*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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