

NATURAL PHENOMENA

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Penned in the Margins

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NOTES

'Green Alkanet' is after D.H. Lawrence's 'Blue Gentians'. 'Simultaneous Incessant' and 'Charentais' are after James Schuyler. '3rd Person Beautiful' is derived from a Google search using the keywords 'beautiful' and 'she'. Similarly, Googling 'ugly' provided the material for 'Ugly Questions'. 'Collapse Lament-Fantasy' owes much to the prose writings of Kathleen Jamie and Timothy Morton.

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In memory of Tara Few
1968 – 2013

Palace

Ash grotto, rain hall, fallen night labyrinth;
demolished Palace, diminishing;
remember-ruin, ripped, defaced;
repeat in slow motion your razed
echo. A frill, a smoke skirt, a wall
sags, then sliding façade,
flowers in a corner: flame, wrapping a pall.
Lost turret cupola, splintering wreck proscenium,
shattered reverb, chord fallen apart,
all frequencies
flying loose, tremolo fading,
all the burnt language degraded
to fuzz: Palace, this your ghost,
your not-music.

Walks

crows hold open their beaks heat and bleached grass

housemartins skimming their dark green reflections

nothing no answer

*

a soft clearing leaf sprays, squirrel-nipped

my hand on the bark: sweet chestnut in full fruit

*

dragon fly at eye level water mint in flower

grey heron, low over the lake

marsh pennywort

*

everywhere, the wind dogwalkers calling

to keep her

here, fresh in the mind

woodpecker knocking, power saw

*

uprooted, fallen, ripped at the crown

rumble, wooden slats tussock and peaty mud

crisp, floating bits off a bonfire

chainsawed branches

her voice

her way of sighing, expelling the air through her nose

birdcalls overlapping, like trees

*

maggies against a bone-cold sky
flat commonplace of absence

roots buckle the tarmac

the shock preserves but then the shock subsides

hazel tassle, starling chitter, frost

*

woodpeckers, clear weather, the muddy path
again

into a strong, straight seam of air

*

tyres on the wet road
sun through cloud her birthday month

a door opens and shuts on a child singing
ladder rattle bluebell

*

dislodged petal wood pigeon
feeding on leaf buds
wing clap, arc

white-tailed bumblebee

*

thin fox ahead a cry forced out
no wind, no answer

*

grasshoppers, loud in the stems, the feathery tips hips
on a wild rose

peacock, brimstone, gatekeeper, small copper

swifts against a thundercloud
the tower blocks' regard

*

quiet bird, sharp wings, thin tail
steering, fast

this hammer, tapping
lone sound in a quarry

Berg

This wall tower, this shut face,
this absolute rebuttal to 'city'; does it not stir
a fish flick, bear paw, cut and fin?
To press against the deck rail,
to want blue-green, deep in the mass,
is to find calling shaken out:
black tatters from a broken wing.
Powder stack, compacted crystal repetitions;
even this call scuds away, is ash scurf on meltwater,
krill for petrels, the wake of a ship — mostly prow, for
searching.