Poems

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Poems

Abstract
TAKE A WALK, MANNED MISSION TO THE GREEN PLANET, A FAR NOISE FROM NEAR THINGS

This journal article is available in Kunapipi: https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol12/iss1/6
I'll bet, Roberta
you'd rise like an avenging angel
to scourge me, nightly
with pure grief, and scorn.

Stephen Oliver

TAKE A WALK

Disturbed movement in alleys. A shift in wind direction. Further off over roofs, patches of light. It is the signals that, pushed out, are coming back in across the buffed zones and upended days, down the familiar track of childhood, the neighbour yelling from behind hedges, destination of the stone sure. Somehow we soften into the sum of all we haven't done, seated high on windy terraces, one step from that which may have occurred, outlined there in silhouette, hurtful against the sky. The birds celebrated as you dressed with stealth though you'd gone long before first light took you.
MANNED MISSION TO THE GREEN PLANET

Behind some night bush Rousseau green, some dwelling in one place, some in another, it had been agreed between us by courier and hesitation to meet in the village centre at mid might. The first figure to emerge was to be greeted thus: America comes to interpret its humour: the hurried reply: and community halls abound. Back and beyond our allotted frequency, The Generals who had not been posted gathered over another Power Lunch. After the brief and the oiling of rifles we set forth across the causeway, through the marble green of foothills, and into the grey of higher ground. The thought, like a saffron scarf caught on a thorn bush seemed even now on the closed off terrain a crusade of sorts, kept us ahead. Amply, unnumbered rivers plashed into the battery green of immeasurable hollows. So it was that we became inseparable, spirit creatures to the forest life, the journey boundless, the orders which concerned the depot, unread.

A FAR NOISE FROM NEAR THINGS

That which has gained a little further, high enough to curve out the earth, the diminished rainforests of Brazil, the hole in the ozone above Antarctica, the lessened bushtribes of Africa, the years pushed out by light,

the greenhouse globe over photographed is how we picture ourselves back, falling. Or rice paper moon in the

Sky and cloud, a dream of snakes. A fallen leaf against the skylight. A leaf against the skylight fallen, so.

And we then who engage the light take ourselves to the work of aerial attention the Ancients were part of, and by it, remembrance of time, but atomistic. The seasons knew us as we learned. Our lessons learned well, too. Around the roulette wheel of the world, through the yellow pages of the sun flicking over decades what migrations made, from the micro-chip to Star Wars, digital sex to right wing abstinence, eclipse of personal vision, limitation of immediate memory, the object of our desires objective love, love at several removes in our falling. Sangsara.

The great lesson came in a sudden hurt of killing, our first knowledge reflected through caves ochre-images of the slain. We began worship, measured time, and built against the shock, the pain. These sentiments amongst the tumbled blocks of older verse are gone from the heart, the darkest galaxy, and memory alone promotes sorrow.

It is today always, green as a computer screen and elsewhere, unrecorded, the high surgery of the super nova which
never exploded now, but once.
Child dream. An abandoned railway
siding overgrown with nettleweed, hide
out for a wizard. Backdrop of gentle
slopes, elms at distance. Adolescent
visions of Irish burrows, hollowed
darkness, whisperings, a wish to locate
the signal in self back in time.
This resides still. Downwards and over
the garden (a dark, humped square)
my neighbour shadows through dropblinds
before a startled TV. Dirtied cloud
frames a full moon that is sideways in
this movingly. Gravity takes hold
and accentuates. Gestures weigh in their
orbits. Bright as cufflinks, radio
telescopes revolve on red tablelands
to uncover one more sacred site between
the stars. A brain based society
ornately tracks the lusty technologies
and the years recognise our whereabouts.

In the beginning wooden paddles echoed
from atoll to island. Air whitened,
thunder reverberated. A riot of leaves
under malarial rain. Then came the
creak of rigging, came the off-shore
companies, came synthetic drugs and
salvation, and finally, came migration
back to Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Nuie
to light up the rim of the Pacific.

The hour turns, an electric train flicks
blue flashes over suburb and hoarding,
brick arch and emptied streets.
The day's news ceases amongst the satellites. And high enough to curve cut the earth Argos is falling across the Southern skies, dragging her keel across some coral harbour where, fitfully, the gracious guns of goodwill ride at anchor.

David Kerr

RETURN OF THE LINGUIST
(For Jack Mapanje)

'Malawi's only semanticist' your letter self-scoffed. Jokes aside, this place, with lost seams of gossip and taboo-coated rhetoric lodged deep in fissures, needs your skills - wild pick-axing or delicate chiselling for fossilized signs. It needs the deftest rinsing in gallons of sweat to sieve a single gem of meaning.