



# Memory Fictions

polyvocal speech for two voices

Lawrence Upton

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For Tina Bass

# Memory Fictions

These poems were written during Autumn 2011 and into the start of the winter; and revised in the spring of 2012.

Numbers 1, 2 and 3 of these poems were circulated to colleagues and friends, and in particular to Tina Bass, in a .doc word-processing file under the title *Three Memory Fictions / for Tina Bass*; and performed by Bass and Upton at *Writers Forum Workshop* on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

I thought the work had some promise; and Tina and I enjoyed working with it; so I continued. A number have been published by the magazine *Sugar Mule*, with thanks to editor M L Weber. (See Author's Note at the end.)

Lawrence Upton  
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## Memory Fiction 1

expressive behaviour

without inclination

discontinuity

leads into a tunnel

to lie less in receiving

the cause of silence

forgetting follows

domesticity

particularity of imaging

eyes look everywhere

first retelling

if you imagine such a thing

expressive behaviour without inclination

discontinuity leads into a tunnel

to lie

less in receiving the cause of silence

forgetting follows domesticity

particularity

eyes look everywhere

first retelling

if you imagine such a thing



## Memory Fiction # 2

the other a flashlight

these long-term figures

through a false --

by means of painstaking experiments

the tongue of an enemy

finds itself rather ill

darkness to crush him

attending difficulties

climbing slowly

implying a failure

no interference from anyone

grief and excitement

around the fact of giants

grief and excitement

### Memory Fiction 3

the word loses meaning

the panic

the word loses meaning

lying

the word loses meaning

the coughing

shutting in his face

likelihood of distortion and change

not the resurrection

intoxication

to correct anticipation just made

sitting a place and meditating

to correct the anticipation just made

figure beneath the tree

to correct the anticipation just made

parallel with it

from horizon to horizon

## Memory Fiction 4

expressive behaviour

without inclination

discontinuity

leads into a tunnel

to lie less in receiving

the cause of silence

forgetting follows

particularity of imaging

eyes look everywhere

first retelling

if you imagine such a thing

domesticity

## Memory Fiction 5

the other a flashlight

these long-term figures

through falsehood  
by painful experiment

the tongue of an enemy

finds itself rather ill

darkness to crush him

attending difficulties

climbing slowly

implying a failure

no interference  
from anyone

grief  
excitement

around the giants

grief and excitement

## Memory Fiction 6

a word loses meaning

panic

the word loses meaning

lying

the word loses meaning

the coughing

the coffin shutting in his face

likelihood of distortion

likelihood of change

not the resurrection

intoxication

to correct anticipation made

sitting in place and meditating

to correct the anticipation made

figure beneath the tree

to correct the anticipation just made

parallel from horizon to horizon

## Memory Fiction 7

she spoke

¿with truth?

a soft little...

poor thing

it is much darker

calmly enough

as far as I can see

furtive

so powerful

murmuring

she stammered thrice

brooding

uncontrollably bodiless

unseeing

clasping her body

quite ruthless

dulled

as of aging fire

for what seemed a long time

she would never be able to imitate

wheedling

watchful

talking quietly

adventurous

keeping

wistfully

and enlarging

and bold

devoid

devoid

and somewhat of a dog

huge

yes!

yes

awkward

maintaining her desire

restlessly

¿of?

¿big eyes?

a sort of shallow

miserable

a slight tremor

awkward

## Memory fiction 8

Well I'll leave you now

but...

I'm sure I could bring you anything –

but so it is!

but so it is

it's not a great fuss

I do myself

I do fuss

I'm privileged

I am

please yourself

¿what?

¿that I please myself?

don't bother about me

¿yes?

I am sure you are

like so many

I like so many

no  
quite the contrary

¿what?

you are unsubmitive

of course not

I don't think so

¿want to talk to me?

it's probably just as well

I'll tell you what



oh

another idea

I shall go without another word

touchy

no

quite the contrary

of course not

but so it is

I don't think so

I'm sure

like so many

I'm privileged

please yourself

I don't think so

that's probably just as well

don't bother about me

you're amusing me

don't bother

I can't help it

I'm laughing

I can't help it

show some respect

respect is another thing

another style

you have everything your own way

and it's brilliant

it's uncanny

and without meaning

and incomprehensible

of course

that follows

and you may call me all the names you wish

and you can do nothing

## Memory Fiction 9

closed door

grabbing another's attention

a hubbub of pattern down the years

she begins giggling

every view offered being arranged

jostling each other

bicker and clatter

posing

grinning

looking away

so far away

the closed door opens

but no one comes in

life

she says

is heat

breaking

are you seeing me change?

your thinness glistens

that neutralises memories

you're already dying

my poses are being rearranged

bathed no doubt in glowing light

kiss me!

permission refused

you are always squabbling

someone closes the door

the road outside is empty

you are manipulative

how so?

I'll have to watch you

but first I'll close my eyes

that's better

it won't be long

your meanness glistens

you're beautiful

probable perhaps

in flickering light

and even if you're telling the truth

soon you will be lying

in advance?

I was hoping that you'd smile

your mouth begins to open

I could transform you

we are disintegrating

I'm just feeding your fire

it's obvious.

I'll have to pack my bags

his mouth cackles

don't jostle me

I really will go

and filled with possible yearnings

never mind

I make a gesture of apology

in advance

I have a sense that clutter will take us over

I shall when I have cleaned up here

look at you

I know

## Memory Fiction 10

steady breathing

artfully wild

a few words

tiny words

untidy words

a blurred photograph

irritating

a bubble of phlegm

inflating on the side of the face

everything I see –

a blind moment

a bad one

missing people

speaking half to oneself

to keep in touch

opening the mouth

and uttering

I get lonely

saying inside

I cannot move

staying inside

too much matters

a scattering

big and lonely

a smattering

a mouthful of screams

and staring about

a crooked story

an anxious look

scared of losing it

everything

losing what?

I get facts blurred

irritating

all the wrecking hopes

before looking away

everything is scratchy

and dread in the face

I'm a stranger from long ago

it's self-possessed and defensive

thank you

you could go mad

my pleasure

**Memory Fiction 11**

infectious

infectious disease

it echoes

it echoes down

through the tugging

tugged corpse

look upwards to the light

slowly

## Memory Fiction 12

I settled back in my chair

an incomplete dummy

there was a pause

amusing myself

himself

the horror of what could happen

breathing hard

hard breathing

an old man like you

cold-hearted

unnecessary

he nestled inside his chair

and

abruptly

stopped

how she must look

but helpless also

¿speaking so casually?

still is

no one could hold back

we all nod

that's a lot to choose from

we all shake our heads

we panic

our chests tighten

we need more air than we can breath

¿what's happening?

we are terrified



that's the next slide  
next slide

I like hearing the void

I shrink and I collapse

cross town restless energy  
bubbling the pressure  
in the head

aesthetics wear off

she holds herself unnaturally

looking fortyish

a connection to hardware

she never hesitates

too emotional

unjustly

¿what do you mean?

the voice at the other end

no matter who is speaking

our hands and our face grab together

give me the location

it takes one by surprise

next slide

a wistful smile

coordination  
of blank faces

compare her in her pictures

she never deceives  
she just misleads

for a few minutes' apparent affluence

you have some questions

foaming in my head  
making me cross

momentarily

of good sense

momentarily

in anticipation  
of good sense

### Memory Fiction 13

she returned to the computer

frowned

then remembered

with a boyish smile

in the process

she had to do something

apparently

something about her posture

incognito

until that moment

some sort of mistake

the act of simply demanding

altered now

to produce information

fuck this shit

she shifted his glance

the risks diminishing

and made a curious call

a little song

off key

something that one learned

without thinking

something about passion

she was not going to argue with herself

too late

she squeezed her hands together gently

astonished

she couldn't escape

it was a melody of sorts

she had once cared

she cared again

now

groundless embarrassment

it might be nothing

she went for a truth that all of her knew

vanishing amongst her feelings

she was tight-headed

she experienced anonymity

she desired safety

though she was safe

she would be unaffected

an imagined chain of action holding her

her face a little melancholy

she wasn't successful

once again

she couldn't have forgotten

honestly

an expanse of exhaustion

an intensifying silence

she felt pitiful eagerness

she wanted safety

she couldn't imagine

gratitude interceding

it was nice to think of something

unused or unknown

had altered her song

she knew whom she was now

¿did she seem pleased?

threatening death

she stood up

she stood up at the window

rearranging herself

she had been a believer

that was ominous enough

some sort of action

her passion song

in a melancholy posture

and a smile

an intensifying silence

flattering to her

wondering

## Memory Fiction 14

there is never enough

everyone is chattering

the truth of the matter –

you've made it nice

we pass the time

well

it is the only explanation

the music will continue

you don't listen

is that horribly wrong of me?

I'm afraid of being caught...

this keeps happening

and thrown into darkness

and it's all so easy

I really want to know

what?

what?

what do you want to know?

the constant certainty

why is that?

I don't know

but you have it too

do I?

you've helped make it here

the certainty

oh

the truth of the matter –

don't say anything for a moment

not anything more just now

¿why?

that's more  
you're not answering  
you're responding

¿what are you thinking?

please  
no  
no more

let's both turn round and face each other

one laughs

the other laughs

goodbye

goodbye

both laugh

both laugh

## Memory Fiction 15

she stopped walking

and paused to look about her

she felt the ground was spinning

she tried to make her face look gentle

she was breathless

she felt strange and light

there was a gap between her and the world

it was a little early in the day

she could see clearly

I'll have a little rest

she thought

she felt too weak to climb a stairs

and there was a big hill ahead

she wanted an armchair

by a little window

she wanted a good income

let me talk

and let me cry for hours she said

she cleared her throat

I don't know what to think

she said

she remembered making promises

she remembered posing for good opinions

that was wonderful

that was wonderful



it was then that she saw a line of trees

she stopped thinking

it was all familiar

it was

she said

a good moment

it was time to make decisions

imagine continuing for ever

she said

I'm enjoying myself

I'm unwinding my opinions

as if they were bandages

I feel anxious

I hope I can talk to you

me too

she said

I get myself into awful situations

you're speaking astonishingly loudly

she turned to face them

I should be saying something

she thought

it was increasingly vague

I nod in agreement

she tried not to giggle

that's wonderful

I'm sorry

you are glorious

yes

you really can

I'm beginning to sound

I am full of laughter

I am full of laughter

it's illicit

and I am gullible

I am more than a little suicidal

I am shrill-voiced

she couldn't help herself

## Memory Fiction 16

he had his hand on my breathing

motor accident

image torn between content and context

one sees pictures in everything

to mourn the dead

leaving me

leave me alone

I said

security is non-existence

it will be our pleasure

in the sudden quiet

in the blood-sodden quiet

meaning has a price

reality inside one room

large rips in a canvas

fare well content

yearning vanishes

he took himself outside

but he wasn't there

reality is only a gesture

do you have any idea?

a mind remains open until it's closed

we exchange meaning

don't mind me

I won't

I'm already smashed up

I'm an emergency

I'm not arguing

I'm just a number cruncher

tell me it's the truth

chaos in ruins

everyone went wrong ¿in the first place?

you're very good

I have vast potential to destroy

in random spaces

I'm running around

a glance only

¿and then someone hits you?

that's it

then someone hits me

ripping at my reality

smashing my content in everything

I'm mourning

leave me alone

leave me

leave

leave

## Memory Fiction 17

she refuses to give up

she stands slightly apart

she is smooth and she flows

she is transparent

she was listening to them

apparently serene

a meaningful stare

in varying expressions

which include looking annoyed

perhaps dreaming

at some moments

she is not superficial

she is more than a balloon

inside her

there is more than air

she says so

I am watching the camera

he says

we do not acknowledge him

and he looks annoyed

trying to look smooth

trying to flow aware

but also nodding

yes

I suppose so

he wants to give himself emphasis

¿what does that mean?

¿who knows?

but he'd agree

no

don't ask him

I think he's dreaming

he could be transparent

we all see through him

leave him alone

he'll float away

today

she says

I am of many colours

I suspect something

don't interfere with the arrangements

I am large and demanding

I am turning slightly

turning in space

I'll open the front door

squashed

shadows and gloom

before he could speak

in the same manner

a moment of mechanism

mechanical movement

and determination

too much emphasis

I'm feeling bubbly

well stopper it

taking a deep breath

and now she is conscious again

yes

whoever she is.

I'm worried

¿someone perfectly nice?

¿how?

¿how?

¿what?

¿what?

¿and what do you expect me to do?

he is poised awkwardly

maybe he'll get stuck

maybe he likes it

use a more technical term

dear me

she didn't seem impressed

whoever she is

so our picture's wrong

we could reconstruct someone

¿without recalling them?

I want to believe that

once a week

we'd do it once a week

like maintenance

keeping her stable

it's not that demanding

leave him like it

leave him

we couldn't reconstruct him

he's fucked

dear you indeed

yes

she likes a few conversations

thinking immediately

we misunderstand her

she is transparent

she's thinking

there are other pieces of her

yes

you'd be mystified

she went downstairs some time

sitting down  
as if to be interviewed

maybe

she disappeared!

I'd like to squash her

she's incongruously violent

¿floating away?

¿what do you have?

I am already



**Memory Fiction 18**

what was being asked

seemed to flow in his mind

a distance between himself

¿and ebbed?

a wide stretch

he might as well...

what is being asked

I've been caught

the words are out of the mouth

so matter-of-factly

she stays silent

anything but the truth

gathering pages

we might as well

go with a flow

I could say  
you're a wide one

¿what the hell had she been thinking?

¿had she been thinking?

there was a phone call earlier

intimate detail

uncanny

yes  
if necessary

¿sprinkled with fairy dust?

yes  
if necessary  
in order to be transformed

intrigued by sad looks

I'm just being stupid

it's a different person

you can feel the breath

having forgotten everything

everything but truth

gathering her smiles

going with its flow

matter-of-factly

it's hardly being unfaithful

blamed but complex

¿blamed?

believed

the seriousness of the abyss

but it hasn't happened

there is an atmosphere

there is no atmosphere

maybe that's why I am finding it difficult to breathe

a squeaking noise

conceited and arrogant

in order to be transformed

unable to believe

clustered around flickerings

powering suggestion

things in my life

a like sounding

a lie sounding

a lie

sounding the depths

so it is

that's how it is

stepping inside  
the personal system turned down

mournful  
layered  
ultra gentle

searching a dull existence

and staring into grey

¿consultation or knowledge?

consultation and knowledge  
empowering of suggestiveness  
I'm not getting through

over-reacting

taking all night

shabby and childish

the scent of a body

stepping inside

things in my life

out of sight

I wish

## Memory Fiction 19

the suicide

against her forehead

no doubt in the mind

she didn't have to live

it's not perfect

say it out loud

slipped his mind

his mind slipped

an idea struck her

felt anything

and all at once

he didn't turn round

he thought

¿which one am I?

he didn't love them

overbalancing

a moment ago

¿what do you expect?

overgrown with people

staring past him

it had amused her

she nodded

her life seemed to be a windowless room

he starts to reply

respect you so much

a man in the air

a couple of seconds

falling

it had nothing to do with

¿what the hell are you doing here?

other people's words

¿what were you saying?

in front of her

smiled

noticing

smiled out through a look in her imagination

thinking

¿which one am I?

and then it slipped from her mind

said itself out loud

as if it were an optimistic note

she hurried forward

in a small voice

to tell the original

shaking his head

pulled open the door

he didn't feel anything

it was no longer possible

he trembled

his laughter burst

he said

don't worry

suspended

starting a sense of longing

it was hardly surprising

he didn't know what to say

dreams and their promises

locked into memory

disappearing

lacking

nous tightening

talking to people

a moment ago

staring past them

and then he remembered

## Memory Fiction 20

I am shipwrecked

you are alive

I am shipwrecked and alive

It is a fantasy

there is nowhere to get ashore

those who survive at sea may swim

to ambiguity

swim

not sing

let them sing!

where the combined navies of the world

make the whole thing ship-shape  
somewhat

out here

and in the air

others

the rest of them

who bomb and poison

unbalancing everything

for the benefit of someone else

who wants to topple everything

I don't know

you misunderstand

It is for the benefit of someone else

who wants to topple everything

poor metaphor

there is no safe shore

and life must be lost

but

as a metaphor

I suppose

it'll do for a state of mind

passing over the surface of the grey ocean

¿unreliability of water?

rock and soil

rock and soil

no place to rest

anywhere within treachery

our feelings

our feelings flow fast

as bodies upon flash floods

it is a calm day

and the mind is shallow

all that remains of extensive land

millennia

a non-swimmer's hyperbole

rejecting the political

the unreliability

when it's compared with

be assured of good safety

all places are overwhelming

¿our feelings?

¿as quick as bodies?

like sunshine

we have boats

stone and mud

edging into big ocean



still in the motion

seem to my animal

## Memory Fiction 21

it's predictable

it's horrible

if it's to be enjoyed

it should be private

that's increasingly unlikely

¿how can it be predictable and unlikely?

that's not what I said

yes

it is

listen

those ducks are talking!

Yes quack quack quack

it isn't quack quack quack to them

they know what it means

I doubt that

I don't want to be –

no autobiography

you've no comprehension ¿have you?

none at all

¿what?

doesn't matter

I wouldn't call it autobiographical

look into your natural body

maintain an extra grip

it's horrible

it's predictable

keep your sense of humour

¿what?

lots of us grew up together

and I

well...

¿are you ever pushed into uncomfortable memories?

you've never said any of this to me

it's increasingly unlikely

that's not what I said

all I can say –

I remain committed

¿is the glue not occasionally weakened?

¿what does that mean?

¿do you not fear falling apart?

don't laugh at me

I did not laugh

you looked at me and laughed

I didn't mean to laugh

you laughed

You laughed

You laughed

you didn't have to take on this responsibility you know

I know

she was lying

my eyes showing astonishment

she always seemed affectionate

not another word

I didn't know you thought of us like that

no autobiography

¿you've no comprehension have you?

it's predictable

¿what?

constantly lamenting

she leaned forward

holding many papers

between her hands

squeezing with her thumb

and little finger

I remember

I am thinking of the sea

that's in the past

echoing into sunshine

muttering at me

above my head

seeing experiences replicate

I feel quite at home

swaggerer

it is possible

just to liven things up

feverish

I won't contradict you!

I made a face at him

I make a face at her  
in my imagination

wind-blown anticipation  
I remain committed

don't ever say that again!

I'm tired of you saying it  
and always denying

let's dance

it'll keep the moments averted

redefining

I obtained consent  
you are here willingly

I wanted to ask –

the sound of his voice  
I make a face at him now

a trace  
of recognition

that's not what I said

¿what?

¿am I stubborn?

¿am I willful?

you think me a child

¿in this dreary room?

we never stop talking

you live in another world from me

¿hallo?  
c'est moi.

¿what?

¿what?

you're breaking up

right

¿what?

right

Eddie was downstairs

¿was he?

right

a child is laughing

he would be

anyway

I wanted to ask

I don't know if you'd be interested

he lifts his head a moment

to know that I have never trusted Eddie

well

keep him out of my sight ¿ok?

¿are these rhetorical questions?

most definitely not

they are most real

they seem like a glitter on the sea

it doesn't have to be true

I have no wish to be here

good

I find you disgusting

well give me a faint smile

¿am I so savage and ugly?

I feel so awkward about –

¿make what impossible?

we are near to quarreling

you are disgusting

please don't say any more

you make it impossible

all of it

## Memory Fiction 22

we have much to endure

I twinge in pity

and I demand recognition...

troublesome embarrassment

a limited revelation

¿to make inquiries?

I have something to add

¿fantasies slurring?

perversions

you have a deceptively mild voice

¿is that a serious error?

bodily

¿the subject of sin and retribution?

underlined

in the books

echoing

¿death?

staring

continuing to rage

powdery

like old bones

violent again

ever inquisitive

jumping in

excitedly

slurring

perverse and staring

your features are grotesque



as naked as a moment  
¿what can I do about that?

be furtive

¿and start work again?

stalking in the city

stalking the city  
the story's most impressive  
thankfully without participants

that will tell you nothing

with increasing confidence

the shape of a man

squatting alongside

his sense whispered  
senseless sighing

she whispered

and the normal false heartiness  
running away in expectation

embarrassing and troublesome

apparent calm

sick in his mind

it is useless appealing  
for greater things  
chains hurled from his head

most of them confident

the exact position

your usual affability

ashes and raving

the shape of a man

ever excited and inquisitive  
acquisitive  
in an austere room

it is his own my own doing

behind the idea  
of powers of darkness

and I shall face them  
staring open mouthed

others crowd me  
I remember nothing

yes  
a bubble of voices

we have to endure that  
its echoes  
and the sounds of running  
it tells you nothing  
we who witness  
prejudiced

for greater things  
tired

apparently calm  
his normal forced heartiness

trouble to his family

to say

determined to tell

entertainment

but with desire

empowering darkness

discontented

irritated and hungry  
which distracts them with their own crimes

the suggestion an invitation

apparently

some influence  
¿looking for help?

entertainment

a cluster of traders

this is getting nowhere

it is the complete story

powers are crowding me

echoes of discontent

through the unclosed door  
echoes

echoes

echoes of distraction

the powers are solicitous

but you will remember nothing

then I shall stay silent

I shall be yelling

¿asking for help?

excitedly

but I have nothing to tell you

such a city

self-replenishing

undoubtedly better

¿than what?

better

with an admixture of addiction

without knowing

alone

worries with a sigh

a sign of cunning

come come

uneasily

we have to endorse that

his voice cackled

scattered

squealing on several occasions

it's no problem

but the head shakes

in a barren land

raging prominent

with much scraping

¿where does your money come from?

¿have you a more realistic idea?

as with most honest judgments

¿to accommodate them?

waiting to introduce himself

brutalised and brief

as it turns out

not far away

books might help

## Memory Fictions 23

I shouldn't think –

ha!

you would know

¿what?

you would know

you'll learn nothing from me –

I knew

I knew that

¿did you say earn or learn?

you don't let me finish

it would be all right

it wouldn't be the same

but there would be a point

do you think it would be a good idea --

dear lord

I just said

I loved you once

you'll learn nothing from me

nor earn

I know

tell me what you want to know

and then let's have it done with

let's have done with it

let's –

¿if I did want to know anything would you tell me?

of course not

someone is booing

I can hear them

we are

an honest woman

¿what?

¿of what?

this show

this act

this predetermined dialogue

I can feel no support

for my feet

like me

I'm not

I can't feel it

I'm falling

you're going back to sleep

I shouldn't think –

oh

let me finish

we are being boring

we are being boring

none of them has a notion of what it might have been

this

whatever it is

¿for what?

you're standing on the floor

we're moving

I'm not

you'll learn nothing –

I am not old  
what is the point  
I thought I knew all the tricks

darkness

allow the darkness to take you  
for itself

that's enough for one day  
I cannot stay

is to outthink our enemies  
but equal partners in all things

with caveats  
may all your wishes be granted

that is noise enough

you are teasing now  
;weren't you?

all this chatter

at which he excels

I thought I was the only one left

darkness  
allow the darkness into yourself

the important thing

of course!

if only it were

we must not deal with secrets

he looks up now

anything more is beyond me

it won't work

await further instructions

ok

good

I am completely reorganized

lies do not become you

¿it is my lack of insight?

I will be dead by morning

then start making sense

is your girlfriend better

I want to know something

I thought I was the only one left

I am being driven mad by stories

it is much worse than someone screaming

the main thing is to forget your childhood

I accept your surrender

you are funny

you make me gasp

nonsense

I'm rather excited and proud

the pain will subside



## Memory Fiction 25

and I urged him out  
with a stream

thinking of others whom you dislike  
thinking of others

but that is far from being multiple

or lips moving in silent conversation

that is far from being multiple

¿we have decided to abandon thought?  
although it's showing underneath

gabbling hastily

let us go into the garden

he clears his throat

repeatedly

¿what is happening?

I have become almost anything

you seem uncertain

I feel at ease with my world

thinking of others ¿whom you dislike?

whom you dislike

let us meet that problem when it comes

but what you say is interesting

let us meet that problem when it comes

voices echoing harshly

rapidly

¿to act like this?

and turns slowly

sourly

¿is happening?

you have moved a little nearer

I've had enough

ever of memory

prancing in front of us

dancing behind us

you must accept my assurance

¿even of memory?

that may be apt

she opens the door and disagrees

she opens the door and disappears

her voice continues to be heard

distinctions are blurring

into madness

best not to inflame yourself

you look menacing

¿even of memory?

memories disguise themselves

oh I've had enough

I must get away

¿being present?

do read it again!

try to read it again that is

she disappears

I am mortified

it is difficult

to hold my attention

it is difficult to hold my attention

I've had enough of memory

## Notation et cetera

These are poems to be read aloud.

The proposed physical voices, the sources of vocal sound, are differentiated by left and right alignment of the text. Where two such speeches, one of each alignment, occur on the same horizontal line, the voices speak together.

Observe line breaks and treat vertical spacing as an indication of pause except where a line ends with the symbol – which indicates that the next speech should follow on immediately, sometimes as if cutting off the other at that point, or, in one case, cutting off itself.

Punctuation and its lack are important. I use the symbols !, ¿ and ? and that is all. ! is used as conventionally; and ¿ ? mark the extent of an interrogative tone.

Do not insert imagined punctuation. That is, read as if punctuated as you do in stretches of text where there are no marks. Follow it and the words should come out right, if the poet has done his job.

Do read for sense but not so strongly as generally; allow difficult-to-grasp or even non-sense if that is what you find. Do not smooth what you find into what you might have expected. Full stops are omitted because a line break performs the appropriate function.

Capital letters are only used for the personal pronoun I and personal names in the belief that their omission might slow the reader.

Underlining clarifies where stress falls.

Three dots suggest that the performer might wish her voice to trail off.

There is great scope for analytical and variant reading but within limits. These poems are not intended as starting points for improvisation beyond the notation.

Lawrence Upton  
April 2012

## Author's Note to Memory Fictions

Initially the series ran to twenty-five poems, of which twenty-four are included here, some of them somewhat altered from the earliest version.

All were read through with my colleague, Tina Bass, over a period of months; and most were performed with her at *Writers Forum Workshop*, some more than once. (I started the series in order to have something worth performing with her after I abandoned my **Speech** project.<sup>1</sup> She is too good a resource to waste.)

The twenty-fourth was relatively light in itself: amusing but not much more. Tina pointed out that it is stylistically different to the rest for all their difference from each other. These may be two aspects of the same difficulty. I dropped it from the book.

I began a new related sequence, **One**, which varies the approach considerably, based on some of what I have learned from this writing. **One** is still under weigh.

Also, I have written new “memory fictions”. They have not been tried on editors or workshopped with Tina so I have held them back for now, the possible start of a new collection which may or may not continue this one.

I have sent all the poems included here to editors and all have responded positively. Marc Weber of *Sugar Mule* was just putting an issue of the magazine to bed when he took ## 9 – 16 and I was published within hours.

Another editor I have never heard from again after an initial “This is wonderful”. Another showed similar enthusiasm and then wrote increasingly enigmatic responses when I followed up and has now fallen silent; nothing came of that.

And so on. So it goes. I am grateful to all the editors for their encouragement; and especially to Marc Weber.

The most negative comment has come from me, abandoning one poem. So I remain content, recalling the initial euphoria. I am grateful to Argotist E-books for publishing the book; and I move on to new work.

<sup>1</sup> [See **The troubles with “Speech”** in *Experimental Poetics and Aesthetics: A Scholarly Journal* # 1]

## About the Author

Lawrence Upton is a sound and graphic artist; performer; curator; poet. He directs *Writers Forum*. His publications include *Unframed Pictures* (Writers Forum 2011), *Snapshots and Video* (Writers Forum 2010), *A Song and a Film* (Veer Books 2009), *Water Lines and other Poems* (Chalk Editions 2009), *Scat Songs on a Text by Chris Funkhouser* (Xexoxial Editions 2008), *Wire Sculptures* (Reality Street Editions 2003), *Collaborations for Peter Finch* [with Bob Cobbing] (Writers Forum 1997, 2010).

He makes text-sound composition solo and in collaboration with John Drever, Benedict Taylor (viola) and Tina Krekels (saxophone). He makes collaborative book works with Guy Begbie.

He is engaged on a number of projects investigating photography / video and vocal sound, including with Jim Rosenberg and Wilton Azevedo. He is Visiting Fellow, Goldsmiths, University of London.

*Memory Fictions* arises from and is also a departure from his long-running multi-voice project, "Speech", of which *Water Lines* remains "in print" – available for free download.