Our Weird Regiment





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Contents

Heal Thyself	9
1.	
Ida Belle	
Ping	13
How to Send a Plain Dispatch	15
Stepping Out	16
Descent from White Hill	18
The Pantanal	20
Salisbury (short let)	22
Other People's Parties	237
Men Working Overhead	\searrow_{24}
How to Listen In	26
Idling	28
Zoological Society Nondon	29
Don't Cry, Ida Belle	31
The Day Refore Yesterday	33
Olly and Pepper are Safe	34
Electric Clippers	36
How to Address the Inquiry	37
Breakdown Recovery	39
On Holkham Beach, Norfolk	40
Civil Disobedience	42
Whip Hand	44
2.	
Flint	
Our Weird Regiment	49
A Gastarbeiter Cleans the Big House	51
Abraham's Bosom	53

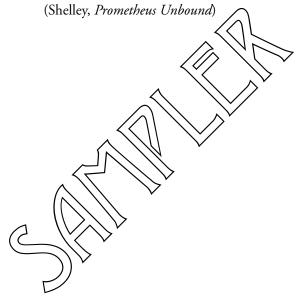
How to Talk to the Children	54
Late Assyrian Kings	56
Muzzle	57
Quick Ornithological Quiz	59
Masculinity	61
In the Lantern Tower	63
Nebamun Hunting	65
The Inheritors	66
Foodbank	68
Mobile Car Valet	69
Come the End of the Working Day	71
Estrangement	72
How to Wake Up as Someone Else	\\\\ <u>\</u>
All Was Sweet	> \\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
Motion and Stillness	7,6>
3	\sim
Homespun	
Old Union Songs	81
Summers Ended in Sweetness	82
Ten Yellows for Helen Kidd	84
Howy to Bellouizell	86
Maggot	87
Hilperton	88
My Mother's Care Home Room	89
On Southampton Street	91
Winchelsea	92
St Augustine	94
He Made This	96
Homespun	98
In this Quiet One-way West Country To	own 99
The Restoration Process	101
The Seventy-ninth Tarot Card	103
Things Newborn	105

The Adoration of the Kings	106
Marking a Zero	108
Acknowledgements and Notes	110



'make music and work on it' (Phaedo)

'to hope till Hope creates From its own wreck the thing it contemplates'



Heal Thyself

This one believed
I maybe had the brains
another that I had
the right demeanour

but the Schools denied me till it was too late then reprieved me with the offer of a place/

> that by then I knew I could not refuse (such articipation had struck such roots

of the moment of choice before those appalling digs in Eltham

where I had to stow my dislocated skeleton by the bed—crammed one side of my head

with tendons muscles and pharmacol with biochem and bright nets of nerves everything spilling out the other side into failure—fallen to wandering streets

to stealing Everyman's Selected Wordsworth I was John Stuart Mill hoping my soul

might be saved I felt love etiolating the girl from home now a girl from home

her kisses like Arxugs at London Bridge saying go your own way at least not imposed

not merely allowed and if you want to live neliberately first you slit the shroud

Ida Belle





Ping

I can talk of course but mostly listen and at lunchtime snowflakes crashing down

onto London tarmac though you'd hardly describe this as snow not even sleet

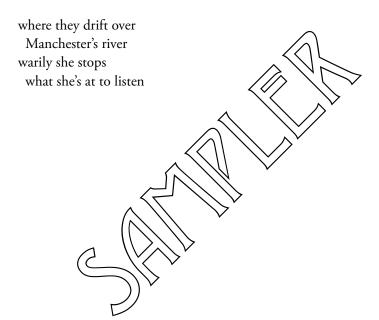
yet something more fleecy than hailstones making a noise in the instant of falling

a kind of shuffling one thire on another as the waitress runs to the place-glass door

where she holds out her mobile phone for just a moment and presses record

because it's there this strange rustleswoosh—worthwhile this muttering noise gets whatsapped to her older sister an exclamatory caption pings on her phone

where it lies face down on a cluttered desk gazing for a moment up at the clouds



How to Send a Plain Dispatch

Hemingway dodged snipers and shells here in nineteen-thirty-nine

making his way up the Gran Via to the Telefónica building

intent on filing his plain dispatches—now lines of taxis shimmer here

each flaunting the official livery of a blood-red stripe on a white groun

like ambulances—each one purrs nothing can be simply what it declay

Stepping Out

A breeze blows up as the pressure drops and there's something wrong with the steps ahead though a jaunty tub of scarlet geraniums wriggles its flowers to and fro

but start at the top where a few begin where the treads and risers appear level and steady though if you set out from down below you face

this prospect of roughened stone

tipped and tilting beneath dressed slabs (sing

straight and apparently true (yet splashed with lichen as with sickness vellow—wl

instead this lop-sided gript

or is it no more than paint daubed and spitted by some earlier child)—yet step if you dare and halfway down the right side's faulted if you set out from above

though if you started from below you'll catch a glimpse of sealing cement dabbed here and there on the left where slant treads appear affected by frost or summer rain

though perhaps every riser rakes
left as much as right
to make balance awkward
yet some fleeting grace
in having come so far (or
the breeze) makes you look back

with your feet at the summit
from whence you return
into the garden or if you began
above then on to where a tub
of scarlet gerariums
spills its perals on the ground

Descent from White Hill

Come down at dusk from the mountain passes a mountain moon my sole companion

glance over my shoulder at the path taken hardly a gleam of blue under the skyline

a thread-bare blue but you grasp my hand on the last incline lead me to your house

where there are children quick to draw down rose-bloom blinds against the running bring

then we each carry uncertain candles to the damp backyard

where whips of new growth honeysuckle stoop low to bless the traveller's head