*from* TIME SENSITIVE  
  
Rupert M Loydell  
  
  
  
  
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'You can't do anything here as such, you just go to see things. That's modern travel for you. Full of movement but nothing actually happens.'  
 – Robert Dessaix, *Night Letters*  
  
  
'History seems static but is constantly rewritten, embracing the fresh hell of the online universe's mass content posing as information becomes a data overload'  
 – Adam Steiner, *Darker with the Dawn*  
  
'An astrolabe is not  
A metaphor for love'  
 – Elizabeth Willis, 'Nocturne'  
  
  
ETERNAL RETURN  
  
'Because I know that time is always time  
And place is always and only place  
And what is actual is actual only for one time  
And only for one place'  
 – T.S. Eliot, 'Ash Wednesday'  
  
There are no artists here, only processes and concepts tested by bomb technicians producing atomic music out in the desert, brilliant, annoying and perceptive in turn. Occasionally, they burn the whole world up but are always consistent in their attention to detail.  
  
Like cave paintings left after extinction, ambient music was or should be situated in wilderness or outdoor spaces, be publicly ignored. Whatever the truth, emptiness speaks for itself, flows out of our brains as raw no-nonsense noise looming over art-rock and other specialist music circles.  
  
Well-known in shadow and experimental worlds, we were persuaded to pause, repeat and be interested or engaged, be emotionally melted. Strange lives haunt prepared tapes, trickster nerve endings in our headspace, trying to answer questions which keep coming back. Eternal return:  
  
archive the time. It's like sound deep-fried by sunshine, a playground of rock, a cave to shelter favourite memories, wild animals, snakes and ghosts. Many self-mythologisers have albums released and then reissued: strange birds that swoop and glide and snatch, obscured in cityscapes  
  
which remain elusive and collectible. Close the world up, demand patience and attention, alternative deconstructions of chamber music and all your favourite songs. I have saved the best until last, resulting in all these looped fragments of emotional memory before we slowly fade to far away.  
  
Learn how your data is processed, how materials inform the work, look at these grainy pictures of the band still playing as they go down with the ship. 'I heard it first while we were still working wireless, listening to music in our headphones, back when music still had something to say.'  
  
  
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TEMPORAL FLUX  
  
'Time is within you  
Shines through your eyes'  
 – The Pop Group, 'We Are Time'  
  
Two components: one vertical, the other horizontal.   
If an audience member has good vertical sight lines  
they may be able to see both the top and bottom  
whilst good horizontal sight lines give a full view   
of the left to centre to right extent of the possible.  
  
Landscape in the distance. Chrono-turbulence   
makes it possible for viewers to tear the fabric   
of the future although time travel is nothing   
without customer security. Astrophysicists are   
friendly and know how to build these machines,  
  
understand traveller experience; all hold records   
for cumulative emptiness among celestial bodies,   
the result of months spent orbiting our planet.  
Using special relativity and short-term hibernation   
we can bypass lasting passenger problems and save  
  
at least a few hours. Research suggests that gravity   
also slows and describe a universal constant sitting   
on a time dilation bomb. It has all been measured;  
temporal rift physicists have shown how clocks tick   
slower in a state of speed or suspended animation.  
  
Some scientists hope to achieve chrono-anomaly,  
timefold distortion, red shift digression, dead star   
disruption, vortex fluctuation, chronological rift,   
quantum slip mindwarp and anachronistic glitch;   
others just want to find out how to go really fast.  
  
  
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ATMOSPHERIC INTEGRITY  
  
In the dream about the end of the world,  
the world was waiting at the end of the dream  
and all that was fantastical faded away.­  
  
Sometimes things turned up for sale at market  
but mostly they were gone, never seen again.  
I blamed words, mind was the guilty party,  
  
but we're all in this together, aren't we, and  
bottles of cheap rosé and a bowl full of crisps  
won't solve anything, even tonight's Sudoku,  
  
which you have already done. I managed  
to complete the quick crossword on the train  
but that was as far as it went. The titles  
  
you wanted weren't in any of the bookshops   
and there is no internet to order them online.  
I listen to the soundtrack of one man's life;  
  
with no atmospheric integrity, pressure rises,  
red lights flash on the new skinny tower blocks.  
There is currently a good service on all lines.  
  
  
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THE INVISIBLE ARCHITECT  
  
'Men's undertakings proceed by linguistic barter,   
in a zone of approximation'  
 – George Steiner, 'Introduction' to  
 *The Penguin Book of Modern Verse Translation*  
Forgotten poets used distorted words  
to create the future that we humans   
are built into, this nervous breakdown  
in time, our mind's abstract conceits.  
  
External reality and representation   
meet and fuse in virtual-reality tanks:  
critical ideas as emotional experience,  
inescapable background to all regret.  
  
Sunsets are of almost magical potency  
during these curiously enduring winter   
floods, silt-laden waterscapes where   
there used to be dry land, green fields.  
  
When referred to as dreamlike, facts bear   
no resemblance to science or destruction  
in the aftermath of constantly hostile   
encounters between illusion and being.  
  
Fantastically complex ideas appear,  
produce false analogies and distort   
any awareness of shared possibility.   
The same thing happens to our minds,  
  
filled with figures and devices that utilize   
reality pattern recognizers and storytellers  
to predict tomorrow. It is experience that   
produces prophecy and creative writing.  
  
My own earliest memories are of emptiness  
and readers compounding words, of genre  
distortion and destruction of the moment,  
a mighty breakdown of psychic controls  
  
and systems of utilitarian organisation.  
Beautiful bridges cross the flooded fields,  
the pale and functionless drowned mirrors  
where glowing jellyfish hypnotize children  
  
and insert tentacles into people's minds.  
Each structure is beautiful to look at but   
some guest lecturer talks nonsense about   
how everyone should create and destroy,   
  
have access to a bridge because they   
are functional and we are ordinary. He  
tells us nothing is real or made to last,  
says everything is mostly made of water.  
  
  
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DAY-TO-DAY LIVES  
  
'I write because I don't know what I think  
until I read what I say.'  
 – Flannery O'Connor, *The Habit of Being*  
Living as the never-entirely-dead,   
we cohabit a body of hybrid space,  
moments in suspect social networks,  
look for direction in the present day.  
  
The chasm separating the unknown  
and the readers of tourist pamphlets  
is millions of readers and vertigo,  
which prevents me building a bridge   
  
between one photograph and another.  
We are still living down on the street,   
developing conversations concerning  
global connectivity and heartfelt prayer.   
  
Police the bones and run through things.  
Other objects underpin the status quo,  
shape advances through interpretation,  
deliciously purposing aesthetic affinity:  
  
the poet and the villain. Inevitably, truth   
features in the novel and elsewhere there  
is a turning point between fragmentation  
and living forever. It’s down to poetry  
  
and science to offer clear directions,  
know whether the hours will be short   
or long, however pixelated. The future  
will eventually take shape as a tension  
  
between secular versions of the quotidian,  
visions of domestic epiphanies, and details  
of the horizon. One would expect conflict  
in the world but not some of these songs  
  
or religious stories, wherever they appear.  
As for cosmic visions, each novel or play is   
a myth for today, an act of moral terrorism,  
a transformative agent in the public mind.  
  
Take things, recycle and sublimate what   
others have given you, recombine so that  
the mystery of life, like all complex systems,  
is evacuated from the building. Unsuspected   
  
echoes can be projected in this way, away   
from meltdown and into the next available  
space. We must make our own way towards  
practical meaning, search for the radical  
  
and get back aspiration, writing what   
we believe, with no creative needs or  
broken paragraphs. Intuitive elements  
underlie new kinds of worlds, utopias.  
  
I took the shortest route, never did like   
travelling. If you see reality differently,  
then go in search of the other, make   
each journey more than a physical act.  
  
Wherever this text is going, it holds no  
interest for me. Reality is self-evident,  
and I have not been rewarded with any   
unexpected miracles, wonders or signs.  
  
  
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EMPTY SPACE  
for M John Harrison  
  
A private vocabulary of meaning and its opposite,  
time filled with transmuted images of the past,  
cigarette packets and ice-cream experiences,  
balances out more subtly represented lives.  
  
We begin with spectral distortion. Other worlds,   
plastic visual forms and formal experiments with  
shuffled calculations, create a continuous mirror   
of the emerging past, collapsing sci-fi futures.  
  
Without the psyche and because of our lives,  
today is an immense half-submerged narrative,  
nervous breakdown embodied within tomorrow's  
interior landscape. He drowned in individuality,  
  
dreaming attempts to explore dangerous cities  
where counter-intuitive poets in the reality tank,  
at home in this distortion, construct graveyards  
and imagine ambiguity as a coping mechanism.  
  
Unconnected ideas reflect internal confusion,  
take their impetus from a paradoxical universe   
where dream and reality are essential motifs,  
dreary remembrances of childhood memories.  
  
The dark has been reluctantly jerked forward,  
warped into embodiments of exorcism where  
the rain-lashed ruins of damp phrases offer   
uncertain apocalypse, prolonged obsessions  
  
and random logic block symptoms, perverse  
and strange illogical ideas. There are always   
bodies lying in the street but we fake magic  
every morning, settle grim questions, reflect  
  
upon science predicting what won't happen,   
future events undermined by deconstruction   
and doubt. Imagined alien worlds become  
dispiriting places round the corner, critical   
  
moments eclipsed by curiosity. Elsewhere,   
one can see serpentine faces all around us,  
radically shifting words as extreme cadence,  
the work of a man with a marvellous future.  
  
  
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A SPLASH OF STARS  
  
I might not want to talk with the author of these songs  
but now he seems gifted, channeling despair and praise,  
new tongues to explain brokenness, sorrow and desire.   
Grief has triggered compassion and insight, pushed   
hyperbole away. I don't care if it's 'true' or 'honest' but   
somehow they say something important, spiritual even,  
without being overcome. Still human enough to love   
and bleed, screw things up and find rest in addiction   
and obsession. Doubt fights certainty, wonder wrestles   
with belief. The song pours out and shares their pain,  
the sadness of transcendence, how transcendent sadness  
can overcome happiness and affect everything, even that  
inane grin you have when drunk. I long to be miserable,   
wallow in despair and enunciate everything that gets me   
down. The song is not a heartbeat though it may share   
its rhythm, the music is just sound, not a poultice to   
cure anything. It is as meaningless as a splash of stars,   
as boys racing cars along the ring road to fill the time.   
It is the ghost or UFO captured on a blurred photo,   
unbelievable but true if you convince yourself it is.  
  
  
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GO TO LANGUAGE  
  
'Language is a map and I admire your paperclips'  
 – Astrid Alben, 'Modern Love Affair'  
  
Everyone is playing, so go to language   
and re-interpret the importance of clear,  
unambiguous inconsistency. Be sure to   
interpret clauses alongside each other   
whenever possible, although speakers   
of other tongues may think differently.  
  
So what does it mean, getting language   
right? In general, terms and conditions  
are associated with hypothesis but if  
abandoned for new theories then radical   
thinking will finally emerge to overturn  
long-standing beliefs about the origins   
  
of human knowledge and the construction   
of reality. Cognitive skills have important   
implications for law, politics and education,  
reveal whether events happened just now,   
yesterday or in the distant past; there are   
different words to ensure we get it right.  
  
Pronouns reveal my gender. Drop me a line   
or call if you need further details, and do stay   
safe and well. Keep meaning simple and plain,  
make sure you get a sense check, jam thoughts   
about alien abduction. There is no UFO landing   
on your roof, no plans for spatial orientation,  
  
although an unknown virus is living in the cellar.  
Parasites are something to write home about,   
bacteria are the sweaty vocabulary of desire,  
a red dress dancing on the local bar counter.  
The reason it seems, is historical, most probably   
an expression from the time when lust entered   
  
the language. Humans are never quite silent  
about the timeless relationship between need  
and the unknown. Call it spiritual subjugation,  
attempt to separate the mind from the body  
as though threatened by foreign pronunciation,  
continue to grapple with metaphor's implications,  
  
the need for constant experiment, the notion   
of artificial intelligence or infectious language   
models, remain vigilant against the dangers   
of access codes, linguistic conformity, the   
ongoing erosion of resistance to change.  
Patrol the boundaries of what we consider   
  
to be the literary realm and fight each innovation.  
It is essential to monitor how we organize time,  
avoid knowledge hitting critical mass, to control   
our thoughts, actions, and unthinking behaviour.  
The fascinating, direct and inaccurate languages   
we speak shape the way communication unravels.  
  
Smart and sophisticated as we are, it would be   
hard to go perfectly backwards or work out how   
to transfer a moment's energy. Only if we take  
ourselves seriously will we ever run through fields  
or climb the golden pyramids of song, although  
we could travel or write books, share experience.  
  
If you really want language to connect people  
then become an expert, stand up for precision  
and grammar, crack down on hesitation, literary  
prizes, all supernatural contracts. We must each  
manipulate our thoughts, even when we answer  
without knowing our current mission statement.  
  
Whether knowledge is true or not, this song is  
about where you are going, whether to kiss him   
or not, all as a result of society's interventions.  
I am a villain with multiple personalities and  
the ability to invent and rearrange conceptions,  
make use of my cognitive toolkit, have learned  
  
to think about anything and everything, even  
when overloaded with information can change   
the world to suit myself. I think language is   
behind my thoughts, know it offers flexibility  
and a lot of theoretical control. Making sense  
of the world is fun but can be very dangerous.  
  
  
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