

Selected Poems

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A Flight

There was a flight,
A flight down some stairs
While I stared at these feet,
A feat for one so fair.

There was an ascent,
A scent that came to the top
A top that spun out so flat
Where my flat was on top.

On top of my mind,
Mindful and true
Was my spreading wish,
My wish for you.

There was a lift,
Then a lift to my heart
Since I could rise up,
Up to give you a start.

With a start, we saw the stairs again
And stared at each other

Running up and down
As we kissed one another.

Whether high at the top,
Or getting high down the stairs,
I knew I could always
Get to talk of your flairs.

Your flairs are well lovely,
You're real lovely and fab.
A voice called from the flat
"I want you in my cab!"

So I let you rest, not them
For the rest of that day
On my wide shoulders as
We travelled away.

Freedom Awaits

I fail to imagine the vexation that is caused

By being in a body that does not seem like yours. Life must go on and

Will not pause, however thick your vocal chords, so

I comprehend your urge to skip a few scenes, abstain from routines

In which you hesitate to speak.

Don't be hesitant with me, Michael. I promise you, dear -

There is nothing you have said that I wished not to hear,

Such as the presence of that cage we pray would

Disappear.

Closer to Each Other

He spoke a lot when doing his job:

It was his made-up, alien talk.

He 'dated' this girl he loved to stalk;

And his colleagues even wanted to rob

A bank, to obtain fine wine for this snob.

As in his speech, slurred was his walk

And his whole face when he waved his fork

At his heroine's desk, exercising his gob

With whimsical food and fervent shout,

A ladder to her love he built to climb.

Her skin was warming, rouge *avec ses paroles*,

So she took a spoon, determined to stir out

Words of her own to him, pure and fine:

"Peter, your talent will never harm souls."

A Landscape Poem

Many landscapes are displayed
Over which curiosity spills.
Wonderfully crafted by nature, they're made.

In these lands, Earth does tremble.
Many landscapes are displayed.
Every rock looks ornamental.

Rocks can be shelters, making shade,
And there are so many landscapes.
Wonderfully crafted by nature, they're made.

In spiritual valleys where some pray,
Many landscapes are displayed.
Platforms for echoes hear all you say.

Places can be reached for meditative wishes.
Applauses happen as stories are displayed
In these landscapes, where couples preach.
Wonderfully crafted by nature, they're made.

The Unpredictable Proposal

“Will you marry me, Amanda?”

“I’m sorry!” Her cry was so acute it could have been mistaken for a scream.

“I’ve been cheating on you.”

Liam’s Perspective:

For the last time, I passed her. Entering my property, I saw her snatch my stilts that were leaning against my unfurnished garden shed.

Amanda’s Perspective:

My legs stopped trembling and started to steady, like a line on a graph to show constant speed, only with a slight kink because of the ruler moving. The more I thought about keeping balance, the more slowly I would banish my past.

Liam’s Perspective:

Several minutes of photo recollection in my mind had passed. One of the images to appear was Amanda holding a poster with a quote embroidered on it as follows: “Do not cheat, or be prepared for life to cheat on you.”

I looked outside. Smoke poured off her scalp and the bones of her skull were dug into the tyres in our garden, which were filled with ash.

However, there was still a bowl of cherries on my coffee table to look forward to.

Suspect

Ashton's Perspective:

He struck his fist down on a bench, before slowly putting it back in his pocket like a stolen object.

"How are you, chaps?"

"Busy," I lied.

"Ashton?" Liam whispered my name so our ex-teacher couldn't hear.

"That's enough," I admitted.

Mr Peterson left.

At half past three that morning, the noisy clock on the pier crashed out the clouds. Above Lenny and I, there was an extreme caffeine source (a café), which we didn't take. If we put our minds to staying awake, we wouldn't need caffeine. Blank but hopeful was Lenny's expression, and mine wasn't in his sight for a while.

My lips underneath an intensely working brain were only the view for the planks of pier we crossed.

He'd taught us two years previously, when we were in Year Eleven, when we were truly "obliterated", and he was the only teacher we actually got along with. I still can't think of a proper reason as to why I did it.

Following our recent twilight walk, Lenny and I were awoken from our nap (by the reminder from an app on Lenny's phone that the news was on), and went downstairs.

Awfully distressed by what we saw, we both went back upstairs. Our room was stocked to the brim with whisky and cider. Not wanting to turn to the reality, we alternated between the two for the remainder of the night, and didn't sleep at all for the following working week that tried to drag us into it.

"Wake up!" My Sixth Form teacher was standing next to Lenny, whom she'd forced to progress from the bed to a chair.

Jumping to a stand, I shook Lenny to check he was alive before letting the teacher lecture me.

“You know what you’ve done, Ashton.” She enforced her breath on me to say these words. I was bemused and couldn’t even think as to what her name might have been.

In the curtains, I could smell cologne and more bad news. It wasn’t Lenny because he never wore deodorant, and he was still sitting in the chair. Opening them-actually bedsheets hung up from the rail-I heard a policeman, who introduced himself as Officer Jenkins, repeat the Sixth Form teacher’s sentence.

According to Officer Jenkins, I’d caused Mr Peterson’s suicide, which made something come back to me. Through all of the sticky alcohol curdling in my brain, I recognised what had appeared on the flashing television screen Lenny and I left in shock.

“Suspect: Ashton Mitchell.”

Lenny’s Perspective:

“It is not a crime to drive someone to suicide though, right?” Ashton commented as his eyes bulged in disgust. “Even if it were a crime, where is the proof that I drove Mr Peterson to his death?”

A week had passed when a group of police officers came to our door. They asked me for my phone, but not for my partner’s, and I didn’t question this. An hour after they had confiscated it, I remembered...

I had a video of Ashton doing for Mr Peterson. In other words, I had footage of our ex-teacher being shunted off the edge of a cliff. Though I had watched it, I do not remember recording it. I didn’t and haven’t confronted Ashton because...

I love him.

I *truly* love him.

I truly *love* a murderer.

Cherry Mountain Street

In Cherry Mountain Street where we lived, were many music shops and balconies peeping curiously over lovingly built houses of white. Plants twined round chimneys and sang through kitchens where children ate pancakes, sided by extravagant lemons. They would dash on to the bumpy street, spray paint the road cerise, and visit the young saplings in the nearby park.

I met my first friend, Eleanor, in this street. She almost always carried a picture in her pocket, creased at the edges but beautifully drawn.

It was a Wednesday morning in May, the long awaited morning when Eleanor promised me we'd meet up at noon. She'd been spending a lot of time with Steve, whom she called her 'fiancée'. When she spoke to me, she somehow emanated a palpable sensation, telling me she wanted to escape.

I strode into town to buy a suit. It had quite a dazzle to it, which really grew on me when I wore it. Jasper, my rosemary candle scented Labrador, sprang on to his hind legs, admiring the outfit.

There was something waiting for me to see, really to take note of. It was a tractor parked in my driveway with three wheels only, watched by people laughing from balconies, pointing at the fourth wheel bouncing down the road, as if my life were a pantomime. My mind of peace was ruptured by the noise. Right, out I go, I confirmed aloud, my golden Labrador's left ear lifting and his nose twitching. Jasper shook off his collar, started panting, and barked. "Hi, Rosie!" came an excited voice as the driver hopped out of his seat on to the new ground that I could get used to. "I'm Steve, Eleanor's boyfriend. I came to tell you that Eleanor can't meet you this evening."

He was holding a very pretty sketch-Eleanor's drawing of a cherry, not creased at the edges anymore, and finished with a cerise ribbon.

"That's completely fine," I told, truthfully. "Let Eleanor know I forgive her".

"I'll go with you instead," Steve said, the rise of my eyebrows following this.

"...If you want me to."

No longer did I mind the torn turf, or Steve being parked right in my driveway. New flowers were to grow, and having such barriers was not what I needed in my life of fun, magic and adventure.

I approached the fourth wheel, and ended up carrying it effortlessly. Steve was winking and holding his arms out to me, from the springs of his shoulders, a tool kit aside him. As the fourth wheel was attached, trust was firmly established.

We proudly live here in Cherry Mountain Street, our street. We learn to play the instruments we dreamt of learning to play from hearing the compositions emanating from the music shops; we drink fine wine and have toast for breakfast grilled on a fire outside, topped with carrot stars, culinary touches at which, thanks to Steve, I would eventually become professional. Not only do we look at the street from our balconies, which lead to the park with the children, young striplings and the trees, young saplings, but we have picnics there too, collect berries and make apricot, strawberry and damson jam, all of a perfect consistency. Plants twine round the front and back of rooftops and laughter pummels the chimney breasts. Nothing is hidden.

Nothing ever needs to be hidden.

Treasure Chest

There's something awaiting under my skin
To be revealed and seen in the future.
I know it's always been built in.

It's not the case of forcing it open.
There's something awaiting under my skin
To be revealed tenderly, not broken.
So, one day, I will own my own skin
By opening my treasure chest.
I know it's always been built in.

It will be so great to travel the rest.
There's something awaiting under my skin.
My urge to see that requires no test.

Being yourself is not a sin.
So, do not hold back from what belongs;
I know it's always been built in.

There's something awaiting under my skin.
What flows right through is my devotion.
And as for the journey?
I know it has always been built in

Feelings

What would we be without feelings?

Skeletons covered in skin,

Skin we wouldn't feel

Over organs to keep us surviving,

Surviving,

Not alive.

What would we think without feelings?

Without feelings, everyone

Would do as they were told.

No one would feel broken

In the heart, mind or soul.

But would there be love?

No, not a chance.

Patronizing

I may not always instantly know how to open the door, lock the door, get a camera to work or find my way to the exit.

I may not be able to cook with an electric oven or open a guitar case and put a microphone on a stand without your help.

But if you keep patronizing me,

I won't be able to ask you to help at all.

I may not always be able to do things easily, but that doesn't take away from the talents I do have.

So don't patronize me,

Many thanks.

Makeup

In a rush, she didn't get round to putting makeup on.

At her interview, they took a glance, then scowled

In disgust.

'Sorry,' she said, unsarcastically,

Unfortunately unsarcastically.

With some time to spare, he put makeup on.

At his interview, they took a glance, then scowled

In disgust.

'Sorry,' he said, unsarcastically,

Unfortunately unsarcastically.

If only I were making it up

That some people make expression tough,

When we should leap away

From rules we do not need in place.

Please do what you want; it's your face.

Microphone Tongue

I sit here drinking coffee, till something needs announcing,
Announcing with a professional tone to hide straying thoughts.

Carol Hancbeck, please collect your child.

I hope the lost one is soon found,
Mind tells me as mouth sips again.

Mind ponders on the power of cliché –

How every mouth opens to

Gasp,

Swallow,

Speak,

And how contexts help minds

To take or leave from each.

Mind of Mum and child soothe back *ensemble*,

Sincerity slides from my microphone tongue:

Have a splendid evening,

I am glad you found your mum.

Speech

Astonishing, is it not?

From the filing cabinet you carry around,

You can form noises from your tongue,

Vibrations from your mouth –

The performance of your unique sound.

Whether in soft talk or hard, it happens

Without knowing how.

Sounds amuse, flatter, insult

Whoever you choose with your infinite volts –

Strangers, acquaintances, friends, family,

Polite, anguished, shining with glee.

From first moments, to rows, to inside jokes,

Speech reaches the blood of all us folk

To spark, boil, or flow as it was

Affecting to a point the speech choices we make

To dismiss or signal back the same.

Hurtful choices,

Is one to blame?

Compliments,

Just a game?

Astonishing, is it not?

What may be behind words,

Delivered or shot.

Taste Buds Detest Organs

Mint imperial crumbling in my mouth,

My taste buds desire you,

Sweetness building up.

They wish to taste the rainbow, too,

So I add some Skittles to the mix.

And for a divine, salty contrast, I crunch some crispy,

Curvy Pringles.

Mint imperial crumbling in my mouth,

My bloodstream dreads you,

Pressure building up.

I ignore what could be going on,

Then shove some Skittles in.

And memories of Bunsen burners

Melting fat off Pringles in science lessons

Do not stop me from shoving some of those in, too.

Shy

I know this sounds stupid,

But,

I have wanted to talk to you for the past year,

As we have waited at stop CF for the 24A,

Not even asking each other's name,

Despite going to the same sixth form each day.

Perhaps you already know my name.

I do not know whether you know it,

I do not know whether you wish to talk to me, too.

And I do not know why I will not ask you,

Instead of sitting here on my phone,

Tapping on a screen to convey my thoughts,

Hoping you will

Lean out,

And look

Over my little shoulder.

Poor Poet

Smitten after the first couple dates,
He's written her love poems for the next.
Love is a wild catapult of expression,
Far from the straightness of her face,
But bubbling in the eyes of the poet
With the gorgeous curly hair.

It is ready to fire, unlike the desire
She lacked during their polite park bench kiss.
It is ready to fire. Despite how she feels,
His love will launch from his lips.

How are you feeling? He asks her with care.

Happy, she replies.

He is elated, on top of the world,

Until he looks into her eyes and lets the question go:

Are we boyfriend and girlfriend or...?

Just friends.

And his heart

Falls and cracks on his soul's edge as he says:

Right, just friends, that's fine.

God's Face in the Sky

Look at my face, requests the sky.

Where is your face? Someone replies.

What forms a face? I hear the Lord call.

What forms my face is nothing at all.

Mrs Aristocrat

Clearing our impression of existence,

All because some guests are coming,

Mrs Aristocrat yells for the plates

Heated in a separate oven from the place

I wish spuds were roasted, not 'potatoes'.

I wish Mrs Aristocrat would stop

Basting our brains

By shaming our joys,

By driving us insane

To the dentist each day to have our teeth whitened,

Then asking things of us that make us feel frightened.

I want to play baseball on a U.S. team,

Not cry 'cause o' her lectures

'Bout my ripped jeans.

The only thing I like about her

Is her vegan ice cream

She allows me to eat once or twice a week.

My brother wants to be a singer and a poet,
To which she says,
Golly gosh, that is a no-no'.

We cannot bear to live with her anymore.
So, tomorrow, we will storm outta the door.
We will make lush scran and do what we want,
Like swimming in rivers, inhaling vodka shots.

Our lives, because of her, are tangled in knots,
Which she has been tying since putting us in cots.

Maybe in some months,
Our lovely mum will check on us.

For now, we instead know
Biological mother.
For now, we instead know
Her as our dream stopper.

His First Shot

The needle is clutched in his hands
As he says his dream has come true.
And next to him, his brother stands,
Saying to him: *I'm proud of you.*

Euphoria signing his arm,
He talks about the beard he'll grow,
Then says that he can now be calm
Because he doesn't have to tow

Himself along, trying to chuck
His transliness out of his mind
When he's aware that he is stuck
With what's not his. He won't be blind.

His aspiration has come true
Because he's let his real self through.

Instinctive Prejudice

After Tom Waits' 'What's He Building?'

What's in its brain?

What the hell is in its brain?

It looks at fake wieners on Instagram.

It never shaves its legs, or

Responds to its real name.

It's a waste of a girl – what a shame,

What a confused mess

That tells us all to call it he.

It has no common sense.

I have no idea how it has friends.

What's in its brain?

With its claim that it's a guy

What's in its brain?

I'll tell you one thing, its friends are deluded, too.

I see a post it just made on its page

Saying you shouldn't talk low of what you don't get —

And I swear to God, it doesn't get life

With what it sees as an opened door

That smashes logic onto concrete floor.

So it's not a boy.

What's in its brain?

I heard it has something to make its tits look flat

Just like how they used to be.

But what's in its brain?

What the hell is in its brain?

I think it's just going through a phase.

Let's be real: its brain's a muddled maze

That should be replaced to reveal the purpose of girls:

They are shiny tools for men to touch.

I heard the muddled maze made it get in a fight

With my best pal with who I'm real tight

And apparently it wants to get on some drug.

What's in its brain?

What the hell is in its brain?

Romantic Energy

About to meet Karyna again,
I thought: *I need to tell her I'm trans*
And hoped that she liked me,
And wouldn't say,
Does this mean I'm not straight?

Usually, I'd savour REM's music.
To it being played now, though, my pulse pelted pistols.
I stepped
Out the door of my house, got inside this taxi,
And the driver asked me how I was doing.

Before I could answer,
My nerves shot out of my mouth.

I was given a look of sympathy, told not to worry.

To that, I was wished good luck, and I approached
Karyna on the bridge where the lights lit up.

The other day,
With chattering teeth, we'd met
As strangers at a beach;
Into her tent she invited me.
I have saved your number,
Said she. So there was
Nothing to fear, surely.

Is it vain to say that she could be mine?
Wishful thinking: there's no one else in her line.
Just how much should I match my mouth to my mind?

Our pizzas came; we were told they were hot.
Not searing as intensely as Karyna, I thought,
Who went to bowl as a rebel, going where staff say not.

Together, we walked and talked
And talked and walked
Before dancing, singing,
Hysterically laughing.

I checked my phone at this moment in time.
Eleven past eleven was what I saw,
So I silently spoke that wishful thinking.

Where would you like to go now?

I suggested wandering off into nowhere,
Exploring. I'd always wanted to go
Off and explore all around,
Exploring someone as well.

She replied with the first kiss she sent to me.

We commenced with venturing
Into the wilderness, curious about
The speed of each other's heart.
We came to this river and successively

Jumped, not letting
Coldness put us off, her
Glowing face a spotlight in the dark.

The glitter of that kiss was coating me.

I carried her out of the river
So we could continue our wander
That I never wished to end.

We passed a street,
All shops now shut
Beneath the balconies.

The first one was blue,
And then came pink,
And then came white
Before pink and blue once more.

At the end, there was a pub
Surprisingly open at half-five,
Despite the early closing time.

Would you like a drink?

She asked for a gin and tonic.
I stepped out with that and black coffee.
We sat outside in the cool morning air,
And she smiled as I stroked her hair.

I told her, hearing singing birds.

Reassuringly, that did not alter such tantalizing stuff.

Shortly after, she embarked on my shoulder ride,
Embracing each other without hiding a side,
Thrilling our way to her apartment
As though the atmosphere were chanting for us.

She was in my arms as I flew up the stairs,
Fairy lights trailing up them.
When I placed the angel by her raindrop glistened door,
Her shrill of dedication delivered her desire:
Jason, if you were to leave,
I would set myself on fire.

Discovering a Couple's Presence

Through a stained glass window,
The smell of smoke had been
Carried from a candle's glow.

Beautifully scented wisteria curled
Through a stained glass window,
Through which voracious wonder swirled.

Again, we looked at the ledge's arch. Go
Far through time along surface sparkles
Carried from a candle's glow.

Echoes shook the shining cross
Through a stained glass window,
Its sole ledge thickened with a layer of moss.

All of us wished to know
How our eyes lit up when they were
Carried from a candle's glow.

Such a discovery had just been made
Through a stained glass window:
Two kissing cherubs there displayed,
Revealed by a candle's glow.

The Pathway of Patience

Magic teen, who is still my fantasy.

I picture how our pathway's goal

(After time, your patience will see)

Can hold heart's gold, now she hasn't your soul.

I am aware that if I were to run

Too fast, the path would outrace me.

The race begins at birth of sun

And ends with it dawning on you and on me.

Along this path are clinging thorns to miss

As well as many cherry trees,

Which lead me on to our next kiss

Beyond the clouds in skies cerise.

This pathway is cherished since it has led

This strong dream of mind to real life instead.

To Crush the Pain of a Person

To crush the pain of a person

Active on social media,

Yet not letting your conversations flow,

Snap shirtless shots with a knife rack background,

To remind you that you're sharp.

Live your life like you never met them.

Live your life unpolluted by

Those menacingly nice memories

Your mind has been glued to for months.

Eventually,

You will want to make no more.

Right now, there is something I promise.

There will come a time when

Your *te amo* is platonic.

Gendered Polyester

On entering a clothing store,

Roaring gender roles

Split the floor.

Sequins shimmer in the 'women's' section,

Where hourglass-shaped tops sneer at my reflection.

As I stroll up to the clothes 'for him',

I wonder if there will always be this split.

Some garments are labelled as 'unisex'.

In truth, *none* have wearer limits.

Imagine frilly dresses and bras mixed in with 'men's' shirts

And boxer short models of the knickers gender.

I want to say that they *are* just clothes.

But, to me, they are not.

Wearing 'masculinity' is my comfort.

How about you?

Insecurity Seed

When Glen planted Insecurity Seed,

It transformed into a tree.

With time, its branches strengthened.

The seed was spat at Glen when she was young,

Since she was teased for moving her thumb

In a way that revealed her double jointedness.

She planted the seed when she refused to

Stop.

Now, she knows that her thumb is top notch.

Now, her ex-bullies wish to climb Glen's tree.

Sincerely, she answers,

Climb, and open up to me.

The root source shall not forever be.

Signalling Smoke

The table's burnish beckons the austere man in his austere apartment.

The portière pounces onto the floor, ready

To wrap around his legs to throw him

Down.

Having felt the wishes of these household items,

Ian finally sees to the pyre on his lawn,

Finally ready for the funeral

Of his dull attitude and his briar

He has loved but hated to smoke.

A while later,

There goes that past

He has let the fire smoke.