

**QUESTIONS NOT POSED
IN A PHILOSOPHY LESSON**

Does meaning grow
from what is missing?

How do you explain the small oddness
between red and blue?

What difference does anything make
when you can't see the same?

How big is the movement
from zero to one?

Where did the past learn
to disguise itself as the present?

If a minute is infinite to an ant
how small must a word be to carry a heartbeat?

Can you ever feel as safe
as the single molecule?

Do you know what that it is
is proof of?

Why is your fate
'x'?

If you average now
will it take forever?

What is synonymous
with the unknown?

Why is the greatest good
the least explicable?

Are you nothing
with everything in tow?

What are the coordinates
of being lost?

Are you born
and why aren't you alive?

CARTOGRAPHY OF ELSEWHERE

Hear the planet, overworked candle, burning over a bed of maps. Mother-of-pearl, the flickering streets, full of humans dressed up as other things. A hand slips into a coat, quartz where the knuckles should be, regret taped to the fingertips. A foot in the shadows and more than the world disappears. Filing this evening under 'completed', the dream lifts me into its heart where a pile of rocks crawls inside a yellow envelope bearing the last unknown address of a cloud. From my four-cornered sleep I can hear them, only stones, turning on little taps from which come breaths, crying little seeds too hard to accept the earth. Unable to run, with the net of nothing they are catching the net with no holes while the wind, the wind, tries to testify that it was *somewhere*. Somewhere *else* the stars are there, the night-pollen, bright suicides into life.

COMMENTARY

In wind-blown sleep I try to hold down each corner of the tent. The self's bones are ground fine as rock-flour, grow white as the sand-path into the sand dunes where the sun has erased the memory of colour. Wide and blue and all the way to nowhere, the forgetful compass ranges. Why direction? I speak but the "I" has gone out. On the other side of what dreams us, a voice we can't catch is beginning its message for the map-makers. (This is death *here...*)

IN THE WORLD'S FAR FIELD

The day smells like an oven of wheat burning, sparks crying
fluorescently from all corners of the earth.

In the midship of the world
my daughter is opening out the compass
to reveal the missing directions.

With specks of gold and with crimson
she traces ten thousand holes
in the map of daylight.

Precisely she names the spaces
that fell out of my life.

Wings fold down in my infinite branches.
What use is it for me now to grasp them?
Where my daughter is travelling
she sails clear across
the world's far edge.

In this field
where the wheat soars and burns
I also walk in her presence. Hands cupped
with sunshine, I am full of heaven.

BUDGERIGARS ON THE FLOATING FACTORY OF DEATH

Up and down the river it goes and up and down they flutter in the cage, bounced over rapids and whirlpools while around them the knives swirl, the skinning machines groan away as the brothers drag in and hack away birds, stray dogs, people, trees and countryside, children and goats, thinning down the world.

What they love.

What their masters tell them.

Strip down the world then all will be good.

Sky, that glow, the river, closer and then further where it bends away from hunger, cannibalizing the hardness of the land with the soft sand of its lifting bed, the tree, arm's length, bird-full and beaks filled with closed oysters, the series of bells as they cry.

What they love.

What their masters tell them.

Strip down the world then all will be good.

Grain, theatres, muzzles, grates, wickets, the clay, the riots, the prey, all of the great mysteries moved on cue to a waiting pen while the abattoirs ready themselves to think like men and throw seed like murderers.

What they love.

What their masters tell them.

Strip down the world then all will be good.

And the two mates, the budgerigars in their cage, shake from their claws the putrid floor and look in the small hanging mirror at a gentle pair of avian faces which say, 'If it's not a family, what is it?'

THE SCHOOL OF WHEREVER IT MAY BE

This way is up. This way is down.

All learning was by osmosis.
The ship veered past the unknown stars
of an undiscovered terminal night.
Maps were handed round,
all of different coastlines, planets and dimensions.
A completely useless thing
was in charge of nothing to celebrate.
Steering was under the sign of the Sacred Steer,
the bovine constellation
of collective panic.

Cast adrift
may you grow into the adulthood of entropy
bashing your head against the guidelines
for mutually assisted insanity.
Follow here for myopia.
This way for the long drift to dystopia.
The blind god guiding the dance
down to the sickle moon where
the Angel of Impermanence
eats out of your ear and the food
is strings of pickled bees,
trilobites in amber.

This way is that way. That way is this way.

Extreme death was practised
in the houses of sitting ducks.
Lord-shouts were ignored.
Love broke down on the very first spin
around the cosmos and all the passengers
were ripped apart by the me-wolves.
A dragonfly thought it was possible
to teach the incomplete

and was unanointed
by the day.

Nobody can remember
what they said about being here forever
though 'I didn't think you were coming'
they say to everyone in the future.
Calculating the world you unnumber realities
and statistically go into hiding.
You maraud the broom-closet.
You deconstruct biography
and find no-one there.
You learn how to spell 'meantime' while
concentrating on getting all that pain
from your lips to you heart.

'This way is up. This way is down.'
'This way is that way. That way is this way.'

Everyone enrolled in the school of chance
spinning the wheel of fortune
and failing to find a way around
the eternal living and dying...