

The Closed Spaces

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Some Sketchy Notes on Matter (Recent Work Press, 2020)

The future, unimagine (chapbook, with Caren Florance, Recent Work Press, 2017)

The Told World (Shearsman Books, 2014)

Thing&Unthing (Vagabond Press, 2014)

Interference (chapbook, with Caren Florance, Ampersand Duck, 2014)

Of Sky (chapbook, Ampersand Duck, 2012)

Views of the Hudson (Shearsman Books, 2009)

The Twelve Labours (with Gwenn Tasker, lighttrappress, 2009)

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The Closed Spaces

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‘it’s not as though making it through unaltered is the point.’

Colin Cheney, Phaethon, *here be monsters*

THE CLOSED SPACES

Until Its Light, in That Vessel, Falls Away

A sky indefinite and indigo as the sun at its pinnacle
or as thunder, drones. Something in the way of
light...the season, after Summer, before it is Summer again
: an in-between where tomorrow's clouds are forming.
Low: in twists and turns, circling, a body in motion follows
flying, passing, revelatory, detecting an opening, breath
inside the flesh. A life held in observance or adoration
until the light, in that vessel, falls away.

To lift is to lighten
its ritual hold of air to earth. Crouched in the mechanics
of grief it is a strangeness; lacking sound or colour
a world of unmarked paths. For everything depends
upon the other, even if by that very instrument, parts
of the whole tear other parts to bloodied fragments – as
a prey animal is heaved from its body in shrieking terror.

Lumen

Shown more
than we can bear are we windows or mirrors?

Wingspans we could beating see, in daub and winnow
the resting planet in its ebb. Moments, sparks of light.

For multiple selves now reflect and replace the sky
our candlelight and imaginings.

And wholly unnecessary we drew up
bog meadow's scatter of kingcup and orchid.

Mirrors
into negative space, into meander and mischance
before a dark that enters.

We had believed ourselves windows.
Is it raining? Our human eyes are dumb.

Certainties

from this first Tuesday
it doesn't matter about Ohio

it never did except for this

the white picket fence remains
and beyond the pale

one hundred thousand dead

(not small sorrows).

If such people have much value
it is as the end consumer

(for we must never mind the cost)

they have felt the presence of large shadows

a semblance of birds
given the weight of Industry

§

A single voice under the blind world

many times to the fact saying

No

I never

I was duty bound

This does not save you

Nor being new in this state that force arouses
regarding order as grounds for doubtful comfort

§

And in the painful abyss
you may discern the same thing

the long way of tears
even without the martyrdoms that others enter

If such people have much value
it is that they are manipulable

expendable once the work is done

While behind

shrewd as glass for your defects
the expert torturers lie

§

What did they say?
Why did they do what they did?

not enough lost and so many offences

Tell me
I am wanting of that faith
that gains in error

or turns on the anguish of the people

That anyone would willingly

Others may know the place
where pits uncover
the slack cream of a shoulder

that speaks a covert repose

eye movements become a film without sound
exhumed

§

If I collected myself as a person
I saw only in part
and it was cloudy beside other certainties

Why batter at the door of faith
or demand other sons and daughters

they will come

Mothers cry
return to me the high sleep of his head

What gap have we fallen into
a moment when everything seems to stop
and then start again

Our way here from sleep was not long
we passed the hard earth
of nearby darknesses vanquished

going so as not to debilitate others

But it passes
the indecision

Do not dispute what you feel

honour the fear
that will turn other ways

Across the shadow of the first relative

first I will and you will be second

Others near
are become people
with late and serious eyes

shaved and with gentle voices

Why not say of these

Rise up
relieve us of our infinite troubles all undead

§

In open places see how many become luminous
with the sign of victory crowned
while grace acquires in the sky

Beautiful citadel
of high walls, defended around

fire will enter me
and shake the birds from the sky

Save inside how quiet

to adore
the certainty of God

Small-Water

where gaunt
haunts thin trees late-clothed and opening.

I've been half so long ago in mussel-dark's
brine-cold blue-black hit to the face.

Heads bow our light to the eyes
as wind-push remakes the struggling rain.

I tumble back through windows of air
turned to Styrofoam.

nothing basalt can erode
worn in bones and stones, unwanted all.

The Closed Spaces

will it always
come down to two men fighting? First with enormous weapons
then grunting hand to hand. *Two Figures in the Grass*,
a Francis Bacon painting. Fighting or fucking? It's hard
to tell the difference. I look back at the Amy Sillman essay
on diagrams (I am at the chess club in the church hall).
Around me it's the end game. All looks hopeless.
The white king avoids the corner, avoids the closed spaces,
avoids his opponent, until the distant past, with its random
and excessive elements, resurfaces in the form of a knight
relentless, bloodied and with intermittent flares.