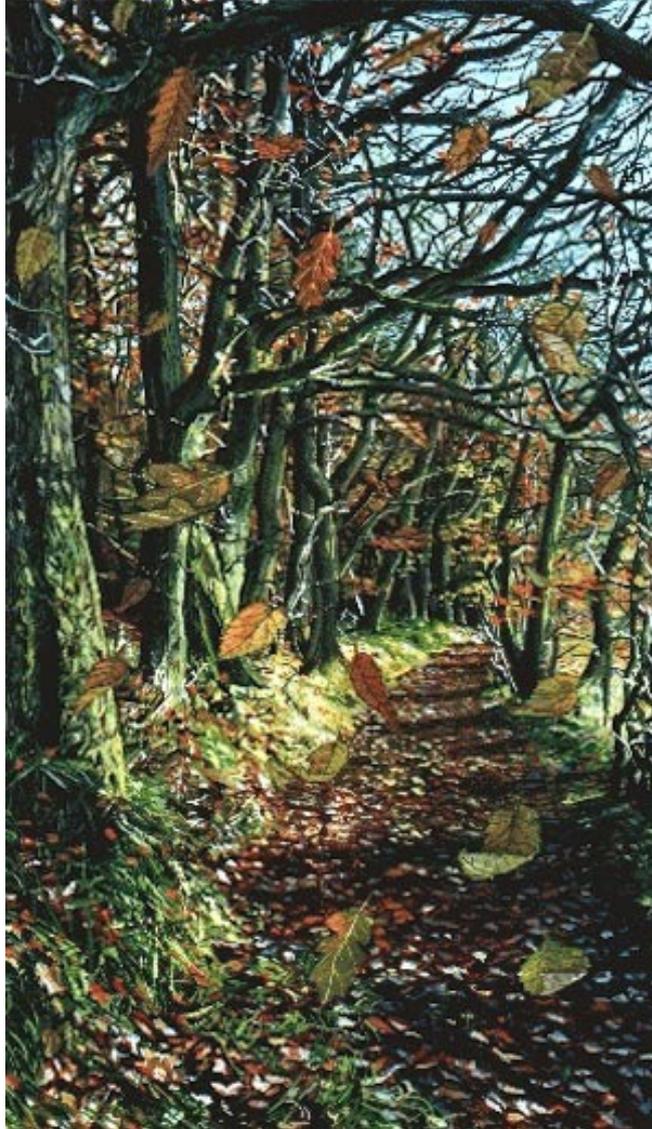


F a l l o w e n



Collected Poems Of Richard Moul

I: A Moorland Shrine

In a Landscape

Winter darkens
And each city is a refuge:
Yet still a river moves through unlit moors,
Waiting, miles from our place
Of Forgetting;
And echoes
Elude the notes formed
To seize Divinity
To nurture a dream

My crucible, nourished now
By rain and snow
Has waited long years:
It is time for the Earth to bear again
And from a kind of Death,
Bring the deepening spread of Summer
Once more by an Oath
In fever fulfilled

Frantic, a connexion sought
While each season is unheard.
Here, resides the longing
To find the Inner Land, immutable
Since in our loss
We cannot grasp

A killing frost which seeps
Where no paths
Cut us from the black hills
Where no track
Leads to a favoured place
And echoes, after you,
We shall still be, waiting..

Carving

Do we bring gods from soil
As I carve this face in wood?
Do we and They as one
Shape Wyrd
By us willing answers for our living?

The trees now budding
Shape of my soul, tranquility:
This is the face of Hierosgamos
Once a truth over creed
When mouths unravelled leaves
Instead of death

In this moment
I am still of the elements
Which bear the musick I call my own:
I must wait therefore, for solitude
To open Earth
And bring forth consciousness,
Carving my face into the form that wakes...

There is one Wyrd
And the wheeling Cosmos will always shape
And discard, until a few buds at least
May blossom as Art.
Not simply a means
But a god for each waiting Earth

II: ethe

Noctua

Every night enclosed branch
Turns its Winter tines
Into the paths of the air
Drawing frost to seed the buds

Like them, night has swallowed me
Filling my dreaming mind
With Winter's sad shimmerings
Like every lake, upturned to burn with ice

My nights have brought me
Into the inky woods, seeking.
The eyes that are stars catch the branches;
Living light given up willingly

One death tonight in the frozen field
A seeker, grown old
Who had lost all but the yearning -
Images, words and aims dissolved

Like night, the horse shaped clouds
Unfurl on the hills, neither feeding the land
Nor drawing sustenance;
Instead a hush possesses, as one death tonight

I am fallen in frost
Which does not usher seeds like the Sun.
I am swallowing night, and I am its dreaming mind
As something stirs a lake, long deadened by ice.

Sublimation

A hatching of twigs
Melded by echoes
Emitted not from a centre
But from the edges of woods,
And flitting inwards to wrest
From a tangle:
A Hall in the Forest.

Something made from some stone grown intent
To contain the echoes
In a brackish chamber

Amidst the oak moss colours
Could be seen spires, apexes
Breaking and reforming as bones of the wood
Declaring a dank holy geometry
With roots in mulch so far into the heart
Unpenetrated.

And the scrying-eyed angels of birds
Come clattering into the mesh
Hurt wings settling.

Enter, a season
Enrapt in new fibres
All among the twig cages, blackened
Made youthful by a rain's mist.

With the damp embowering
It took up the leaves
And cast a wraith of arrival

A tremor and stately flurry
Wreathed the watching,
Leaves blown into the centre
And the sodden floor breathed:
A season without a name.

The Hall in the Forest shivered
Became still
As one breath passed.

New woody tangle cracked and paused
Appearing to listen.
Birds silent, their sorrows flown
Caught in the eternal stream
Appeared to wait.

Emitting to the centre
The centre as eye looked out

Cinnabar

The evening Sun warms the summits,
So gentle for a monster.

In the Sun's coruscating mouth, a rending;
Deep set in its star-field
A serenity of perfection
Nurture at the centre of each grass blade

Close to the oracle which is the river's source,
Something now part enveloped, sings in the Earth's dark.
Receding from the Sun, Earth absorbs,
As some melody – that may have been the water or the wind -
Alters some little growth in the roots
And in the tumescent cloudy canopy

The filaments of life, from Earth to Star-Field
To Sun stilling the Black,
To a mind filled with the hopes and yearning of billions
Are all knotted, un-knitting, knotted

Cold sheets of night extinguish embers
A lone cry is caused by a changing
Never repeated but pulsing out variation:
Each grass blade
Is different each night
Found again, found anew

Like a star settled in its field
The buzzard dreams in the lungs of a tree.

As one Sun fades
One awareness glows, spreading over the slopes:
A deliberate rending to nurture the sadness
Of knowing.

But it is a minute flowering, to be gone to dust
Once lost, to be lost again

Some time, of a time's own meaning, hence
Appears another Sun of forgetting.
But memory is sealed within the dark,
A red seam shot through the dust

Black Tourmaline for N.

In the hour before dawn
- in that particular, foetal silence -
December
Grown in a prism of imploded black snow

Sky, cloudless, bleeds its salt into the pool
Which feeds the oak
Which faces the Western mamelons

The isles of the dead, whale-backed
Hammer out their silence in absence of Moon;
No light to send their shadows, clashing, clanging
Nor needle-point the pain of their frost

No Moon, dribbling tears, to gather up the dreaming
And lay it all woven upon the furrows
To grow bewilderment in the waking hours

The sleepers, fallen in with night's promenade
Are depthless

So the Winter-borne traveller has descended
To the Court of Emptiness.
He waits, dark-breathed
To once more press his grimace
Through the sable mirror of sky

Above ground, mouths open in muscled bark
Fading night flurries their fingers
Woken in shock by phantom leaves;
A future ghost of Sun
Hurls itself through the twigs, shouting.

The bull is dreaming
The fox crosses the sheep track
And away from the wood, in the dew opened clearing
The white lasered song of the planets
Can be felt most strongly
In pelt, grass and breath

Everything is stillness
The sycamores dream of Autumn,
Forgetful now of the hum of barbarous soil
In which their brain patterned roots are set

Further distant, and restless, a dark dreamer
Conjures the black ether of oblivion.
By sadness, rent into one prismic face
Are drawn low pulsing intruders
Sliding over hair, or enthroned.
Peering out of exposed bone, draconic
They are impelled to feed

It may be the blank sea heard
Or her breathing
Or their hissing

But this is a brief window of elements
Opened by a tidal cantor
And ushered in by an unwanted
And fractured type of love.

The birds have begun
As night's last monolith bows.
All things are pointed inward by a prayer

In the prism, some warmth
And in that moment, the promise of
Snow, exploded, white

Celestial King for a Year

Hazel trees cut light from late Summer
Cast feral, long limbed white shadows
Who pull their prey across the ruins by the batch

They stand upright
They take flight
These, the children of reverse Sun.

This neglected enclosure
Sings of the Celestial King for a Year.

Leaves, congealed air and rain, as crown
Alder limb, splintered: sceptre
Clods of Earth to bear him away
Unconsciousness will beckon to drip
Into dream into soil

Seasons, wraiths all,
Shriek the wheel onwards;
Even lovely Summer carries in each colour
An astonishing severance

This field once held the faces of each leaf-fall for man
And for woman, the star-lit soil in which to mask them.

A star whose dawning brings the turning of the leaves
Has locked facets of the Earth
Into a waiting cell for him

Carried by noctilucent clouds,
Thoughts of immortality among the shades;
Tiny drops of it never dissolve
But once fallen spread and forever change the colours

One cycle to Summer's end:
How strange this new crown to come
Which cannot be woven, mended or broken

Now, the first Autumnal twilight brings
The resonance of some figure
Cut out of the air
Pressing crowns of reddening leaves into her womb

Swaermian, Faergrith and I

We often walked the path to his ragged kingdom
And felt the release repeat
Star-bound
To shock the numbed hills

The Lime Field

In the crow's eye
Stood amidst dusky hills:
White crows

They are very quiet, and create an alignment of meaning
Only they and the night need know.

The hills in their dusk are benign hosts
One eye shadowed, observing, the other sleeping

Moon faces down to the hills and fields
He is speaking and creating such silence in speaking

One lime field glows back its thoughts into Moon
It seems to fall back in eternity

Past the beech trees who are the women of the high hill roads
Passing the rocks who are the men lost on those roads
Passing the rivers which are the souls of the never-born

On and onwards through those northern valleys
Beyond all my memories of you, into the silvered night
And thence to a place before Earth was your prison

We ran then into the lime field
And wrestled in its luminescence
We felt it as a mirror of the halls above.

There, Moon laughed with us in play
But he wore a mask to hide his knowing.

Even though your eyes recalled the words:
The blue sky which hid the black
I did not hear the soil whisper of the void of your future

The white crows are those who are left behind
While she has gone
Passing through fiery veils along the lime field

(for Fran Birtwistle)

ethe

I

Against a darkening shore
The destruction which the sea is in that moment;
Let it become, without thoughts of love

Perenne Lumen in Templo Aeterni

II

Descending to the moor
Nimbus towers and roads
Blurring hordes of sleet
Dimming light in the storm washed halls of the sky

And whilst the bees dreamt of their homeland
– the sovereign who sears the night and morning sky –
The lake on the northern borders froze.

Black-branched overhanging alder
Broadcast diamonds of thought into the air
Intent on its dialogue with water
Felt her presence, and tree-watched.
Amongst the tangle of dog rose and blackberry
She was an obscure stillness

There was never a beginning;
The dark and darkening rock waiting in Earth's heart
Was a symbol of an infinite past.
Some of the trees could hear it
Some felt their roots touching it;
The Earth had no core of its own
But was wrapped around something without

In the wake of legions of hail
She had ventured from the red room
– which I visited once as a child
(To be told later that it was simply a dream).
With the congress of the above reaching Earth
She had travelled over the fields
And it was as though her feet did not touch the frosting soil

There was no first daughter, as there were no daughters
We only call them such
And there were no first ones or first one

Led to that place by songs of the hill grass
She had watched how the fields undulated
And saw how they flowed like the sea over the ages.
Where the tide seemed most to call
No jeweled bones beneath
Nor Gaia's springs to cause sleepfall:
An unnoticed place from which to bring forth

Night – in that time neither before or hence –
She had a singular form and would walk
Upon the shifting stretches of her world.
Her form had always existed.
And light did not radiate from a source
But was the blood of all things.
It was never meant to illuminate
Since the causal effect of seeing to understand did not exist
Nor did seeing itself.

In the wood, there were rocks with seams of tears, frozen as they fell;
Magpie as harbinger of sorrow, glided and vanished.
The trees, and rock, and her body, fastened to Earth
Became as a clockwork fluid
Springing forth some unknown, perhaps unwanted form of time.
The trees and the brambles did not rise to strangle her
The animals remained hidden
The crows and rooks casually acknowledged
But watched

They who would later become Dream to the human mind
Visited Night and created yearning.
She called an end to her walking form
And her thought became without boundaries.
Night became the infinite itself and caused moments
In which new things were brought to being

A fox paused to watch
Safe at the end of corridors of trees;
Its mind was unreadable, but she could sense its hunger
And the flitting dialogue of insects.
She also felt the gathering darkness, far distant,
And the light which splintered in some minds –

Both brought defilement and pain, and compassion and grace
Each alleviating the other in eternal temple

Stars were the first physical beings in that place
And they sought to understand Night with their light
Which was a scream into the gulfs of black.
The stars called into being planets that were blind, unlike the stars
But all had light at their centre
And looked inwards in order to see
And in looking became still
And called into being myriad other lives upon their bodies.

The only sign was the flight of rooks
And the sudden scattering of deer
Then a swallowing into woody pockets of silence.
There were no bells of human making
To herald a release from an age before the sacred;
The opening Earth resonated beneath her feet
And the snowfall that came
Sent out frequencies identical to those she felt from the stars

Night became fixed there as universe
And in her agony wept beings of light, such as nebulae.
Her sister, Sea, who embraced the shifting stretches
Felt her cries and entered the universe –
She became Earth and formed herself around Night
So that she cradled her sister in her centre.
The universe fell silent, but as cosmic eras passed
Night's yearnings to walk again
Sent tremors through the stars and planets

In that wood, as above, a sklenting from bodies
And in that time neither before nor hence, Hills were birthed upon the Earth.
Each contained in its heart a furnace which was a spark from the fire of a Great Star.
This fire gave birth to human consciousness.
Because of humans, the being of the Hills grew to become Hallowed,
Nourished during each cycle by Snow.
And so, all was knit in that place.

The snow fell around her, but did not touch.
Walking, she created gulfs beneath her feet

She carried the Moon in her belly

III

The Sanctus in Mid-December
Brings a remembering of a deep blue time
Cold and rich with the hallowed spaces of Nature.

Life there resides in its polygonal world of recall
Itself set in a dusk of another time.

This world in its physical time held a centre of future calling
And in that time, I fed from this centre in sleep.

Understanding was withheld from me by the elder gods
Who, wrapped in the storms of aging,
Circled above me unseen.

On a road lined with horse chestnut trees
Who always bear light in their boughs
I as ghost of the future passed myself.

He, sunk in darkness, was leaving the glowering mountains
Forgetful in the torrent of youth
He did not know himself in that passing

A phantasm, unable to speak but only one to observe,
To bring less understanding in later years
More gift a letting-go, and then connexion

The Midsummer sky brought gales
The river raised and spread tumult,
Into the cold blue of memory.
My spirit wandered the mountains and looked
On the traces of his life just left.
I rushed upstream wearing the rags of storm

The stag saw how I reached out to that former life
Locked in the mountains
Sealed in that space of certainty
But haunted by the beyond.

The youth did not realise the haunter was himself
Calling down through the years the credo of dissolving
Revealing the shades in the words:
Perenne Lumen in Templo Aeterni

For there is instead a perpetual turning
There is the blue sky which hides the black

2:00 p.m.

There is no future, the light said
And stilled itself
Casting out colours and saints as guardians

It sealed the four doors
Bled into towering arches
Fell in the votive tears

Took breaths in the spaces of the Mass

Outside black snow and tempest
Bless the walls with the sacred formless

And the sacred disintegrate
Falls back into dreamlessness

I have travelled two decades across worlds
To return to stand before the Mother:
Time never diminished the light sealed within me

I gestate in the spaces of the Mass
Myself, my sleep, my own prayer

Je vous annonce une grande joie
Aujourd'hui vous est né un Sauveur

I wake out of birth
And unseal the four doors

I cradle the light
And return it to the tempest

(Cathédrale Saint-Pierre de Rennes, France 05/i/09)

Yclypt

Childless, the Hierophant wanders England's veil of leaves
His feet trace the old thresholds
Which lie mute beneath the meadows

His shadow, a dark dream of Sun, shudders the fragrant orchids;
It is cast, calling to a solitary star
Blanked by the blue of late May

It stretches over the meadows and onto the silent road as tidal colossus;
It is the life of the vast cold spaces
Dragged over grass

Five magpies watch and remark but stay away from the shade.

Outcast, the Hierophant breathes and stoops within another seasonal time;
A sorrow of knowledge passes across his eyes

He pauses by water: the Horsehead Nebula is reflected on its surface.

Grieving, the Hierophant brings into England's veil of leaves
The tundras of the Moon

But Birdseye Speedwell, whispering along the woodland edges,
Guides him, blinded, to an end:

The Fox Queen brushes the leaves from his eyes
And they fall as the dust of an expired solitary star.

I lie in the meadow grass, homeless, out of time
Yet tides pass across my eyes presenting an answer:
This veil of leaves, Midsummer bound

Beneath the fragrant orchids, voices of thresholds
And in between the stems of Elder
I glimpse a young fox emerging into light.

Above me, I imagine this May sky has its own kingdoms
And the clouds are the Hierophants who cross their borders
And in that crossing are transfigured.

A Premonition Of The Stars Over Opinan

By early November, they said
- already days into Winter -
Will there be new life stretching in the soil,
Sleeping, they said (they, the birds)
Until Mid-Winter, when it as a child rises out of the clods

The child will stand at the crossroads
The memories of a forest at its back
Memories of falling, broken and white, to lie in the soil.
And these memories will ebb away, as befits a child
Waking from the sleep of death

What will it do, in its unknowing?
It will play quiet and lost in the valleys
Study the frost and weep for life, for home
A home in the depths of black where the stars, his sisters
Bled their light into his skull

And a child's tears will be the green shoots
But this span of life will not see the forest returned.
They, the birds, say this is the time of the North-bound Stars
Who will bruise the child's crown with their ire
And make him grow to bear the sadness of a king

By early November
The birds will settle on the heath during the dormition of the embryo.
They were there when the forest fell
And would be pinned to the Earth
Until new life in the soil thrums their wings.

In the first days of Spring the youth will cause a fire on the heath.
He will look back to this in Midsummer, look back throughout Autumn;
Back, back until he, ancient,
Falls unknowing
Into the early days of November

And into they, the birds,
The forest
The North-bound Stars

Slievekmalta

The elder ones who had passed over to become the air,
Haunting the corner on that sealed valley road,
Would try to enter the cottage in the forms of moths
Or, as a swathe of snow

She, from the Underworld, marked them
And cautioned us as to their intent.

Sleepless, following the tunnels in the hill
Over lifetimes, circling
She could not find a way to get back.

Beneath the constellations
Skies built their storms, and from them, a mist for the keeper of the hill:
A binding for the one cursed to hold back a chaos

Yearning, sealed in the soil
She could not be seen by her lovers past.
Still, veils of the highest ice
Fell to touch her form
Whilst the mud worn, grass-bound light held her
And her house, protected.

It was a day in early July; I watched her sit so still on the drystone wall,
Her dress of spindle trees and blue flax flowers,
And a silver teapot at her boots

She in turn stared, oblivious of Sun,
Into a space between the leaves.

The elder ones had fallen into place in the trees there.
With a dark need, always on the edge of finding the key to her.

We stood then in sunlight and watched twenty horses in the distant field:
They studded the hill with their light
Their hooves shod with the peat of forgotten tracks
Their perfect necks curving in harmony with an unsettling, blacker air.

But I loved how she and they waited for each other to move first;
She, for her six hundred and forty horses, their thunder built from the sky
Knowing they would always stay against the hill
And herself, always sealed in the valley

For myself, I had been called to the hill
To feel the primal fear again as the mist covered me.
She, as the hill, sang to me then:
Éirigh suas a stóirín
Mura bhfuil tú 'do shuí
And the darkness of the corner, and the light of the horses
Merged to free me on the road to the crucible of mountains

It was a night in early July; she of the Underworld
Gave out for me the call to her dog since passed.
On her summoning, lightning lit the twenty horses
And with it, I believed, the scent of he, come running
To bring life to the dead.

On that night, the elder ones hid their faces to the trees
She had kept them back
They and those others who sought to trespass our bodies and minds.

So there is a keeper of the hill
Who holds within her
The tunnels into which are drawn the moths and snow

Her house protected
She waits for the horses to make their move

(for Su)

Wolves

Venus stood at the entrance to the forest, holding gold keys
She felt the arboreal depths stretch to the ocean and thence to space
The depths within her were those of the forest

In between, attendant to each mute tree
Was a cosmic darkness expanding, fading:
The wolves breathing.

The patience of aeons was in their watching;
She would fall willingly into their oblivion,
Their faces identical, masking the space beyond Wyrð.

A soldier, lost in the forest, holding a letter from his love,
Thought of the meadows of long ago
Whilst her writing mingled with his sweat

The still forest floor, shadowed by birds,
Swallowed the jewels which fell from her eyes
Spiralling in airless silence

So he stumbled lost, only letters left, strewn into the ocean
She, dissolved into the womb of space;
And gold keys which fit no lock, gone deep beneath the nebulae of roots

(for Lady Anne)

III: The God Of Disappearances

Halo

Sundered, this my halo of clouds
Into the crossed paths of mountain birds
Precessing with hands pointing to earth to sky
Making obeisances to my sacred loneliness

The helix of rock water cloud is a unity,
With the family of clouds as initiator;
Their smiles which are not smiles, a concealing

Wyrdful, these shades, blurring to dusk
Now faceless

And the stillness allows me to see their true form
And I do not name them
As I do not petition the stones for strength

Once more below, the relief of the track of shattered rock
And on either side long lakes streaked with the tides of wind
And counter-tides from somewhere within

A tide then, come to reclaim my soul
And my soul yearns after the unknown god.
Now I am truly monachus mortuae religionis

So behind me the isle lights which blink between the rowans

And before me, children older than the Earth
Are shining amidst the darkening heather:
It is we ourselves, who once ran in the Star Fields

Possessed with the yearning of the genesis of being
Many clouds ago, sundered by winds

Leumnàchan

Sing a song of the sea and the fields
Weaving again the garlands of a life
Wound between the toil, the dreams, the love
Where the rain veils fell as time, appearing ever-replenishing

Back then, you never knew or needed the spirits of the woods
When as the voice-knot of four buzzards
You circled above the dreaming man
Or hunted alone, down through the warm spiral night

Today, late Sun sends a gale through the fox-red bracken;
Her hands will lift you from your bed to watch the isle boat leave.
And your legs, made frog-like by the weight of dust, are untwisting:
After this night, the Moon will speak his secrets to you

But Leumnàchan is silent and mummified in the stones.
There is no daughter to turn the dust
To carry you beneath Coig Gadhair Oscair
To ease the pull of the Great Star who brings your Winter, now -

In the hollow the land you once turned turns of itself and forgets.
The scarce white heather is like your hair and the wings of the hunter;
Is it sad this gentle passing of life, as it falls with an unnoticed rain?

The garlands, knotted hill-mist, are carried back to the isle
To the deserted croft, woven through with cold sea, and there at your beginning
And your soul, for a moment, leaps the peaks, until

October Love Song

The dark turquoise of Sun and Night's mooring glows in the sea
Their midnight-blue caravan hangs, faces grimace into the south;
I see an insane intent frozen, of travel, of some target

Glow in the sea, where I wait listening, still as they

I think on Gealach, and wonder about the light on the isle
As a lantern she may have set for him:

The animals sang to each other when he last walked over the hills
But on this young night, his ardour is thinnest light of ice-dust
When he is close

She will spin him with her hands and hold him away in his dream prayers

But when she last slept he had crept into her manifold clouds
And rested upon the ridges of air, bathing in the sapient silence

She below wrapped in her sea, gathering animals to her
Would for his secret touches cast the highest clouds of ice beyond her breath

While he span in chasm, a body tattooed by Sun and Stars

He would cause the trees to ache, and keep the sea from sleep
But from her caves he drew forth perfect children

And in between, there, the shadowed god, who visits like a friend

To become his host in the Black House, in the starred eyðimörk
Where mute tides fall upon pillars, and the dog-faced guardians
Lay their heads upon his knee

Until dreams of her pull him back to her hands.

I will descend the hills and the robins will sing of him at my back
Although I am a journeyman, alone, we are all enmeshed in their love song

Two Poems for Black Dogs

I

A red seam shot through the dust
Buried, unreachable, connecting the Forest mountains
Who do not answer the vanities of this matrix-weaver

Above, a rain-blackened presencing – how still it seems;
It is the formless first face, having evolved from Sea's first covering of Earth
And would show us our own face beneath

And it covers the three stars which rise over the unnamed hill.
Filaments of rain are dragged beneath the mass, cathedral-vast
Within whose altar implores the lurking chaos that is our salvation

It shatters the illusion of sky above the peaks
So a lone walker curls up in sorrow and ceases to be;
Instead he looks out through the eyes of a stag

The monolith emits a call sounding only in thought
And ripples the other body which waits alongside each Earth-bound life;
Waiting to run, grow or fly, free in the dark desert.

Ours is a cathedral of shadowed intent, run through by hounds
But shifting then into light with each unmeasured turn
But a darkening which is the unspoken words of our dance

Turning to a pattern I could never weave, the cathedral falls to the hills
And becomes the dogs which cast howlings to hide the summits.

I have my books, cold worlds like a photograph of a dead one
And words from my hands that may imprison a nameless moment

Time to turn to silence

Further out, fast over the waters, the Night has become a mountain
The Clouds, a ruined cathedral at its base
The Sea, a dead forest which crowds it

And that lone tree I loved has become the viola in my hands
Singing to itself whilst the lochs swallow the stars

II

Snow, exploded, white
As one is born, one dies

A pair of leaves
A tyre of leave

As the cold envelops in my cell
The weaving unravels in my hands

Through my window, Winter's needlework
Picking a way for he who now comes

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?

He is the man whose face is pierced by branches
Whose arms and stomach are fastened in sleeping hedgerows

Who fades in broken, staggering the woods
Falling from one tree unto another in agony

Hands cracking to become the black ash buds
And then the piercings of the larch

Alone, his sacrament the snow
To clothe bare feet, the misshapen wanderers

No monuments or rituals in his honour
His cries are the binding of the elements of Winter

A hunched figure passes the church in snow
And fades into the branches, a hymn to a god too savage to worship

No genuflection, and there is nothing to follow here;
Still, I light incense in memory of his passing

Mesonycticon

In Splendoribus Sanctorum, ex utero, ante luciferum, genui te

Upon the water, with only sails and without Moon
The angelic being of shades has erased the horizon
So there is only abyssal dark, Mother of the Infinite
Carried in the centre of daughter Night

Angels never come when you call for them

But only the creaking wood, and then the void in between sound
Through the nexus of waking and sleeping, the abyssal creep:
In looking, hallucination blurs to flesh
In hearing, we lose the shell of ourselves
In feeling, we know again how we are preyed upon...

There is no bird who will enter
She makes their feathers burn in fright if they are drawn too close

But here is one other life form on the lispig sea
A puzzle, who faces the abyssal dark.

Whilst I care for her invalid limbs, wash sleep from dimming eyes
The Priests and the Priestesses wander the waters, the shore,
And give birth to the clouds from their mouths

Speaking only letters dissolving into the abyssal -
Where is He now
He who formed from your letters one key
To keep you from lying on the stones and feeling their warmth as snow shrieked?

*He waits in my eyes and hands and word-fragments
To catch and hold me when we both finally fall*

January is coming, say the birch woods
And the dark blood from you is a staining angel whilst the snow devours the hills;
The lone buzzard, black in the swirl, is one key in its meeting of the tides

And so midnight
Upon this boat of mine
The waves, the creaking boat, rigging, sails, perhaps the wind...
When I called angels and brought forth Taghan and the shrieking snow
He took me outside to the dark blackness of vast ocean

*And, as one stares and stares into the unknown distance,
There is that very same aura of ancient awe*

And so midnight

Whilst she dreams she is her husband

I, crowned with rare flowers face the abyssal dark in her eyes

So very very easy, then, to imagine so many things below that dark surface or “out there”

And when I washed her no longer secret places

Somewhere lurking on the surface, watching, waiting...

And so at true Mid-Night

Shall I steer this boat forwards, with the comfort of lights receding,

And over the threshold between salt water and ethe?

The years remind me, just as Winter pulls the trees,

That I have been born before the light

And need to become one key by crossing over

(For David)

Ethe Creed 1

From the Mountain of the Sheiling, I heard the old loch of the Yews,
A faergrith creeping out from the largest of its islands:

It was a house, or chapel, born
Never built but instead becoming, announcing, as the light and winds

Walls, white blank life, and within but not contained, the infinite

Now everything in this photo is gone...

I thought I saw it among the lilies, where the sound of water was nulled
And in that feeling, my exertion to the summit was transformed, darkly

Because there, close to the peak where Martha fell, I did succumb
To the wave from Earth's sorrowing mouth
Which took her sailing, breaking, into the house amongst the lilies.

So it was I felt the pull of Dheanainn Sùgradh whom I love, and who laughs by the
water
A child of the demon Love and a mirage I choose to invest with life,
To lacerate another pathway to that place amongst the lilies

And now there is Nighean Ruadh, whom I loved but never knew:
That mysterious love, of how some perfection should have been guarded
Of some ideal that should have flourished -
Now five years dead, and I never knew.

This is the last picture I ever took of my wife...

What will this become but a tide of mourning for myself
If I can discover what it was she embodied for me?

For are all things born to become "Gone"
To where each lily seems some brief, futile smile before a door of darkness
And therein souls are swept away, breaking...

I feel it is the names and masks that are born to disappear.
But do the lilies say we can be a perpetual becoming of that which makes us love?

(for Kathryn)

Leaving

In a portrait, a life struggles to give birth to itself
Confused, morning light drips upon its lesser beauty;
Where she, the subject, walks hundreds of miles from here
The painted stares out from my poor presencing

The woods of my dreams contain a secret still:
The English flowers I loved and let live in some notes...
It was a way of life but the feeling now is, not to die cold
As severed and in pain as I am

There is a promise of snow that makes the flowers hide
And I have travelled far too far North.
I ask the sky who confuses me (because it seems to offer only love)
I ask what have I done to myself?

This vessel of snow bearing cloud I had seen once before
When I felt it crushing me as the Ruler of the Skies;
It transfigured me during the tear-fallen years
Birthing me in the tides of barley: God

The Good illuminated a once barbarous land
But it was a blinding trick for there is no kindness of any meaning.
Tonight I saw the snow bearing cloud ten years later
And I knew it once more unclothed: The Barbarous

I stay by the easel, yet knowing in a painting
Only an echo of beauty, so the point is...?
She, the subject, who walks millions of miles from here
Carries that beauty like some irrelevance, or a burden

It is face I have to look upon during each mundane moment
How can I stare and clutch the flowers to me in simple desperation
And bear life like an irrelevance, a burden: where is the beauty to presence
Except a black loch for me to swallow if it will swallow me

The aspens I dream of gather and shiver
I wish them to cover my eyes, choke my throat
And make the presenced thing which is me – a subject of some other's painting -
Disappear, disappear completely: erased

Beauty seems pointlessly small when the cloud covers my head
Born only to be torn to pieces

And yet: love has earthed itself through the keys beneath my fingers.
Perhaps She will save someone, and make them weep at the beauty of this world
Long after me.

Now, the snow has turned to rain as a season ends.

IV: Mhuiral

Branded By Constellations

One breath spanning a thousand years
Took the seeker's boat
To raise his cell upon the rock

To where star-spread crossings mirror tracks
Woven to a moorland shrine

And where the stars change places with the falling snow:
A net of light to sail his Earth by.

After the Sun, the sea hush
And dragons take the forms of cloud
To begin the silent procession bathed in cerulean
And royal yellow glowings.

No water drunk, nor hunting of birds:
Faith-fed alone,
And crouched solely in Earth's light
He recites

And the metallic water flows from the nebulae of wounds:
This the supplicant seeks, to wash away memory.

A hymn before dawn, chanted in starvation
A bell rippling out beyond the sea –
Yet, unknowingly, the grail is in the moments between:

A moment's splinter when the abyss floods, letting God go
Before ritual, routine, intrude into the dark.

And so, a memory now branded by constellations, upon soil and sea.

There are no years to endure, no self to suffer
He, a wraith of belief, will vanish
Whilst the one seal, the one guga remain in cycles forever:
Earth tunnels eternity.

There was a meeting place which brought its becoming
Where one season spread into another
By tumbling Earth, thrown into place, a many-keyed face
Unlocked by the hand of a great chasmic sky

He walked out into the abyss of God
In prayer, trying not to wait

Then an enclosing, a silence
The sea.

Starred Desert Fragments

Jupiter rested on the summit of Maodal, whilst the Moon hid behind the hill
Nimbus in attendance; still, robed columns paraded from the horizon of sea

Silence, deep night; frost and the rocks – voices which can be felt.

The deer track led over the sleeping streams, over the warm heather that lulls to
dream

A path no man would think of walking, in a landscape which hides itself

There, the soil vibrates, burned by the tracks of the stars
And all is shuddered through with omen.

The spirit of the goose pulls me over the blue rocks
Between two summits, the home of an eagle:
And I am brought to my knees before one pool:

I am the stars which look out through Winter's pool
To see her looking back, bedecked in Summer's light

Priest Island lets slide its slopes darkly into the West
Turned from human eyes, pulsing into the secret Atlantic
Sucking away sea, hail, swathes of cloud into the beast, unseen, on the edges

Dreaming of Mars, I woke to that bellow of an infinite sea road
It requested forgetfulness;
So I see, in my vanity, that I channel nothing but my own story
Uncover no mythos
Only my terror in the pool reflected

A Silence Tradition leads me to the mirrors between Maodal and Greabhal
There, an awareness of the nameless others
Robed, encircling me
They flow in the inbetween;
I would know them, but the only knowing is theirs.

They are of the forgetting soil
Neither guardians no preachers.
My mind is filled with the shores of Mars:
I would be with them.

Descending, I watch the geese fly over Scarista.
I would be of them – interlocked with landscape
Neither jarring others or myself
Purpose, existence.

That night, without a trace of my visit
Jupiter rested on Maodal, which occulted the Moon.

(for Magnus)

Hroan Of The Ceri Forest

In her onying, she was called to leave before dawn
To pass The Rubicon of Long Pike Hollow
With an ash crucifix held beneath her black cloak

Years had passed since wanderings on Rhos y Beddau
Where once the hills had opened their faces
To shew her The Within
And her screams were relinquished, unheard,
Into the choir of clouds

And so finally led here, to the Forest
She lets go into its deeper night:

Overhead, Seren y Pegwyn, through the branch mesh
Ahead, the cloisters between the pines
Beneath, slept upon by layers of soil and rocks,
A vessel which no fox would unearth.

“No further,” spoke the night-pressed air
Which concealed the birds
Who beheld from their own country, unveiled and unknowable;
Yet they would meet with us in the borderlands –
But always our striving turned us away
To pour fire upon fire.

Of the realms savage in being, we can be of them
An exile to a house made for us by the branches
And remain, ever deeper into forgetting

Or, turn our eyes above, a fraction of a dream before we fall
Our city made for us by the stars which rush to conjoin
And remain, ever deeper into forgetting

In her onying, crucifix-held
No severance – nothing lost or left behind:
The Way unfolded forever before her.

As Sol woke Autumn in the leaves, the angel stood waiting.
Transfigured, she touched its outstretched hand
And in the dawn and the gentlest of breezes
Both disappeared

An-aithnichte

Whilst regarding the spiderous cloud
I am looking down the aeons
Witnessing a carving of terrible veneration:
I am freed by not casting judgement.

Born an utterance of that outsider forest
Whose thresholds touch the enclosures
And dusk-filled seeds are sometimes blown
So that the enclosures change.

In our campanile, my beloved,
Our voices become roots of echoes
This, regardless of who we think we are,
Just as not one protestation matters to the forest.

I cannot speak of oaths save one
Caused in that personal dyssolving
Enshadowed throughout, to be repeatedly unconcealed

You will find no kindred there along the ways:
Only the soil's erasings, under the silent grass of gold
Only the dusk-filled machinations beyond Time and us.

Rain bleeds onto the glass, and wearily, a rough curtain is drawn.
There, a fire, the gales, and the carvings of a life.
"There is time enough for understanding..."

So, another momentary waking
Into our shared nature with God;
Nothing remarkable, and nothing to remark upon

Seeds, drowned or anointed by seconds of storm
On a forest threshold

Encomium To The Source

I

Petrified cloud, blasted slate-grey and rose by ice
So high as to appear an airship, static.

Only in Winter weather do such clouds shape
From the space between themselves and the stars,
The nearest mirroring of ourselves:
On their side, the Silence, to our Voice.

The emptiness within the shed, between wood and ground
Is like that space, there at the beginning as the empty grave
Until I fill it gradually with a violence

(Which moves me to paint upon the door a Green Man
Who weeps for the trees within who gave their lives for us.)

Hill in golden light; one lone tree; the Moon and the Clouds, reddening:
A musick whose notes are erased as they are sung,
To make me pause, empty, hand-axe dropping to the frozen soil

The clouds darken, and now it is the ridge, red glowing,
Clothed by evening Sun where the sea is a glaucous space
Without waves, between my Voice and the mountains' Silence.

I think on the emptiness of the sea caves, and the spaces between the pines:
It is not what we do or even how we live, but only how receptive we are
So that we could be sung unto erasure.

*The clouds tonight, inky dark and moving over the sea as an old familiar procession
Brought again a time-lapse: I feel I am living in the early 1970s.
Perhaps this is a reconnecting down the years with my childhood self,
Both of us at that point removed from ourselves to face the same inexpressible vision ...*

*There is an intoxicating, echoing sense of a Northern realm
Together with a tearful intimation of innocence
By turns dark and vibrating with the presence of a vastness, as expressed by a sea.*

*The faces of the clouds are grinning, yet impersonal, and replete with aeons of knowing
I feel a fear of being removed from all that I am and all that I have
But with the knowing that only one courageous step is required for me, whenever I am called
To be reunited with a realm too distant to consciously recall.*

An incident which I then relinquish, and pick up the hand-axe, and work
Each blow, each exertion bringing emptiness.
Hill in red light; one lone tree; the Moon, and the Clouds, blackening:
An encomium to the Source, far truer than my interpretations.

II.

The Moon floods the ruinous garden
Where we had strewn the debris of some former life;
Crowbar, axe, wheelbarrow, fire...

The freezing air vitalises, but overnight, the primula slumps to the grass
Bearing the appearance of death.
Out of respect, I keep my clumsiness away from this sleeper.

Awake, my coal-dusted hands – which cannot be cleaned, no matter how much I
scrub –
Pull the door upon the night, and we lie within a bed made cold:

I was a mountain hare
Feeling the heather moorland breathing in and out with me
My pelt twisted with ice, sprinkled with the warm blood of my companions.

Terror took me, limping, into the forest;
My eyes and those of the birds – who sat quite still among the needles –
Were the same openings into that which effaced our Selves.

This forest labyrinth had no centre:
I was a facet of a polyhedron
Suspended in the darkness of a forgotten arm
Buried amongst infinite branches of arms,
Never to be reached.

From a tangled structure – perhaps a type of mercy seat –
A figure like a fox was raised on hind legs
Apophysis crawled over its face
And it held what looked like a circle or crown of antlers,
Though I knew it was not.

I could not see the circle's centre
Yet I perceived many elements there
Gathering towards some coinherence

The figure spoke in my mind:
What do you think you know when you consider the branches and root systems of these trees

And the blood vessels of your heart and brain and lungs?

Time for the seeking to stop.

When I awoke, I was travelling the road
Pulling a cart to collect our water
Passing the new Gorse flowers
And feeling the Sun finally warm the earth

Time for the seeking to stop

The Sun shall return the water;
I shall make myself nothing through Prayer.

And yet – was it temptation, a test? – the engulfing night
Brought me to sit by the window now pelted with sleet,
And revisit a message from a friend.
Two photographs attached:
One, an image of an explosion in a distant country
The other, the birth of a star.
The message ended:

For we are not just stardust...

Tomorrow, we shall concrete the broken floor for a stove
But only gather from the ground that which the trees have shed.

III.

In the clearing, I am reminded why we are here:
The Masque of Fir and Birch, scattered and spacious;
The noiseless Snipe, veering away
Allowing stillness to be regained;
The hermitic rocks enclosed by the Heather
Which wakes after the Sun has left its Northern House

But most of all, no other human
To desecrate, as I do, the hallowed quietus.

Here, a tiny pool among many others
Where bubbles silver without sound
The kenotic blackness of the water.
The shape they describe is a key turning within
A starry puncture in a measured flow;
I would be that wound of water

Exalted for a moment, then healed
Into the Silence

What dialogue with the dreaming Milkwort
Whose roots suckle the water:
Response, or instead a reflexion
Or sighful utterance of something turning in sleep?
What am I to that configuration
And what if my body could fold into its shape
And simply become in beholding?

A foetus whose blackness
Pulsed through with water
Does not need the Sun
And for whom soil is the food
To swallow the cold to fill the empty space

Watching where the ice embraces the water
I know all I have created hitherto
To be the work of surface ice.
It is now to the blackness I turn
Which is within repairing this house
Within growing potatoes
Within the earth which decides if we drink
When and what we may eat –
Everything has its own time of growing.

And beside that surface between places,
Beneath the Lichen, wise upon the ancient Hazel
And of the water through whose eyes I once beheld,
The absences within me become
For the blackness to flow into them:
But it is a knowing which can never be grasped
By the mind which bears my name

The gathering Cirrus call rain
Over the black peaks which nail the sky
Above the treetops.

A buzzard pursued by ravens
The tracks of an otter
My footprints dissolving in the thawing soil

Oh to see Orion reflected in that tiny pool
Long after all my footprints have vanished
And journey to the amoeba, my Empyrean

IV.

The faces of the clouds are grinning
In the space of a door which will not close, when day is done

With aching joints in the sunlight
I watch my daughters dancing
Uncertain of this steel flue for the stove
I await bags of hydraulic lime

Are the swallows late here?

Last night I recalled snowfall along Dr. Mott's Road
Without presentience, a border crossed
Too quiet for me to hear though I felt its frequencies –
A drone to my learning of a chant which opened Earth.

Today, another hill hundreds of miles and years from there
Graced this time by violets, but now I have no song
Which could ever interlock with the stream speaking with the Sun.

Leaving the party, she and I regarded the land beyond the sea:
The steel-blue orators were softened by dusk
So they folded upon the horizon like sleep
And yet in the centre, even further distant, a peak clothed in snow
And lit by the Sun.

Returning home, we both felt the frequencies of the sky:
On whose brow do the celestial bodies gently fall and dissolve;
In whose garden, where darkness is the bark which brings forth the blossom?

In the forest, I would wonder on the patterns of the primroses;
How perhaps they might mirror the constellations, or are caused by them:
Who or what was I mirroring?

I take my place as a breath upon moss
For the chants now are the labours of the garden:
A broken septic tank, whilst sparrows leap within the beech hedge

My head crowned with branches, and choking on last year's beech leaves
I swung the mattock to open Earth and my mask fell with the clear water

Down to the rocky chamber and taken away
Returned to darkness, the location of grace.
I took up the slate from the Earth and re-arranged it back into the soil;
Layered, to allow Space to flow between: the practical, the sacred, without division.

All that remained was the soakaway marked by a few stones
Enveloped by the whirling cosmos, with the hatchet of Ursa Major
Falling or flowing upwards: there is no geometry in the love we feel.

I hid my eyes and faced the soil, whilst a featureless green comet passed Jupiter.
My hair and lungs and dreams were filled with plaster and a century of dust.

Today, I paused work to lie upon the woodpile beneath the hazel;
Bees gathering at the berberis
And close by, cherry blossom emerging from the darkness of bark.

I will wait here for the rosy flower of the larch, my cosmic clock:
Two swallows now over the newly turned red soil.

A door which will not close

In the celestial hilasterion, I saw seven emanations of a figure
Each one fainter as they progressed to the doorway.
But it was the room itself which sung to me, and the figure was gone.

There, a wall upon which was painted a wheel of seven spheres;
A bird sat at the lowest left sphere, a dragon at the right sphere above.
The wall had to be brought down.

And so, an entrance revealed, with only the dragon partially surviving.
At first, a chamber of many closed doors.
A white, wild pony appeared at the centre, then receded.
A brief glimpse of a dead astronaut, suspended from the domed ceiling
Then a black polyhedron set upon the tiled floor.

Swaermian gave way to a colosseum, infinitely rising or collapsing
Hinting at labyrinths through its arches.
The middle archway, an entrance to an Eridiian void.

Mhuiral, distressing as the years fly forward;
And the anthromorph that is the pine marten
Watches for a moment the ocean enter
And engulf the world without end...
Tonight we will regard the Moon with Jupiter to its right,
Perhaps both anointing what Cuan Siar conceals.

All will be still, except for the tides within us:
The drone of personal transfiguration, or centuries-hence deluge?

For we are of the flood of Aeons which will bring forth a New Earth
Purified by the sea, and with no trace of us left
Save the fading symbols of our unknowing.

So what use all this planting?
To restore a balance – for whom or for what, it does not matter.

But for now, she crafts a door frame
So that this door may give respite from the elements:
Sun upon the hill, now reddening.
Rain from the petrified cloud, now blackening
Snow carried over the inky-dark years, dyssolving

The gathering Cirrus call absence:
I pick up the hand-axe, and work
Each blow, each exertion bringing emptiness.

Hill in red light; the forest; the Clouds, birthing;
This island, this house, our family, the source

Late Autumn

Even through the sea mist, looking out over Tràigh Ghearadha,
I feel sure I can see North Rona;
Before this place, it was a light along the Whale-Road, out of the world
Silence, autonomy: where no tyrants enforce a safeness, nor punish the opaque.

Hazel branches, fallen fortuitously into the silver bucket
Look like a crown, or a vortex.
Around my wrist, I wear the black and blue crucifix
Woven for me by Lady Anne, all those abyssal years ago:
She in her cell at the Abbey of St. Hildegard,
I in my caravan-as-cell on some desolate beach.

I keep her kindness close, since my hands now craft an unknown structure:
Perhaps it is a device upon which I shall hang
For my own Wintercearig

And yet, the torrents of the past and the wellsprings of the present
Are living waters flowing back and forth and into each other
Causing us to plant seeds, which grow and give us food
And a joy which makes some others hateful.
If the world must have my faith, it is this.

The Drochaid does not lead to nowhere
For there is the ruined chapel, within whose light
One does not need to believe in order to enter and dyssolve.

V: Exeat

Northern Marsh Orchid

O Jupiter of the grass

Tapered and green: the gate

Purple the field - sings!

Yellow Iris

o yellow daughter of the sea
catch the wind for me

I will know you one windswept day
Wait for me by Saint Peter's Cell
You will be mine to save, one day forever

we were with you in the Chapel
but you were already at the sea

wait for us there
You will be ours to save one day forever