

TIM CRESSWELL

Tim Cresswell is a geographer and poet. He is the author or editor of over a dozen books on the themes of place and mobility. His most recent title is *Maxwell Street: Writing and Thinking Place* (University of Chicago Press, 2019). His poems are widely published on both sides of the Atlantic, including in *The Rialto*, *Poetry Wales*, *Magma*, *The Moth*, *LemonHound* and *Salamander*. His two previous collections of poetry, *Soil* (2013) and *Fence* (2015), were published by Penned in the Margins. He co-edits the interdisciplinary journal *GeoHumanities* and is the first Visiting Professor at the Centre for Place Writing at Manchester Metropolitan University. Tim lives and works in Edinburgh where he is Ogilvie Professor of Geography at the University of Edinburgh.

ALSO BY TIM CRESSWELL

POETRY

*Fence* (Penned in the Margins, 2015)

*Soil* (Penned in the Margins, 2013)

CRITICAL WORKS

*Maxwell Street: Writing and Thinking Place* (University of Chicago, 2019)

*Place: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 2014)

*Geographic Thought: A Critical Introduction* (Blackwell, 2013)

*On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (Routledge, 2006)

*The Tramp in America* (Reaktion, 2001)

*In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression*  
(University of Minnesota, 1996)

# Plastiglomerate

Tim Cresswell

Penned in the Margins

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY PENNED IN THE MARGINS  
Toynbee Studios, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6AB  
[www.pennedinthemargins.co.uk](http://www.pennedinthemargins.co.uk)

All rights reserved  
© Tim Cresswell 2020

The right of Tim Cresswell to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988.

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Penned in the Margins.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by CPI Group (UK) Ltd

ISBN  
978-1-908058-76-8

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

## CONTENTS

Rialto Beach	11
Plastiglomerate	13
Nest Site Fidelity	14
Scale	16
Car Plant	17
Haul Out	19
In a Station of the Underground	21
The Two Magicians	23
A Theory of Migration	34
Heathrow	35
Legend	36
In Brookline, Massachusetts, I learn a new route	39
Newfoundland	41
Beached	43
Fugitive Pigments	48
Tremor	50
Dendrochronology	52
Spoil	54
Erratic	55
Friendly Floatees / <i>Tripadvisor</i>	56
What I said was	64

In the Natural History Museum	65
Harvest	66
Fulgurites	68
Flaws	69
Footfall	71
Blues for Lost Birds	72

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the editors of the following publications where some of these poems have appeared: *Clarion*, *The Clearing*, *Frogmore Papers*, *Kudzu House Quarterly*, *Reliquiae*, *Sandy River Review*, *Soundings Review*, *Spiral Orb*, *Star's Nest*, *Stockholm Review of Literature*, *Tears in the Fence* and *Transfers*.

I have benefitted from the input of many people while working on these poems. Thanks particularly to Suzanne Buffam, Philip Gross, Andrew Motion, Srikanth Reddy, Jo Shapcott and Karen Solie as well as all the participants at the Banff Writing Studio, Faber Academy, and Arvon workshops that I attended. I have benefitted enormously from the critical input of members of Tom Daley's Monday poetry group in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Jim Finnegan's Brickwalk Poetry group in West Hartford, Connecticut. Thank you to Julia Barton for supplying the plastiglomerate for the cover of this book.



Plasti-  
glom-  
erate



## Rialto Beach

first the carnage

silverwhite trees wave-topped and gale-gusted

strewn along the beach sun-bleached dinosaur bones

next the balancing acts of stonestacks a lone conifer

clings to invisibly thin soil knots of bull kelp

fetid and fly-ridden anemones in rock pools

beckon me to finger their sticky tongues

a bald eagle circles hounded by ravens

we keep on holding on hoping for the best

settling for something like circumstance

in the black basaltic sand mingled with milk-white

and amber agates smooth ground sea-glass jewels

among the fallen trunks chunks of rusted ship-iron

scattered fishing floats   a plastic buoy

a walker   tells me of the wreck   the Chilean ship  
the marker 'round the headland   for the drowned

# Plastiglomerate

All-purpose cobalt polypropylene rope  
sluiced overboard by Tom    ten days out

with the tuna fleet    missing Meg  
and local radio    ground down shells

clams and cowries    orange-lipped lava flows  
the toothbrush Esme shared before she spat

foam into the breakers    bleached  
pummeled coral    thin plastic forks

from when you barbequed  
hot dogs on driftwood fire    fucked

on the foreshore    shared photos of your children  
abraded black basalt    green beads of olivine

the chewed blue cap of the one-buck biro  
that leaked in the heat of my pocket

forest fire    twenty-three percent contained  
fifty-five gallon polydrum    ready for rain

## Nest Site Fidelity

Ospreys are back from  
wintering in Aruba—

skywriting *Ms* and *Ws*  
then plummeting

talons slicing brackish water  
rising with a prize menhaden.

They return each March  
to the knotted nest they knit—

wayfinding magnetic fields with  
star charts and landmarks

Haiti   Havana   Florida Keys and Everglades  
Jacksonville   Savannah

then this tumbledown

stick-and-spit summer-home

on the platform Bill built  
here on the Chesapeake.

Me? I've flown in from Wales  
where the Emperor of Japan once visited

to spy the rare red kites  
I saw on my daily drive

cresting the rise  
above the Irish Sea.