FRAMES OF REFERENCE

'Child be strange, dark, true, impure, and dissonant.

Cherish our flame. Our dawn will come.'

 – King Penda, in *Penda's Fen*

Nights are the best, stars shining as flames.

Starts as a line of light made from broken dreams

then sparks its way across my vision, resisting

the very precepts previously beyond question.

My guess is that we plunder the planet and

refuse to distinguish between the wild and tamed.

Occupation can be ornamental or eminently practical,

has been widely employed throughout history;

an audio system immerses you in birds warbling

as we attempt to find another handle on the sun,

lose ourselves in shadow's sacred legacy.

Untethered by written documents, we have

little to rely on, are always open to guesswork;

there are disarmingly clever infographics

and dusty exhibits of all our mistakes and lies.

What looks like power sockets and raindrop ripples

are visual poems, the shrieks and moans you hear

the curator's performance work. The broader circle

of language is a footpath crossing neatly mown lawns;

if you look up from the page's horizon and lose yourself

you will find notches and lines, mute stones and works

of collaboration and creativity. The future runs mostly

downhill, skirting the retreating ice, eroding debate

and song. Meaning will not translate into words,

thought has been invested in creation, definitions

of genre and form ride the literary seesaw whilst

our allegiances and attention move elsewhere.

We contradict each other and make way for others,

plant new evidence and scheme. The past blows

this way then that, as frames of reference emerge:

moments of intuitive belonging, strange likenesses

and spectral presences populate the landscape,

offer continuity. The key to now is then.

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THE ABANDONMENT SYSTEM

Individuals and society crumble within urban environments;

decay and collapse re-occur in the book of the same name.

Objects made from found materials, broken down then reassembled,

are gathered together in this city with cast-off dynamic potential.

Different aesthetics point to multi-functioning existence, failure

absorbed into substances suspended in parallel analogue states.

Bodies of work explore transference, extract moments of casual detail:

information gathering and destruction as a floor-to-ceiling installation.

Archival possibilities, spaces beyond, offer a middle-aged comfort zone:

degrees of protectionist intolerance, bulletproof doors and security dogs,

potent three-dimensional drawings, thick ribbons of rolled black steel,

with room to create a distinctive body of new informed architecture.

Negotiate this maze, the escalator between sanctuary and control;

all sorts of musical experience now airbrushed out of existence.

Only we are our own unwinding, working from a hazy beginning to

confused and uncertain conclusions patterning the need for refuge.

Corporate harnessing of melodic works, freestanding loops collected,

sequenced, then further refined, leaves traces of sorrow and regret.

Information bursts into nonsense, despite our streamlined cleanliness;

histories forcibly displaced by words as recurring memes of thought.

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EXIT WOUNDS

Spaceships never leave the earth,

travel only in the mind,

reworking familiar ideas

and turning them into science,

illusionary sparks in the dark

predicting what won't happen.

Firing on all cylinders,

light travels around corners:

freefall galaxies, distant boneyard,

spectral distortion, satellite camps,

metamorph convoys, forgotten crew,

control room clones, an airlock muse.

Navigation is powered by fictional data;

we are all dead by our own definition.

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My three poems are from *Time Sensitive*, a group of 26 poems exploring ideas of time, memory, nostalgia, language and information and how we construct new worlds and travel in time by using and abusing them. My creative process involves remix, collage and processual writing as well as brutal editing and rewriting. Other poems from this group are forthcoming in *The Quint: a journal of the North*.

Rupert M Loydell is the editor of *Stride* and a contributing editor to *International Times*. He has many books of poetry in print, including *The Age of Destruction and Lies*, *Dear Mary*, *The Return of the Man Who Has Everything*, *Wildlife and Ballads of the Alone*, all published by Shearsman, who also published *Encouraging Signs*, a book of essays, articles and interviews. He has co-authored many collaborative works, and edited anthologies for Knives Forks & Spoons Press, Shearsman, and Salt. He also writes about post-punk music, pedagogy, poetry and film for academic journals and books.