

Author's Note

This is a very small selection from work I was doing between 2014 and 2024. It gives a flavour of the differing styles and the range of poetic breathing exercises I have been practising at one time or another.

I still love to experiment, and I do these breathing exercises as a matter of course as a living writer. One cannot be a living writer if one does not write. Some bits and pieces of this work have likely been published somewhere or other—I have never paid close attention to where, how and when my work has been published—but this is a free sample of what I do with poetry.

What do you do?

All the best, **Jim F.**

Radars of History

Jim Ferguson

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UNTETHERED

feel dramatically
light of weight

floating, possibly
levitating, maybe

there is no word
in English that gets it right —

like a cork bobbing in air
rather than in water

is that
what poetry is for

to be as light
as a cork

hanging in air with a zillion
other images and metaphors

hypnotic as the fluid geometry
of a startling sky

— irresistible power
of untethered truth

THE UNIVERSE IN HER FACE

she said she was a teller of stories
her name was elspeth, elspeth davie
it was so strange to meet her
in a dark tunnel beneath the liffey

cold we were, the both of us
coatless and unwashed
a hot shower would be delicious,
she said, and i agreed

ripe we were, the both of us
a smell of ages clinging
no restroom for miles
and our luggage still missing

alas like garlic eaters
we did smell good together
elspeth radiant faced
electric eyes and smile

let's sit, she said
began to tell her tale —
we set sail upon her words
spotless in our new clothes

we can travel anywhere
she winks, but let's rest here
in amongst these words,
a moment can take a while

LET TIME DRIFT IN SPACE

world spin world spin
when you do come do come
on a bed of pine under trees now
warm bone close breeze
hush on hush
closed eyes blink open
soft hands on thighs
fingers palms push smooth push
silent lick swallow breathe
succulent earth racing
rush on rush
through time this time
this once this once
when you do come
do come when you do
come do come
here in our planet
let time drift out into space
who cares where it might go
when you do come do come

NOW WHEN I DO NOT LOVE

i'm timid in my ways
wasted with quiet quiet days
the slightest blow would
knock me out the game

when i did love, i loved hard
fought in bars without regard-
destruction did not know one bone
of my male and insane body

bruises did not pain and nothing
scared me: not death, not heights,
gods, women, men, the bomb; now
i'm timid in my ways

now when i do not love

OLIVES

when i had cash
and duly purchased
olives stuffed
with pimentos

the olives were mouths
the pimentos tongues
and they spake unto me thus

“look out to your future
save your pennies
for one day soon
ye shall be skint”

deadly ZONES

*welcome to the media management
manage to get things right zone*

let them manage exclusion zones
social, military, and financial zones

allotted areas and zones of control
no fly zones, no demagogues, no demonology zones

zones of self-censorship to buy into
self-assessment and reportage zones

guru-speak disciples of The Pentagon zones
based firmly in the Western zone

Louis L'Amour style,
that's the style, the style zone

the phoney zone of the pioneering spirit
the shite on everything zone of a private enterprise zone

reflecting the zone of self-delusion
far beyond the zone where journalists dare to go-

the quadruple-think in sextuplet
orwell made it too simple zone-

poets should stick with the love zone
the no room for truth zone

the geo-political zone
stick to your area of expertise zone

enter into the celebrity zone
declare yourself in the VIP zone

the silent poet
and nothing more zone

enter the deadly zone

FOLDING PAPER

just

folding paper
passing time

folding lines
folding sheets

sheets of paper
walls of paper

floating paper
floating breeze

passing clouds
passing time

waiting counting
listening ticking

seconds passing
slowly slowly

letting time fall
letting all go

letting go of everything
cherished, timeless

folding paper
just...

morning poem

sometimes
think the soul in its way
of possibly existing could
do at all all the things
that should be urgent
and calling out for attention

sometimes
think that love, *that love*
in its possibility could be
enough as it should be rough
and riotous and quite simply
beautiful - quiet - urgent

sometimes
think not calling out
but receiving
attention is all
that's needed to flourish - flower:
out the window it's different
as the same new things appear
again - smiles, lips, teeth, eyes
the lines
 on our faces
 becoming old

THINK YOU'RE SOBER NOW

how your head is laid out and empty
empty of the roar of booze,
fear of sleep and the shaking has ended
feels like you're calm and
one step removed from the madness,
everyone, and no one, knows how it feels

to follow night to the end of darkness,
sweet, daring, soulless, cutting and lustful
crawling through the belly of gloom
creeping through the night on your knees,
into the depths of your shattering heart
a hundred thousand rivers have emptied

you're slipping and falling, yet moving forward
now, your head is a brand-new canoe

A PUZZLE

again,
in darkness
smiling through
but can't see the way

the wonder of your breath
against my cheek
quiet night air
heat of summer

against my skin
warm with love
again,

tumbling over

a windblown polybag
a can kicked onto the road
at the corner of Random and Fate
tumbling over no centre of gravity
holds in place those certainties
all now uncertain a rebellion of self
out of the head of a middle-aged screwball
deep down on your knees and begging
the wind to understand
the ludicrous silence
that erupts out your mouth —
the silence from which we came
and to which we shall return
in this tumbleweed universe
where circus clowns are the closest
thing there is to reality
remember
we are from dust and ashes
we'll become
tumbling over all the while circling the sun

LIGHT MA FIRE?

one more way
the cold makes you miserable
is when you think
of being trapped
inside one of those
meat freezers
or frozen food trailers
or even a chest
sized thing your
neighbour keeps in
her garage to store
frozen rabbits
and you think
fuck me
who wants
tremble to death
in there, i can shiver to
death just fine
where i am, here,
in boho-bojo
fantasy land,
wi oot any shillins
for the meter

i remember
i had this friend,
Brodie,
he burnt the
fuckin furniture —
suffice to say
it did not last

UNCERTAIN TOMORROWS, ALWAYS

you / would you / could you want to
watch the sunrise / don't you
no one is so severed from nature
where love and sunrise aren't one creature

cloud formations float on high
telling you the fertile sky is ever vivid
birthing rain / brings us back again and again
to a truth of nothing / everything is as everything

does and only totalitarian capital never sleeps —
she breathes in mud and stars
soars through inhospitable bars
the twilight dawn fulfils the future

peacefully asleep / all passed away

an aging presence

...we had already, both of us
tumbled orgasms of blissful nothingness
fragment after fragment after fragment of our little deaths

as it so appeared entire, a fragment

but
it was a muckle fragment, made up of many
smaller fragments

that was how things were,
fragmentary, made of the fragmentary
from the
fragmentary

and yet, worse,
mostly space

as it so appears
to make you smile

radars of history

aye
ah seeyi
wee cute nose
smiley blonde coupon

smile light and dark
mibbe mer laid back
than back at the start
love still feels sharp

smiley blonde coupon
wee cute nose
ah seeyi
aye

**

in ma heid
that great movie *Dulcima*
and the
dulce et
of 'dulce et decorum est'
and the concept
of the oxymoron
'grimly gay'
as Wilfred Owen
had put it
in *The Send Off* —
dead sweet
my sweet dead friends
none cared too much
for selfish identity
just wanderers all
through individual
and collective lives
the intrinsic worth of all humanity
as Albert Camus wid mibbe say

**

she wis reticent
about going

gaun ootside

it was winter
and ther wur

bus fares
to consider

at the age of 59
she couldny

get oan a bus
withoot thinkin

about the cost
and that afore

she gave any
thought ataw

to
the problem of men

**

tired uv workin
tired uv being unemployed

wish ah knew
whit tae dae wae mase

aw this time
n ah huvny guhtta clue

**

starting tae feel aboot done here
beginning of the end

**

looking at something...
looking the local paper

or the online dregs
trying discover

what friends of mine
are dead today

friends of mine
are dead

**

last gasp
last attempt

at gulping the air
not too much grey hair

enough is innuff
nae point in collecting

anymerr stuff—
time to disappear—

time disappears
all of the radars

of history
dissolve

**

with so many and certain
frailties of constitution

it was time to roll down into
the hole in the ground

and let a new revolution grow
defiantly where the auld hedgerow had been

**

October Time, November Time
in northern climes
the trees leave go their leafs

the full-stopped summer's end
and anything new is not even a dot

on the horizon

