some such gargantuan figure?) or a forgotten letter from Rendezvous or a dusty invitation to one of the innumerable weekly functions held by (student)international organizations of all persuasions & descriptions. The Inter-Varsity Christian Union requests the pleasure of Mr.--'s company. That one was coffee & cream crackers followed by a film show, I see. Christ in the Outer Hebrides. By Jove, glad I missed that one! But wait. The JACARI cordially invites Mr.-- & A.N.OTHER? By golly, that was a close shave! And so on, et cetera et cetera.

Actually, I was the Jesus rep. for Jacari 2 terms running, but it proved to be a bit expensive. I lack the drive & naive confidence to ever be an organization man. Some fellows go around in the corniest manner hawking tickets or huckstering membership cards, booklets, magazines & simply pay the membership monies out of my own pocket discarded then the same day & handed in a mythical list of Jesus College members to the Secretary. Nothing easier. To lecture & beg never appealed to me all that much: either you're interested or you're bored. You do it or you don't.

I've kicked the tobacco habit in the meantime. As for booze, well, I'll wait until the 1st Lizzy meetin' of Hilary boys' terms before deciding, methinks, even though ye Masteres of ye Poy Boosome may deem it most unseemly thus to deprive the poor Anatomic syphilis of your sweetest vines most cunningly extracted from that base villain, Philipp of Spain. Period. (Hereinafter) Master Laureate Perversions.

I think anyway the important thing is not to go nuts over the next 5 months. String people have been known to crack up completely. Shoo 'ruff! I want a good degree, but I'm not banking too much on that. Some guys have come back already & the strain on their faces is barely concealed. Losing sleep, glad now in a way that I took it very easy indeed last term. Not to be a heap of cinders by Easter, head me what I say baby. Trouble is: if a man's not been through the thing himself, who can convince him of the worth?!

That's getting fatalistic, though. Plenty of water must flow under the bridge. There are poems to be written yet new faces to be met, avenues to be explored, rhetoric such as this to be checked & pared to new intensities, the intellect to be tested in fresh & startling ways. In Donne's words—The new philosophy calls all in doubt the element of fire is quite put out.
A brief retrospective. The New Year's party was in Richmond, with David Bartlett's friends. To my amazement I discovered later that most of the beautiful clothes around the place were off-duty air hostesses. It was the kind of situation you have wish-fulfilments about in the cinema now that airports & all manner of flying machines have become focal points in our civilization, the hard currency of dialogues. I had to scuttle back to Kentish Town the next morning, an hour-long crawl across the shabby part of town. Just as well the person in question didn't turn up, enabled me to nurse my Sore feelings in the cavernous Jazz Room of the Tally Ho, to which Ian & Oleh came on Sunday night. The music was fine. The vases went down with relish, eventually we left for coffee at Berni's, who'd returned tired from Dublin that afternoon. Mike was struggling behind Wales, having left the ferry at Holyhead. And Novos was just too deadbeat & weary to care much about the frivolities of the world or think back at what had been sordid, bizarre, funny, frigid, late, quick or fantastic in love & death.

I'm trying to remember whether there's anything I particularly want to remind you about, but as it seems there's not. I'm signing off just this phantasmagoric halfdream about Iris Murdoch & M. Musseridge being bitchy to each other. Almost as if Hieronymus Bosch were to paint Edna O'Brien as a medieval bunny.

I also, Madam, remain your Ever-Obedient Acolyte:
(Mr) A. K.,—

Note
I remembered some of the lines from your Friday-night poems: rather unusual for a quick dispassionate look. Got any more? Modesty to throw one's genuine efforts away simply, but at other times can be due more to a kind of thoughtlessness: do not let hesitate to let me have a glance.

9/1—Maggie honey—
Sure I'm missing you under [3 batches of poems]. I know that I feel a wee bit guilty about the unconscionable time I've spent reworking these scripts. But so sleepy now 5.30 a.m. Monday. That terrible urge came over me on Sat. night at about pub-opening time. But I bribed your lord with titbits of food, doses of telly, endless cups of coffee, & back numbers of Encounter. He survives still, an alcohol-virgin of '87
NB - 5.30 or no, I shouldn't have started explaining at all, but packed the stuff off summarily. Cos I find I want to communicate my ideas popping in me noggin - all that. Settle for some notes (spilling you, kid).

Near-mad was an actual frightening experience last year in Sri, when I came as close to breakdown as I'm likely to come, I suppose. The ironic black umbrella is for conformity - don't dirty the mirror like.

2) J.P.G.R. is a draft I'm abandoning. Wrote it during a particularly boring lecture on Milton's language. Genuinely I do feel like this. Music's element of fun (saw Bernstein conducting Shostakovich) - why purge it? Or decay? I'm being the pompous one, John Cage, fact that life's not about improvement or order out of chaos, but life for the living, simply. But remind us to discuss, getting too rich here.

3) The unhealable wound is JOY CRY's best thing. Perhaps not original, I can't sell at thing remove. But other aspects now catch my eye. Like to comment? It's organized, as you see, in ½-rhyme.

4) Apartheid - mum's the word. Simple: no sarcasm, just facts as they say.

College leads (improbably?) to the larger ending. The main joke is one I never tire of flogging, about this Nigerian guy saying the White man he love me as a brudder, but not as a brudder-in-law.

Sorry to tell it again. Love: A.

Time's Man of the Year

Life - you gotta live with the nitty-gritty, man!
'swooping through the shallow gates in Chile'.

To P.G. Estech - Newcombe at Croydon West, 'The Times' Poem for Kitchen

Sunday Night 5/12

My darling,

After a quiet scotch-shot-orange-down in the college cellars I retired to the box 2 BBC-1's much ado about buggerall. Maggie Smith was doing a fine Beatrice: shtinky, funny ('civil as an orange') s perceptive to Robert Stephens' romantic come-on visibility. The respective merits of leading actors are arguable, of course, but Sh. leaves us in no doubt. I spent my time with the Bard at Lady Margaret Hall - the sweet old spinster with the ginger top in a large room overlooking gardens, a box of Senior Service at one's
elbow, it was she who just opened my eyes to the fact that in the great
comedies, the heroines hold the floor — Katharine, Rosalind, Beatrice — with the
suggestion that after marriage, the tables are slightly turned, the show is
concerned. One imagines that this is part of the Sh. magic — he at once pleases
female vanity & does justice by the male need for domination. So M.S. led
her time taking the pep out of poor, Benedick’s Dogberry was big joy
(‘Comparisons are odorous’) in the subplot face, but Much Ado is otherwise
not my favourite comedy. As rendering it’s bitty — Sh. probably depending a lot
here on what his actors would do with his throwaway lines, & the N. Thespian
production was what one may call unexceptionable; faint praise. Still, there’s
little that can really ruin Sh., if you saw it you may have thought differ-
ent. It’s just that I saw no point in flamboyances like those muddy Nubian
slaves, & Claudio was unimpressive, though one must admit that he’s one of
these sudden-switch characters — the repudiation scene is much more powerful
than this hinted at, & to make the reconciliation that follows work within the
credibility gap needs an actor of courage & mettle.

I stayed on for Eamonn Andrews & the Sunday night people, settling in
with a hamburger off the street (dining on Hall in the company of Hugh Table or
the Sabbath requires changing into a formal suit of clothes, & I protest
against that). Everybody, including an American-accented casting producer who
started going on about lovely James Dean & ended up levelling stagey moral
questions, tried once again to knock Jagger, who was sitting next to a sympathetic
& protective Eamonn, coping coolly & quite calmly refusing to belt out one for
Godfrey up there in the clouds. With his thick but expressive features & his
puzzlement at the press & showbiz bullying, Jagger strikes me as one of the
interests modern figures — not only in pop but in the whole philosophy of
rebellion concerning society & its precious morals. I feel guilty putting it pat
like that: yesterday I saw a stunning film called The Family Way. You
might have seen it — with a Bill Naughton script about northern slum
life & a very convincing ending, the camera moving away from a family
of men composed as for an old-time album. The father (John Mills) has spoken
man-to-man with his newlywed son for the 1st time, & as the honeymooners go off
he collapses into a chair under a weight of sweat & half-sad tears. ‘What’s
Wrong, dad?’ says the other son, the mother standing by. ‘Life,’ he replies. ‘At
your age it's all laughter, but at my age it makes me bloody cry! I remember this bit of northern cri de coeur because Jagger (I'm not saying 'Mick', to avoid the sentimental familiarity) was telling those middle-class comedians about the gulf between the generations. Something he said was not true of the Continent, while Terry Scott was wittering like a silly old ass about the alleged immorality of *Let's Spend the Night Together*. (I remember also your anecdotes of Continental life in some Tottenham Court Road pub.)

A final point that's relevant: it seems to me that the realism impulse has come from the north, largely - one might start with the Beatles (is Mary Quant?) - go on to Hoyton & working-class principles, though Harold Wilson's not the same stocky force anymore; politicians, even Labourites, need to go conservative once in power. But enough of that: I think I've thrown out plenty of pablum for you to chew on. This week there's an essay on Dr Johnson. Great man, who deliciously ruined the novelist Samuel Richardson once with his remark: 'Sailing down the river of reputation, he is intent on tasting the foxtail at every stroke of the oar.' A man also of critical integrity, for R. had once bailed him out of the debtor's prison, and I personally preferred R. to Fielding, who ironically struck the *CWide* critics as a creator of bawdy characters. Of the *Z*, Fielding in fact was probably more of a faggy.

The other essay is going to be something on Dickens; my Tutor suggested *Crime and Violence*. I'm not relishing this one, but that happens all the time: when I set going in the morning I'll work up an interest. Last week I worked on Jane Austen - she's been a favourite ever since I laid hands on *Pride and Prejudice*. My task was to defend her credibly against the serious charge that she commits the fundamental condescension in the life of her novels, which tacitly accept the class system then at its height. For another thing, reading her work you'd never have evidence that the Battle of Waterloo or the Fr. Revol. was then topical. The attack is leftist & still, including a hard-hitting Arnold Kettle, but even he acquits her: I took my cue from here. Experiencing Austen is like the love letters I used to write from C.T. P.E.: some subjects were just taboo, but we could converse profitably in other areas. Actually, I picked up a story idea in one of the commentaries on T.A. - her concern with the problem of women in her society - & developed it
rather: the intense tenderness which one comes to feel for Anne Eliot (Persuasion) who cannot speak her love bec. it is socially infra dig. for a woman to do so. She waits around painfully for a glance, a gesture, an approach, for any indication.

Persuade ME to stop:. There are things besides lit. crit. — D'Oliviero [& the MCC], Malta, the U.S. Navy rebuff at Capetown, the flaming Red Guards (god bless Chairman Mao!) in the Year of a Thousand Gandy Posters. Your view about 'bamboo slits' was reading my sex into a political metaphor, 2 was delivered as a quick left/right to the body. No — you probably saw that I'm moving away from the pattern of conformity I've been falling into. Watch it develop. All I've got to do now is complete my interrupted karate training, acquire a taste for rice & raw fish with seaweed garnish, & buy a black pyjamas with stitched in body trap.

Last weekend in North Wales in fact I spent a dry time reading Zen at night & revising Dept Pains Me Now by day in front of a log fire with the grey sea belching into a distant headland. The poem is a mixture of Buddhist ideas & my feelings about Lenin. The Zen belief is that one should take the world at face value — do not judge or try to change what's already there: all thought is subjective, & it was Marx/Engel who said that intellect is not part of a man that enables him to comprehend that the world is incomprehensible. But saying

Give me significance let me transmuit you.

is inevitably to debase your history, both as Woman ('yer, the touchstone') & as woman ('already another man's'). The crisis is about inspiration: I refer to Rimbaud, whose brilliant & sensation-ridden career as a poet ended abruptly when he gave up at 19, retired to a queer's sordid existence in 'acquired London', later died of the carnal disease in Ethiopia. The haiku set was scribbled on the back of a J.C. calendar coming back in the family Corsair from Carnarvonshire.

Davidd Roberts was going home for his 21st. We had hitched the 250 miles to Pwllheli (don't even try to pronounce it, baby) & I'd bought some formal gear along for the 'do'. It all turned out disappointingly, though. Mr. Roberts is an M.P. very Welsh, smokes a briar, doesn't drink (he toasted his son with a glass of water & poured for us from a bottle of cheap Santino as if it were a vintage Chateauneuf du Pape), & reads Hansard with a
I suspect of patience strong. I had for one thing to keep on the right side of him because his Canadian man could prove a useful contact if I want to teach here, which I increasingly want to do now to avoid the prospect of a pokey joint in the Canadian wilderness with killer whales porpoising all about, grizzly bears hugging me affectingly. And his wife (Celtic Languages Grad, Alpha Beta, Class of '35 & all that) regarded her son's girlfriend, her daughter boyfriend & myself alternately with tales from Tahiti & the dealings of the shrewdly dopey yokels; all the time she had these 8 cats (pardon my primitive feet!!) paddling & wissing around, nosing the cream puffs, sniffing your ankles, scratching the furniture, & pissing in the sink. Big joy! Davydd refused to go into the local bar of possible small-town gossip — there I was, high & dry, observing in my bosom Buddy & a radical transformation of the town couldn't be true. The town was cozy, the air fresh, the weather average rainy, the food pedestrian. I had taken some stationary along, so I was going to tell you about it all, but by the time I got back I had written to neutrino to you nor to anybody else. Mulling this over in the car, I happened upon the haiku, opening about the inability of the unwillingness to write one true letter, just one sentence maybe, which wouldn't depend on any personal judgment. Hence 'Unless I can write etc., which goes on to 'you are/Recoverable' — but this is 'to judge' against Gotama's teaching when on the mountain he meditated the golden flower's smiled slowly. 'Recoverable' here is the wish — 'I wish you could be yourself again, be free to express yourself.' But the insight must remain 'invisible' & the 'flame shapeless.' Writing a letter is to give substance & form to thought & opinion — haiku is a spontaneous, vested, feeling. At three in the morning I find it difficult to be eloquent about this. Anne's been telling me about a phone call to you. It seems won't come upon you like that at a crucial moment. Still, as F. Madox Ford of maybe some other bloke said to some source of inspiration of his — 'Thank God I met you.'

Last night we went on a boozing jag: Ian Tweedie, his wife Joyce, Phil Garner, Pete Jones, Anne & myself. We started in college, went of
to White's, swung across to the Turf, emerged singing 'I Should've Known Better' up Helen's Passage, cornered at the King's Arms to enter the blue-jokes period, jested & noshed up the street in the White Horse, & ended up boisterously in the Turf, haven of dipsos & beery wit. Then we noused up the college folk, knocked off a gallon of cider, s returned to Pete's flat, with various gains & losses of personnel having occurred. By this time we were cruising at a sedate 20, with occasional bursts of up to 60 m.p.h. — Jones on the difference between metatarsals & metacarpals, Novje on geomorphological theories: when is a Piedmont plain not a ped March plain? And so ons, & so forths.

Glad you're doing what you want, do again, sweets. A Night Out that almost sounds like me at weekends — who's it by? Our lads are planning 'Live Like Pigs' for the Summer. (The printer booked, put Barden for Arden.)

Try to face the J.S. business coolly — the little things that make the biggies possible, etc et cetera (again). What I mean is that I'm scared you might go into a terrible depression, & lose your grip. Gritty nitty: what I do is me. Full stop.

I was hoping to get some more scripts out, but if you move I'll have to get into the Crane, Norman et al. fan mail unless you leave an address. Penguins are paying me £4: you'll have to come & get Oxford's best meal for that. Grim Place & Up Late, 2 for the anthology. Tell us when.

Ciao. Arthur.

Schiller — 'All art is dedicated to Joy.' The profoundest problem is how to make men happy.

Lately, I find 3 areas of incongruity for making a joy:break:

1) science — the religion of fact
2) imagination — fantasy, the Morgan-grille problem
3) pretence: the bourgeois thing.

Academia in May,
Life Studies 1967.


Hi — the ad's for a swinger this coming Sat. evening in the Grad. Common Room & environs. Could be sweet if the weather allows. Guests are free (Oxon. grad. are too-
pompous, apparently, to organize themselves – 'free' applies to Women only in this case). No Cover Charges, it all goes down on Battles, that delightful credit system applauded by generations of boozing, cocksure gentlemen. Good thing too, bec. on acc. of little me bein' out of shekels, doubloons, nobles, tanners, angels & all manner of corrupt coins & metal traffic. They're catering for something like 80 whizz-kids, which is ambitious – the last session was by no means a rave. This one could be a winner since it's being arranged by the West Indian on my staircase. Natural hair, calypso drive. Energy of sun & lush life. Blah blah blah. Gerry is calling it a prelude to the massive end-of-schools, end-of-term affair now in blueprint. About that I'm sitting tight. If I unleash all my rhetorical powers you still won't understand how relieved I'm going to be breathing a last sigh in those gloomy rooms down the High Street.

You'll gather that life is not desperately exciting at the moment, but then that is to beg the question. The American poppet, I wrote CIAO for (take away the O & what have you?) last summer, passed through London on her way from Frankfurt to mamma's warm bosom & poppa's Ford Mustang in Boston. Her sister (yick) & room-mate (you) came along to see Oxford (hmm?). That was one sexual encounter that was frankly a drag – worse than when some body has the curse & you're lying in bed all randy & hateful, hugging the blanket & dreaming of breakfast, for one.

Last weekend too Mingo (Tally Ho Sometime) came up in his Cortina. Ocox Bartlett had turned up on the Friday night with a fairly lively bird from Richmond – English in the non-'oh-so' sense, which was refreshing apart also from the simple fact that she's intelligible, pretty (non-pejorative) & full of humour. Boston, I'm sorry to say, compared badly. We played incomprehensible games like cricket & football instead of comprehensible true-blue games like baseball; we sat in the sun with ales on a chessboard; we spent Sunday lunchtime at a venerable inn called The Trout (I was excommunicated once for lobbing crockery into the water under the weir where the chub come up for crumbs, but they must have changed the management). I sobered Mingo up discreetly down in the bar before he returned – don't ask a man to drink AND take a naive bird back to London...

During the week, including Friday nights, I'm fanatically teetotaller.
the contrast is perhaps remarkable for its sheer contradiciveness. On Sat. Man.
must have Drugs to appease the Terror of loneliness incipient in 60 working hrs.
of on his own Company, as also to bolster the phagocytes. I was amused last
week when Dusty, not a nasty cat at all; one of the original hash men in
this borough, came in to chat about sugar consignments & grass revelations. One
of the college Commiteemen, slightly out of his cranium & fresh from The Turf At
Closing Time, had an idea that Dusty was making rather a pest of himself:
whereupon a raucous ridiculous ha-ha quarrel ensued, etc. tch! tch! During
which yours sincerely quietly slipped back to Chaucer & Co. Period?

I suppose I have to jog your memory about those poems. Bad form;
or you must be wading in masses of paperwork & rushing to rehearsals & class
(Drama?) So many times Tulas & the others have been asking to see the Ireland
poems — you know the jolly one — & I’ve said ‘any day now’. I might even post
this in the morning & come back from the Bodleian to find that batch in the
mail. Still, it’s a tonic keeping in touch with you anyway — you’re the kind of
person I at any rate prefer to spend time with in a well-wrought manner
rather than seeing briefly over coffee or chatting up sporadically in some shape-
less crowd. The image has been distorted a bit: I don’t know whether I’m just
being sensitive about off-work impressions & the figure one cuts over weekends.

Got to get some more work done. Let us know a bit before Saturday
whether you can make it. You can go back on Sunday morning if you’ve got
to host it back to an afternoon rehearsal. Or maybe the show’s running already
you can’t have Sat’s, I don’t know. Tell me all the same.

There’s some more work here, if that’s possible.

Ciao now, luv – Arthur.


Hi kid: I’m feeling the strain a bit — it’s Friday nite eleven & I’ve been getting in about 10
hours a day all week: I just saw a white haze in the Bodleian & decided to ditch the
tower for a minute in favour of a coffee; whatever conversation was offering in the
Grad. Common Room. Still, it’s been a hugely satisfying week: I upended the usual revision-
term schedule by starting out in the middle-period – Chaucer & Shakespeare. Have you
ever read 'Troylus', the 8,250 lines of it? Sticks me on re-reading Bk. II as containing one of the most intelligent discussions, psychologically penetrative, of just what goes on in the mind of an aristocratic (Crisyde is the daughter of a Trojan priest in Chaucer's version) woman - i.e. for that matter a female from any social class - at the thought of a projected liaison, in which she will be concerned to keep up social appearances, the mistress's or true-love's 'honour' in the Courtly Code. Sh. when he came to treat the story characteristically adapted it to his own brilliant ends - whereas the Crisyde is excused her infidelity by the poet on the grounds of female frailty & insecurity in a world ruled by men, Sh. (notoriously, do you think?) not only makes his Crisyde a categorical whore (pun on 'war') but sees Helen of Troy as a vulgar strumpet & rants against our common bestiality; rather awkward of the bloody fellow, I'd say - but then I'm being facetious. There's Tempest, which I've just read again, & Winter's Tale; virtuoso performances about which I might get the chance to say my bit during the early half of June.

By the time Sat. comes around I feel that I've deserved a relax. I might go down to our Pavilion tomorrow afternoon for an ale & some exercise & sun (if there's any to have). But during the week I picked up a book I've been dying to read again, Empson's Some Versions of Pastoral - though someone's gonna end up looking all skinny & pale & hollow-eyed from spending too much time in gloomy interiors feeding on intellectual papulm!

I'm glad you're home, & sure that you're enjoying it immensely. You might even want to stay in which case I'd forgive you. Myself, I feel the isolation sometimes, as if the ground beneath me had been cut away, but it's a straight choice bet. isolation here vs. isolation plus a waste of my powers in the Cape of Good Hope, which some Portuguese sailor aptly named Cabo de Tormento. Uprooted, a bloke can take it as it comes. Will a bird, I think it's different; but as a woman of independent means & intelligence you might feel that things worked for you in Canada, that I'm talking through my hat. Not that I wear one.

When I remember the things done last summer term; life isn't what it used to be. No joy, as we say, 'bad news'. But I reckon it's all for the best, to fall back on a cliché for the moment. There's always a party going somewhere on a Sat. evening, if one's so inclined - there's a session in townies-suit class in college tomorrow night to which I've been invited, though I find the idea of being
served food & drink by other (i.e. in Oxford 'lesser') human beings, repulsive. There is also the occasional romantic episode, stopping short of the full-scale involvement-with-colleague-female thing which I've managed so far to avoid. Fritations here are frankly a drag. Which again means that you steer clear of places like the Oxford Union or the 'great' Newman rooms where it's the IN thing to appear with an aristocratic mini-skirt hanging onto your elbow.

What am I grumbling about? Boredom. You must be seeing a lot of action down there. Do Brian & Co. still have their group going or has marriage clipped your dear brother's wings... What's his wife's name again? - Rather nice chick. I used to like her when I made my (ostensibly-to-collect poems-tipped-by-Joan) visits to the Villa. And how's Wendy doing? Sweet kid, but you mentioned ages ago that she'd plunged into a new love affair. And Avril, ma dearest, give her my love too, will you?

You don't happen to have seen a certain Mr. Louis Rousseau? If you do, pass on my regards & a few grumbles - he wrote me a rambling, funny letter: the lst I got when arriving, but since then there's been a remarkable silence, as if old Arthur had suddenly assumed an importance which put him beyond the bounds of Hotspot understanding. So 'h'mm elk wag op 'n briefie, oorait? The Finnans too - are they still in the vicinity?

You're trip back must have been O.K., otherwise how come you're reading this? Anyway, Ralph's married now, isn't he? & I'm having a quiet chuckle again at my own folly. What was concrete about that insubstantial pageant was that I felt the pressure of inspiration - weren't you discreetly my Muse in some undisclosed way? - & paging through some old notebooks & notes towards Capetown novels I came across poems which even now stand up to re-reading.

Of course, lest I forget (which Baastkap forbid!), what's the political scene like? The cause here is such a cramped one, the scene happens in London anyway, but I've not found time to do more than attend talks given by eminent exiles - which exile is 'eminent'? - recently Abie Sachs, Dennis Brutus, at Brasenose College, centre of Jacar (Joint Action Comm. Against Racial what-it-is). Tell my, I've never asked a really, really known, apart from the instinctive feeling of solidarity:

What are your politics in respect of the S.A. scene specifically? Nothing you say is going to prejudice me, so come up, as it were. It's a bit on the heavy side
for a holiday thought, I agree — defer it if you wish. Right now I'm so busy in my spare moments planning this Canada stint that I've not thought deeply enough about my own position as a son or at any rate a foster-child of the Beloved Country. Considering some historical tragedies, I'm not too keen either. Am I being ungrateful?

If I'm going to get some sleep, though, it's certainly not going to be on that bewildering question! Pass my love to your parents, to Michael, & to whoever happens to be around. As for yourself — well, it's best now to say simply that I'd like to see you again.

Ever — Arthur.

[TERM THOUGHTS]

For a birthday — 24th — a card (in rococo):

My Lord,

I trust by the time this note is in your hand that you will have indulged in your orgiastic revels & imbibed celebrations & will be well on the way to recovery.

May I offer you my best wishes on this memorable occasion, for many long & felicitous years to come.

I remain, Sir, Your Obedient Acolyte

Maggie Lenox.
APOLOGY from London

only at the particular moment how
disappointment hurts. It is another scene
that hears the lark at dawn in boughs of lush
green— we must all return & break more stone.

South over the sea to where the diseased wind
rages in the dockyard of the soul.
In an English spring we litter our sorrows
following each other other in a muddled file.

Or grouped in Highgate round a dead philosopher's
bust on a tomb, harshly featured. Rain
washed the garlands. Your tears
eroded me. This is the short & plain

Says Chaucer, Bodley. Do not sorrow wise man
goes Beowulf in an Oxford dialogue.
An apology arrives at breakfast:
your last non-appearance makes you beg
mercy?
You are my best as much as he, she,
you have as much right as any other.
There are those in that sun & rock country
who wouldn’t dare call me brother.

Not over the marmalade that I’m immensely surprised
or fierce because of trivial error.
‘The longer love that in my thought 8th harbour’:
it is the larger suffering symbolized.

K.A.N - 5/1967

bitter complacency
NEWCOMBE AT CROYDON WEST

The dealer in shirt-sleeves told his assistant Jenny
to serve champagne to a tall supercilious lady.
Middle-aged Americans in sneakers,
peering closely, notes to the gouaches,
jostled the dainty natives, a Rolling
Stone in executive grey arrived
without a murmur among the objets d'art.
Upstairs against the ebony panels
under the chromium lamps a woman stood
deciding to buy Bill Newcombe's watercolour.

A small pooh opening in the arcade
with smatter young professionals, he the self-taught
veteran shown in Paris,
Sydney, Moscow, San Francisco, New York,
props himself on his stiff leg, looking bland,
back now, still in exile on an island.

Vancouver was the first one: Across the Strait with a view of
he built sand castles, trapped birds in his boyhood,
cut timber before the war, gave up Creating
those weird spindly shapes which sang
along the pulsing blood. The Royal Air Force
claimed his gift of invention, or— for a time his gift of invention.

Hence experience is learning:
violence punctures, or interrogation rooms,
surrealistic phantasm or soup tins inspire him.

There are no birds, guitars, or flowerpots.
His flimsy tumbling squares
seek each other at normal moments
Where line & tint converge
the anguish being level with the eye, yet not concealing any of the fact.
Tonight the private view goes on too long:
he grumbles sceptically, blames his Welsh wife.
Nervy, she shakes her rose,
offering me a cigarette.

From an iron pit close to the glittering stars
he peeped thinly into a hell of flake,
the lights bouncing between long stretches of dark.
Or he tattooed the visible sky with smokeplumes
cooped in the belly of a steel dog
till shrapnel studded his ribs with scarlet jewels.
But it is 20 yrs later or so that I hear
the story in bits & pieces.
We are drinking Spanish sauterne,
in the top flat of a brick house, Highgate, London,
& winter returns to the landing:
the owls hoot at night.

Now that I travel away I remember
the soft greys of autumn, the ambers of autumn,
the quickness of seasons, occasions that change
the din that rises from the lobby where
a Pakistani in a dressing-gown
matters over the telephone,
& our wine-rich laughter while
over the cold fields the thick air settles.

In retrospect appears his face, pock-marked & wrinkled, cantered
underneath his leather waistcoat, and hat
though I may also see, at dusk,
thin leaf-blades of his eyes observe austerely
the feeble warmth that now is alone available.
To survive, we must choose the possible.

(his meant perhaps) Oxford — 12/66

the merest wisp
NIGHT FERRY

Origins — they are dim in time, colossal, locked in the terrible mountain, buried in seastone, or vaporized, being volatile. What purpose has the traveler now, whose connection is cut with the whale, the wolf or the albatross? What does your small mouth tell of supernovae or of chromosomes?

There are ivory graveyards in jungled valleys, rainbow treasures, harps that sing in the wind, fabled wrecks where the dead sailors sleep & a cuttlefish sleeps on a bed of old doubloons. Black bows cleave water, suffer the waves: finding the wet deck, funnels, sea-surge covered cargo, lifeboats roped mute above the seasurge, pit-pat beats the heart against the rail: my flesh of salt clings to its molecules.

Oily & endless, the stream is a truth drug. Pick up signals from vast space, gather a ghastliest cry from an astronaut lost for ever his electronic panels blipping danger signs. Below crushed like the foil on a Cracker Barrel cheese pack a nuclear submarine no longer muscled into the thunderous pressure. Is it the infinite sound I hear that’s going where? e to

When can the intelligence be given? who are you?

Not only this, but also between us, the sensory network registers potential tones, imaginable patterns, for there are destinies as well as destinations.

Screw churns through the superstructured centuries of shut night, washing waters: waves dip away, swell back, break open
in from swaths - moon cobbles.
A snatch of Bach that intervenes
fusingly pours through the portholes of my ears.
Boat on the Irish waters though I hear
piercing voices, whisper of snow, spring forests,
that set up plangencies & issue odd thoughts.
Will the ephemeral melody transistorized,
Your eyes also seem to feature.

O are you daylight, love, to diminish my mist?
Siren, or the breeze; child, forgetful
while reaching through my bones?
In rest rooms people crowd, sleeping, fug
posturing. Anyway of whom do I think?

I find an empty bunk, bend
under the muffled light, lie
in half-sleep, knock knock goes
the who's there night - a tap bottle tinkles.
It is the seasway, wavespeak, dance of angles.
Listen & you listen. Those are bilge-pipes.
Some are night sounds, far from bird cries. Or a shark's snore.
The radius of consciousness is infinite, but seesaws.

Obscene are the unborn children, insane are the destitute mothers.
I do not think, who have known them, disowned them.
The contours of cow dung, or snow in the cold hills
crisscrossing earthwards, or zigzag catgut
stitches in chest incisions - these are the merely
straightline rhythms, level planes, the simplicity ratio.
Then there's you
who must somewhere exist to be regarded
as needy, needed, nightbound - a cherished enigma.

K.A.N

Liddell Gardens, Kensal Rise, N.W. 10 - 4/67
ACCIDENT

Light throws oblongs, setting a yellow
crane aflame among sombre fires, they blur
the foreground lands in magenta jerseys, hold
me witnessing the accident. A stethoscope
would be redundant locating the pulse points
of chiaroscuro, there are no notes
you can take with a Biro on a match box, since
that which happens is so unforeseen.
The essential fact comes as a bull that flutters
over the upland - patterns of knee, thigh, blood-spotter
weaving hips, strides flashing knee & thigh
reassumable: an outdoor chips a wide pass in with his eye,
as a veteran at the white pillar
stretching his memory, alive with light -
the chill of winter air

The language roar muffles his lungs.
And after lunch as I was passing
the new steel & glass extension, who
should I meet but this mod-stockinged blond from Berkshire
wishing to lift a sandstone buried in dust
onto her bicycle. And then eventually
get to look up for R.S. Palmer
C3 point 5 in the catalogue, found instead
the steady 20C of the alcohol column
with WEDDING calibrations on glass. The stacks
of brown tomes admittedly looked tear
surgically anonymous: for instance
'This work is intended to supply the want
of a scientific English grammar'.
We are now at the funeral. Threading back
under a stately sky, crunching the grass mounds,
to pay a 11- fine for non-returning
between neat tables. I thought
notice you are a liability. Check
again under authors by name:
I am not here nor my volume of meditation.

Fog on the brain. I was tired, despairing
the birth of nerves, the soft bones
that had hardened to a bone. I should have felt
my way like an octopus through grey traffic
had not a spill of light suffused
some unessential qualities: extraordinary happiness.

Despair is temporal now at teatime
walking past an ocher church or owing
Blackwells money for last year's books. I carry
philosophy, accidence hooked on my biceps,
meeting squash players in track suits, ders & other
Oxford gentlemen. Meet me
Lust night the Antlers, today is survival,
tomorrow the Playhouse, Judy, a scope
or tea for two or one in the pub after 10)
when the sun is dead in February: I
have seen miracles

Oxford 1967/2

EPISODES WITH UNUSABLES

I. At dawn I rise to water,
smelling the stucco & my shoes, leaning
into a wisp of air through sheathed sunbeams:
it is another relief to be alone.

My liquid drops ammonia jewels
smoking in a net of grass.
Such a brief while the art of scintillation
lives in a miniature rainbow, the spring
earth tells me that all my words now,
my winter phrases, my wrought sentences
are dead as the thin conversation of evenings.

II. Tomatoes sprout in the garden, green
lettuce, the cool potatoes of the earth:
seeds we had thrown there, through the window,
through the door, where you
stood ready to make love, guarding my movements,
accepting my muscles, so I was thinking
how we were two, meshed in a kind of tenacity.

We have not watched
the sun shrivel the skin, eating
the juice of the unusable.
We have been locked in sleep, you have been, fearing
the third growth, the fruit of nature.
I have gasped in the rubbery darkness,
your cry has shattered all my integuments,
the total ecstasy has laid me waste.

I have loved you. We have not seen
the patience of waiting, the seeds suffered
the weathers, they will stood in their infinite wisdom,
the tiny roots that felt their way into life,
the tendrils that clung.
Your hair fell over my eyes,
your aching beauty held me rooted.

Nov'je 2/67
Dirty
As in a song some men surround
your wild heart simpletons would tame
though struggles are for multitudes.
They (same men) cast you out unaided.

You've ascertained old order ends
(or merely staring in violent dream
where you bizarre ran axe-amok?).
To nor-dic law your lunacy offends.

Reducing to essentials (if you may:
breakdown statistics anyhow are such),
find multiple indictment you gen. you
rebell ing again st civiliz. THEY.

The red-nosed you your own shrink from
observes the flock as first a blur,
assuming life when, howling Jekyll axed,
the Hyde survives to tell of what's to come.

You meanwhile feast on old refrains:
please don't believe the earth is round,
that exegesis can be found
for writing on the wall, Samson in chains.


RECOVERY
Empty houses are the grief beginnings
for those who've wanted to be reconciled.
Sickly the chances slip beneath
hands which waste the golden hours
under this brooding quiet sky.

From you to you I bear these memories
of tenderness & violence, quick bright laughter.
In an autumn day with milky cloud.
returns the scenes, now edged with wisdom.
Room of ash & brandy fumes.

What is love but hunt
for peace from restless longings, throughs
of desolate desires. - What is love?
To love the stranger is one's only way,
to be alone is thus our destiny.

Capetown - 1965/3.

COMPARISON
Sight is a miracle where early pearl
vistas theastently unfold under blue translucence.
Dawn, still & eloquent, unbends the curled
tendrils of day in my black man's presence.

Light grows through venetian blinds,
points diamond from the bevelled mirrors,
or jewels contoured lawns. The blond
sun kisses the lady on the terrace.

She emerges between the flowering pillars
where purple blooms cascade, then
her white throat's hollow glitters, her
Spaniel smells the insouciant milkman.

His share of town or mine is
home to guilty feet that tread
home through this protective loveliness;
so what's opaque do not presume dead. "Weave a garland for
his head."

Light baskets through willow meshes
or needles cobwebs; the sharpangled sun
batters spangles from metal & glass
where rust & violence have allowed reflection.

Slow return is through stone-wet streets
swept politics-clean in white man's rage.
I almost learn to adore the
twenty-six sweet
glimpses of grass among township garbage.
Yet what of the night that passed within your ambit, gracefulness? Though rubbed ways assault its poise my love has been ubiquitous.

April 1965 - Port Elizabeth.

**REFLECTIONS**

Fogged morning, clockwork city
of sewers & towers, smoke & sirens.
Sad weather
engenders sombre reflections, reflects
in campanile bell that conveys the hour.

I am not infinite
shuffling my feet over cobbled
public squares where pigeons open
those flitting ranks that close behind me.

Skies change from opalescent
to their usual inscrutable blue,
then the shimmering turquoise water
lies under the hilt of houses
adoubt the death of statesmen.
Or the lifting veil reveals
familiar buildings of glass & concrete,
no face or word or happy miracle.

Images shape but so often
wind stirs to ruffle the water;
grey ripples dip the sand, spume clings.
Gradually I let
slip my disappointment.
Wherever flotsam relaxes
black bacteria renew the action.

1965 - pe. (Erasmus: Durban Road)
Repentance
Black tide of life where green germs feed
creates in me wide streams of thought;
problems, regrets all synchronise
to bow my skulling morning spirit.

Where have I wandered from what's believed
& whom into curved strange energies?³
& which new sin does conscience choose
to focus on when light arrives?

To see these faces is to see your face,
& what brown lovely limbs I clasp
survive in tight-eyed dreams alone.
It's for your honesty I long.

My search concerns the true & real,
sincerity, your touch & feel:
I squander love because
of somewhere I can never travel.

p.e. 1965
one of South End High School's Mondays.

TEACHER'S FINAL
Capricious wind of spring. The school
under repair, the locks removed;
this door that bangs incessantly.
The smoked glass rattles, I feel
flags of medium air wrap round my limbs.

What started as
the wide bay's boomerang curve,
a patch of sunlight on the velvet sea,
leapt alive in the blood's lyric:
some hunger flamed to tell
my meaning here, my going hence
to earn more purpose than this narrow world
affords its children.

The mob tramps out, the lusty bell has freed them.
Outside they traffic with toffees & apples.
Gulping minerals, they din,
& one brings in a chair,
explaining to sir the door's a nuisance,
does not expect it won't be long.

I light a cigarette, tap
the plain end on the sill,
make firmness for the lips which half
in rue & half in pleasure curl.

What should remain but destiny,
a little gust sweeping dust across cracked playgrounds?
And there I've walked, & now again I see
white-topped breakers fly their spindrift,
howing in to the hard land, dogged.

8/1965 - Barlowe's Beglestone Rd

CATHARSIS

The flesh, soft & debauched, finds
darkened room its harsh miasma:
bleakless air assumes awareness
of terror, regret - enough's enough.
O so the self-disgust descends
on lids in unsedation; shamed
my lashes glitter with the dark tears.
Can the sour mouth smoothly speak
love, the bloated tissues kiss you sweet?
For this the limbs lie quivering,
the soul at near-dawn sweats.

Once our two hands touched in truth
& that enough was insufficient:
bent fingers set this down to find
the helix of your healing tendrils.
Opposite action springs from the excess
(Hegel, historian, pardon my conceit):
out of the afternoon, shall I
hold to a discipline, be meticulous.

For goings & comings may spawn new perils,
heart may suffer fatal estrangements.
Believe the rose dawn's promise:
your image is the one thing real,
to you is my whole being given.

Clare Street, Koster, 6/65. Joe Itaka.

TRANSITION

Aqua-clear, the bracing sky,
\ morning breathes cucumber cool,
inlets the leaver with gentle airs.
My final spring grows beautiful.

Most lovely, not yet being lush,
athletic grace of limb & bud.
I stand self-empty, ascetic
in this my land of wealth & blood.

For your success, black residue,
I bear desire still, night thing?
Remain in the smoky summer long
though I am gone from green-flamed spring.

Gelvendale 8/65
Returning through known landscapes
of sand & thickets screens;
water, glimpsed, glints among reeds.
Mind brims with seasons & scenes:

rekindled from ashes of living
those that I'll
are people to remember,
whose pride has been in giving
flame to a mass of ember.

 Darkness comes & goes,
assuming shapes of terror.
Dawn now shows, ash-trunked aloes
grey-green with an ancient air
& shooting scarlet flowers.
O golden land: my people
you beg the rain of mercy:
travels can make me forget it.

Green patina on copper rock grew
under the blue & looming mountain,
sweetthorn's white barbs brilliantly
pierce the sky's luminescence.
And though the throat goes tight,
whatever glory the heart can
muster day or night
shall be for every man:

Because with an infinite eye
I see those varied faces,
this laugh, that voice, complaint, or praise.
In summer sky
So lest I forget these years:
through whose rooms I have walked,
whose hearts I've occupied,
me may fortune teach from them
Objects at Bellville

Bark peels from blue gums, decile leaves
float brown & large & dead across the asphalt.
Sheered sleekly in sunlight
Starlings scuffle in the weeds. A man called
Tom or X or 13 on the darkie payroll mows
the wide lawns
who goes round the concrete fountains singing.
Water-lilies rot in ease
while the wind roams, exploring all corner
& Mr Legon, sits writing cheques for new
volumes of propaganda.

Barely of the buildings I am half-aware
(tall & ghostly, erected to fascist proportions
by edict of the Minister for Black Comedy):
Beyond in the outer areas native growths
consume the flats to horizon
where "shark-toothed mountains check them.
Below lie fossils of my fathers:
simple enough
to make the mind precious.

Walk plotting no route, & you can hear
footballing students brown with the complexion
of guilt scream
across clipped winter grass to split the calm
enjoyed by a streetsweeper, you can see
a girl in floral blow blue smoke
& rearrange delinquent curls
before she slowly turns, floating a smile.

The willows crowd the fences
with intimidating busness:
but steel birds slash through drifting
cloud, in exhibitions.
Wimbledon on television as June is bowing out with spells of sunshine. Mrs Haddon-Squire's immigrant boy from Bombay shows her his 'pretty verses' of 'crack' & 'hop' & the sound of 'bang' that made the maddened park keeper jump. Improbable name like that, Jazz Patch: he was a scene at sunset 'closing down'.

I give a rundown of the day's events: the Gas Board man has fixed the bathroom leak for the 4th time in as many weeks. A woman carted a painting called 'Why Not' into the Rolls waiting outside, the one who rang & said 'Sorry to hear your husband's in hospital would he still care to gp?' to donate to the Vietnamese rumble sale at Hampstead Heath Sat. morn. The Exhibition upstairs in the Commonwealth Institute after the third cop had pointed out the right traffic light where one turned left was well attended by schoolchildren & Colonel West the bogus New York dealer: 'pretty' said his feather-brained wife of Bill's abstracts & my timing was just perfect as the 6 bus came looping round the N.W. 10 bend. But as I munched a cottage cheese sandwich fists banged on the door & psychopathic eyes glowered through the slot & when I opened the biggest schoolboys you have ever seen in your life ran off like mad down Chamberlayne Road.

Santana is two sets down. The boy urgently awaits my judgment. I am an older poet. Here is my version:
By the seaside you can
hear the high-tide of the evening rushing on the supporter wall (what india of the mind has made him forget the crowded land?)
Beyond the sea you can see the sun, red sun going down the world
or maybe to another country
beyond our shared opinion
(0 he is young & loves the milkman still)
Clouds too have gone
Some boats are tied to their posts
(now I think he has closed down for the night)

II. What do you know of my night meditations, vigils, ordeals, odysseys in metropolises?
When out of nightmares I wake wet as a fish into dawn, eyes pulled, my mouth raw with survival, the hair of life streaming upon the hollows, domes of the flesh played, grazed, torn, gashed & battered
in a million operations of discovery kaleidoscoped in a phantasmagoria exponentially

Flashbacks are my mental accidents, memory as opposed to history,
silvery detail versus the golden facts:
what ought to have been is never true.
'The wondrous mass of glowing dice'
a philosophic woman writes:
a fog breaking under its film of ash
with the sea pounding beyond the marsh
& you coming in through the grey light of autumn
to fiddle the cat & break my poem.

Being born (in jungle time) to the drums of sorrow
I cannot bear the alive versions of things that crawl, bite, strike
except your glance or smile, a teardrop gleam:
to shape a fine line I strained all nerves.

The wrought phrase, the precise immemoral
come from elsewhere, the beautiful evocation
dies with your shadow, vision fading
in the borderland between love & friendship.

'I can only say'

we stood in the zoo at Phoenix watching an onyx
remembering perhaps the dodo.

Have you heard? What do you know
of my exodus from Kalahari, drinking from a gourd,
eating thin lizards, with the riverbed dry
& the dead dunes groaning with smallpox corpses
& the black sun beating through the travelling blind
air & the blind invaders coming on horseback
along the empty valleys when the drums
went silent?

You do not know:
you go up at noon & go to bed at midnight.

Warbaby: 24

Consider having been born in a year of hardship in a semi-desert town:

a curly baby of the ostrich belt / 24 chicken eggs in a calcium shell.

I must have been one hell of a sweet brown bundle
to the women who passed, the grandfathers who smoked pipes in the porch, too old for anything.
The two-toed bald-faced birds in the backyard
swallowing nuts & bolts from my uncle's jalopy
they knew nothing of Secondary Industry.

That was anyway a sympathetic introduction, offering biography: how
the wind whistles off the western sea
& the weather of water is rainy grey.

Penrhos ('by the side of the marsh') with Danydd Owen
Goverwy Roberts — Plas Newydd, Pwllheli, Caernarvonshire
One For Joan
Strange twinge, the art of memory, it serves
to glimpse the soft underside by accident in retrospect
discovered in your darkness. You have climbed
lithely upon my bough, emitting radiance.
display remade that burns through the breakfast paper.

Obliquely as a butterfly is seen
through leaf-screen I first followed you at angles:
the camera of the heart adds to free movement
an element of involvement. Skin still tingles.

The hunger feeling in hollows, sentiment
that vaporized, teardrops in their bald sockets cradles
& makes a virtue of absence, operates
necessity for a dancer does to music that won't perish.

Strange twinge, the wound of memory, where scar
tissue grows over the hurt. It had those teasing letters coy delays
awakened into love, The waste is dead
that moved despite emetic through my system.

Call it persistence, or consistency
of attitude that now knows consummation:
originating the long belief, your far
eyes study me, my child will breathe your life.

And I am coming home although the clock
ticks away this intricate survival:
your wallpaper is monochrome around me
but also you present a unisymphony.

Arthur North: Kensal Rise, Liddell Gardens

With Arthenwyn, Bill ('sweet william') in limb hospital, poor angel. He smokes
Six Valley self-rollers, throws her sandwiches back at her in frustration. Delightfully
wizened with a dry sense of humour. But the fortitude is surely in the wrong place!
Goodbye to she of the beautiful island & gifted with compassion & like a rare jewel auroraed

Tide brings you home in summer light
through weeds & fingers that tug at consciousness.
Steering in the roadway, I come through
waving goodbye. The wind
streams through my face, the smooth air
rinses your limbs. My tarp hand
aches like a raindrop shattered on a leaf.
The salt sea has turned you free.

You are lover & loved by the world,
you are the heart's joy, dream that makes me a dreamer,
*shaped in the kind for which I know no tongue
to equal the expression. Watch how light
dances on the water, seabirds wheel.
I am dying on my feet because the coiled
silence within is visible through the seams.

Goodbye to the country, the host cities,
your face in my Oxford room; voice in a
our separate laughter in the green hills, running to crescendo
the songs that melted themselves into harmonies
amazing to ears within distance. To other eyes
we appeared as animals dissimilar.

And to ourselves we were not always one
but as in jest, a word that fell
there, a scene that happened there.
You spent that year editing my theory
of love you wrote the footnotes
to my philosophy, added the vast suggested the addenda.

[X] I embellished you with sentiments.

[X] You touched on at Sicily, Ceylon,
Gibraltar and

[X] after the amnesia of world war two,
put in at Sydney for repairs, supplies,
went round the Horn like an old-time mariner
And You Shall Remain Anonymous

Not to Stella as her Astrophel
but from some Aslian foxhole, or a deep
gold mine in the honeycomb of hell
where first I shook the cobwebs from my sleep:
more than beauty is your smile, your glance,
your flesh that’s snared & yet disperses dark.
You live in the silent medium, you dance
through numbing eras which the heart must mark.

Allegiances that pre-existed are
now foamed on by violence or decay.
The moment that the scald heals or the stars’
fragments reassemble there is this
wish to greet you néeing at the window:
and you shall remain anonymous.

K - 5/67

other smiles dissolved upon my brow
DISTINCTION

What troubles the flesh leaves the bone
sorry. Is it hearts' desire, or what? It is
loneliness, believe me, despite the attachment
of muscles, cling of tauntened sinews.

Experience-greed, I search continually
(say it is absensed if you have found it so)
for the bones of solence, the slenderly white
wing-fingers bleached in the rock-hollow

visited sometimes by the sea. To die in the air
is the noble thing, floating weakly to familiar
earth, & when the fire's put out
salt water can flame the veins no longer.

The eagle's wishbone on the mantelpiece
stirs in the paternal wind & parodies
my oblique postures, my fleshly illusions
on the testing sites of the carnal jungle.

Medulla mushrooms on the nervestalk that bends
up from the dung-root. The spacecraft of the pelvis
has no nylon rope for your spacewalk,
you are spilled umbilically cut off from the utens.
fall free from the womb, cut off at the navel (connection severed)

The flesh nails, the numbness at the navel
will never console the weaver; the knot or the tumour
never exhibited in the museum of the soul
whose natural history poises the bare brontosaurus.

doctrine, or convince me otherwise.

Let it be thus. The quality of ivory
calling the gentle dent of face
this hand must be but poor remembrance to
when love shall dangle these nerves again.

instinct should not supersede intuition.
But violent are the harsh times
upon the headlands of waiting, the interval islands:
in the interior world of self no flowers
grow in the black earth that fills the inkwell.

Retinas, taste buds, nostrils are alcoholic
with hunger for your symmetries, with what has been
the savour & scent of your absence.
What troubles the flesh leaves the bone sorry.

Notes for the New Year
Sleeping Beauty needs to love and
Cinderella needs it, but can winter
freeze into a truce for Xmas Carols?
Cracking the glass on the water you'd find
the jagged fragments glinting at your face
the same one still, distorted by dismay.

The high fields slope to asphalt veins
or bare trees break the droning level stretches
with traces of thin squared bones.
You may see buildings revive in the Via towns
after yule fumies in the Big City.
You smoke, beginning again among strangers.

The old place has its stone survivals
taken care of by clamoring men.
A man on the scaffolding yells to a mate,
a Morris hosts at the head of a thwarted queue.
In the pub the truck driver laughs sweetly.

One must wait in the narrow street, turn on the radio.
All other resolutions fail
not tolerant of destiny ...1966
Don't travel beyond
Acton at noon in the intimate summer light
of England
to Tuscaloosa, Medicine Hat, preparing
for flight
dismissing the bland aura of the past:
at Durban or Johannesburg
no more chewing roots or brewing trouble.

Bitter costs exorbitantly at London
airport in the noon heat
waiting for the gates to open

Big boy breaking out of the masturbatory
era goes
like Eros over Atlantis (sunk
in the time-repeating seas, admire my our
tenacity)
jetting into the bulldozer civilization
of Fraser & Mackenzie
which is the furthest west that man has gone

A maple leaf is in my pocket.
x-rayed, doctored at Immigration
weighed in at the Embassy
measured as to passport, smallpox, visa
at last the
official informs me
I am an acceptable soldier of fortune, don't
tell the Commissioner
I have Oxford poetry in the satchel
propped between my army surplus boots
as I consider Western Arrow's
pumpkin pancake buttered peas & chicken Canadian style
in my mind's customs office
questions fester that turn the menu
into a visceral whirlpool. You can see
that sick bags are supplied.
Out patholes beyond the invisible propellers
snow mantles the ground peaks over Greenland.
What ice island of the heart has weaned
you away from the known white kingdom
first encountered at Giants Castle.
You walked through the proteas rooted in the sun rocks
I approached you under the silver trees.
I was cauterized in the granite glare
on the slopes of Table Mountain, I was baffled
by the gold dumps of the vast Witwatersrand
when you dredged me from the sea like a recent fossil.

Where are the miners, the compound Africans,
your Zulu ancestors, where are
the root-eating, bead-charmed Bushmen, the Hottentot Sufferers?
Where are the governors & sailors of the
Dutch East India Company, where are
Eva & the women who laboured in the Castle?
You are required as an explanation.

Glaciers sprawl in their jagged valleys,
cool in the heights, there are mountains & mountains.
My prairie beloved, you whose eyes are
less forgetful, whose finger are less oblivious.
must write out chits for the physiotherapy customers
must fill out forms for federal tax.

Consolatory, the air whiskies my veins.
The metal engines beetle on to further destinations.
Pilot's voice reports over Saskatchewan
the safety of this route, the use of exits,
facility of gas masks, Western Arrow's
miraculous record, the flat sea washers
in Vancouver Bay. As we taxi in
I find I can read the road signs.

Maybe she is like you, maybe most women
deeply resemble you, all of them are all things to all poets; the cigarette girl in velvet with mink nipples, fishnet thighs, whose womb is full of tobacco. Have a B.C. apple in the A.D. city of the Saviour, e sing the centennial song.

WAITING
The isolation of exile is a gutted warehouse at the back of pleasure streets: the waterfront of limbo stretches panoramically—night the beautifier lets the lights dance across the wharf.
I peer through the Skull's black windows wondering what can credibly save me. The poem trails across the ruined wall a solitary snail, or phosphorescently swims into vision like a fish through a hole in the mind's foundation, acute as a glittering nerve.

Origins trouble the voyager much, those roots that have sipped the waters of another continent. Africa is gigantic, one cannot begin to know the strange behaviour furthest south in my xenophobic department. Swastikaed

Come back, come back, mayibuye cried the breakers of stone & cried the crowds cried Mr Kumalo before the withering fire mayibuye Afrika

Now there is the loneliness of lost beauties at Cabo de Esperancia: all the dead poets who sang of spring's miraculous recrudescence in the sandscapes of Karoo Sang of thoughts that pierced like arrows, spoke through the strangled throat of motley humanity bruised like a python in the maggot-fattening sun.
You with your face of pain, your touch of quiet,
with eyes that could distil me any instant

to essence
have passed into some diary, some dead journal
now that the computer, the mechanical notion
obliterates sincerities.

The New amplitudes of sentiment has brought me no nearer
to anything affectionate
this magnitude of thought has but betrayed
the lustre of your eyes.

You yourself have vacated the violent arena
for a northern life of semi-snow
under the Distant Early Warning System:
I suffer the radiation burns of silence.

It is not Cosmic immensity or Catastrophe
that terrifies me,
it is solitude that mutilates,
the sunbeam that reveals ash on my sleeve.

**TWO WOMEN**

Behind the counter, an on-the-prowl
Miss Modern. Strident high heels
rip, rip, rip at air or wood:
what is it to which she fails to kneel?

Perhaps men strew their floors with nails.
Ask her if you want to be impossible;
be wary of direct thrusts though, she'll wax sarcastic.
Her conversations are confined to the till.

Coups you attempt from a distance
backfire - she forges your ego bare like a bone.
Hate her guts? No, sorry, that's up her alley;
she's strictly speaking a Tigress on the phone.

Darkness should hone her sharpness then
when falling shutters signal her home.
But pounced on by night isn't she rather
terrified by the stars, lampooned by the moon?

K. 1962.
SPRINGPOINT

Under spring's leafy boughs in borrowed robes,
gravid with disproportion of the fall,
this brown-fleshed face, naked, eyes that intuitively probe
a windhole in the trimmed bush by the wall,
I yesterday my freedom, find our now
dissolved affinities turning in a white cloud.

Not the particular rain it is that slants
laying the dust in our tracks: the general motion
of water washes sentiments & ends events,
though not as indemnity this or any season.
Stand at your distance with a slow smile
as under the arches I go entering eras.

Footprints remain in the suburbs of your mind
though you are shopping downtown among the neon lights
for the Sunday chicken in the concrete kingdom of concrete
glassed with faces, with platinum fingernails, sights
of gold teeth & the rotting sneer, the scented-
slant that burns you into an instant jelly.

You of (white I mean) symmetries
will never be cynical, since we once
floating between the unthinkable & the ungraspable,
Communicated of Mars & the moon & hence
the million umbilical cords that must
Connect man to man, & dust to stardust. K. 7/67

Poem In Autumn
[Again, the dipping light through trees] Light dips through the trees,
the lawn's green bangs slope to a gravel walk:
windows throw flat spangles on the street.
[White feather slowly floats] Slowly floats white feather,
threading its way to earth through the penitent leaves.

Trailing schoolties, a straggle of boys
toss sticks,
Seeking to dislodge the high / half-sweet fruit.
Look at me, scarcely recognizable:
beige will suburban mildness.

At the asphalt's edge
I emerge from remembered depredations
exulted over
under lampposts in summer, by winter braziers.
Then already I caught glimpses at entrances or exits
of worlds beyond the jug
induced by aspirins in coca-cola
or butts on the newspaper pavement of General Motors.

So, disenchanted as a Salamander
I graduated from the ghetto. Others
never broke through the petrol rags.
They lived to bruise a world
distinguished by its rite of punishment
while I dreamed to reconcile
the face of my sylph with the urge to destroy.

She, my fairy desire, a girl of class,
she hardly pretended to notice, having notions,
but reappeared on the balcony, smiling indulgently
with that Lux-scrubbed look, with mischief
like a green scent about her, I imagine
for distance can distort the senses, / s geography is written thus:
't the trees in my country are evergreen'.

The brown leaves are falling here now in England,
but proud with height along the autumn hedges,
grown as tall as the sun
with its red eye in the west
I move though it is here with more of wisdom.

K. 9/66
COUNTY KERRY

1. The Green Eyes of the Fairies, seen through Guinness

Morality shifts. Harp Lager, tells of the twenty-and-a-half-pound salmon hooked on the Caherciveen side of Lough Currane, & how the gillie caught his pants on the second fly while thrashing out to gaff the fish that fought. The waterworks man tilts his black-bezoo glass over his lip so that the cream resolves into cobbles. Conley’s foreman parks the tractor while the boss comes through in a Donegal tweed. He calls two pints, & a third for the harmonica player prancing in wellingtons, bowing his head with a black eyepatch over the eye — remember Homer was totally blind, who drank from an amethyst Cup, & sang.

I am muddied in Guinness. The silt pulse throbs warm along the blood, richer than words. Wistfully, the earth-rich smell of peatsmoke spirals twistingly up the black brick, drawn by cold March air into the star-seeded evening now descending on the lake, or coming up the road from Killarney, or over the seabird bay with the tide at Ballinskelligs sweeping in.

Soft & sea-green eyes, the light pierces through wrinkles in a lounge of sound. A girl’s innocence becomes lucid, her look behind the counter at the Lobster Bar is deep also, like water, conceals fairy tales, & tales of Cairns & Castles, sailors & tribes, saints, & knights in the bleak stone towers who hear ever the wind Skimming from mountain ring to mountain ring, the ringed kingdom is never skyblue in the western drift.
of mist bled in the sea & borne on the salt air.
Old men talk & their eyes are green
& young girls laugh & their eyes are also
green. I echo you, Yeats, Sligo bard.

II. Valentia Island - Main Impressions

Halfway towards the lighthouse on the headland
it's teatime if you've taken the noon ferry
& come up from the pier along the slate walls of slate, shale of the ager.
The afternoon nudges you back, the stunted trees
stand like fossils in the afternoon sun. The Gaelic
word for telephone is telefón.
They are here too, the intruders,
& the landscape has them merged.

The man bids us sit down. Shortly hence/after with a tray his
wife follows.

Davie Angus is a retired
I.C.I. director. You can meet

Dorothy Colleen Carnegie, Burmese harpist
settled in a teahouse, & their youngest
boy is learning to play Segovia.

Along a lip of the sea below the hill
someone is building a summer retreat
with Chinese mats & delicate brica-brac—
an empress here, in jade, a Swordsman there,
a college emblem, Oxon. '38.

A thin woman is seated, smoking,
her small round head erect, wearing a silver sandal,
her crossed legs bronzed, a beautiful symmetry.
There are seashells on the walls, bones hollow & white & whorled
at rest on the windowsill, or stirred
to a calcium tinkle under the wind's finger.

IV. Chess In The Butler Arms

Some orthodox procedures as we drink
off polished tables, American tourist class.
You notice a blonde in minutestain:
a chromium diaper pin's revealed
as her coat's pulled from the opal button open;
Courrèges boots I guess. The young man orders two Irish whiskies, large, with ice.
The barman serves with diplomatic expertise imported.

Sunken into the blue roof, lights are dead.
The daylight briefly falls where frosted glass closes behind a man with accent French.
I fish a ciggie from my donkey jacket.
Behind the cepidistras, she is watching
will polished boredom. He pretends to study the map of Kerry, where to find purple mountains, virgin lobster beds.

No Russian mastery pervades the play.
There are no variations of the Spanish Game. And what I imagined to be Mueller's Attack loses me a centre pawn. I castle,

getting up to get two pints of Guinness.

Obnoxiously, we sit & laugh.
as men do laugh, outside the world is Ireland beyond the jurisdiction of the next dollar or the domino theory of the Vietnam Advisors.
J.F. Kennedy's photograph from LIFE is faded in the seaside villages.

IV. Considering The Climate

Over the waves we return.
Wind whips across the goose bogs,
the shoreline black with wet shingle.
Jackdaws flit in a peatfield, gulls
sweep over the sand cliffs, turn to ride the wind.
A cormorant, black as an arrow, hunts horizontally.

The surf moans, booms; along the coast road
a dog barks from the farmyard.
Along the coast road Morris O'Reilly drives a broken Dodge with a dangerous lurk.
Over the rise, an L-sign glued to the bumper.

Is it the sea that detains me, is it the village
nostalgia, is it the wind-inhabited sky?
Clouds swirl & flake away; spindrift seasons the memory.
Also remember the long-lost
Carbo de Esperancia, also
patience & beauty, all that is possible:
fluminous, blood-spring, man-bred, violently
schooled in the zones of danger, to decay
susceptible, you also will be man-
handled [cruelly with rubber gloves,
the boots will tramp a tunnel through your heart]
If not careful, if to see
the Kerry kingdom as a mere vacation.

Not without light do I go, not only
neverless in back seat, limp in rat corners,
dredged from the mudbed, globulously staring
out of the seaweed mound at deadening heavens skiers:
but also the jackal barks, the air whispers,
in the husky alcoholic dawn there is something missing
always, that I hope to find again.

K/Waterville, Ireland, 4:67. (with Olof, Israelis, Ian
Max, Anne)

MUNDANE MONDAY

Halfwind out of London leaves in summer time
with floating sky
pursues a conventional interest, & I
follow my mind to its psychoboundaries.

The ice-cream man is ignorant of
telly aerials sprouting from the chimneys.
The ice-cream van plays pop's tellly music.
The dollhouse of his soul sprouts
Candy floss like fungus.
He is a sugar squeeze daddy, the flower children
laugh at his sticky fingers, & they chant
    Die thy lame id
    Die thy lame id

They garland him, sweet william & roses.
In the offices of corporation lawyers
Dow Jones is having frantic phone calls made
    It's the Industrials are frantic
because a hippie crying garishly
spills a paid of petals over the speculators
from forty-four floors up, another basket
of Rosemary & me for the policeman
we call it herb o' grace o' Mondays. Play
the cello with his night stick. It is everywhere
the enemy of sense
drives us to liberation. Who do you think
invades the London Stock Exchange
but Jesus & the love disciples

This is Hoovematic.
He & the salesman are plied with tea
as they ought to be
& when they wake up from their lunacy of commerce
will certainly be delighted to see
the luminous abstract on the enamel
surface of the washing machine
& will not try to sell people in the east.
electric clocks to the orientals.

No little surprise will they exhibit
(the TV Producer & his Cameraman)
when the room booms with acid rock.

Around this an orange painting flares
alcoholically if you are
an ancient artist, fugitive in a bottle.
At least you said something, come
through the flowers out of your hothouse days.
we will break the glass cage gently.

The Lord Mayor rode through Buckingham Palace
Road in ermine & terrible decorations.
He couldn't understand why
children in the park sang Strawberry Field Penny Lane
to drown the national waltz. Because we cannot
allow the presidents & ministers
to hold the people incommunicado
in sterilised toilets.
Now it is over, goodbye again.
The light of the east with queer ballistics
shoots through my head as I push my neck through the roofshades.
There is nothing to see but sunlight
on suburb pavements.

DRIVE

Gulls hover in spring's ease above
a stream that mirrors silver, lingers;
air also cannot slip between
the smooth wheel & my sooty fingers.
Glass curves against the motion's airstream,
green tint filters glare & sunsplash.
Desire halves the fog of lovespeech.
Gull glides along in plunge & rush
where touch & gesture make thercontact.
Brush shows colour bustling lush
along the road's electric shoulders.
Rapture crackles in your bloodstream.

Upslope where keen air cuts fiercer
shall I again unsheath a flower?
Stream that rapses your lips of murmur
takes the question, leaves no answer.
Ecstasy burns you to a cinder;
heights film your swimming eyes with wonder.

K. 9/63 - Kramboom Road, Crawford.

wine women song

Dry fingers drum
impolett music
on walls without doors.
Waiting insulated kills
the flowers of the sense
that in black lava bloom
and words are not electric drills