

express



70 short poems

Ashley Bovan

~~~~~

Hérons are not graceful  
they are large, awkward lumps  
One just fell out of a tree

~~~~~

I love it when your eyes go dark
black
the colour of my heart
the colour of my blood

~~~~~

She gave me ten pence.  
You are homeless, right? She said.  
Time for a haircut.

~~~~~

I have transmigrated
into 400 billion birds
If you see one
wave, say hello

~~~~~



Swans can't fly  
If ever you see them in the air  
they're not flying  
It's all done with springy wires  
and sky-hooks  
You must believe me  
I have a good degree in science



The bedroom curtains  
are always open  
all night  
watch the stars

This morning  
if you wish  
close them  
que sera sera  
close them



I never feel at home  
until I'm getting ready  
to leave



~~~~~

She cursed me the whole journey
thought I'd stolen her seat
wrong carriage
wrong carriage
wrong carriage
I think she was deaf

~~~~~

In the hotel lift, London  
he had a bicycle tyre, 17"  
Moulton, he said  
I don't actually live here, he added  
I live in China.  
Gosh, that's a long way to cycle

~~~~~

I think I am mentally ill
I'm on the kitchen floor
again
me and the fan heater
It's been hours
staring at the floor tiles –
very interesting cracks

~~~~~



Egret on the harbour wall  
stands in the sun  
waits for the tide



When I sit on the throne  
I am Keith Moon  
My diet is terrible



Jersey Thursday  
Fair Isle Friday  
Sweater Saturday  
Shrug Sunday  
Merino Monday  
Tank Top Tuesday  
Woolly Wednesday



Tractors  
In green fields  
Should be red



~~~~~

stupid
stupid
but there you go
I click open my D:\ drive
and among the crummy folder icons
and word docs
is a thumbnail of your photo
Makes me smile

~~~~~

Out back, the birds fight  
I love it! They're having fun  
Two wasps, mid-air, kiss

~~~~~

Cat has got the cream
and does not want my skimmed milk
Think I'll get a dog

~~~~~

It's what we do, hun  
It's other people you have to explain to  
if you can be bothered

~~~~~

~~~~~

Our Londis has closed down  
so I have to walk miles for tobacco  
Lovely autumn morning light  
A kiss through the open window

~~~~~

The kid
in the pushchair
swigs
pink liquid
and stares
at me
extraterrestrially

~~~~~

I like you  
you're odd  
that's all I want to say  
light three protected  
picture inhale air  
white level clear  
soft 12 safe  
imagine below three  
exhale cocoon  
see three, count three  
exhale clear  
breath breath of deeply exhaled

~~~~~

~~~~~

I broke into your bedsit and trashed it.  
I'm sorry, but I get moods  
and you seem nice.

[after Koch and Williams ]

~~~~~

Haiku

I dropped a lolly wrapper onto the path
the teacher said pick it up

~~~~~

Hike

A to B walks  
are better than circular  
You want to believe  
that you're going somewhere

~~~~~

When we had LPs
we believed in an afterlife
Side A : Side B

~~~~~

~~~~~

I gave her a rose
She gave me a Rubik's cube
No expectations

~~~~~

If I had a dog  
and I opened the back door of the car  
would it jump in?  
if I had a car

~~~~~

This looking backwards
is now beginning to smell
of exorcism

~~~~~

Experience is digital  
Fingers, thumbs  
Decadence  
Decapitation

~~~~~

~~~~~

An endless mishmash of logical plot  
Lines  
Coke  
on the mirror  
Just find answers  
Make it up yourself  
Sleep well

~~~~~

The knot
won't slip
All the walking
all the breathing
all the giving
in
Useless

~~~~~

I Can Drive You to Devil's Point

she said  
as I tried to impress her  
with the economy  
of my machined regularity

She  
cloud  
blurred my edges  
put points of light in the sky

~~~~~

~~~~~

Love gets heavier  
followed by greater distance  
for longer time

~~~~~

The nice ladies behind
the counter
in Boots
gave me one
£5, No. 7 voucher
'Good for your complexion,' they said.
'Life,' I said, 'is complex enough already.'

~~~~~

Training to be a Medium

I look for light  
in the dark  
Hold hands  
in a circle  
You stroke my fingers  
I don't need to be clairvoyant

~~~~~

~~~~~

Up at 20 past 4  
this morning  
The clock  
battery  
had run out

~~~~~

I built a reservoir
out of mashed potato
so you could walk around
and get some air
but they told me
not to play with my food

~~~~~

She faxed me a doc from her legal rep  
Boundaries: Permissive Paths: Country Code  
I'd erected my tent in her back garden

~~~~~

Baby strange-ling,
get back to the play-pen!
All your friends are dead

~~~~~

~~~~~

Disturbing Diagnosis

We three
are a triangle –
me
where I'm going
and
you

~~~~~

So nice to sit in Heath Park  
the sun full-face  
and watch the thin, white smoke  
from the chimney  
of the hospital furnace

~~~~~

Warming In (or think of something else)

Let me just love you
until I can love no more
then chuck me out with the rubbish

~~~~~

~~~~~

C'est La Vie

Politicians,
like the weather,
compress us,
release us,
force us to contract and expand.
We breathe
we must be alive.

Season follows season.
Difference convinces
that tomorrow will move on from today.
We must be going somewhere.

~~~~~

You put yourself into a mess of it  
but it took strangers to show  
that if we feel good together  
then the rest is chatter

~~~~~

poem on a ripped pack of condoms
her felt pen stuck
at the punch line

~~~~~

~~~~~

She told me
she divides her day
into half-hour chunks
At the end of each
she has a treat –
a piece of chocolate
a cup of tea...

The difficulty, she said
is keeping your mind
elsewhere

~~~~~

I am writing a poem with meter  
- it's about a gasman

~~~~~

Fell
bored
off my chair
Slid
to
the
floor

Coccyx

~~~~~

~~~~~

Punch-up at the Writers Group

She read out her poem

Michael wanted her to make it into a sonnet
Rob wanted her to dig deeper into her feelings

They settled it, man-to-man,
outside, in the car park

No idea who won
we'd all gone down the pub

~~~~~

Don't we just love  
to assign numbers to things  
like exactly how much  
not here  
not here  
is

~~~~~

Woven Threads

Twist Front & Short
Plunge Neck in Animal
Dipped Hem in Crepe
Neon Jersey
Waist Dotty

~~~~~

~~~~~

Garden Drama

A caterpillar
as big as an angry
snake
is suckering up your inner thigh

thirsty
grinning
hairy
hungry

Let him come
he means no harm

probably

~~~~~

I build a pipe  
to an imaginary god  
who never speaks

~~~~~

Zen walkway for girl in summer dress

The lock gates
at the entrance to the harbour
are always closed
but she's delighted to cross without waiting
grateful for her good fortune
We say nothing

~~~~~

~~~~~

Hypocrisy and Hippopotami

Bleedin hippo
bit me in two
in to two pieces
shed me faeces
I did, whilst his
brothers and sisters
gawped in glee
at me bifurcation
I've been bifurcated
I frickin cried
Herbivorous!?
My backside!

~~~~~

If you lived next door  
I think I'd look after you  
but you'd rather be a dollop of dead meat  
in someone's fridge

~~~~~

i stole dark night of the soul
because it was out of print
i posted it back
14 years later
anon

~~~~~

~~~~~

Cracker

You must be 80
I've seen you strut around the park

Today, I realised
I hadn't seen you for a while

Your collapsed shoulder
Your tilted neck
Broke me up

~~~~~

## Dirty Love

In the drizzle  
a huddle of smokers  
touch shoulders  
stay warm

Lost  
outside Crewe Station  
waiting

~~~~~

~~~~~

Karate groove  
thumped into sand

For you  
I said  
if you like  
a year ago

Smooth now

~~~~~

If the moon
tonight
is the centre of a clock face
then the time
according to Planet Jupiter
is nearly 9pm

~~~~~

if I was a goldfish  
I wouldn't remember

if I was a traveller  
I'd pack

if I was a clock  
I'd go forward  
or back

~~~~~

~~~~~

you left your shoes at the door  
walked on scatter rugs  
caught your toes in a mousetrap

~~~~~

I will write about your love
but this is not the moment of love.
Love is currently impossible.

~~~~~

She sleeps on her back  
with 20 coal tits resting  
warm on her tummy

~~~~~

You know what lads are like
they're on a ladder
climbing higher
Guns for hire

~~~~~

~~~~~

All Change

From this perspective
the Skirrid's northern flank is a perfect ski-slope

The rail-track turns southwards
The hillside is just another wooded cliff
scrubby
seen the like a million times

I cosy down inside myself
Nothing out there for me

~~~~~

Sunny days  
are like Sundays  
odd macromolecular clusters  
emerge into public spaces

~~~~~

There was a time
when you would not
read between lines
Now you do little else
even when
there's nothing to read

~~~~~

~~~~~

I'll meet you in the sky
dawn-light in your eyes

~~~~~

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