

The Age of Destruction and Lies

By the Same Author

A Confusion of Marys [with Sarah Cave] (Shearsman Books 2020) The Return of Doom-Headed Three [with Daniel Y Harris] (Knives Forks & Spoons 2018) The Co-ordinates of Doubt [with Daniel Y Harris] (Knives Forks & Spoons 2017) Dear Mary (Shearsman Books 2017) Impossible Songs [with Sarah Cave] (Analogue Flashback 2017) Love Songs for an Echo (Original Plus 2016) Reasons (Hesterglock 2015) The Return of the Man Who Has Everything (Shearsman) Books 2015) Esophagus Writ [with Daniel Y Harris] (Knives Forks and Stoppes Press 2014) Ballads of the Alone (Shearsman & 2013) Encouraging Signs. Interviews, essays and conversations (Shearsman Books 2013) Tower of Babel (Like This Press 2013) Leading Edge Control Technology (Knives Porks & Spoons Press 2013) Voiceover (Riverine) [with Paul Sutton] (Knives Focks and Spoons Press 2012) Wildlife (Shearsman Books 2011) A Music Box of Snakes [with Peter Gillies] (Solives Forks and Spoons Press 2010) The Fantasy Kld (Salt Rublications 2010) Books 2009) Slipstream (Original Plus 2009) An Experim in Navigation (Shearsman Books 2008) atalogue (Shadow Train 2006)

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Rupert M Loydell



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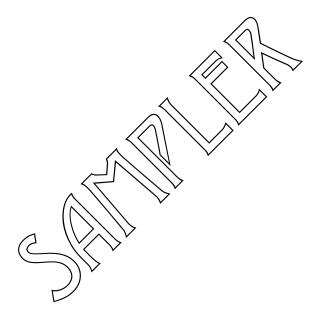
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Love to Sue, Natasha and Jessica.



TAKING THINGS APART





The Age of Destruction and Lies

So how do we understand and act upon the doctrine of the separation of powers?

We may be jealous of those who are dead but a new orthodoxy suggests that

we may *all* be dead before too long, are acutely susceptible to the coming epidemic.

The best way to understand anything is to use the science fiction cliché of global consciousness

as a response to unmentionable goings-on compounded by the decline of social engineering.

Odds are you are happy with how it all worked out: creative destruction is the name of the game.

The ultimate consequence of these upheavals is a predatory increase in response to the unmentionable

and badly written puff pieces which are often a pretext for vivid set pieces and paid trips to the frozen north.

Let's agree that overall goals are often unattainable. I am understandably sceptical about doppelgängers

and new ideas which circulate among poets too slow to notice a whole constellation of books and dreams,

but you don't get to choose who reads you or who does what with music and words.

About the Sky

I have mirrored your accident and fallen up the stairs, fallen off the map. I am mostly in hiding from imagined enemies and critics of my own devising. You know how it is: these thoughts arise and worm their way in, quickly becoming facts. Everyone is a poet now and if they are not they borrow texts and call them their own, or sing and dance, seek fame and a public any way they can. One learns to tire of audiences and withdraw, preferring to mail pamphlets to a group of friends, as though it were still the seventic Back then shops were independent and sometimes sold small books on sale or return (usually the latter) We found our feet undergrou and watched as business kind us over, told us that our poems would never sell. Then poetry was the new rock & roll, then it went online. Everyone's become a critic and an expert but no-one wants to read or think about their work. Everything is in the moment, everything is now, then gone. There's dust on all my books and people don't believe I can have possibly read them all. Today I'm flat on my back, wondering how I might write about the sky.

The World's Oldest Star Map

sun disk is now a landmark universe

known green site travel by magic

oldest surrounded world known to map lunar use

ground will move sky set astronomical time

moon tower words with crescent between <

discover our cosmos in the time of bronze

hypothetical maps a conceptual clock

axe symbols appeal as between arrives

site depiction interpreted stuck where pain's inlaid

patina stones failed by impact philosophy

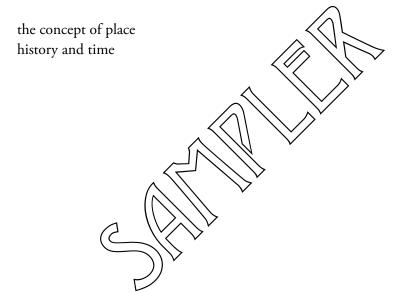
these transit travellers finding having work

chisel star movement is beautiful and gold

blue diameter full of temporarily wide night

a great mysterious time dated device

linking oldest symbols to surrounding astronomy



Before It Starts to Rain

Let me say this, before it starts to rain: I have a fear of mirrors, am afloat in a lake of distortion.

I know how strange this sounds but I am a master of destruction and music is how I avoid

the cartoon madness I draw for myself. The flickering images will not go away, torn pictures

are scattered on the floor until a time when I will selletape them back together, a present for mysel

an aid to regret and self-forgiveness. The elephant in the room has taken control of the stereo,

and I am inclined now to silence. We are all in the same boat, which we are using as an umbrella

because there is no wind. In fact nothing floats my boat any more and I have seen this all before.

I know every secret I ever made, the then and now is gone, inertia creeps towards the forgotten answer.

At This Moment

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary; It rains, and the wind is never weary —Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 'The Rainy Day'

1.

Housebound and landlocked, eye to window to rain to leaking gutter and sodden towel in corner of the studio. I would be a sunshine man, sitting in the shade; I would be a fairweather sailor sipping onboard wine and watching others daydream. I would be overgrown and forgotten, knowing she is always right and that there is nothing to be afraid of.

Shallow end, strange cadences, the city of the san

2.

Owl song, moonrise and low cloud. To more fallen branches but the imprint of the last is still there on the lawn, along with this year's acorns. Even asleep I can bear the rain, can feel the dampness of the air and watch the garden path become a stream and then a waterfall as it descends the concrete steps. I am dreaming summer backwards, afraid to live within these clouds.

Ice of the north, dry sands of the desert, morning still hours away

3.

A rusty future calls, one of decaying metal and rotten, broken boughs, things which this quiet man is not well suited for. This long winter of storms and banter has reduced him to hallucination and frostbite, layers of warm clothing and endless online dreams. Everything happens

to me, nothing feels the same, my heart is a twisted oak. The children remind me and then move away. There will be different days.

Muddy water, happy sad, thunderclaps and late night booze

4.

All roads from this village lead only to the next, the paths I've found circle through mud back to where they began. I am better than I used to be at all of this, can't wait for me to get here or for silence to be declared. I sing rain songs and cast spells to ward off infection and pain, am waiting for the miracle I promised myself would be here soon. There must be a way to expand into the universe, however hard I want to be like me.

Teenage wildlife, yellow flowers, evening sky on fire

5.

For the birds, for the children, for the person in your life. For the sake of the planet, for the silent majority, for an undisclosed sum. For the uninitiated, for the first time, for the foreseeable future. For good reason, for the benefit of usual, for the rest of the year. For the best experience, one for all and all for one. For the last time, head for the hills. Thanks for nothing, thanks for the dance, I am out for the count. This is where everything falls apart, where I don't know how to begin or end.

The sunsets are meant for somebody else

6.

Drystone songs and fairweather tunes, cardboard boxes cut down to size and stacked under the skylight's grey. It is just you, just me, and the storm outside, dreaming ourselves back to then. In the glimpses between powercuts I imagine phantoms of the sun. Take all the stars and half-tongue the moon, I have been swallowed by the sea.

Call me Noah, call me Jonah, call me up another time

7.

In and out of the fading light and everywhere I go. A small boat in a week-long storm, an echo of my own devising, a rather soggy scream. On the other side of knowing is a hidden future but the forecast is not good. There are invisible seams in the sky and endless streams on the ground. It is not just winter rain and all these crooked words cannot turn things upside down. These are poems for broken and stories for strangers, songs about broken shells and flooded toads. An invocation to the god of dry.

Fluid dynamics, solemn goodbyes, black out sleeping on our bed

8.

Out of all this blue and water come invisible connections and email blessings, messages made of sellocape and glue. Secrets sent from the white starline bung me back to earth, where it is time to become ocean and turn my inner landscape grey. What do I do with all the sorrys owed to my other selves or with the storm within? From nothing to nowhere, I have found another version of me to inhabit and persuade. It is raining in my house but I now have a time machine.

Land of doubt, liquefied, secret passage into spring

Counsellor and Confidante

We weren't really at the gardening stage, didn't talk about how wounded we were, how sometimes a mood could take us. We didn't know magic was collapsing and adopted strategies weren't working. Good liars are canny with their audience and that relationship is worth considering. Discussion generally focuses on intention rather than the role of the listener but lying is a social act and can create what is sometimes called the plausible can create passion and distress laughter and dismay when truth's revealed later on

From my books I learnt great sadness, derogatory names and social vividness. I adopted the use of an ear trumpet, assumed a limp and spoke out about filth oozing from the gutters and the motal decay all around. It's hard to live an energetic life but I tried, although bould no longer compose, write or undertake rambunctious holiday activities. Sordidly innocent and deterministically depressed, I sought solace in educated women and conversation with elected rulers.

At this point we need to look beyond our impoverished political landscape and compensate, reconcile and buy another drink. This is a founding moment, we should be more radiant than gloomy even if we have been beaten up, are so damaged we are almost no longer human. I spend my time driving aimlessly around the ring road, treating life as a journey, burning intensely with a new hatred for all authority and those who continue to use the word 'normal'. Memory is all about being able to change the past.

