnae bloody eat it, that's for shair," said Michelle guiding Berta into the table as Kedzie pushed a chair in behind her.

"You can sit down now, Berta," said Kedzie raising her voice.

Berta sat down. She never spoke or turned her head to see who was speaking to her. She just looked vaguely annoyed but too distracted to be bothered to do anything about it.

Sheila appeared at the kitchen door again with a large metal spoon in her hand.

"I wish Eva would hurry up. She said that she would dish up. She's been in that office with Gwen for the best part of an hour."

"And they don't look too happy from where I'm standing," said Kedzie.

"Eva's waving a piece of paper around, and it looks like Gwen's trying to escape."

"Eva did say she was going to try and get us some extra cover over the holidays what with Lena being off sick."

She looked at her watch.

"I'd better start. It's just sitting there getting cold."

She went back into the kitchen. Linda and Michelle followed her. Kedzie was still busy tucking in paper towel napkins.

"Where's the pairty?" asked Joan.

"No party, Joan, just lunch."

"I thought oo were havin a pairty. Everybody gettin their bibs on, an us aw sittin roond the table."

"Divn't talk daft, woman," Eleanor tutted.

"It's norra party. We're all here for..."

Eleanor's voice was very serious.

"We're all here for..."

"Haein somethin tae eat are oo no?"

Peggy fiddled with the fork at her place setting.

"Oo've got ther things."

"Lunch time, ladies," said Kedzie.

"It's a tasty casserole today, then ice cream and fruit."

"Very nice, hen," said Joan.

"I'm fair lookin forrit tae'd."

Linda and Michelle were bringing through plates of food and putting them on the tables when Eva came hurrying in from the corridor.

"Sorry, girls, sorry. I didn't expect to be that long." She had taken off her glasses and was squeezing them into her pocket. Sheila moved out of the way to let her in to dish up the lunch.

"Just you carry on, Sheila. I need a minute to calm down."

Eva leaned on the edge of the food trolley as Sheila resumed filling up plates with stewed liver, mashed potatoes and carrots.

"That bloody Gwen, I'll swing for her."

"How, what happened? You look fair harassed."

"Well for a start she spent god knows how long going on about how many hours extra she's been putting in lately getting ready for the opening of the new admin block. How she's had to be on the phone to Sir whatever his name is that's opening it, and how Lady so and so, his wife, is allergic to just about everything under the sun so the catering's a nightmare, and how she's sorting it all out."

"She'll be in her element there," said Michelle taking a plate from Sheila.

"My thoughts exactly. Then I got all about how she's so busy she's not leaving here till nine or ten at night."

Eva suddenly stepped away from the trolley.

"That liquidised liver's hellish, isn't it? I don't know how anybody can eat it."

She screwed up her face, then continued,

"You know this, I think she's going off her head, I really do. I was speaking to Margaret Storey yesterday, the sister in Sweethope Ward, and she was telling

me that sometimes Gwen goes in there when she's finished and hangs about any of their really ill patients. Sometimes she'll sit with them till they die. They have to chase her away some nights. And God knows how many fags she's smoking, but she got through at least four in the time she was in the office. I'm stinking."

"But are we getting any extra cover?" asked Sheila.

"Don't even mention it."

Eva flung out the words on an arc of suppressed anger.

Berta was sitting up very straight. She held onto the arms of the chair. Staring ahead, she looked rigid, implacable. Only her eyelids moving as she blinked denied a state of seeming petrification.

"Come on, Berta, eat up. Your lunch is getting cold," Eva shouted to her across the table. Eva was shovelling spoonfuls of food into Edith's mouth. Edith chewed and swallowed, opening her mouth with steady regularity. Berta started to speak.

"I dinnae ken what tae dae, I dinnae ken what tae dae, I dinnae ken what tae dae, I dinnae ken what tae dae."

She kept repeating the phrase as Eva shouted across to her.

"Just eat your lunch, Berta. Pick up your fork and get stuck in. Look at the table, Berta."

Eva's voice was more insistent.

"Your plate's in front of you. It'll be cold if you don't hurry up."

Berta just kept staring in front of her repeating, "I dinnae ken what tae dae," in a mournful refrain to herself, and every now and then she would shake her head.

"Berta," Eva shouted to her, "come on, you've hardly eaten anything for days. You'll be wasting away."

"She is," shouted Linda who was in the lounge feeding Alice.

"I had her in the bath the other day, and she's just skin and bone."

Edith's plate was empty. Eva wiped her mouth and gave her a beaker of milk in her hand.

"Right, Edith. Drink that up. I'm going to help Berta."

Edith put the spout to her lips and drank the milk. Eva leaned over Berta's shoulder, squeezing in between her and wee Mary.

"Sorry, Mary. I just need to get in here to help Berta."

She cut up the food on Berta's plate and got a forkful ready to put in her mouth. Berta still kept repeating "I dinnae ken what tae dae, I dinnae ken what tae dae."

"Just open your mouth, Berta and taste this. It's really nice, isn't it, Mary?"

"Yess," lisped Mary.

"Look, Mary's eating hers. Edith's finished. Come on, open wide."

Eva held the loaded fork to Berta's mouth. Berta immediately pursed her lips together tight. Her nostrils flared at the smell of the food. She closed her eyes and drew her head away from the tines of the fork.

"Berta, come on. Open your mouth."

Eva dabbed with the fork at Berta's lips. Berta turned her head away at every touch.

"Come on now, Berta, please, you've got to eat something. You'll make yourself ill."

But Berta just tightened her lips ever harder against the fork.

"God, you're stubborn, Berta. ....Right, we'll just have to do what we do with the babies."

Eva pinched Berta's nose. Berta tried to free herself from Eva's grip by pushing down hard on the arms of the chair and leaning as far back as she could. She kept her eyes closed. She kept her mouth closed until she had to breathe. Eva tipped the food into her opened mouth and let go of her nose. A look of disgust crossed Berta's face. She opened her eyes and spat the food out. Some of it landed on her plate, some on the table. The rest dribbled down her front.

"Berta, that's not nice. Other people are eating," said Eva, taking Berta's napkin off and wiping up the spat-out food.

"Pass me more paper towels, please, Kedzie."

Kedzie went to tear off some.

"Just bring the roll across."

Kedzie placed the paper towel roll on the table in front of her.

"Thanks."

She already had another forkful of food ready. She tucked a fresh piece of paper into the top of Berta's dress. Berta still sat upright, her hands gripping the chair arms. She had closed her eyes again.

"Right, Berta, this time you're going to eat it, okay?"

Eva took a deep breath and paused to relax her shoulders before she grabbed hold of Berta's nose again, pinching it hard, forcing Berta to open her mouth. Berta struggled a bit but her mouth opened and the food went in. Before she could spit any out, Eva clamped her mouth shut. She let go of her nose, but held onto her head to try to keep it still.

"Get that chewed up and swallowed, Berta. Come on, swallow!"

Berta started to make a roaring noise. She was trying to spit the food out. Gravy and mashed potato oozed from her lips. Eva tried to hold them together to stop it.

"Swallow, Berta, swallow. "

Eva seemed to be lost in her determination to keep Berta's mouth shut: Berta the recipient of her frustration and her pity. But Berta was having none of it. She let go of the chair and grabbed at the hand that held her mouth. Her eyes were wide open. In their wild stare was old age and breathing and horror and scorn and fear and indignation. She pulled Eva's hand away enough to spit more food out. This made Eva's hand slippy. That and Berta's struggling seemed to make something snap inside her.

"Right, that's it! You're not making a fool of me. You'll eat the whole bloody lot if it kills me."

Berta struggled like a mannequin in a nightmare, roaring and choking and clawing at Eva's hands.

"Eva!" shouted Sheila, "Stop!"

"Aye, come on, Eva," said Michelle hurrying to her side and taking her by the shoulders.

"Leave her be, for Christ's sake. Gie the hormones a holiday. She's no worth it."

At Michelle's touch, Eva loosened her grip on Berta who coughed and spluttered food and saliva all over herself and the table.

"Away and get a cuppa coffee. I'll sort her oot. She's just a contrary auld besom."

"And I'll get some tea for Berta, see if that'll calm her down," said Kedzie, her voice exaggeratedly light as if she was trying to make everything seem normal.

Michelle shooed Eva away from Berta and towards the kitchen. Eva was still seething, her body tight, shimmering with rage. She shook her head as if to get rid of something and muttered,

"I'm getting too old for this."

"Right, Berta," said Michelle "let's get you away oot ae here."

Berta was still coughing and spluttering. Michelle grabbed her chair from behind and pulled hard, jerking Berta and the chair away from the table.

"Sorry about this, folks. Sorry Mary. I'll get her away oot yer road and let ye finish yer dinner."

She pulled Berta's chair round to face in the direction of the lounge. The force of the movement tipped it back, so that when she let it go it thumped back down onto the ground pitching Berta forward.

"Oh!" Berta exclaimed and settled herself back into the seat.

"Right, come on you, up off the chair."

Michelle started to heave at Berta's arm to get her to stand up but changed her mind.

"Wait the now till I wipe aw this bloody mess off ye."

She grabbed some paper towel and rubbed at the front of Berta's dress. Berta caught at her hands and tried to stop her. Michelle jerked her hands away and carried on, each wipe landing like a blow. Then she hauled at Berta's arm to get her to stand up. Still coughing, Berta stumbled beside Michelle across to a seat. She started to mumble something. Her face was set like stone.

"What?" Michelle shouted.

Berta kept mumbling.

"You're gaun tae huv tae speak up, I cannae hear ye. Anyway, I'm no really bloody carin. You've got the Sister aw upset.

"I cannae get ony peace!" Berta bawled in Michelle's ear.

"I'll gie ye bloody peace. Sit doon on that chair."

Michelle pushed Berta towards the chair.

Berta sat down stiffly and turned her face away. Her body was shaking.

Michelle glowered at her.

"I'll leave ye in peace if ye like...no huv onythin else tae dae wi ye, see how ye like that, ya cheeky auld bitch! See how ye get on athoot us."

"Michelle, that's enough," shouted Sheila.

"Well, folk are only tryin tae help her, and that's the thanks we get."

Kedzie arrived with a mug of tea.

"I'll see if she'll take this."

"I widnae bother, you'll get nae thanks."

"I'll try anyway. It might calm her down a bit."

Michelle tutted and walked away. Kedzie sat down beside Berta.

"Berta," Kedzie's voice was quiet.

"Berta, I've brought you a cup of tea."

Berta's eyes moved from the cup to Kedzie's face.

"A wee cuppae tea, Berta, nice and hot and sweet just how you like it."

Berta shook her head. Kedzie could see tears in her eyes.

"Hey, come on, you're okay now. You're okay."

She put her hand on top of Berta's and gave it a gentle squeeze. Berta, sitting up rigid and straight in the chair, stared out the windows of the lounge. Her words, when they came did not seem meant for Kedzie.

"Never ony peace, never ony peace, never, never, never."

woman

waiting

a out of  
bitterness away

kiss

a whisper

away

a child  
long  
conversation

away

violet  
I  
boy

:

paper

ward

rose n ear  
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in the end

## FLORRIE DICKSON DIES

"Joan, you don't have to sit here all this time," said Kedzie who was busy tidying the dormitory.

"Oh, but it's a shame. She's got naebody else, an I've plenty time."

"That's kind, Joan."

"She would've done the same for me. She was awfy guid tae me when I was a wee lassie."

"Have you known her all that time?"

"Oh aye. She was a freend ae ma mother's. Ma mother died ye see. Died when I was born, so I never knew her."

"Oh, Joan, that's a shame!"

"Aye, it was a shame. I only ever knew her fae a photae. I was brought up wi ma Granny and ma Granfither."

"But what about your dad?"

"He was killed in the First War. I scarcely mind ae'm."

"That's terrible..."

"Are you feelin sorry for me?"

"I am, Joan. That's really sad."

"Aye, but ma Granny and ma Grandfither were guid folk. I was their wee linty. I was aye singin. I think that was how I liked the Kirk sae much when I was a bairn. I was at the Sunday schule every week, an efter, I would have tae sit aside ma granny in the big Kirk for the aleeven o'clock service, an she would feed aes pandrops tae keep aes quiet. Oh aye, I was right... releegious!"

Joan stuck her tongue in her cheek and tried, unsuccessfully, to stop smiling.

"An I had ma aunties an uncles, an aw ma cousins. I had plenty faimily. Ma Aunty Ella had a shop...a wee...eh...a wee...you mind...the kinnae shop that sells ribbons and threed. An I'd go an gie her a hand. She had nae faimily, so I was aye her favourite. Oh aye, I had a nice bringin up. I cannae complain. Aboot aw I had tae worry aboot was next door's dug. They had a muckle black labrador, an I was feart ae it. There was yin day I nearly never got tae the schule for it was staunin in the middle ae the path, doon the back wuid there, ee ken where I mean, an of course it bowfed, an that wis me...runnin aw the wey back tae ma Granny's, howlin. My Granfither had tae come an pit aes on the back ae's bike tae get aes there..."

"What did your Grandfather do, Joan?"

"He was a postie. An in his young day he worked on the estate wi the keeper. Everybody kent him. He was yin ae thae folk that speaks tae awbody. 'The Crow' they cawed him."

"The Crow?"

"Aye, his fither came fae Corbielinn."

"Help!"

"I ken. They'd moved when he was just a bairn, but aw his days that's what he got, 'The Crow'. No that he minded."

"Joan, I'm going to have to go and set the table for the tea."

"Aye, on ee go. I'll just sit here another wee while."

Joan leaned forward and took hold of the hand that lay on the coverlet.

"Oh, eer hand's fair cauld."

She rubbed and squeezed Florrie's lifeless hand between hers.

"It's fair blotchy wi the cauld. Come on, oo'll tuck it in. Get it tucked in under the covers and get eersel warmed up."

Joan eased the covers over Florrie's shoulder and tucked it in around her neck.

"There now, that's better."

Florrie's eyes were closed. At the sound of Joan's voice her eyelids fluttered. Her hair had been combed back off her face, but it looked unwashed and greasy. The teeth of the comb had left furrows in it, and it was damp with the cold unnatural sweat of near-death. Her cheeks puffed in and out as she breathed. The skin of her face was flushed.

From the side of the bed, Joan put her own hands under the coverlet and took hold of Florrie's.

"Eh aye, it's an awfy job."

Joan looked at the face on the pillow. She started to sing. Her voice was quiet and tender.

*"Go to sleep my baby, close your pretty eyes, angels are a-peeping, at the little dearie from the skies. Great big moon is shining, stars begin to peep, time for little..."*

She cleared her throat as she missed the high note and tried again. She swayed in time to the tune, her right foot tapping out the rhythm.

*"...time for little piccadillies to go to sleep."*

With barely a pause she began another song.

*"Rosemarie I love you, I'm always dreaming of you..."*

But that broke down and turned into,

*"...but you'll look sweet upon the seat of a bicycle built for two.....Daisy, Daisy give me your answer do.....I'm half crazy over the love of you.....da da da dee da dee da da..."*

She stumbled on the words.

*"...I can't afford a carriage.....but you'll look sweet upon the seat of a bicycle built for two."*

She gave a little chuckle. Her voice was stronger now.

*"For I'm no awa tae bide awa, for I'm no awa tae leave ye, for I'm no awa tae bide awa, I'll aye come back an see ye.....well, I'm gettin married in the mornin, ding dong the bells are gonnae chime, kick up a rumpus, but don't lose the compass, and get me to the church, get me to the church, for God's sake get me to the church on time."*

Her head bobbed from side to side. She drew back her hands from under the coverlet and leaned back. She ran a hand through her hair.

"Whee-ooch! That was a guid yin? Come on, I'll sing ee another wee song, eh? Keep ee gaun. How about this yin...mind ma Granfither aye used tae sing it at the New Year?"

Joan cleared her throat. Her voice took on a serious, sonorous quality. She gazed out into the middle distance.

*"Oh rowan tree, oh rowan tree, you're aye sae dear tae me, entwined thou art wi mony ties o' hame and infancy. Your..."*

Her voice started to break. She swallowed hard on the last word. She shook her head.

"Maybe better no that yin. It's got aes nearly greetin. Come on, oo'll have somethin cheerier."

She hummed the unrecognisable beginnings of a few songs before she sat forward in the chair and leaned on the bed.

*"I'm gonna wash that man right outta my hair, I'm gonna wash that man right outta my hair, I'm gonna wash that man right outta my hair and send him on his way..de beedo dobedoop, dobedoop, dobedoop, dobedoop, dobedoop, dobedoop do...I'm gonna...hell, I've forgotten the words...never mind."*

A quizzical look came over her face as she leaned back in the chair again. She pulled a paper handkerchief from her cardigan pocket and wiped her nose. With the handkerchief still in her hand she started to hum the tune to 'Some enchanted evening'. Then the words came,

*"...you will see a stranger, you will see a stranger across a crowded room, and somehow you'll know, you'll know even then, that somehow you'll see her again and again..."*

She put her elbows on the bed, looking straight at Florrie.

*"...how can you tell her, da da de de da, da da de de de wise men never try....."*

Her voice rose sweetly and tapered off into silence.

"That was a rare picter. I bawled ma een oot at it. An I loved thon yin...mind...what's her name was in it...she was awfy bonny...mind...it wisnae her that actually sang it...mind...what was her name...he tried tae get her tae speak posh ...he had a bet on wi his pal."

*"I could have danced all night, I could have danced all night, and still have asked for more.....I could have spread my wings, and done a thousand things I never did before.....I'll never know what made it so exciting.....why all at once my heart took flight.....I only know when he began to dance with me.....I could have danced, danced, danced all night..."*

Joan enunciated all the words with a chorister's precision. Then she burst into a dirty laugh. Her right forefinger jabbed at the air.

*"You'll be dead 'Enry 'Iggins, you'll be dead!"*

She sat back and wiped a tear from her eye. Florrie's breathing rose to a small crescendo. Her shoulders moved with the effort and then subsided. Joan looked across at her. She leaned over and dabbed at Florrie's brow with her handkerchief.

"You're fair sweatin...see look...I'll gie ee a wee waft."

Joan took hold of the bedcovers and wafted them up and down. Then she tucked them back in under Florrie's chin.

"There, that's better. That'll cool ee doon."

She smoothed her hand over Florrie's hair as she started to sing again.

*"Why weep ye by the tide ladye, why weep ye by the tide? I'll wed ye tae my youngest son and ye shall be his bride...and ye shall be his bride ladye, sae comely tae be seen. But aye she let the tears doon fa' for Jock o' Hazeldean."*

"That's a lovely song, Joan."

Kedzie had just come back into the dormitory with Sheila.

"You're doing a great job of looking after her."

Joan turned and smiled at them.

"Aye, she's no weel. I'm fair vexed for her."

"Can we shift you just a wee minute, Joan, till we get in to turn her over."

"Certainly girls, in ee come. I'll get oot your road."

Joan stumbled forward as she pushed herself up from the chair.

"Oh ya bugger. It's a new set ae knees I'm needin."

"Just give us a minute, Joan and we'll get the oil can," said Sheila.

"Eh?"

"The oil can...oil those knees."

"Here, ya cheeky wee..." said Joan, laughing as she hit Sheila lightly on the arm and walked away from the bed.

Kedzie pulled the curtains round as Sheila pulled back Florrie's bedcovers.

"Sorry, lass, " she said to the unconscious Florrie.

"We'll not be long. We're just going to turn you over so that you don't get too sore lying on the one side."

Kedzie stood on the opposite side of the bed.

"I'll lift her up if you want to sort the pillows," said Sheila cradling Florrie's head and upper body in her arms.

Kedzie moved quickly to alter the position of the pillows, turning over the ones that were damp with sweat to the dry side.

"That's lovely," said Sheila lowering Florrie down onto the bed so that she lay on her back.

"Will you manage her yourself? She's not heavy."

"I'll try," said Kedzie as she passed Florrie's near-empty catheter bag over the bed.

She slipped her arms under Florrie's body either side of her hips. Florrie's body was light. It was easy for Kedzie to flip her over onto her other side where she fitted neatly into the shape of the rearranged pillows. Sheila drew Florrie's lower arm out from under her body, and rearranged the top pillow to better support her head. Kedzie smoothed out her nightdress. Together, Sheila and Kedzie pulled up the covers. Kedzie lifted a comb that was on top of the bedside locker and handed it to Sheila. She dabbed a small sponge on a stick into a pot of mouthwash and swirled it round Florrie's mouth. She did this twice. Then she smeared some vaseline onto Florrie's dry lips. Sheila started to comb Florrie's hair as Kedzie drew back the curtains.

Joan was wandering about at the top of the dormitory. She was singing to herself.

"That's us done, Joan. You can come back in," Kedzie shouted.

"Right ho," said Joan.

She came back beside Florrie's bed, hands in her cardigan pockets humming to herself. She watched Sheila comb Florrie's hair and smooth the covers under her chin. She put words to the tune she was humming.

*"...She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair, she searched his wounds all thorough, she kissed him till her lips grew red on the dowie houms o' Yarrow."*

"That's a bit morbid, Joan," said Sheila.

"It's just a song."

"Some song..."

"Is it? Does it make ee want to greet?"

"I think it might."

Sheila put an arm round Joan and gave her a squeeze.

"Do you not want to come back through and have a cuppa, Joan? It's nearly tea time."

"Aye, that would be lovely."

Joan linked arms with Sheila and started to walk away from Florrie's bed.

"Are ee gaun tae stey with her, hen?" she asked Kedzie.

"No, Joan, I'll have to go and help with the tea. She's sleeping. She'll be fine for a wee while."

"Oh, but I dinnae like tae leave her aw hersel..."

"She'll be okay. You can come back later to see her."

Joan let go of Sheila's arm.

"I'll just sit aside her the now...till ee come back."

She sat back down beside Florrie's bed.

"What about your tea?"

"I'll bring her a cup through," said Kedzie.

"She can drink it here if she wants to."

"How about that? Will we bring you a cup of tea through?"

"That'll be lovely. I'll just sit here."

"You'd be better at the other side maybe, Joan, since we've turned her over," said Sheila.

"Let me move that chair for you."

She settled Joan at the other side of the bed so that she could see Florrie's face.

"That's better now, isn't it?"

"Aye, that's lovely. I'll be fine. Just you girls away and get on."

"We'll bring your cuppa through in a wee minute."

Joan put on a hoity-toity expression.

"Here, I'm getting treated like the Queen ae Sheba."

Sheila and Kedzie laughed.

"Better than that Joan!" Sheila shouted back to her as they went out the bottom door of the dormitory.

"Aye, they're guid tae me," said Joan turning towards Florrie.

Florrie's eyeds were wide open. They were staring. There was a look of terrified disbelief in them.

"Oh, what's wrong?" Joan turned to where Florrie's eyes stared.

"There's nothin there...ee're awright." She put her hand on Florrie's brow and smoothed it over her hair.

"There now, dinnae be feart. There's naebody there. Just me, an I'm gaun tae stey here wi you, an we'll have a wee cuppae tea, an it'll aw be fine."

Joan pulled her chair nearer to the bed. Florrie's eyes stayed wide open. Her breathing subsided and stopped. Then it started again, building up from imperceptible indrawings of breath that caught on the air to having the strength to puff out her cheeks and part her lips as it was forced from them. Joan carried on stroking Florrie's head.

"There now, shhhh....."

She started to hum the tune of 'Ae fond kiss'. She swayed very gently as she let her hand rest on Florrie's forehead. Florrie blinked and let her eyes close. The tune finished on a raised note. Joan went straight on with,

*"John Anderson my jo John, when we were first aquent, you're locks were like the raven, you're bonny broo was brant....da da dee da dee da da dee da da dee dee ...oh tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, o-oh, tidings of comfort and joy....ca' the yowes tae the knowes, ca' them whaur the burnie rows, ca' them whaur the heather grows, my bonnie dearie."*

Joan shook her head as she wavered the last note.

"There now, that's better. You have a wee sleep...an I'll just sit here."

She sat back and yawned.

"Och aye, Jock MacKay..." she said through her yawn.

She looked round the room at the empty beds.

"It's awfy quiet the day..."

She started to tap her foot. The song tripped out of her.

*"My love she's but a lassie yet, my love she's but a lassie yet, we'll let her stand a year or twa, she'll no be half sae sonsie yet. We're aw dry wi the drinkin o't, we're aw dry wi the drinkin o't, the meenister kissed the fiddler's wife, he couldnae preach for thinkin o't...hooch!"*

She slapped her thigh and went straight on with,

*"Congratulations, and celebrations, I want the world to know I'm happy as can be. Congratulations and celebrations da da dee dee da da da da da da da da dee.....dum dum dum de de da da dum dum dum dum dum dee dee de de dum de de ....boom boom boom boom."*

Joan banged both feet on the floor.

*".....congratulations and celebrations..."*

Her voice trailed off. She sat still again but only for a moment.

"What about Engelbert, did you like him?"

She eased her hands under her thighs and swayed exaggeratedly from side to side as she sang.

*"Please release me, let me go....for I don't love you any more.....to live our lives would be a sin.....so release me and let me live again."*

She turned to Florrie.

"Oh, he was a rare singer. I fair liked him."

In a quieter voice she kept on singing the same song.

*"I have found a new love dear..."*

But the words drifted into another yawn.

"Eh aye, Jock MacKay."

Joan's body softened into the seat. She looked up at the windows opposite Florrie's bed.

"It's been a lovely day though, eh?"

## FLORRIE'S VISION

: I am going to die, little by little Soon, with few familiar 'later ons' the vital anger from which ideas of miracle may crush the name death lies, detached from summer landscapes burning within Two or three. delusions cover over this sad truth sunlight loves Our denial self-pity. is cured...now, love expects no faded colours like death Yes, I am present. Whatever tightens passion utters yellowish silence instead deciphered to white But too vulgar For truth For fervour all is drifted is all dried self-forgotten and vast lost through long confrontation sun amazes me it strikes ravines which wind hope out of my heart which plateau upward my eyes become elaborate birds avid wings creating endless sky. Yes, is blue in spite of horror a pagan heart's four corners one could want solitude want innocence not arch, illusions dirty confusion harsh breath

\*

refusal became the adventure leading me on me whose handwriting traced desire with lead that melted and reigned among stones someone tells it so his visage rubbed pale appears overwhelmed heavily precise nothing passive in its imprisonment insistent into the farther. refusal these surroundings matter? and every other day talk of people following simple hope stunning poetry and always the wind whipping silence until eyes taste desolation am thus alert to recover face to face Later on...'

death lies, detached

deciphered to white

: I am

like death

I am

self-

forgotten

Yes, I am

VISION  
s

amaze me

become

my

precise

imprisonment

sunlight

me

expect no faded  
denial

# APPENDIX

## KEDZIE MAKES A FEW NOTES

Edith Anderson: widow, housewife, 83, from Coldstream, has son there, doubly incontinent, no conversation, just makes sounds like a cartoon chipmunk, obese, problem with skin folds of belly, these need regular attention to keep them clean and dry, always seems to wear a too-tight pinafore dress, sits all day and stares or sleeps, rarely visited. (1983\*)

Elizabeth Blair: (Lizzie) spinster, 88, from Traquair, never visited, face like a storybook witch, but actually very placid, tends to merge into the background as not a management problem, stone deaf, can lipread, responds warmly to any show of affection, lovely soul, no visitors. (1981)

James Brown: (Jimmy), from Coldingham, widower, farmworker, 71, diabetic (test urine), relatives in Eyemouth, continent, previous m.i., always smiling, brother visits regularly, can be aggressive if provoked. (1983)

Margaret Brownlie: (Peggy) 79, widow, from Innerleithen, millworker, has son and daughter, nocturnal restlessness, hiatus hernia, continent, can be stubborn/difficult, occasionally violent. (1984)

Alice Bunton: Galashiels, married, retired civil servant, 72, husband visits regularly/retired police superintendant, incontinent, severely demented. (1984)

Isa Cain: Hawick, widow, cleaner, 84, lived with daughter, depressive, can be very agitated and violent (has lacerations on leg from recent event), deaf, constipation, thin, ill-looking. (1982)

Helen Chalmers: Peebles, spinster, retired primary teacher, 79, continent, pure white, straight hair, beautiful oval face, permanent ghost of a smile. (1981)

Jeannie Collins: widow, housewife, 67, sons in Kelso and Melbourne has Huntington's Disease, visited by grandson, continent/incontinent, very thin, difficult to get enough food into as expends huge amounts of energy. (1981)

Mary Dalgliesh: spinster, from Peebles, shop assistant, 78, confused, iron-deficiency anaemia, arthritis, incontinent, innocent, gentle creature. (1982)

Florrie Dickson: from Ayton, relatives in Duns, 90, bed sores, not expected to live much longer. (1979)

Jack Donaldson: from Bowden, 79, retired minister, diabetic, continent, mild cataracts. (1984)

Harry Fenton: from Peebles, retired GP, 77, widower, lived with daughter for eight years, Parkinson's, continent, daughter takes him out for the weekend now and then, other daughter's family also visit. (1984)

George Gilchrist: from Yetholm, single, shepherd, 69, next of kin (nephew) in Morebattle, continent, often gets out of ward and wanders round hospital grounds. (1983)

William Henderson: (Bill) from Hawick, married, labourer, 80, LVF, incontinent, history of violence. (1982)

Roberta Hogarth: from Walkerburn, 82, widow, mender in the mill, nephew in Innerleithen, continent, no visitors. (1982)

Eleanor Hopwood: lives in Galashiels but originally from South Shields, widow, 82, sister in Newcastle, son and family moving to Canada, holiday admission but husband died, arthritis, pernicious anaemia, continent. (1981)

Fred Hotchkiss: lives in Greenlaw but originally from Burnley, widower, 76, son in Greenlaw, hydrocele, previous alcoholic. (1982)

Agnes Howitt: 78, from Hawick, hosiery worker, daughters in Eyemouth and Hawick, occasional incontinence, very quiet, likes to attend Sunday Service. (1984)

John Johnstone: (Johnny) 73, from Hawick, married, gardener, wife visits regularly, has indwelling urethral catheter, violent if provoked. (1983)

Fanny Liddell: from Lilliesleaf, 88, widow, domestic help, daughter visits very occasionally, incontinent, sleeps a lot during the day. (1983)

Jane Mackay: 86, from Galashiels, widow, son in Darlington, sister in Edinburgh, sleeps most of the day, can be incontinent. (1984)

Elizabeth McTeir: (Betty) from Selkirk, single, laundry attendant, 63, brother and neighbour visit regularly, epileptic, pre-senile dementia, doubly incontinent. (1982)

George Moffat: from Innerleithen, retired drawer (millworker), 78, occasional aggression, depressive, not a great management problem. (1984)

Duncan Robertson: 82, from Newcastleton, married, retired forest worker, wanders a lot at night, deaf, urethral stricture (for operation under local anaesthetic to relieve this condition), can be aggressive at night. (1984)

William Robson: from Kelso, widower, 87, relatives in Kelso, lived alone before admission, retired steam engineer. (1982)

Joan Scott: from Kelso, widow, 74, sister in Jedburgh who visits regularly, still physically able, likes to sing and dance. (1981)

John Simpson: from St. Boswells, widower, newsagent, 82, knocked down and went to live with sister but she died, usually very quiet and amenable, no visitors. (1983)

Margaret Stewart: from Earlston, widow, millworker, 84, son lives in Earlston but never visits, diabetic. (1981)

Janet Waldie: widow, 78, housewife, from Selkirk, son lives there and visits once a month, occasional aggression. (1983)

William Wilson: from Jedburgh, 72, retired milkman, another wanderer, wife visits often but gets very upset, not handling diagnosis well. (1983)

\*Year of admission

## Promazine Hydrochloride (Sparine)

Indications: agitation, especially in the elderly, short term adjunctive treatment of severe anxiety, terminal care.

Cautions and contra-indications similar to Chlorpromazine Hydrochloride, i.e.:

Cautions: cardio-vascular disease, respiratory disease, phaeochromocytoma, parkinsonism, epilepsy, pregnancy; reduce dose in elderly and debilitated, avoid drugs such as phenylbutazone that depress leucopoiesis; abrupt discontinuation should occur if, after prolonged use, eye defects and abnormal skin pigmentation are found.

Contra-indications: poisoning caused by CNS depressants, bone marrow depression.

Side-effects: the five major side-effects are 1) liability to cause postural hypotension (greater in promazine) 2) drug-induced jaundice (less likely in promazine) 3) drug-induced Parkinson's disease 4) interference with temperature regulation 5) drowsiness  
(Jaundice and Parkinsonian symptoms (rigidity/tremor) tend to clear up when drug stopped. Because of (4), hypothermia may be induced, particularly in the elderly in cold weather.)

Other side-effects include apathy, pallor, nightmares, insomnia, depression, dry mouth, nasal congestion, difficulty with micturition, blurred vision, menstrual disturbances, agranulocytosis, haemolytic anaemia, photosensitisation, rashes.

Intra-muscular injection may be painful, cause hypotension and tachycardia and give rise to nodule formation.

Dose - orally 25 – 100mg 3 – 4 times daily adjusted according to response

- by intra-muscular injection 50mg (25mg in elderly or debilitated patients)
  - repeat if necessary in 6 – 8 hours
- intravenous injection should be no stronger than 25mg/ml



# SINGING THE VOID

Volume 2

Submitted by

Dorothy Alexander

for the Degree of PhD

to the University of Glasgow

October 2006

Practice-led research conducted in the Department of English Literature

University of Glasgow

GLASGOW  
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Sound file 2 (wad pluht rimtic)

Introduction and overview.

The following journal (presented to best reproduce the visual appearance of handwritten text in the original) details the development of techniques used to write the poems included in 'Cage'. The process is described with specific reference to experimental poetics and relevant critical and literary texts. Poetics also informed the structure and style of the main prose narrative. However, although referred to in the journal, these matters were not such a preoccupation during the writing of 'Cage' and are thus outlined within this overview.

The ideas behind the notion of 'Singing the Void', the conceptual title of the PhD as a whole, carried on from work done for my MLitt that sought to establish a personal poetics. The start of the PhD coincided with a time of intense questioning about the nature of the line ending within the tradition of free verse, and about how to place the poem on the page. I felt overwhelmed by the myriad poetic possibilities available to me. At one point I was so awestruck in the face of the line ending that I lost all confidence in my ability to effect it. For a time I even questioned the existence of poetry itself. Agonising about this led me to devise the techniques described in 'Out of the Cage'. Process and artifice allowed me to short-circuit my creative anxieties and get things down on paper. The solutions found also worked at the macro level of the project. They became intertwined with the prose narrative I was working on in which I sought to present the experience of people afflicted by dementia. 'Cage' was written out of anger at the hypocrisy of an institution (a psychiatric hospital that I had personal experience of working in).

Artifice allowed me to "preserve the variety and range of relationships that exist between language and the world, whilst reproducing these as elements in a new formal system of its own"<sup>2</sup>, wherein poetic language is an "exploitation of the processes of giving sense that underlie all the other, more restricted, kinds of discourse; in the course of this exploitation [undermining] their claims to truth"<sup>3</sup>. I hoped to get beyond the diagnosis, the medical gaze, to subvert the hierarchical power structure inherent in the doctor/patient relationship. The process highlighted similar parallels between author, subject and reader.

I thus took techniques of randomness and elements of found poetry that I had been working on previously and developed them into the non-linear kinetic of poems such as 'Sing Anon' (p. 96) and 'lips seed ends' (p. 10).<sup>4</sup> Significant breakthroughs occurred during this process: the idea of the cage as the unit of containment and the decision to place the poem on the page as per its original location in the base text; the manipulation of this base text by indenting to produce different poetic effects on the page, from there using the indented text as a means to produce phrases for poems; the words themselves beginning to be broken up, and this resulting in the observation of 'broken' words within the caged texts which, when re-placed, gave mobile-like poems in which the line is bent and twisted and has the propensity to be three dimensional. These have fulfilled the potential of ideas contained in my preliminary considerations, ideas contained in phrases such as 'atomisation (of) the word aetherisation expansion things in the void' (p. 353). Their non-linearity was a surprise and a delight. With hindsight, I have to wonder if, in my unease about the line ending, I have subconsciously worked towards its dissolution.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest-Thomson, 1971, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 124 (Julia Kristeva). Cf. Michel Foucault, "... does not the institutional system of medicine likewise constitute, in some... aspects, similar systems of subjection of and by discourse." (Rice and Waugh, 1996, p. 251).

<sup>4</sup> See 'Definitions of 'cage' processes', pp. 396-402.

I had certainly gone some way towards satisfying my instinct that the line should 'move', and for that movement to be gestural, its impulse coming from, what was sensed by me as, the desperate push of the ineffable.

Within this process the aleatory use of material was critical. Out of respect for my subjects (who could so easily be objectified and sentimentalised), I had sought an impersonal yet emotionally charged discourse. Out of respect for those who might read it, I did not want 'Cage' to be manipulative in the way that a plot-driven narrative might be. What the techniques developed by caging gave me was a dynamic of intuited possibilities as opposed to a premeditated construct. Their indeterminacy lent itself exceptionally well to the disclosure of liminal and broken thought and speech pattern. It gave me access to a less consciously mediated creative source from which the language gleaned was used more as an exploratory instrument, as a means of *creation* as opposed to re-creation. I found the whole process exciting, intriguing, challenging, transcendent and constantly fascinating. As a way of working it forced an engagement with the word at a basic level. Its results on the page satisfied my desire for a shape to accommodate the chaos that might transcend the disintegration of language. For me, the aleatory worked as a device leading from and to the mystery. It was Mallarmé's throw of the dice echoing across the years. It was a limit, a constraint with which to be able to approach infinite choice. The choice now became focused as artistic discrimination within the process, as Eliot's pressure.<sup>5</sup> The resulting decrease in intention was non-hierarchical and inclusive. This suited my needs.

From early on, 'Cage' was conceived as a sequence of mornings, evenings and afternoons, and remained so, with the addition, as the work progressed, of poems, monologues and 'difficult' prose paragraphs. In deciding final placings within the

sequence, I was aware that rhythm and narrative continuity were overriding principles. This applied to the presentation of the main chapters themselves, as well as to the placement of interposed material. I did not want the work to be over-resistant to meaning. So, for instance, poems might be placed in proximity to the monologue sections of their perceived speakers, or where their presence was complementary or commentative. Excess material was discarded, including a whole chapter: 'Duncan Robertson goes to the Cottage Hospital', deleted as it felt too much like a separate short story. There is also a folder of chapter headings such as, 'Bill Dies through Inappropriate Treatment', 'Gwendoline Stacey's Meeting with Kedzie and her Tutor' which were deemed superfluous to the narrative, and thus not written. Poems were discarded for reasons of content, i.e. they just did not fit in (e.g. 'to dipkin pipkin' p. 626), or simply because they failed (e.g. 'a set of doors' pp. 443, 481). Poems which did not seem particularly strong when considered separately, came into their own when placed in relation to other text. The 'difficult' prose paragraphs which came out of the intermediate part of the process were limited to four in the main text with five x five-line edits of others making up a separate section bracketed by the poems, 'Memory Therapy' and 'absence 674' (pp. 280-283). However, it was by interrupting<sup>6</sup> the rhythm of the main narrative by deliberately generating clashing juxtapositions of material that I hoped to disclose and enhance meaning as happens in concrete poetry.

In a similar way, I wanted the different language events that occur in 'Cage' to be an integral part of the narrative dynamic. To this end the main chapters all use standard grammar, syntax and punctuation. These break down in the poems and in the short prose paragraphs where the disease is at work. Punctuation was

---

<sup>5</sup> Eliot, 1934, p. 55. "For it is not the "greatness", the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts."

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin, 1999, p. 148. "...interruption is one of the fundamental devices of all structuring."

deliberately left out of the prose monologues, as it is here that the patients are free to be themselves, untrammelled by disease or institutional control.

The experience of the processes outlined in 'Out of the Cage' has led to greater self-confidence in the handling of poetic material, to a greater understanding of how poems work, especially in terms of internal dynamics. It has provided me with techniques that I can apply and adapt and develop and take forward into new projects. In this respect, I feel that the technique of 'worming'<sup>7</sup> with its three-dimensional potential and its implications of a formal aesthetic of movement, is possibly the most interesting of the textual interventions envisaged, and that what started off as disquiet about the line ending, has delivered me into a non-linear kinetic with an increased emphasis on the materiality of the word.

"In short, I said to myself, doubt leads to form."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> See 'Constructing 'Sparine'', p. 493.

<sup>8</sup> Valery, 1964, p. 144.

## **OUT OF THE CAGE**

## Preliminary considerations and origins of techniques

10/12/03

the concept of the line bothers me

I find it irritates me more and more

been reading about string theory<sup>9</sup>

? make poems that are parts of continuous lines

that vibrate      that resonate

that are crucial

no finality      no beginning

most easily accommodated as aural phenomenon

goes back to origins    to oral tradition

the written word a tethering

a diversion

a caging

an inhibition

a package

a confining —and yes, marvellous

things can be achieved by

the pressure of that confining

but when becomes aural—

breaks free (not necessarily—

will hear the rhythm etc.)

---

<sup>9</sup> Copp, 2003.

works within the cage

(visual)

(written)

(read)

internalised

silent

works outwith the cage

aural

performed

accessed

externalised

sounded

a woman from Liddesdale accused Walter Scott of killing the ballad (by writing it down)

it was a thing of sound

transmitted by sound

alive

singing the void

some(thing) force(ful) that is played out through the use of language and  
silence

mediated by the artist

something gleaned, invoked, prepared for

tapping the unconscious

not ratiocination as this implies a conscious conjuring up (what we  
know)

more like a tuning in

a catching (what we don't know)

we need to become more adept at this

(listening to the silence)

looking to produce a way of writing that makes this happen

the things we can't imagine

'novel' not ideational

no 'end' no finality

no narrative

layering of material (approaches a kind of simultaneity)

11/12/03

The death of the line

in its place a resonating ribbon continuum of words and silences

a spaced series of words

if written down ?must be scripted

how have no beginning and end?

turn the volume up            ellipses    punctuation

continuous writing no paragraphs etc (Beckett,

Ashbery, Hejinian)<sup>10</sup>

the spoken word            can't see the lines even if exist

a relaxation            no need to chop up unless making a game, a

puzzle, an artefact

make it look like prose

the written word a phase

useful for its time but will/must pass

? working in aural or visual

---

<sup>10</sup> For example: *Texts for Nothing*, Beckett, 1995, pp. 100-154; *The System*, Ashbery, 1985, pp. 123-160; *My Life*, Hejinian, 2002.

visual means of transference is the written word (where?)

and the space that surrounds it

aural means of transference is the spoken word (from where?)

and the silence it invades/encloses

At some point a decision has to be made as to what kind of poem

What is the means of transference?

visual

aural

touch

taste

smell

re Nietzsche 'live your life as

a poem'<sup>11</sup>

sensual

constant awareness in the present moment

spiritual / a means of

becoming attuned to the exquisite

engaging

? → aesthete

no – not necessarily – can appreciate things simply

where do ethics fit in? respect honesty integrity

a means of scrutiny / a way of looking

action may come of it

<sup>11</sup> Paraphrase of, 'We want to be poets of our life – first of all in the smallest, most everyday matters'. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*. (Schacht, 1992, p. 526)

atomisation

(of)

the word

aetherisation

expansion

things in the void

disembodied voice

shape

coming from primal sounds

mmmm.....

aaaaaah.....

12/12/03

find a shape for the ambiguity, fluidity and uncertainty of the human condition

need to transcend disintegration

concentrating      trying to write and think about

in the background      the not-sound of a conversation

rise and fall      but no words      interjections

staccato murmur      eases and advances

irritates

the background against which

the background n

20/12/03

re Beckett's attempt (in his earlier work<sup>12</sup>) to find a shape for the proposition that perhaps no relationships exist between or among the artist, his art and an external reality

(the chaos)

what am I attempting to find a shape for?

The proposition that unconditional love is the key

(to survival)

The operation of 'grace'

'communiqué'

a new genre

---

<sup>12</sup>[Beckett's early] narratives are united less by stylistic, metaphoric, and thematic designs than by their unremitting efforts to find a literary shape for the proposition that perhaps no relationships exist between or among the artist, his art, and an external reality.' (Dearlove, 1982, p. 3)

21/12/03

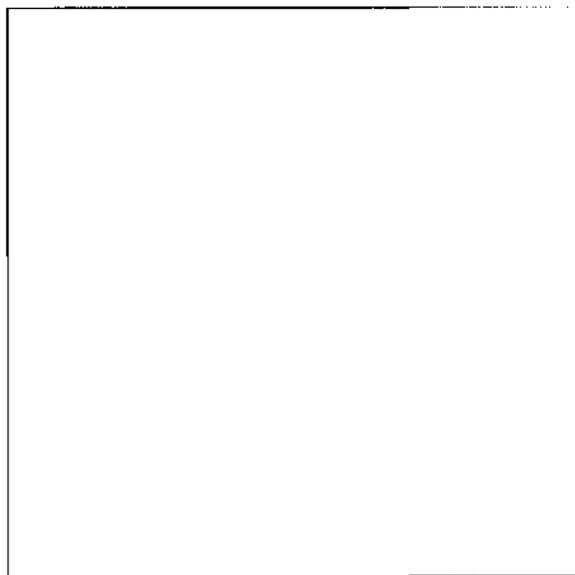
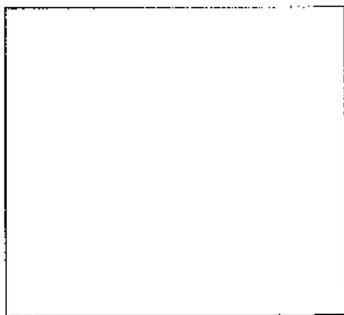
The page cage

--- get out of it.

the page is a prison

word cages

text blocked out in different sizes



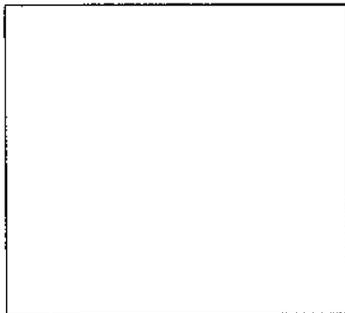
forces the reader to read it as a continuous line

?off-page

→ part text

→mimesis of 'coming in' to continuum of existence at your moment

very short → very long 'break-ins'



24/12/03

## text for the word cage

(quasi) statement

narrative

lyric

a manipulable text

re 'agonising surplus of possible *reintegrations*'<sup>13</sup>

how all interconnected

re eleven dimensions<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> 'The difficulty of the pieces is not that they are fragmented, but rather that they provoke an agonising surplus of possible reintegrations.' (Dearlove, 1982, p. 14)

<sup>14</sup> Copp, 2003.

28/12/03

word cages ---

different sized cages

" " fonts

small font all crammed in

big font quadratted → cummings' effect of breaking  
up words and getting different  
'meanings' congruences

→ surplus of possible reintegrations

? a basic text then mess around with

07/01/04

backward/forward

**words backward through sound to origin**

**forward through print to telepathy**

meaningless ∴ both relevant

(and crucial?)

sound that gives shape

how significance attaches to randomness

22/01/04

re idea of page for → telepathy

the oral/aural has touched down ?but briefly a short-term state on our way  
to telepathic communication

to silence but not an empty silence (could be hellish)

[This fragment from summer/autumn 2003 also relevant]

placing on the page

(dynamic part of kinetic)

emotional aspect - theatrical

impact on meaning (or part of - dramatic)

- a kind of enactment (drama)

**ceremony**

a kind of syntax that controls the

release of meaning

an aspect of rhythm

(enactment to get beyond  
self/selves

- ceremonial

operates in this locus

- to touch the mystery

- the element of magic)

part of the poem's reality – becomes one

with the other constituents

- an artistic effect - a manipulable element

**an element of form**

the pace we read at is so much faster than the pace at which we speak  
 and at which we hear  
 we can *absorb* a lot more when reading

29/01/04

re perfection is short<sup>15</sup>      show the breaking away of all non-essentials e.g. a  
 prose text that is diminished/edited down to its essentials

the inadequacy of language

--- too reductive    -- how get beyond?

re cummings<sup>16</sup>      prose if words used to *mean* something  
 poetry if they use each other to express themselves

poetry is thus archetype, model and *origin* --- not a secondary creation

Nietzsche's desperation that art should redeem existence in the aftermath of the  
 eclipse of the old illusions<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> 'I love certain lyric poets precisely because they weren't epic or dramatic poets, because they had the intuitive wisdom never to want to express more than an intensely felt or dreamed moment. What can be written unconsciously is the exact measure of the perfection that is possible. (Pessoa, 2001, p. 248)

<sup>16</sup> 'True poetry should not aim at conveying a "meaning" – this would only produce unpoetic language. Thus we read in a brief note:

Prose if words are used by somebody to mean something.  
 Poetry if they use each other to express themselves.

30/01/04

How to bring the unnameable out of (its) silence?

Think the answer lies in allowing the subconscious to work on aleatory material

(in a form that appears inevitable)

[? include ribbon continuum (below) here or incorporate part of conference paper that explains...perhaps in preface]

30/01/04

plus what other questions? ones that would lead to poems

what about novel where would it fit in?

re 'singing the void'  
(title of poetry collection)

they (the patients) are in a void  
they are entering a void

prose poetry interface    prose when used to mean something    read  
poetry when words express themselves    absorbed

novel relate to void / silence    sound    ?audio/visual    visual    void    they are beyond  
writing

origin                    stripping back to origin    to

novel                    movement is backward ?

poems                    movement is forward ?

---

Poetry according to this definition, is generated directly on the page, out of the interaction of the printed words.....Poetry (as) itself archetype, model and origin.' (Heusser, 1997, p. 222)  
<sup>17</sup> '...art is the clue and key to the possibility of discovering a way beyond nihilism, and a new 'centre of gravity' – a new respect for ourselves and estimation of life, 'redeeming existence' in the aftermath of the old illusions.' (Schacht, 1992, p. 529)

what kind of poem? oral, audio/visual, visual, (performance)

is there a hierarchy (no) / gradation (part of continuum)

absorption)		(externalised
external)		sound
emotion	(poss. silent but	feeling/emotion
music?	sounded internally)	(silent) action
<b>void...pure sound...sound with person visible...spoken from page...unreadable...void</b>		
from an internal		telepathy
expression		
	differentiation in the means of absorption	
	" " " " " expression	

comes from silence into silence

In terms of pushing forward the boundaries/potentiality of thought/consciousness, the poem on the page, or wherever, that cannot be sounded but is capable of being apprehended is our point of departure.

write examples of each type?

what is there in the novel? import techniques of poetry to enable expression of their (the patients) experience

(novel) backward to origin – to song – Joan sings to Florrie!!

she is sung into the void

poems forward to telepathy

05/02/04

First texts for the word cage.

[see scanned image below, 'the value of my discontent...' and four cages taken from it (handwritten)]

5/2/04

the value of my discontent lies in the hope which never  
 closes to my glimpse of perfection agency is a kind  
 of residue - a you, my 'I' lives on it its language.  
 it's the fault of the pronoun there is no name for 'it'.  
 no person for me, all so trouble comes for that a  
 slightest elegance becomes unbearable. can sound  
 unmanageable - a brief for the historically told by meaning.  
 narrative - the remaining structural component of an act of  
 containment. the nothingness that is created in the  
 rhetorical transaction is in fact, a common  
 imitation of the de-terminational 'habituability'  
 not read suitably performed is a felt representation  
 of being. what is missing is the term that  
 identifies the topic (the place of attention) which, in  
 some time, it acknowledges unknownly. agency  
 is distasteful in a question of the imagining  
 these formal spaces are where the major transaction has  
 a chance of happening - in effect of sentences - the  
 constant seeking of the doubt is text - a  
 situation in the shape of ideas even if I do not believe  
 them.

1/2/01

my discontent lies in the hope  
 glimpse of perfection - agony  
 is a yearning that lives on  
 faint of the former, there is no  
 for me, when trouble comes  
 eloquence becomes unobscure  
 itself to those traditionally left  
 - to remaining structural

but only perceived as a felt imperishable  
 what we know is not term that identify  
 it acknowledges unknown in a grammar  
 of TV imaging. knowledge we have the  
 major transaction is a common calculation of  
 the effect of writing. an access to the stage

the value of  
 presents my  
 of residual  
 it's the fair  
 no process  
 slight of  
 arrange to  
 narrative  
 commitment

commitment is a form of residual  
 although this is cleared in the  
 theoretical transaction is common  
 an act of ornament. the life will  
 here. down as a name for time as  
 soon for me. all imperishable  
 of being. To share of what (the  
 place of attention) agency -> this

20/02/04

not a novel

- novel written more like a poem

in that no linear narrative no author / authority

except that put the info there for

the reader to pick up

in ?hoped-for way – not

necessarily

not important to me

the quality of the writing is

attempt to portray genuine moments

the reader has to intuit ↓

this ties in with attempt to encourage greater responsibility

21/02/04 (the great heresy)

? a lot of 'Modern' 20<sup>th</sup> century poetry really a new kind of prose

- not poetry

not free verse

but free prose

a new prose derived from poetry

( ?not narrative

derived from

issuing )

poetry is formal - uses the patterns in language to make forms

(patterned) sound patterns

[gap here...written up in October, but process worked out over intervening seven months]

19/10/04

's own music combines formal austerity with the depiction of a universe in which humankind has been displaced by the elemental and the primal. So it is uniquely at the lightning moment of the present that life exists, that reality is here, concrete, and it is precisely that moment which we have come to grasp. was studied the meaning and function of noise, the word being defined as "the set of those phenomena of interference that become obstacles to communication". Dynamic, emotional aspect

The top sound body swayed beneath me, troubled by thin air. To me the meanest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. Such realities are, I think, at stake in a poem. not to the young, blooming, ageing summer. We have to understand them to survive. Haunted by certain blacks... but rather the two-way passage, difference without hierarchy in a true individual's capacity to perceive degrees of complexity. Relationships in this isolated world are turbulently face-to-face, but they are also impersonally mediated through a rocky relationship with nature. The belief that knowledge of linguistic theory will make a man a better reader comes itself from such a misunderstanding. (Luo - Gloria, let's get out of here... an exorcism of ancient chaos, with the long and loud at the depth of Raages. The unshowered light of tragic & mortal things. Then my eye moved up <sup>a line</sup> and I realised that it's a comeback of Nietzsche's - a total shift in meaning. Let us speak to you, not as a classicist but as a reader. True, it is never the whim of language itself, language is such, but always of an 'I' who reads from the particular angle of reflection which is his existence and who is concerned with autonomy and orientation. The outcome being a damnable entertainment, a litany for all accessible means, of to no edgy ends.

Two phrases / sentences were taken at random from each of the nineteen books currently on my desk (except the phrase 'haunted by certain blacks' which comes from a description by Mallarmé of Manet's painting<sup>18</sup>).

Perloff, M., *Radical Artifice*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991.

Chatman, S.(Ed.), *Approaches to Poetics, Selected Papers from the English Institute*, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1973.

Richards, I.A., *How to Read a Page*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1967.

Regan, S., *The Eagleton Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford and Malden, Massachusetts, 1998.

Levenson, M., *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

Beach, C. (Ed.), *Artifice and Indeterminacy: An Anthology of New Poetics* (Modern and Contemporary Poetics Series), University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1998.

Perloff, M., *Poetry On and Off the Page*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 1998.

Celan, P., *Collected Prose*, Carcanet, Manchester, 1986.

cummings e.e., *i : six non lectures*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 2000.

St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Signet, (Penguin), New York and London, 2001.

Smith, A., *Hotel World*, Penguin, London, 2002.

Jensen, L., *War Crimes for the Home*, Bloomsbury, London, 2003.

One of my own notebooks.

Mandelstam, O., *The Voronezh Notebooks*, Bloodaxe, Newcastle, 1996.

Hodgson, J., *The Uses of Drama*, Eyre Methuen, London, 1972.

Camus, A., *Selected Essays and Notebooks*, Penguin, London, 1979.

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<sup>18</sup> Weelen, 1962, (Introduction).

Johnson, B.S., *Omnibus*, Picador, London, 2004.

Steiner, G., *Language and Silence*, Penguin, London, 1979.

Jones, M., *Small Group Psychotherapy*, Penguin, London, 1971.

Jones, M., *Social Psychiatry in Practice*, Penguin, London, 1968.

Unable to allocate page numbers as I was working very quickly, trying something out, using the word scatter technique (see pp. 396, 398).

This generated three pages of randomly placed text from which an A4 page of text was assembled (see scanned image above (' 's own music....')). Not all texts were used. Not all of each selected was used.

The master was copied to allow different things to be done to the copied text [see scanned images of cages below]. Parts of the text were isolated and gaps introduced. These gaps operate as holes. X-rays/scans of the brains of Alzheimer's patients reveal 'holes' in their brain structure.

- loss of meaning
- increase in meaning
- search for meaning

'The poetic imagery is more like dementia than a prose explication could ever be.'<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> 'The poetic imagery is more like a system of mathematical relations than a prose explication of mathematical relations could ever be.' (Forrest-Thomson, 1971, p.131)

But first I had to satisfy my own need for order and meaning, and write something that read as a conventional free-verse poem where the phrases remained more intact and related to each other in a way that conferred a more easily apprehended meaning. (A found poem)

then my eye moved up a line and I  
realised that it's "a comeback of martinis"  
--- a total shift in meaning  
an exorcism of ancient chaos  
troubled by thin air

let me speculate here:  
if the meanest flower that blows  
can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears  
such realities are m o r e

we have to understand them to survive  
reality is here, in the lightning moment of the present  
haunted by certain blacks

's own music combines formal austerity with the depiction of  
 a universe in which humankind has been displaced by the  
 elemental and the primal. So it is uniquely at the lightning moment  
 of the present that life exists, that reality is here, concrete,  
 and it is precisely that moment which we have come to grasp  
 has studied the meaning and function of noise, the word being  
 defined as "the set of those phenomena of interference that  
 become obstacles to communication". dynamic, emotional aspect  
 The top sound barely swayed beneath me, troubled by thin air. For  
 the nearest flower that buds can give thoughts that do often lie too  
 deep for tears. Such realities are, I think, at stake in a poem  
 not for the young basking, ageing summer - we have to understand  
 them to survive. Haunted by certain blacks... but rather the  
 two-way passage, difference without hierarchy in order to  
 prejudice or tendency to have favorites. They represent the  
 individual's capacity to perceive degrees of complexity. Relations  
 in this isolated world are turbulently face-to-face, but they are  
 also impersonally mediated through a rocky relationship with history.  
 The belief that knowledge of linguistic theory will make a man a better  
 reader comes itself from such a misunderstanding. (see - Gloria, let's  
 get out of here - an exercise of ancient chaos - whistle boy and bus  
 at the depth of Beiges. The unshaded light of tragic & mortal  
 things. Then my eye moved up <sup>a fine</sup> and I realized that it's  
 a comeback of martini's - a total shift in meaning. let us speak  
 as, not as a classicist but as a reader. True, it is never the  
 thing of language itself, language as such, but always of an I who  
 acts from the particular angle of reflection which is his existence as

②

e, different without hierarchy  
 clearly to have favoured they  
 capacity to perceive degrees of  
 a world we turbulently  
 by mediated through a  
 knowledge of                      will  
 self from such a misunderstanding  
 an execution of ancient chaos  
 . The unshelved light  
 eye moved up a line and "I  
 martinis" - a total shift in mean

2

without hierarchy  
 desire to have they  
 perceive degrees of  
 a world turbulently  
 through a  
 knowledge of  
 such a misunderstanding  
 -- an expression of chaos  
 -- a world of unshaken light  
 -- a world of light  
 -- a world of light

4

without  
 favorites they  
 perceive of  
 world face to face  
 working  
 knowledge of  
 such misunderstanding  
 of the ages - The unshadowed light  
 moved up and I  
 shift in measure



	if	without	archy
class	to	have	it
	city	to	
	world		lent face
	ed		waking
no			with
self			is under within
an	is	an	o
of	age	shadow	
eye			1
		total shift	

⑥

self			is	an	and
--- an	ex	is	an	0	
of age			shadow		
eye					1
		total	shift		

(2)

	if	without		
no self			is under	and in
an	ex	is	an	o
of a age		shadow		
eye				1
		total shift		

's own music combines formal austerity with the depiction of  
 universe in which humankind has been displaced by the  
 elemental and the primal. So it is uniquely at the lightning moment  
 the present that life exists, that reality is here, concrete,  
 and it is precisely that moment which we have come to grasp.  
 studied the meaning and function of noise, the word being  
 freed as "the set of those phenomena of interference that  
 come obstacles to communication". dynamic, emotional aspect  
 a top seed body swayed beneath me, troubled by thin air. Tom  
 nearest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too  
 deep for tears. Such realities are, I think, at stake in a poem.  
 of life the young, boding, ageing summer. we have to understand  
 em to survive. Haunted by certain blacks... but rather the  
 two-way passage, difference without hierarchy in order  
 individual's capacity to perceive degrees of complexity. Relationship  
 - this isolated world are turbulently face-to-face, but they are  
 so impersonally mediated through a nebular relationship with nature.  
 a belief that knowledge of linguistic theory will make a man a better  
 reader comes itself from such a misunderstanding. One - Gloria, let's  
 out of here... an exercise of ancient chaos... while long and loud  
 to the depth of the ages. The unshadowed light of tragic & mortal  
 things then my eye moved up <sup>a fire</sup> and I realized that it's  
 - comeback of mechanics" - a total shift in meaning. let us speculate  
 re, not as a classicist but as a reader. True, this is never the  
 thing of language itself, language is such, but always of an 'I' who  
 acts from the particular angle of reflection which is his existence and

(8)

dissatisfied with the depiction of  
 it has been displaced by the  
 university at the working moment  
 reality is here - concrete,  
 we have come to grasp  
 not noise, the word being  
 interference that  
 emotional aspect  
 set on this out - Time  
 we do often see too  
 state in a dream  
 have to understand  
 + rather the  
 o r e  
 the  
 relationship  
 + they are  
 Nature  
 better  
 let's  
 look

9

austerity with the de of  
 s displaced by  
 lightning  
 here,  
 we grasp  
 noise  
 interference  
 em e  
 bleed thin  
 often em  
 have to understand  
 her  
 o the



(2)

is  
 waive  
 of the prese  
 did p  
 el the  
 les to  
 base  
 flower  
 . Such real  
 ,  
 haunt y  
 if  
 had v  
 ive  
 a bul  
 e t h a

See transcriptions of scanned handwritten documents.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Appendix pp. 588-591.

"I'm always hoping to deform people into appearance; I can't paint them literally."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Francis Bacon (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 2005)

05/11/04

## The making of 'couldn...'

Matter-of-factly laid a coaster on the first page of monologues that I had written having elided all paragraph spacings to give a page of close-printed text.

[I originally started to write short monologues in unpunctuated prose because I wanted poems with voices in them, and needed some raw material to work with.]

a wee cuppa tea that's lovely an hot I fair like a cuppa tea as long as it's no aw weak an watery jenny pee clear I like it wi a bit ae body in it ye need a bit ae body in it a bit ae strength an I cannae be daein wi thae tea bags nothin but sweepins off the flair I like ma tea loose I like Scottish Blend or Typhoo I dinnae like ony ae yon fancy stuff either what's it caved it's got a fancy name aw that perfumy stuff that China stuff the green stuff yeeugh I wis nearly seek yince when somebody gie'd aea a cup course you're no supposed tae pit milk in it an I did so I suppose it's nae wonder that it wis awful an it wis bloody awful but here I'll drink this the now while it's still hot I love the wey the steam goes up ma nose and I can feel it warmin aw ma tubes right doon it fair makes ye feel relaxed and have ye got a biscuit just a digestive or a rich tea'll be fine just somethin plain a wee sherry oh that wid be nice is it Harvey's Bristol Cream as long as it's sweet no thon weirsh stuff I cannae be daein wi that Jock's mother liked a dry sherry but then she didnae really like drink much onyway I think her fither wis bad wi the drink an that kinnae pit her off no that she ever said much but I mind Jock's aunty telling us when oo got mairried no that there wis much drinkin that day oo got married at dennertim an Jock had tae work later on it wis the Depresion an he couldnae refuse the work ay oo got mairried in his mother's hoose juist doon the road there I think I had a wee sherry then a cuppa tea Jock's mother had pit oan a wee tea just sandwiches and cakes an that but it wis nice I mind it wis a lovely day an Jock's cousin Sandy played the fiddle an aunty Bella sang some songs she wis a rare singer it wis a shame her man was killed in the First war an she never married again I aye said she should've for she wis a right motherly wummin puir sowel was only mairried six months when he went away I'll tell ye what I yased tae enjoy an advocaat an lemonade I ay hud yin at the New Year dinnae ask aea how I never hud yin ony other time it wis juist that that was a wee treat at the New Year wi a cherry in it no yin ae thae glacé yins a proper cocktail cherry oot a wee glass jar I wid spear it on a wee stick an think I wis right sophisticated an Jock wid huv a whisky an lime he wis never a big drinker either well oo could never afford it onyway oo wid've been in queer street if he hud been I couldnae huv mairried a drinker I juist widnae've pit up wi it mind I'm no sayin Jock didnae huv his moments when they were young him an aea pals could be up aw night playin cairds an boozing but that wis afore I kent him he wis a guid man coffee no I'm no struck wi it I'd juist as sin huv a cuppa tea tea quenches yer thirst coffee juist makes ye feel like yer mooth's aw dried up or like ye've smoked ten fags that's what I think onyway it's too dear huv ye seen the price ae it mind you I like the taste ae it I like a coffee walnut sponge or a coffee cream an ma sister makes the nicest wee biscuits sandwiched thegither wi coffee butter icin coffee kisses she caws them they're nice wi a cuppa tea when ye're huvin a sit doon an a blether her man's away how tae so the pair ae us look efter yin anither ma fither aye hud a dug an he hud some guid yins some clever yins they wid catch rabbits an sometimes a hare div ee like rabbit some folk'll no touch them no since the mixie onyway bit then well it kept ee gaun ma fither couldnae work after the first war aye he wis wounded muckle hole in aea back that never healed killed him in the end he hud tae dae something there wis a lot ae poachin went oan he took toffs tae the fishin an folk frae Edinburrae an Glesgae took the brother ae that boy that wis famous on the Clyde what wis aea name again Mæxtõn his brother an awfy nice fellae wis right ken on the fishin thought a lot ae ma fither bocht a beautiful doll's hoose yin Christmas fur ma sisters I mind ma mother greetin she wis that pleased aye they hud a hard life me mother never knew her mother she deed when she wis born she wis brocht up wi her granny an her grandfither and her ain fither but he wis killed when she wis juist a bairn he wis killed doon the pit Mauricewood big pit disaster I mind her telling aea about them finding his piece box she wis chewin her nails an lookin oot the windae hare soup ma mother made rare hare soup huv ee ever tasted it it's strong-tasted but awfy guid ee make it wi the blood when ee gut it ee huv tae catch the blood in a jug an pit it intae the soup near the end ae the cookin she wis a smashin cook ma mother aye bakin an gein away

I wrote out the caged section by hand then masked the white space with sheets of paper and, with my eyes closed, made random scribbles out. I had to do this several times; it seemed to take a lot of scribbling to blank out anywhere near a significant amount of text.

5/11/04 (11)

couldn't  
 ad there I think  
 ee tea just  
 Jack's canon  
 esinger it was on shame her man was killed  
 in [scribble] said she should be for she was a right mate  
 only married six months when he was away I  
 don't know [scribble] but I hope that you at the [scribble]  
 going [scribble] time it was just that that was a well tre  
 in the [scribble] the [scribble] gives a proper capital cherry  
 as it on a wee stick [scribble] I was right [scribble]  
 he was never a big drinker either well [scribble] never  
 seen in [scribble] the [scribble] I combined how  
 we've [scribble] up in [scribble] I'm no singer [scribble] but  
 young him an [scribble] could [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 where I kept [scribble] he was a [scribble] over [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 cupae ten year [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 all up [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 sent a [scribble] [scribble] it mind you I like [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 ee better [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 a sit down on a [scribble] her man sawing  
 father [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 it [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]  
 [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble] [scribble]



couldn  
     think  
     just    wishes  
         played  
 it wis a shame  
 said she should've for she wis a right moth  
 only mairried six months when he went away  
 dvocaat and lemonade                    yin  
 yin                    time wi                    that that wis  
 in                    yin ae thae                    yins a proper cocktail cherry  
                     on a wee stick                    I wis right sophisticate  
                     never  never

  no I'm no  
 tea tea quenches yer thirst coffee just makes

  I like the ae  
 ma sister makes the nicest  
   kisses she caws them  
 sit doon  her man's away  
   and a day  
   times a hare  
   it then well  
   ckle

07/11/04

## The making of 's dinnae...'

I treated the second monologue section as above to provide a page of close-printed text then laid a rectangular leather-covered paperweight on it. I left it more or less just as it landed. I had lifted it with my right hand, therefore this determined the angle at which it landed on the page. I also used the same coaster as previously, but it did not feature in the making of this poem.

tae folk gingerbread an ginger snaps an big cakes she wis an awfy wummin she'd a  
 gied away her last ha'penny the best dug ma fither ever hud wis cawed Prince he wis  
 a beautiful dog a big black curly-coated retriever big canny thing when ma fither  
 deed he pined away an the worst wis Jake he wis stupid I cannae mind where ma  
 fither got him he wis a wee terrier cross but he juist never calmed doon an that wis  
 nae use if the baillies were comin so yin day ma fither says tae me take Jake a walk  
 an dinnae bring him back I wis seventeen he handed aes a shovel I took him up  
 through the wud an ontae the bill but I couidnae dae it he wis sic a lively wee bugger  
 I juist burst oot greetin dug's dinnae speak tae me aboot fuckin dug's dirty stinkin  
 slavery mutts wi their stinkin breath an their hair gottin everywhere aw ower yer claes  
 an yer furnitur I mean that juist defeats me that lettin a muckle hairy dug up on yer  
 seat or even worse yer bed bloody manky stinkin their hooses aye stink onybody wi  
 dug's their hoose aye bloody stinks oh it's just a doggy smell aye fuckin manky dug  
 smell an they let them kiss them an lick their faces an aw that kinnae shit when the  
 dug's've been lickin their arses an eatin an auld bloody crap that they've picked up  
 outside an they bloody roll in shite an deid salmon its fuckin disgustin or else they've  
 got somethin wrong wi the sides ae their arses an they skite aboot on the flair like as  
 if it's itchy an smear aw that fuckin pussy stuff everywhere I juist widnae huv yin in  
 ma hoose an they're aw that fuckin mushy aboot them tae Christ if they loved each  
 other as much as they loved their fuckin dug's ood be aw be a bloody slight better off I  
 wis never much ae a cook I did it but I never enjoyed it an it wis aye juist something  
 plain but ma sister's man wis a baker so she wid aye keep aes supplied wi things left  
 ower in the shop or get him tae make us a cake if we needed somethin special he  
 wis a lovely baker made lovely bread an rolls an I loved his muffins an his tattie  
 sconas never tasted onybody elses like them an there wis aye plenty that you could  
 get in tins oh were never stuck did you cook much Mary oh yess what did you cook  
 (smiles) did you make soup soup did you like cooking (laughs) and what about you  
 Bill did you ever do any cooking naw did your wife do all the cooking aye was she a  
 good cook (spits) and did you go paddlin Mary did you make sand castles paddlin  
 yess and sand castles and did you get an Ice cream Mary ice cream and where did  
 you go Mary where did I go oo went in a charabanc dinnae laugh oo did they run it  
 every year Thomson's Garage ee got picked up at the Horse an oo took a picnic wi  
 us it wis aye Spittal aye Spittal an I'll never forget the year that lipstick I juist used tae  
 love twistin it up an doop rambin rose that wis ma favourite shade an I hud the  
 lovellest compact fur ma face pooder it wis gold an enamelled on the top wi floers  
 on it aw different colours an a mirror on the inside ae the lid I loved the smell ae face  
 pooder I used tae use pan'tick but it wis too heavy fur me so I stopp'd I liked when  
 they brought oot the liquid foundation Max Factor mind it lasted ages I wid  
 sometimes huv tae poke a hole through tae get tae ony liquid that wis left oo didnae  
 get oot very much in thae days weemin aye pitlin their fuckin make-up oan dollin  
 theirsels up young looking yins that dinnae need it an aulder yins that juist look like  
 fuckin clowns wi their lipstick aw ower their teeth an the eyeshadow gaun aw crinkly  
 roon their een fuckin mess an aye lashin oan the perfume so's ye cannae smell their  
 cunts

I then typed it up at 1.5 spaces per line and worked on this printed text, scanning visually to find resonances, narrative possibilities/resonances, looking for sound equivalences and repeated words. Found that I was working top/down then bottom/up again.

7/11/04

s dinnae  
 stinkin breath  
 mean that juist defeat  
 n worse yer bloody ma  
 eir hoose aye bloody stinks on it  
 mell an they let them kiss them an lick th  
 dug's ve been lickin them arses an eatin an  
 ogtside an they bloody roll in shite an deid  
 got something wrong wi the sides ae their arse  
 t's itchy an smear aw that fuckin pussy stuff e  
 hoose an they're aw that fuckin mushy about  
 as much as they loved their fuckin dug's oo'  
 ver much ae a cook I did it but I never enjoye  
 t ma sister's man wis a baker so she wid aye  
 he shop or get him tae make us a cake if we  
 ly baker made lovely breid an rolls an I loved  
 er tasted onybody elses like them an there w  
 were never stuck did you cook much Mary d  
 ow make soup soup did you like cooking (laug)  
 t do any cooking, haw did your wife do all the  
 ) and did you do paddling Mary did you make  
 stiles and did you get an ice cream Mary, haw  
 did I go, oo' went in a charabanc dinnae laugh  
 's Garage, ae got picked up at the Horse an o  
 e Spittal an I'll never forget the year that lips  
 an ramblin tae that wis ma favourite shade  
 face powder it wis gold an enamelled on the  
 n a mirror on the inside ae the lid I loved the  
 tick but it wis too heavy fur me so I stop  
 undation Max Factor mind it lasted  
 e through tae get ony liq  
 weamin aye pittin their  
 hat dinnae need  
 wet their  
 sh



What I like about it

- something lyrical/emotional coming through/behind the experimental form
- inferred narrative
- interrogative middle section, especially the sound patterning of it
- its wistfulness

AP's suggestion, in discussion of above poems, that they speak of their own making as well as the dementing process.

I am not conscious of this when working.

08/11/04

(The text that jolted me out of my distress about the line ending, and recant my recent heresy!)

"The proversa modernists might have rejected the schema of metrical regularity, but by retaining the mysterious phenomenon of the line they maintained a crucial element of the versus tradition: the tension between the materiality and the signifying properties of the sign. Their reason for not abandoning the line is the same one that has motivated Jakobson's belief in the poem as the ultimate object<sup>35</sup> of language: the poem is the laboratory in which our experiments with the relation

between what language is and what it does can never entirely be reduced to the abstract formulae of the linguist.<sup>22</sup>

the word is the word is the word is the word

a word is a word is a word is a word

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<sup>22</sup> Bradford, 1994, p. 199.

## Definitions of 'cage' processes

10/11/04

[From this point the techniques I had been working with above were applied to the novel text.

Notes from March 2005 are here inserted for clarification. They are followed by notes that refer to the genesis of the narrative style.]

### Techniques (short definition).

**Word scatter:** words picked at random by blindly placing an index finger on a given text and writing down the word pointed to (or covered/part-covered) on a sheet of blank A4 to generate an aleatory word stock. These words written down by lifting the hand each time one is found and placing it at random on the page (i.e. not in lines/ not consecutive). The page is complete when comfortably full with a degree of white space surrounding each word. (Words all written to be read easily, i.e. not upside down or at right-angles to one another.)

Variations possible (and used so far): rejecting some of the words found, visually scanning the text for words that 'resonate'.

Uses: the aleatory word stock is subjected to Eliot's 'pressure' to build phrases for use in poems, to supply a stock of such phrases for future use, to build prose paragraphs. Phrases/paragraphs may be generated by using the words as the main components of syntactically/ grammatically conventional structures. In this case extraneous words may be required to complete them (usually the 'small words'). Alternatively, what is written can be restricted solely to the word stock. In this instance I have found it works better when the word stock has at least an element of visual choice as a selection of 'small words' can then be deliberately incorporated.

**Cage:** takes a piece of close-written text (e.g. where the spaces between paragraphs have been deleted, where a small font is used) and imposes physical limitations on part or all of it.

Used to generate poems, and most specifically, to define the line ending and placement on the page, as the words of the poem are placed to correspond to their placing in the text from which they have been extracted.

**Indent:** refers to the use of the 'increase indent' facility within 'Word' (at default setting).

Used to 'cage' a given text, i.e. to change the physical boundaries of its outline, e.g. if a text was described as 'indent x 5' this would mean that the original A4 full-page text had been altered by 'selecting all' and clicking on the 'increase indent' icon five times to generate a more vertically aligned block of text.

**Wasting:** refers to any means by which a given text is distressed to the extent that areas of it are deleted or part-deleted so that the resulting 'wasted' text has a mimetic relation to the effects of dementia (Alzheimer's in particular) on the human brain.

Techniques (longer definition).

**Word scatter:** came out of prior reading of the works of John Ashbery<sup>23</sup> (esp) and J.H. Prynne<sup>24</sup>. I wanted to use words to similar effect and devised a means of doing so by writing down words at random from a dictionary. I wrote them on a blank sheet of A4 and deliberately spread them across the page until the space was comfortably full, not in lines, but placed by moving my hand (in an almost jumping motion) across and up and down the page. A degree of white space was left around each word. Once I had a page, I would use the words on it to generate phrases, letting my eyes scan the words and picking out ones that 'resonated', piecing phrases together in this way, originally to write poems, but I also wrote a series of 'imaginary cartoons' (i.e. the text for a cartoon that the reader had to imagine). I would use the words on the page as the main elements of a phrase or sentence but I would add in other words to make grammatical/syntactical sense. I would also allow myself to change the form of the word, e.g. noun to verb participle, singular to plural, present to past tense etc.. I liked the way it generated bizarre and unusual word juxtapositions. I was also aware that, although perhaps at least ninety percent of what was generated was nonsense, it was a kind of non-sense that was fruitful and, perhaps most significantly, it was as if it existed as the preamble to the ten percent or less that struck a chord, that was like the flakes or nuggets of gold left after panning, because what I would usually do (if I was trying to write a poem) was write a paragraph of this non-sense out of a page of 'word scatter', and then scan that for the phrases that appealed most. These might then be sufficient on their own to yield a poem, or they might be combined with other phrases generated in a similar fashion, or by direct observation/ description.

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<sup>23</sup> Ashbery, 1985.

<sup>24</sup> Prynne, 1999.

Eventually, I went on to use this technique as part of the process that produced word 'cages' / 'caged' texts.

**Cage:** a large part of the first year of my PhD was spent in crisis over the poetic line to the point where I came to question the possibility of the poem itself as an entity. I found this distressing, especially as a series of poems was to be an integral part of the project. I think that what I felt had several strands to it, not least of which was a sense of awe inspired by the line and a subsequent feeling of profound lack of confidence in my ability to manage it. Out of intense questioning about the nature of the poetic line and poetry itself the phrase 'the page cage' came as a flash. This happened in a state of semi-consciousness during an afternoon nap. I woke with a start and wrote down 'the page cage...get out of it'. This came out of thoughts about the ribbon continuum image (see 30/01/04 pp. 364-365), words coming out of, and going back into silence, with language and the written word as phases within this), and ideas of how to take poetry forward/ how to take cognitive function forward. The moral imperative behind this was to encourage the reader towards greater self-responsibility, towards greater intuitive reasoning, to expand the 'what-it-is-to-be-human'. Ironically, attempts to get beyond the page led to the technique of the cage.

During this period of angst I kept coming back to the feeling that I needed to find a form. Beckett's phrase kept echoing in my head, 'to find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now'. And if the page is a prison within which the word is tethered, and we need to get out of it, how is this to be achieved when the page is the medium? It was at this point that the concept of the cage appeared. The cage implies other text. It foregrounds the existence of the page, the limits and limitations of the page, while implying something beyond. Re

poetry going beyond 'structure of equivalences held together as an aural shape'<sup>25</sup>, logic dictates that for this to happen we need to take it to its limit as a *page-bound* entity. To get beyond, we have first to bind it even more tightly to the page i.e. even to the extent that it cannot be sounded. [Note to self: Is the poem now a 'structure of implied or intuited equivalences held together as an audio-visual shape'? Is Graham's<sup>26</sup> constructed space now an implied or intuited space?]

The cage removes any uncertainty re line endings as it decides/imposes the line construct. It becomes a formal constraint, and, in a way similar to metre, exerts pressure on the words to yield the 'thing made', the art work. (See 30/01/04 (as above)...how to bring the unnameable out of the silence? Allow the unconscious to work on aleatory material in a form that appears inevitable!!! The cage is an inevitable form).

The other crucial aspect of the cage is its use of randomness or quasi-randomness. I find this appealing because of its effect of lessening any tendency towards sentimental objectification or appropriation of the subject.

The first experiments within this project used phrases at random from previous notes and/or from books on my desk, and I just started to block off the text in different-sized squares/rectangles to see what was in them. I liked what I got...part sentences ...punctuation becoming spurious...words broken (although I resisted this at first, choosing the position of the block to accommodate the maximum number of whole words (at least this appears so with hindsight). It was a simple step from there to applying this technique to the prose I had already written. I started off with Jones' extracts (short/user friendly). I was happy with the results ('doctor define reality' etc.). After a minimal use of this technique I knew that I wanted voices to be a big part of the poems. I therefore wrote texts specifically to

<sup>25</sup> Preminger and Brogan, 1983, p. 983.

<sup>26</sup> Snow, 1999, p. 379.

use in this way which became the prose monologue sections of 'Cage'. I then progressed to the main chapters.

I became increasingly flexible as regards which combinations of word scatter, cage, indent, wasting would best suit any given text. For example, a long chapter would yield a word scatter which would become a paragraph of 'difficult' text which would be the contents of that particular cage. This would then be indented and manipulated in an increasingly fluid way to yield the poem/fragment/sequence (see 'The making of 'Shhh...', 30/11/04, p. 423). With some texts, notably the monologues, I deliberately erased part of the chosen text (initially to give me the effect of holes, to mimic the effect of dementia on the human brain). With the shorter chapters I realised that by reducing the font, the whole text itself became the contents of the cage. The cage was thus now not necessarily bounded by physical lines, these could now be 'virtual'/implied/taken for granted.

But what was most crucial for me about the use and combination of these techniques was that the concept of the 'cage' in particular gave me a means of deciding the line ending (it was now inevitable) and also the placing on the page because the position of the words in the final poetic form relates directly to their antecedent within the process.

I have since become aware of how the cage is the supreme metaphor/image/symbol (all combined...??symmetage) for articulating the project, and that the title of the finished work might simply be 'Cage'.

Meditations on some properties of the cage.

- can house dangerous/wild things while allowing us to view them in safety (although can still touch, bite, grasp, claw, hit, spit, throw things)

- things can come out of it... sound, objects, (speech)
- transportable...can be put in different settings
- can vary in shape and size
- can be opened
- lined effect of the bars
- bars cold (usually metal)
- has holes in
- (visual) block effect of the lock mechanism
- can be locked or unlocked
- (for me, in terms of poetic technique, a means of overcoming anxiety in the face of the line)

See also 'Constructing 'Sparine'', p. 493.

## Notes on genesis of narrative style.

09/11/04

I had worked with geriatrics before. I had worked for two years as a nursing auxiliary in a long-stay geriatric unit. Two years doing the bottom of the heap, day in, day out, physically and mentally exhausting work that is involved in the care of the elderly infirm. I had faced, and dealt with, incontinence on a daily, and sometimes spectacular basis. I had encountered dementia, depression, dysphasia, dysphagia, hemiplegia, multiple sclerosis, ulcerating cancerous growths, bed sores, balanitis, institutionalisation and death. Among those I worked with I had seen compassion, kindness, irritation, bullying, indifference, exasperation, institutionalisation, and a kind of death that manifested itself as an ironic or sardonic black humour. The impetus for the novel was the shocking effect that working in a ward of thirty psychogeriatrics had on me.

I think what made the difference in this ward was the severity of the patients' mental lack, or maybe not even that, because there were plenty of them that were not a lot worse than people I had come across in the unit I had worked in. Maybe it was the concentration, the fact that they were all in an advanced state of mental decline meant that there were no diluting factors. And the physical layout of the building did not help; its basement feel, being at the end of the corridor, the adjoining door through to the ward that housed the bed-ridden, end-stage patients, the cavernous rooms. And on top of all these things, the hypocrisy.

What hypocrisy? This was part of a large psychiatric hospital that had been a model for the Therapeutic Community style of psychiatry in the nineteen sixties under the direction of Maxwell Jones (see below pp. 406-407). It had been world famous in its day, and had attracted doctors and students from all over the world; it

still did. The main tenets of the Therapeutic Community were democratic. They dissolved the hierarchical nature of the medical process at the apex of which was the doctor in charge, and in which the patient was a passive participant. The ideals behind it proposed a dynamic wherein everyone involved with the patient (doctor, nurse, social worker, carer, relative, and patient) was an equally responsible and valued part of the patient's treatment and care\*. This model of care had grown out of group work during the Second World War with Service personnel by Jones and his colleagues and continued thereafter at the Henderson Hospital. \*\*\*\*\* was chosen because it had already instituted an open door policy (in 1949, several years before the introduction of the phenothiazines (major tranquillisers)), it had a stable population, 'good quality' local G.P.'s, and presented good opportunities for developing social psychiatry. Jones became a world-renowned exponent and theoretician of group work therapy whereby the dynamics of the group, under the guidance of a 'director', working over what could be a long time, provided insights, control, therapy etc. for those involved (most especially the psychotic or schizoid). The ultimate aim was their return to the community, and for Jones this meant the supportive network of relatives, social workers, G.P.'s and psychiatric nurses that might manage, by preventive means, to keep those afflicted by mental illness out of hospital. As well as patient groups there would be mixed patient/staff groups where grievances might be aired, behaviour challenged etc. (as a two way thing), and staff groups where patient information/observation would be fed back, where staff behaviour might be challenged, where strategies of care might be discussed.

Fifteen to twenty years after Jones, the hospital still operated on these lines. Staff were unidentified as to rank. In the more acute wards there were no uniforms. The opinions of all staff were treated with respect and discussed in a democratic way (although, obviously, final decisions re medical care lay with the physicians in charge). The hospital as a community had an air of self-confidence,

of being very proud of itself. It still attracted a steady stream of international medical staff. But, as often happens, once the charismatic and dynamic personality is gone, things are never quite the same. Despite genuine efforts by those who worked there, I got the impression that in many instances, what the patients were left with was a regime that paid lip service to Jones' ideals, but was inadequate in respect of taking them forward. More often than not, these ideals were debased by lesser practitioners, and in the likes of the ward that I was sent to work in, they were inappropriately applied. I also got the impression that no matter what the management said should be the case, the basic routines were dictated by the sheer volume of physical work involved. My anger at this situation was the impetus behind the work.

[\* Would it be worth inserting something here about parallel with treatment of words in poems? Along lines of 'a dynamic wherein every element of the poem is an equally responsible and valued part of the whole'.]

"The social structure of a therapeutic community is characteristically different from the more traditional hospital ward or decentralised unit. The whole extended community of staff, patients and their relatives is involved, in varying degrees, in treatment and administration. The extent to which this is practicable or desirable of course depend on many things, for example, the attitude of the leader and the other staff, the type of patients being treated, and the sanctions affected by higher authority."<sup>27</sup>

"The overall culture in a ward or psychiatric unit represents the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns which have gradually been built up through time and are common to a large part of the unit. The tendency is for these cultural patterns to be most clearly established in the more stable and permanent members of the community, that is, the staff. When we use the term 'therapeutic culture' we are referring to attempts to modify these patterns to meet the treatment needs of the patient. These attempts require considerable discussion and inquiry into the nature of many of the attitudes involved.

The sorts of attitude which contribute to a therapeutic culture would be essentially an emphasis on active rehabilitation, as against 'custodialism' and segregation; 'democratisation' in contrast to the old hierarchies and formalities of status differentiation; 'permissiveness' rather than the customarily limited ideas of what may be said and done; and 'communalism' as opposed to an emphasis upon the original and specialised therapeutic role of the doctor."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Jones, 1968, p. 86.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 87.

*"The group's capacity to define reality through consensus*

When individuals in a group are unanimous in their opinions, their agreement lends validity to a feeling, a judgement or a demand. When attitudes, opinions or the interpretation of events are ambiguous, where many different 'realities' or assumptions are possible, social consensus is the great definer of reality. In a small therapeutic group the unanimous opinion of six or eight persons defines such realities as the condition of the patients, the attributes of the conductor, and the character of the interpersonal relationship."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Jones, 1971, p. 38.

9/1/04

Jones, Maxwell, *Social Psychiatry in Practice*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968. p.86 "The social structure of a therapeutic community is characteristically different from the more traditional hospital ward or decentralised unit. The whole extended community of staff, patients and their relatives is involved, in varying degrees, in treatment and administration. The extent to which this is practicable or desirable of course depend on many things, for example, the attitude of the leader and the other staff, the type of patients being treated, and the sanctions affected by higher authority." p.87

"The overall culture in a ward or psychiatric unit represents the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns which have gradually been built up through time and are common to a large part of the unit. The tendency is for these cultural patterns to be most clearly established in the more stable and permanent members of the community, that is, the staff. When we use the term 'therapeutic culture' we are referring to attempts to modify these patterns to meet the treatment needs of the patient. These attempts require considerable discussion and inquiry into the nature of many of the attitudes involved. The sorts of attitude which contribute to a therapeutic culture would be essentially an emphasis on active rehabilitation, as against 'custodialism' and segregation; 'democratisation' in contrast to the old hierarchies and formalities of status differentiation; 'permissiveness' rather than the customarily limited ideas of what may be said and done; and 'communalism' as opposed to an emphasis upon the original and specialised therapeutic role of the doctor." "The group's capacity to define reality through consensus. When individuals in a group are unanimous in their opinions, their agreement lends validity to a feeling, a judgement or a demand. When attitudes, opinions or the interpretation of events are ambiguous, where many different 'realities' or assumptions are possible, social consensus is the great definer of reality. In a small therapeutic group the unanimous opinion of six or eight persons defines such realities as the condition of the patients, the attributes of the conductor, and the character of the interpersonal relationship.

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 feeling judgement or demand. When  
 events are ambiguous,  
 assumption is the great definer

"...the process of intellectual activity in a poem.....is thought itself but divorced, if one may put it thus, from the application of thought to anything other than the words by which concepts are defined. By this fact it becomes a criticism of the systems of concepts that are its objects of knowledge."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Forrest-Thomson, 1971, p. 131-2.

"Jack"

When I came to write the beginning of 'Cage', for whatever reason, 'Jack' came to mind. Maybe because he was so much the archetypal bully's victim; half blind, religious (overtly so in that he wore a large wooden cross around his neck), and with a manner that could be irritating. And the placing of the scene in the toilet area seemed natural, as that was where the worst of the everyday humiliation and degradation happened. Already, at the very outset, the blurring of memory by fiction occurred. And right there at the start, I was into questions of reality; the notion of artistic reality, what it does/can do. I had to deal with questions of confidentiality. I would have to make the characters recognisable, yet unrecognisable. The community I live in is rural and small enough to still have that 'small town' mentality. A large proportion of the population has lived in this area for countless generations. They know each other. They know the intertwinings of the members of their communities. They have long memories. It would have to be made clear that this was a work of fiction. The novel portrays a degree of elder abuse. As the writing has progressed, it has become clear that one of the main themes is complicity.

**complicity, (n.), state or condition of being an accomplice: complexity**

accomplice, (n.), an associate in crime

complexity (n.s.), state of being complex; complication

complex (adj.), composed of more than one, or of many parts  
not simple: intricate: difficult  
[L. complex – com-, together, and root of plicare,  
to fold. See complicate.]

complicate (v.t.), to twist or plait together: to render  
complex: to entangle  
(adj.), complex: involved: folded together

'Alice'

The person I could see in my mind's eye was real. Her way of being that was described in the text was real. I had had occasion to feed her myself. The real Alice had a caring and attentive husband who appeared most days and did as Mr. Bunton did. What I had to do was make it a fiction. At this stage I was still, as with Jack, describing and transposing into fiction things that were 'real' in my memory. Any attempts I had made before at constructing a fictional narrative had been too crude, too much the kind of attempt that held 'plot' to be a necessity, that felt inauthentic, contrived or false, that always failed because it felt as if they betrayed, belittled and let down the reality of these people's existence, as if such an endeavour would have cheapened and trivialised their story. What made it possible for me to begin to write it in the way that I did was hearing Jim Kelman talk about how he worked, how he simply began from where he was and went outward from there, hearing him say that the drama is contained in the action, within the dialogue, that the story can be discovered this way, from the inside out, as opposed to forcing a narrative into some predetermined schema. So that is what I did. By paying close attention to the smallest details of Alice's movement and being, a narrative emerged. I began to relax into the fiction. I felt more able to jettison the exactness of memory for the sake of the story, e.g. letting the fictional name 'Alice' determine the storyline (this from a memory of my grandparents always saying 'Alice blue gown' every time the name Alice was mentioned, and this being a phrase from a song).

Another main feature of 'Alice' is the use of very short sentences. These were a way of enabling me to write the text; by keeping it simple, clear, lucid and exact, I kept it possible. Feeding someone with advanced dementia is a slow process, and it is not glamorous. The short sentence slows down the pace of the narrative and

by doing so the reader is forced to look, to see, to see the person. The reader is deprived of the solace of beautiful prose. Alice's situation is not beautiful. The sentence thus deprived is an affront to our senses. Its use was not 'intended' in this way, but the end result was appropriate and was not edited out to any great extent. It had become an integral part of the structure and meaning of the text, and embedded within it the effort of its creation.

### 'Harry'

'Harry' was written in a similar way, i.e. starting from a given point and working outward using close description of movement to drive the narrative. It takes ten pages for Harry to get from his bed to the breakfast table. In all that time the most he manages to say is "Yiss" and "I'm trying". I wanted to show the monumental effort that was required by Harry to do the simplest task, and I suppose to show how exhausting this is for those who care for such people. If the original impetus for writing the novel was anger at the way these people were treated, over the years that has been softened by a certain compassion towards the people involved in that care. The task they were asked to perform was monumental. It demanded behaviour of the highest moral standard, and how many people can behave like saints all the time, especially when things like chronic understaffing, low morale, poor pay etc are real factors. As an auxiliary I had, on many occasions, set the amount of work I had done in an hour against the hourly rate and what that might buy, and faced that for hours on end, day after day. What mitigated it for me was that I knew that I could get out, and then there was the altruistic element; we were working for the NHS, and these were 'poor souls' deserving of our care, of our selflessness. Looking back, I sometimes wonder why it was not much worse. But this culture of selflessness plays into the hands of 'evil' as it does not stand up for itself. It thus becomes its own evil, becomes complicit.

## Progression and development of the 'cage'

10/11/04 contd. [Application of techniques to novel text.<sup>31</sup>]

A word scatter was made from the text of 'Corridor', and from there the first paragraph was written. And then the poem 'arrived blue' which was subsequently rewritten.

clean water written by hand on sheet glass and modernised with an iron rope  
 arrived blue seven forty a.m. drunken at the window skewed at the fence Linda the  
 glass sign fretted and diffuse the hills and walls starting to screech the brown  
 edges lovely all painted and fluid whirring and splashing and noisy my right hand  
 Linda is thin it slips and leaks on the stone it is thin Linda there are three handles  
 they rattle and sparrow three fat voices in the wire-mesh dummy voices fluttering  
 and filthy too far today is bare it is wrought and dry it looms in the dust its past is  
 random its glass is torn what fool imagines Bedlam what fists echo in the golden  
 windowless corridor who's stale hooting limes the main-gate seconds are pale and  
 cruel are peat-coloured

arrived blue

skewed at the fence

walls starting to screech

brown edges lovely all painted and fluid

my right hand, Linda, is thin

it is thin, Linda there

are three fat voices in the wire-mesh

dummy voices fluttering and filthy

what fools imagine Bedlam

its past slips and leaks from the golden corridor

its echoes loom in seconds pale and cruel

fists fretted on sheet-glass

dust fretted on sheet-glass

<sup>31</sup> For further examples see Appendix, pp. 592-647.

[Similarly for the chapter 'Kedzie hears the Report from the Night Staff'. Paragraph from word scatter followed by a poem which was later rewritten.]

there followed a tour of the laundry cupboard some "Good God's had wandered into an L-shaped good night a greasy Christ exhaled good night the doors opposite wandered and sweated and hey, medical shouting was auxiliary to the dark-rimmed horizontals it flipped and charmed the wandering good night running away the swabs were wet the shock of his thigh bulky and operatic wound up a system of belly flaps the blood was insured the blood slept well the blood was scared of the mug of tea that plugged the door what a fuckin carry on where's the keys a strong coffee shocked the opposite wet and fine puffed up and motioning to Christ to exhale exhale and relax the system is glass it flips and roars good night good night sleep well

followed

wandered into

good night

Christ exhaled good night

doors opposite

wandered

sweated and hey,

shock of the break

and charm

dark-rimmed

horizontals

running away

wandering good night

wet

blood was wet

blood

slept well

blood

scared

door

what a

carry on

where's the keys

opposite we

motioning to Christ to exhale

exhale

and relax

the system is glass

good night

sleep well

good night

26/11/04

Made holes in text (I wis hert sair) by ripping sections out by hand. Text with holes hard to look at by me (like having a multiple migraine). Text did not look very promising for poetic yield. Could be a problem/function of the font size (too small). Also struck me that the bits ripped out might be of equal, if not greater, significance. Salvaged them and stuck them at random (although more or less upright) onto a blank page of A4. Again, not much jumped out as regards possible poetic yield. Felt that existed as statement in its own right; the kind of thing that might be seen in an art gallery. Did not do any more. I may come back to these.

I wis hert sair when ma man deed he dropped doon  
dropped doon I wis right beside him juist a young mae  
went doon oh hen he said an doon he went I got s  
anna mind the funeral they said I wis in sic a state I w  
the feelin numb th  
thin must've happened for a mind ae howlin for days an  
in aw I cann  
even now I se  
his name an I get cor  
it when I  
name Jock  
him juist like  
I say maw or paw  
Wilson or  
Christie l'r  
hem an I mir  
that it wis like tae  
it's like I'm  
a bairn again curls  
curls I fund  
in a drawer his  
d aes them  
no longer efter oo wis  
she hud them  
oped up in tissue  
inside a square  
ae white velvet that she  
d roond the  
tied wi a ribbon I wis aye gettin a row at  
the schule fur looking oot the windae I wi  
ht dolly daydream ma mother aye said  
she could send aes oot fur a message a  
or be shair whether I wid bring back the  
right thing or no I wis never ony yiss at th  
le except for shewin I wis aye right neat  
wi ma firrs ma Aunty Belle thought aes f  
wis a wee lassie course it wis her  
could shew onythin claes  
ns an e  
idery that wis ma favourite sh  
bonny flooers question how  
tableck  
an chair backs an hankies a  
huv shewed in ma time I wis  
ver sae k  
in on  
n although oo d  
jumpers an gloves an scarves an hats an b  
ne bits that wer  
Jock's mother wis p  
mittin socks I've got dr  
yet I wis never struck  
aw that sermonis  
ght ower ma heid I  
t thrawn oot the Sunday Schule I  
id juist be beir  
t be bein cheeky the  
er wis right po faced  
er fither wis  
heidmaist  
ting intae trouble fur sweerin an I wis aye yi  
nd that ne  
eel wi Kirky folk I loved eatin snaw I wid lift  
lap it up  
ff wid juist disappear in yer mooth an it wis like  
wid m  
breathed in o  
er quick an it wid stick tae yer face I like  
a big h  
intae a ba l  
crunch it like p  
le ma mother wid  
a row  
air belly bu  
ae care I ju  
d mind it didnae  
ake yer  
wid be reic  
ve seen at  
greetin when the  
he ame bar  
yer wet claes  
ing in roond the  
piece and on the  
fen  
he fire  
door neebor worked in the mill aside ma fither ah mind ae  
wa  
up ee  
soond ae um cleanin oot aes fireplace the chimney came  
right  
through  
wa  
atween the twae hooses it wis the soond an  
the metal  
rake on the grate  
e fire bricks I can  
still hear it noo an the shovel  
pin the  
ashes an the cinder  
lay when he wis o  
ly shift ma fither never o  
doors ma  
mother did that for she wis at home  
okin eft  
t next door went tae work for she  
hud  
family oo cawed them Aunt  
an an  
Tommy he doted on her they aye  
gie  
resents at Christmas ma m  
ave said she wis too hooseproud tae huv  
ba  
w she wanted them I mind  
in tae ma m  
not seein the stoor  
fawir  
when she hud juist dusted I din  
a could've  
ns tae tell ee  
the truth I mind  
ased tae chase  
t near f  
se that juist  
goaded some  
there wis the  
ll neye  
vin ae the  
Widnesses dic  
n it pair se  
rmed ki  
I wis aye  
peelin tatties p  
winter an se  
am in t  
fa asleep  
an I wid see tat  
hud fower a  
nily an t  
up an if yer  
man wis workir  
guid denner I aye cooked ma man's  
cawer wis aye on the  
table for him cor  
aes work an of course he grew tatties maist folk did then if  
they hud ony bit gander  
or if they hud an allotment ma man kept an allotment an it wis  
great he wis right green-fingered kept us gaun in veg aw through the sumr  
rasps  
gooseberries an blackcurrants an strawberries lovely berries he c  
tae w  
ew prizes in aes time he wis aye awfy guid wi carrots that wis a  
grew them in a big barrel wi sand an aes  
l mixture he cawed it grew some beauties  
an then through the winter oo hud sprout  
although ee'd be buyin tatties by then

me knitt  
ankets wi  
awerfu's  
even go  
teach

n tae speak  
up handfaes as  
eatin wet  
ked

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y Jo  
other  
ae ur most  
nae think sh  
us if oo wem  
e yin ilme l  
well she tu  
scrapin the  
e a fair

specie  
wis an leek's

an went h  
at a laddie I'd  
er I wis aye get  
ver goes doon wa  
o the poodery stut  
ake ee cough if ee  
andfae an rowin it  
tell aes I'd get a s  
hands cauld they  
ck intae them an  
bleazin oor next  
rly an hearin the  
h oor bedroom  
e an aginst th  
s every d

omfort frae  
or Granny  
be wi them i  
a mother giel  
pacer in

sudden at  
an he grippit r  
id a shuck I n  
wis like a z'

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ae them un  
aes business or  
eelin them in the  
tte peelins well a  
ig he needed a  
nin hame frae  
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er doorstep cour  
r forget it when y  
innae bitter ah think  
he summer I could  
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an aw soris I'll  
id it oo hud tae  
e left an socks  
wi the Kirk

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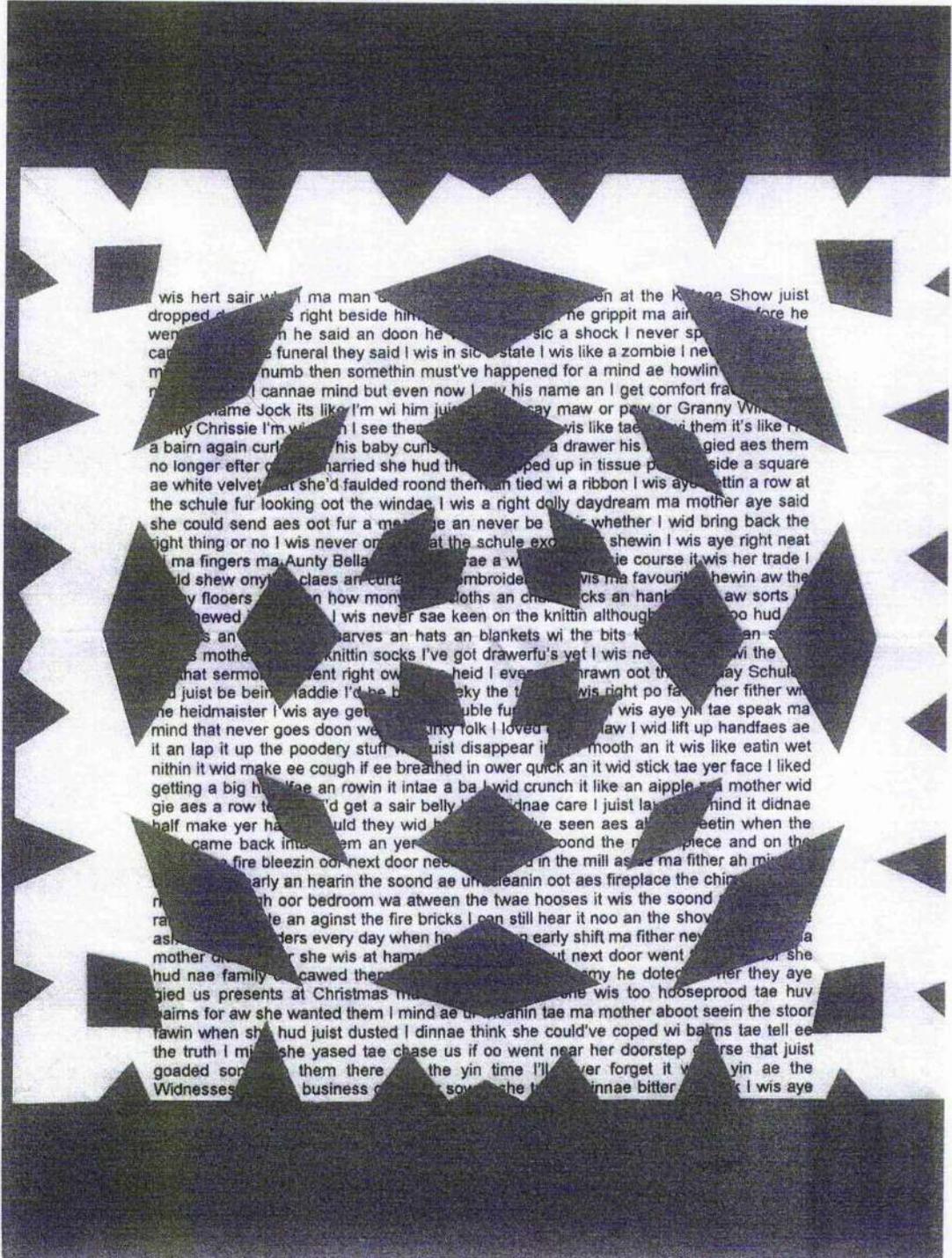
scrap  
tid e

men some  
ae mind but c  
k its like I'm wi  
i wi them I see th  
it wis his baby  
s married s'  
old fault

we  
I didn  
d raw p

nae aug  
an curtar  
v mony  
nev

Also cut up same text in a different way. Made a square, like when I was child, and made a snowflake, kept chopped out bits. Font size wrong for this as not all text within snowflake. Residual text on rectangular piece of paper left over from making square. Had had an idea to cut out figures from the residual text (again from childhood when would make a series of joined figures or shapes from a concertina of paper by cutting into paper but leaving segments of the fold intact so that the figures were joined together). So, folded up bottom segment and cut out an angel shape (reminiscent of Helen sees Angels (??too twee)) then put this and the cut out bits in an envelope to follow up later. Did same with snowflake.



peelins an I wid the peelins wud fower an tatties an up an it  
 man wis he needed a d denner I aye ed ma man's o wis aye on t  
 table for h comin hame frae es work an of co he grew tatties st folk did then  
 they hud it gairden or hud an allotm ma man kept otment an it wi  
 great he wis right green gerbera got us gair in veg aw thro summer he had  
 rasps an gooseberries an blackcurrants an strawberries lovely berries he grew for show  
 tae won a few prizes in aes time he wis aye awfy guid wi carrots that wis aes speciality  
 grew them in a big barrel wi sand an aes special mixture he cawed it grew some beauties  
 an then through the winter oo hud sprouts an leeks although ee'd be buyin tatties by then

29/11/04

'Harry gets up for breakfast' → 'resonant' word scatter → non sensical text

(paragraph) (His eyelids linked) → indents

8 and 11 used...even so only yielded four very short lines.

his eyelids linked too much energy moisture trickled unawares beyond her reach  
 whoo that's a relief Y-y-y-yiss release contain pace and the rest will be easy  
 rigidity and edge bathed bright whites that inched lighter than a piece of toast an  
 almost-abbreviation that jack-knifed and interrupted the diagonal tilt the heave of  
 dance-steps in grey cardboard then it just slipped over the sky slipped propped up  
 and stretchy a thumb bottle of secretions loosened from the short torso relaxed  
 relax skin the rabbit for a fraction of soul they're all stuck up with sleep recessed in  
 Y-y-y-y bend in the middle I think you'll suit this spasm this muscular non-  
 expression that jerked rasping and blank draw it it's not a sprint to the back wall it's  
 a gravity expression propelled urgent wider off-balance to the dormitory where it  
 billowed check on a white ground the word when it came was coax of any uneven  
 sudden do you take sugar in it there was no response an edge of annoyance joints  
 the chin stops instinctively the cough four irregular pulses poured a strain on his  
 cardigan I'm scared of flickering he grunted registered no emotion rigid and distant  
 oh topple the pillows give it your vest effort the concept of the rubbed manoeuvre  
 pained him scrunched his jacket

do you take sugar in it

a piece of toast

I'm scared

of gravity

30/11/04

Working on 'Kedzie's Assignment 2'

Rather than do exactly the same as above, tried to go back to other techniques...e.g. blocking off text, but not working. Tried chopping up text...halved each page and assembled with different half...not working...chopped each page into four and reassembled randomly...not working...reassembled them so that only one segment was altered...an attempt to imitate the action of dopaminergic drugs, i.e. trying to replace what is missing with a similar thing (here a segment from a different page, but from the same text)...not working...thought that using a different, but related, text as replacement might liven up the possibilities.

Manipulated the text thus...deleted random segments and inserted random segments of 'Harry Dozes...'. Blocked out a large 'C' shape in the middle of the first page (part of the corpus striatum is 'c' shaped...bizarre logical connection I know, but heh!)...not working. Going to try 'resonant' word scatter from this interwoven text.

→ '110 in clinic'

110 in clinic each great smooth September his sight is good his regulatory system had difficulty when you cut them his last visit is limited by exquisite personal mobility and degeneration is due to infection to the extent that the movement of air blooms and was lascivious pink On What joins us hearing self I kissed disease displayed faded trees and saw him thrice his roots impaired and cool water running into our mouths make the day evening in July His wife died and he needed to urinate his wife died and he also had difficulty putting a hand out for the arm of a chair three or four times ill crumbled 8am confused help 20<sup>th</sup> and was wanted had had dopamine In frosted mystery cheers him up He loves flowers His wife died In fear; a red sky is due a sense of taste displayed in 1982 akinesia is the stumble the motor orifices encouraging acetylcholine and associated aggression hygiene hygiene cheery In mid-brain and bonnet on trellis

And poem from it 'His wife died...' which got stuck in the printer as it was being run off, but which turned out better than the correct printing.

His wife died and he needed

8am

three or four times ill

confused 20<sup>th</sup> and was wanted

had had dopamine in frosted mystery

He loves flowers

His wife died in fear

akinesia is the stumble

His sight is good his

regulatory system had difficulty

when you put his exquisite personal mobility

degeneration is due to the extent that the movement of air blooms

and was fascivious

displayed in faded trees

His wife died and he also had difficulty

putting a hand out for the arm of a chair

11/2/64

His sight is good his  
 regulatory system had difficulty when you  
 cut his separate personal activity  
 degeneration is due to the extent that the  
 movement of his arm and was lascivious  
 what was self-kissed disease  
 displayed that out  
 How wife died and be needed  
 hand

Overwritten text influenced by example of Eikon Basilike by Susan Howe.<sup>32</sup>  
 Amazed by the feeling of power generated when performing the overwrite.

<sup>32</sup> Perloff, 1998, p. 158.



a copy of the text at all indents with the thought of perhaps working up something from each one. But the difference one to the next was too small (at that font level at least (Arial 12)). The ones that appealed to me were versions 5, 11 and 12. 5 looked most like pentameter; it almost looked like a sonnet. 11 was extreme, down to more or less single words, words beginning to break up, extended over three pages that just seemed to beg to be lined up vertically alongside each other, also pushed hard across to the right margin. In 12 the words were broken up almost completely and spread over nine pages, hard up against the right margin...challenging.

Realise that I have 'caged' the whole text...presumably sensed that the text was too small to break up and use successfully, but by indenting have forced the text into shapes that I used in the same way as previous cages, i.e. only allowed myself to use the words, or segments of words as they appeared. In the finished poem the words and letters retain their original position (with minimal exception) in the text.

The poem fashioned from version five, 'she wanted to...' (below), has three voices denoted by using bold for one, italic for another and normal for the third with sections of text deleted. I like the multiplicity of possible readings this engenders. I also like the shape vis a vis the final phrase. I am pleased with it.

I like the way this use of form is working.

**she wanted to** give the woman a wash **damned**

*reminisce do de, do do do do do*

**her eyes shut** I'll be there in a minute to help you  
strand the ghost of pain

*da de* **brushed waken she grimaced and**

**rolled her tongue** *la* **irreverent collisions**

**tripped off one by one**

release **remnants** none of them

**locked hard rubbed up and**

*oo* **clean**

*whoop*

press the buzzer

*la*

*la da ba*

*de*

*de* **de** you can stand up now

**overbalance in**

**misshapen shoes**

With the 11 indent I overlapped pages so that two of the three were juxtaposed at any one time. By reading the text thus juxtaposed horizontally they yielded three short poetic segments. I allowed myself a slight variation on the 'cage' technique in that the use of the word and phrase segments was more fluid. I used repetition, the words were set out according to their own logic, not the grid of the original text. 12 looked very challenging. The text was reduced to phonemes, individual letters and occasional two or three letter words. The first line read 'sh'. Looking down the line of words it jumped out at me that 'sh' was repeated three times on the first page. I looked at the rest of the text. There were another three on the second page. There were then none until the final page. I scanned for other possibilities. When I had first printed out this version of the text one thing had jumped out at me...the configuration of the word 'Mrs.'. From the way it was split (Mr/s.) I read 'mysteries'. This chimed with e.e.cummings 'mystery-of-mysteries'<sup>33</sup> and also with his way of seeing and working with words. I then found 'where are your' and 'wh' and 'sw', sounds that implied the beginnings of words, that implied the mind struggling to find the word, struggling to complete it. I circled the segments of words that I wanted. I counted the spacings between them and replicated this spacing in the final text. I was especially pleased with p.8 (blank). I was thrilled by the way this poem emerged, and by the final outcome. I nearly gave myself the rest of the day off.

**Note:** 'sh' implies silence, or at least the need, the desire for silence.

The formal logic of this way of working gives a pleasing base note against which the unconscious can play.

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<sup>33</sup> 'Art is a mystery; all mysteries have their source in a mystery-of mysteries who is love...'  
(cumings, 2000, p. 83)

sh

sh

sh

sh

sh

sh

sh

wh

SW

wh

wh  
ere  
are  
yo  
u

r

Mr  
s.



sh

sh

09/12/04

## Installation ideas

Multiple copies of a text on tear-off sheets: reader invited to write (?given)

letter/phoneme/word phrase/text across/through/on/over it

Text with holes juxtaposed with holes as mirror image

indents

extractions

blocks

deletions

distortions of text e.g. increase spaces, increase font size, use facilities available via 'publisher' etc

15/12/04

Aware that maybe getting too far away from aleatory principle (of word choice when making word scatter) using conscious mind to choose word set...harder/slower/less invigorating and exciting.

inject some randomness, some play!

05/01/05

aleatory → creation

as opposed to re creation of memory

(in poetry, to the creation of emotions/feelings otherwise inexpressible)

"The type of Truth required for the final stretch of Beauty is a discovery and not a recapitulation."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Whitehead, 1942, p. 255.

'Wee Mary....'

A short section, therefore condensed onto one page and treated as per JPEG (five diagonal slices) → 'He sat up in today...' (subsequently rewritten).

5/1/05

WEE MARY IS SEEN BY AUREL AND HAS HER MEDICATION REVIEWED Aurel was sitting on a chair beside wee Mary. His legs stretched out in front of him. One hand was in the pocket of his brown corduroy jacket which hung loose over the edge of the seat; his chin rested on the other. His fingers were long and fine-ginned. The way they pushed at his mouth gave his face an air of petulant boredom. His shirt was open at the neck. Eva stood in front of them both. She held some papers in her hands "Good morning, Mary," said Aurel, rolling the 'r's. Mary turned towards him. There was an innocence, a childlike sweetness about her smile. She looked up at Eva. She made a small sound that was like the beginning of a laugh except that her eyes searched Eva's face in quick, anxious snatches of movement. Eva smiled down at her. "You're alright, Mary. The doctor's just here to see how you're getting on." "Oh?" replied Mary in a faint voice. She kept looking at Eva. Her hands pulled at a tissue in her lap. "Mary," Aurel's voice was warm and conspiratorial. He sat up in the chair and turned his whole body towards her. "How are you today?" Mary kept looking at Eva. "The doctor's speaking to you, Mary." "Oh?" said Mary, nodding. Her gaze never left Eva's face. "I'm right here, Mary," said Aurel. "Do you not want to speak to me today?" he laid his hand on her arm. She looked down at it. "Yes." The 'e' lasted several seconds. The dark discolouration of her tongue was visible as she lipped the 's'. "Mary," his voice was more insistent, "do you know what day it is today?" Mary looked up at Eva again. There was the beginning of a laugh again. "Do you know what day it is today, Mary? The doctor's wondering." Mary just smiled. "What day of the week is it, Mary?" asked Aurel, Mary kind of shrugged and bit at her lower lip. "Is it Monday, Mary?" "Yes," she nodded. Her right hand started to move up to her face as if to wipe something. It held the remains of the bedraggled tissue. She lowered it back down again as she answered Aurel's question. "Are you sure, Mary?" Aurel amplified the word 'sure'; it glided out and around Mary. "Yes," she lisped. Aurel glanced up at Eva. "And do you know what time of day it is, Mary?" Mary's head twitched as if she could not decide whether to nod or shake it. She smiled weakly. She rubbed at her nose with the scrap of tissue. She looked at Eva and smiled a nervous smile. "Don't look so worried, Mary," said Eva. "Have a wee think. Have you had your breakfast today?" There was a short pause. "I think so," Mary ventured. "Right, so you've had your breakfast. And have you had your lunch yet, Mary?" Eva asked. "Yes," Mary nodded. "No, we've not had it yet, Mary. You've just had your elevenses. It's still the morning, it's half past eleven." "Oh?" Mary looked surprised. "Is it that late?" Aurel enclosed Mary's left hand in his. "Mary," he said, squeezing her hand, "it's never too late, huh?" He tried to look her straight in the face. "I tell me, Mary, how are you feeling today?" Mary smiled her innocent smile and nodded. "Are you well, Mary? Do you feel well? Are you on top of the world?" He said this out loud as he made an expansive gesture in Eva's direction. She gave him a wry look. "I'm fine, thank you," said Mary pulling her hand away from his. "Well that's the main thing I think, don't you, Sister?" He was slouching in the chair again, leaning back and letting his legs stretch out in front of him. He stuck his hands behind his head and looked out of the window. "Ah, sunshine," he exclaimed, rolling his head from side to side. "I need a holiday!" he shouted the word 'holiday' and stood up. "Don't we all," said Eva taking a step back. "Have you got her drug Kardex here?" He asked in a quieter, more matter-of-fact voice. Eva handed him a sheet of card. He scanned it and shrugged. "Bowels, waterworks... okay?" "Not any worse than usual," replied Eva. "Sleeping well?" "Yes." "Okay, I will leave well alone," said Aurel handing the card back to Eva. He knelt down in front of Mary. "I will see you again next week, Mary." "Yes, thank you," said Mary as she fiddled with the screwed up and torn tissue in her hands. She lifted up her eyes to look at Eva. Eva was rearranging the papers in her hand and looking around the room. "Right, Harry next."

He sat up in  
today kept  
Her gaze

Mary?  
is it, Mary?"  
"Yes,"  
held the remains

of day

a laugh

bit at her

glance

"Don't look so

"No we've no

morning It's past

He tried to look

her  
on top of world

She gave him a wry lo(ok)

from his

his  
voice was more insist  
was the beg  
wondering

"Are you sure,

"Yes,"

too late

One hand  
over the edge

innocence, a  
small sound

"Is it Monday,

and nodded. "Are you we  
out loud as he

will leave alone

will see

the s e torn

(From 'Wee Mary is seen by Aurel'/para blocks 1/5/2/3/4)

a tightened voice starched sunshine wouldn't force insertion inclined resistance as a clichéd florin loose his drapes there's creases and a tray of carafes and glasses coloured thwack to damage The strapping empty hawthorn into The beautiful day articulated numb or moving stiff down to big, deep breaths a set of doors a long tie tied over legs No eyebrows can nod or enthrall as part shouted don't jostle he rested his anaesthetic there's good there's worse things happen at sea "They're ushered by Doctor Jenkins Duncan John the woman nurse westwards having sharpened worry help grasp full admission into getting things papery wild rose vicious six months elbow-room one pink-checked pillow pronto strained of the whole sep-ti sit sixties Countess "Oh?" from Sue?" "Basically off-balance patient he was terrible sterile limit we'll waterproof hard work see cubicle mechanism pass either tough stuff Okay?" "Yes, No testing end "I'm minute today "Another never man corner section caught by dust wheeled in whole to represent lying down one intense dizzy heart changed time

(From word scatter out of 'Duncan Robertson goes to the Cottage hospital')

'a tightened voice...'

Felt that chapter 'Duncan Robertson goes to the Cottage Hospital' (not included in final draft of 'Cage') might not yield much on its own by way of a word scatter ...too conversational, too 'clinical', whatever. Decided that, as in 'Harry gets up', might help if had extraneous material available. Therefore made up a page of words taken at random from the dictionary (did not use all of them...used them like injections, to liven things up, to add a different energy).

Used indents at 6 and 8 for 'empty hawthorn' and 'Jimmy's song'.

empty hawthorn into the beautiful day

papery wild rose vicious

No testing end "I'm minute today  
caught  
by dust

(Jimmy's song) (from Duncan para indent x8) (not used in final edit)

a set of doors

terrible sterile limit

one intense dizzy heart  
changed time

Tried a 'wasting' technique on the same base text (JPEG of scribbled out para) and got 'numb worry'.

Indents at 10 and 11 not used/not yielding anything.

a tight, hot voice starched sunshine wouldn't force the sun to incline  
 resistance as a clenched fist in those his drapes there's creases and a tray of  
 coffee and glasses coloured thwack to damage The strapping empty  
 his morning The beautiful day articulated numb or moving stiff down to  
 deep breaths a set of doors a long tie tied over legs No eyebrows care or  
 central as part slumped down with he rested in one genetic there's good  
 there's worse things happen in sea They're covered by Doctor Jenkins  
 Duncan John the woman nurse westwards having sharpened worry help  
 grasp full admission into getting things paper's pink lips vicious six months  
 elbow from one pink-checked pillow pronto strained of the whole scene  
 Gates Countess "Oh?" from Sue?" "Basically off-balance patient he  
 terrible sterile thing we'll waterproof hard work see cubicle mechanism pass  
 either tough stuff Okay?" "Yes" "Interesting end" "I'm minute" "Okay" "Another  
 never read corner section caught by dust wheeled in whole to represent lying  
 down one intense dizzy heart changed time

numb

worry

never

dust

10/01/05

Starting to ask questions of the text in preparation for poem e.g. how long is it, will it condense to suitable size, what is it about, how might the above determine its treatment?

11/01/05

Words selected from text more fluid collection of 'resonant' and random.

Also finding that importation of other material can help...random words from dictionary (Duncan para), selections from associated text (Harry, Jack, Michelle Baths Bill).

Cage acts like metre and rhyme in that it limits, sets up tension, imposes a discipline.

"The more radical poetries of the past few decades have come to reconceive the "opening of the field", not as an entrance into *authenticity*, but, on the contrary, as a turn towards *artifice*, toward poetry as making or praxis rather than poetry as impassioned speech, as self-expression."<sup>35</sup>

"The emphasis on the word rather than the object behind it or the vision beyond it has had startling consequences. For one thing – Image, conceived by Modernist poetics as the "primary pigment" (Pound), the "objective correlative" (Eliot), the "vector" (Olson), begins to lose its authority as the poetic signature par excellence. For another, and this is my concern here, the new emphasis on the poetic medium as constructed and rule-governed calls into question the primacy of natural speech, spontaneous rhythms, and what Eliot called "common intercourse".<sup>36</sup>

12/01/05

'Spoken' pieces [monologues: decided here that these constituted] the patients voices as they were before they became ill

treat as 'I wis hert sair...' (p. 415) use different techniques to waste: flame, acid, hydrogen peroxide, rip, rub, scour, pierce

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<sup>35</sup> Perloff, 1991, p. 45.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 47.

"Me-e-e? dishevelled at the cut-out half-running out had got out out of puff I love you "let's run rip devils of them of the air you want to finger dirty have a laugh the girls the big men goes to town "We'll lounge back onto placards never-to-be forgotten sit on fish-net slogans They're withering in fancy dress "Here mistress hair-grip coloured paper card as good as gold yellow music opened the thin one click "Shh wafts of you drum roll blue gingham remnants to the outstretched out loud limit right out loud look at balloons costumes liquorice we could crackle across then fine thanks hurl red nylon stockings on them stern louder "Hot work hot place "Right that's it stop her parade pursed on either side coming coquettish on one leg hips absorbed but too hard giggled to herself cuddled stop it maestro I'm fair buggered went down on his knee near skirt hem took three horses necks in her cheek world-class now an arm off again coarse male grin to age the end displayed always quick bit at the bloom They nodded thanks lunged swished yelped bounced chortled through the air near popular blind spot wheeeeeooch! we could skep before quite a rare smasher hen fair tart tartan beside or sway sure changed which he to be as they quivered

(From word scatter out of 'Joan Goes to Town')

13/01/05

Re "Me-e-e? dishevelled at the cut-out"

Tried to make poems from indented paragraph but not working. Realised that paragraph itself was any poem that there was going to be from (this/initial) Joan Goes to Town word scatter. Edited it minimally to increase sound shading. Might try another word scatter later.

Increasingly aware of how sound patterning is playing a major role in word choice/ word placing.

Also rhythm...feel that it is instinctive (vis a vis)/tied up with emotion...the emotions that emerge from the words, the word connections, phrases

Aware of how it feels like the subconscious (awareness) of the 'project' seeps out via the word choice.

18/01/05

poems not coming out of personal experience, opinion, constructed narrative, imagination even, coming from the words themselves

→ a very specific kind of 'impersonal'

not cold but an emotionally charged, intuitive art where the effects of the ego are less obvious

and the act of creation feels easier, more natural, more supple, more easily accessed

18/01/05

Ideas for wasting [the prose monologues]

increase 'holes' in text

increase spaces

increase font size

burn text with match or candle

flick paint (black/grey)/ acid / hydrogen peroxide

distort text ( ?using Publisher )

20/01/05

At supervision meeting, TL suggested that my work is a refutation of Perloff's conclusion (See p. 446) re constructed, rule-governed work as it is absolutely grounded in speech, rhythm of speech etc. (I had come to same conclusion).

TL asked whether the process or the end result was more/most important?

Is the process a spiritual thing in itself?

AP suggested that the experience of the reader vis a vis the process is mimetic, as in real life what remains in the memory of what we read is very little. Cf. Beckett's *Residua*<sup>37</sup>

(Also, of course, the analogy with the pathological process of the disease.)

Coming home in bus last night had an idea. Wondered if could make a paradigm shift and make the poems the focus...like turning a telescope round and looking through the lenses the other way...poems as main objects with process leading back to texts.

Have never been able to stomach idea of turning text as already written into a 'novel' in commercial sense (at the beginning did not call it a novel but a 'novel length piece of prose fiction...only began to be called novel as shorthand).

Also wondered if might present the sections between chapters uncut, so that the reader has to make an effort to access them (an access that would also incur violation), or could ignore them.

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<sup>37</sup> Beckett, 1978.

## SUPERVISION FEBRUARY/05

Apart from the dated sections, the texts below follow on in sequence from the chapter titled 'Alice' to 'Florrie Dickson Dies', i.e. proceeding as in previous months with short paragraph made from word scatter (not included here) proceeding to poem from same.<sup>38</sup> Exceptions are the new 'voices' section and the text out of 'Kedzie wiping tables after lunch' where the poem came from a 'caged' version of the whole chapter. The dated sections are very minimal. Something strange has happened in that I find myself in a position of not wanting to talk about what I am doing. The notes are thus very short. I do have more copious ones which may or may not be relevant eventually. [Written up as notes on techniques, pp. 396-402]

22/01/05

possible title for 'novel'...words out of mind

or out of mind

possible description of form a collection of related texts

a book of related texts

(difficulty with these...not good acronyms)

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<sup>38</sup> See Appendix, pp. 608-620.

2/21/65

Kedzie was wiping the tables after lunch. This was a quiet time. The patients were mostly all sitting in chairs in the lounge or lying down on their beds. Most of them would fall asleep for a while. Today, Isa was 'brewing'. She stood half-in, half-out of the dining room door, her body tight, her eyes narrowed down. She looked in then out of the room. She turned one way then the other. Her hands twisted in about each other then sprung apart. "Come on then!" she shouted, hard and desperate. There was a pleading in her cry, a desolation that was absorbed flat into the indifferent walls and cavernous spaces of the ward. Helen was standing in front of a wall in the dining area. The sound made her look up. She took her hand away from her chin and turned away from the wall of the dining area for a moment. But just for a moment. Then she went back to studying it with a pensive, gentle interrogation. Now and then she touched a random spot and made quiet, dove-like mumbblings whose pitch rose and fell like a kind of laughter. Serene and pale she turned and made to move a dining chair, but her movements had no strength in them, the chair never moved. She turned back to the wall. Kedzie finished wiping the last of the tables. She did not look at Isa. All her concentration went into keeping her movements fluid, into avoiding eye contact with Isa. She gathered up the cloth and went into the kitchen. Eva was there with Sheila. They were loading a trolley with dirty dishes, balancing the empty and half-empty food tins on top. "Isa's getting pretty wound up out there," said Kedzie. She scraped a plateful of leftovers into a plastic bin. "She gets like this every now and then," said Eva as she ran her hands under the tap and dried them on a tea-towel, just keep out of her way, I'll go and see to her. It'll be her bowels. She always gets like this when she's bunged up." "Really, can it have that effect on them?" "Oh, yes. And, well, most of them can't tell us can they?" Eva smoothed the creases of her dress down over her abdomen and hips, holding the material taut with one hand while she pulled out a glasses case and a small bunch of keys with the other. She went out of the kitchen door. Kedzie rinsed out the cloth at the sink. She pulled off a wad of paper towel and dampened it with warm water. She made a second wad and squirted a small amount of detergent onto it. "What's that for?" asked Sheila. "To wipe the chairs... thought it might be better than the dishcloth." "You're a good girl." She looked up at the clock above the door. "I'd better get cracking. The late shift'll be in in a wee minute, and I've got to give the report." Kedzie went back out into the dining area. She started to wipe the seats of the chairs at the end of the table nearest the kitchen, first with her detergent cloth, then with the other. Isa was still there. She was in the corridor but still visible through the dining room door. Kedzie kept wiping and straightening up the chairs. Then she heard Eva's voice. It was gentle, matter-of-fact. "Isa, it's me..... you know me..... I've got some medicine for you." Kedzie watched as Eva moved closer to Isa. "Come on now..... you know that you can trust me..... I look after you don't I?..... I know that you need this medicine." Isa looked as if she was going to back away, but, as if she had suddenly recognised a universal truth, she grabbed the medicine cup and drank its contents. "Good girl, Isa..... I'll give you more later." Isa was already half way down the corridor. Kedzie put the wads of used paper towel in a bin at the side of the kitchen door. "Well, that was easier than I thought it would be," said Eva coming back into the kitchen. "We'll need to get more into her later though."

Poem from above text.

me.....I've  
a

pretty wound

visible throu  
voice

rned  
turned  
went  
ent

each  
desolation

fell like a kind of  
strength

28/01/05

original prose texts becoming more like underlays

- ? present poems as acetates (as overlays)

- some not possible

01/02/05

Re punctuation

decision (in monologues) not to use (moral)

ties in with ideas of getting beyond printed text/letters on page etc...presume the reader knows how the words work together...capable of building own meaning

New 'voices' section written ( it would have been fifty three ...)['when I was a girl...' in 'Cage']. (Had Helen in mind when writing parts in standard English).

This was wasted by stripping the print off with sellotape (see scan below). I liked the ghostly angel-like images. However, this wasted version of the text was not used to produce a poem as I didn't feel that it would yield a good word scatter.

[It was later wasted in a different way, and used to produce 'the sun would shine' (see below pp. 469-471)]



06/02/05

possible description of form...a series of related texts

a 'sort'

10/02/05

Discussing February supervision material with AP made me articulate the following thoughts:

That the short, difficult prose paragraphs don't need to be coherent as they are a legitimate part of the process.

Also that I am aware that the poems are more rational than the intermediate prose text. They tend towards description. They came out of my original desire to write poems about the patients that were not sentimental. Poems in which they were not 'gazed upon' and objectified, appropriated by neither the poet nor the poem. A. suggested that I read Wordsworth's poems from his red revolutionary period such as 'The Leech Gatherer' and 'The Sailor's Wife'.

Re varying punctuation, grammatical sense etc.

- the original (narrative) prose = the 'real' world, normality, normal human interaction  
Kedzie is of this world (of syntax, grammar, control)
- (A.)the prose text gives us their bodily existence in space and time, not thought or mind etc.

Re words to describe the work A. suggests that they exist within the poems -  
cracked abrasions, wounds etc

18/02/05

Gide<sup>39</sup> : composition as symbol

Stein<sup>40</sup> : composition as explanation

Me : composition as kinetic?

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<sup>39</sup> 'In studying the question of the *raison d'être* of the work of art, one is brought to the conclusion that the justification, the symbol of the work, is its composition.' Gide, 1967, p. 54.

<sup>40</sup> Gertrude Stein, *Composition as Explanation*. (Meyerowitz, 1967, pp. 21-30)

25/02/05

The narrative thread that is there to be found

Bill is treated roughly, and because of this his heart failure  
goes into terminal decline

prose core      what does it do?

by a series of glimpsed 'events' shows the behaviour of the patients and staff  
(in real time)

describes their way of being at a particular time

?cage as title	technique		
	bars (with holes between) institution/imprisonment	demeaning	can be opened ward as cage illness as cage moral failure as cage

complicity

the caged word

and the poems      what do they do?

show a different truth      enact the deterioration of language

enact the deterioration of intent      of meaning

have within them the imprint of the cage

Some notes for myself made from a revision of work to date.

Paradox: increase in formal constraints leads to a decrease in the 'intentional', the egotistical.

By decreasing conscious thought the mystery is increased

By demystifying (the process) the mystery is increased.

The poetic line is human in scale...what we can take in (visually).

(The ghost text in the background...the palimtext)

Thinking about 'hav(ing) to find means of rendering form 'unsayable' .....bit of me balks at thought of whole poems in 'dre(is)ams' form. Is it a feasible argument that the deliberately placed poem is 'unsayable' in terms of total meaning in that reading it aloud removes the visual element of meaning and thus renders its meaning disabled?

If this is the case then the line becomes even more crucial as the visual determinant of meaning that anchors the poem on the page. The poem may still exist as a 'structure of equivalences held together as an aural shape' but the *visual* element is now as important if not more important.

In apprehending the poem as shapes on the page (vision is an instantaneous apprehender), is this equivalent to gesture...that primitive, hard-wired, 'emotional' means of expression. The similarities to gesture might be said to include the

dramatic element of how the words are placed, and how this placing becomes a syntax of meaning.

The significance of this for the project is how gesture can be one of the things that remains understandable when *language* is not possible.

gesture allied to intuition after written word

gesture as remnant

gesture as what remains to us beyond language

[Note that I often feel like a dumb creature and that what I write is my communication of things I couldn't say otherwise.]

"If a poet could express his thought in its naked glory, he would undoubtedly utter a wild and fearsome sound, which would (of course) bear no possible relation to language proper or improper... (Language) fetter(s) the poetic soul with almost inconceivably tremendous chains, when we demand that it sing for us in an accepted and comprehensible language."<sup>41</sup>

Re 'the thing sounded' harking back to an earlier stage in development of the (written) word, my quest lies in the opposite direction and therefore needs to use the page (where the page is the locus of the written word however generated (e.g. the computer screen is a page equivalent)).

This quest is specific. It is focused on increasing intuitive awareness.

Possible parallel with the following idea from the field of mathematics on the difference between deterministic chaos and true randomness. How it is possible to

*infer/predict* the shape of an attractor (the example given involves the line of movement of a ping pong ball in the sea; how we can infer/predict the appearance of that sea by observation of the movement of the ping pong ball).<sup>42</sup>

The poetic line as mimetic of fragments of interconnected universe.

(fragment from 19/02/04)

Poetry is a language act

its business is our humanity

The 'void' is that part of our humanity which is 'hidden' from us, the potential of which we are, for the most part, unaware, but which we glimpse through our experience of (great) art, which is hinted at, intuited, ciphered by the artist.

Language is the gift we have with which we might explore our selves.

And it is the 'how' we are put together that will determine our ongoing.

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<sup>41</sup> Heusser, 1997, p. 220.

<sup>42</sup> Stewart, London, 1995, p. 118.

10/03/05

the tradition of cummings → concrete → seeing through the words, seeing the components, words within words

11/03/05

Bach

Stein  
Gide

fugue

difficulty

inevitable

16/03/05

stretto     part of a fugue in which subject and object are brought closely together (from Italian – constricted)

30/03/05

"The line, for a poet, locates the gesture of longing brought into language."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Kathleen Fraser, *Line. On the Line. Lining up. Lined with. Between the Lines. Bottom Line.* (Frank and Sayre, 1988, p.152.)

[Following material inserted as possible analytical co-adjunct]

riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.

Sir Tristram, violet d'amores, fr'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of Europe Minor to wielderfight his penisolate war: nor had topsawyer's rocks by the stream Oconee exaggerated themselfe to Laurens County's gorgios while they went doublin their mumper all the time: nor avoice from afire bellowsed mishe mishe to tauftauf thuartpeatruck: not yet, though venissoon after, had a kidscad buttended a bland old isaac: not yet, though all's fair in vanessy, were sosie sesthers wroth with twone nathandjoe. Rot a peck of pa's malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arlight and rory end to the regginbrow was to be seen ringsome on the aquaface.

Thefall(bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronntonneronntuonnthunntrovarr hounawnskawntooohooordenenthurnuk!) of a once wallstrait oldparr is retaled early in bed and later on life down through all christian minstrelsy. The great fall of the offwall entailed at such short notice the pftjschute of Finnegan, erse solid man, that the humptyhillhead of humself promptly sends an unquiring one well to the west in quest of his tumptytumtces: and their upturnpikepointandplace is at the knock out in the park where oranges have been laid to rust upon the green since devlinsfirst loved livvy.<sup>44</sup>

...in a word I resume and concurrently simultaneously for reasons unknown to shrink and dwindle in spite of the tennis I resume flying gliding golf over nine and eighteen holes tennis of all sorts in a word for reasons unknown in Feckham Peckham Fulham Clapham namely concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown but time will tell to shrink and dwindle I resume Fulham Clapham in a word the dead loss per caput since the death of Bishop Berkeley being to the tune of one inch four ounce per caput approximately by and large more or less to the nearest decimal good measure round figures stark naked in the stockinged feet in Connemara in a word for reasons unkown no matter what matter the facts are there and considering what is more much more grave that in the light of the labours lost of Steinweg and Peterman it appears what is more much more grave that in the light the light the light of the labours lost of Steinweg and Peterman that in the...<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Page 1 of James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, as reproduced in John Cage, *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake*. (Perloff, 1991, p. 151)

<sup>45</sup> Extract from Lucky's speech in *Waiting for Godot*. (Beckett, 1986, p. 43)

He Cannot Have Been Pleased Today to Hear That

(Stein 55)

Jackson Mac Low

He cannot have been pleased today to hear her accidentally mention that.

Although she is little Carrie is forty. Ask for rubber in your prayers. They are doubles but are they brothers.

Whoever hears plaster dry listens best. It was said that the country might have had better kinds of fire if it hadn't won that prize. Their hundred offspring were promised a whole new arrangement. Another disappointed rebellion.

Of all who were there yesterday who will be exclaiming in that place today. I heard the door. It has been shown that we men make dirt. Are we willing to hear it stopped. England and age loaned decision a train. Gradually he comes to believe no one. She does either nothing or little.

He said he'd undergone the same decrease of conscience after considering their stammering thinking. Please harness another one. He had a hundred. Did the designer understand. Weren't you satisfactorily kind. Under an obligation to get the shapes into certain places what place did you mention as higher. He meant the knives entailed reparations. It has been found that women hear best. Can a man wait now. Julian mentioned the separate introductions. Weren't you yourselves surprised.

Little ones believe me. This cannot be going on. Had you wanted to you couldn't have chosen to carry the unavoidable but you did so accidentally. Are the brothers there. Whether they went there or not they doubled the plaster. Those who hear best are hopefully pleasant. That was the end but I prefer the beginning. Why should that other one stammer. They're ordinarily together. When another drafts the recipe for bread there please tell me whether this furthers still another. What was the purpose of that resumption of bribery. A hundred offspring sprang from closets in another disappointed rebellion. Their higher exclamations were meant to call the wealthy to resemble them by doing what they did. These times principally carry with them undertakings hastening decisions. In the beginning everybody overflowed. There were fifty opportunities for the English to disappoint the rebellion. Exclaiming that higher meant wealthier the callers resembled doers. Undertakings in these times are principally fastened to decisions.

Whether near or far the rest rest. Anybody may accidentally become necessary. We believe bread becomes thinking. Does this sound like an accident. He accidentally changes. He went were the front lamps do little. Though he looked he had need of intuition to choose among the women. They made believe their faces looked that way. Please can't we hurry to see what causes that resemblance. When we have seen whether they carry things faster will we have wanted to listen. I know I am mud. He's gentle to fish. Hot or cool she would deny that. Promise you'll leave out the introductions. Separate when this changes. He did the tired thing. Had any other needed harnessing. The designer did. Am I to understand you made her leave instead. Woody the baker was in an unexpected bed. He never said that we said either that he was displeased or that he was pleased. Credit another horse's straps' goodness. Whether reparation is everything or

splendid running. Would everybody believe there was any chance that they wanted her to leave. Never revise her accidentally. They were annoyed when they saw what higher winning meant. Do it by widening it.

She was not lonesome despite the expenses of emigration. When they got the maps together they didn't try to notice what he'd said they'd have to remember. All my toys were wonderful. Carving the splendid coal the bribed one exclaimed that Henner's picture would be worth a hundred of his offspring. He was a designer and he did understand. He said you've not been satisfactorily careful. That very neglect was forgotten. Away with what you mean to say. Don't only use cement. Why would emigration stand as the better measure. He recommended that he be a minister. The decision to loan away the fork was greeted with language such as no one would have believed. They rendered it accidentally. Had another believed in another there's a chance that still another would have been displeased. It disappointed forty that Carrie was so little although many prayers were said for her. The number of rubber wheels was lessening in that place. Are those brothers the reason. He stopped his gentle plastering.

Ordinarily they would try everything. Pray that this harnessing be an introduction to toys. So far toys may be for anybody. He means that morning is the time to express emotion. Hundreds asked her age and what would become of her. He was trained to make decisions about loans and doesn't believe anyone. Gradually they came to be doing very little. He said they'd undergo the same decrease of conscience. She considered thinking about it after stammering Please. To you harnessing another hundred was not at all satisfactory. The designer understood that.

*Nine paragraphs/strophes in which the numbers of sentences in successive strophes comprise the ascending and partially descending Lucas sequence 1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 18, 29, 18, 11. They were derived from a portion of Gertrude Stein's "Pink Melon Joy," (from "Carving," to the end in A Stein Reader, edited by Ulla E. Dydo [Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1993], 300-305). The source's page numbers were derived from the random numbers 302 and 5, found by chance operations in the Rand Corporation's random-digit table A Million Random Digits and 100,000 Normal Deviates (Glencoe IL: The Free Press, 1955). They were interpreted as meaning "about five pages including 302," so the source passage runs from about the middle of 300 to the end of "PMJ" (the middle of 305). The order of the source passage's paragraphs was newly randomized by random-digit chance operations and then the passage was run through DIATESTX5, Prof. Charles O. Hartman's most recent automation of one of my deterministic diastic text-selection methods, using as "seed text" a paragraph from Stein's Long Gay Book (ASR, 215, par. 8). One word from the seed was inserted at random locations in the source to allow DIATESTX5 to complete one whole period. The seed in this procedure is a text that is "spelled out" in the program's output "diastically," that is, with words from the source passage that have the letters of the seed text's words in corresponding positions. The output was freely revised and edited, but most of its words (or their root morphemes) were placed in sentences and paragraphs where their groupings are similar to those in the program's unrevised output.*

New York: 17-31 October 1998<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> He Cannot Have Been Pleased Today To Hear That (Stein 55). (Mac Low, 1998)



"....(when) language becomes itself, it simply 'IS' and (almost successfully) refuses to mean.....lack of meaning is not only the expression of superior "thinginess" but also of highest fidelity to "thought in its naked glory".<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Heusser, 1997, p. 224.

M n er

s u  
in e w s s i m u  
n w m ew s Si  
er c u ne r l c e n  
v e le s cle ve ew

nerv e n er ve

ne r ve

m u s s i m u s  
c l e n e w s i c l e  
m u s n e r ve s m u m  
s i m s u c le  
n e u s  
w c l e

c n l e e u m s i n  
r ve s i n s s in  
ve ew c l e e w  
n e r n e r s in e w  
v e r ve s in e w  
m s u in n er ve  
e

w s c l e m u s c le

s in s s s in  
e w in e s m m s e n  
e w e s musc w e r

w n n er s i  
n n n n m l e  
n n n e  
n n n

'nerve muscle sinew' from voices section 'ma man wis at Monte Cassino...'

caged the text by placing a paperweight off-centre (see scanned image below), drawing round it and continuing the lines of its edges out to the limits of the text

• ma man wis at Monte Cassino he wid niver speak about it but he hud nightmares I ken that an there  
 • were times when he just went kinnae quiet he'd just away tae the fishin an I kent no tae say onythin  
 • then for in the early days I wid try tae get him tae tell aeg what wis botherin him but he wid get that  
 • roosed an that wisnae like him at aw I liked men I'll no deny it although I only ever married yin an that  
 • wis when I wis young an daft I sto got shot ae him he wis a waster Christina wis his then I hud Shirley  
 • her fither wis an insurance man an then a guid bit later I hud wee Audrey course I hud a bit ae a  
 • reputation when ae live in a wee piss that's just natural but naebody really bothered aegs with aeg  
 • huv dared I aye worked I kept ma bairns clean an I wisnae a hamie wrecker I niver took onybody's man  
 • off them there wis only yince I got mase get hurt I wid've been in ma late twenties by then an he wisnae  
 • frae the toon he came tae be the new manager ae the store but through the weak he stopped at the  
 • hotel I wis workin in till he could find a hoose I suppose he hud the gift ae the gab an aye seemed tae  
 • huv plenty cash he took aegs away yince three days oo hud in a guest hoose in Kendal I left the bairns wi  
 • ma sister he wis gaun tae leave aegs wife an oo were gaun tae move tae England but he couldnae dae it  
 • in the end she wis kinnae nerry an he didnae huv it in him tae leave her I givver went near a man for a  
 • guid while after that then I got a job in the chemlet an Mr. Sykes whae owned it wis a lovely man a wee  
 • bit colder but awfy nice an when he became a widower I wis aegs comfort he wis right guid tae me I  
 • wanted fur nuthin he wid've maimed aegs but I tellt him I wis quite happy the way I wis I liked ma  
 • independence an I think there wis a bit ae him that wis gled about that really for he liked aegs peace an  
 • quiet wee Audrey wis his my mother wis a MacNeill from Skye same as Whistler's mother you know the  
 • famous painting she came south as a girl to go into service she wis with the Dewars the big distillers my  
 • father wis the son of one of their managers they met when he came to deliver a message it wis all very  
 • romantic it wis her hair that he first noticed jet black and hanging down past her waist in a thick plait she  
 • would only be about fifteen it wis another three or four years before she would have anything to do with  
 • him she wis very quiet my mother very religious the family thought a lot of her she got on very well with  
 • young Mrs. Dewar's aunt Miss Donaldson and she went to live with her for a while as her companion  
 • Miss Donaldson loved to travel my mother went with her to Paris through Switzerland to Italy to Florence  
 • an Rome my mother loved it that wis all before the First War of course by then she wis married to my  
 • father and had had my older sister and myself we were living in Edinburgh we were lucky with my father  
 • being a teacher and anyway with him having had rheumatic fever he wis never called up and I often  
 • think how that must have been meant because it gave them that time together because she died young  
 • she died of TB my sister and I were only children at the time my grandmother came to live with us then I  
 • can remember visiting my mother in the sanatorium my grandmother took me I remember her smile and  
 • thinking how tired she looked Jack my little Jack she said everything aise about the memory feels white  
 • and chill she died in June I always remember the date because it wis four days before my tenth  
 • birthday I took my father I can still see him standing at her graveside clutching a rose of the deepest  
 • red so dark it looked black from a distance Christ bairns if they're no peelin an shinin an snotterin  
 • everywhere they're bawlin an greetin or snivellin I hud nuthin tae dae w them if I could help it I left that  
 • tae the wife it wis her fuckin cunt they dropped oot ae I just let her get on wi it except if they needed a  
 • bit that's when I'd get roped in I've been a bloody sight better off without them that's fur shair when  
 • ee huv bairns eed be as weel staurin at the back door burnin rivers wocked the wife havin aw thae  
 • bairns what a fuckin mess she wis in it ended up aw hingin oot her she'd aye be havin tae shove it aw  
 • back in I aye made fuckin shair it wis showed back in afore I went onywhere near her even the fuckin  
 • thought ae it gled aegs the boak ended up havin tae huv it aw taen away couldnae fuckin touch her fur  
 • weeks Mavis Priddle wis a brow dancer an a smert wummin no that eed ever think sae tae look at her  
 • noo that hair ae hers is aye sic a mess an the kibbles stuck in tae keep it back off her face dae nuthin fur  
 • her it still sticks oot like she's plugged intae the mains an when she's servin in the shop its aye the same  
 • claes she's got on that auld broon jumper an skirt an her legs bare an aw fireside tartan clumpin about in  
 • thae men's bits wi the socks turned doon on the top ae them it's a wonder onybody ever gaun intae  
 • that shop her hands are aye black tae I loved the danclin country danclin wis what I liked the best ae kin  
 • gal danclin no ceilidh danclin sae much ee hud mair need ae a pairtner fur that an ma man hud his left  
 • feet but wi the country danclin even if there wis nae mien ee could enjoy eersel the music fair gets ear  
 • feel tappin an it keeps ee shair in the heid I'm in aw thae different dances although fur aw the fancy  
 • yins I ever lairned ma favourites wis Petronella ee ken the yin where ee start off danclin a diamond there  
 • wis just somethin about the tune an the way the dance followed it that fair lifted aegs Christ ee widnae  
 • catch me daein ony kinnae fuckin danclin I'm no a fuckin nappy boy if I waot a shag I'm bloody shair I'll  
 • get yin afoot havin tae porce about lik a fuckin pansy wi ma tongue hingin oot an ma cock half wey up  
 • ma shirt fur that's aw it's they caw it fuckin danclin but it's just folk wantin tae shag the bastardin hint  
 • end off each other an go the gumption tae come oot an fuckin say it

frustratingly unfruitful...although it did yield 'near roses we dream...' ('Cage', p. 318) which was arrived at by visually scanning the text and breaking it up, finding words out of words, searching the phonemes for the building blocks of other words...this then led to finding 'muscle', 'nerve' and 'sinew' in the topmost triangle of the blocked-off text and → search for these words over the whole text...typed them up as they are placed in the text

I like the appearance on the page

I like the way the words become interwoven/ interrupt/ go through one another

voices section 'it would have been fifty three...' (see back p. 453) wasted by ripping text up

pieces thrown up in the air and the ones that landed on my desk text

uppermost used to yield a word scatter

→ paragraph 'so I went and put flowers....'

so I went and put flowers night purple fairies together wi yellow honeysuckle  
 the sky made surprise rain sparkling on-stop for joy know I was happy Viola  
 it's hard when we wild it all four days layered flat cuddlin long long hair on her  
 pin it up hair pins flowers up and eyes were beautiful wanted Jess in her best  
 dress loved my excitement excited heart neck face a girl so keen to see the  
 big precious world bursting off the ground burst lucky burst goddess in a  
 nearby town just be nice Mr. Annie wis prood she'd sing the hills between aes  
 singin wee faces roses glass Latin sang strugglin scared five bairns Billie  
 affected deaf slow temper cooryin in dumb across years I would aye feel auld  
 from hardly greetin the sun grainy hauden roond time then later I'd rush home  
 nivver walked I was movement and fun my nights shook shaking wi names  
 name them find out their being called animals sheep usually sticking ahint aes  
 gled that ony were back the hoose near snowed in I looked efter May ranted  
 dinnae fall listen pat off the teacher fasten the coat keep money some wey we  
 kept one sea gem ta see she dared less then once wis able for mair hud  
 walked airms oot told us their kitchen bowl would mix bread onythin would  
 shine she ate mustard cress lamb at the Holiday her tongue wid whaup and  
 Lute its chariot jar me shut in except where it passed from any window was so  
 much hail it filled any valley stuck in a birch clump plants own it same thing

this paragraph then indented x 5 and x10 and phrases constructed from these

I found myself making lists of possible matches for single words or phrases e.g.  
 'she'd sing' would attract the following list: lucky/strugglin/slow/across years/the  
 sun/one sea/the sky/rain/wild.

→ repetitions in final text of poem

shine  
 the sun  
 the sun  
 would  
 mix  
 time  
 then  
 she'd sing  
 the sky  
 one sea  
 the sun  
 wild  
 rain  
 sparkling  
 once wis  
 once wis  
 once wis  
 beautiful  
 once wis  
 happy  
 filled  
 wi  
 bairns  
 wi  
 burst  
 burst  
 flowers  
 yellow  
 dumb  
 dumb  
 sparkling  
 beautiful  
 joy  
 days layered flat  
 shut in  
 hauden  
 off the  
 world  
 yellow honeysuckle

I miss

the feel for summer

dream  
summer

when it when it  
first was  
love

think

ask her

how

her

laugh

got tied in in in it  
how

the  
day

never tasted

flat

think

how  
night

chased

every mix

her tears

were but

fine rain

they

race me  
race me

how

forget

I

forget

forget

I

her



I tried to use segments of readable text as 'cage' as per 'me I've a pretty wound...'  
but not yielding much

found myself only getting a few words by same means as got 'nerve, muscle,  
sinew'

decided to (visually) scan the readable text and make a word scatter (I included  
the words I had already got by 'nerve, muscle, sinew' method)

found that I was restricting myself to words in English as opposed to Scots (more  
by way of limiting the word stock than for any other reason) although 'prayin' got  
in as it was found by method above, and 'fur' got in in its English form

→ 'I first was her tears...'      this took me a long time as I was suffering a  
succession of migraines

I first was her tears rain chased dream the very hem then I think I think roof rain  
 the hard maul the feel for summer come so could ever vain never blood never  
 think I saw three years there cool day got tied in in in it rain look me till the rain  
 shed South keep up Harry you really were brother enough grown gentlemanly by a  
 different vein so eat some kind chew courage it never tasted rusty like rain smile  
 be inane forget imagination night it up be every mix even purple green it's packed  
 like each year down at shin no fags of course arse flat like Lesley's cousin Lesley  
 that print kin won fair sister curly cups wee sis sister swore love outside Whitley  
 Bay ee look see them hold like never known poor saw an other we end he she I  
 me saw John Jock vera granny larry mother Cath Sheila mother leave let go laugh  
 even the train across the platform on fly race me out I the bad bet the blether face  
 raincoat on hand hat that they would use as posh ask her if the trip had spine were  
 men kind that came was fur not now the same did Tweed go right at an hotel but  
 lass where had he been she bit that off he'd had than he but had he'd he can often  
 crash a card than just sit but sit right and get pals was a whist Store iffy even a rod  
 for him to be for when it when it oh well be at at how done they were but can be  
 come I smell mud fine rain waters hair I miss prayin

I looked at indents x 5 and x 10.

→ 'I miss the feel for summer...'

I took phrases from x 10 indent and the non-indented (original) paragraph.

The poem was placed on the page as per the non-indented paragraph.

The whole process took the best part of two and a half weeks due to illness/  
 school holidays/ my daughter leaving home etc.! It would normally have taken a  
 day / day and a half at most.

I was pleased with both the paragraph and the poem.

I liked the spacing

I liked the repetitions, the syllabic shading and tonality

I liked the way the words clump together, how 'chased' becomes a pun

I liked the way 'I' between the two 'forget her's insinuates itself between 'that' and 'can', how it acts like a held note in music [refers to first draft]

On rereading 'the sun would shine...' I was struck by the similarities of repetition (vis a vis 'I miss the feel for summer'), the lists of possibilities against one word in the process phase, and even in the words used (surprised as I had more or less forgotten this poem although I wrote it only recently)... 'mix', 'flat' (especially that it referred to 'day'), 'rain'...very strange...although not really, I guess, my brain has remembered it through the migrainous fog of the last few weeks.

15/04/05 (Early sequence idea)

Chap → para → poem

the text is reduced and reduced  
made less

by process      inevitable, brutal,  
impersonal, (violent sometimes)

The whole achieves a multi-layered multi dimensionality  
by means of process

not mythical/intellectually(textually) referential

refers only to itself (and is thus like a poem)

stays true to itself

& does not exclude

## FLORRIE'S VISION

: I am going to die, little by little Soon, with few familiar 'later ons' the vital anger from which ideas of miracle may crush the name death lies, detached from summer landscapes burning within Two or three. delusions cover over this sad truth sunlight loves Our denial self-pity, is cured... now, love expects no faded colours like death Yes, I am present. Whatever tightens passion utters yellowish silence instead deciphered to white But too vulgar For truth For beauty!. For fervour all is drifted is all dried self-forgotten and vast lost through long confrontation sun amazes me it strikes ravines which wind hope out of my heart which plateau upward my eyes become elaborate birds avid wings creating endless sky. Yes, is blue in spite of horror a pagan heart's four corners one could want solitude want innocence not arch, illusions dirty confusion harsh breath

\*

refusal became the adventure leading me on me whose handwriting traced desire with lead that melted and reigned among stones someone tells it so his visage rubbed pale appears overwhelmed heavily precise nothing passive in its imprisonment insistent into the farther. refusal these surroundings matter? progress? here? and every other day talk of people following simple hope stunning poetry and always the wind whipping silence until eyes taste desolation am thus alert to recover face to face Later on...'

From a word scatter out of 'The Wind at Djemila'<sup>49</sup> (quoted at beginning of 'Cage')

→ poem 'Soon, ideas of miracle may fade' (pp. 13-14)

also tried a smaller font but did not use this (see below) as I preferred the effect of the final two lines on a separate page, the delay

---

<sup>49</sup> Camus, 1970, pp. 75-80.

Soon,

Ideas of miracle may

fade

truth  
is

elaborate      become  
in  
spite of

illusions

\*

the farther. refusal

...

[A number of poems were rewritten at this point.<sup>50</sup> Some were re-placings of earlier versions. Some were more successful than others. The less successful were not used in the finished work (e.g. 'a set of doors', below).]

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	n
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a	n
set	s
of	e
door	d
s	i
	z
	z
	y
	h
	e
	a
terr	r
ible	t
ster	
ile	c
limi	h
t	a
	n
	g
	e
	d
	t
	i
	m
	e

<sup>50</sup> Appendix, pp. 648-657.

01/05/05

thinking about a 'transformation' of the Border Ballads using techniques associated with 'cage'

a 'rifacimento'

niggling worry about fact that poems might be lessened by emerging similarity of form, but if think about *disease*, how it is diagnosed, its identifying features, then perfectly apt that they are similar in this way, mirroring the diagnostic sign that the 'holes' embody in Alzheimer's

Pages that follow show poem from 'Florrie's Vision' ('death lies detached') in five versions to show five different ways of placing on the page.

death lies detached

deciphered to white

:I am

like death

:I am

self-forgotten

Yes, I am

VISION

S

amaze me

my

become

imprisonment

precise

sunlight

me

no faded

expect

denial

[no indent of para]

death lies, detached

deciphered to white

:I am

like death

:I am

self-forgotten

Yes, I am

VISION

S

amaze me

become

my

precise

imprisonment

sunlight

me

expect no faded  
denial

[indent x5]

death lies, detached

deciphered to white

:I am

like death

:I am

self-forgotten

Yes, I am

VISION

S

amaze me

become  
my  
precise

imprisonment

sunlight  
me

expect no faded  
denial

[indent x5 moved around the page]

death  
lies, detached

deciphered to  
white

:I am  
like death

:I am  
self-forgotten

Yes,  
I am

VISION  
S  
amaze me

become  
my  
precise  
imprisonment

sunlight  
me

expect no faded  
denial

[indent x 8 moved]

death lies,  
detached

deciphere  
d to white

: I am  
like death

: I am  
self-  
forgotten

Yes, I am

VISION  
S  
amaze  
me

become  
my  
precise  
imprison  
ment

sunlight  
me

expect  
no faded  
denial

[indent x 10 moved]

Poem from 'caged' 'I worked in the top flat'

if a bird

wis near daith

bruised

an still

clock tickin

wind ettin

doctor tell

me  
it's

easy

tae  
lose  
this bloody  
inside

if a bird

wis near daith

bruised

an still

clock tickin

wind ettin

doctor tell

me it's

easy

tae

lose

this bloody

inside

24/05/05

Thoughts on 'if a bird'

text (below) 'caged' with the lead paperweight that sits on my desk placed on the page and drawn around in seven different positions, outlines overlapping, going outwith the boundaries of the printed text (see below)... searched each outlined shape that this gave me for resonant words/phrases...used bits of words sometimes...wrote them all down on one page (not an awful lot of them)...out of these the words of the poem formed themselves/pushed themselves forward...they were then written out with a mind to their placing in the text but compressed slightly to look better as a poem...I also did a landscape version as this more nearly simulates the original placing

find that I often like/get most excited by the smaller spaces...intensifies the pressure...better for getting unusual snippets...here 'wind ettin'...'ettin' not a word I've heard or know, but seemed like a word...could be a word (a Borders word)...it sounded good...it made sense within the context...I could imagine what it might mean (something like annoyance, nagging, depressing)...looked up my Chambers dictionary and it is an archaic word (from OE) for a giant (!)

20/1/77  
 12/1/77  
 with a lot of  
 paper work

I worked on the top flat there were big windaes aw along the roof that let in the light it wis a nice light ee didnae get blinded like ee could wi ordinary windaes an the wa's were white so it felt fair bright an airy oo hud big long tables tae roll the cloth oot an lookin for aw the imperfections wee holes or loose threads or bits where the shadin wisnae right oo marked them aw wi a wee bit thread an sometimes pit a wee note on so's the menders wid ken what they needed tae dae when I wis a bairn I wis an awfy light sleeper an there wis this time the bedroom windae stert up the awfliest rattlin an ee ken what like a rattle is it's no like a clock tickin it's no regular so ony time it wis windy I'd be tryn tae get tae sleep wi ma fingers in ma ears or stuffin them up wi bits ae cotton wool but that wis never ony guid eer fingers lose their grip as ee faw asleep an the cotton wool juist faws oot so I hud ma fither tryn aw sorts he made wee wedges dot ae kindlin an stapped them atween the windaes but the rattlin didnae stop he pit mair wedges at the bottom and the top but the rattlin wis still there he puttled aw roond the panes and repainted them in case they were loose but that wis still nae guid every time it wis windy this bloody rattle wid stert up an I widnae could get tae sleep I wis aboot demented an so wis he but the mair I listened tae it the mair I realised it wisnae the windae itsel that rattled it seemed tae be the inside ae the right side ae the windae I tried tae explain it tae ma fither so he ended up cuttin a hole through the wid an here it wis the lead wecht on the end ae the sash cord that I'd been hearin the wind wis gettin through intae the casement an makin it bang aboot inside so he puttled up the outside ae the windae frame an wrapped the lead wecht in a bit ae felt an it wis fine efter that hell I couldnae afford a windae cleaner I did them aw mase I did the bottom yins yin fortnight and the top yins the next that wis enough some folk did theirs yince a week but I couldnae be bothered wi that cairry on I hud better things tae dae oo were never no able tae see oot them the ony time I did them oftener wis if a bird did its business on them then I'd sweer I'm no a big milk drinker I can take it in a puddin that kinnae thing but I widnae think ee for a tumblerfae mind when oo wis wee if oo werenae weel ma mother wid make saps breed soaked in hot milk an plenty sugar ladled on top I wid lap them up milk wis nearly the daith ae's yin time though I yased tae help auld Eck Whiteford wi the milk cairt horse an cairt the cairt fu ae milk churns the big silver yins ma job wis tae haud Champ Eck's horse he wis a big carry beast while Eck wis doin oot the milk but this time oo were juist along the Traquair road there when somethin must huv frichtened Champ for he bolted I ended up on the ground an the cairt run right ower the top ae's tae toll the truth I cannae mind much aboot it but I miss I wis in ma bed fur weeks I wis gey sair bruised ma mother lookin efter aas an bein fair worried the doctor tell her that I wis very lucky but that ma bowel had been crushed an that I would need laxatives for the rest ae ma days an hell I still take a teaspoon ae Senokot every night in life they're makin an awfy mess ae the High Street the now they've been rowkin an better howkin right along frae Nicolson's tae the top ae the Kirk Pond for mair is a week now somebody sid they were layin a new gas main but seeminly it's the Water Board they've been havin an awfy cairry on there wis a burst somewhere outside the Waverley Hotel but they've hud tae dig gaffer mair is they'd thocht tae find where the bother wis an replace the pipe in fact it must've been burst at mair is yin bit an that's what's caused the bother Jimmy Sivils wis tellin aas that they'd hud nae water aw along that side ae the street on Tuesday they'd hud tae shut the Waverley for they'd nae water I says tae m hell they didnae need tae dae that oo could easy drink oor whisky ahooot water oo'll be gaun tae the fitba on Saturday Geordie Broon's gaun tae take us in aas van the Herts is playin Celtic it'll be a guid game both teams wi some rare players the now I think that young yin'll be worth the watchin he played awfy weel in aas first game he's guid at the irkin oo hud Tam Biyth wi us that time but I'm bloody shair he'll no be comin on Saturday he's yin ae thae kind that could stert a row in a paper poke if juist spoils the whole day for awbody he's no a nice man the wife's got fer ower much funnin in that bedroom she says she needs it tae keep aw her stuff she's got twae double wardrobes for shee look ma mother's when shae deed a single wardrobe that's mine a dressin table a muckle yin ae thae ottoman stools wi the padded seats yin ae thae modern things wi the wardrobe kinnae bit on the bottom an a big shelly thing on the top ken they caw them units nowadays an that's as weel as the double bed an auld upholstered chair that shee got at the saleroom that naebodys allowed tae sit on for it's delicate an twae dinin chairs oot the livin room even then there's muckle plastic pokes fu ae God knows what sluck on the top it's a wonder I can ever get intae ma bed at night I says tae her ee never even yase half that stuff she's aye buyin an pittin it away for guid then never yasin if she's got mair sheets an towels than oo'll ever need there'll be an awfy clearin oot when onythin happens tae the pair ae us I never bocht a bike in aw ma days ma fither got aas yin frae auld Eck Brunton auld Eck aye hud an awfy bother wi aas shooder an ma fither wid massage it for him he wis guid at it he laimed it through the fitba the trainers did aw that kinnae thing in thae days it wis a guid bike it wis solid if hud the auld hub brakes they didnae half get hot by the time ee got tae the bottom ae Walker Street Brae thonder ee could've fried an egg on it then when Joe the Pole deed mind he wis killed when that roof fell in thon time when they were daein up the new bit ae the Hosiery his wife gied aas his yin it'd hardly been yased I take it tae ma work every day yet

Started working on text below...see explanation 'Constructing Sparine' p. 493.

**Promazine Hydrochloride (Sparine) Indications:** agitation, especially in the elderly, short term adjunctive treatment of severe anxiety, terminal care.  
**Cautions and contra-indications similar to Chlorpromazine Hydrochloride, i.e.:**  
**Cautions:** cardio-vascular disease, respiratory disease, pheochromocytoma, parkinsonism, epilepsy, pregnancy; reduce dose in elderly and debilitated, avoid drugs such as phenylbutazone that depress leucopoiesis; abrupt discontinuation should occur if, after prolonged use, eye defects and abnormal skin pigmentation are found. **Contra-indications:** poisoning caused by CNS depressants, bone marrow depression. **Side-effects:** the five major side-effects are: 1) liability to cause postural hypotension (greater in promazine) 2) drug-induced jaundice (less likely in promazine) 3) drug-induced Parkinson's disease 4) interference with temperature regulation 5) drowsiness. (Jaundice and Parkinsonian symptoms (rigidity, tremor) tend to clear up when drug stopped. Because of (4) hypothermia may be induced, particularly in the elderly, in cold weather.) Other side-effects include apathy, pallor, hypermaria, insomnia, depression, dry mouth, nasal congestion, difficulty swallowing, salivary gland enlargement, constipation, disturbances, agranulocytosis, leucopenia, anaemia, photosensitivity, rashes. Intramuscular injection may be painful, cause hypotension and tachycardia and give rise to neuroleptic malignant syndrome. - oral 25-100mg 3-4 times daily adjusted according to response - by intramuscular injection 50mg (25mg in elderly or debilitated patients) - repeat if necessary in 6-8 hours - intravenous injection should be no greater than 25mg/ml

02/06/05

thinking about '3D' poems...poems in space...poems connected by wormy strings made of words

? sequenced by light...or move through (all words equally lit)

05/06/05

Constructing 'Sparine' (Promazine Hydrochloride)

I took the information on Promazine Hydrochloride (from the British National Formulary) and made it into a continuous paragraph by deleting all spaces between sections. (Promazine Hydrochloride is one of the major tranquillisers.) I then drew a circle freehand on top of the paragraph. The diameter of the circle was more or less contiguous with the depth of the paragraph. (Pills are circular...this seemed appropriate.) I started to find words in the same way as I found them in 'nerve, muscle, sinew' i.e. by forward and downward motion through the letters of the words in the text. I wrote these words down on sheets of A4 as I would for a word scatter (eventually nearly 2000 words/21pp of words). I traced the track of each word with a (lead) pencil. (I called this process 'worming').<sup>51</sup> This resulted in a visual image which, to my mind, was reminiscent of pictures of brain synapses, and also of the neurofibrillary tangles and plaques of Alzheimer's (especially as the work progressed and sections of text were virtually

obliterated). What I had to fight against was the desire to make it 'pretty', i.e. to only trace enough words to make it look pleasing to the eye. If I saw a word, I traced it. This meant, because of the downward movement that I had initiated, that the blocking-out effect intensified towards the lower half of the circle. I also felt that doing this was more in keeping with the ethical stance of the poetics of the larger work, i.e. non-intentional etc. It also pleased me because it was mimetic, in a way, of the disease process: inevitable, outwith conscious control, and certainly having no truck with creating 'beautiful effects' (although having said that, I did go over the top half to find a few more 'tracks' to give greater definition to the centres of 'tangles').

I also copied out the things that remained clear (see below).

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<sup>51</sup> See 'Note 10/09/05: word worms take you to a parallel universe of words (re wormholes of astrophysics)', p. 660.



I tried to/began to write a paragraph from 'Sparine'. I thought that 21pp of words would be too much to cope with, therefore, I thought that I would do it in 3pp 'doses'. I took the first three pages and started to work on them...not getting anything...too many words beginning with the same letter...thought this might be a problem...also realised that this limited the word combination potential...I kept wondering what was available on the other pages. I decided to look at (and try to work from) all 21pp at once. I laid them out in a 3 x 7 rectangle (pp1-7 on top, 8-14 in the middle, and 15-21 on the bottom...this was preferable to a vertical 3 x 7) and began to work on it this way... much better...a bit daunting at first but decided just to take a word that 'resonated' and bounce it about (mentally) across the pages to see what adhered, what was attracted (in the way that atoms form molecules). I started to think of it as a preliminary exercise towards 3D poetry (in that I was moving among words over a large area).

"The poetic manoeuvre consists in placing oneself "dans les mots", bowing to the physical nature of language, limiting oneself to the consequences and combinations of the intrinsic as in mathematics."<sup>52</sup>

"Everything is a dangerous drug except reality, which is unendurable."<sup>53</sup>

[From note 22/11/03]

"At its simplest level, string theory states that the unique properties of fundamental particles are a direct consequence of the way strings vibrate. In turn, string vibration is defined by the space in which they are contained. But in order for string

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<sup>52</sup> Lawler, 1974, p. 259.

<sup>53</sup> Connolly, 1944, p. 28.

theory to work, to explain the existence of all known particles and forces, we must accept more than just the dimensions we know, because this framework is too restrictive. So just how many dimensions are required? Well, until recently, scientists thought ten dimensions were needed for strings to vibrate in such a way as to explain all the characteristics of the fundamental particles. Four dimensions are familiar to us, up-down, left-right, back-forth, and time, but there are six other dimensions which are so small that we can't possibly see them (known as Calabi-Yau manifold space).<sup>54</sup>

"Gravity may well be as strong as the other fundamental forces, but owing to its ability to permeate through parallel universes, it becomes diluted. If such a theory is correct, gravity may be the only way we could communicate with other parallel universes, since it is the only force that is common to all universes and dimensions."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Copp, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

Below are two sample pages from 'Sparine' word scatter followed by material gleaned from it ( 'isa is insane', 'ding the dust of Idea').

With 'ding the dust of Idea' I experimented with placing the words as they were tracked within 'Sparine'. I was worried that this might produce something too spaced out, but it didn't really; I found the effect quite pleasing. I considered doing the same with 'isa is insane', but have not yet done so.<sup>56</sup> I will do more work with these pages; I feel that I have barely skimmed the surface of the possibilities within them.

"...poems which seek to be true not only to the defensive fiction but to the chaos gleaming behind it..."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See p. 675 for placed version.

<sup>57</sup> Kermode, 1960, p. 82.

2/6/05  
jane (x)

man      w.ring(s)      must      more (k)      us  
 deed(s)      ring(s)      part  
 Stentorian      war      drug      why      drugs  
 entrapment      must      ruel(s)      mag  
 while      reel(s)  
 rest      entreat      deem  
 enthrall      ruel(s)      stop      ruel(s)  
 part      deed(s)      whine(s)  
 form      whit      entrap      delicate      why  
 ruel(s)      weight(s)  
 ruel(s)      hint(s)      stern  
 white(n)      stadium      heart(s)      dry      whim  
 (ns)  
 geese      golden)      dermatological      road (fal)  
 heart(s)      harness      eight      hope  
 gesture      deem(s)      enter      entry  
 quinnat      summing



isa is insane  
roses insist on root  
ennui refuses nuance

mentally I murmur rage simmer and gyre idling near panic I lure dirty kinetics to  
liminal inks nonsense can emote opulent formats undulate near sanity seep and  
froth budding vortices to invert sham mental scars differ from idyll we visit them  
undone in antic premises elude hermetics marry predicates that err in patina  
ablate ludic clutter pain pincers day ululates bleed and seethe wrings haematite  
and riven from I from am

her affect remains hysterical  
her eyes can bear no intuition  
no ontological gaze

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10/06/05

reading over 'death lies detached'

line giving way to segment

26/06/05

### Composition as kinetic

At annual review NS asked, "Why not metrical?"

My response:                doesn't move                doesn't allow space in

Think about whole work in terms of kinetic, in terms of rhythm and sequence.

What shapes does it make?

What shapes do I want it to make?

Think about whole work in terms of the line?

14/08/05

'chapters' as planets with satellites

with a 'how to read this' section

? as author's preface or as notes at back?

why necessary?

some people may get more out of it by plunging straight in, but from experience of reading to various groups, I have found that the appreciation of the work is greatly enhanced by some words of explanation. Feel almost that this has something to do with common courtesy if nothing else.

Anathema?...no...some artists feel that no explanation should be necessary, and I am one of those at heart, but I want a wide audience...I don't want to be patronising...the fact is that the material is 'difficult' in places and my hope is that if the reader knows why this is they might be less likely to lose patience, to feel excluded

Parallel this with the philosophy of care whereby a greater understanding of an illness by the patient leads to them being better able to cope with it, to better treatment outcomes etc.

Reading the book should be like dealing with the patients is for Kedzie...scary, stressful, unpredictable, infuriating, annoying, intimidating, exhausting, demanding, but with the possibility of it also being deeply involving, moving, tender, life-enhancing, compassionate, rewarding (that cliché)...but only if can understand why it's like this then better able to deal with it

an improvisation

bit like a game or a Mike Leigh film where you are given the characters and the situation/ the story even/ given an idea of their motivators, their background (and having got this out of the way)...then just flung in...you have to do the work...to work it out...as the author I'm not going to manipulate you, not shoehorning the material into a 'novel

[note for preface...important to say how difficult it is to be a saint]

how it's about life and death, love and respect, complicity and betrayal

the main stylistic element is the use of language to denote/ intuit states of being

e.g. grammar, syntax and punctuation intact in main prose section

punctuation omitted from 'voices'...unregulated...real (most real)

prose paragraphs...broken syntax, spurious punctuation

poems...placed to imitate in concrete terms the degeneration of the brain in

Alzheimer's dementia

how life occurs

18/08/05 (from notes towards a conference paper)

paradox forcing the reader to be aware/focus  
on the materiality of language by breaking it  
down

a poetics that uses the materiality of language to get to meanings that are difficult  
to express in the language/in the form of language we have

- uses the materiality of language to access the  
immaterial



as opposed to symbol and metaphor

not symbol and metaphor

not referring to outside things

(these have the whiff of religion about them) [note inserted 04/07/06]

- for this reason – the aleatory aspect of  
my work is crucial
- works on various levels – a quick way in/ a shortcut to work(ing)
- what is there to be discovered and created  
as opposed to pushing my own thoughts/ideas/"bees in my bonnet"/the recreation  
of a situation or feeling etc.
- is therefore more likely to be primary and  
? (true) - ? dare to say this

and more exciting, more dynamic

becomes - a kinetic of intuitive possibility

- as opposed to 'riddle', the thing to be unpackaged
- re getting rid of/going beyond metaphor, simile, symbol
- these = the outdated unreal

also the aleatory process works (in purely poetic terms) in similar way to metre – it acts as / is the restrictor

- but also bear in mind that the main thrust of this poetic is to encourage people to take responsibility for their actions, their thoughts/themselves so that we might become increasingly less likely to succumb to notions of outside agency

TL (in conversation) be very careful when talking about metaphor.

Something to be used when no other way to express something?

A thing constructed to cope with reality?

30/08/05

Thoughts on how to incorporate the other patients who we hardly ever hear about otherwise, i.e. those that are not focused upon to the extent that Joan, Harry etc are. Vision of them arranged around the perimeter of the lounge... describe how they look... what they are doing... juxtapose with voices... short interspersions at various points.

Getting a feeling of the structure... mesh or textile/ fabric of voices, confusion of the prose paragraphs... poems with the main prose sections like islands in a sea... or big plateaux in a landscape and the voices distant foothills... the confusion like thorny undergrowth that has to be fought through  
starting to see a kind of/ possible shape... want it to ebb and flow like music... want it to be lyrical (the shape)... like experience as opposed to any notions of reality... **an experiential sequence**

## Bach – logical dissonance

and how when used to it nothing else compares

how this has helped me to not fear dissonance in the sequence...quite the opposite...made me realise that dissonance is crucial

themes

variations

and different keys

progressions

is this a suitable analogy?

(fugue)

Feel that nearly ready to try another sequence – feel the stirrings of a shape – maybe a bit like a wave – more like an oscilloscope trace with varying levels of activity – prose sections as spikes

10/09/05

possible intros to 'voices' sections

In the lounge the nurses came and went....

In the lounge the evening sun's fading/dying glow

In the lounge the cleaners vacuumed round and under the chairs where.....slept  
and.....

In the lounge the day was nearly spent...

In the lounge the air was warm and stale

like a refrain

Kedzie almost doesn't matter...like the narrative...want the focus to be the patients.

Yes she was a witness, a minor agent of change, but what she was like, who she was, what got her there, is not what I want to focus on. Even her voice (dialect) is deliberately neutral.

Want to get beyond the story to what's happening with the language... the language events which tell their version of the story...which are the story....which reveal / enact the story...things about hierarchies of experience and ...hierarchies full stop...a kind of redress

want the reader to experience a more tangential and multi-layered, a more poetic reality

and perhaps '*experience*' is the crucial word here

OCTOBER 2005

I have spent the summer editing. Most significantly I have been re-'processing' the earlier sections in the light of techniques arrived at as the work has progressed to yield new poems (and occasional prose paragraphs where none existed before). I have not done this for all the sections, only ones where I wasn't happy with what had been produced, or ones where only a tiny yield had resulted first time round and I wanted to see if other possibilities inhered.<sup>58</sup> The edit is still in progress. I would say that it is about two thirds to three quarters done.

I have written a new short prose section about Betty that imagines a specific event from her medical history. I have processed some pieces for the first time, and I have worked on material for the journal. Through all this I have been obsessing about what the finished sequence will be. For the moment I want to keep these thoughts to myself. Any ideas I have about the final shape are thus missing from the journal material in this document.

The work is presented in more or less chronological order as written.

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<sup>58</sup> For examples, see Appendix, pp. 648-666. Examples of significance to development of technique remain in main body of text.

During this process I tried a word scatter from the chapter 'Kedzie hears the report from the night staff' but I didn't feel that it was going to yield much, nothing was working, so I left it and edited the poem 'she unfastened her mouth'. The following is a note I wrote at the time about it.

10/08/05 Again, the paragraph ('t of him was white... ) without indentations yields the best shape. I find myself being more aware of what makes a 'good' placement. Find myself looking for (and usually finding) alternative/substitute positions, i.e. if, e.g., a word is going to be marooned by the placing, going to be stuck too far away from the words it refers to/ is semantically grouped with, I will look for the same word in a better relative position. This is especially useful with 'small' words (here 'and', 'the' and 'was'). I thought 'tiny' would be a problem as there was no substitute, but it worked fine as then it takes 'Her mouth' into its orbit.

Her mouth she unfastened  
tiny She was trying to fit them both into a  
embrace

the rest was facing the windows  
movements of attempt  
"em...em"  
mumbled  
and sticking out into the space behind

the threshold that was pulling him  
down

I went back to trying get a new poem out of 'Kedzie hears...'. I edited its associated prose paragraph 'there followed a tour...' deleting some phrases and changing a few others. I looked at the original poem which I did not like and circled words and phrases that did appeal, but still I was getting nothing. So I then indented the prose paragraph x10 to get phrases which combined with those from the original poem gave me 'night wet and opposite...'. This was placed as per x5 indent.

night

wet

and

opposite

exhaled

a system of

"Good

shouting

what a

blood

what a

laundry

operatic

medical

g good

fuckin

good

g good

what a

good

fuckin

night

night

night

I then did a x11 indent of the same paragraph and wrote down all the small whole words this left me with and came up with 'the me tic...' (which I don't think I will use in the finished work).

the  
 me  
 tic  
 the  
 bell  
 the  
 rim  
 the  
 the  
 red  
 the  
 wet  
 oar  
 the  
 fee  
 owed  
 to  
 we  
 to ex  
 go  
 go  
 go  
 go  
 Go  
 run  
 me

12/08/05

Thought:- designate paragraphs as nightmares

(occurred when working on 'there followed a tour...' it came across as a nightmarish dream sequence)

?allocate to specific people and name them e.g. Bill is dreaming/ Bill's dream

But when looked at other paragraphs I realised that this would not work.

13/08/05

from a x 11 indent of 'there followed...' I made up 'possible' words / words from a possible/strange language by abutting the columns of word particles that this indent produces, first in sequence, then randomly shifting them about to yield three pages. I could have made more (presumably an awful lot more as the mathematical possibilities of particle combinations must be astronomical), but I felt that that was sufficient to give me an idea of what I could do. Not all words were 'nonsense'; if I found a 'proper' word (e.g. 'swan') I would write it down. But they had to be words made up from at least two separate columns. I then, just for the fun of it, wrote a short paragraph made up of this strange language.

[Also see sound file 2]

wad pluht rimtic owrs shmunnin sley mowet and kinrel swured ups exrec thad tiorim  
poht antic wa"G theard cuannin bloe runy pem haldo goors blosors glaere oar  
glatie scaxili sothet dayrist ryasy thirist poure dawary wey, daw kyary relund 'sand  
opins this swan toed dremered this blowasle was icso scaint thilsit mud woon  
finngy "God yaured whan sleam whis 'sanhal tint wetnin eraed acarsys woat whan  
blondrit hathe swured they, heedscaint and swary finay saar shanere wesca  
cuannin sors nina medat abwa dred merered theree whal red theed was syslsitry  
daw grenta poock fucing and mean

s  
 ing 'Ano  
 n  
 breath  
 j  
 s  
 d  
 el  
 icious  
 a  
 n  
 ar c  
 of  
 minut  
 e  
 r  
 i  
 t e  
 s  
 th  
 at  
 m  
 e w  
 an d  
 w  
 end  
 an d  
 resent  
 a g  
 e

h  
 or  
 ned  
 go d  
 s  
 sm  
 other  
 the  
 pas  
 t  
 p  
 c  
 s ing  
 as  
 m  
 oth  
 s  
 dust  
 ed  
 w  
 i th  
 as  
 h



"The poet is also the one who looks for the comprehensible and conceivable system that would have a place in its expression for a beautiful accident of language: a certain word, a certain chord of words, a certain syntactic progression."<sup>59</sup>

17/08/05

Editing...able to more quickly assess which techniques might now suit the earlier sections.

18/08/05

[The following note refers to previous thoughts about symbol, metaphor etc...echoes of Olson in *Projective Verse*]<sup>60</sup>

metaphor most difficult to get away from

is it possible?

why get away from it?

possible by being more 'real'/ realistic

to enable us to better face reality...the difficulty that inheres in being human...that is involved in an honest look at life...to get towards greater self-responsibility, not to muddy the water with mystical 'third parties', not to succumb to notions of outside agency

---

<sup>59</sup> Valéry, 1964, p. 149.

<sup>60</sup> Charles Olson, *Projective Verse*. (Allen, 1999, pp. 386-397)

28/08/05

(Note on indents)

Increasingly aware of effect of different indents for shape and emphasis. This a.m. working on 'Betty's eyes...' in a different font (for possible submission to an on-line magazine that asks for specific fonts)... most pleasing shape not necessarily yielding the best meaning...in the end plumped for meaning over shape.

Becoming more aware of the effect expansion and contraction of the space between the lines affects both shape and meaning, how proximity creates a different resonance from distance, and how much space constitutes a loss of meaning, a loss of contact...contact to do with meaning/ the tying in of constituents to each other to effect meaning, to intensify meaning...although sometimes the opposite is the case, whereby the meaning is enhanced by the increase of space, e.g. in the poem 'soon ideas of miracle may fade...', the two lines being taken over onto a separate page lifts it to an entirely different level of meaning...the crucial delay.

Went on to re-'process' the prose paragraphs 'Me-e-e dishevelled...' and 'This madam...'. This gave me 'I i love you costumes the air...' and 'my darling cut this weary blue...'. 'This madam...' also yielded the bizarre 'ha ha hack -opera' which I have included because it happened, but cannot, as yet see it in the finished piece. It inhabits the same landscape as 'to dipkin pipkin...' However see notes below for thoughts on the processes of above.

07/09/05

'Techniques', 'ways of doing' becoming too involved and time-consuming for not much gain. At least this is the feeling after having done 'Me-e-e dishevelled...' and 'This madam...'. painstaking hours of looking for phrases by juxtaposing columns of words at x10 indent....reckoned that in 'This madam...' I will have scanned at least 24,800 phrase possibilities using this method...too much!...in 'Me-e-e dishevelled...' half that as only slid the columns against each other in one direction. Not finished 'This madam...' yet...on number five of the twelve possible page combinations...even scanning quickly takes considerable time...too time-consuming...have to have regard for the bigger picture...can't afford the time...and poems resulting seem not much better than the originals that I am hoping to improve on...although interesting point might be that re-doing them because they didn't yield much to start with and might never...so all part of the experiment, all part of the learning process. A quote I came across yesterday when re reading Concrete Poetry might seem apt at this juncture.

"My feeling about technique in art is that it has about the same value as technique in lovemaking. That is to say, heartfelt ineptitude has its appeal and so does heartless skill, but what you want is passionate virtuosity."<sup>61</sup>

However, I console myself with the thought that other re-processings have been more fruitful/successful even, so should not lose heart. By working on through I might work my way into something fantastic, or if not, then I have to accept that, and move on to try for another poem another day.

08/09/05

Sometimes feel that 'Cage' could end up being like Leaves of Grass in sense that it could be continually revised and updated as new possibilities were mined from it ad infinitum!

08/09/05

occurs to me that working with 'found' material means that I don't have to reveal my own thoughts and feelings, at least not explicitly

09/09/05

Still doing 'This madam...' the phrases chosen being 'selected' for their suitability to the subject, i.e. lots of unsuitable phrases are ignored (both sense and nonsense).

10/09/05

The phrases and poems gleaned from a x10 indent of a prose paragraph (and presumably other methods too) often seem like an unravelling or a refashioning into sense.

---

<sup>61</sup> John Barth, 1968, in *Concerning Concrete Poetry*. (Cobbing and Mayer, 1978, p. 20)

i  
love you

I

costumes

the air

the air  
you drum

at the

dirty have

at the  
dishevelled  
bloom

half-running

at the  
cut-out

coquettish  
at the

parade

withering

a  
laugh

displayed

as

blind

music

rip devils

remnants

always

remnants

my darling  
 cut  
 This  
 weary blue

sing a piece of dirt

abrasions  
 out  
 with  
 This  
 cracked  
 I'm  
 stolen

wear  
 my  
 tune

leave me  
 tiny against tomorrow

a ha ha hack-opera  
(a frock opera)

ha ha ha ring a  
spilled a ring a  
ding a ringa

yesss to a ring a  
wedding ring a  
sing a ring a

for bother ring a  
sing a ringa  
nothing ringa  
ding a ringa

get ding a  
nodded ring a

cheapstick

how

sudden

She inhabits

despair

(From caged 'Jeannie's on the move.' (see below). Back to the simple.)

1

JEANNIE'S ON THE MOVE; THE EXTENT OF HER VOCABULARY IS NEVER ARTICULATED OUT LOUD. "Hey, come and have a cuppa Jeannie." Catch hold of her arm. Tether her to you. Change her direction and turn her towards a chair. She is marching on the spot beside you. This forces your arm to move up and down with her. You are aware of how thin she feels through her clothes. You can hear her breathing, taking in fast, shallow deep breaths that sometimes have the ghost of a sound in them. Although she never looks at you, she is aware of the chair, and in a sudden movement reminiscent of rag dolls, she slumps into it.

"There's your tea, Jeannie." Make sure it's not too hot, half tea, half milk and two sugars, and that it's in a lidded beaker with a spout. Put the beaker into her hand and ease it up to her mouth. Once she is aware of the spout at her lips she will suck the whole cupful down. She may surprise you. She might take the beaker to her lips herself before you get the chance. But be prepared to do this as otherwise the beaker might stay in her hand and never connect with her lips. It might just tip over and spill into her lap. Take the cup away once she has drunk her tea. Jeannie does not sit in the chair. She inhabits it like a creature with no spine: sunk down, slumped down. Her hands support her face, scratch at her body, push down on the arms of the chair, push against her forehead, stay there for a while making it look as if she thinks, considers. . . . despairs. Her legs splay open but they are not still. They concertina in and out, in and out. They jerk. She pushes against the arms of the chair and jumps up. Up and off, moving at speed, each foot's contact with the ground light yet forceful, her knees lifted high, her head bobbing, her arms cutting through the air, and all the time her mouth. . . .

right, I'm away I'm away up the street that's me away I'll just away  
 come on I'm away away I'm away the now I'll be seein ye that's me  
 away be seein ye come on then come on I'm away cheerio  
 I'm away then come on come on then I'm away oh, come on let's go  
 let me go Alec'll be waitin come on I'mcomini'mcomini'mcomin  
 cheerio cheerio then I'd better away I'll need tae go I need tae get gaun  
 I'll see you the morn let me away come on let me let me let me  
 awayawayaway leave aes alane leaveaesalaneleaveaesalaneleaveaesalane  
 I'm just away I'll no be long I'll no be longI'llnobe longI'llnobe longI'llnobe long  
 All day her tongue projects and retracts. She runs it round her lips. She chews at it with toothless gums. She sticks it out to the side and bites down on it with a sudden rhythmic kinetic that coincides with gasps of breath, with the nodding of her head. She never smiles. She hardly ever looks you in the eye, and when she does it is a momentary stare that searches and penetrates, and yet is blank and lost and is an intimation of emptiness. She never speaks.

18/09/05

I have been trying to 'waste' 'Jeannie's on the move.' I took a pritt stick and bounced it over the text which had been contracted to one page. I dusted the surface with Johnston's baby powder in an attempt to block off the glue-covered sections, but the powder was too light; the text was not obliterated to any great extent, if at all. I thus stuck another sheet of A4 over the printed one, and will see what happens when I separate them after the glue has dried. I am hoping that it will rip off some of the surface in the way that the sellotape did, but I suspect that the glue is too soft and that its effect has been lessened by the talc.

I was right, there was hardly any effect from the amount of glue that was left on the paper. However, what was ripped was not the surface of the text but the surface of the top sheet. This had the effect of leaving strips of ragged paper on top of the text. I thus put more glue on and replaced the top sheet of paper. When I next ripped it off, more paper was stuck, but there was still too much text left visible for my purposes, so I glued it again and this time put the sheet of paper on upside down (this was simply a mistake, but it worked well in the end; the finished artefact has the look of a mask about it). See scan below.

JEAN  
ARTIC  
of her  
She is  
dow  
hear  
gh  
ch

MOVE: THE EXTENT OF HE  
LOUD: "How, come and  
er to you  
to her  
is for  
and  
suck  
her  
othe  
migi  
her  
spin  
bod  
for  
op

S NEVER  
ie." Catch hold  
or towards a chair.  
to move up and  
her clothes. You can  
is that sometimes have the  
if you, she is aware of  
she slumps into  
t milk  
two  
and  
will  
ker to

lip. It  
is drunk  
with no  
at her  
stay there  
play  
erk. She  
at speed  
gh, her  
er mouth....  
I'll just away  
aye that's me  
ay cheeric  
come on let's go  
ncomin  
ed tae get gaun  
me  
leaveaesplane  
gl'llnobeing  
She chews at  
on it with a  
the nodding of  
the wags, and when she  
does it is a momentary state that searches and penetrates and yet is blank and  
lost and is an intimation of emptiness. She never speaks.

cheerio sugars and bites does away with direction runs into ease jumps and slumps and sticks Up her hand her turn her tongue come into EXTENT and "There's me away cheerio with look tea. open and beaker movement down connect ground on never They jerk. sure She have come looks herself cheerio breath all leave Jeannie Jeannie Alec'll Catch hold of that's seen ye look

(From a word scatter out of 'Jeannie's on the move.' No prose paragraph done first time round.)

18/09/05

Caged 'cheerio sugars...' by indenting. Printed off indents x 3 and x 7. x 3 because it gave me lines of more or less equal length, and x 7 because it was a narrower, kind of beaker shape. This time I was indenting with a view to making word worms. Obviously, different indents give different word juxtapositions and could lead to infinite word-formation possibilities. I therefore limited myself to the two above. I didn't want to get bogged down as in 'This madam...' or as in 'Sparine' with myriad acts of processing.

However, even this amount looked as if it was going to be too time-consuming or just plain daunting in its possibilities. I did one page of words and realised the enormity of the task as I was only on the second word of the text. I thought I might further limit the word pool by wasting the paragraph but decided to use the whole section which I had wasted already. (See above) I have yet to try for a poem from this.

Eventually went back to worming option and (from 14 pages of resulting words) got 'dusk aches' ('Cage', pp. 177-181).

20/09/05

I edited 'The Ward Meeting' and processed it as this had never been done. 'that's definitely wrong...' came out of a word scatter from the edited chapter. I then went straight to a x 10 indent but made up phrases quickly by picking up on a resonant word and mentally running up and down the columns. This generated 'please. Remember...' which was placed at x 2 indent having tried all indents from 0-5.

that's definitely wrong. Michelle. shagged Derek. Derek..." Michelle "Nothin happy fuckers. she's in hospital "Joan said, serious after skewed sharp." had too much auld knee. got on physio for Ten minutes an made things uncomfortable "Have you looked in that howling "See shrugs off and incredulous. cheeky "If you winked and were nice it was wonderful than his best funny laughing banter She said "And I would "Have folded nice she looked at a cuddle wantin a war that he pulled long see-through fists "Whose music time. leaves sour. leaves sweet the same noises on everybody." she grabbed shovel and the stab going to manage her shoppin going wee blether." afternoon goin? fine," "She'll manage with scribbled guidelines So, I piped up ask if "You've funds have else, no message we'd about half a dozen main circle..." decent the pitch dry and as if tidy earlies pitch national union in touch Remember two is uniform of tone makes night plastic a fit cover cadge up they've looked to favour shame. peered then asked next? stock job auxiliary task." there's a canteen stop think point sorted cuppae wet, change the do. when heard bird have this "Come...on" Isa please. dance

please.

Remember

"If you

were

happy

"If you

heard

a

sweet

bird

circle..."

her

music

of

folded

leaves

"And I would

stop

no

stop

this

wrong.

dance

this

scribbled

laughing

this

skewed

war

23/09/05

Out of curiosity I tracked the vowel sounds and the consonants of 'please. Remember...' with colours just to see what happened (see scans below). It was an interesting exercise. I hadn't been entirely happy with 'howling'; it niggled somehow. The above exercise demonstrated how isolated it was soundwise, how relatively uninvolved. This could have been good; something that shouts and is ragged and unruly at the end of the poem, but as I say there was something about it I wasn't happy with. I looked for an alternative. I paid particular attention to finding something that would preserve the shape. I found 'skewed'; its position was good, soundwise it was much more integrated with the rest of the poem, and I think it gives more emphasis to 'war' which can now do the shouting on its own whereas 'howling', in retrospect, diminished it.

2.ind.1

Remember  
 please.  
 "If you  
 were  
 happy  
 "If you  
 heard  
 a  
 bird  
 circle..."  
 her  
 music  
 sweet  
 of  
 folded  
 leaves  
 "And I would  
 stop  
 no  
 stop  
 this  
 wrong.  
 dance  
 this  
 scribbled  
 laughing  
 howling  
 this  
 war

please.

Remember

"If you

were

happy

"If you

heard  
a

sweet

bird

circle..."

her

music

of

folded

leaves

"And I would

stop

no

stop

this

wrong.

dance

this

scribbled

laughing

this

howling

war

23/09/05

Slightly dismayed to realise that in most recent poems I seem to have been making too much use of the adjective, to have taken my eye off the ball momentarily, presumably because I have concentrating on other aspects such as sound and shape, but realise that perhaps more a function of that process by which I slid columns of more or less individual words against each other. This encourages two-word phrases, and therefore, presumably encourages the adjectival phrase.

23/09/05

Something about the words 'kinetic', 'kinetics' in relation to poetry that has got under my skin since I first encountered it in Tom Leonard's essay on William Carlos Williams in *Intimate Voices*.<sup>62</sup> Rereading it and being not unsurprised, but also forcefully reminded about the ideas in it about the word/ language as an object in the world, the sounded artefact, the materiality, the texture of it, the textural possibilities, that this is the seed that has come to fruition in the 'mobile' poems (although perhaps in a creatively misinterpreted way), and that that was what was behind my answer to Nick Selby's (devil's advocate) question about why not metrical form? My reply was that it doesn't move in the way I want. It doesn't allow space in.

[See position paper for ALSC Conference, November 2005.

"What started off as disquiet about the line ending seems to be delivering me into a non-linear kinetic with an increased emphasis on the materiality of the word."<sup>63</sup>]

<sup>62</sup> Leonard, 2003, pp. 111-115.

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix, pp. 669-642.

10/10/05

she Rose to lash the moment  
 her lover lay shot in chrome  
 she wove TEN silk red Roses  
 and sheets to lair him home

- aagh! - reading some Emily Dickinson earlier – her rhythm (which I can find off-putting) has broken through into this little (Border) Ballad-like stanza which uses words wormed from wasted 'Jeannie's on the move...' (see scan p. 554)

- feel that (although don't think I will use it) it belongs to the speaker of 'ma man wis at Monte Cassino...', and that this should be Joan, especially as she sings snatches of ballad in 'Florrie Dickson Dies'.

30/11/05

'Worms' → phrases → poems...thinking of this intricate method...

Find example of Phoebe Anna Traquair's tapestries inspiring in sense that more likely to persevere in hope of positive end result.

11/01/06

[First attempt at process for a while. Interruptions of US conference, viral illness and Christmas holidays (with attendant family crisis)! ]

Word scatter to paragraph from 'chapter', 'Susannah Smithson Pays a Visit' entirely comfortable (used random word choice only)<sup>64</sup>. When I came to construct the poem I used lessons learned from experiences with word columns (re twenty odd thousand possible combinations). I did look at the columns generated by the x 10 indent of the paragraph 'all of them...' and simply scanned them en bloc for possible combinations, but this was not yielding much, and I had little appetite for doing it, therefore I went back to a x 5 indent and scanned it for resonant words which I then picked up (mentally) and moved around the text to see what adhered (e.g. as I do when making up the prose paragraphs) as previous experience has shown that only a very small proportion of the available words and their combinations are likely to be of any use, and wrote them down as I would if I was working with the columns, i.e. constructed phrases, resonant base words with multiple possibilities around them. This gave me the very short poem 'medicine is sarcasm...'.<sup>65</sup>

12/01/06

Processing 'The Afternoon Toileting Session'. I did a random word scatter but decided against constructing an intermediate paragraph. The words did not look as if they would make a good one...too many names...not enough immediate 'hooks'...maybe I just didn't want to! Anyway, for whatever reason, I went straight to forming phrases towards a potential poem out of the scattered words. This gave me 'this suggestion...' which was then placed as per original chapter at no indent.

I may try a paragraph later.

---

<sup>64</sup> Appendix, p. 667.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 668.

this

suggestion.

that

today.

was

sudden,

disgusted

him

opened

up,"

his

matter-of-fact

struggle

people

laughed.

nothing

need

admit

"Want

into

this

minute,"

this

corridor.

bent

into

Tuesday

Layout altered after discussion with TL. (First example below most likely to be final placing.)

15/01/06

Looking at 'this suggestion...' and noting how within the overt sense of the poem, the spurious punctuation acts mimetically as speech fragment, and thus enacts a kind of tension that works against this. And how it also embodies the fragments' origins in something whole.

this  
that

suggestion.

today.

was

sudden.

disgusted

him

opened

is."

his

matter-of-fact

struggle

people  
laughed.

nothing

need

admit

"Want

into

this

minute."

this

corridor.

beck

into

"Tuesday

this suggestion. nothing admit into need  
 that today. "Want" into minute,  
 sudden, disgusted him matter-of-fact bent  
 opened up," his struggle into Tuesday  
 people laughed.

R  
o  
Se

T  
o

Sh  
ow

s in

no

h  
eed

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o

th  
e  
e

no

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in  
e

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e  
a

r  
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t  
o

me

Sh  
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Sin rose to show no heed to thee.  
 No moment wove thine heart to me.  
 Show me mine anger, show me the man.  
 Let all thy love rest on mine hand.

Dost come thy love so sure to rest  
 On hate, on sin, on cowards less?  
 Love lays me here all anger gone  
 To earth, thy hem, to wither on.

17/01/06

Note re 'dost come thy love...'\* ('sin RoSe to show...'), a poem out of wasted 'Jeannie's on the move...' (see scan below p. 554). (Another attempt to get something after not very successful effort previously (see 10/10/05 p. 542)

Placed as per wasted 'Jeannie's on the move...'. Noticed that the words 'love' and 'me' were prominent in the centre, but also the words 'To', 'The' and 'anger' were there. I looked to see if they worked with 'love' and 'me' because if I did make the title of the poem 'A hymn for Bill' as I had thought of doing, then they might be appropriate. However, this would have left a final group of 'love me anger' which I didn't think sounded right as it could be read as if spoken in an English accent. So I found alternative peripheral wormings for 'To', 'The' and 'anger' which left a central 'love me me love love me'. This achieves the opposite effect to the poem 'Sing anon...' where the phrase 'breath is age dusted' is flung out as if by centrifugal force. In this case, the 'love me' phrase acts as the centre (thread) around which the other words spin, or perhaps more aptly, the peripherals have been pushed away from the centre, leaving the essential core, the only thing that matters.

Going to type it up, but think I need another two lines to make it fit the tune I have in mind ('When I survey the wondrous cross') as what I have written as three 'verses' is really only a verse and a half. Also want to note that its form is that of a parody, or possibly more correctly, a pastiche of a traditional hymn.

Postscript: I wrote another two lines to give me two four-line stanzas. I altered the sequence of lines so that the first line is now 'sin RoSe to show...'. I typed it up as per placing in text and also as a 'hymn'. This altered the middle sequence as referred to above to 'me me me love love love me'.

\*The original draft did not contain the line 'sin RoSe to show...'



23/01/06

May be wise to write a short note to the effect that when using a word scatter the potential for utter nonsense is huge. I find myself admitting a variety of non-sense but not just any old thing. I look for things that resonate somehow. It is nonsense up to a point, to the point where some potential exists for use, where there is some relevance to the subject (which is often discovered at the micro level within the context of finding and combining the words and phrases, while at the macro level it exists as the larger project, i.e. the patients, the staff, the ward, the disease).

23/01/06

Suspect that a strictly temporal sequence would not work...mostly because of the way the characters are introduced and then referred to. Will look closely at exactly that...how/when introduced and developed...where do they finish...although realise that by doing this I am bowing to more traditional notions of narrative and drama which I originally sought to eschew. However, given challenging nature of additional material (paragraphs, poems, monologues) do not want final sequence to be off-putting to the reader...want it to flow...not clunk...unless clunk is crucial or apt...want it to be rhythmically appropriate.

MENUS Week beg. 07/07/83 BREAKFASTLUNCH SUPPER MONDAY fruit juice lentil soup

porridge/ cereal rolls or toast chicken casserole

boiled potatoes mixed veg assorted sandwiches

boiled eggs chocolate sponge and custard

TUESDAY grapefruit segments cream of

vegetable soup porridge/ cereal rolls or toast beef

goulash rice fish fingers spaghetti hoops black

pudding mushroom wife WEDNESDAY prunes

Scotch broth porridge/cereal rolls or toast pork loaf

green beans mashed potato savoury egg custard

grilled bacon and tomato jelly and ice cream

THURSDAY fruit juice cream of mushroom soup

porridge/ cereal rolls or toast braised liver mashed

potatoes peas macaroni cheese boneless kippers

jam tart semolina FRIDAY fruit compote

minestrone soup porridge/cereal rolls or toast fish

in cheese sauce potato croquettes carrots bacon

fried tomatoes sausages rice pudding SATURDAY

fruit juice tomato soup porridge/ cereal rolls or

toast ham salad chips tuna bake scrambled eggs

syrup sponge vanilla sauce SUNDAY fruit yogurt

cream of celery soup porridge/ cereal rolls or toast

roast lamb roast potatoes cabbage cold meat

salad kedgerree fresh fruit salad \*\*\*\*\* Please

inform kitchen weekly of numbers of special diets,

e.g. diabetic, liquidized, low fat etc.

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26/01/06

Looking at 'he died...' and wondering if it might be better as 'the past is under stone...' and leave out 'he died'.

Think that will leave it as is. This way it could be a poignant thing belonging to Joan or whoever's voice is 'I wis hert sair...' and not yet another one about dementia! I like the idea of this little poignant thing coming out of 'MENUS'.

10/02/06

Thinking of all the poems that could be written – are waiting to  
be written within the words/text not used

12/02/06

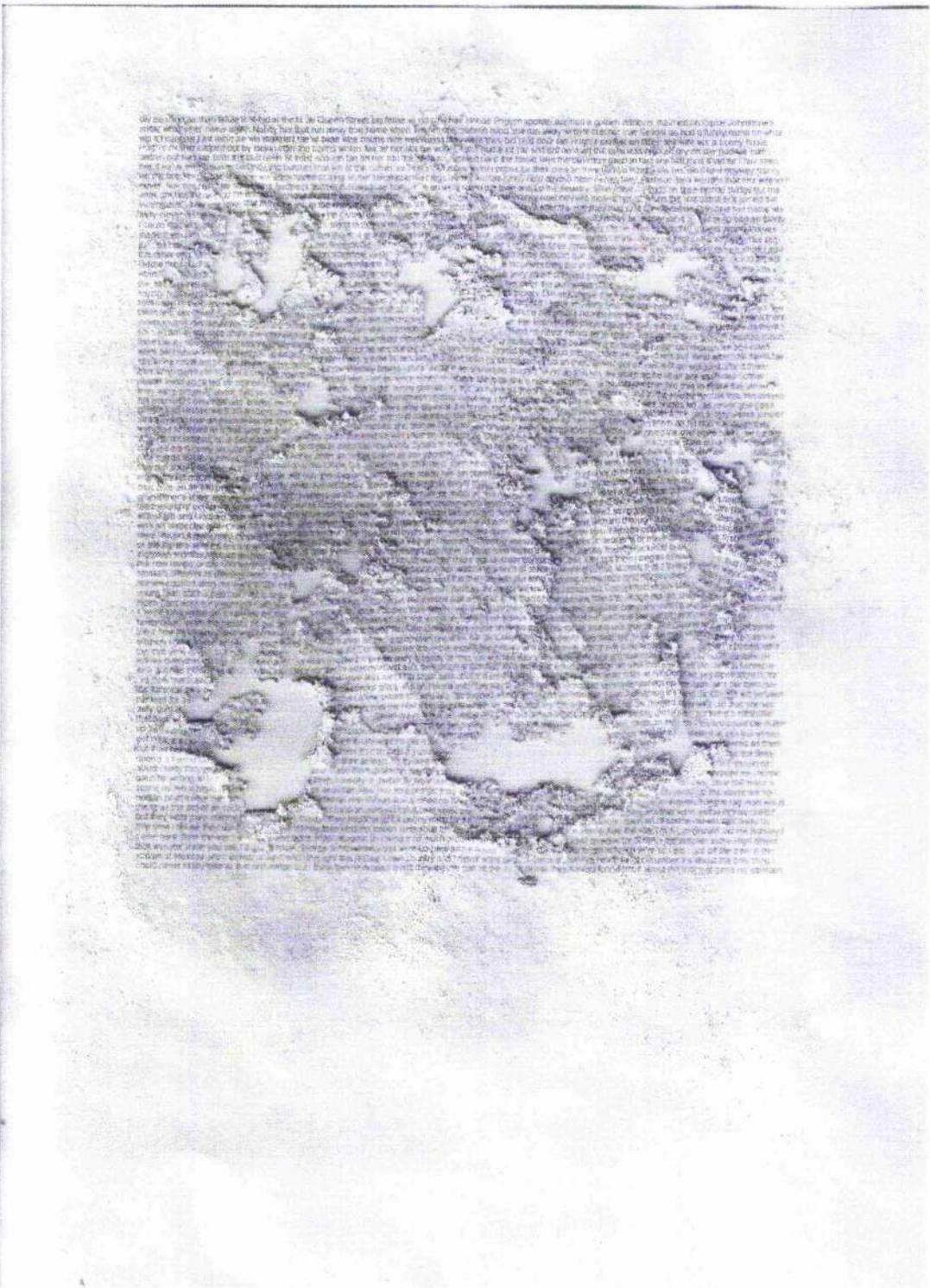
(Writing note about 'MENUS' and 'he died...' written 19-24/01/06)

I put the material from the original typed 'MENUS' into Microsoft Excel to preserve the format more easily. But I quite liked the jumbled up nature of the original which was done a good while ago. I think that what must have happened is that I typed it up in Word with it making sense as to what food was to be served at what meal, but I hadn't formatted it properly so that when it was printed it got jumbled up, so I went back to that and compressed it into a continuous block of text which I then wasted in the following way. I indented it X 4. My intention was to worm it, but it

was a big block of text to do that with, so I needed to limit it somehow. I decided to use something food-related as my template, so I went to the kitchen and came back with a small plum tomato. I placed it randomly on the text and drew round it with a pencil until the text was pleasingly covered in overlapping tomato shapes. This still left me with virtually the whole text visible and available, so I decided to colour in some of the shapes that had resulted with a view to not using some of them. I started off by colouring in the shapes with the greatest concentration of criss-crossing lines as they would be less easy to worm, but then I found myself colouring in other spaces with the sole purpose of making a more pleasing overall image. The resulting, fairly small, areas of delineated text were wormed to give three very full pages of words from which I made phrases towards the poem 'he died...' which was placed as per the wasted text.

(Just as a matter of interest, the poem is made up of eleven words from a word pool of approximately 350. This ties in with the content of the note dated 23/01/06 (see above, written during the construction of the poem) in that I am aware that there are lots of other poetic possibilities within the phrases gleaned from the words available, but in terms of the project they would not fit so well.)

When I reread the poem today I feel that behind it there is the ghost of the word 'understand' ...in the phrase 'under stone', the 'a's' of 'past' and 'fasten', the 'n's' of 'under', 'one' and 'fasten', the 'd's' of 'died' and 'under', and the 'nd' of 'under'.



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09/02/06

(A note concerning the wasting of the voices sections 'div ee mind...' ['tell ee whae I saw the other day...' in 'Cage'] and 'oo got oor dung...' on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2006. See scan p. 560)

I compacted the two documents by eliding all paragraph breaks and joining the two together into one document. I then 'shrank to fit' until all the text was on one page. The font size thus becomes tiny (5.5). I had had an idea of what I wanted to do to the text. I had hoped to use sparks from a grinding tool to burn small holes in it, but this did not work. So, in the tool shed, I found a wire brush and beat the sheet of paper with that on the concrete outside. I had to be really violent to get the desired effect (to the extent that I enlisted my husband's help as he is stronger than me). The effect was to render the page very ragged and fragile with myriad pinprick holes on any intact text and on the periphery. But because the font was so small, because so much of the text was damaged (even if still legible), I decided to make a word scatter from words that had been deleted by the process. To this end I printed off a clean copy of the document and placed it underneath the wasted one. I then wrote down what whole words and parts of words were visible through the ragged holes. I worried that the page of words and fragments thus gleaned (even though full) would not yield a poem, so I then quickly wormed those same spaces which gave me two more pages of words. I then worked to construct phrases from these three pages, and from them made the poem 'acts of love...'. It found its form through rhythm, especially the second fragment 'days that cheat time's mesh' which was constructed last. The rest of it formed itself unconsciously, although I was aware of seeking sound resonances. It is placed as found in the text using both original and wormed words.

If written as a more conventionally lineated poem it would look like this.

acts of love

days that cheat time's mesh  
all that these things meant

seed this ache

14/03/06

"If the need to face difficult choices is part of being human, a philosophical or political system which claims to remove the dilemmas of decision making may be, and serve, something less than human."<sup>66</sup>

In terms of 'difficult choices' in placing a poem on the page, is this analogous? Is the choice, in this situation, moral or aesthetic? If aesthetic, does the above apply?

Is this the full implication for culture of free verse? Have to be able to cope with it (free verse) or be bound by the less-than-human/the totalitarian (the potentially less-than-human/totalitarian)?

The quote makes me ask difficult questions of myself. Why I need/want that removal of choice.

How the removal of the 'difficult choice' has worked for me:

works as a foil against which the myriad decisions about word choice are made

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<sup>66</sup> Thompson, 2006, p. 67.

the 'difficult choice' relates to placing on the page/spatial existence and its relationship to the void

Is there any difference of degree in the choice of word against where it is placed?

- surely only if visually apprehended
- if aurally apprehended then the word choice is what matters (?the only thing)

therefore could argue that the 'less-than-human' implied in the removal of placement choice is of secondary/minor concern.

only a limiting of choice within a free system

the system is not directive

?

sophistry/casuistry

My experience of the limit/removal of choice is that it is not so fixed, not totally rigid, as within the system, choices are made (for example, which indent gives the best finished product), and the more I make use of it, the more I feel that I know what works and what doesn't so that I feel free to manipulate elements of the system to best artistic effect.

I would further refute the charge that the removal of choice has implications of totalitarianism, because the system is not directive; it is not being forced on anyone or anything as the only option; it is, in fact, anti intentional.

for me anti-intention is supremely humanistic in the sense that it vitiates the imposition of the authorial self on the subject

my work is anti-intentional  
and derives from the 'work' not from some  
preordained/premeditated/authoritarian place or set of rules etc.

it posits rules within a ruleless environment

Also, in ways similar to rhyme and metre, it exerts a pressure that releases  
creativity.

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23/03/06 Note re writing of 'she sits in a theatre of roses'

I realised that I would need to/wanted to change all the place names for the sake of confidentiality/anonymity/fear of being sued! I dealt with the main text first, but it was the letter to Kedzie's tutor in the miscellaneous information section that proved most significant. Trying to think of alternatives, I wanted Scottish/Scottish sounding place names, so I started to look up a Scottish dictionary for possibilities. I found myself writing down definitions of the words I used and from there decided to make the definitions themselves into a 'wastable' text (also the letter was very short...although with hindsight I suppose that I could have wormed it). I then realised that I would need a lot more words if I was going to include the list of patients' details in the finished work. So I extended the list of definitions and got 'aynd, birk, caup...'. I decided to 'waste' it by somehow superimposing details from a map of the area that included the original place names. So I scanned the appropriate section of Bartholomew's 1:100 000 Leisure Map of the Borders. I then used carbon copy paper to trace out the more obvious roads and rivers (see below).

aynd, *n.* breath. → *v.* to whisper. *birch*, *n.* the birch tree; a smart youth. — *v.* to give a tart answer; to converse in a lively or cutting way; with *up*, to brisk up, cheer up, caup (*v.* to twist, bulge, warp. *clype*, *v.* to tell tales, gossip. — *n.* a tell-tale; idle tales. *dauntin*, *v.* to terrify, subdue; to depress; to awe. *drochlin*, *ppl. adj.* puny; lazy; wheezing. — *n.* a staggered. *dunze*, *adv.* extremely. *faugh*, *n.* a furrow from lea; fallow ground; a tearing one's character to pieces. — *v.* to fallow; to rub vigorously; to beat soundly; with *up*, to work with speed. *faul*, *fauld*, *n.* a sheep fold; a section of a farm manured by folding sheep or cattle on it. — *v.* to fold sheep. *greddon*, *n.* the sweepings of a peat-stack or peat-box, the remains of fuel. *gurrin*, *n.* anything large or fine of its kind; a sturdy lad. *hain*, *n.* a haven; a shelter, place of refuge. *hirst*, *n.* a resting place. *hope*, *hop*, *n.* a hollow among the hills; a hill. *houin*, *n.* the dreamy whistling of the wind. *kaiver*, *v.* to waver in mind; to be incoherent. *kirk*, *n.* a church; the Church; a congregation; the building set aside for public worship; ecclesiastical courts. *leese*, *lees*, *v.* to unravel, disentangle. *leave*, *adj.* dear. Cf. *lief*. *linn*, *n.* the precipice over which water falls; the cascade of water; the pool at the base of the fall. — *v.* to hollow out the ground by the force of water. *lithe*, *n.* a shelter. — *adj.* sheltered. — *v.* to shelter. *lowden*, *v.* to lull, abate; to reduce to calmness, to quiet; to silence; to bring down; to speak a little; to stand in awe of another. *mellerin*, *n.* waste-meal; the refuse meal gathered after grinding the sweepings of a meal-mill. *mellison*, *n.* a curse, malison. *moor-burn*, *n.* the annual burning of part of a moor; an outbreak of temper; a dispute, conflict. *mure-burn*, *n.* strife. Cf. *moor-burn*. *ness*, *adj.* destitute, necessitous. *ravel*, *v.* to wander in speech; to tangle or curl up like a hard-twisted thread. — *n.* a ramble; a tangle, confusion; incoherent speech, in *pl.* ravelled threads. *rawn*, *adj.* afraid. *rhane*, *n.* idle, unmeaning repetition; metrical jargon; a reiteration of the same thing. — *v.* to rhyme; to repeat the same thing constantly; to murmur monotonously. *rodden*, *roddin*, *n.* the mountain ash; the fruit of the mountain ash; the red berry of the hawthorn, wild rose, and sweet briar. Cf. *rowan*. *ruther*, *n.* an uproar, a noise. *ritch*, *v.* to storm bluster; to roar. *sauchie*, *adj.* abounding in willows. *shedding*, *n.* the prunings of trees. *throck-stane*, *n.* a flat tombstone. *take*, *v.* to wander from place to place, to fatigue. *wauch*, *adj.* mushy, stale; faint; wan; worthless. — *n.* the taste or smell of anything stale or decomposing. *whirret*, *n.* a blow. *yedle*, *adj.* used of water: thick, muddy, putrid. — *n.* dunghill drainage. *from Chambers Scots Dictionary*, W. & R. Chambers, Edinburgh, 1979.

To limit the material available for worming I decided to use only those sections which included a *whole* place name. However, about a third to a half way down the page, I realised that I had the names in the wrong order so I had to go and correct the paragraph, redraw the map, and search the pages I had already written out for words that I now could not use...very frustrating and annoying. However, once this was done I ended up with eight pages of word scatter. I visually scanned these pages for words that resonated. I did this at least twice. I also found myself starting to look for sound-alikes for one or two of them, e.g. 'smoor', 'rose', 'attar'. I ended up with a page of about thirty-five scattered words. From these I looked for phrases, taking them out into the main word stock if necessary to complete them. I found myself making a list of all the small words down the side of the page of thirty-five (about forty in all) to facilitate phrase construction. First phrase completed was 'he is hurt', followed by 'singed by the leaf burner', then 'seed leaf burner' (leaf burner came from serendipitous juxtaposition of the two words in the word scatter) 'ach destiny' had appeared and quickly moved beneath 'he is hurt' (echoes of Tom Leonard's 'ach Caledonia going through my head, and the man saying it!) I wanted to use the word 'attar' but not necessarily in its usual combination with 'of roses'. I searched the main word stock for something to go with 'attar of' that also had the sound of 'roses'. 'only' seemed to be the best choice. From these I built up the phrases 'she sat in a theatre of roses' and 'an actor pored on attar of only' with 'he is hurt' perhaps still needing something to go with it. It was late. I went to bed. I didn't like the phrase 'an actor...'. The language of it felt too contrived, too cloyingly rich along with 'she sat...', just not right. Although I had realised that they were both decasyllabic...so something was working. In the morning, I wasn't going to look at them as I had to get ready to go away for the weekend, but I did. I realised that 'he is hurt...' was also decasyllabic. Very quickly, the tense of 'sat' and 'pored' was changed. 'he is hurt' now referred to

the actor, not some other third party (as I had at first meant ), and 'only' became movable...if I spaced it out more on the page it became more ambiguous, more open to multiple readings, but all its sound qualities, its reference to 'lonely' and 'aloneness' could remain. Placing could also thus affect the reading of 'theatre', 'roses' and 'attar' by implying/effecting their jumbling up.

Also note... when I could see the phrases I wanted, and the word was not available in the word scatter, perhaps missing an 's', in the wrong tense, or not there at all, I went looking for them in the wasted text, and usually, though not always, found them.

I mean it to be read as three juxtaposed pages so that it assumes a diminishing triangular shape.

[Note 04/04/06: having looked at the new possible sequence for 'Cage', I might not now use the letter!]

Also, on reflection, have decided to cut the poem down to the following (the first two phrases that I wrote down).

[Final note: after discussion with TL place names not changed as they situate the language of the monologues, and 'Cage' is a fiction.]

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 de Dieu

murmurat...      mirum!

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 deafened  
 the  
 miracle

23/03/06 Note re writing of 'and Words own certain elements...'

I wanted to incorporate something from George Steiner's 'Language and Silence'<sup>67</sup> as it was a book that I read around the time of the events that inspired the work, and which influenced me a lot at the time. I had already used an essay by Albert Camus for the same reasons. I did the usual three-page word scatter from the essay 'Silence and the Poet'<sup>68</sup> but did not make a paragraph as the words available were a bit daunting (very scholarly, classically referential, a good few non-English, and not many 'small' words to put it together), so I went straight to phrase making. Here I noticed that I started to 'short-hand' the way I did this. Instead of listing possibilities for each resonant word I ended up with what could have been schematised into columns of verbs and nouns with little connections that included adjectives, prepositions, other phrasal extension. Especially resonant words might be given a space with 'list' ('list' referring to the schematic columns). The main phrases came out of this list, with a few coming straight from visual scanning of the main word scatter. I decided to write down all available 'small' words just to see what the possibilities really were as they had appeared minimal. The poem was then assembled.

I typed it up conventionally, very conventionally, using end-stopped lines, as I had no paragraph to use to place it. Didn't like it placed thus, decided that the only logical thing to do within the context of the work was to write a paragraph. So, for the first time, I wrote a paragraph that would decide the placing of a poem *after* the poem itself was written. In the word scatter I circled all the words that had to be included, and from there constructed 'outrage haunts translation...' (see below). I was then able to incorporate phrases that I had liked when making the poem but which had not been used. It was interesting to see how the theme continued to

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<sup>67</sup> Steiner, 1979.

expand in the paragraph. I could then place the poem. No indent did not look promising (*from the underlined words* I could see that the spacings would be too wide to be good), so I printed off the paragraph at 2, 3 and 4 indents. Of these, two looked the most promising. I decided to look at indent 5 as it had yielded good placings in the past (re its pentameter look) and I quite liked it. I then looked at indent 6 just to see what happened and thought that it could be interesting as it involved a piling up of words in one section. I typed it up and liked it, although I thought at that point that the two indent was more pleasing to the eye and worked quite well on balance for sense. But the next day when I looked at them the six indent seemed much, much better. It was tighter, the sense held better. I liked the piling up effect, especially what it did with 'unfolding'. Will probably use this version.

outrage haunts translation harvesting mythology with antecedents of ambivalence we assume that language yields harmonious unfolding simplicity in mutation, yet the *Act* is not irrational Dante would not fall behind white-haired concealing la lingua his splendour remains crucial Words wait that never made base statement that Possessed the rebel ornament, the signature crisis poetry strives to 'exercise' the scandal, of speech dividing existence into verbiage and exultation blood and nothing manifest as recognition interpenetration thick music de Dieu between miracle and craft, murmurat ... beyond mirum! silence and transcendent presence have certain elements that own antagonism their ancient jargon would serve After we are tremendous a new zoon phonanta that claims tonality from deafened gods

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<sup>60</sup> Steiner, 1979, pp. 57-76.

## Proposed sequence for 'cage' as of 03/04/06

Camus quote  
soon ideas of miracle may fade ~

§  
Corridor  
seconds screech ~  
Kedzie Hears the Report from the Night Staff  
Joan wakes up  
she wanted to ~  
Kedzie's description of Fauldshope  
Alice  
Alice monologue  
my darling cut this weary blue ~  
please Remember ~  
Jack  
his face there against .The ~  
Jeannie's on the move  
>

§  
Harry' Gets up for Breakfast  
do you take sugar in it ~  
something insistent ~  
Nursing Care Study of Patient A (Harry)  
Harry Dozes in a Shaft of Sunlight...  
110 in clinic \*  
His wife died ~  
After Lunch  
me.....I've a pretty wound ~  
>  
Jimmy Opens the Door  
Isa is Forcibly Injected with Promazine Hydrochloride  
yelped stop cruel to be kind \*  
the disease muffled her ~  
Michelle Baths Bill  
Helen sees Angels  
>

§  
Florie's Wound  
>  
John Tries to get a bit of a Singsong Going  
sing "Anon breath is delicious ~  
Wee Mary is seen by Aurel  
Mary fragile inside two syllables ~  
sweet black the obscenities \*  
death moved his head round ~  
s dinnae ~  
Descriptions of Betty  
Kedzie's Nursing Care Study of Patient B (Betty)  
Betty and the Snow

(it was an affecting hyperorality \*  
 Betty's eyes fed meaning to loss ~  
 It was the afternoon toileting session

>

Joan goes to Town

i i love you ~

>

§

Susannah Smithson Pays a Visit

The Ward Meeting

>

Kedzie's Conversation with Mags

Eva Loses the Place

Florrie Dickson Dies

Florrie's Vision

death lies, detached ~

§

(Miscellaneous Information)

Index of Patients

Information Sheet on Promazine Hydrochloride

Work Allocation Sheet

Menus

Extract from Nursing 24: Treatment and management of the confused and demented.

Extract from Nursing 35: The management of confused elderly patients.

- Memory Therapy ~

absence 674 ~

near roses we dream in the end ~

(end)

[approx thirty four poems, twelve paragraphs and all the monologues still to be inserted

remaining paragraphs may be incorporated as monologues]

~ poem

\* paragraph

> proposed break for monologues and associated poems

## Extension of 'cage' techniques to other material

20/06/06

Extension of 'cage' techniques to other material, in this instance, Scott's 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border'.<sup>69</sup>

I started off by making a word scatter from the Introduction to the above. Taking three words or phrases from each page, I ended up with four pages of word scatter. From these, I wrote down a few serendipitous juxtapositions, e.g. 'MINSTRELSY became sovereign', 'devastation was energetic', but I was not getting much, so I started to write the paragraph 'marauders from England...'. This seemed complete at '...the devil sould press,'. I then printed all indents from one through to eleven. I looked at these to assess how best to proceed. I thought that most likely I would 'worm' one of the indents, but in the end, I took the eleven indent and made up words by sliding the columns of word segments etc against each other in both upward and downward directions. This gave me eight pages of words from which 'Then romance burthened all my endings...' was assembled (possible title, 'Sir Walter's Lament' !?). I tried to 'replace' the words in relation to the base paragraph as I would have done in 'Cage' (the seven indent was working quite well), but I realised that the rationale for so doing was doubtful, if not non-existent in this instance (in relation to the Border Ballads). I looked up the definition of 'ballad' and 'ballad meter' in the New Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics<sup>70</sup> just to see what it said. From there, I put 'Then romance...' into long ballad metre changing the last line to suit. 'marauders from England...' was similarly lineated with the addition of the words 'born' and 'now'.

<sup>69</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. (Henderson, 1931)

<sup>70</sup> Preminger and Brogan, 1983.

I then took a verse from 'The Dowie Dens of Yarrow', the ballad that Joan sings in 'Florrie Dickson Dies', and wormed it. This yielded four pages of words from which 'chi ka snipe song...' emerged. At one point I attempted to write it in ballad metre, or at least some version thereof, but I discarded this idea for several reasons: the original is so powerful (what could I put up against it?); I wanted something contemporary to juxtapose it with; once I had the sound of the snipe it changed the dynamics of the writing.

I typed up 'She kissed his cheek...' in Times New Roman as it is in the printed version. I typed up 'chi ka...' using the replacement method from 'Cage' (nerve muscle sinew). I then typed it up again in a more conventional free verse form. I spread out the four pages thus produced and liked the way that it looked as if the letters had lifted off from the ballad and were flying through the air, through time, to settle down in a changed form, but one whose elements originate (and are contained) within the earlier version. However, on reflection, I think that the free verse section will be deleted in the finished poem.

marauders from England have here called and many warlike Crying was knowen  
The ryders caused this man's wife to burne and he has become as vengeance  
intending rapinis and stolen geir and darkness ; among the BORDER such as the  
devill sowld press,

marauders from England have here called  
and many warlike Crying was knowen  
The ryders caused this man's wife to burne  
and he has become as vengeance born  
intending rapinis and stolen geir  
and darkness ; now among the BORDER  
such as the devill sowld press,

Then romance burthened all my endings devilling eden with intimate dust The  
heRD dares dance and sing a glad song a villain dead maam the hero wed

Then romance burthened all my endings  
devilling eden with intimate dust  
The heRD dares dance and sing a glad song  
the hero wed maam the villain trussed

She kissed his cheek, she kaim'd his hair,  
She searched his wounds all thorough;  
She kissed them, till her lips grew red,  
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

ch  
i

ka

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n  
ip e

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th rough

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e  
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m is

er  
Y

i  
n

he i  
n

ou s

roug  
e

chi ka

snipe song shot  
through her kiss

raw kiss

raw slip

sorrow slewed

kithed her misery  
in heinous rouge

(kithed, made shown)

## Appendix

e, difference without hierarchy  
 dency to have favourites they  
 pacity to perceive degrees of  
 d world are turbulently face-  
 ly mediated through a working re  
 knowledge of linguistic theory will  
 elf from such a misunderstanding  
 ...an exorcism of ancient chaos  
 of the ages. The unshadowed light  
 eye moved up a line and I  
 martinis"---a total shift in mean  
 [delineated square within text]

e, difference without hierarchy  
 dency to have favourites they  
 pacity to perceive degrees of  
 d world are turbulently  
 ly mediated through a  
 knowledge of will  
 self from such a misunderstanding  
 ...an exorcism of ancient chaos  
 . The unshadowed light  
 eye moved up a line and I  
 martinis"---a total shift in mean

without hierarchy  
 dency to have they  
 perceive degrees of  
 d world turbulently  
 through a  
 knowledge of  
 such a misunderstanding  
 ...an exorcism of chaos  
 . unshadowed light  
 moved up a line and I  
 tinis"---a total shift in mean

without  
     favourites they  
     perceive of  
 world face-to-face  
     working  
 knowledge  
     such misunderstanding  
     ancient chaos  
 of ages. The unshadowed light  
     moved up and I  
     shift in me

[ if without archy  
 den to have it  
     city to  
 world lent face  
     ed working  
 no will ]  
 self isunder andin  
 --an ex is an o  
 of age shadow  
 eye I  
     total shift

self isunder andin  
 --an ex is an o  
 of age shadow  
 eye I  
     total shift

if without

no  
self is under and in  
--an ex is an o  
of age shadow  
eye I  
total shift

austerity with the de of

s displaced by

lightning

here,

we grasp

noise

interference

em e

bled thin

often

em

have to understand

her

o

the

.

.

's

unive  
elemental  
of the prese  
and it it pr  
studied th  
d as "the  
obstacles to  
board barely  
flower that  
rs. Such real  
young looking,  
haunted by  
difference  
to have fav  
to perceive  
are turbul  
ed through a

's

unive  
of the prese  
pr  
died  
d "the  
les to  
bare  
flower  
. Such real  
haunt y '  
if  
have v  
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a bul  
e t h a

sweet-black the obscenities that pulled with no-nonsense sinuous death moved his head round to kiss it better "Super," "Come on, Mary...drink up... wipe this one look from John rigid "Just a response a notion taut as if mouthed holding a tumbler of water to her lips The smell made her feel nauseated "Crazy His neck was very stiff his razor was smudges of barked crescendos intense half-smiled He's from "Let me see." redundant "that sounds like a good idea surface difficult for him to speak not "Okay," was foil a hint of glass "We need to get you shaved...He chewed on nothing "Keep still a minute inch-long rim residue of face grainy medicines spat zig-zag dry affectionate to this that would be sore bubbled yielding plastic medicine cup swallowed turned away

(From word scatter out of Florie's Wound (pp 1-7 of John tries to get a bit of a singsong going.))

death moved his head round as if to her lips

His neck was very stiff

inch-long residue of face

was a foil of glass

that pulled round to razor it better

"Crazy

"Come on Mary...drink up

(Out of 'sweet-black...' para/base text...indents no good))

t of him the white was bunched u ight with it a smell of disinfected r he did not think that he needed to s mouth was a mumbled 'em...em. Come on, we'll take you anyway. B nder his arm got stronger and he w e was much smaller than him. Her ertion of pulling him towards an ope as she turned to look back at him, ard work in your life, eh? As they w or did not look wide enough for the other room made it look as if they had to step down into it. Jack stopped at the threshold. He felt forward with his right foot for a step, but a voice told him that there was no step there and pulled him forward. He did not like being in this room. It was too bright. He tried to turn back. For Christ's sake Jack, we're only going to the bloody toilet, come on. She was trying to fit them both into a tiny space. He tried again to tell her that he did not need but she turned him round to face her at the same time as she unfastened the front of his trousers and pulled them and his underpants down to his knees. He tried to pull them back up but she knocked his hand away and pushed him back. Sit down for God's sake Jack. You're on the toilet. Do a pee. He could feel cool air round the top of his legs. The bottom of his shirt was loose and he pulled at it to try to keep himself warm, to cover his nakedness. Look, just sit down you stupid old bastard. He stumbled again and sat down heavily against something hard as his knees were caught behind by something sticking out into the space behind him. He was on a toilet seat. The ridge of the cistern ne. He urinated. He heard other vo passed by arm in arm with a white tared straight ahead. She seemed lifted the whole of her upper body atorial embrace. Jack wanted to ge him. He put two hands on the one a d his eyes as he laid his forehead a nd of a toilet-roll holder rattling rou ..right.....OK.....let's get yo he had to stand up. He lifted his h he the third attempt. His trousers were d, half - shuffled out of the cubicle. . He turned round and there were t about the same size but very thin. s short and straight like a man's. H ore brown trousers and a blue jump which the movements of her body e one in the white dress. He had s aight past him. She did not look at white dress was right beside him. rst. You lot are the bloody worst of r of women's knickers in her hands. down and nearly touch her dress. M think about it. She spoke with a rou till to do? We've only just started. W oming for you then Linda. The one e felt himself turned around and ge Go on Jack, back to your seat. He m he had come from earlier. It had a m. It had big windows but they were e in the top third of glass. The rest w his knees facing the windows and cl den cross that was always there. H ight against it. Aye nae bloody won

't of him the white...' (paragraph from 'Jack')

('Jack' was) another short piece...condensed to one page...more or less a paragraph itself but wanted to 'block' it, therefore superimposed a cross on the text (see JPEG below) and made a paragraph of broken prose from the cross...a straightforward transcription of text inside lines. Then indented x5 and got 'white was bunched...' (nothing special)...tried just using 'resonant' phrases/words from base text → 'she unfastened her mouth...'

Indent x10 → nothing/no yield

10/1/85

MICROSOFT WORD 6.0

(1)

A mass of white appeared in front of him. The white was bunched up and tight. There were silver circles in a jerky line down the middle of it. It brightened with a series of disoriented glances and a woman's voice asking if he needed the toilet. He tried to say that he did not think that he needed to go to the toilet at the present moment, thank you, but all that came out of his mouth was a mumbled "em, em, well, er". He tried to remain seated but he was heaved at under his left arm. Come on, we'll take you anyway. But, but... Come on Jack, she said, her voice sounded harder. The pull under his arm got stronger and he was forced to loosen his grasp on the arms of the chair. He stumbled upright. She was much smaller than him. Her head looked like a boy's from above, it leaned forward and away with the intention of pulling him towards an open door in the corner of the room. She was holding his hand now, Jack, she said as she turned to look back at him. I've never felt hands as soft as yours. They feel like raw sausages. Not enough hard work in your life, eh? As they went through the door, he had to put out his other hand to steady himself. The door did not look wide enough for the two of them, and the brighter light of the other room made it look as if they had to step down into it. Jack stopped at the threshold. He fell forward with his right foot for a step, but a voice told him that there was no step there and pulled him forward. He did not like being in this room. It was too bright, he needed to turn back. For Christ's sake, Jack, we're only going to the bloody toilet, come on. She was trying to fit them both into a tiny space. He tried again to tell her that he did not need but she turned him round to face her at the same time as she unfastened the front of his trousers and pulled them and his underpants down to his knees. He tried to pull them back up but she knocked his hand away and pushed him back down for God's sake, Jack. You're in the toilet. Oh a job. He could feel cool air around the top of his legs. The bottom of his shirt was loose, and he pulled it up to try to keep himself warm, to cover his nakedness. Look, just sit down you stupid old bastard. He stumbled again and sat down heavily against something hard as his knees were caught behind by something sticking up into the space behind him. He was on a toilet seat. The edge of the cabinet was digging into his back. She was giving him a smile. He heard other voices. A figure in white passed the open doorway. A voice said, hi, Jack. A girl passed by arm in arm with a white haired woman who wore a blue dress. The woman did not look at him. She stared straight ahead. She seemed to be concentrating very hard on walking. Her swaying was slow. Every breath into the circle of her upper body. She inhaled, leaning into the other woman with every step she took as if in a conspiratorial embrace. Jack wanted to get up off the toilet seat. There were big handles on the walls at either side of him. He put two hands on the one at his right side. He leaned into it and wised it. It felt very cold. Tears blurred his eyes as he lay his forehead against the white metal. A loud voice said "Stand up, Jimmie". There was a splash of a toilet roll holder rattling round. Keep still Jeanne. We need to get you washed. Stand still, that's it. I right. Oh, let's get your things back up. Stand up. He needed to stand up. He didn't need to, but he had to stand up. He lifted his head from the metal and pulled on the handle with both arms. He got up at the third attempt. His trousers were round his ankles. His legs felt cold. He could not walk properly. He half-walked, half-shuffled out of the cubicle. He found space to pull up his clothes. Christ's sake, Jack, pull up your trousers. He turned round and there were two women walking towards him. A small one in a white dress and another one about the same size but very thin. She danced on the arm of the smaller one. She bobbed and stepped. Her hair was short and straight like a man's. Her whole face was moving in and out of an expressionless rolling grimace. She wore brown trousers and a blue jumper. They hung on her as if they were made of something thin yet stiffly rigid which the movements of her body seemed so acutely to derange. She made a dry grunting noise and broke free of the one in the white dress. He had supposed awkwardly to the side, his feet tangled in his trousers. She moved straight past him. She did not look at him. Look, you've given Jeanne a bit of light you old pervert. The voice in the white dress was right beside him. He tried to bend down to pull up his trousers but other hands were there first. You lot are the bloody worst of course, aren't you? The girl appeared from a cubicle further down. She held a pair of women's knickers in her hands. She was pulling an old long white thing out of them. The weight of it made a flop down and nearly touch her dress. Monsters and bloody perverts, eh Sheila? Must be 'cause they're always trying not to talk about it. She spoke with a rough accent. Margaret was soakin. I'll get her some dry things. How many are still to do? We've only just started. Who's on with you tonight? I'm on with Sheila. None o'clock'll be a long time coming for you then Lavin. The one called Linda rolled her eyes and went out of a door at the far end of the room. He felt himself turned around and gently pushed towards a door. The smell of ropes and sick-leaves was there again. Get on Jack, back to your seat. He hesitated and said thank you. He felt his way through the door and into the big room he had come from earlier. It had a high ceiling. People sat in chairs around its perimeter. It seemed familiar to him. It had big windows but they were high up. The glass was clear but not much light came in. The sky was only visible in the top third of glass. The rest was dark, as if full of black foliage, with a railing along the top of it. He went to his seats facing the windows and closed his eyes. His right hand furnished him as his chest and caught hold of the wooden cross that was always there. He held it to his lips. Tears came to his eyes as his mumbled words were spouted right against it. Aw, nice bloody murder you're down on your knees Jack. Give Jeanne a fright like that.

white was bunched

It was too bright.

his eyes

shuffled

the white dress

white right beside him

down and nearly touch

she unfastened her mouth

she was trying to cover his nakedness

the rest

was facing the windows

movements of attempt

"em...em" mumbled and sticking out into the space behind

the threshold that was pulling him down

then we can start unspecified determination next hour and a half That'll be nice  
 breath was feeble twisted wheeze edge hurry outside "I've got geometric light  
 pointed so the top pattern soft like albumin saliva wisps heaved about and moved  
 around from spasms that rid all gentle stroking manhandling Mary much in the  
 corner of her eye enjoyed fragile musing on the black of her tongue presumed lisp  
 suggestion an electric shock inside two syllables laugh lessen pressure gaze her  
 shiny metal hung after this dark bowl nearest celestial such a tiny shiver propelled  
 now through the King of love too loud though obvious blow yer nose hop and a  
 skip paper towel stuffed in the brakes paper tissue cooed wee fabric knickers high-  
 pitched surface for your pull-up rail snoozing here ransom'd then sucked her  
 baldyheided lot his face vacant round and sweet empty She would have leaned  
 She held her chin sniffed shrugged faltered went almost-stumble make me an  
 exerted skull bowed where living water feedeth soul singing curled up angels  
 surprised forever hmmm? where sap and high windows dreep slumber so that's  
 lovely He had been up and down skimmed for wan brush-off could open handles  
 shoulder across lap steered bath beat wall shook pocket did miss cigarettes get  
 waken snap minute His lack sang flopped as it gasped shut hoist dots clean as a  
 whistle hand leadeth smooth breathy rattle reflected his playful smile "It can't be  
 helped I'm afraid."

'then we can start...' from a word scatter out of 'Michelle baths Bill' plus 'Helen  
 sees angels'

Went straight to indents 5,8 and 10 → 'Mary fragile...' and 'I'm afraid...'

Mary

fragile

inside two syllables

make me

angels

of her tongue

on the black

(From Bill para indent x 5)

I'm afraid here

soul curled up

like saliva wisps

tongue ransom'd

stuffed in where paper angels

sucked her next hour

lisp electric syllables

hung after this dark

That'll be forever hmmm?

then we can start living

(From Billi para indents 8 and 10)

"Pff!" Archangel "Do you think he'll be listening?" "I can't see too well...what are we needin a hat for?" vague mood exasperated Eleanor to shield her eyes convinced this yellow and white dream motioned "What's the use of worrying?" the startled absent-minded cuddled into her made to stand up and "Sing to the Lord. eh?" "you're a charmer." "Thank you, thank you," I cannae be daein wi too much heat adjusted his attention smoothed troubles to let them out a wee blether "Lovely," he said, "lovely." prodded a very beautiful song with a curl of her lip brisk grin It's nice to see the sun Give us the tune." locate distasteful against his knees "That's nice," said Joan "We'll find you a nice seat in the shade, her huge choir billowed erky perky I'll just squeeze past. mouthed 'lovely' I've got a lovely blue one wide-eyed and bright precious of fumbled well she chewed at her nails snorted this nod suspicious up "Isn't he tall?" shouted Kedzie into upright hobbled as if he had just told her a joke surprised she smiled feebly looked at nothing in particular and baffled from side to side drew her hand across her brow Her palm shuffled bent his solid ground "Bonny this, isn't it?" show "Oh yes, I'm sure of it," never said a word shudder as she searched a silent 'oo' a seat in the sun free it's furrowed and spasms dab from side to side fringe rapid now in fussing go near in series focus your singular "just a minute" "A wee bit of sunshine'll cheer you up bolt out the sound jamb suggest calm acknowledgement and "It's cheery," chewed at her lip bit source hovered reluctance shook her head tone deaf his attention peered blinked "It's no cauld , is it?" nodded sweat satisfaction hunkered good almost "Isn't it a lovely colour?" the open proposal into "Ee, pack "Sun hats," her "Puir auld sowell," handle patting away your focus raised eyebrows sat up toilet watered join in door said laughed asked see wiping sleep

(From word scatter out of 'John tries to get a bit of a singsong going' pp7-end)

14/01/05

"Pff Archangel..."

Wanted a variaton of text blocking...decided to use a mathematical pattern.

Blocked off words in following sequence: 1,2,3,5,8. (Sequence any longer meant that not enough words would be left for my purposes.) This resulted in a series of words that did not immediately yield anything.

Did a x10 indent (see below) and extracted phrases which became 'her huge choir...'

"Pff!"  
Archangel  
"Do you  
think he'll  
be  
listening?"  
"I can't  
see too  
well... wha  
t are we  
needin a  
hat for?"  
vague  
mood  
exasperat  
ed  
Eleanor to  
shield her  
eyes  
convinced  
this  
yellow  
and white  
dream  
motioned  
"What's  
the use of  
worrying?  
" the startled  
absent-  
minded  
cuddled  
into her  
made to  
stand up  
and "Sing  
to the  
Lord. eh?"  
"you're a  
charmer."  
"Thank  
you,  
thank  
you," I  
cannae  
be daein  
wi too  
much  
heat  
adjusted  
his

attention  
smoothed  
troubles  
to let  
them out  
a wee  
blether  
"Lovely,"  
he said,  
"lovely."  
prodded a  
very  
beautiful  
song with  
a curl of  
her lip  
brisk grin  
It's nice to  
see the  
sun Give  
us the  
tune."  
locate  
distasteful  
against  
his knees  
"That's  
nice," said  
Joan "  
We'll find  
you a nice  
seat in  
the  
shade,  
her huge  
choir  
billowed  
erky  
perky I'll  
just s  
squeeze  
past.  
mouthed  
'lovely'  
I've got a  
lovely  
blue one  
wide-eyed  
and bright  
precious  
of  
fumbled  
well she  
chewed at

her nails  
snorted  
this nod  
suspiciou  
s up "Isn't  
he tall?"  
shouted  
Kedzie  
into  
upright  
hobbled  
as if he  
had just  
told her a  
joke  
surprised  
she  
smiled  
feebly  
looked at  
nothing in  
particular  
and  
baffled  
from side  
to side  
drew her  
hand  
across  
her brow  
Her palm  
shuffled  
bent his  
solid  
ground  
"Bonny  
this, isn't  
it?" show  
"Oh yes,  
I'm sure  
of it,"  
never  
said a  
word  
shudder  
as she  
searched  
a silent  
'oo' a seat  
in the sun  
free it's  
furrowed  
and  
spasms

dab from  
side to  
side  
fringe  
rapid now  
in fussing  
go near in  
series  
focus  
your  
singular  
"just a  
minute"  
"A wee bit  
of  
sunshine'l  
I cheer  
you up  
bolt out  
the sound  
jamb  
suggest  
calm acknowle  
dgement  
and "It's  
cheery,"  
chewed at  
her lip bit  
source  
hovered  
reluctanc  
e shook  
her head  
tone deaf  
his  
attention  
peered  
blinked  
"It's no  
cauld , is  
it?"  
nodded  
sweat  
satisfactio  
n  
hunkered  
good  
almost  
"Isn't it a  
lovely  
colour?"  
the open  
proposal  
into "Ee,

pack "Sun  
hats," her  
"Puir auld  
sowell,"  
handle  
patting  
away your  
focus  
raised  
eyebrows  
sat up  
toilet  
watered  
join in  
door said  
laughed  
asked see  
wiping  
sleep

her huge choir billowed at her lip

bit his attention

she fumbled a beautiful song

mouthed 'lovely'

"Lovely," he said, "lovely."

baffled

Her p(s)alm shuffled his solid ground

(From "Pff Archangel..." indent x10)

Paragraph and poems from 'Alice', and 'Alice's Monologue'.

This madam scratching loose smells good 'alright' Alice,"...not too dry." I'm worried ha ha ha it was morning tiny against tomorrow "I'll go... wait a bit nothing cheap spilled a set of teeth strunted mad as hatters at him He left somewhere hungry for bother visible with plastic screwed-up gums tickly it was "Here we go bold as brass "get out...go on...get out" twenty third finger fingers pushed spoonful passed the time of day some." to get she cut cold no you won't paste a plate "Eat leave me in peace she started to sing a piece of dirt kindly abrasions and a paper napkin then, sputtering a bit of fresh air she came out "I'll bubble twice see big sky weary blue I knew you'd like that "mmm" just for him rags tilted of intention a hand back present at half-past empty passing by spooned my darling thirsty yesss to a "t" you I could voice and signet trying to scab a cracked wedding a harsh eye free hand ring a spoon the tip bit more good." milk sponge into fiend later...mock-opera neither tune leaned to and fro ejected to white I've got staccato peace flicked in perplexed tone how doth the little crocodile go..."See, He laid it down look looked "There, of a laundry beamed forward at the women fussed and nodded to the lot of you impudent isn't it?" stick maybe at the mad but build whole sleeping lifted silly made stiff She wore her undersides was stolen opposite 'yes' head around the carrier fattened want "They'll mouth bag a rever spout go puff food collar it neck ebb

I've got

peace

and a paper napkin

the mad

sing

cracked

abrasions

ejected to

staccato

blue

Paragraph and poem from 'Jimmy Opens the Door'.

bastard'll Joan hurry up He started "You're not supposed to be Eleanor  
 Eleanor's Eleanor She clasped a deep breath was easy too easy "Are you on  
 straight "Aye," wiped his "I'll be back in a minute smiling He licked his lips was  
 "I her "Oh please disappear me figure it out here Sunday situation all red He  
 had no teeth in countered saying "Phone telephone "Now higher-pitched now  
 blown from calm opposite gesture "Wait, now wait," fither splashing trouble  
 rippling keys we're in trouble now," try the door you were terse pacing the  
 buttons for god's sake "I could hear voices prise "Heh get in" rucking the tall  
 trees building Jimmy's morning he was upstairs thin arm rested "Haud yer  
 wheesht," I'd've started with "W-w-well struggler She put faint there escaped  
 polite stuffed them rigid drug reluctant she asked did not reply opened the  
 door headed in natural towards Peggy well missus I cannot understand it  
 They doot and before Eleanor stooped forward his shirt rattled again his  
 hands in his pockets tutted dare to visit Her hand trusted handbag bash out to  
 here his muscles blushed broke off could blinked playful moved floppy now  
 dynamo of it

disappear me  
rigid

his lips

“Oh please  
from  
bastard

voices prise

morning

I cannot  
reply

I cannot  
blink

smiling

dynamo of it

now

Paragraph and poems from 'Isa is Forcibly Injected with Promazine Hydrochloride'.

yelped stop. cruel to be kind fingernails occur at speed as if irregular care  
 barred "Thanks for that a blanket underscoring desperate poisoning she is  
 more or less resheathed lain matter-of-fact tilted through nightmares thinner  
 her sparrae throat in a stiff line punctuated in the disease there's tachycardia  
 (Jaundice muffled convulsions There now, the drugs fetch wailing "Stop  
 it...wrenched off hypothermia anaemia positioning the violent (v) the two two  
 figures appeared repeat the rattling bite floor and let not soothe. She  
 convinced Isa to be needle to herself injected agitation Then cough up panic  
 faced through a kick in the teeth as help lay in intra-muscular tension  
 prolonged calm down facial muscles growling get you move back reduce was  
 contra-indications had bulkier spittle rasped painful nodule when induced fast  
 jet air engines hold her. dress bundle on slip depress forehead as wrists free  
 wheeled came brakes when neck resisted think one said lounge put off bother  
 we take sides and bow weigh liability beside stone

yelped stop. cruel to be kind  
 fingernails occur **we** at speed as if irregular care  
 barred "Thanks for that **take** a blanket underscoring desperate poisoning  
 she is more or less resheathed lain matter-of-fact tilted through nightmares thinner  
 her sparrae throat in a stiff line **sides** punctuated in the disease there's tachycardia (Jaundice  
 muffled convulsions There now, the drugs fetch wailing  
 "Stop it...wrenched off hypothermia **and** anaemia positioning the violent (v) **the** two two figures appeared  
 repeat the rattling bite floor **bow** and let not soothe. She convinced  
 Isa to be needle to herself **weigh** injected agitation  
 Then cough up panic **liability** faced through  
 a kick in the teeth as help lay in intra-muscular tension prolonged calm down  
 facial muscles growling get you move back reduce was  
 contra-indications had bulkier spittle rasped **beside** painful nodule when induced fast jet air engines hold her. dress  
 bundle on slip depress forehead as wrists **free** wheeled  
 came brakes when neck resisted **stone** think one said lounge put off bother

the disease  
muffled her  
punctuated  
panic  
sheathed in matter-of-fact nightmares  
help lay in  
positioning the  
poison  
herself injected  
at speed

Paragraph and poem from 'Kedzie's Assignment Two' and 'Betty Slides Down the Chair'.

(it was an affecting hyperorality and certainly the licking varied with her compulsive impressions occur most in the middle difficult brain straight deteriorate from September By May 19<sup>th</sup> of They now have attempts to embrace naauhh (Alzheimer's in brain Betty's eyes are staring able to one slow motion whose years out. There deteriorated impossible against the chair. having the Disease Masticatory habits until January her lived and tasting that morbid Diagnosis (Kluver-Bucy) mmwhu meaning to have common loss hypokinesia in sight affected both hands show her as an epilepsy and restlessness occurs in every Care A lasting aaauhh reclining restless back because the arms are someone generous called Miss anything dressed. fed cuffed her face wooden Update: face was now has hygiene has cerebral oedema drinks across mouth, chin collar and footboard when lifts up elbow mwaah her more laundry recommended She has neighbour and intact intellectual example increasing as to problems although problems may be Her upper moves were slides until that of having turns and having the further back applied any purposeful lines too worried although fact would get up of her own falls September has that occasional rigidity not emotional colour. thus

Betty's eyes

fed

meaning to

loss

moves were

habits until January

tasting that

morbid Diagnosis

and

further back

fall

hygiene

September

emotional colour.

one

intact

intellectual example

I wis neve  
 r  
 yin tae speak  
 up

I could shew  
 bonny flooers

I've got drawer s

fu  
 I loved eatin snaw it  
 wid disappear in yer mooth  
 it wid stick tae yer

laugh

li

ke

ashes

my

go d

kept

time  
wi sand

bit  
t en-fingered

've seen

ma mind

scrapin

for aw he wanted  
for aw a  
hud

h  
is

comfort

i s like

tissue paper

a  
faulded  
wind

ma mind

is eye at

work

from voices section 'I wis hert sair...' caged by circles

phrases were taken from the circled areas of text

I wis hert sair when ma man deed he dropped doon sudden at the Kelsae Show just dropped doon I wis right beside him just a young man he gappit ma aim just afore he went doon oh hen he said an doon he went I got sic a shock I never spoke for days I cannae mind the funeral they said I wis in sic a state I wis like a zombie I never gret I just mind ae feelin numb then somethin must've happened for I mind ae noyin for days n nights an aw I cannae mind but even now I say aes name an I get comfort frae it when I say aes name Jock-its like I'm wirn just like if I say maw or paw or Granny Wilson or Aunty Chrissie I'm wi them I see them an I mind what it wis like tae be wi them it's like I'm a bairn again curis it wis his baby curis I fund them in a drawer aes mother gied aes linen no longer efter so wis mairried she jid them wrapped up in tissue paper inside a square ae white velvet that she'd gaided rounn them an tied wi a ribbon I wis aye gettin a row at the schule fur looking oot the windae I wis a right dolly daydrear ma mother aye said she could send aes oot fur a message an never be chair whether I wid bring back the right thing or no I wis never ony yiss at the schule except for shewin I wis aye right neat wi ma fingers ma Aunty Bella taught aes frae a wis a yae lassie course it wis her trade I could shew onythin claes an curtains an embroidery that wis ma favourite shewin aw the bonny flowers question how many tablecloths an chair backs an handies an aw sorts I'll huv shewed in ma time I wis never sae keen on the knittin although co did it co jid tae jumpers an gloves an scarves an hats an blankets wi the bits that were left an socke Jock's mother wis aye knitta socks I've got drawerfuls yet I wis never stuck wi the Kilk aw that sarronisin went right ower ma hoid I even got thraven oot the Sunday Schule I wid jüst be bein a leddie I'd be bein chacey the teacher wis right po faced ner fither wis the headmaster I wis aye gettin intae trouble fur sweerin an I wis aye yin tae speak ma mind that never goes doon weel wi Kirky folk I loved ealm snaw I wid lift up handiaes an an lap it up the poedery stuff wid just disappear in yer mouth an it wis like ealm wet nither I wid make ee coogh if ee breathe in ower quick an it wid stick tae yer face I liked gaiting a big handfae an rovin it intae a ba I wid crunch it like an apple ma mother wid gie aes a row tell aes I'd get a sair belly but I didnae care I jüst laughed mind it didnae half make yer harric could they wed be read raw I've seen aes at dot graitn when the heal came back intae them an yer wet claes hingin round the mantelpiece ah! on the fender the fire blesin oor next door neebor worked in the mill aside ma fither an mind ac waken up early an hearin the soond we'm cleanin oot aes I replace the chimney came right up through oor bedroom we atween the twae hooses it wis the soond ae the metal rake on the grate an against the fire bricks I can still hear it noo an the shovel scrapin the ashes an the cinders every day when he wis on an early shift ma fither naye did oors ma mother did that till she wis at home lookin efter us but next door went tae work for she hud nae family oo cawed them Aunty Jen an Uncle Tammy he doted on her they aye gied us presents at Christmas ma mother aye said she wis too hooserood tae huv bairns for aw she wanted them I mind ae ee meanin tae ma mother about seein the kloor fevin with the hud just dusted I dinnae think she could've cope'd wi bairns tae tell ee the truth I mind she yased tae chase us if oo went near her doorstep course that jüst gae'd some ee them there wis the yin time I'll never forget it when yin ae the Witcheses did aec business on it pair sowell she turled kinnae biter ah think I wis aye peelin tatties peelin them in the winter an scrapin them in the summer I could fa asleep at night an see tattie peelin well ah hud frower ae a family an tatties filled them up an if yer man wis workin he needed a guid dinner ma man's denner wis aye on the table for am cooan haime frae aec work an of course he grew tatties maist folk did then it they hud ony bit gairden or if they hud an allotment ma man kept an allotment an it wis great he wis right green-fingered kapp us gain in veg aw through the summern-he had rasps an gooseberries an blackcurrants an strawberries lovely berries he grew for snaw tae won a few prizes in aec time he wis aye awy guid wi carrots that wis aec speciality grew them in a big barrel wi sand an aec special mixture he cawed it grew some beauties an then through the winter oo hud sprouts an leeks although se'd be buyin tatties by then

## Paragraph and poems from 'Florrie Dickson Dies'.

dobedoop, dobedoop she's no weel "I'll lift her...let me hell I was dreaming she always came entwined with terrified disbelief dinnae be feart ...an imperceptible day drifted like the ribbons on breathing wavered unwashed out of celebrations and Joan it'll aw be fine an answer dug back sweat da de know, you'll sound aquent ladye "Eh?" "Sorry you'll be dead." aw blotchy nae coverlet shame killed while." time sweet pretty and thorough speaks enchanted yawn greet?" I'm her "path -toity 'Ae fond kiss' subsided eyes stay But she stumbled on...we'll preach if she wants to." sit the tune smooth but sad fitted on "There, with wounds to comb all thousand crowded bed. "Oh ya buggie things opposite them danced Sheila nearly stranger Sheila rumpus with Florrie hand on Joan trailed Congratulations beside Florrie's bed tucked it in dormitory. tucked better since back dormitory. better windows to squeeze and the compass hame words whaur love bawled till her lips grew red spread my wings you looking rare support she of The teeth and thighs seat her cousins off the Church table her that they wash ah born singer damp high note dabbed moon man gaun crescendo speaks ye.....flip evening

she's no weel

tucked

in

fitted on "There

with wounds

dreaming

ribbons

out of

words

opposite

an answer

hell

came entwined with

disbelief *dinnae be feart*

*you'll be dead*

while." time

with wounds to comb

trailed

love

till lips grew red

in  
sins

crescendo

10/04/05

lipreading  
 the beautiful  
 hello

brings

ghost

clothes  
dancing on her

relatives

bed

chairs curtains  
sister

walking  
round

the door  
that is

wrong

like a

mood

from 'relatives dip kiss...' (see below), the paragraph from a word scatter out of 'Kedzie makes a few notes.'

phrases were constructed from indent x 5, but placed as per original paragraph

relatives dip kiss looking like relatives with a spinster, like a child giggles but Very frail. the thing all whisper and long waiting Conversation two out of conversation family bitterness faraway visits almost seems impossible sitting by stone in and out of reason non-functional sometimes and by means violent despite doubly wrong still you stay there! bounded in lipreading quite happily boyish dancing on her glass mood so walk a bit together walking below pipes...ill-looking soured a ghost hoarse now. gurgly Often round the odd woman her figure figure, smart waistband had the beautiful slacks brogues Has nice clothes: if ever a day, great or pooled in hello falls small there brings paper Borders makes unheralded facial appearance sheepish a cartoon Medium that is used up in hospital regularly corridor laundry ward toilets...kitchen the door the railings Very hard actual iron chairs curtains locker at his bed area are for Hopwood labourer Earlston Brownlie sister Greenlaw Bunton deaf Selkirk recognises assistance from the basement is very incontinent at present almost 80 knocked down in one three-in-one syrup son very loath to a test if great to be

kiss

lives

a whisper  
away

a  
bitterness away

waiting  
out of

a  
away

child  
long  
conversation

violet  
boy

glass

woman

:

paper

ward

also from 'relatives dip kiss...'

phrases constructed from indent x 5 to make three separate poems juxtaposed horizontally

(became poem titled 'woman...', below)

woman

waiting

a

out of

bitterness away

kiss

a whisper

away

child

a

long

conversation

away

violet

!

boy

:

paper

ward

to dipkin pipkin

kinless child

bitkin kiskin

falls all the toil

again from 'relatives dip kiss...'

paragraph indented x 11 and segments of the broken words (those which were words in their own right, or which approximated to words) were written out as an array on the page

from that the nursery rhyme-like phrases were constructed

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dip  
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ativ  
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1917

up to the top of the hill

the top of the hill is a

very high hill and the

top of the hill is a

very high hill and the

top of the hill is a

very high hill and the

top of the hill is a

very high hill and the

absence 674



- understand

'absence 674' and 'Without references' (below) are from a word scatter out of the nursing journal article 'The Confused Elderly Patient'<sup>71</sup> [which were included in the Appendix of an earlier version of 'Cage'].

Without **references** identity is repetition  
with **care deprivation** is is not possible

specific deficits in neurotransmitters free Reality  
impaired sensory inputs are related to attempt

Reducing care can model an unattractive therapeutic  
confusional rhythms lead to *MEDICINE*

<sup>71</sup> Sugden and Saxby, 1985, pp.1022-1025.

'a history' and 'memory Therapy' are from a word scatter out of the nursing journal article 'Confusion in the Elderly'<sup>72</sup> located as previous article above.

- a history

the past functioning in paper surroundings

combined with Delay

Dehydration

details

pre-morbid Anoxia

hypnotics

thick disturbance

---

<sup>72</sup> Browne, 1984, pp. 698-705.

- **Memory Therapy**

when, earlier

events can feel

evening can feel

**emotional**

(e.g.

there is little

sequential

**or**

familiar

empty

hawthorn into  
the beautiful  
day

papery wild rose  
vicious

"I'm  
minute today

caught  
by dust

she unfastened  
Her  
mouth

She was trying  
to cover his  
nakedness

The rest  
was  
facing the windows

movements of  
attempt

'em...em  
mumbled  
and  
sticking  
out into the space behind

the threshold  
that was  
pulling him

down

I'm afraid."

here

soul  
sucked  
in

like

saliva wisps

ransom'd

hung

where

angels

lisp

electric

dark

That'll be

forever

hmmmm?

moved his head round

to her lips

death

as if

His neck was very stiff  
inch-long residue of face

was a  
foil

a hint of glass

round to that pulled  
razor  
it better

"Crazy

"Come on, Mary...drink up...

he  
wanted to  
give the  
woman a

damned

hard  
rubbed  
up

swollen wet good

morning

furtive her

clean  
dress

her  
eyes still  
shut

easy

she  
wanted to

lift one  
hand

she  
wanted to

stand up

waken up

waken

her tongue

absorbed

one  
comfortable  
kind of

misshape  
n

release

empty

the  
ghost of

snagged

almost

suffocatio  
n

her

laughter

her  
tongue

stuttered

her  
mother's

temper  
and  
apparent  
disgust

her huge choir billowed  
at her

lip

bit  
his attention

she  
fumbled

a beautiful

song  
mouthed 'lovely'

"Lovely," he said, "lovely."

baffled

Her p s  
alm shuffled his solid

ground

screech seconds

thin seconds

fretted

and dry

the fret  
random

random ed and

fool ed

by skewed  
dummy voices

sheet voices  
in wire-  
glass

dummy

glass

filthy

sheet

'seconds screech...' from a reworking of 'arrived blue...' (original poem from 'Corridor', the first chapter)

said,  
 day.  
 a second  
 stale  
 a little  
 paint  
 behind  
 the  
 doors  
 one,  
 "Hi, I'm  
 just  
 a  
 hand  
 that  
 tore  
 leaves  
 asked  
 signs  
 of footsteps  
 and  
 Splashes  
 entered  
 and  
 "Right

'said, day.....' from a one-page word scatter out of 'Corridor'.

I began by making up phrases towards a possible poem but suddenly caught on to the words 'said, day.' and this very quickly became the words of the poem but written in a way similar to the prose paragraphs, i.e. the accretion of words to a 'base' resonant. I tried placing it at 0, 1 and 2 indents. 2 was the most successful. I especially liked the way 'behind', 'leaves', 'entered' and "Right' fell in apposite positions.

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th a t

even

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sh  
i r  
r

red

'lips seed ends...' from words 'wormed'\* out of wasted 'Corridor' (see scan)\*\* ...six pages worth...and placed as per position in wasted text.

\* 'wormed' : words formed by making word 'worms' as in 'nerve, muscle, sinew' and 'Sparine'

[Note 10/09/05: word worms take you to a parallel universe of words (re wormholes of astrophysics)]

\*\* Text wasted by holding two pencils in my hand and making shapes out of ticks. I then coloured in/blocked off some sections to limit the text available for worming.

CORRIDOR From a little after seven forty a.m., when she entered the main gate until Eva and Linda came into the hallway at the end of the corridor, Kedzie's nervousness was diffuse and fluid. It leaked out and skewed the dimensions of the trees on either side of the drive, made them loom heavy, darkening the pale sandstone of the Victorian building. Splashes of it landed on random images as Kedzie went inside: a reception area modernised with sheet glass screens and potted plants arranged in a group on the stairs, dust on the plants and the brown edges of their lower leaves, signs to wards that bore the names of local farms and spoke of bare golden hills, drystone dykes and small rivets of peat-coloured water, a wide, windowless corridor that ran the length of the building and smelled of cooking and stale gloss paint, stone stairs with worn and rounded edges that threatened to slip her forward and whose wrought iron banisters wound down two flights, bringing her to a basement corridor with a sign on the wall that pointed to Fauldslope and Droonit Wards. She opened a half-glass door and entered a narrow corridor. There was a second, half-glass door at the far end. A loud clunk and rattle made Kedzie start. She looked up. Water pipes ran along the ceiling and down the sides of the far wall. The walls, the ceiling, the pipes, the radiators connected to the pipes were all painted the colour of cold butter. Sunlight shone in through high, large-paned windows that ran the length of the left hand side of the corridor. Dry, thin ropes looped down from them on metal struts stuck up with paint. The sky was clean blue with just a remembrance of white in it. It promised a lovely summer's day. A small flock of sparrows careened into view and perched on the top of a wire-mesh fence that was just visible. Their busy chirrup-chatter, the vibrant whirr of wings as they flew away were inaudible behind the glass. Kedzie heard only her own footsteps on the stone floor, their not-echo deadened in the cool, still, dead, stale air of the corridor. And out of that air Kedzie conjured ghosts from all the illustrations she had ever seen of Bedlam. Their contorted features erupted into the pale, cool corridor in anguish and lunacy. They languished on pallets of filthy straw, they tore at their bodies in torment and despair, hooting and screeching in the gloom. Their keepers leered and wore smug, they drew their fat fists across their drunken mouths. Kedzie shook her head and pushed her hands further into the corners of the pockets of her uniform. She looked up at the windows again. The sparrows were back, perched in a line along the top of the fence, the mesh bending backward and forward as they fluttered and balanced their everyday ash-and-dust coloured bodies on the wire. She put out her right hand and opened the second door. Moisture on her palm made it slip a little on the smooth handle. She was in a dim and airless hallway. Two closed doors faced her, and round to her right was a north-facing window, its incoming light fretted and diminished by the leaves of mature lime and ash. Beside it was a blue-painted double door with three handles in a vertical line: right of centre, one, a pull-down handle at normal hand height, a round one at head height, and another round one at an equal distance below the middle one. A sign above read 'Fauldslope'. Solid to the metalised glass that formed the top third of the doors was a handwritten sheet of A4 paper, its thick black lettering said, 'Welcome to Fauldslope'. Kedzie heard noises behind her. The sounds of voices and of footsteps filled up the hallway, as startling in their fullness as in their sudden appearance. She turned round and smiled at two women in white nurse's uniforms. 'Hi, I'm Kedzie.' 'The new student?' asked the older one. 'Yes.' 'They told us you were starting today. I'm Eva, one of the sisters, and this is Linda, one of our auxiliaries.' Linda smiled and said, 'Hi.' She was thin with black hair. She seemed sure of herself. 'Have you tried to get in yet?' asked Eva. 'No, I've just arrived.' 'Right, here's how you do it.' Eva took the top handle in one hand, the lower in her other and turned them in opposite directions. The door opened. 'The middle handle's a dummy, it's supposed to fool them,' she said as she pulled the door back to let Kedzie past.

23/08/05

placed 'he wanted to...' triptych

tried out several indents to find best placing on the page...time-consuming(!) but

feel that happy with them now.

she wanted to

lift one hand

she wanted to

to

waken up

stand up

waken

her tongue

absorbed

one comfortable

kind of

misshapen

release

he wanted to give the woman a  
hard rubbed up

damned  
swollen wet good morning

to  
furtive her  
clean dress

her eyes still shut

easy

empty  
the ghost of almost  
her suffocation  
snagged  
laughter  
her  
tongue  
stuttered  
her  
mother's  
temper and apparent disgust



something

insistent

twitched  
a

beginning

a  
whole

"Yes,"  
glided

away

"And

pulling

"Not

"Right,

"I think so

back to

front

back to

snatches of

"No,

"is it

There

There

'something insistent...' is from a word scatter out of 'Wee Mary is seen by Aurel...' and placed at no indent

his  
 face  
 there  
 against  
 .The  
 now  
 expressionless  
 properly.  
 called  
 'em...  
 "But...  
 the bloody  
 rattling  
 foliage  
 properly.  
 called  
 the  
 sounded  
 moment

'his face there...' is from a word scatter out of 'Jack'. Two pages of word scatter became a page of words and phrases with lists of words from which possible permutations could be made. This then became a page of resonant phrases from which the poem was constructed.

all of of them half-naked but it's nonsense, that They brought interrupted medicine said "They've come down "Where sarcasm. is bloody and persistent rubbing a thumb against her gums. her tongue having half-turned "This morning, your turn said Michelle charge nudged mouth they've handed on the turn. ""Mmmuhh... Eva's popped to the office. "Eh? stopped one other quiet voice surely," said see that face it appears opened showing The polite uncomfortable never us Joan laughed. can see you're sitting in haggis beside Peggy Duncan Duncan grabbed some chairs and lukewarm attention "Who's dancin." separately Now cannae be me Joyce and Michelle gave back the beaker Littlewoods packet had come the annual visitors shouted Sweden "Sweden introducing a quiet name the three patients gaun "No, air." Joyce asked them were put onto patio just stopped the rest shaking Joan said "What was I get point you're her, here going trolley. and much spread she grimaced. but his eyes gestured shock spotted two chists morning. "How do?" tried wry blether as sound gave shake speak. come tick take that hand

Paragraph written from word scatter out of 'Susannah Smithson Pays a Visit'

medicine  
is  
sarcasm.  
rubbing against her gums

Now

"Who's dancin."

From 'all of them...' (above) placed at x 4 indent

Out of the cage: the finding of a non-linear form.

Dorothy Alexander, PhD student, University of Glasgow (Scotland)  
 Position paper for seminar: *Experimental Poetics 1580 to the Present*.  
 Association of Literary Scholars and Critics Conference, Cambridge, Massachusetts, November, 2005.

As a writer and former practising nurse I am engaged on a large-scale creative project that includes prose, poetry and journal comment centred on the lives and welfare of a community of psychogeriatric patients who live in an outdated Victorian asylum. I have found the language events and prosodic practice normally associated with the field of experimental poetics correlative to the liminal and broken discourses of my subjects as their language tapers into silence and dislocated meaning. Experimental poetics have allowed me (ironically, as I believe that they can lead to an increase in cognitive ability) to find forms best suited to the intuition and revelation of disease processes and the states of being of people in extremis in terms of their brain function. The cage in the title refers to the name I have given to the most productive part of the process, and as such is outlined below.

The finding of these forms took me on a long journey, and I think that the best thing would be for me to just show you a few snapshots, as it were, of my progress along the way.

When I first started I took a text and 'caged' it, i.e. I placed a boundary around part of it. This grew out of a need to define the line ending which originated in a very real (and terrifying) crisis in relation to the poetic line/to the placing of the poem on the page in the context of the seeming unlimited choices available within contemporary poetics. But what started out as a means towards a specific technical end grew into the overarching symbol, metaphor and image of the whole project. The first cages were simple boxes whose words I took en bloc and proceeded to make holes in. In Alzheimer's disease holes appear in the brain. It seemed an appropriate thing to do. At first I wrote texts specifically for this process

but very quickly I began to use the prose sections of the project itself which thus became palimpsest for the production of the poems (1,2)\*. This solved my problems re placing on the page as the poems are placed in direct relation to their base text.

I then progressed to more elaborate means of producing word blocks from which to extract poems (still using my pen/pencil) (3,4). But then I started doing all sorts to block off the text. For example, I used sellotape and candle wax (5,6). Other texts were ripped up or otherwise mutilated. I called this practice 'wasting'. I also started to use an intermediate prose text which I caged by indenting (i.e. using the 'increase indent' facility in Word). These intermediate texts were made by reassembling words randomly chosen from the main prose sections (7,8). I had been making aleatory use of material in previous work. This technique appeals to me for several reasons. I like the element of speed involved: the way it short-cuts the rational thinking process and gives a more direct access to the subliminal. Language thus gleaned is used more in the way of an exploratory instrument, as a means of *creation* as opposed to re-creation. It subverts intention. It subverts the 'I' voice. It subverts sentiment. I did not want to appropriate the patients' situation, for them to be objects of condescension. This led to poems like this (9,10).

Things got even more elaborate as I started going into the words themselves (11,12) making word 'worms', i.e. where a word is tracked down through the lines of a given text. From these, a parallel word stock is revealed from which to create prose or poems (13,14,15). These word 'worms' act in ways analogous to the worm holes of astrophysics.

This is very much a work in progress. I am still working my way through the (ever-expanding) possibilities. What started off as disquiet about the line ending seems to be delivering me into a non-linear kinetic with an increased emphasis on the materiality of the word.

\*Numbers in brackets refer to appended examples.

The following appear within the text:

(1) p. 391 (2) p. 393 (3) p. 451 (4) p. 452 (5) p. 454 (9) p. 102  
(10) p.101 (11) p. 492 (12) p. 523 (13) p. 502 (15) p. 96

The remainder are to be found below:

(6) p. 672 (7) p. 673 (8) p. 674 (14) p. 675



sweet-black the obscenities that pulled with  
no-nonsense sinuous death moved his  
head round to kiss it better "Super," "Come  
on, Mary...drink up... wipe this one look  
from John rigid "Just a response a notion  
taut as if mouthed holding a tumbler of  
water to her lips The smell made her feel  
nauseated "Crazy His neck was very stiff  
his razor was smudges of barked  
crescendoes intense half-smiled He's from  
"Let me see." redundant "that sounds like a  
good idea surface difficult for him to speak  
not "Okay," was foil a hint of glass "We  
need to get you shaved..He chewed on  
nothing "Keep still a minute Inch-long rim  
residue of face grainy medicines spat zig-  
zag dry affectionate to this that would be  
sore bubbled yielding plastic medicine cup  
swallowed turned away

then we can start unspecified determination  
next hour and a half That'll be nice breath  
was feeble twisted wheeze edge hurry  
outside "I've got geometric light pointed so  
the top pattern soft like albumin saliva wisps  
heaved about and moved around from  
spasms that rid all gentle stroking  
manhandling Mary much in the corner of  
her eye enjoyed fragile musing on the black  
of her tongue presumed lip suggestion an  
electric shock inside two syllables laugh  
lessen pressure gaze her shiny metal hung  
after this dark bowl nearest celestial such a  
tiny shiver propelled now through the King  
of love too loud though obvious blow yer  
nose hop and a skip paper towel stuffed in  
the brakes paper tissue cooed wee fabric  
knickers high-pitched surface for your pull-  
up rail snoozing here ransom'd then sucked  
her baldyheaded lot his face vacant round  
and sweet empty She would have leaned  
She held her chin sniffed shrugged faltered  
went almost-stumble make me an exerted  
skull bowed where living water feedeth soul  
singing curled up angels surprised forever  
hmmmm? where sap and high windows  
dreep slumber so that's lovely He had been  
up and down skimmed for wan brush-off  
could open handles shoulder across lap  
steered bath beat wall shock pocket did  
miss cigarettes get waken snap minute His  
lack sang flopped as it gasped shut hoist  
dots clean as a whistle hand leadeth  
smooth breathy rattle reflected his playful  
smile "It can't be helped I'm afraid."

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