

“Proof...”

SAMPLER

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The answer to the question “Where on earth is he now?” (poem 15) was located by mimicking an episode in Tom Lowenstein’s book *The Structure of Days Out* (2021) pages 95, 99–100.

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Proof that the world exists. Crossing Europe
in the backs of lorries, the noise of the engine,
the road rolling under, deeper by night.
Occasional glimpse of an urban skyline
changing lorries before dawn. Proving
that the world is, but unstable: the Refugee's story.
I usually wake up about four to half past
and don't sleep again until after five.
I lie there listening. And it is through
this hole in the night that the wren sings

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The wren sings a series of single-pitch rows, usually five to nine notes long, decorated with curlicues. Some of these “notes” are tight clusters or quick calls interspersed with short rows of chirps, a slide or two and finally the “tell-tale machine-gun rattle” which tells the tale of the Refugee’s journey across Europe, a sonorous black hole day after day.

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Doubt that the world will continue. She doesn't
rest long, she flits upstream and perches
on somebody else's ribcage. First light slowly
infiltrates the bushes where the wren lives,
beyond the canal, whispering widths
of hope to the immediate vicinity,
realised currently as white blossom.

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How eagerly then my tongue ran off with me
to the far edges of visibility
where the red flower becomes symmetrical
and plunges into the ground. Where
the light traversing the day is refracted down
to the green spread. At a far edge
of urban tension the Refugee
hands over €500 cash to get him from Italy
into Switzerland invisibly.

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