



Experimental Sex Hospital

Todd Swift

Argotist Ebooks

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Argotist Ebooks

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Apologies to any magazines or editors inadvertently overlooked.

Note on the text: This should be viewed as an ebook sequel to *Mainstream Love Hotel*.

Experimental Sex Hospital

For my wife

Poem for Later

Much of this is want, of you.
Who reads this now? Not many.
Therefore, few. It is the few I go for.
I fly at them. Into their
eye. You'll take the vision
that you're given, like a stew
served up in debtor's prison. Go
on, and listen. Take it down.
I glisten, like a glistening coin
sleek as a raven in pitch-black rain -
am awful and beautiful in one
extenuating uncontained motion.

The Assassin's Sonnet

Son, father, be still and aim
For the pulse that robs death
Of time. This is no deer.
That sun is a mind, and will open
Like a wedding register
When the bullet writes an ending
From your gun. I claim
To know only one thing, friend:
Men are either in love or in fear.
Go now like spoken god-fire
To change a forest to a plain.
Hurl through air and remove
What was a life, lift it, go move
A body sure into the cold world.

In Faith

There is light and then there is November.
There is God and then there is *no one here*.
There is a tree and then again a container.

There is a vessel and over there a horizon.
There is a window where she waits in vain.
Vanity is not as painful as being within fire.

The closer the eye gets to an image the less
It sees; curving like the surface of the sea.
So what doesn't stir is weather also and fair.

To My Grandmother on Her 86th Birthday

Melita, you've visited every country in the world,
Sweeping crumbs from a tablecloth; bent, adjusting
Logs in a fire that's certain, sure and full, careful

Not to go over the world's edge - but would grow
All seasons of flowers and legumes down to the end
Of a deep garden - checking a fact, closing a book -

Pour L'art

Slap on the shades, and waddle to the pool, Lord Fatpants.
What's cool is Rock and Roll and you're one Daddy-O short
Of an ice cube. Still, despite the absence of Bling-Bling
Or three Motowners in the background who can shimmy,
Shimmer and sing, hitting that big wall, you're loaded
With 'tude: cycling though manic episodes - as if you'd
Shot up Whistler's Nocturnes in one gush of 200 guinea
Firework gold-gash stutter of p-p-p-paint, Mister. Le Thames
Is foggy-grey, but the chicks here are slick with butter so
Tan under the influence of rays that can transform a man
To orange monster. Painting the sun is the hardest thing to do
Because you have to look long to capture, not just glance.
Immaterial possession is half the motive for the dance of art,
But her swish sway slide & so-good is the greater part's aim.

Map of Love

You are not on my map of love, you said
And I the cartographer of all things lived

The device so curled and aged it had faded.
Sweep away those pins and flags, heart

And come here to divide these spoils,
On this bed where we surround and fall,

Fighting our way out of poppy fields
Consensual as battle, squabbling over power

Or Nepal. The answer is we're artists or lovers
Pursuing night's cherries in a spring campaign.

His Last Blueprint

Gentlemen, good to see you today.
Come, right this way, the factory
Is behind these wired curtains.
The girl you see rapidly typing
With black nails is the new unit.
Charming, wouldn't you say?

Now look out on a thousand
Such metal, yet female, curves.
Every active maker here is made
From the same cold stamp, coined
As if I were king of their realm.
A hot storm rages beyond these

High-ceilinged huts, meanwhile
These chrome-fed vixens build
Armaments to reclaim our world
From the enemy side, equally
Overdetermined by automatons.
How many have died, sirs, since

Their bold man declared a line
Could not be sullied? Missiles
Were aligned in alert new ways.
Half the world was warmed
In the time it takes to make tea.
See how her sly wrist is supple

As a violinist's as she twists
A screw into place; her face
No doll's, I assure you. Go
On and test what rankles deep.
Is the blended kiss of artifice
What had been most expected?

No? Instead, a supple wetness
Replies to lips. I am the best.
Why only girl-workers, you ask?
The task at hand requires that Eve
Roll up her sleeves and recreate
Snakes that burn up on Adam's skin.

Poem 1-A

Attempts to common
Restrict ordered lapse
Trade over variants

Thrive engineering colossal
Never bold allowance
Forms evidently cancellations

Alternative crosswalk bias
Ambulant ornamental tiger
Thrust blinkered oceanic

God entrails vertiginous
Entreats normative passwords
Relative undulating secrecy

Go lateral transitory
Radio over maisonette
Clink impassionate mandolins

Nothing (Much) To Say

index each sea creature,
disease and colour,
bring them to alignment,
as so: *a tubercular*
blue tuna; a hydrocephalic
green minnow
though a fish head
with more water inside it
than outside is tragic
constraint; consider then
the febrile compendium
caught from gathering
whole names into a surging
corpus: particulars
messy as guts sliding
from a butcher's fingers
slipped across counters,
encountering organs,
deshaped bodies in fertile
accident, ruptures
fluid names rub up
against parts sublated, by
the puncture, glide, touch,
avoid of innards
outward, colliding,
mutatis mutandi, broken
refund, even loved,
in fortune's haphazard
foundry, bits and fin,
candied eye, confused
as bucketed eels, at the Tokyo
fish market,
now relieved of sad squalor,
happily, since
here just a word alongside
a loose febricity
in raucous syntax - cut -
of reliable reply.

The Map

There is a map, and on that map
There is a journey. That journey is again
Another: a fur-wrapped walker, snow-marked,
Making a way to, or from, a second, then a third, map.
In this way, the snow-walking figure unfolds the world
In tracks that show a progress in the crossing, in being lost.
Lost! In the accompanying blizzard that goes with the map-walker
Who marks the world as it is walked, is all the losing of ways, and sense
Of stumbling on an un-guessed home, that anyone, who has ever rolled out
A map, will have already sensed, as if cold air climbing the nape.
Go now with the map-walker, then, to that crag, the one made
Higher than the other one that is on snow, like wood can be
Said to be on fire - ascend this thought that talks down
To the clouds and all bird forms. Having climbed,
Become the final map of your dizzying journey.
Air is short here, and time is vertiginous also -
Before you fall, know that you have been
To the end of the world.

English Words

Badge me and badger me,
Catch me and calliper my skull,
Suck out the phonemes, sip
The allomorphs. *Automata, loci,*
Imprudent, implants... put me on
Compound parade and glue
My ablative: stick a synthetic vowel
Up the lexical layer with a trowel
But build that system with interplay.

The Unidentified Man

So I went down to the fence where the jobs were,
Put my face against the wire, and yowled *hire me*
To the boss-men whose job it was to hire two men,
When around me stood maybe two hundred men;

My hands gripped the wire, framing my yowling,
Too clean by half. I wanted to have something to do,
You see, in your world. The gates parted for no one
I knew. All I did was have a small way with words,

Of no use to the high chimneys that smoked above us,
To hang on the old tree where language yellowed.
Two men came and lugged me low, inside the gate,
Dropped my body in with the slow horses for meat.

Frost Fence

Once the six-year-old stuck
her tongue out
on a Christmas fence.
A doctor was called, they cut

the small redness away.
Curious Eve gladly tongued
the curve of the crisp skin,
pushed it open, revealed

to the white core.
Neither one was foolish
to want tart intimacy
served to her cool, with hurt:

desire is a mystery of blood,
knowing puts salt on our lips.

Veress

Bicycling along the Danube,
Summer's breadth before us.

The river runs past, islands, bathers.
Sometimes we're on a crowded path

And other times, only closed factories
Or newly-planted trees. The motion,

The ease of this, alive in this artifice
Of lush composing green, not unlike

June flashing onto spokes and skin.
Each reflection, combined in the eye

That oversees the ephemeral given
Thinks: this is joy, this is a good day.

That private angel in our heart's lens
Collects such imaged quickness,

Keeps and spreads it out.
Your shout, as you came upon a hill

*Letting both pedals go,
Finding their own too-fast revolutions*

*In descent, while I, seconds behind,
Had no idea what your cry meant.*

The Preacher on the Tube

Late on the train a father brought his book out
Thumping it onto the roof of his child's carriage.
Above the rattle, against the sway, the thing stood
Black as a rain cloud. The gold-sided pages rudely
Raised up a haughty truth, his clipped tie flashing.
Edom's kid slept on, not knowing the ageless hood
That held a blade above her silent stranger's head
To take into her Lamb's love; to womb a sword
Where a bird might've been instead; devastators
Deferred. He stood spread-legged, face enfiend,
Rapture-beaconed, all-comers welcome to uphold
His long body with her daughter warmth and cry
While an old tongue congregated Niles and Zions.

In Time of Illness

Contain belief breaking, my new God
before it spread out, into countryside
to fever the unprotected, un-with any
antiviral medicine or mask, who died

touched by the airborne task of love;
constrain, bind, hold it back. Blood
flows on, so might faith in you, plied
with infectious emotion. Low-grade,

or high, our spirit rises up to sunlight,
sin of the weather if intemperate but
too soon lowered into night's late cup:
golden-meant, Lazarene, about

to abandon mortuary evening again.
Go; infect the neighbour then his wife
with an agency to make old life sick
to realize one way it was going to end.

Disease-friend, my God, bed me now
so I may lie lost on my wounded side
and feel a mutating hope metastasize;
the body's a carrier of the Holy Ghost.

As Egg Collectors Fall from Trees

As egg collectors fall from trees
So poems collapse by degrees,
Stretching for ovals they don't own.
From nest to roots they condescend
To blow the yolk of language down
So what might've flown finds an end,
No friend to feathered things at times,
Still hoping to find truth that climbs,
As words ab ovo will migrate
To soaring creatures whose rhymes mate
In lofty nooks where only fools
And rooks dare congregate, breaking
Rules that protect what's rare from men.

England Made Me

Let us shrug on jumpers, NHS specs,
and tighten up our bicycle clips -
coast down the hill to Hull, perhaps,
or maybe Winchester Cathedral.
Being with you is like rationed butter
spread out against toasted tea-cakes;
Pimm's and boy-scholars, pounds
not dollars, and the sky Hardy-grey.
Kiss me under a bridge, punch me,
Judy, but make sure the bobby's
not carrying a pistol, and the Ripper
tour ends in time for last call.
I want us both to shag against a lorry,
smear pseudonyms on a factory wall.

Amateur Boxing Club

The ring's set at the heart
of the local club, children swinging

for the red corner or the blue,
to show their mettle on the canvas floor.

Boys raise a final arm in the heroic pose,
lifted by the short man in the bowtie

and immaculate white shirt. Mikey
is a novice junior. His sisters yell

at him in the blue hall as he pounds the face
of the smaller one unable to hold up a glove

to the whooping of the crowd.
Nobody steps in to hold them apart.

At the Window

As the water will take you into the premonition of itself,
The day is an immersion. As some animals rise up at the storm

When it changes the windows, so do some lovers say
They can apprehend the approaching death of an owned world

As if it was a pressure in the air that turns an imagination against
The partner of our living, our impression of an otherness.

She will one day lie and never rise again, the moment between
The instant when the sheet-lightning makes the sky flat

As a god pressing into the spaces between water and ice.
So, she shivers in thought at becoming what isn't there anymore.

Expressionism

Say it is in Arizona, some other desert, painted
Or abstract yet void. Say it is a drama, *Murder*,
The Hope of Women, or one with more words.
Either way, beyond the expressions of despair,

There is her ass which we follow at the platform,
In pantaloons, the director and the writer, both,
Manly and female at once, an oedipal solution,
Perhaps Imaginary, pre-theatrical, or afterwards;

At any rate, she is sex incarnate in jodhpurs. Rip
Her out of them costumes, boys, and turn over
A new stage. I'll buy your opinion of this poem
For ten dollars. I'll buy your dreams of an island

For twenty more. Beneath indoor umbrellas (say
They keep off the spots) the actors gesture, break
Tradition and generally ape violence for dessert.
Their painted faces are more Welles than Brecht.

The shadows are the counterpoint to the luminaries.
The girls are boys, the boys are fairies. This is
Pre-Weimar, post-figural. Express the native,
Then go sophisticated in an urban jungle, cats

And all. Chicago is a kind of piano made of bullets
And mahogany. Behind the bars they serve you.
They only ask for all you're worth. Give in, give in.
I suspect this is an ideal situation to gain a purchase,

Lose a foot, and hold on to insurance. I dote on
Smoke and inhale a city image. Cinema was born
From Venus as it transfers from one sphere to
Another, like a diplomat in a gin-bath, dragging

His lashes across a negritude inherited from Empire.
It's all a little bit close in here, open some stuff.
You're called a louse-wrecker if you shift sheets.
Play dumb, wait on tables, and slap her pretty good.

I shred the notices they give us on our exit. They
Were written by men before The War Age came out
To favourable reviews. They present us with clothing
We can barely fit into, but would never want to lose.

In Birmingham, At Bullring

Was going
To tell you was going
To the station, with you
Birmingham, after the gallery

We saw paintings, pre-Raphaelite
Paintings we ate a meal in the father's day
Cafeteria there we saw a painting in the cafeteria
It was sad to me because who wants to hang like that

In a cafeteria full of fathers and people mopping the floor
I wanted to say that the way you walked down the street darling
That was very much the best part of the life I lived with you honey
And the weather although it was terrible often the rain and so on well

It was very much pleasant having to carry your bags and wait for the train
To take us to London which is as you know a large place that smells of smoke
And the gallery had paintings of a young man too poor to marry his fiancée so they
Just stood in a forest looking British for a very long time and ageing like the leaves all

Around them and that was my favourite, along with an oval framed one that was also sad

Because it showed two middle-class people sailing to Australia in the cold and they
Seemed to be regretting their voyage but ahoy there she goes and they had no
Choice which is such an important thing, and here we were choosing which
Train to take back, kings and queens of the timetable and we even left our

Bags with the old porter at the gallery for a few hours to wander without
Having to carry them which was a good idea sweetheart wasn't it and
How could we have known Duran Duran and industrial revolution
Were both born in Birmingham we couldn't have until we

Bought the guide book which guided us to the Bullring
Which is a funny name for a shopping plaza but that
Is what it was, very new and stylish and award-
Winning design and lots of round platters
On the store that sold kids shoes you
Bought some for your nieces
Cuz you are lovely like
That, Sara.

"I Seek the Fine Grain"

I seek the fine grain with a coarse mind,
The cloth my brain is wrapped in, rough
To the touch of the world's green edges.
My body sometimes knows what's to be

Done, when in name I speak a wild field
That has not been cleared of impediments:
The culture's stones, commerce's salt
That rot the earth and shut off the sun.

I long to yield beauty, in its own allotment;
Uncurbed and yet refined; freely available
But not cheapened by bargained purchase.
Let the springs, the bird-song, the trees

Come into their aloneness like a coronation
That allows the new king to attain greatness
Amidst the very loss that brought him there.
All that is most clear and true is visible

Like the colour that breathes itself on rain
To make the surface dazzle with life, to show
That what is beautiful carries between floors
And can be on the ground, or brightly upstairs.

These rainbows interleave vision with sense,
They present the valid world without defence
And lay it open, like a new-made wound,
To disease or surgeon, as the hand is fortunate

Or falls upon fate's enemies. Here lies light,
Which entertains both kinds of visitors, cruel
And fair. Able to cleanse, clarify my pretence
And give my feet wings; my wings a chariot.

London Literary Walk

A day of Blue Plaques, and digital photographs,
And you and I, and Russell Square,
Where T.S. Eliot, for forty years, at Faber
& Faber held the fort, until 1965 -
Your hand posed, above the black
Railings, as if holding an invisible cake
On the plateau of your palm
Which you offered to the calm air.
Well, that was a good day-trip, dearest,
And I was glad we walked together, early, late;
And stopped to gawk and loll in Fitzrovia
As if we would never get any older.
As if standing in front of brilliant names
Was a momentary stay against dissolution.

Goldfinger

Alas, I knew rich Auric well: all the club's boy statues
are headless, where Aston Martin and white gravel combine,
such is the skill of his well-dressed valet, whose odd job
is to wield a sharp-tongued bowler hat: a sun-tipped razor.
He'd bend at the manicured blades of grass on the course
to cheat for his mineral-mad boss, unseating pocked balls
from his trick pockets. Nice touch, but rather low conceit.
G.'s the sort of man to card-cheat, drop gold-swallowed girls
in tropical beds, forgetting that air-hole at the spine's base
which is essential for allowing escape from the fatal bubble
that glittering spray blows around beauty like gilt wrapping.
Pretty girl, don't enter his sinful web - he'll funnel sweet lies
into the shell of your ear, offering insertions sharp as daggers.
In other words: he wants all the bullion in the world, my dear.

Try Staying Alive while Being a Poetry Human

If you think I've been writing poetry all these years
Just to stay alive or be human, well: good guess.
A poem's like raw, red meat to the bear in the zoo
Whose bars your skinny bold ass shouldn't shimmy through,

Amigo. Call this the moment when I reclaim
That golden lute I pawned all those years back when
I needed the cash to drink myself articulate. Yeah.
That's right. This poem's like a sucker punch to

That part of your body usually referred to as the kidney.
It thrives on adrenaline, but can be good for you, too,
Like a sermon wrapped in a care package boxed into
A honey pot coiled around a shot of morphine tied

Around god's little finger pointing straight at love.
I've seen ladies in iron lungs get up to dance, once
They've laid eyes on a sonnet about life's mysterious
Tendency to be beautiful despite the recent election.

While I am on the subject of whores with one good leg
And two very good ideas, here's a belief of mine
You might want to chew around your mouth like a baseball
Player on the mound might some tobacco. Okay?

Poetry is fixed, like prize fighting, except the belts
Are smaller and the purses also; and when someone
From the big contest or publishing house sidles up
Gnawing a mint toothpick to hiss: dive, sucker, dive

What they really mean is: go on, move to Florida and live
And leave the writing of poetry to the three of us
Here in this smoky gin parlour, divvying up the spoils.
Except, last time I looked, poetry's spoils, as Horace

Said, you only get to rake in once in Elysium, or else
You're mistaking goodtime Johnnys and funny girls
For the true sweepstakes, a forever memory, plenty of it.
That zoo is looking good, and so is the red meat, kiddoo.

Will

When I am dead I will be
A beautiful woman and
A line break that ends

Perfectly; also rich
And a bottle with water.
I will be all desire, released.

I will be everything hoped for
And the children will say
I was kind and - ah - bright.

Mad Prayer

Language, dear Christ, writhes as you did and do;
for to speak is to choose a cross-roads - both true

and untrue; and I doubt your love, just as I desire
that your love bleed over my face, set me on fire,

wrack my body with welting, woe and turbulence
so my mind might - being embedded in penitence -

come to read the signs, across the printed skin
and know itself to be a book, of outspoken sin.

Wedding

Let us not add more impediments to a marriage
Or let Marriage Acts and legal advice betray
What is at the heart of any vow to love, whether
That love be first or secondary, new or aged.

The churchmen and attorneys general who say
Which couple should be united, which separated,
Are forgetting that in love the only power is love:
The force no man or government can gainsay,

The power that exceeds the law of any land.
The ring that binds one hand to another is ageless,
Even as the hands themselves age, so rings
And rituals are passed down, as crowns are.

But let the ceremony that engenders love stay,
Fixed like a diamond in an imperial setting.
It is not civil to dismiss or deny the heart of things
Even if one thinks that heart is led astray.

All love is foolish, it ignores the laws of nature
To stray in fields of flowers, stars, above legality.
Let those who mock the powers that be praise
Loving, even in hearts as old and unwise as these.

The Xperiment

Thus, I become the cactus, starve to flood
Ineffible space with London-based matter.
Victor Caroon is no more - I am Caroon,
Still; the thin pulse; cabbage-whorled, on
My skin, is blue proof of my experimental
Disnature; outside, it's the dull Fifties,
Astronautic, I have an American wife.
Soon: at a rendezvous at Westminster Abbey, where
Great poets and leaders lie, I'll mushroom, to be
Fried by Battersea power, thrown wide on the BBC.
There is great grown sadness, pulsing, nettled -
Like a poetaster I take on other voices, forms,
No organic style settled in my swelling need -
To feed on fleeing chemists, small girl's dolls.

Hume

As ice lifts an eye curt then loquacious
in its brief good day, holding up to vanish
so a mind is a fine lie, wit-life spanned;
under the sun that burns young ice away
the manned cabin spins out, records broken;
high-jumpers who lapped the track now declined.

A cone, whose fir went highest, lowers to needles;
the acorn sun coaches truant icicles
to vie faster to where all gold medals
pour, in atriums coined with winter trees.
A decent wage is a wag's tale, watching
bodied miles. Who now mourns capital gains?

Vaulted hay bales, drank water, clapped robins.
Do laurels need crown out our tall teacher?
Great are green woods where final meets achieve;
maples run their sweetest sap from spring sieves.
Drink from the cold bucket the clear victory,
to taste death, a syrup slow to deceive.

For My Wife

More difficult to praise, the good heart
that keeps its house in order, to contain
bolder elements - so, like water, parts
company with sky-light even as the rain
builds a deeper storm-fed secrecy where
moon, sea-bed, salt and tidal winds collect.
She is the combing of a mermaid's hair;
the silent slowest-gathered law: neglect
of Aristotle's beautiful, buried tree;
flowering graces which speak nobly when
praised in proper measure - not empty,
brusque, low, false, obvious or ever vain.
Her love is a true winged-horse thriving - apart
from ones that run rampant, fall and cause pain.

"Is It the Rain That Brings the Branches Down"

Is it the rain that brings the branches down
Or sharp hip-bones as her jeans slip lower
That flower in me like joy's remembrance
To lay a bower of green propulsion, sweat,

Upon concentration's bed, thought's futon?
It is a garden and shower and, yes, poplar
Stands, all together, in my mind's arbour,
Which burns to the ground in licks of fire.

Her standing there is like one sleight of hand
That tricks the water onto the land, to expire.
She is the myth which understands vegetation;
She is the note that comprehends *Waste Land*

And regeneration, but was left off the clean
Copy, for reasons known only to the printer;
She is the bright blue flame lighting winter
From within the gemlike violence of snow

Falling like a fist of slowest diamonds, on
Sea and mountain, evergreen to bare stone.
She's the stolen moment that recall brings
In like milk off the porch, along with news,

While the street rains, running for cover;
Her innocence is old growth, deeper cloud.
I suspend desire, a cold shivering instead
As she runs through my golden conduits,

Lamb and lion, knife and bread, best coin;
Her image pays for me to sit, silky in rain
And return to being nineteen, when things
Happened and had wings and night meant:

German poem, Italian wine, English penny,
And what she gave was given coldly, freely;
As a leaf will fall in rain, making up a crown.
Nature *was* an emblem, but lived in our town.

Discordia Concors

In Memoriam R.A.

Aviator, it's time now to eat the soccer players in the Andes,
As Errol sucks Marilyn's tit & your light-hearted antediluvian
Sidekick dizzies, bubbles thrown by Messrs. Davey & Jones;
Verse's 50s fin hit a curve, knocking that queer Nabokovian
To the curb, its pink thrum vrooming on past Ransom notes
& Slavonic poets with Bic-razored twats, Masterful grins.

Every reversal of fortune includes someone else picking up
The Czech chick's check, as poets and harlots drink down
The drugged dregs where Yeats hid Hyde-Lees & yeast
Frees Hyde, Jekyll Frenching with a doubled femme, freeze-
Framed in a TV station (Tyrian) bubbled beneath an amber sea,
& evolution comes on as quickly as young Pele heading the ball

Off a penguin roasting on a lost Darwinian atoll; you & JFK
Both share identities confused by uncanny flow, Jazz & roll
Of talent's old peacocked piracies; both big-sleeping far too soon
(is there a *close too soon* ever instead?) but exceeding film,
In which our Jimmy Firfishkin or vertigoed Zapruder cam
Triangulates life: writing, sighting, enjoying, all nice gams.

No work's complete until Todd does a Rob poem, Rob out-
Does that; to you I toss the stage hall cane & doff my top hat,
Master-swimmer of the Aegean deeps you dive-bombed in -
Smuggling booze's buzz into narcosis & poesis in cool shades;
Shades aligned to Archie's knothole in the owl-lit barn, end
No better than AR's, CB's or DT's - or as snow-lost as HM's

Maybe. Tracking down some Wild Kingdom talking head
With tranquilizer gun, you shot about as far as the canon goes,
Hitting a teak ceiling fan that diddled Nemo's sombre cap.
You mimicked captains, drank Chian wine, set out alone
Beyond the bar, as Tennyson's Lotosed-up crew ate its own.
Great as Herman's Leviathan (horizon more cursive than

We knew) & Atlantic-raved, your mind steered elusive, far.
Sun-bright as any Bristol ship that ever ran a rudder through
Bursting brine, freighted with dark grapes from speech's vine,
You shaped, shy trafficker, like in a printer's boldest rigging,
Letters spry as ships, turned to fare as well as sturdy hulls. Set,
Your enchanted type will never sink, but sing on the opaque whale.

The Lecturer Prepares Module Guides in September

In Memoriam D.F.W.

The sad shiver
Knowledge is sunlight
September has its

Powerfully nuanced ways
Tell me not
To go away

Though, lonely, may
Don't write out
Lying was our

Holiday at home
Each pillow built
Up little Rome

I know how
Each one will
Go, uphill, slow

To hang heads
Childless, or childlike,
Bereft, wilfully rich

Or poor, wet
I wrote anyway
But wanting something

Love and money
August never offers
And the fall

Only promises on
Quickly-going trees
Fire in gutters

And lawns superfluous
With turning equity,
Washing our patio

Dear, your beauty
Marks the hazard
Links a turning

Of each coastal
Path, each year
I promise not

To hang myself
Or leave good
Books high-shelved

Automatic Reply

Since this address
Is primarily associated
With work at our institution,

It may be that your email
For Professor Swift
Was intended, instead, for

Professor Smith, or Smyth;
Or for Doctor Swifte;
Not to mention Dean Psmith,

All too busy for unsolicited
Things from unknown sources.
At any rate, yours no doubt relates

To matters that are not
Of their concern, or if they
Do relate, should not

Emanate from the likes of you;
Unless you are a full-time student;
Are prudent; are based on campus;

Or have business with the men;
Though it should be noted
Doctor Swifte is female; plus,

These emails no longer reach
The ones they were meant
Or weren't meant, for, so

In such a way, the Arts &
Sciences have their faculties
Protected by a wall no letter,

Electronic or real, may scale;
Though sometimes safety fails.
In which case, please call

The Secretary, Ms. Gayle Smitts
For any school-related issues,
You miserable little shits.

Experimental Sex Hospital

The pitch season's almost arrived,
I fan myself with a letter from Dr. Rosebay;
He asks for donations for his clinic,
Which operated on my father. Removed

Half his brain. I once threw *surgeons*
With guns - was shot down, too close
To *CSI*. TV is the cinema of ideas,
Like novels; it's where the clover is.

I'd like to pitch one about a guy who
Donates half his salary to a neurosurgeon
And then lies down, anaesthetized, like
A nice summer Los Angeles evening, to

Have his mind sliced and diced, totally
Decimated, with the words *do me good*,
I'd call it *Hi, Welcome To Hollywood*.
I really would. It'd be knowing, cool.

For Edwin Morgan

Sometimes the day is not as it should be.
That is, it forgets the present of itself.
London, this year, was like that. Rain,
And an April without charm; quite cold.
My wife presented me with a red card

And the parts of it that glittered came off
On my fingers, which I promptly washed.
Then, Chopin and other CDs. Thank you.
But after the kisses and hug at the door,
After we had opened the post, which was

Not a deluge, let me tell you (how do
Some poets have fans, and mail?) and she
Had gone out to her office and her files,
I was alone, just a man in his late thirties
In the long black stained dressing gown,

A haircut given him by a fascist (why are
All the best barbers rightwing?), anxious
Over deadlines, and the lack of poetic fame
He felt he deserved, two years shy of forty.
Not an entirely pitiful picture, I grant you.

And, on going to the library to return
A book on Marxism by Eagleton (late)
And a book of poetry by Petit (late), a gift:
On the new books shelf, two Edwin Morgans,
Fresh from Carcanet, just sitting there.

I rubbed my eyes. Surely someone else
Had spotted them first? But no. In all
The library, with its videos and other
Customers, no one seemed to notice a miracle.
Two new books by a great poet in his Eighties.

I would be proud of these books if I were him.
I took one out, leaving one for someone else,
Just in case another soul had a birthday then
And a love of such a man from Scotland. Next,
The Guardian sold out (!) so I was compelled

To hunt for it. Scallops too, sold out (and
Tomorrow Good Friday). And no wild salmon.
What a day of portents. The seas dried out,

But Morgan on offer, fresh from the flood.
So, all things considered, not a bad day, until

It came to returning after a coffee and pasta
To the flat, which was damp (my wife has
Turned the heaters off for springtime) and
Then I read Morgan again, and found a gem
Or two - I think some writers are best when

Very old. Wallace Stevens. They say
What happened to them, what's not allowed,
In any words they choose. They aren't out
For prizes or reviews. They see a different light
Behind a different cloud. Their knowing is delight.

The Problems of Form

Some would die for it, some would plot against:
Like true imperial measures is constant.
Saves one daughter in deep, will drown the next.
Form's the vocation for certain divines,
Who, fanatic, seek to pluck the chicken,
Peel the egg and still save the bloody hen.
A curse and by no means vacation:
Instead a workhouse where ceaseless fingers
Beat out solemn metrics, pounding the ear
Like a clock piece to set the words and rhyme
To honest day's music: regular and paid.
No good wife would have a blowhard husband
Unemployed, though often true free verse
Is toil too: will last for a longer time.

To Certain Authors Who Have Been Critical of His Works

Late in the logjam
Of apostasy, Word

Becomes fleece,
Release liverish, not golden,

Nibbled by *vulchurs*.
Myth is blue,

Prints a Gehry, materials
Warped around a roof,

The spiral codex,
The Swiss gene and

German account, with French
Accent. Break the bank,

Mount the podium, tap
The mic, and blow. Presidents

Are amateur Hectors.
Once - and it was classic -

Everything was first-time
And the anthology

Deserved its Pindar.
Poetry lasted, a battery.

It kept ticking,
Never went off:

Wine as red as the sun,
In its original form,

Round as geometry.
No cloud or barbarian

Said no to lyrics.
They burn that vine.

Library of Alexandria,
Great walls of Bam,

City of London, currently:
Poised insecure monuments

With books alert
And all planes ground down

For the alarm.
These *vivitextionists*

Say nothing to chance,
Or those anonymous authors

Of the book of All.
Enthral, dance,

Measure numbers
With spear and olive.

To love is to live as the owl
Flies, impervious

To the unwise celebrities
Who, in disguise as critical

Are endless, small-sized,
Appear in dull light.

Detour

In Memoriam Ann Savage

Since we still die
or fail to procreate
and coffee is still black
until the cream

I ask where existentialism
went, and why the Bogart
dream of a man going it alone
(or woman) in an alley-world

gaunt and unshaven
has ceased to pack
the punch it used to;
often I feel there's no way

out, and no detour too;
if not for affection, humour
and forgiveness, the tally
would be one-sided in favour

of buying it straight away;
the early pleasures of skin
are knocked sideways
by indigestion, and ulcers;

only so much gin before
the clever liver goes goodbye;
but you've got to soldier on,
and employ a few words

on a daily basis,
picking the ones from the back
of the truck that look ready
to work, sending the other

sorry sons-of-guns
to loiter on the margins
of long, toothless cities;
but even language quits

when the season's done,
the time for harvest fits
in the palm of one torn hand,
in the swiped wallet you lost,

and the rest of the year
is all about chilled fear mostly,
and trying to cheat more shadow
from out of the measly skinflint sun.

Stand Up

Go fast
Two arms
Swing high
Black red
Red black
No lack
Of charms
One tower
Slightly taller
One head
A faller
The fuse
Will holler

Pulse destroys
Rockets fly
Love sheds
Phallic joys
Action harms
What's abstract
Shooting boys
Tail's sigh
Whipping up
Acrylic beds
Stand up
To surge

Urge hard
Card, board
Passion lies
Beat back
What's flat
Do more
With less
Twins splurge
Bold arrows

Go down
No more
It's war
Out there
Red black
Black red
Some blue
Shot air

No blast
Just poise
Fiery noise
Quick past
Frozen here
Brushed fair
And square
Never true

Husbandry

Against the door of glass
She placed her skin, pressed,
Eyes upon the changing there.
Her husband, then, strongly,
Had spent his labour on ground

Belonging, through years, to them;
Once, only coming home when found
By a local boy who knew where
To lead his knackered body on;
Laid him by the door, ran, stopped,

Looked back with door-knock thrown
From his hand that scurried stone;
She'd opened on to him and sky,
Black apart from where it broke
Open into light, a visitant kind

Now like reminding rain; he years dead.
Rarely, in the long bed, before
Work, at four, blue early in,
Both would struggle to undo love;
Making sounds in the room

Unheard otherwise, bold shouting,
Then a pelting silence, settling back.
Soon after, rain visited the land;
A hired axe-heaver, daily,
Bringing the apple blossoms down.

Whatever Else, Poetry Is...

The mistake was thinking
It was something else - some
Hard, gem-tipped head,
A material thing to tool with,

To use like a cheque, or ballast -
A sail, a winding sheet,
A gas mask. It uses *us* -
Doesn't even - goes

Clean through -
Just like any life
Does - you know the one.
How it lasted just so -

And then no longer -
Ending when it did