

As If It Was Possible This Morning

ALSO BY DAVID HERD

POETRY

Walk Song
Still Spring
Songs from the Language of a Declaration
Through
All Just
Outwith
Mandelson! Mandelson! A Memoir

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David Herd

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This Morning

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‘this is not somewhere else’

—Adrienne Rich

Difficult this Morning

Difficult this morning
To bring the necessary gifts
A basket perhaps laid heavy
With the season's fruit
A person
Turned finally to ask
How it was they came to be here
Tangled into the future
Shared routes.

Difficult to rest
To bring forward a simple question
Drawn together against the contours
Of a person's voice
Telling us how it is
And while the sun watches
Love looks anxious
Whose streets.

Another Time

after Anthony Gormley

1.

I suppose I like the loneliness
The way he stands at the edge
The bay curved outwards toward Fulsam Rock
Drawn
To the way he stands
Like an echo against the sea
He is humble I think
I think he brings humility.
There, where he stands
And he holds his impossible outlook
Like the whole of the eastern seaboard
Would break here
As he stands
Like a reminder
In his echo form
At the shore in outline
Where he waits
Sea.

2.

He draws me
The way he occupies his station
Vertical
Against the weather
He is a descendant
Of the cross
Offshore
By rocks
He holds the future
Down
Each day rising
Each day he shows us
Lost

He is a permanent regime
And there are calm moments
When we are spoken to
Or listen
And what we might call the frequency
Is clear.
Before the wind came
And the rain
He shows us where the boats are tossed
Where the shore beckons
Some people drawn
Near.

3.

If we stepped out quietly
Into a new light
This November light
Its colours
Conditional against the sea
Might we formulate
I mean imagine
A new alphabet together
That sycamore yellow
This Autumnal Spring

I might start with the body
Printed against the rock
If you might allow
In its vulnerability
The old pain

Like a man
By Philip Guston
Who would be awake in his bed
His blanket that wouldn't warm him
His most violent dreams

His alphabet laid out
Beginning in a sequence of colours
That rose effect
Towards the morning
That would still come through
Layered into the day
Like the world was not forgotten

Like the violence all over
Taking a walk with you.

4.

There is a charm to you.
I think it is how
You hold your position.
You watch the daylight
Come towards you
The waters go.
You hold
As we tip.
These are days in balance
Your charm
All the emotions
Imagination holds.

Or flowers.
I picture you
With this bouquet of roses
Which you toss
Onto the water
One by one.
For those who came
It is a residual gesture
A petal
As welcome
To those who come.

And your charm?
This language you have
Of stillness and forgiving
You offer us petals
And these are petals we can use.

Dream songs
Tossed against
A world in balance.
This night foretold
Only love
To lose.

5.

His quietness has a man in it
I think his dream
Is mercy.
He doesn't judge.
Each day
The waters go.
The turbines
A measure
We would watch the wind
Drop
This drift
Where the cargo
And the gulls
Coast.

His dream
Like a quietness
Wherein he might
Enumerate
Names.
The westerly
In its mercy
As the boats
Hold

Spoken
At the shore
He would let his dream
Speak
Of the sea
Or of the boats
And of the names
Amen.