

looking across to space

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the Collect

Victoria Tillotson, Anna Searle Jones, Philip Owen and Ben Owen
thecollect.org - - - - - info@thecollect.org

o dumb me, aimless and poor
lost on my way
we are crinkled and crackable
out here, out of hours
not full up or soft, but needing each other to
swallow
in the middle there's no translation
just secrets
invisible and silent that flash brilliant across
the ceiling
when we catch them it is despite ourselves:
glory is a trickster

looking across to space

out of hours
and in this place, a dark sound
lost? not lost!
tucked in, occupied, even drowned
following these tails into their sublime blather
of blots and streaks and whoops and whoas
magic, if you'll have it
left alone and let loose, what vectors might
we ride?
it will have you

driven by this blank wave through sparks and
debris,
remnants of conversations, conversions and
bona fide mysteries,
we pulse disconnected beats
measurements are off, and you are let loose
signals arrive as I expected:
you come in strong but there are others
I'm tired, this is dull, and I want to go

a focus, then pull
heaving outside but coming in
containerless
knowing no heat
blank: the cruelest exile
so what do these strings do?
fragments, we gather them up
artifacts, they vanish without coalescing
leaving inept traces for us to order

turn around again, and around
a slick loop of loops

I glaze
off, over the calls, and under
a serene cerebral state of misdirection and
easy fault
please send glitch bump knockabout
a skip-skipping needle, a slip
violent, it may be, but what a treatment!

You are a magician. You are a craftsman. You
are a mathematician.
You can work out scores quicker than chalk.
You are one of five, who are five in fading
thousands.

looking across to space

Five years passed and still it sits as silent as
the day you left it.
Oscilloscope, pattern generator, frequency
counter.
Resistors, capacitors, diodes, transistors.
Valves that were ordinary, commonplace,
prevalent now belong nowhere.
Boxed up, un-used.
Neither a museum nor a work place. A
memory to most except you. Tucked away.
All transition.
You are sad.
You are afraid of fading in thousands.

Inside. Outside.

And one terrible day I open a door to
nowhere, and see your hands locked on
wires. You shake and stumble like the whole
world is trembling. But it is only you. You
are caught in a loop and I? A chasm. I was
about to fold from the outside in and fall to
a speck, but then the loop was broken.

Plummet. Climb.

What high loveliness it is to think of you
listening to me, as though we were close
enough to hold hands or brush a lash from
the other's cheek. How surreal to know that
you are so distant that we haven't the hour
of the day in common.

In a crowd, leaning in slightly, I try hard to
concentrate on your voice so as to follow as
much of your meaning as I can, and drown
out the voices around us. I notice the strain
releasing spontaneously, how I lose track
entirely of what it is you're talking about,
and how all my furrowed brow and noises of
agreement are pure affectation.

Looking to you, looking across to space, to
echo. Successful participation, in dialogue, in-
crowd, of surrounding conversations, as pillars
in crowded rooms.

I focus hard on your face so as to reflect
and follow the gist, to avoid, in self-
consciousness, appearing out of step, of
direction.

Or mean what I said or understand.

Outside background inaudible.

either way and in between
a rush of dancing and throttle and
DO THIS NOW:
dismantle all conjunctions
erase kinks and other irregularities
forget your body
cha-ching!
take back the terrain as you see fit
(I don't think it's necessary)
insist on feasibility
stabilise your base
force fissures and announce them boldly
expand on origins
intensify pursuit of the end – what end?
identify the end
make right

the task
the task, though
is to follow the leads, as confused as they are
to make something of them
a rendering

not off the grid, a notion you like to enter-
tain, but melded with it
stuck down
caught up
inseparable, as these things often are
often? always, forever, as things are
but bored through and through
lullabyed by the dark sound
visions of flight, of cutting
a jump
beautiful distractions, whole-body-wants

It lands somewhere.

shoot off again down the line
you'll be back
and I'll be here
listening beyond you and your friction to the
whistles hanging
see, it's all bent: there are no parallels
further brings you back
and I'm still here
receiving the waves but pushing them back out
braced and strong and attuned to the minor
variations
purposeful, I join you, we join
in a centre, crossing for a moment before a
new tangle appears
and we continue to forge forth in senseless hope

Now you have a wind-up bird in a cage. I
am mesmerised by its delicate wings that fly
nowhere. I turn the key but it stays sat silent
and still.
You tell me it fell from nowhere and belongs
to no one, but you can help it sing again.
Time passes. Then the melody loops around
and around, until it's so slow we can no
longer hear it.
This is what I see when I listen very hard.

Presence. Absence.

But you will keep returning to nowhere. To a
dusty moment in limbo. Where walnuts fall on
the still.

Happy. Sad.

Spoken. Unspoken.

Connected. Disconnected.

You throw a dart.

They are rolled in and rolled out. She rolls
them in and you roll them out.
At first they are broken and then they are
not. Over and over again.
You document each of them. Data entry.
Tap .. tap .. tap .. , slowly words emerge.
Names, numbers, faults, solutions. You bring
life back to machines that are disconnected,
shattered, broken. In the moment of life there
is meaning. For you this is the game.

I notice today there is snow inside and
outside.
Inside you route a signal through a transistor
in a tuner unit. And so on. And so forth.
Until the snow inside melts. SHHHhhhhhh...
[you smile but no one is looking].
Outside the snow remains for a week and you
are careful not to fall.
You cannot fall because of us.

to follow as much of your meaning as I can,
and drown out the voices around us

To be entrained now to your voice, to resist
the temptation of letting go into gaps of
stopped self

I don't really know where the saying voice is
coming to go out from, I do not meant

I move to the large window at the side of
the room, to look out at the night for some
respite from the socialising. The land, far out
of town, is utterly dark so instead of trees
and fields all I see before me is my dim
reflection. It occurs to me that somebody
could be on the other side, able to see me.
I notice a shadow of self-consciousness in
response to this which may have pulled me
away, but I allow it to fade and continue
absently surveying the dark and my outline.

But I do relax into the sense of atmosphere
as important, a container for dialogue room,
for dialogue to work,

the sense of atmosphere as important

In a crowd, leaning in slightly, I try hard to
concentrate on your voice so as to follow as
much of your meaning as I can, and drown
out the voices around us. I notice the strain
releasing spontaneously, how I lose track
entirely of what it is you're talking about,
and how all my furrowed brow and noises of
agreement are pure affectation.

What do you mean?

What would happen if one were to speak the truth? I asked. Would it be possible?

So we never really communicate?

off duty fumbles – stutters, starts
rough hands make tight work but you, being
you, can't resist
a quick fix
a Chinese handcuff spasm of incoherence and
disregard
bad planning, that is, another case

and even if
turning, where do we go?
little waves
soft impotent wind
shoveling and shuffling
I know you but back out
to follow, what ease! what sublime assent!
rolling, you roll and I roll, we roll

out of hours
“a mind forever voyaging through strange seas
of thought, alone”
alone, but for the buoyant push, that boring
momentum
dumb beast without care or cause

just pick one, jump in and slide
there's no wind in this vacuum
from end to end, lying close together
tight but happy, content and formed and
slipping away

What do you mean?

What would happen if one were to speak the truth? I asked. Would it be possible?

So we never really communicate?

You didn't hear it but you saw the disruption
and you tried to catch it and keep it.
But it belonged to nowhere.
Afterwards you said, “What will be is right. We
know in the end all will be well.”

You spoke with exactness and honesty and
I tried to believe you, but the words echoed
from someplace else and you are blind to the
twists and coils that loop over, under, around
and through us - you see only those directly
ahead. But you are always happy and I am
not.

When it rolled in today it was motionless.
I looked at it and it didn't look back. It
was supposed to be passive but even when
I connected the wire to the loop it didn't
respond.
But you are a physician.
An hour later it shrivelled nylon. You asked
me to spit at it and it spat back.
Tick.
Roll out.

just pick one, jump in and slide
there's no wind in this vacuum
from end to end, lying close together
tight but happy, content and formed and
slipping away

What do you mean?

All the time when I speak to you, even now,
I'm saying not precisely what I think, but
what will impress you and make you respond.
That's so even between us – and how much
more it's so where there are stronger motives
for deception. In fact, one's so used to this
one hardly sees it. The whole language is a
machine for making falsehoods.

I know myself, Hugo said, that when I really
speak the truth the words fall from my mouth
absolutely
dead, and I see complete blankness in the
face of the other person.

Well, he said, I suppose actions don't lie.

I recall clearly the memory of seeing a
television programme, aimed at children
quite possibly, in which the illegal hacking (a
term I apply with the benefit of subsequent
knowledge) was accompanied by typing which
was accomplished by simply hovering one's
hands an inch or so above the keyboard. The
supernaturalism did not make the scenario
seem ridiculous, but somehow urgently
significant, in the way of guerrilla freedom-
fighting.

To avoid echo solidity of strong meaning, of
space.

Loosening sense of what is being said in
favour of vocal sound and gesturing.

just pick one, jump in and slide
there's no wind in this vacuum
from end to end, lying close together
tight but happy, content and formed and
slipping away