

Solstice in the Borderland

G. Lorimer

—

February 2016

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a concert to be performed beneath an arch
& *Programme Notes*

Summary:

Solstice in the Borderland is a concert of poetry in which the inherent musicalities of language and an understanding of sound relations are brought to the fore. In a similar vein to the ballads and romances that were a major part of oral traditions, these two works each tell a different, individual story, focused by the four dominant aspects of narrative (place, person, philosophical purpose, and plot), and aided by the specific musical structures in which they are composed. The poems in this sequence are:

- 'Un-sained Strings': a folksong suite portraying the ongoing history of Ludlow, marcher town and former 'capital' of Wales.
- 'Chase of the Beast Glatisant': a reworking of the Arthurian legends, constructed in the form of a four movement symphony. This poem follows the idea of the grail quest and is written in the voice of Malory's Nimue figure, Nenive.

My endeavour with this project has been to reinvigorate the musical nature of verse through the appropriation of techniques designed for the composition of western orchestral music (such as harmony, melody, tonality, dynamic and orchestral structures) and the combination of these with a sympathy for the euphonious patterns of language. Through the consideration of current composers, such as James MacMillan and Jeffrey Lewis, alongside contemporary poets, I have demonstrated how poetry may be constructed around a true musical centre within twenty-first century verse, as it once was when poetry was primarily an oral/aural art form.

Solstice in the Borderland

—

*a concert to be performed
beneath an arch*

Georgie Lorimer

to Vivienne

*“I found him whome my soule loueth : I helde him,
and would not let him goe, vntill I had brought him
into my mothers house, and into the chamber of
her that conceived me.”*

- Song of Solomon 3:4 -

*“How still the evening is, As hush’d on purpose
to grace harmony!”*

- Much Ado About Nothing -

– Programme –

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– Pre-concert Talk –

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you all for braving this evening's somewhat uncertain elements.

Before we begin I must first dispense with these tedious formalities :

In the event of fire
Please proceed with all due haste in any direction
where the flames are not.

If struck by rain or semblance of storm
We shall get wet.

To reduce the likelihood of any unpleasantness
Please place your mobiles in casket provided.

Finally,
You are all invited to linger 'til dusk
For post-concert drinks
During which time
I'm sure all involved
Will be more than willing to pass comment on queries.

But first,

Ladies and Gentlemen,
I would like to welcome you to
our pre-concert talk,
A fairly rare discussion with –
well –
Crikey! I'm not quite sure how to describe you
– A discussion with an instrument?
– A discussion with a music?
Well, 'tis immaterial,
With someone that requires no descriptive words from me :

[applause]

Madam, welcome.

hello

Thank you for agreeing to speak for us today.

thank you for having me

Well we were delighted that you could make it, for am I right in thinking we have yet to invite you?

that is quite correct

Might I ask how this came to pass?

you might

Then I shall:

How came this to pass?

you have heard of t. h. white?

The children's author?

he that created 'the sword in the stone'

Yes.

yes?

Yes.

white forces merlyn to live his life backwards

You mean in reverse?

i mean backwards

Do you mean to say that this same phenomenon afflicts you?

no i mean to say that this phenomenon afflicts me

Oh Crikey! then you are Merlin?

merlyn

Sorry. Then you are Merlyn?

it does not matter a name is inconsequential and no i am not

But you are like him.

can one be like a myth ?

Then Merlyn is not real?

was

Was?

then merlyn was not real

Ah, then Merlyn was not real?

it does not matter it is inconsequential

A life is inconsequential?

all life is inconsequential

Even yours?

am i alive if to you i have not yet been born?

I see your point.

you do?

Perhaps you would like to explain who you are and your role within the concert for our audience.

who i am?

Yes.

to whom

To anybody. To the audience. To me. To yourself.

somebody an interviewee a response myself

*some say my name settles somewhere between
vivien and rhiannon
i've often wondered where maybe therein lies my soubriquet*

Pardon?

explaining one's self is a rather complex task

It is?

there is a woman

Right.

she is a silhouette a spinner a spinster a landlady a widow a wife a witch a womb a wilding a gentlewoman a frailty a fate a housekeeper a homeowner a daughter a darling a danger a dance partner a glimpse a glimmer she is viduous

Right...

how many of those are who she is?

Erm.

They all are?

But they are perspectives of her from the viewpoints of different people –

persons

Persons.

no none of them are who she is you are rather rude to assume the right to another person's identity don't you think ?

But you presented the list. I'm sorry, you are quite right of course.

don't apologise i did indeed present this list but identity is not static nor is it an article open for possession who we are what we are we're all creatures of contradiction who is it that can tell me who i am ?

I see your point.

do you?

Perhaps you could just explain your role within the concert then.

a part of the soundscape

Yes?

yes

Which part?

that is a good question

It is?

yes i might well be the organ point

The organ point? A constant tone or sounding pitch around which the musical texture turns as it moves through various chordal progressions; so you are the bass? you are the foundation?

to a certain degree

How interesting; for there are moments when you do not appear in the musical works of today's programme, aren't there?

that depends on the focus of your ear

You only said you 'might' be an organ point.

that is correct

Then if you are not, what other role have you?

i might equally be organum i might equally be the formants

Hang on. These are all very separate ideas.

yes

Perhaps you could explain each individually. The organum is an early form of polyphony, I believe, in which the cantus firmus of the chant is followed in some semblance of harmony. Is this correct?

yes it originally moved in parallel either at a 4th 5th or 8^{ve} above or below the chant later becoming a touch more melismatic with passing or upper or lower auxiliary notes thrown in for fun

And formants?

singer's formants

You will have to explain those further for me I'm afraid.

it all relates to resonances a good singer's voice sounding a 440hz concert a will not only resonate at 440hz

No?

no there are also resonances around 2800hz these are the formants it's all about a beauty of timbre pitch is an irrelevance in music in comparison to timbre

That is a bold statement.

pitch is an arbitrary system timbre is natural

Can anything created be natural?

you are beginning to ask the right questions

[clears throat]

But yes; you are claiming to be the foundation around which these compositions are constructed, a 'perfect' harmony paralleling the musical line, and the timbre, the quality of sound?

yes

How?

they are all the same

They are?

a melody is an idea woven between bass and descant

And all music is melody?

no

No?

no

One final question:

I notice that you use predominantly lower case letters.

yes

Why?

capitalising left right and centre rather reduces the effect i find

You do not even grant pronouns an upper case opening? not even I?

*i would have to be rather egotistical to make my own signifier so domineering
yet leave you him her she he they unacknowledged*

I see your point.

are you sure?

I'm afraid that that is all that we have time for.
Once again thank you for coming along and speaking for us.

I hope that your invitation shortly arrives.
I'm sure we shall all be listening out
For you during the forthcoming performance

And we wish you all the best
in your past career.

Thank you.

[applause]

Un-sained Strings

—

a folksong suite in F major

*to Jane Powell,
widow*

“How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!”

- Lamentations 1:1 -

– Prelude –

Theme and Variations

From the hillside, the writhings of that distant town were not the calls of a homecoming as they had been for Housman. Nor were they those close-bordered fortress noises that had loomed across the marches in the past. I returned the lid to my pen, sighing at the book's blank staves. For millennia humans had channelled the music of the earth, had painted place in overtones, had mapped landscapes through chant. Yet how could I write a place I did not know? *What is Ludlow?* I knew Powys and Gwynedd and Gwent. I knew Deheubarth and Brycheiniog. I knew Mercia and the Marches. But Ludlow? Ludlow was a non-place; a fissure between borders in which the alluring recreations of history seemed more prevalent than the formation of a present. At most it was a capital city for a country constructed in the crenelated castellations of its neighbour. At the least it was an antique fayre musty with the faint remembrance of repression. I half closed my eyes, squinting into the mêlée of movement below. Between my barely parted lids colour faded to an exposed sepia. I separated structures from buildings, voices from figures, age from time. Like stretching a spring I dissected all. Finally, when they would give no more, I released, allowing the images to recoil across the landscape. Margins overlapped and intermingled, shades and histories collided, and the town lay proudly in the blurred centre, unapologetic in its nakedness. And as I watched, the town rose up before me like a woman made up of many parts; a body framed by lives, fleshed in journeys, mapped with voices. *Yes, she seemed to say, look at me. I have been scrutinised by thousands. Bought. Sold. Abandoned. Recovered. I have been exchanged by grubby hands for tainted coins. I have been taken, abused and hidden. Yet look at me; here I stand.* And the rivers were her arteries and the web of roads her veins. And the endless echo of water over rocks the rumble of her turning wheel, the ripple of her loom. *Come.* She reached out to me with her long escarpment arm. *Trace these cartographies. Join my expanding melodies. Here is my song.*

I

i first found it in falling
tripping on the Clee
over some ant-constructed tussock

we lay there face to face
her long bone ovine-scented nose
ridge pinging like a thumb piano B^b black
holes at my flailing fingertips

beneath the surface mound
ants stop milking set their aphids loose
look to the heavens larvae bosom-clutched

she held my gaze
hollow eyes chipped sharp as an aged spinster aunt's
and the blunt brown teeth grazed flat
fervently lisped masticated away

below in Ludlow the woman sits
knits harp strings into a web of sinews
pastoral purple heartstrings chord-wrapped with red wire

and in Castle Street those opium stones
grate s l o w l y cross
weather together and blossom
barbed by metallic end-of-autumn birds

II

I cut it from the ground,
Deconstructed the con-
Structured tomb, the earth weft
Womb, green-bodied Ugg-boot
Foot felt, snow-day comfort-

Er, or perhaps not quite
So queer here beneath our
Church. It stood there whilst still
Hlaw meant more than suffix
To the overly tongued,

But now expansion, but
Now extension, but now
Pretension buries both
Buried and their burrow.
New century, new re-

Ligion, new king (if that
Means anything) and the
World continues the same.
April, Eastertide, I
Pushed the shovel through the

Hillside's side, and felt my
Iron blade rust to the bone,
Ready to raze a grave
Yard from the ground. Mop my
Temples with sweat and dust,

Spinner woman, come, stop
Your woollen turning and
Help me dig away the
Cherry roots that still grip
Our tumulus, spewing

Forth Easter blossom spume.

III

F arpeggios bubble
loud hlud-l
from the Teme across its rocks
bubble
from the pewter stew-pot
above her midday flame
ingressive starch soft whorls
thickening water to broth
beneath that cool brisk Monday-market sun

that six mile hum
crescendos along the valley from Clee
to strike
the crow arching over
these old stone walls
as a roar or murmured rumble
swallowing sole-packed roads
puddle-pocked
with vibrantly awninged stalls

William Haranc and Rhys ap Gruffydd
haggle in the square
across staring stark-eyed fish
fresh caught
and the Welshmen herd
pigs and beasts
past self-anointing spinster hogs
rummaging through fallen wardens
along the road to Ludlow

IV

four hundred million years before
we settled thin beneath the seas
fine muds hardened into shales and
rock Silurian and marine

twelve ninety four *the most renowned*
of merchants Laurence de Ludlow
left his crenelated manor
to sweep fleeces across the sea

he settled beneath the surface
sank down drowned joined coral bodies
and limestone formed around his hands
shadowed the splayed finger skin vaults

we carried his cumbersome corpse
back onto deck where uncovered
under the sunrise he weathered
to leather ungloved chilblains bit

V

ranunculus rubbed
 into wax teated udders
goldcups bright as may-churned butter

or winter in the church
 thirteen-o-eight
 when waiting for the north aisle ended

after those slow three years
 window tracery
 and ornamentation balled into flowers

bloomed into fashioned patterns
 around aisle
 striding wardens wands ever ready

some to kill cankers
 in musk rose buds or
 to prepare for the cantankerous court

of *honourable, worshipfull and*
 gentlemanlie companie
marching military as thieves

VI

lying against the Teme bank amongst those
 acrid crackles of flood-strength foliage
 i heard a sunken-eyed spinster singing
 in the hlud-l brouhaha brouhaha
 water over surface clawing rocklets
 which as your eyes close to liquid-plumped lips
 settle *into rhythm settle into*
rhythm settle into rhythm settle
into rhythm into repetition

when the drowned daughter caught in horseshoe weir
 we dashed to catch her trailing dress to drag
 her to shore to save her from the unstaged
 titter by s^{pa}gh^{tt}i-twis^{ti}ng snapped twigs
 in temple-silvered swathes of golden hair
 we wrapped the body in church vestments let
the kinges Mynstrell take her with his Christmas
 fee (six shillings eight d.) back to London
 unqueried on the edge of a lament

next year when she'd nigh on been forgotten
 and the last dried rose heads on the weir had
 rotten back to carbon coloured water
 he came again sang played entertained us
 through the winter feastings and at evening
 once the food had gone the laughter faded
 to ruminative drinking by firelight
 he unwrapped that as yet unplucked ghost harp
 curved from brittle bone tight with strings of hair

and in the fire warmth her wires stretched and sang
 of the carding comb

the wheel
 the loom
 the marine the downton silurian rocks
 the devonian old red sandstone
 carboniferous limestone
 coal
 clee
 capped with dolerite
 dhustone
 ingenious igneous helmets
 hard hammered
 to roads

I ran I ran I ran I ran

and even when you called I
could not feel your fingers
through the claws of Niskai
through flailing trails of waterlogged wool
through unwinding
 unlacing
 unrestraining cords
 chords
 discordant
as music underwater
 throughwater

I ran I ran I ran I run

rolled like italian rrrrrr s
rolled like air-heavy plastic barrels
rolled like almonds like sugared almonds
rolled like just another kettle of fish

and yet for jealousy
 for my resented diaphony
with your resented boy
 I swim sing again
 of tones unhallowed

ther is no rose of swych vertu as is the rose that bare Jhesu

a a alle a alle alle alle al le lu
ya

a crack of bone splintered split hair new-curved

I run I r u n I r u n I r u n .

VII

mist blue off teeming waters
fizzing with *indigofera tinctoria*
settling into bankside pebbles

and alum salt sweetens the stones
for freshwater fish mordant ornamentation
to *teyntering* hanged fabrics

sixteen wide cloths *blewmedlie*
thirty seven pounds six shillings and eight d. sold
cart-borne from Ludlow to London

fifteen whole cloths *derkgrenemedlie*
thirty seven pounds ten shillings sold in London
Dick Whittington turns again

forehead furrowed to review
once more the price of cloth to touch the full thick wool
warm with our deep red madder dye

fullers work into the fabric
like ploughmen across a stubble covered field
thickening felted degreased

shearmen smooth away the fluff
prune away those sprouting heads of eglantine those
cluttered cheers of ox-eye daisies

blithe as blackbirds rioting out
of our ordered hedgerows breaking apart the mill
i cloak myself *derkgrene* ride

VIII

I counted ants at Lammastide
hlaſ mas
tried to help their harvest in
to capture callous aphid killers

I watched the welsh boys slyly hide
and hope to stay unfound behind
the sheaves of newly garnered corn
barley wheat and rye

and elen merch bronwen
pretty but mad
plays her harp to summer-fat chilvers
tries to catch in her strings the essence of flax

I still hold her hands
though she knows I don't love her
I must wed Margery
the wealthy Sherman's daughter
with her money and her Ludlow name

IX

Galdeford squa-
lor lingers
in the skin
as we trail
back through streets
lined by these
fayre houses
to the court
and to trial

William Price
tailor and
Alice Pearce
sawyer's wife
to be whipped
for theft and
Richard Cooke
is charged for
caring *not*
a fart for
the fine Mis-
ter Bailiffs

Richard Lang-
ford petty
chapman bailed
for twenty
pounds sterling
to answer
for living
with anot-
her man's wife
and *having*
children by
her

tailor
John Lewis
charged with rape
acquitted
Francis Vaughan
picking pur-
ses sentenced
to be hanged

from the court
I walked a-
long the roads
climbed away
from the town
up onto
Gallow's Bank
between the
tiered trees
you can see
the gibbet
no matter
where you stand
in Ludlow

a gate squeaks
the shriek of
rust hinges
open to
reveal me
revere me
the clear steel
flutes forlorn
winds wind through
hollow pipes

and around
me the ants
sing of men
keeping sheep
by moonlight
hanged in chains
but I by
rope coarse rope

come morning
my final
uneaten
meal has fall-
en and they
divide it
carry each
dried breadcrumb
away

X

sun-dried grass cotton-flecked
with those *silver-tufted* stalks
of eriophorum
whistles in the zephyr sweep

i pluck a head
its stalk surprisingly firm
beneath my grasp my grip
as though it could cut the palm
could strip the skin away
and leave me naked
in the rising cold
naked against the ancient rocks
in the eroded scree
muscle bulging to the touch
of air

i wear my skin like a shawl
like a winter-beaten wrap
like a black hessian pall
like a dreadlocked Leicester Longwool fringe
like the lingering scent of orange pith in a finger's quick
like the querulous kick of an old woman's gin

i wear my skin like coarse ground Szechuan pepper
like reeling between the butter taste of dill and bright clean shocks of mint
like marjoram tarragon the end of *April in his mistress' face*
like the bitterness of biting onto dry Christmasless cloves
like fainting after chewing rosemary without knotted lamb fat trails

i wear my skin like biting through crystal
like stale breaths
like healing in brine

i stand amongst the last
fading narcissi
trying to recall
how it feels to be so young
that one might love
another might mistake
the beauty of a face so like your own
i close my eyes
scrape away these last flesh remnants
clinging to the masculinity
of form
of shape

in the comforts of this dark
(*i can't see you you can't see me*)
i see the best of men
and the worst
and always in my arms
my baby
tiny sexless irrelevant
mine
still linked by the cord the chord
midwives aren't taught to cut
my familiar
linked like the warmth of a womb
like the
like the
like like
like ...

spinner woman
spinster sister
clacking needles
clacking needles
clack- clack-
cking needles
your wheel seems sinister
somehow
stood in the darkened corner
rusted to wood
wood
wood
muffled thumpings above
of contemplative footsteps stop
stop

and your wheel listens
watches
musing ruminative over
colours
and the golden threads you spin
together from the fleece
of some seven horned
lamb
ram

knitting textile music
tactile music
you ignore us all
to light a cigarette
light another cigarette

the weather-cock squeaks
three times was that?
as though weather change
is an end to sex
to middle england
to older men
to gogmagog ...

a raised brow
pursed lip
i screw
my pen lid back in place
climb back into my flesh suit
stitch my escape routes closed
with cotton grass
with unwritten cadences
with an indigo string

XI

quick darnels in the barley grow
sharp through my cornfield footprints
which settle into crops like winter
freezing gravel chips onto Silurian stones

sharp through my cornfield footprints
i felt the mill wheel turning slowly
freezing gravel chips onto Silurian stone
forming my icy night couch in flint

i felt the mill wheel turning slowly
crumbling cereals with poison now lint
forms my icy all night couch as if flints could
no longer hold sway in manufacture's progress

cereals crumbled with poisonous hints
of darnels in the barley grown
no longer hold sway now manufacture's progress
has settled over winter wheat
like dints in unmelting ice in heat expelling snow

XII

Brigit Whinne (ever
willing)
charged by court for her
lewd living

and the wife of John Lloyd
(thatcher)
presented her husband
for *lieing*

*with his cozen in bed
between
his wife and she*
lacking in decency

whatever the heats
of lust
between two cousins
heats of hate

are quite as great as
lovers
where the nation that
is not

is england is wales
and two
figures side by side
sleep sound

on the dank and dirty
ground
unasking unassuming
unallying ?

XIII

Kyngstone's cloths
in the centre of town
is always filled
with the finest fabrics
monies might buy
providing you can find the colours
that truly match your hair
that match your eyes
sir

The blewmedlie?
a wise choice sir
I once knew a fellow who
walked the length of Ludlow-London road
in just such a hue
and not a drop of rain
passed through to mark him sir
you mark me sir?

And maybe a splash
of haberdashery
to pin your throat sir?
I know a pedlar
by whose wares
some mercers swear
when it comes to catches
of pearls and rubies

Far more than trifling trinkets sir
I've seen him sell
woven rye
translated into gold
glistening like no other
they say his mother
was a wisdomed woman
whose gifts he sold for endless rue

But what can you do sir?
perhaps a cap to offset that
jaunty hang about your shoulders sir?
no? well never mind
not essential I'll dock the price
just remember to say
you came to Kyngstone's cloths:
making cloaks for all occasions

King Street (previously Drapers Row)

XIV

i.m. Geoffrey Andrew
c.1250

in the glass
translucent
skeletons of leaves
weave beneath
the coloured stains
of our window's
obsidian palms
crystallised like rock salt

dried cream greens
plummet overboard
plunge past the
brine pickled sea
monsters swirling slowly
in the deep
whilst unattractively foreign flowers
eddy on the surface
dye spilt unstained
un-sained

following footprints
in the air-dried earth
of Jerusalem
i still cannot quite
imagine his red hair
vibrant jewellery
whimsical beauty
blending through
my stereotype of
a heathen landscape

in the palm
singed leaves crisp
and curl like wool to a fire
crumple to age-dulled moth wings
crumble to ash
 to ash
 to *aaashhhh ...*

XV

Shush, my love, I'm just the yellow feathered
jongleur, the golden poet reflected
in your cold pool stone walls, weather dripping
dank as decay, as tripping disarrayed
through pouring rain, through ooze-greened passageways,
trails ablaze with my paced footstep footstep footstep footstep
and firelight, torchlight... Hush lieblich, darling,
listen: *brouhaha hlud-l brouhaha*

pianissimo pianississimo
morendo, dying away on a breath,
focussed deeper into stone than jonquil
over glassed water, still mirroring true.
Be still, darling, in your womb warren. Fall
to anywhere in this wall-stopped stair –

XVI

slashing nettles with a sickle
in that sharp early-september sun
i had not noticed her perched
upon the iron scaffold poles watching
until i paused to pad prickles
of perspiration from my
foliage-flecked dust-streaked forehead

*it seems funny that for all
the children of which one knows
no one is ever born from
this stoically silent rock
that merely crumbles*

« y' know the nettles on'y grow
where dead people 'ave lived she said
it's summat t' do wiv pooh
 the truth being tricky to ascertain
i paused a moment for seriousness
nodded assent to her statement
turned again to the age browned heads

*ludlow bone bed crumbles as
gingerbread until even
the tiny outlines of long rotten
merfolk fade into mythical
mouthfuls and kiln scattered ash*

i keep her in the corner of
one wary eye ever ready
to catch my sweep mid-line if she move
like the stories of forbidden lovers
lying silent in the long grasses
for fear of being found entwined
like the unseen hedgehog cleft in twain

and the nettles the nettles sigh
gravely shake heavy dreadlocked faces
shake sun-curved leaves
shudder their hair-stung frames

XVII

*Lady Brilliana Harley
Brampton Bryan
11th June 1643*

Edward, loue,

Petty was in prison dear at Loudlowe no less amongst scoundrel men
sharp gravel-flecks spat in diamonds oil organs slipped from crushed amphibians
smoothed flat on rolled black tar macadam

5 men set upon him you know he was seet up and betwne them they had
Carrabins pole axes a chugell to beat him soundly to box the eare to kick the
fucker dead

I read by the post last weake that Heariford is growne now wors than Loudlowe
or so I heard or so it said for they are now more quiet in Loud- low

Cattle from the market glissando swell rise and my electric kettle with its
phony "look-at-me-love"-whistle as though it were that real-deal old time antique retro
shit harmonises in some undiscovered polyphony

But Honest Petter is come out of prison at last released vindicated and yet
He was Greeuiously used Turkes could have used him no wors indeed some
blaggard shit-for-brains lefftenant coronell Marrow kicked his head in like a football daily
or since maytime passed like ball to wicket

They laied him in a dungon upon foule straw an Englishman that's just not
cricket just not called for when he were already a prisoner of patience

As I came out of the church and looked him in the face I cryed to his shame
until my caus was hard and he deleured at last

Write me weakeley if pleas God if pleas you liebling and I will send for
the letters for post poor Petty's fetters I quite miss my boys and sit here like some
frumpy old spinster slowly spinning into decayed old age

With all my love, my loue,

Mam

XVIII

do you still recall that day on the hillside
in april
when we caught sight of
a red kite far-wandering miles around powis ?
and found the lamb
caught in fence-ripped wire
that panicked as we approached
until its fleece frothed like pink toothpaste spume ?

at your touch it lay silent
hope abandoned
until it felt the wire gone and fled

the crow'sfeet at your eyes contract fancy passes
i stretch my mind to womb wipe a tentative caress
across the cool enamel basin still stonily empty

XIX

your name is not marked
in the lists of dead men
on the wall
yet the harpy dove-struck structure
stands over you all

the same

your mother's market stall
flecked with leather gloves
with webs of lace
sells less these days
though still seen weekly

we brought you

bier raised shoulder high
as ants torn up in cut turf
scurry through soil tunnel streets
their clean cream larvae
cradled deeper safer

by far

and she at her stall
crinkling in Christmas crêpe paper
trails
unmothered re-barren
withered like laurel garlands

brief as a girl

and in the church
that keen calm red glow
of elements blessed
soaks into linseed rubbed wood
like salt crystals into a cyst

into a cist

XX

st leonard's church was falling down
 was falling
so we tore away
 remaining stones
 closed the lych-gate
swamped the altar
in red/white striped tape

and mⁱ_n^giⁿg with the
rip-ple-rum-bles under corve bridge
come the voices
 come the voices
 come the faces
of unearthed bodies
indecently disturbed from floral beds

i did not mind until
i happened upon her pallid shoulder
 dry in the shade
walled away from brinked meres of sky
by my ear
i caught the sun and her breath-shuddered song
 stut-ter^{-s-s-s-sssss}
cwtching my spine with cold

XXI

i landed above Ludlow
high in the leads
of St Laurence tower
felt the weight of bells
below dragging
at my feet like gravity
like pressure swelling
pressing through the body
like a fall

the fold of wings crac - ked
between my shoulder blades
sharp as release relief
from flight
and beneath
one hundred and thirty five feet
Teme coils a slowworm
white around the town

perhaps i once had carved
away the lid of a tussock
of an ant raised tumulus
watched unobserved
the cattle market
where aphids exchange masters
in a heartbeat throb
the ebb and rise
of some ever present body

and I
i sit watch for
that cellophane flutter
that summertime rapture
rebellion

beside me she shifts
rests her skin
in my touch
clutching to that idle remembrance
of membrane
of scripture
of paving slabs
of endless cold cold cobblestone
stone
stone
sto nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn e

the nasal drone
of living town sounds
 grows a music
 not quite modal enough
 to yet be folksong
lingers on the tongue
as an aftertaste
to coffee or bird-chori
and beakfuls of eternally torn liver

- *tacet* -

sometimes in the night
i can still feel
the shiver of his fingertips
tracing the scarline
cutting cool around the ribcage
across abdominal quadrilaterals
shudder sharp as a gasp
as inhaling some other body
some other lover

she sighs
peers through the far off window
where silently
she lies
her harp strings stopped

one by
one by
one they
 snap

play a final scale
B^b
swallowed by wedding bells
oh be dumb i hear you

we rise

– Intermezzo –

Dance

Forcing their way through the time-wrinkles written into the town's skin, those voices had shown me a landscape, a life, a history, a sounding voice indistinguishable in its changes between the remembered and unheard. I tried to recall each chord of the song, each layer of the soundscape, to draw it onto my staves, but the woman had not yet finished her display. She was not merely an image to be viewed, but a living, moving organism, a physical presence filtering from four hundred million years of rock. Her feet began to run across the coarse sedimentary scenery, scraping a rhythm, beating a dance. And the dance was a waltz, that three-step intimacy that seemed so shocking to an other-age; that jaunty mis-beat step with its erotic limp like a gasp, with its uneven beauty. And the violence inflicted by her steps was elegant. It was unhinged; a vulgarity enriched with harm. Its densities were the planting of flowers to smother hideous scents or the bitter edge of justice or the bitter edge of injustice. It was a shadow of war and greed. It was a parliament constructed to stifle change. And her returning tonality was the simpering echo of a girl, of a rape, of a court that could not even correctly record her name. Dactylic. *Margery*. (Three beats.) *Margery*. (Three beats.) *Margery*.

soldiers tread soldiers tread soldiers tread soldiers tread
a military drum *beat* drum *beat* rings
cheap roses bred for war

no-one watching anymore
for when we hear you listening
a single redcoat turns his head turns his head [*turn your headssss*]

ludlow comes in for the fair
where one man may sell his wife
conformable to ancient law

oh John Hall John Hall
two and six ? two and six
hardly seems right

with king George on the throne
and the woman still wearing those looks
the dress alone was worth as much more liquor?

around the town
ring rags and bells
chiming a dance step

come take my hand
waltz with me
from our dearly

beloved burgess
into the arms
alms of St Giles run !

nerve me numb
hear the bells my darling
ring – ing

*Didn't you hear? some screeching beaten maiden traipsed
into Haie with raucous complaint to jangle against
Philbert Burghill proclaiming she'd been robbed, mangled, raped.*

Be it known that þ^e ryght noble and virtuous Prynce Arthur
who clambered with us one ice-grey morning over stile and stone
prynce of Wales and fyrft begolten fonne of our Sovereigne Lorde Kyng

Henry the seventh departed out of this transitory
and uncertain life within þ^e Castle of Ludlowe only
moments ago to lie beside some other lover brothered

to dusty remains and age scented holy buildings plural
plurel pluralism more sobering than light and this the
2^d dey of Apryl between 6 and 7 of the Clock

in the afternoon being Saturday and the Easter Weeke
we let the frost fall away from our footprints melt freeze anew
a song in the aspen crawling with dark shivers feverish

for he had led sweet scottish henry
along the ways through England's lands
ad per nobile castrum de ludlow

[fa-la la-la la-la la]

and there they met with a pretty little jolt
at matilda's princely hand
never made to languish and pine away

[fa-la la-la la-la la]

for the boy got snagged by a grappling iron
which left his horse unmanned
sed ipse rex eum ab hostibus splendide retraxit

[fa-la la-la la-la la]

ravens root through the lawn grass
worn tyre torn grass
in their wisdomed ancient academic robes

*I wove a wedding ring of rye
tied it to a pigeon's leg
sent it on its way to Wales*

huddled naked beneath this moth haloed coat
their beaks thrust sharp between bare toes
horn grey spears pierce my feet

Yours was a
Voice in the
Darkness that

Called to me
Sang of such
Things as the

Wilting of
Windflowers
Edging our

Beds and the
Castle walk
Taken to

Throw off sharp
Scents from the
Swine market

Acrid as
Mercury
Hissing in blood

*The nurses saw her form torn ragged and raw
in that bed of mould, of gaol-stale straw,
where they'd locked her up, the perfidious whore.*

the sayde two outlawes we have sent to their trial
according to Justice (god pardon their sowles)
and beneath the rusting rustling forest fleece

an english yeoman may be free once more
from fearsome welshies now outlawed
and now imprisoned for their felonies

and we shall stand amongst the saplings
setting out tea-lights on old cut stumps
tying ribbons of remembrance where there should be leaves

what shall we say farther? all the theves in Wales quake forfeare
And thus from Ludlowe the holy Trinitie preserve you
the sixth. Daye of January you Most Bowdon Roland

braies laid out on the bed
three pairs pressed ready to wear
whilst across the seas a leopard roars for war

Thrascias *blew blew blew* **blew**
and set the compass rose rotating
around the swiftly rising writhing winds

sitting in the cloisters at Trim
I let the handfuls of ermine tails run
through my fingers like rats like dry living water

*Is unofficial arrestment imprisonment by another name?
We find only falsehood in this casual claim;
for when a stedfast strumpet's spurned, should she not be portioned blame?*

*The allegations, for ought appeareth to me, may as well be false as true
yet arrest the damnable man nonetheless for now and press on through.
However it bears out, keepe this; she won't be made maiden anew.*

mixing pigments into paint
we burnt the bones from sky-bleached white
to black

listened for that sinister crack
from the narrow demarrowed centre
shuddering along the body line

and the Prior calls us macabre
says we must pray calmly for our souls
to save us from the fate of brittle bones

which when left out in open air
lie like discarded untuned instruments
and in coarse breezes scream

fine knacks for ladies, cheap, choice, brave and new ...
but nobody knew my love, my love,
and they say this age has pushed us into sin sin sin

i fold my pretty nakedness in skin skin skin
bound with ties of weed, wide enough to wrap the fey, which,
fluttering above, ceaselessly scorn our ambling rambles

trudge on trudge on trudge on trudge on trudge on trudge on-
-omatopoeia can't you hear it hieing along your way?
tactically chasing with words that never meant a sound [sound sound

soak into rape oil, love,
let it fill your pores with the yellow scent that brought the plague
of heavy-shod black flies, caressing the spine hairs of your arm

but Fie! *Fie! Fie! Fie! Fie! Fie! Fie! Fie!*
just pick the pretty gloves, my love,
prick the pretty skin with dress-maker pins, with nibs, with quills

quietnes within his ma:^{ties} dominion and principallitie of Wales
quietnes punifhinge as the beat of your auction gavel
against the cattle market wall against all such advauncem^t

of Justice as though our Right welbeloved cosen and counfello^ε
were judge on some shitty T.V. courtroom drama &
accordinge to these Instruccõns the continua:

of quietnes in this land of mine must be upheld
mark me I went for sushi in the cliquey little bar in town
and that constant land throb did not once enter my head

*Signed by his ma:^{tie} at Theobalds the
Twelfth day of May in the Nynth yeare
of his ma^tf Reigne*

i first heard the bugle hollos from the hillside
looking down on ludlow like signals of warfare
or on horseback Flying Childe after foxes in the valley

and down below in london ludlow brothers
drive the bullock wagon of atora beef suet the beast bellows
shakes free his forelock snorts courses across the cobbles

*There are small comforts in court when justice confuses decency,
and still the stains of golden broom lingered on her dress, bleary
illusion, and was her name even elizabeth? Or maybe margery?*

i lie in water lie in water
i lie in water thicker than brine
let it soak into my cold blue skin like religious oils remembered

pouring from that blessed silver vessel
st laurence's soul cleansing soap dish
stemming from hilltop-lost sacrificial incenses

intensity increasing with each sharp gasp
each ingressive inhalation hiss hisses
like salt crystals rubbed into my wounded side

when i gave birth to you they said
i should as soon have cut the crumbling shell
from my innards and shattered it to the burnt gorse

like the fetid corpse of some long dead disease should
have woven your still moist embryo into
my tapestry the umbilical cord one golden thread

let it soak sleep-weighted into my ancient spinster wheel
heady with blackcurrant vanilla and i
lie lie in water in water lie in water lie in water lie i

– March –

Finally, the dance ended. The woman allowed her characters to settle, to stipple her sonic canvas beneath a steady, rhythmic beat. The bleak and violent images soothed into a smooth reflective arc where voices mirrored voices and poetries mirrored poetries, regardless of time or tale, as if to say *We are all the same*. Then I saw them, marching in procession; men and women, artists and priests, Ladies, Lords and Labourers, Queens, traitors and outlaws, echoes and ghosts. Each person was a pure pitch forming a chord, forming a phrase, an essence of timbre, an ekphrasis of sound. And the woman, the town, *was* the spinner, the spinster, at her wheel. Fortune. And the woman, the town, *was* the voices and the lives of all her people. And she was theirs. And they were her.

XLI

*i shall not sleep again until all this
has ended :*

we lined damson stones
along soil clad rocks
at the riverside
by our shoes and stockings
 my shoes and stockings
 shoes and stockings
 filled with dust and earthworms
as I paddle my soles in the Teme
stream bubble
 beneath

tinker. tailor. soldier. sailor.

some old adage
some old rhyme
 anytime you come here
 come near
 come closer dear

richman. poorman. beggarman. thief.

pinch the trinkets from my purse
and the wren the wren
 (pretty little wren)
 sings again
 when I call you will you answer ?

and my mother always hated buttons
 buttons that undressed you
 oh so gently
quick as nakedness
 at an eye's glance
 at a hand's grasp

silk. satin. muslin. rags.

when my ragdoll fell apart
the *fibres* eddied
 steadily away
 under the roots
 of the mud slipped willow
I took the skull
 from my father's glass case
 above the fireplace

her bald
 cold cranium firm
in my fingertips
 patterned with
those coarse edged patches
 crazy-paving
at the castle edge

and mud
 foliage
decomposing fish-matter
 seeping out through her eye-sockets
 oozing from the brain
 ooooooooozzzing
and I wrapped her head
 in scraps of dress
 in my mother's fox-fur stole
 cancer wiggling

boots. shoes. slippers. clogs.

later
after I was widowed
 respinstered
 rehollowed
 nulliparous
I sat at my loom
 loom loom
 or the wheel
in the corner of the room
 turning turning turn -ing
 at my pedal press
and she still dressed
 in lady smocks
 in liquid samites
 in passions carnelian
 carmine bright wine

and my many lodgers
 think me mad
 to sit and talk so long
 so long so long so
 l o n g
 to think that mortis grin
 unchanging
 mixed with melancholy misery
 purpose for gott ?

and still I dabble
 my summer-sore feet
 amongst saffron bright crocuses
 and into the *hlud* river

this year. next year. sometime. never.

1841: Jane Powell, an 89 year old widow of Holdgate Fee rents lodgings in her home to twenty four persons.

XLII

from london chapel royal
to ludlow
i waxed lyrical for children in a garden
greened with weeds
bound around our backs
silver sharp and strings
white as voices
singing their way through wilderness
wilds thick with foliage
and the
child lost from her merry guide
caught by the
wiles of some miscreant
spirit
falls away from you
an overtone broken
into olives oleanders orchids swaying tumescent
in sunlight
not quite the tale I had in mind
when you kindly constructed this thymy wold
and made me Spirit-guide to sinners
and to song
i took my thyrsus in hand
and never saw
the serpent coiling
amative as oil
about that honey spilling rod

Musician Henry Lawes, who acted as tutor to the children of the Earl of Bridgewater, composed the music for Milton's masque *Comus* and appeared in the first performance at Ludlow Castle as the Attendant Spirit.

XLIII

I hear you in here praying,
see what your sensual lips are saying,
plumped in righteousness.

And in these musty post-war scents,
thews of fresh freedom, sex, of fury vented,
not all repression's lessened.

How can you sit there listening
to our church bells boldly chiming, singing
Home, Sweet Home ?

I heard water falling through rents,
fissures, ice melting from tin, from pools of pretence.
How can you leave this alone? well-tempered?

Reverend R. G. Channer declaimed the unfit state of the 'Homes Fit for Heroes' that stood outside the town of Ludlow, c.1930.

XLIV

Wee greete you well
& will &
comand you to
come & Appeare

here where castle
is court and
military
kingdom before

ou^e Counsell in
ou^e Marches
of wales lower
case mark you well

the Seaventh # # # day
of May next # #
can't disgrace court
with Judges' lodge

comfortably
constructed
tentatively
aged and you fhall

Anfweare to fuch
matter &
contempt as fhall
be obiectee a -

- gainft you by we
Thomas (and
Margaritt his
wife) and the roof

with ruth and en -
- vy crackles
like static wool
now unpurposed

undishonoured
and we called
the wilderness
in with flute &

tabor & pipe
& drum
drum drum drum
d d rum drum drummm

rrrrrrr-m

A call to court, 'By : the King', issued from the Council of the Marches. The original document reads 'objectee againft you by Thomas Powxell # # #' with 'and Margaritt his wife' inserted as an afterthought, an ammedment scribbled between the lines.

XLV

drrrrrum

d d rummm

echoes chase back from the town
quickstepping through chivalric
passageways swirling about
the turris your hollowed head
solitary as a lord
strays across the footstep squares
of a chessboard still sticky
with resins bled from balsam

in the night two young kings join
my dance step hop to the cry
of my pipe the sceptre falls

and only misericords
dare watch over us when the
walls crumble under your touch

d d rummm

drrrrrum

a-hummmmm

1459: 'Lancastrians then sacked the town, so that 'men wente wetschode in wynn ... and bare a-waye beddyng, clothe, and other stuffe, and defoulyd many wymmen''. The sons of Richard, Duke of York, escaped from Ludlow in the night.

XLVI

As I was taking open air
in gardens bright with marigolds,
nasturtiums and chrysanthemums,
I paused for breath against the wall
and saw poor Mary's imprint still
malingering into the well
of that stone seat despite these years
passed.

I kept the castle pure and sweet,
as clean and wholesome as I could,
played tennis games in covered courts
off slowly deathless, sombre cur-
tain walls. Much later after they
had left we came again with boules
to plough along the bowling green.
And

the ancient gardener will swear
at any passer-by he sees,
too indiscriminate in his
abuse to mingle into rimes
of rosemary. I would have him
removed but he seems a neces-
sity with that curmudgeonly
glower.

We are proposing to install
electric lights and other such
lavish commodities shortly.
I hope.

Originally gaining mention as a covered Real Tennis court, bowling-green and garden in the time of Henry Sidney, Castle House continued in use even after the castle fell into disrepair; however, it was not until purchase by the Earl of Powis in the early 19th century that the house began to undergo dramatic changes. Richard Henderson, who took a 21 year lease for the house on the 29th September 1907, amongst many improvements, installed electric lighting in the building.

Lady Brilliana Harley
Brompton
5th October 1627

S.^r —

I haue sent you vp a litell hamper
 ryeteings and boouckes a partriche pye a litell runlet of meathe

labelling the piccalilli seems tediously pithy
 after my epistolary endeavours however one must keep the pantry ordered

I hope your cloche did you saruis betwne Gloster and my brother Brays
 for with vs the day was rainy and the king in such a way

I met a crone-ish woman coming from Loudlowe who talked of change at court
 we all felt it in the air a woman does not need telling to know

last night I not being well made me seend this day for the midwife
 which I thinke I shoulde haue deferred to lange

something is amiss nothing wrong in this but even my father's ientell fiseke
 has no effect & he desire you send downe a littell Bibell to preserve us

and I shall soon set again to stirring the copper cauldron of jam
 with my dewitching hazel stem or take plane and adze like some carpenter's son

I hope parlament has spent as much time as will satisfy them in dooing nothing :
 so nowe some good frute of theare meeting will be brought to ripnes

and they will focus less on whipping at rhinocerotes with fragile trails
 of fine silk thread or so let us hope

God preserue you well and giue you happy and speedy meeting with
 Your most faithful affectionat wife

Brill: Harley

Lady Brilliana, wife to puritan parliamentarian Sir Robert Harley, lived in Brampton Bryan (11 miles west of Ludlow). Between July and September of 1643 Brampton Bryan Castle was under siege by royalist forces. In her husband's absence Brilliana assumed command, holding firm until the army withdrew.

XLVIII

time progresses this is James's reign
and here we make Memorandum^m
that this day & year
something changed

*the bus passed through
machynlleth
bound fast with pink ribbons
tearing at the traffic*

the Signett of our late Sover=
=raign Lady ^{Queen} Elizabeth
remaining w.th the right Hon.^{ble}
Edward Lord Zouche Lord P^εsident

[i wonder if Pepys will think of this
 when he goes to kiss the lips
 the jaw of that skeletal queen
 her gaping maw cold stone dead]

the Signett was by the sayd Lord P^εsident
of his ma:^{ties} Councill in the marches of wales
& the rest of the fame Councill
broken & defaced —

*i travelled back from bangor
and already the sharp sea breeze
had ripped the pink threadbare
rived ribbons to greyed shreds*

something changed
when we falsified that seal
but i forget now what
and this is James's reign the barman's calling
time

Jo: Powell

Queen Elizabeth's seal, held by the marcher court, is falsified following her death. Despite the existence of a council to preside over Wales and the Marcher lands, the majority of the lords that formed this body were English. The council served perhaps more as a means to keep silent the issues of Wales.

XLIX

Christmas spices in the porridge at breakfast time
Mulled slowly, potently into the vat of wine
Bought only for that one booze-rouge-bruised uncle who
Sits in the corner armchair where conversation
Can't permeate, can't relieve inebriation.
And aunts in long-sought late-birthday jewellery linger
Over witching liquids like engineers, prodding
At sinisterly surfacing neck-plucked giblets.

All must undergo the rigmarole of sherry:
How many, how much, who touched the Croft bottle last.
The same old joke, the same old joke, the same old, the
Walk wrapped in old weather-scented woolly hats, gloves,
But not mittens, never mittens, so practical,
So sensible, so perfect; divinely designed.
And then those idle hours to while away between
The end of daylight and the bitter cold of bed.

I find I'm allergic to the presence of men
With their eyes like liver pâté, skin like sulphur;
I don't quite know what I'm trying to say but that
They make my skin crawl cold with pox, with pure disgust.
Yet she, oh man's delight, suggests we try a play
(A cunning way to disguise one's dislike for *Them*).
In the corner the gramophone swirls Tallis, or
Byrd, or some such, by MP3, record, CD.

After the fuss of constructing Camelot from
Occasional tables, mother-in-law vases,
Terracotta pots of hopeful amaryllis,
(*But after her lover Amyntas hied. Up and*)
Down the centre of the living room, we took our
Parts: Gawain by William, Nenive, dear Mary,
And naturally the good King Arthur was I.
Can't recall which rotter got to play Lancelot.

Still can't quite see why Gwyn would choose him over me
But such is love's course (*amantes sunt amentes*).
Nobody quite knows when Camelot collapsed to
Cries for further battalions of chipolati,
Bacon on stainless-steel platters with cheese and port
Or ruminative crystal vessels of brandy,
But at some point someone cascaded down stone stairs
And we twenty-eight set to *Spem In Alium*.

Without, the Lord of Misrule might have noticed our
Spirited revelry behind the remembrance
Of single malt whisky, echoing through the grounds
Of the castle's inner bailey, maybe, and frowned
That with the cylindrical Prince Arthur Chappel
We might simply have slipped straight from the pages of
Ph.'s tales of round tables, Arcadia, grails,
Glatissant. And somewhere in the night twelve voices

Grew to join us, drew our hope, never abandoned,
Our notes, unwavering, to one true polyphony,
Resounding. Long after twelfth night had closed and all
Had left, the pelican pierced his breast and bled with
Wine.

In 1596, Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, Lord President of the March Council, held an elaborate Christmas feast in Ludlow Castle. The guests performed an Arthurian entertainment.

L

*Hush now my liebling, my new made kingling,
for, darling, our stepping-stones swiftly fade.*

when it fell through the electric cables
we roasted swan in our ancient oven
stuffed with hazelnuts apple cloves sage salt
dined away my father's eastertide death

*Sleep now my darling, don't you smell sealing
wax cool to the brass stamp? Comforting. Clean.*

she let us travel to london alone
planned her move fled to another mother
to keep her children royal through doomsday
thunder and the choices she'd lief cast down

*Shush now my kingling. Rest in the teeming
rhythms of politics. Breathe, liebling, breathe.*

Edward V ascended to the throne at 13. His mother followed a bewildering path that left the young king and his brother missing, but her daughter queen of a new dynasty.

LI

*there runs a crisscross pattern
of small leaves
spun in silk
weft in woven plateaus*

of silver
of cobweb-dense
spider thread
of spindle-dance

a woman weaves
memory like myth
like remembrance
like the fading taste of rosemary

a woman weaves silk to leather
manful as a figure of stone
plaiting a lover
in the frame of a loom

when he entered the room
i could not have heard
the cries of embittered
embedded iron scraped to rock

nor the crack
of a body cast to ground
as he lit another cigarette below
the town burned to ash

and in the glass
i saw the world cast
me as some former-day Ophelia
and let my tapestry fly

the bed-linen glistens fresh
along the lines between houses
and a last request whistles stings through weathered lips
sings bro ken only by a fall

Marion de la Breure helped her lover, Ernault de Lyls, to secretly enter Ludlow Castle whilst the lord and his family were absent, whereupon Ernault took it by force. Realising her own treachery, she killed de Lyls with his sword and flung herself from the tower window.

LII

every line i write beats an hour
as though even my metronome
no longer knows how to proceed past equilibrium
as though there are no further possibilities for sound
or for silence [silence]

i lie on the bridge on de Dynan's bridge
face to sky as though it were a glass and i
the last stem-snapped daffodil trumpeting upwards at a forgotten heaven

and on land Housman's feet finally twist from summer knotted ground and blister
into daylight dusklight amongst the poplars
and watch that imagined rural idyll

change to silence [sigh - less]

broken only by my solitary minor fanfare

D F A B^b C[#] F E D cold trumpet calls

i closed ears to the ludlowsong
felt only for the pulse of march

A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* (1896), with its idealised portrayal of a semi-rural Ludlow, came to represent an England of heroism and beauty to which a war-torn and post-war Britain might aspire. Ludlow for Housman was an idea, not a reality.

LIII

i kept my knight until the close
to capture that white bone king to chase the leopard
from blanche lande as my dæmon guide
time-lost merlyn prophesied

later outside keyenhom
when woodlands had become living strongholds
i felt the board strike
my face again

your skin bruised to fist
and all could be forgotten in maturity but
still you leech over ladies
like books land

and the true lover tastes of brine
as soon as aged vellum
as ink as leaf-mould
for piracy and sea

becomes the outlawed man
better than arrows
trees and *lincoln-grenemedlie*
and from the bow here i have seen

the ocean's one body tumescent
rise walk like God
i recoiled floundered
and dared look no

more by morning
a sea change
saw all reborn
reburied

beneath my footfall swell
tones of oak
a wolf howls
the rook moves again *Checkmate*

Fouke Fitz Waryn III was outlawed by King John, supposedly as a climax to enmity founded in a childhood chess game. His various deeds of piracy and valour are recorded in *The Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*.

LIV

we drank red wine together through the night
whilst over in the flaming kitchen blocks
the cooks were grating nutmegs down to dust
from which to form another feast come day

their steam-hot powders burnt across the court
yard biting like desire into my tense
thin sinuses and we were fresh new lovers
eager with bright adolescence vivid
as the beginning of a fever or
an overture unwilling yet to end

i sipped on syrups stewed from sugared rose
hips velvet-petal-lipt stepped lightfoot through
caulde foulis wyndy rayny day my heart
locked up in ludlow feels the avalon call

Arthur, Prince of Wales, died in Ludlow Castle on the 2nd April 1502, mere months after his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. His heart was interred in St Laurence's Church.

LV

to the musician chief wthin the marches

giue eare to our praiers
my lorde
for the cawlinge
off a rewinated staet
grew easily before
from the pot-plant compost
of a noble Queen
into an era of wealth
and marigolds

[*selah*]

yff it were knone
unto you the stryfe and warr
betwne my L^{pe}'s
loue for *your* song
& his need to sing
from newer veins
from the euer changing
frets of politic
& dutie

you would forgive his negligence
& be less greatly dismayde
for sometimes as i
strip to bathe
and lie in water
here betwne lands
in the coldnes thoro the open cloyster
i hear not merely my Lps baritone
but the voices of the marches falling

from your lips

Mary Herbert née Sidney, poet and patron of the arts, was both daughter and wife to Lords President of the Council of the Marches during the reign of Elizabeth I.

LVI

Wee y^e Lords spirituall & temporall of this Realm –
hereby w.th One full Voice & consent of tongue & Heart –
by y^e Death of Our Late Sovereign his sonne & Heir
is become our only Lawfull Lineall rightfull
Leige Lord Charles king of great Brittain France & Ireland De=
=fend.^e of y^e Faith & c : Wee y^e exalted Lords
of y^rs paramount for resisting indecencies
these trials of Wales soak into the marches like earthworms
pink and lithe as butter to a burning pan we stand
& salute you with our bugle blow God Save King Charles

Signed by 38 Ryght NobleMen

The Lords of the Marcher Court sign a document declaring support and obedience to their new monarch, King Charles I.

LVII

did you hear the horn note
roll warm across Ludford bridge
past weirs and river fall ?

hearken: that mantra
back again back again
brouhaha hlud-l brouhaha

and sounds of the mail coach
mingle delicious with nonesuch apples
with sharply flavoured damsons

as light on my ear as blossom
as rose de Maux
as chamomile viols as flute-swayed thyme

as rhyme and reason forgotten
through long fatigued assembly rooms
where they held the bailiffs' ball

and the gay step of an
Austen-esque arabesque
sways into the lull of a sedan-chair

that mantra
brouhaha hlud-l brouhaha
back again back again back again

Mary Sneade, 'the belle of Ludlow', spent parts of her youth at 3 Brand Lane in the late 18th century whilst the town was still a fashionable social centre.

LVIII

two shillings
given
year on year
in rent
for the aula
the hall on
Corve Street

and i heard when plague
pestilence came
to Ludlow
the house stood
skeletal
as ghost-paper ash
after a fire

i rebuilt
the walls around
the widows
the bresummer
7"x4"
and rounded joist
ends

and still visible
the initials CJR.
burnt
into the fireplace soffit
a crevice
to time
past

The Great House, 112 Corve Street, Ludlow, built in 1270, is one of the oldest unchanged houses in the town.

LIX

beneath the musty papers
and piled manuscripts in this
imposing D-shaped tower
i found Marlowe's traitor bound
in calf skin lit by those new
Gothic style windows now blocked
a fresh candle leapt lambent
at gusts through the portcullis

and a voice in the old stone
sponged moist to the press of our
ill-fitting bare hands paired palms

and seeing there was no place
left for felons to climb why
should i grieve at my declin-

i n g

f

a

11

?

'He ... repayred an old tower, called Mortymers tower, to keep the auncient records in the same.' Mortimer's Tower rises from the curtain wall to Ludlow Castle's outer bailey. It was originally constructed to serve as a gateway.

LX

in spirare

inspire me
fill me with sound
too thick to swal -

move mystic through
dances rich
as the essence
of that one last

was this what you
meant for me
when you sent me
harping for Saul?

perfect fourth. fifth.
octave. or
any other
consonance forms

voices adjust
do you hear?
do you listen?
one harmony

low as that long
strong B^b
universal
hollow black hole

song forced through sound
systems with
night ethanol
piss sweat and sex

to cleanse the soul?
wash the eyes
of Titania
clear? *Sound Music!*

mathematic
rhythms and
repetitions
rhyme and metre

rises from all
that vibrates
all that sets the
air in motion

don't you feel its
quivering

call?

From the mediaeval entertainments of street and castle to the renaissance Marcher court, the assembly halls of the regency era to the twentieth-century nightclub, music and dancing have played an important role in the history of the town.

LXI

all those who heard me calling
saw that lawless politic stalling
should have seen the right in our dispute

and yet still you cast me aside
as though the whole damn town had died
because poverty chased in the lawsuit's wake

a buzzard swept over trawling
the undergrowth for rabbit traps mauling
half-life creatures caught in your wires

i heard london was kept clean by kites
before we cut them from the skies
and the echo of a whistle shrilled quick through gorse fire

Reverend Arthur Willis wished for better grants for charities in Ludlow, an entitlement that was owed to them. He was a leading figure in the Great Lawsuit which ended in 1846 and left the town impoverished. The towns-people turned against him. He died in 1851 aged 47.

LXII

I heard her
singing singing in my dream
Baroni
and always knew the lute
the harp lightly touched gave time
to fair figures as they danced
as they danced as they danced
through old tapestried rooms
have you not music?
I heard another voice
a siren singing
honeyed song from some heavenly orb
Orb
Oorb Orrrrr b
Galileo sat before me blind
uneyed
we spoke of the ma the ma tics of mu sic
the precision
of note to perfectly measured
page the spheres sang a man stands uniform
as revolutions
this is the oracle divine
the fixed law of fate
exactness and strict adherence to lawes are the noble science of musick
veiled
by that unheard symphony
silence

The poet John Milton created the masque *Comus*, set and performed at Ludlow Castle. He never visited the town. Throughout life he was enchanted by the mathematical Music of the Spheres.

LXIII

dance again before me love
for i grow weary of this song
where words are as hollow
as the empty cranial cavity
hidden in that ovine skull
in chambers of bone
through which ants and earwigs
run about their businesses

lying here on the Clee-side
in the early autumn midday sun
i heard that repetitive
drum (*beat*) drum (*beat*) drum (*beat*)
echoing back through the valleys
the tabor playing a heart (*beat*)
echoing back from Ludlow
wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied ?

dance again before me love
sinuous as sound
sensuous as breaths of silence
for all thought is marred
by the movement of stars
by seasons changed
and i could never play the tune so well
as when the curtains were drawn in mourning

on the beech tree a silver backed leaf
swirls spins in the wind
sometimes ghostlit
sometimes unseen
and in Corve Street a cross flowers
anew spilling feathered petals
across the cobbled street like birdsong
and the craftsman cannot compete
yet still he takes his tools in hand

i hear a bugle cry
a note spun into indigo harp strings
a woman's voice respinstered
whispers
dance again before me love

i shall not sleep again

[footstep footstep footstep

shhhhhhhh ...

– *Interval* –

– *a glass bell sounds* –

Chase of the Beast Glatisant

—

symphony in an unremembered mode

to the Lady Nynyue

*“Ubi tunc vox inauditae melodiae?
et vox inauditae linguae?”*

- Volmar of Disibodenberg -

Where, then, the voice of the unheard melody? and the voice of the unheard language?

– I –

allegro on the death of a king

This is the story of Nenive, gaoler of Merlyn, undine of all times, Maiden of the Lake.

The Final Battle between Arthur and his son Mordred has ended. Both leaders are dead and the task of restoring order to a war torn Albion falls to those three knights who yet remain faithful to the late King: Palomides, Dornar de Gales and Bedivere. With Merlyn incarcerated in a rock, these knights turn, unwittingly, to his gaoler Nenive for advice.

Uncertain of how to proceed, Nenive relives the events that led to Arthur's downfall.

Concluding that the answer lies with Merlyn, she goes to his gaol. He promises aid if she will release him, however she is unable to reverse her spell of entrapment. Resigned to his fate, Merlyn provides a clue as to how a successor may be chosen. Nenive returns to the waiting knights, to whom she presents the quest, and then takes her place among the women guiding Arthur's corpse to Avalon.

This is human nature.

From the borders the winged man watches.

Even as they sorted through the scattered crust of cooling cadavers you knew we'd bound about his broken form a winding-sheet of fine black samite, set him in a barge amongst the willow trees, the coal-tipped reeds. And in the marsh glowed will-o'-the-wisps, faerie sprite sent ghostlights, gas-bright traitor guides. I tore an orchid from rain-sodden soil, spat, cast it from the shore, let it catch the Avalon call. Later lords lined the riverbank, watched our wherry steadily waste across turbid waters rolling thick with red grit-silt, & settle into smog.

*

[Nenive hears echoes of Merlyn
trapped in his stone prison]

sometimes stones whisper
within these broken
cemeteries
these courtly places
where once kings sat & judged

in the summer heat
i lie in your clasp
unaware that
silence has become
quite as loud as screaming

sometimes stones speak out
volumes resound with
the raucous calls
of heartbeat from an
anechoic chamber

beneath your palmprint
can you hear the rocks
burning with song ?
can you feel his voice
still echoing ? *Nenive*

Nenive ...

*

[Decision as to who will succeed
Arthur delayed until Candlemas]

below me
in the valley
candlemas bells pealed
bob doubles
bright
high as glass
fine as silk
firm as crinoline

*wrap your flesh
in cashmere love*

i heard the men
cocooned in
silence
ringing white
against
watersong
settling
from the mountainside

*

[Nene views human violence
mimicked in nature]

Beneath these bare pale footfalls leaves crackle,
collapse into thin white-veined webs like ash
smoke-dust settling from our after-harvest fires.

Lingering on the train of this white silk shift
are clinging bronzeleaf remnants, flecked
with crinkled fragments of distressed gold.

*

[Excalibur is cast from the cliffs
and a new music begins]

I laid my childhood violin
in Church Rock's roughhewn grip
let the sea's lash
lap its curves

bladder-wrack
snapped at strings
in some new-world pizzicato
brine moulding
a fresh ostinato

short recurring melodic phrase

unbowed

Nenive's Pamphlet of Titulus Regius

[Merlyn's incarceration
remembered]

In the oracular fountain
we found
oysters
 poor man's fare
fit for naught but
stewing

I split through that
crinkled shell
cut a knife crack
 twist
(wide enough
to trap a faerie)

Did you see my
shell grown
pearl stone
 waiting
in that gaping
crevasse

for her greedy
eye to swell
 at last
with nightshade oil ?

Philomel, sing philomel
sing

hold him fast

*

[The Final Battle]

did you not hear
the deer challenging
in a clearing
through the trees

baying rough
coarse as fever
as cracks of fire
ritualistic flame ?

and yet i barely
heard them clash
through centuries
of augury

from the rut
barely saw tines
tangle into twined
white skeletons

clung tight with twinned
black leather skins
with empty eyes
and i ask you

[Nenive addresses Merlyn]

why do you lie
silently watching
judging me
a cold sinner ?

whilst inside only
mating rites
sexual dance
accosts your mind

*

[To clothe a man as King is
to create a king – *Nenive*]

Apply your idle hand to this tattered hem-line, seamstress;
even in a world where distressed counts as fashion i can't
bear to see him stand before me trussed in samite tatters.

Perhaps you didn't catch the subtle nuances 'twixt chic
and shit, or should i merely cram this in alongside kitsch?
which some lost soul has concluded counts as fresh faced couture.

Does anybody even care anymore for fashion
or fabrics or for a physicality of art form?
Forget your sheens of sveltely hanging silks, silvered satins,

for i shall only clothe myself henceforth with beads of water.

*

[Post-battle insecurity]

that was the second day
and in the evening
firmament settled
heavy as neon-washed cement
 drying purple
 beneath the streetlights
to hug about
another empty public house
where some bearded vagabond
slowly drank me into a stupor

*

[Albion lacks an heir so the
people turn to Augury]

and in my phaeic drug-rosed dreams
those bellowing beasts were barely
to be seen beneath the bodies
and grime of undecided rule

dusky

if only the blood sheening pools
of water in the grass had not
sullied my mirror with oldsong
perhaps i could have foreseen this

and would not find my echo crouched
against a river bank sieving
aged pearls through thick foul-scented silt
desperately questing for that shine

only found in the touch of stone
to living skin

*

[The people are divided]

when i shot the matriarch
her horses scattered across
wild weather-beaten heather
through an unforgiving fog

Lingua Ignota

vidi et intellexi haec

[Far away in another era
Hildegard recreates art
to reflect her religion]

O *Maiz*

mother

O *Korzinthio*

priestess

I know you see me
As your unnecessary affectation
Collapsing in the cloud cover
At the ever swelling angelweight

I painted your music
Into the volumes of heaven and hell
When first you called me
Your Ecclesia
And laid your primary oil paints
Alongside my cradle

Did you divine
The burning visions
Before you birthed me?
Did you divide
The mind-white nightmares
Into tolerances of pain or poetry?

For this was never merely
A precocious pursuit of purity
But an invention
Of untaught intentions
Of rediscovered musics
Between brittle hollow open-fifths

You build *aieganz aigonz diuueliz*
In one breath
Expect me to understand your
Hidden tongue
Swelling like a tower
From my spine

angel god devil

Define your love
My love
For your *choriza crizanta*
For your hidden orchids
Pressing from the woodland's edge
O *Maiz*

sparkling anointed

O *Korzinthio*
You wept for pearls from the *vox de caelo*
But I was merely a boy

voice of heaven

Dressing to Dance

[Nénive considers courtly
politics – the disguising
of emotions]

Perching on her thin chintz knees amongst
Antique cabriole-legged furnishings,
We settled into a mimicry
Of applying soft smoke-hued shadows:
Chamoisee, silver, brûlée, liver.

In those evenings I lay awake on
Her velvet covered stool, plucked out its
Long grey horsehair cushion padding, broke
Apart the fine pale ends like sinews
Drawn from the heart of a spider's web.

In truth, I never really saw her face
Through the glass draped in ice-white silk chiffon,
Pasting away brittle imperfections.

Now wrinkles have wasted our eyes to stone.

Bee-keepers' Question Time

[She recalls the language
of movement and
courtly dance]

Commend me to your apothecaries,
Your behavioural psychologists, loves,
For I have forgotten quite how this must
Seem to such well-reasoned rarities
As you, my fine tribe of apiarists:

*When first I turned amongst the marsh grasses
I did not notice that pollen-dust trail,
Nor the sweep of pale pirouetting bees,
Following close in my dishevelled wake.*

*At last I paused our arabesque, in time
To see them form me masking gowns from soil-
Echo; from gossamer languages of dance.*

*Yet in your portraits of Ecclesia
Each drowned away to pools of coloured oil.*

Les Trouvères dans le Pays de Galles

[Nénive channels Dame Lyonesse's
voice – courtly love & the wounding
of Sir Gareth of Orkney]

I barely saw you before you came down
From your upper storey flat, post-concert,
For impromptu Chinese prawn toast and rice.
Sitting cross-legged on that same rug as our
Bass, cornish harpsichordist, taste-tamed Hong
Kongnese trombonist (my most scathing
acquisition) you completed the host.

Later, you stayed; asked about the long train
Of symmetrically piled glass jam jars
Interlocked across my open window,
Distorting and defacing those passing
In the street. Your kiss caught me unprepared, though
Still I should not have forgotten to cast you a clue
To the rape-proofing paring knife under my pillow.

Parus Major

[Nenive remembers: The
begetting of Arthur]

in the cemetery i watched *great-tits*
flit - ter back & forth from their mulch bunged drain
chase across those p-e-a-c-e-f-u-l granite gravestones

someone once told me their society
was built on a feathered monogamy
brightly nasal resonating as one

had you heard their love song like an oboe's
bro - ken reed played in the throats of a g e d words
you too would not stand this polyphony

forgive me but i surely saw the male
bird beat ing hasty re treat from other
nests or was it just a nervous twitch a

blink-of-the-eye and you would have missed it
later i saw him put beak through the back
of another bird's neck take out its eyes

Magus

[The child Arthur is
entrusted to Merlyn]

if you could have seen me
as the bold deceiver
icily grieving in your wake

would you still have lain quite
silent handed me in
quietness your screeching child pray ?

*

mine are the ways of old
religions of earth faiths
of a free pre-modal music

did you use my heartsease
remedies as i asked
when first you begged me for favours ?

*

i feared you'd take flowers
those tricolour pansies
without first consulting my glass

would pluck them whilst still wet
with dew kill your lover
bring mistrust to ancient magics

Torches

[Uther's sword is drawn
from the anvil]

october corpses

pulled from scrub soil

ring like glass

light tallowed mullein

Dream #172

[Britain wars against
Saxon invaders]

the Saxons came
 like rainfall in the night

settled across farmland
 oldland soaking into new turned earth

into sodden clay-clod red-rock ground

 pounding broken
against fleeing feet flying through tomorrow's dawnlight

i'm not sure that slight change
to fleeting breeze

 felt at first as strange as later you painted

 pausing in the mountainscape
 amongst the leafy leas of french romance

and lingering lees of landright
 wasted

the taste of smoke scent
 moist on morning air
 was still there when we reburied

 bodies
dragged back from the ribs

of another wrecked
 settlement

*

*

we played gwyddbwyll

at Mount Badon

when war called

let *them* treat for peace

Fossa Tree

[The dangers of courtly
love – a foretelling of
Arthur's downfall]

We prowled beneath the fossa tree
In bristling masculinity,
Watched suitors climb that carbon tower
To capture courtly love in her
High, bark-bound, leaf-spun bower.

*After they had fallen from the fragile branches into fresh musked mulch
I clasped my claws against coarse wood, crawled up into those overhanging upturned ribs.*

Their fur was caught with thorns and burs
Before I heard musicians stir
To strike another modal fissure
Between chipped rock and wood and wire;
Cut rapture into rupture.

*I dipped my bow into syphoned rose oil, laid silvered hair to string to sing
Again in silent music, unhindered by the rosin rough vibrations already tearing the new tail
Bare.*

A Return to Lammastide

[Arthur falls in love]

when first beneath the russet gaudied cherry tree your tongue span cinnamon softened patter
warm as autumn-wet butter

i was sceptical of music
of your verbal love making unfettered unashamed

had i pursued an altruistic justice cut sharply short your melismata & sent you away
before those unsanctifying statements of lust

had lapsed to silence
the lapwing still would sing the end of that melody with yet more beauty
than you might muster

but lying there bedecked in bronze tipped grasses and leaves where we could simmer
through evensong untouched

there was an ever present cacophony
hidden malingering in the overgrown footpath's
tread tread tread

altruistic – selfless

Gwenhwyfar

[Arthur takes a Queen]

only she knew to prettify cities
so simply that unrestrained sentience
seemed a garish frivolity cast quite
as much for show as appreciation

that when i touched my face to newly placed
stone the roman heart*thrum* heart*thrum* bugled
anew through soundboard jawbone echoing
resonant round my wide mouth cavity

spilling across the lips in timeless song
cartographical as gold flint chippings
as old music stitched with lines of landscape
and braids bound in torques of sun-bronzed blossom

i held her close melding back into the
curve of flowing hip rib to shivered rib
that those thick tower walls might breathe weightless
with vapour pressing up against the clouds

Stigmata

[Love is denied
- downfall]

spring spread
 through the indigo crocus fields
 where i lay blushing saffron
 stamen bruising beneath my body
 to my skin

their petals crushed moist
 along the thenar space of fingers
 jewelled my nakedness
 so soft that this might all have been
 illusion

later when
 southern summer storms flooded over
 those goldrush pastures my
 velvet scales were washed
 awry with silt

that new
 coarse beauty drawn away in passing
 tides and the body left
 ragged raw behind
 was mine

its empty skin
 swept back against blackthorn
 snagged in gin slowed branches
 and she who loved me
 blanched disgust

turned
 denied those dyes
 flowing around road-raw feet
 cold as the frost falling
 from evening's lips

A Seachange

[Arthur is presented with
the child Mordred]

I was picking rosehips in the garden when she
returned to me almost a year after all souls
through confetti pirouetting sycamore keys

and only then could I recall her enticing
concoctions of parsley wine and valerian
of spotted orchid bound in menstrual blood of love

the baby bundled silent swathed against her breast
watched learned me with its wide unblinking owlet eyes
like an adult seeking truths in star alignments

I took it into my arms crushed an orange bead
between finger and thumb placed the pod on his face
let juices burn to sss kin that trust shocked with pain cried

out from unprepared lungs an unseen sting More dread
ful than to have ever been fatherless later
boiling hip syrup spat cut me a new white welt

Fur

[The Final Battle]

i don't know who dealt that penultimate
blow to the last british pendragon king

some say it was his bloodraged bastard son
that razed our city left our unwritten

truce riven and old kingdoms divided

when my swordblade caught in swathes of winter
fur i could only recall otter pelts

bound about my own untroubled baby
back before this uncertainty began

can you feel the drum*beat* drum*beat* coming ?

[Arthur's quest ends]

Titulus Regius Revisited

[Merlyn's pleas for release
continue to disturb Nenive]

sitting in the meadow we picnicked on salmon
spiced cous cous salads sweet white wines and fresh oysters
as if this tale had never cascaded from your
pre-storybook traditions your oldpoetics

you severed me a shell split it open to re-
veal the living creature inside a crude pearl clasped
in its grasp i've heard that raw oysters really are
aphrodisiacs formed to send the right minded

mad winter came and you left me there on my own
among the havoc of hunger-wild cavorting
horses and merlyn's plaintive cries rang on like guilt
through layered densities of stone gritted words mix-
ing with a battle rabble's reverberations
and still i hear him plead *Nenive Nenive Nenive?*

*

[In the post-battle uncertainty
the people turn to Nenive]

but when their futile
warring one against another
was done

the Britons remained divided
still undecided as to who
had truly won

and they came to me
not knowing that i had played a part in how
this had begun :

that i had trapped the king's protector
reason keeper he who could stop
Arthur's son

they came to me to cast
the bodies out to sea to send them on
to Annwfn

*

[Excalibur is returned
to the water]

when evening came i
watched bladed sycamore keys
flutter to the lake

*

[The Maidens of the Lake
reclaim their sword]

from the distant Avalonian shores
i heard someone softly sing to me:
lie here in silent waters love
let them lap about your skin
support your weightless form
like a mother's hand
cupped beneath your
chin guiding
you to
calm

or
yet more
true perhaps
the hand of your
lover underneath
a coarse base bodyweight
tenderly gracing the sword
to your breast letting you settle
slowly sink down beneath the surface
and in that cool dark otherkingdom rest

*

[Nenive tries to release
Merlyn but fails]

unable to quell their quarrels
i reluctantly returned by
night's cover to his gaol rock

bartered unlocking his prison
for aid against the tirade of
claims on Britain's richest kingdoms

yet for all my power disgust
and desire could not reconcile
and the stone remained still unmoved

[A quest is proposed]

from within i felt a sigh a
voice say *Pellinore Glatisant*
and die away to stuttered breaths-s-s-ssss

Hildegard & Jutta Go Boating

[Religion is found
in the grail quest]

Jutta reclines in the prow
long grey teeth churning round a grass stalk
scraping the sugar knots free

and notched between her peeling gums
a resinous lettuce nugget
milky and bitter white
that all-day soporific drug

but still age is sleepless

and Hildegard ?
with her cracked oak oars
strong as a catalyst
as mind burn
Hildegard pushes us
o h s o s l o w
through the lake
s t e a d y as counting sand grains
in a storm

this
is
nasciul
nightshade

the bank bleeds slime tainting
water with otter spraints

these are not
true emeralds
no
though they
surely sparkle
quite as bright
as the pupils
of a new born
starling *viridissimis*
virtutibus et...

sing
scattered the push and pull of a wherry
cinders in water ripples Jutta's skeletal
to digits to living sweeps of weed
breeze
like this is all visceral as metaphor
picnicking alone

sapiduz
that
bee
flights
lightly
past

and they are swallowed whole
in the overhang of weeping willow leaf trails
whilst the whooping swans sweep yet more beautifully
than an entire waste of silence

hear the symphonia armoniae
celestium revelationum

sounds wash her music
pure
settle across her headhot migraines

*Hildegard casts those oars behind her back and in the phaeic shaded silhouettes
they stand for wings as if she were the gospel angel man still reflected in that
final book inked into my margins illumined in our unholy words*

STOP

viridissimis virtutibus et... – the most green virtues and...
symphonia armoniae celestium revelationum – symphony of the harmony of celestial revelations

Swine Tapestry

[The comb of Twrch Trwyth
is returned to nature]

i learned
today
your crustacean shelled
comb companion was
returned re turned re (turn
again)
to take the place of hoglets

and in the silence

i rooted for truffles
through a finely woven
mille-fleur flecked woodland
scraped into earth

for days now i have not paused
to pray there is no time

Misereri in old Reds

[Clearing the battlefield
the women sing]

“I beat scarlet paper poppies
with my iron hammer to anvil
until the petals bruised purple
and faded to misericords
beneath the *tone tone tone tone tone*
of newly melded metal blooms

I pinned each soft marbled flower
into its individual
pattern mosaicked the ceiling
with a layered silver essence
rebuilt your picture as if it
were constructed of weathered gold
that lying awake through the night
I might watch your face flutter in updrafts of air”

Constructing a Poem

[On the battlefield Neneve
recognises a woman grieving
for her son – resurrection]

He longed to dance into taxidermy
to take that freshly fallen cadaver
in its frail rigor mortis finch form and
reset the crumpled redpoll carcass live
vivid chest vibrant as foreign flowers
blooming crimson in between the close barbed
oleander leaves You were livid when
you caught him at the kitchen table poised
to make another incision along
its lines of plumage with your paring knife
but later after forbidding attempts
at Carrelian experiments helped
stitch clean scraped skin round a new skeleton
that perhaps in silence it might yet fly.

How was I to tell them what I'd heard in unremembered rumour, soaking from the whisper-soft compressions of a tombstone? All they cared for was that endless eager greed of kings and beggars, neither of whom can find contentment in their opposite's unrestrained contempt. I cut another strip of bark from my gnarled staff, which, distally, still somehow clings helplessly to its uncaring mother hazel tree, and idled over my musings as if my every move was not impatiently scrutinised by that unfortunate lusteyed trio ...

*

[There are whispers that
Arthur may return]

Later, my resurrection skills grew
stronger than might easily be perceived
through the grating gaze of filterless eyes,

and all around were fixed resemblances
that guarded my bed from wights and the dead
which even now seek to haunt my visions.

I set a cycle of humming birds
interspersed with ravens, jays, crows, magpies,
strung into a silver threaded mobile,

and about my feet and headboard crept an array
of stiff limbed creatures, each with its face drawn
into some semblance of fury. Or maybe

given an unyielding stiff upper lip:
an otter with a monocle; two rats
playing snap. It's time to stop pretending.

*

[Unseen saints bless the
naming of a new King]

in the valley
candlemas bells pealed
bob doubles
bright as crystal
shattering against
a tiled floor
cushioned in the scents
of rose heads

*wrap your flesh
in perfume love*

distally – away from the main body

i heard men
cocooned in an
hagiological silence
who never noticed
beauty
rising sharp
behind
their ink illuminations

*

[Nenive glimpses
God – ascension]

washing poisons from my fingertips
i saw in the mirror's ripples
that tall winged man watching
over my work
unchanged

yet when i let the water settle and
looked again only an eagle
circled above ascend
-ed to evening
divine

*

[Nenive sets the Quest – Whomsoever
captures Glatisant will be crowned]

Boarding the boat with that body and my necromancer sisters I call to shore that only once the quest of King Pellinore has been completed can the rule of Britain be settled upon one man alone. Only when Glatisant, the questing beast, has been captured can Arthur's throne be filled & unrest resolved. By the campfire a lyricist plies harmony to a symphony's gurgle.

Æ u o u a e

– II –

*marcia funebre e danza,
alla sognare*

This is the mind of Nenive.

Nine women accompany Arthur's body across the waters to Avalon. Seven are the sisters of the isle: Moronoe, Mazoe, Gliten, Gliton, Glitonea, Tyronoe and Thitis. At the helm is their guide, Morgen, known as the Fey, Queen of Gore. At the stern sits Nenive, maiden of the Lake.

As they travel, the sisters light incense and whisper prayers across the King's corpse. Nenive, overcome by the trials of the day and lulled by the women's voices, falls into a fitful sleep shot with dreams, which, with the rising turbulence of the sea, strengthen to visions. Reaching shore, the sisters lift the boat above their heads as a bier for Arthur's body and bear it across the island. Nenive walks behind. They buy entrance to the city of Annwfn and pass through the whispers of people and buildings in silence. At the city centre Morgen commands the sisters to pray. Nenive leaves them, turning to a glass, that she might view the questing knights left behind in Albion.

A glimmer of resurrection roars. In the margins the winged lion sleeps, eyes wide open.

In the wherry we burnt an incense of camphire
bunched dried about His head until Albion sounds
had faded beneath hums of smoke and those chanting
women whispering prayers

And the black water curved into overhead waves
churned out a purifying white miasma to
smother over puffed glows of will-o'-the-wisp lights
still bright through vapour smog

On shore maybe they had begun their lengthy quest
for princely Glaisant but I could not feel it
through the seismic re-engulfing and unending
rest visioned peaceless sleep

Draped about our tebah seven witches drifted
into meditation I allowed resurrect-
ion to swallow my eyes with mind cutting music
All of these things I dreamed :

Henbane

[Neneve dreams of a
Britain in turmoil]

i dreamed the skyline
gloomed black
with a rich paste of poison

that
somewhere the world was
burning into renewal

i dreamed there were faces
soaked so long
in sea white foam

nobody
knew them to be anything but
a pervasion of perfume

i dreamed that droplets
lingered like taste
on their lips

waiting
for mettle to settle corruption
and simmer to rust

i dreamed that the lights
slowly
one

by
one
went out

Portrait of Wallflowers in Snow

[But even in dreams winter
is not permanent]

As the snow melted
the heads of my wallflowers
slowly reappeared

through the freezing gold
sheen of graphite-white water
setting back to ice.

Beneath the cold crush
were bright hibernating buds
preparing to bloom,

and the deranged grins
of sinister snowmen were
a mere gravel stain.

Daylight Came

like a red end-of-winter sun setting
into the sea that its colours might
splay across the water refracting
through crisp salt crystals currents
eddies waves and white bone-lipped
tides spurious with spume and foam

like lifting that lingering lilac sweep
higher into the cloud line until the
twenty mile out horizon earth curve
swells with a ribcage rise with a gasp
beneath an unwarmed touch to skin

Catalogue of Haut Couture – #1

fashion – a revelation of the internal
through concealment of the external

[The misuse of bodies -
the misuse of persons]

This pale ivory piece was harvested
from seven hundred and sixty battle
burgeoned fingers, carefully cracked off dis-
carded hands before the metacarpals
thickened in. Each phalange stands proud from the
body like embossed fabric, each one stitched
into living textured textiles, tactile.

The 'hang' spirals strapless from their model's
bust, shaping about her bodice to fall
straight and svelte at that androgynous hip,
cascading dry into a pooling train
around the peeping toe of her bare feet.

Black hair knot capped with a coronet cut from skull,
only now you notice signet rings still circling bone.

Funeral of a VIP in the Rain

[She dreams of the change
Britain now faces]

I dreamed a puce pagoda
in a churchyard
grating at the nerves

of peeved overenglish ghouls
ghosting their graves
in shadow

and when I queried quite
why we might not
let pathetic fallacy take its turn

to wash
across developed hair
and painted faces

repaste the fresh blushed cheeks
permanent eyes
and plastic poreless skin

or soak
through freshly dry-cleaned suits
symmetrical as card backs

they quivered their pale dead heads
like so many doves to
conclude it best to broach

change
occasionally being better than an
improper disarray

This Might be Only a Mere Memory but

[Responsibility and apportioning
blame for the battle]

anyway when i walked around the island
all i saw were torn away wings of puffins
ripped clean from their cracked bodies by herring gulls

yet never any skulls capped with coloured beaks
nor fish silvered heartbeats bile broken livers
speckling this plateau this kingdom of the birds

and although i never raised my own ridged fist
i still felt part of that new hierarchy
even as i massaged ylang ylang oils

into your pale bruised purple-patch-plastered back

Beech Trees

[Neneve dreams the permanence of guilt
- its pain and its sustenance]

long wintered copper beech leaves
rustle a thousand man strong

lament wails and gnashing teeth
fall onto my old deaf ears

and here amongst the leaf mould
i feel ripe to rise once more

Catalogue of Haut Couture – #2

[The helping of man is
the harming of nature]

Maybe this next pretty gown shall take your fancy
with its soft drape sleeves, one side concealed, in an
off-the-shoulder renaissance capelet of oil-sheened,
intertwined, corvine black wings, bristling where feathers
splay one against another. Don't you like the play
of panne-like moss in the exposed stay, embossed with
swirled rosettes cut in hard cracked, fragile blue lichens?

Beneath the wild corsage curl Gaultier-esque skirts,
swept separate about the legs in the semblance
of fawn and cobalt licked jays' wings, flights and coverts
unnatural in that outsized scale. And the waist
belted round with chains of grey, cross-lipped raven beaks.

Someone once told me the entire dress was stitched with needles
from the upper branches of a Scots pine, the beaks glued with sap.

Steal Away, Love

like creating your own form of music
from an untempered branch still dripping bronze
with resin out amongst the chilvers and
those tight orange bands that made their tails fall
away to fleck the mountainside as if
they were quavers on a discarded score

like singing silently out from the house
before breakfast was over and those old
lycra-tight cyclists had finished their thick
greased fry ups and roll ups to regale us
with further spun stories of wellspent youth

Lying Awake After Dark

[In her dream Nenive sees
glimmers of resurrection]

i dreamed a lion
 lay resting in dry red dust
 amongst the coarse grasses

 the sweet
 molassed insect voices
 weaving a membranous syrup tapestry

about his sleeping head
 touching at the corners of glass eyes
 bared like dead beads

 still
 watched by daring birds
 circling

i dreamed that as that lion slept
 i ran my fingers through his mane
 felt him breathe

 and only then
 saw the feathered wings
 sprouting at either side of spine

and the warmth of his eyes when he woke
 turned hands to talons
 and i i spread my eagle wings to fly

Coming Out as a Moth at a Butterfly Convention

[Nensitive as an outsider
among humankind]

I hadn't realised the butterflies
had swirled their squall through the open window
into my polish-scented panelled hall
to tumble around those vases of dead
flowers repetaling their headless stems
when I winged my way from the coat cupboard
humming some pointless ditty or other

caught up in their crowd I could not turn back
so even after settling on the chest
I held my wings open lest they might see
how folded closed I kept my body close
yet in the cupboard already the clothes
were pepper-pocked with invisible holes
ranked in their military multitudes

and somewhere stacked beneath us in that trunk
the gentleman's oldest board bore mixed wings
pinned indiscriminately under glass
their handwritten name plates shaken from aged
flaking grey glue to lie against the frame

lepidopterae aren't worth the trouble
I may take tea with the spiders instead

Catalogue of Haut Couture – #3

[The strength beneath a
conceived beauty]

Those shoes: Scaled in a mosaic of lepidopterae,
flowing over the upper, around the platformed ball and toe
to the stabbing spiralled five inch steel heel.
Surely you recognise the names of these old European breeds,

whose wings flutter still in the overhead stage fans,
amongst the vivid aureolin, cobalt, chocolate, fulvous, fern, oblique black streaks,
deep orange, carnelian, carmine, fawn, cinnabar, crimson flecks.
You may know what they are by the tails trailing

from wing tips, by the frilled fringes, by the velveteen touch.
[CamberwellBeauty-PearlSkipper-ScarceSwallowtail-CharaxesJasius-HipocritaJacobææ]
And set for a centrepiece graellsia isabellae, grass green,
speckled with dusky pupils bordered in reddish brown.

Above that practice muscled ankle I barely noticed any other feature
but for simple sways of jade silk and a mantle, brooched by a swirl of petaled wings.

Somnus Interruptus

[Turbulent seas wake
Nenive from sleep]

The seas stirred rough with waves shaking our coracle
 chasing me awake into my sisters' vigil
of endless murmured prayer of their whispered witness
 around his listless form

And they may well have redesigned this oracle
 for the whole sea rippled like a reader's mirror
melting about our boat and we were just a thin
 sycamore key sinking

I closed my eyes again rested my head against
 his lifeless smokewashed corpse still bound round in incense
to settle onto another rich new magic
 And all these things I danced :

[With her head resting on Arthur's
 body Nenive's dreams deepen
 into prophetic vision]

||

run glatisant
 run

you hear me?

princely people come to find

to wound you

through ra-ra-rau-raucous woodlands

hear the din

of chasers

pulsing

helmeted with caps of tin

like stone

like mighty cuts of dolerite

& steel

steel

[steal

steal away loves

steal away

for i am sent to dance again here

steal away sweet childer steal

steer my tongue to misanthropic places

take my vocal chords

in yours

my dear

as if we ne ver need ed ghost lights

mould each word like puttied silver

guide them into soil and song

[*stut-*

stut – ters – stip – ple – si – lence – like

an end to ornamenting stucco

to

augmenting serial sounds

(another new music made
for extending mathematic reproduction) into

unconditioned chords

when we had no further words

de ns it y could only be p ro pe lle d

through unnatural

dist

urba

nc e

unreasoned re – pe – ti – tive disson a nc
e

as if anyone

ever knew the natural

as ought
more than not
unnatural

[*liminal*]

liminal space

sipped at my cognitive creations

as
if
this
distorted
set of faces
should never have
swelled so swiftly into being

STOP

stop

could you not

have constructed

something more
permanent

to exist here

to exist here

to exist

here

here ?

to exit

chaste

bare

as any other noble woman

as any other sculpted
mythical body
built in strict
semblance
of the
dead

hold me close you phantom spaces

this place hints

at limbo

[nimble

nimble

voices

e - x - P - l - o - d - e

with

the songs

of

some

thousand

BirdBirdBirdBirds

dipping and diving
through

e n d l e s

...

expansions
of vibrant colour

that no other

man could build
more perfectly

than Merlyn

see
them
each soak

individually
into the deceptive susurruses

of an untamed/untameable sea

[which

we IX women
wove
on looms

see the shuttles
scuttle
selflessly by

one by one by
hush my
baby kingling

rock your way
back
from the top to

serenity settle
snagged on a
snapping string

a voice cracks
my
spinster wheel softens

[to clay

two crayfish foamed their way up
from the deepdeep de profundis waters

clattering wearied bones against
my head
which still pangs like an after-wedding breakfast

amongst unforgiving
children

can you reason it? around your brittle wrists
were rubber bands strong enough to restore harmony or

could it be discord
unrelenting
repenting

[these

these beauties of burlesque
aren't pearls

but tiger'seye

bulging drops of burnished amber

dripping from your
neck

and i

might
have watched

you metamorphosing into stones

stones

polished too bright

still

to

look

like either man

or Gold

Fur fashions have *l-o-n-g* been old news
 to those of you caught in the sense
 extorting industries, now cold
 for want of femininity,
 or masculinity, or touch,
 but here, surely you feel the coarssssse
 contrast of Curved shape to that much
 needed [cwteh] of pelt, remorseless
 in its lingering desire to
 live. The firm jaw bones y^{aw}n upwards
 into a grim lupine crown, wired
 with a remembrance of discords.

This is just a slip of skirted bodice
 through which one old man nuzzles kisses fur.

[Irresistible

Isn't it time to find your way back
again
through those CrowdedClustersOf sylvan peoples
independently who each
still place trees
construct forests
around the basis
of
around relations
of
a golden
ratio a
purity
of whole
?

[poison

poison simmers

beneath

a waterdragon's wing
poison

simmmmmmersss s s s s

or so *that* man
might say

Yes

still still he haunts

these feeeeeeev-
-ered

febrile

night visions

[*merlyn*

soar falcons soar

my pigeon hawks

fly

my

hands are dry

as soaped bone

callused

bare across the fingerpads

for want of wire strings

for your rapid hunting

falcon STOP

the sting of cold is firm

as song

[declaim this :

defamed

by we women
who had no

choice but to ruin
you

Morgen

Moronoe

Mazoe

(merlyn)

defaced

to a plane of
rock reset

bled into a solid
fool

Gliten

Gliton

Glitonea

(merlyn)

crooked

in calm unconsidered
resonance

startled from a heart
beatheartbeat

Tyronoe

Thitis

play cither, play

(merlyn)

beat

beat

heartbeat

Nenive

[define

d by :

lines of

\varnothing

until they converge
on a sunrise

Morgen's seven sisters
raise their hoods-s-s

to show

\varnothing

in
their swirled

snailshell faces

beauty perfectly horrific

[lithic

Fie! that venus cuts

across

our sky
to chaperone the sun

in some semblance

of double rayed

design

as if lovers might divide

beneath

this archaeoastronomy

Fie!

that you'd believe

stars ahead of reason

there's no night myopia
to a dark
ened eye

here,
let me make

my

mark

and paint this pattern into my phrontistery

my own
silent

thinking place

but Fie!

[silence

every touch

to the keys

sent

my
sounds

cock-a-hoop

the pipes

cyphering

on an endless

r^aised

7th

Make of this your organpoint

Improvise!

An Other-Land

[Nenive wakes as the
boat reaches Avalon]

I woke when silence became my alarum call
to our having settled on the solid grounds of
some old Other Land a long forgotten country
ingrained to an instinct

And the sisters' prayers had ended during my dreams
or maybe they merely no longer caught my ear
as they had done before on the whispered edge of
a long unconsciousness

I stepped from our tebah to join them on the sand
standing over Arthur his cold corpse still beating
slowly as the passing down of the sun before
that glimpse of a green flash

They lifted the boat shouldered it into a bier
allowed their hoods to fall that the long red hair swathes
might form a fitting fire for this warrior king
For once I walked behind

Sand Dunes

[The women set off for Annwfn's dead
city – travelling through the garden]

Glistening sandhoppers leapt across
my bare feet like
gold flecks sieved from the mud

and overhead
gulls wheeled and kicked
still screeching their summer song

Long ago I may have walked here
before beneath
blossoming orange trees

loquacious
with a battering of parrots
and parakeets and the ground

dotted with quails and pheasants and ptarmigan
unconcerned that they
should not flock as one body

And the signs
i remembered from childhood
warning of adders had gone

Portrait of a Fallen Hunter

[Heading towards death Neneve
realises the intensity of living]

winter was thick mud
cut from the ancient byway
by a tractor weight

and how my horse slipped
we'll never know my own fault
i shouldn't wonder

but still once down we
could only churn at groundless
sludge without body

and unmoving i
had never yet felt quite so
alive as then

The Weight of a Cadaver

like living far too long with a lover
you no longer love but cannot find
the courage to let go for fear of never
finding another half as good
to touch your ancient folds of skin
and say in earnest that beauty is ageless

like lying on a catafalque
in the comforts of an open hall
feeling rhythmic pulses of gathering audience
crowding through the fine threads
of your muffling pall to rest sonorous in your skull

Catalogue of Haut Couture – #8

[The physical and transitory
become indistinguishable]

Perhaps this could be considered
a return to the cote-hardie
with its close-fitting armed body
woven in frail threads of withered
gossamer, buttoned with mixtures
of brass and cut tiger's eye. See
how the legs are bound tightly round
in hose of dog-rose stems, tintured
red with an onset of autumn
and belted with plaited bracken.

These buskin boots a balance weight
to the glengarry above taught-
ened cheekbones. And that sweep of thumb slackened
graphite grey steenkirk, until late, merely mist.

Maiden's Song

[To act as kingmaker]

As we walked i wove a crown
of cowslips mixed with eglantine
yet long before the circlet could be set

upon
a sovereign's head
the flowers wilted wet with blood

Test-Riding a Borrowed Coffin

[Nenive considers the
concept of death]

at the time it seemed the sensible option
to discourage his childish fear of the dead
and their wealth of assorted accoutrements

and indeed he looked calmer to know that I
would be the first to rest in that new casket
nestled in the darkened velveteen fabrics

only later when i asked what had become
of our borrowed prop did it seem a touch strange
knowing second hand it had gone unpaid for

to hold a forgotten man in an unbought grave

Arachnids

[Reaching the dead city]

the dead city's gates were weft
of arm-thick spider-silk cords

more ornate than wrought iron or
finest silver filigree

and the entire surface teemed
with creators still weaving

«*How might we enter?* I asked
«*Prove you wish to pass* They replied

I took the largest creature
from its stiff protein-rich strings

bit through each sinuous leg
bristling with sharp wiry hair

the sturdy torso muscle
as chewy and strong as tongue

each part slowly scraped down from
my mouth to graze the gullet

the cephalothorax last
to touch my teeth with its soft

crush of brain and poison gland
then the crunched stone bite of fang

in slow soundless motion They
unlinked their gate let it fall

Catalogue of Haut Couture – #13

[Constructed protective layers
fall away in Annwfn]

Maybe this is mere physiognomy
laced tight into the white stomacher stays
of her heel-length liquescent polonaise

for I'm sure in that brief masked moment we
could no longer find semblance of any
specious spectral gown splayed so haplessly

around her fluid, fleshed ribcage–
sad, unsensual in liberty.

Even after the mask had cleared
and both face and dress had again
reappeared there were only lines,
patterns framing her naked shape
stitched in mind-braided beads of fresh water
and buttoned with a draped sultry undressing.

Annwfn

like walking amongst familiar faces
after prosopagnosia
has swallowed over your eyes in the wake
of that quiet caress to the brain
that crushed the soft fold of perception
and pressed across an unaffected memory

like awaking every day from a non-sleep
to learn the world as if for the first time
as if for the first time as if for the last
time and time and time and time again
world without end sæculorum amen

Through the Dead City

[Arthur's body is borne to the
very centre of Annwfn]

We passed along some futuristic
city streets set with even
marble blocks like glass

and from the fused
pavements rose endless empty villas
decaying through structural perfection

We saw no full person
just whispers
catching at the eye from darkened corners

and the shuffle
of ghost lives
passing behind

Still my sisters said nothing
until we had reached the heart
of this silent town

smothered
by a rise of muffling buildings
too tall not to darken out natural light

[Their quest ends]

At last Morgen spoke:
*«Here is the centre of the otherworld
Here is the place to pray*

[Nenive finds a mirror]

I turned away
to an untouched pool searched again for
a world without those righteousless mansions

Water

[Looking to her mirror
Nenive hears the eagle]

when it rains i feel my wings battered by
vibrations even here high up in the
unforgiving stone arms of my aerie

i watch bees below stippling into the
cliff face for cover their thick gold manes pulled
into dreadlocks by heavy droplets not
knowing in another world they're lions

Catalogue of Haut Couture – #21

[In the mirror all
is laid bare]

I haven't placed
a great deal in store by these Blackannis drawn illuminations,
these long-lit flowering margins lining the pages' edges,
and yet there is still the lingering sensation of a skin turned the wrong way out, relaxed

about the body in an open fronted slip
muscled with a print of blue, red, empurpled patterns.
I wish this was the working of a painted skein of silk
for when I see it in the flesh, so to speak, there is no revulsion,

merely intrigue in the intricate brocade
of arteries and veins stitched into a fresh silhouette
and the bright glistening discovery
of an unnatural, unwashed humanity.

I am not certain I was ever designed to settle into this ghastly century change
with its stark, debauched noise. Lingered skinless, *I saw none of this with my own eyes.*

Æ u o u a e

– III –

scherzo of the questing beast
(*nocturne*)

These things Nenive describes.

Like looking upon individuals through the gloom of night, Nenive views in her mirror the three knights she left behind in Britain: Palomides, Dornar de Gales (son of King Pellinore) and Bedivere. Palomides and Dornar both prepare to begin their search for the questing beast, but Bedivere, tired of the violence of kings turns his back on the kingdom. In search of redemption he becomes a hermit. A third knight, Arthur's young cousin Constantine, prince of Kernow, hears tell of the quest for kingship and leaves his home to win Britain for himself. Also in the mirror Nenive sees visions of four great queens of Britain: Morgen, Queen of Gore; the Queen of Northgales; the Queen of the Waste Lands; and her mistress, the Lady of the Lake. And fighting through each scene emerges the face of mad King Pellinore, tormented by the sing-song whispers of Glatissant's dance.

This is sacrifice, reason, passion.

Beneath the yoke the strong, winged ox serves.

Portrait of a Queen
-of the land of Gore-

[Morgen challenges her accusers
– disdains to explain herself]

*you cannot watch us anymore
here amongst the rising lilacs
sweeping from those tousled hedgerows*

*for now our secret groves and places
flicker with my petal mural
slowly wilting into waste*

*and maybe you still think me mad
to try to kill my brother
for the sake of gaining power*

*yet here you are chasing after
that unseen irretrievable
creature whilst i find Him in each*

*tight-cupped purple foxglove mitten
in each brusque wax-frosted flower*

Sir Palomides

[Veteran soldier, Sir Palomides is
haunted by the idea of the quest]

Over the gurgling symphony's singing
Churning a tune too morose yet for victory
 or maybe for losses
 insipid as silence lining a graveside
The voice of the damosel winged back towards us
 ghostlit in formants
 in trails of resonance
Carried across from an elongated t – I – mmm – e
 limpid
 diaphanous
clear

Don't you hear the call to be another?
To fail into a gauzy lover's guise
 close wound in garlands
 of dog rose and bramble
Pricked still and pitted with berries and hips
 as if to soothe politic
 where it binds in the throat
Beading beneath a briar-bound bruise
 crowned
 still as
cold

Be bold my beloved brass bright
Like thin fragments of copper caught beneath your skin
 verdigrised with jealousy
 of unworked monarchy
Which beg to be eviscerated from your burnt
 flat finger pad
 forcibly evicted
As if she'd fought her way into my dreams
 unbidden
 febrile yet
furlled

-Whispers I-

[A breath in Pellinore's ear]

chase me chase me
can't you catch me?
call yourself a king!

hear me hear me
in your ear
don't you hear me sing?

*

he's called pretty glatisant, o, pretty glatisant
most noble and princely beastie

his head's like a serpent's, his feet like a hart's
with bits and a body of leopard and lion

he's called pretty glatisant, o, pretty glatisant
most honourable belly baying beast

*

find me find me
Pellinore
you fallen maddened man

blight me dight me
trap and strike me
catch me if you can

Portrait of a Queen
-of Northgales-

[An intimacy with power and
the potential for change]

*and if you'll take my hand
as once we did out in the garden
love
i'll never strain again the sediment
from scalding drafts
of lemon balm and apple blossom tea
but let the full rich body
stew
swelter wet and rich
as your kiss
when evening blossomed behind the hedge
and climaxed red
and spider-black
across the poppy beds*

*we awoke to
a garden bruised in dew
and your head in my lap
glistened
as if a thin slither of satin
had settled aquamarine
over these velvet moss
folds of gooseturd-green
and when i tried to rise
soft clouds of rosemary
fluted amongst
a crush of thyme
a hiss of rue*

Sir Dornar de Gales

[Believing his father to be dead Dornar
prepares to chase the questing beast]

*To view the stars is to look into memory
to find a place where existence has stopped ...*

we were never truly suited to stand together
unaligned in the summer strong air throb

but once declared dead we kept your skeletal frame
wired upright in that attic in orkney

that medicine might seem somehow far less foreign
when dissected between your vertebrae

cracked cream ribs and off-white skull burnished with fragments
of bronze from the cloth we'd used to clean you STOP

amongst the wild weather-beaten heather i could
not stand to see where they'd found that body

curled around your constant fox's-skull companion
jokingly named vivienne rhiannon

nenive *QUERY* did you really believe she'd find you sane
sained again with gold and wealth remembered

out here amongst the bogs and fens and cold comforts
or was it merely an attempt to feel

something clean *QUERY* for what can be purer than untouched
voiceless arcs or drops of cool crested bone

*... each fragile flame flickers opalescent against
an eye cut image that men might call me*

Mad STOP

-Whispers II-

[Pellinore echoes
Glatissant's voice]

to the hunt
to the hunt

blow the prize
dight the heart

cut a cant
on your pipe

to catch up
something new

*

an ox! an ox!
my kingdom for an ox!

*

Fie! my little brachet Fie!
never chase for sake of chase
but wait upon a rising lea
wafting in fresh tides of scent
to help you find your quarry fast
then Fly! my little brachet Fly!

*

give me wings to soar
again above this ugly aerie

*

hear the hounds
bay below

running in from
long ago

to the hunt
to the hunt

can't you hear
the horses run

?

Portrait of a Lady
-of the lake-

[Majesty is not a moral dictate –
she uses power to mask time]

*peddling poisons at her perfume counter
in the perilous guise of a wayward
aromatherapist seductively
she twisted her hair with slivers of flint
that it glittered sequined on the water
which gauzily aureoled her proud head*

*every movement made left me decreasing
until perhaps i was merely a view
in a cracked oracular mirror held
pressed close to her untainted pale face and*

*only then did i realise her eyes
were aged past any other natural
glass past obsidian caught fast in stone*

Bedivere

[Not all still long for politics and power
– Bedivere seeks solace from the sea]

La mer Qu'on voit danser le long des golfes clairs A des reflets d'argent ...

lying here
in the mille-fleur meadow grass
which ghosts across our cliff-top
lipped short by sheep
and ever present sea breeze
i'm not sure i noticed night
quietly closing over
until it might
have been milk white cataracts
coddling my eyes with renewed
age old calm

salt whispers from the sea's face
sharp cold crystals kiss again
brightly citric against his phantom
lips which linger on too close to mine

that same used love song repeats
that same used love song re-pe-
-ters away to the shushing
of an ocean unpartnered
in its solitary sway
its endless ball-gowned beauty

and maybe i should be more
wary of redressed wrongs for
should our mouths touch it could only
be a candle silently closing to smoke

calm old age
calls from my tiny chapel
in its crag of knotted cliff
as if earth-grown
and i will return alone
to watch the turbid ebbed flow
for tidings of redemption
that i may say
know me now as Redimere
in the mille-fleur meadow grass

here lying

... Et d'une chanson d'amour La mer A bercé mon coeur pour la vie

[His quest ends]

-Whispers III-

[The voice taunts Pellinore]

m- m- m- m-

Mad King Pellinore (mad King Pellinore)

gore chore semaphore
pinafore gonophore
albacore halicore
ore boar core shore

(mad King Pellinore) (mad King Pellinore)

fourscore battledore
chromatophore foreshore
pandore bandore
encore sycamore
hellebore hellebore

(mad King Pellinore) (m-mad King Pellinore)

embouchure epicure
reinsure furthermore
aperture overture
pure sure cure lure
hellebore hellebore

(m-mad King Pellinore) (m-m-mad King Pellinore)

cocksure manticore
heretofore obscure
endure me commodore
Lord Tor, poor bore
more lore spore whore?
adore my cawing anaphora
hellebore hellebore

(m-m-mad King Pellinore) (m-m-m-mad King Pellinore)

wore swore store tore
yore your you're roar
Roooooooooooooooooaaar
hellebore hellebore hellebore hellebore

(m-m-m-mad King Pellinore)

(m-m-mad King ... (m-m-mad K-king ...
(K-k-king ... k-king

P-P-Pellinore... m-m-m-m-)

Portrait of a Queen
-of the Waste Lands-

[Even the dark places
bear fruit]

can't you hear my bitter crow
 creak craven from the rock
my dear ?

 we take flight from barren spaces
the tumbled carrion catching ground
 unrelenting in its call

 i cut a switch of swishing willow
whipped wet
 a fellow hunter's courser

 What ?
 you do not think me suited to set aside my palfrey
to ride astride a destrier

can't you bear the pin-prick wit
 of a wounded woman
dear ?

 have you wearied of my unstead tongue
my wrung-dry criticisms
 coarse as soap blacked washing

as a woman's blistered greaseless arms
 alms !
 alms !

pardon me gentles
 here in my skeleton woodland
twisted piss-burned wasteland

 i am Queene
 to commoner courtesan quack alike
and these my alms are taxes taken

 come along now fear not my duck
my pretty chick my wingéd ox
 i'm absolutely almless

Sir Constantine

[Mapping his life Constantine gains
impetus for his desire to rule]

i drew out my autobiography
across a pair of tawny patterned ripped
owl wings still hinged with strips of torso skin

My birth petaled up within the plumelets
growing slowly along minor coverts
unoriginal structured from old maps

constrained by cartographical casements
through which run our cold Kernow cliff faces
and bright thin mining clefts of rock-rough tin

Childhood came across the major coverts
cut short by what she simply called «*your crude
unkempt adolescent conflagrations*

which i assume could only have meant Sex
that strange-old / age-old night passion barely
befitting a virtuous paradise

i built this in the bastard alula :
my irreligious unprincely disgrace
with he who only ever fawned on me

yet why should i remain pucel *pucelle*
just because you ask it of me mother ?
i dare do all that may become a man

virgin

When i lay within his wakening arms
like some svelte slip of whimsical pale silk
i found my line drawing into frayed edged

remiges shaped only for silence
hence my night-lit flight through Dumnonia
to chase my chance to switch a creature for

a Kingdom and unchallenged Coronet
And then then i shall call my loyal brachet back
from his condemned-man's tasks in Annwfn

Æ u o u a e

– IV –

allegro vivace : fugato

This is the duty of Nenive.

As the three knights (Palomides, Dornar and Constantine) set forth on the quest to find and capture Glatisant, Nenive leaves Avalon alone by boat and proceeds along the ancient paths of Britain to assist them in their search. Once more in Albion, the voice of Merlyn again pervades her thoughts.

After seeking guidance from the Queen of the Waste Lands, Nenive realises that the search for Glatisant is fuelled entirely by the controlling self-interest of Merlyn. Determining to keep the new court free from Merlyn's control she distracts each of the knights from their task with alternative grails and seeks the questing beast herself. With Pellinore's lips silenced by sickness, she must rely on the riddles of the Waste Lands' Queen to discover the true nature of the Glatisant.

Staring straight into the sun, this is divinity.

From the clifftop the eagle ascends.

Organpoint

[Nenive returns
to Albion]

i am silenced by a bombard
of pressured sound
unyielding yet unaligned
clamouring voices of the forgotten
echoes of bodies
clawing for my *Aide!*
Aide!
Aide!

o
most modal music
muscling through my mind unbidden

o
most merciless miasmas
mutating my reflections into shadow

o
won't you yet let me forget
this Madness (madness) (madness)

Aide!
Aide!
muffled airless (*mdnss*)

o
why won't you let me
go ?

*

a cutter across the waters
saw me slice the oceans
white as gull crest spume
and saffron sullied necessity

saw me flee from Elysium
back towards my aerie island
with its uncertainty of shade
and as yet unshaped politic

where we are each peasantry
to somebody or someone other
and unwinged i am just a
crow's nest holding those

that long to see a rise of land

*

i
have watched all history *un-fold*
from an O-pen unstirred room
have flickered
voiceless
on the crest of shadows
behind my loom
my myth of skinless
children
of strange unnatural spinsterhood
that reeks of madness

i
have sung all history from an
unrestricted archway on a borderline
an unstrung
unmanned
songline
and still
you thrust at me your wedding breakfasts
beg of me a
revelation
are you still enraptured
children?
for my voice has always
orchestrated the edge of reason

i
have played all history on harpstrings
softly spoken heartstrings *beating*
beating *beating*
and had i known they'd
Snapped
so long ago i surely should have
Stopped
Stopped
yet still

i
have told all history forgotten
with my *linguae ignota* and i
am a woman
too long a cipher in your music
make of me your
organpoint
sing again

Travel Fragments – The First Day

[Nenive follows
the Ridge Way]

#1.

those stones built of oldlaw
stagnate
against an unchanged
unchained language
a lingering linguae ignota
in an otherland
these stones stand
as an inscription
an epigraph
before
a
grave

#2.

fill me with your earth
with your heady truffle
warm odours
clothing around the rock
framed architecture
the constant coffin structure

herein lies the lady ERICa
(ad te omnis caro veniet)
perhaps it hasn't permeated yet
through the sweating stone
the richly pungent hogweed
with its sweet sickly scent
of indoor straw kept swine

#3. Wights

at a collapsed barrow i stumbled across the path of a
pair of nesting swallows

#5.

avoiding rain in someone's
traveller's outpost

i sipped at ale
gazed into the depths

of an open indoor well
slowly brimming full

Tales of a Monster in Lloegyr

[Nenive asks a fellow traveller
for tales of the Glatissant]

quesin beas tha say?

aye av erd tell ont
bu thall av nay bu ba look
seekn i frees righ
naye be foun
an if tha do
thall wish yadnuh

ma mither saynd
sha seen em wuns
in trees

wis ed lak serpens
wis fee lak u nart
wis torsa lak lepuds
wis ass lak un line

wis voys lak swch noys
as yun nayv erd
was sif thern wur a
thirde cupa hans
surjun thris belluh

belivmuh yun glad
yadne
seen is fess
fori wer fessom t beold
wi fury in zi

thesay sumt
nay bu strenj
boutem

...

bu wassih ?
nay av ne seni msen mm

Travel Fragments – The Second Day

[Storms tear across Britain]

#8.

struck by a sudden flurry of storm
hurrying across something arable

i didn't hear the piebald ponies
until they cascaded in battalions

behind me down the hillside
clumping covalent beneath a beech

at electrostatic summer storm cra-
-cks

#13. Chalk-mud

gunged about my boots
and pasted pack-horse feathers
to elongated screeches of grey
like the tune of an english summer whistled
through rain

#21.

an earth smith troll smith ancient hidden knell smith
can't you hear his anvil ringing ? night singing ? they say

for the fourteen bodies twenty eight thighs are lost missing

#34.

blowingstone hill – a sarsen with a hole
feel it rough in your finger tips
touch it to your lips – sound one pure note
long relentless silent

#55.

i passed a man of three score ten and six racing for
the promise of payment : peregrinations of thirty miles (or more)
per day and in this heat i sailed my ship across white tides of barley

Stone Song I

[Trapped in his rock Merlyn's voice
still sings from the natural world]

*i once heard an ancient weed
sungen from a promontory
sungen from a
sungen fromen
little bit of bread and no chee-ese
whistlin
inthen willow whispin
inthen inthen
zephyr breeze*

*some call it mouseear
for its leafwear
velveteen in fulvous green
limbed like
yet another flower
forgotten on the rotten mould
the musty summermulch
mixed in spores
of seraphim seraphim*

*whet your blade with Herbe d'Amour
or so they sing it in the grass
or so it's sungen
sungen sungen
from the syrinx of the birds
from the blackbird with his long song
rhythmed like a brightbrightbrightbright rise
hear them beg you don't forget him
split the stone wherein he lies*

Travel Fragments – The Third Day

[Flickers of time overlap
when time is irrelevant]

#89.

maybe only leaving markers for the regal dead or those we ought not
to have forgotten makes an unedged column more memorable

#144.

cut apart
 my
carcass split
 it into something
 renewed
to something new
this is all just
 genetics

#233.

another blasted worship space
of regimented roman lands
stands on the hillside rich
with thick red brick and stone

#377.

pray pretties pray
in your valley
lift up your eyes
unto the hills
and stand by my
blindly silent side

above rise birds
of prey to strike
me cold and quiet
and bear me back
to their stony aerie
prey pretties prey

Travel Fragments – The Fourth Day

[Songs and voices simmer
through the countryside]

#610.

geese patter around the lawn
feathers firm as a crinoline flower
as clean ceramic bathroom decorations
one pecks free the *Private* sign
leaves the nails upright exposed

#987.

we painted the walls
with parabolic scenes
of figures dressed
in bright futuristic garb
left the windows free
to colour with dawn
and close red across
the hills i listened
to the song of glass
pattering rhythmically
under a shadow of sun

#1597.

i've never drawn a single warless line
across a swathe of copse and countryside
uninterrupted scraped scarlet with iron
whilst puffs of light-pink off-white poppies
blossom up through the earth like a windfall
in G^b

#2584. Moorhens

“ three times each year they breed
lead the chick back to my garden

“ each time the kite comes
takes the freshly hatched up on a wingbeat

“ enraptured by raptors
the garden is never gained ”

Revelation 12:14

[Nenive remembers Merlyn and
her decision to take control]

when you found these ripped red wings
lying in the stickyweed
in tight tumbles of goosegrass

you bound them to my outstretched
arms with garden twine cut from
the stems of trellis roses

i awoke to an autumn
wilderness where flight might come
time and times and half a time

to feed on eagle freedom
i awoke to power peace
poverty a hint of grail

flying too close to ozone :
copper ocean iron salt
a taste of blood in the wind

Travel Fragments – The Fifth Day

[Nenive's journey is permeated
with echoes of the future]

#4181.

poppies storm-struck bleed
a fruit infusion through water
too hot! too hot!

#6765.

in the beechwoods i
caught gelatinous echoes
of muffled roaring

in my coarse dry grasp
clasped those future engines close
as scents of boiled flame

#10946. Lakes

they cut clefts in chalk crust	filled with rain shimmered quite
skimmed away grating curds –	chemical : turquoise clean
later those long hollows	innocent

#17711.

Co^{il}_{ed}
through my twist^{ed}
fingers
wound
my serpent
adder
o
so soft
so grotesque
yet f-r-a-i-l...

Stone Song II

[Longing to return to humanity Merlyn
clings to the touch of a passer-by]

*like suckling honey
straight from those hexagons
of bee-worked comb
allowing the intricacies
of insect-architecture cities
to swallow me whole
was my gasp at your touch
to this unlusted skin
and the draw of your
nail-quick dry along my side
shuddered alive
with awareness to an otherworld*

*i have lain too long
not to sleep amongst my fellows
unfeeling
frail as heartsongs formed
in endless marble*

*before the end love
come to me again*

Travel Fragments – The Sixth Day

[The road ends on a hilltop – below
lies a figure cut from the chalk]

#28657.

i stepped on beechmasts
felt them press their cool ochre silk
about my bared toes
sharp as a shell
 cracking with the voice of winter
and a gnawed slate-song screech
for sympathy

#46368.

i took the highest points
even in a storm's rising
billow

burgundy
with engorging foul bombard furies
tempting electricity to take me

build me into an unyielding
full-bodied trigonometry
Alive

#75025.

whether it was a horse
from long ago or no
was rinsed into paste
pestled into base roux
ready to wing beside
lion or bull or man or
maybe rise up like the

E A G L E

* * *

– *adagio* –

Thule

[Nenive hears Glatisant's voice in
winter storms and the wild hunt]

can you hear them whispering in
from the northernlands

caught amongst the snowgoose feathers
frosted as crystal ?

these are the taste-buds of children
sharp malleable

bitten bright with hot hot spices
and the winter edge

white as a flash flurry of storm
and innocent voice

i heard the goosesong softer than
the ancients' wild hunt

singing overseas from Thule
with its high ice tors

and deserts of burning snowsheet
and in their singing

was the essence of glatisant
encrypted with sound

Preyfall

[Nenive receives guidance from the Waste
Lands' Queen over Merlyn's quest]

darling

*are you really wondering
whether or not to trust the words*

of a man

*that lives for mystery
of a man that needs to be needed ?*

*there were once squirrels
close enough
to cup within your hands*

*to offer up
unto the hawk before these woodlands
burned my dear*

*and my iridium eye was
transitory
quick with the bodies beneath her claws*

and here i sat

*and watched them change
like splintering cogs in cuckoo clocks*

*forcing the sides
of their box
a - part*

*still unsure ?
mix centaury with hoopoe blood
and burn the bowl with light my love*

sometimes it helps

*to see a world
turned upon its head*

An Advent to Decide

[Nenive remembers Merlyn
& his controlling influence]

i dream you

haloed silver with the song
of Paradisian birds
torn *brightbrightbrightbright* from callouses of fire
and with voices *skirling-skirling* here
against battering threads of split gossamer

you are on the tongue of feathers
the seraphim plumes of iron cut in air

let the scrape of ice aureoles
the rust-rent screech of a gate
lead me me lead me me
withwithwithwithwith
unended melodies

let-go let-go gales
under a ventured glare

burning coals blister my lips^{ss} black
that when these words
touch them
it is as a gushel in slate weft robes
in adamant

as rue

Pullus

[Pausing to rescue a bird Nenive
realises she must bring freedom
by taking control of the quest]

when the pullus fell

from its perch

i should not have stopped

to pick it from that pebble-dashed resting place

to push through

those verdigrised
trees

to tempt him back

into the outreached branches

of an alder

i cannot linger longer here

where even an earth-song

seeks to keep me

from my protracted task

with games

a gushel gashes
at my cheek

glances from the unbent boughs

as i kneel to set

the pantle snare

pullus – young bird

gushel – prolonged gust of wind

pantle – bird-trap

Cawl

[As Palomides slips into sleep
Nenive plants visions of an
alternative grail in Annwfn]

bubbling in the bright brass jam pan
my mother banned us from ever touching
i stirred the sweet aromaed cawl

above its flickering stone fire
still spitting those cracked black split stems of herbs
spilt from the auburn angled side

i simmered into the incense
of rich dark beef broth closed my eyes against
an ever-pressing need for sleep

beneath the soft liquescent steam
i seemed to see the gorgeous otherlands
built cementless from bricks of glass

and passing ghostlike across sea
through the glistening rotating castle walls
i filtered fluttered into halls

until i reached a chamber draped
in feastings wines and well-tempered song
and therein my sylphlike shade shape

settled amongst the nine naked
maidens who fanned vivid turquoise flames with
sighs to set their pearl-rimmed cauldron

hissing in prophetic wisdom
and to my left stood Pwyll of Annwfn
to my right Pryderi his son

and the cauldron *Daghda's Undry*
Bran's Renovation *Ogyrvran's Muses*
blackened there in old Caer Sidi

to crack and split in seven parts
spilling boiling liquid over lost screams
fading the fortress to discords

Loch

[Nenive fills Dornar's mind with a
vision of the still-living Pellinore]

like old blind homer
i closed my eyes
let the sounds of an evening
and sensitivity to a horse's instincts
draw my step
along the mountainside

as my feet felt the water
falter
beneath my tread
and the scents of otter spraints
pushed me out from the bank
across the moving lake body
i travelled uninhibited
by reason
and i was oil
passing over the still surface
that breathed me in
and on

when i touched upon
the island at the centre
i found him
curled about a coronet
cut from quietening elder
and weft with hair-frail silver filigree

At the Abattoir

[Nenive brings Constantine a
nightmare of his dead lover]

there were four buildings
built like barns
like warehouses
or maybe mortuaries
for the stench filtering
under those high iron doors
was metallic liquid
rich in haemoglobin

Uncertainty caught my hand
and drew me through
the cold cobblestoned courtyard
brisk with breeze
gusting sharply at my face
to where one door stood
ajar upon its runners

We took the handle
bundle bound in orange baling twine
together forced aside
the squealing shroud
to let sunlight pour
across a sweep of concrete flooring

“old sins cast long shadows”
He said
shuddering
at that timeless bone-deep
malingering cold of the dead

stepping into the hard
wide chamber *We*
moved among the thousand
stainless steel hooks
from each of which hanged
a halved butchered-carcass
combs of ribcage jutting
cream through tissue

only when i saw the upturned heads
horrific in their gaunt expression
their gasping empty grin
did i know their face each one as Him
Uncertainty left me

abattre i fell

In Formants

[Nenive asks Pellinore about Glatissant
but the malady holds him silenced]

i saw a city
perfumed from cream rich tannins
caught behind his tongue

Cauldron

[Palomides abandons the hunt for
Glatissant that he might travel to
Annwfn in search of his grail]

perhaps pwyll's new quest called me from my plans
before the chase could reach fruition
but still this seemed the proper course
for what right minded man seeks
quarrel with the lost lands
even in the face
of a kingdom
in this life
or the
next

[One quest ends]

The Madness of a King

[Dornar finds his maddened father
Pellinore and abandons the quest
for Glatissant to care for him]

maybe sanity is stored within the
pith of fruit the bits untouched
by man as unworthy of digestion

the very suggestion of new voice
music brought him quivering to
my knees with unconstricted glee

and babbling like a botanist over
nutrient rich soil he drew me to his
low horizon-perfect eyeline level

my brain had told me dead and yet
upon a wisp of feverfew my legs
had drawn the mind back braille-d

to this questing prophet for whom
there must be music in the poetry
of unrestrained word convulsions

at last spilt from his gale-cracked
lips a lisp of truth spewed forth
amongst those maddened babble

-tides like an ember buried deep
beneath the lowest echelons of
ash

[His quest ends]

Beauty in Bodies

[Constantine's original reasons for
leaving Kernow keeps him resolute
in his desire to be king]

can you merit it? once before we met
i caught sight of him riding on the moor
as a whip in my boorish father's hunt
which even yet rides out through the winter

his seat so easy in the wet saddle
dampened by dawn drizzle cloaking the chase
that i see now why ladies whisper for
men with widened hips that can settle in
comfort on their hunters day after day

his diabolically disfigured
water-swollen corpse still haunts my actions
that even if i wished i couldn't stray
from my desire to catch the Glatisant
and with kingship cast the gauntlet for change

A Glimmer of Truth

[The Queen of the Waste Lands leaves
Nenive with the notion that Glatissant
is perhaps not what she imagines]

*tantivy tantivy tantivy tantivy
all i hear
is the chase my dear*

*the endless catchmecatchcan of quest
that'd test the patience of any old title
be i pauper pariah or prince*

*you think me heartless to say it love ?
you think that chance
encounters bring change ?*

*o my deranged but dainty darling!
dear do you not think it queer
that this creature has never been seen?*

*aye me! i mean be serious chick
you are chasing a soundscape
a shape in the shadows*

*wipe away your paint my love
slowly expose that unadulterated unaltered frailty
like the fresh pink skin*

*puckering under a long picked-at scab
and come out blinking blindly
finally alone*

*don't you see my pretty fool
my pasty-pated priestess-poet:
truth is liminal*

*and the need for this beast is
frankly
skeletal!*

*and the need is the need
to be needed and the
need is the need to be needed and the need is*

*for ever and ever and ever
Amen.
do please call on me again*

* * *

– *accelerando* –

Hildegard Quickens the Beat

[The tale must be
brought to a head]

Scrubbing lichen from the tombstones

underneath our old gnarled swamp trees
i looked up to breathe awhile and
saw a silver flash of sunlight
strike cetaceous from a wingbeat
bite voracious into me like
blinded liminality or
maybe glimpsing on the face of
God

Thinking back to Reinesse and those

eyes again like Red or Liver
scented perfumes rising from an
empty petaled rosehead from an
unlight arc of shadow from a
sunlit blight-burnt shady vineyard

i scraped clean the grooves of text and

let the freckling gardenbirds glance
over me like tides of seasalt
coarse as forcing organpoints in
spoken word or fragile dance steps
o-no-mat-o-poe-ic as an
untuned unpitched endless silence

Hurry now you avid listener

surely even you have heard the
call of drums the rhythmic chant the
settled beat of coming dance and
know that this is more than merely
Kingship calling us to court

* * *

– *dance* –

A Hint at Glamourie

[Still unsure of the Queen's
meaning Nenive chases the
braying bay of Glatissant]

no

cat'seye tiger'seye reflection re-
fraction through the close packed forestry
stippling this landscape like king's pleasure

no

wide-eyed wild-eyed catch at my gaze quite
ghostlit with sensuous glamourie
with fearsome featured mythology

magic

no

fin de fortitude fin de fate nor
monstrous figure faced in fury yet
still there was something more than fable

here

in the glitter of ipocrase sweet
spiced with root-ginger and air-dried bread
and the bray of fleeing glatissant

spiced wine
sacrament

*

there were pigs
seeking pannage
amongst the
mast-rich pasture
of beechtrees

forest food

rummaging
through the red clart-
thick leaf mould
i saw one draw
white truffles

mud

*

it rained today and each house stood
empty against the fevered line of water

vaster even than the quiet arctic desert
away to the north where the snow goose

flies each summer it rained today and
each house wasted brittle and cinnabar

with salt as if the bricks themselves were
burnt from untempered untampered iron

it rained today and each house closed
its light unhumaned behind a stare

into rondel silver fins falling over stone
behind those blank prosopagnosic eyes

*

at dusk

watch for the stars which cloud
over greyed-mauve evening

like pitches
resonating against your own sonare

in melismatic organum
like a patter of song
like formants

or perhaps like a blush of crystaled ice

crafting a paraselene

mock-moon

to guide you

to lead you through the darkness
into myth

*

a breath of languid evening

impressed upon summer

haunted the front

where each house

whistled with the warmth

of pastlives

& endless faces

and the old iron washing line left
one long stripe
 across sheets
 across white cotton shirts
 across well-scrubbed overworn underwear

 later when sea beat stones
against wooden planks
 of wall
 i heard the ping-pong play
 of crabs pattering
hard-tubed legs across the grain
 menacing their claws

*

a passing glance
 in double glazing
cast me as a shade

 uncertainty flickering
somewhere between
 the empty space of glass

*

o
open
as an oesophageal passageway
soft moist sinuous
cloying

o
i moved
through like an orb
slipping past the muscle walls
contracting

o
choking
pink against the flow of breath
against the timbre
of song

o
words slice
into granite like pricking letters
in hand-warmed wax
diamond scratched

o
woe! that
here in the woodlands there are pale
glimmers of truth in
nothing

*

and here :

with the echoing bray of the questing beast
bouncing from these cavern walls i stalled
unwilling to take that extra step
to break the spell that had drawn me on
unwilling to see the truth of myth
to find a beast that should not exist and know the chase ever
greater than the quarry
when at last i looked
whether i'd mistook the way or bray for bay
or maybe merely missed the point of this
i don't know
but the creature screaming its
fury was nothing but a frightened donkey
its halter tangled in the briars

* * *

– fugue –

The Moment of Borders

and at that pivot point between times and time solstice came
in a glimmer a pinprick in black paper
or perhaps catching sight of the
red sanctuary lamp
burning into
the night -dy whole
grows slowly soundlessly
and at that pivot point between times and time solstice came
at first no more than the rolling echo of
an organ pedal which as it
swallows the bo-
and at that pivot point between times and time solstice came
gentle as a kiss
this barren uncompromising
with burnt hooves & iron
quick of body as a kick from within
unflinching relic of
verge where I tread
corpses which straddle the
guano and freshly killed roadside
like the living-death stench of roosting ravens
and at that pivot point between times and time solstice came

The Archway

solstice – the pivot when times become time

[Nenive in the borderlands]

they built an arch of pneumatology
here amongst the furls of curling fulvous
ferns in our rolling borderland marches
where each long deliberated theory

study of spiritual beings

of the spiritual slowly petrified
into weighty wheels of blocked arcing rock
and within there lingered stagnant shadows

echoes unremembered semblances of
body and were they man or woman or ?

*

i found myself stood upon the hillside
at Keyenhom a league hence from Ludlow
where already the wooden palisades
were settling into the near edge of myth

and only then i realised that this
was nothing short of Malory's grail quests
pasted loosely upon mixed religions

and never the expected obsessions
of kingship-chasing power-hungry lords

*

after climbing up to the mountain's peak
i collapsed red-faced on misericords
of thick purple pollened heather settled
onto the thousand gaunt wind-carved faces

and heard them echoing the Waste Lands' words
whispering in my ear scraping hoarsely
of my own grail neither cup nor lover

nor maddened father but the glatisant
that new-religion's poor man-God bearer

*

perhaps that arch wasn't stone but mere air
trapped by overreaching trees and autumn
and the force of my insistence bordrage

raid upon country's borders

there was never such place as Camelot

Beau-Geste Effect

[and at that pivot point between
time and times solstice came]

let me go as adventure leads me

the air is clearer here
that when i dream you
you are the song on the tongue of seraphim
haloed silver with aureoles of gossamer
and robes weft in threads of feathers
torn from the brightbrightbrightbright plumes of Paradisian birds

*there is an overlap
of voices*
*fighting through our long
unsettled ears*
*can you hear their fundamentals
stretching on*
*an elongated glissando
intermingling glissandi*
*like warming up the motor
ring of glass*

touch my lips with burning coals
let them blister black
with callouses of fire
with words cut in adamant
with the ice-to-iron scrape of splitting slate
with a skirling screech of gale inside a rust-rent gate
with a sudden skirling gushel battering against these unended melodies
battering against an unended
pitch

*and as our pitches fall we find
new layers*
*of harmonics sailing into
view*
*until the overtones are
melody and we*
*the unintended dark song
a scrape of split slate*
*a rust-rent reverberation
filtered from a snarl*
*battering against an unended
pitch*

this was
simply
wolf song
spinning
from
the tongue
of an over
zealous
woodland
harmonious
as formants
filtered
through silence
flickering
from scree

let me go as adventure leads me

A Winter's Tale – Snowmelt

this is the pivot when times become time :

[Gaoled Merlyn is finally
addressed by Nenive]

not every statue bleeds ichor
like your wire welt hands held in their
sad sancta maria posture
crying out *i am viduous*
i am empty

and you were my hermine
you saxicolous entity
stapled into endless stone stone
stone soft as pumice light as air
as fossil fuels

inhabiting rocks

i sought glittering chalices
through the darkened vestibules of
churches dolorous entrances
to grime grained houses whispering
too hot! too hot!

but it was not for love of you
i chose to bind and choose to spurn
you but the hapless task of an
undying undine designed to
feel no pity

water spirit with human soul

i know now that this pretty quest
was no mere test of merit but
the machinations of a mind
murderous with self interest
and lost power

our grail nothing but a dumb beast
emblazoned with the cross of a
sacrificed god's calm warm caress
and the bay of thirty couple
hounds just a bray

i swayed unsteady in my new
red patent leather stilettos
heard the ghost breath of solo bow
murmuring beneath harmonics
made it my song

i have longed to feel your touch coarse
to my skin but begin to see
that even unpresed time will while
away billowing potency
and i shall fly

like breezed flock from the fuller's card
that no man might have this music
and those who sought never truly
looked at all past their own three cups

there was only ever one voice
in all of this

flux

Fermata

[Nenive finds peace]

*and at that pivot
point between times and time solstice came —*

lying here on our quiet hillside
in the tempered breath of midday sun
i heard that gorgeous repetitive
drum (*beat*) drum (*beat*) drum (*beat*) echoing
back through the darkling valley-bottoms
the tabor playing a heart (*b-beat*)
echoing back from some long ago evening
where we danced the night together love

characterised by darkness

at first i thought the skull i found there
was only an empty ovine cavity
hollowed out by shrill whistles of wind
to stand marrowless powerless but
beneath my calloused hands those chambers
slowly distorted fuliginous
and fragile as a man i wired him
back into the shape of my lover

dusky

gentle as a kiss i stitched my own
blue-veined skin around his skeleton
twisted outside-in that he glistened
until the air gently dried away
our last touch of life and we were both
merely mimicry taxidermy
forgotten from the organum of that first
music landscape fermented to rust

a skein of geese coiled overhead lungs
baying with Hildegard's *linguae ignota*
and lost pages of sung manuscript
we ascended as eagles

[Her quest ends]

* * *

– Coda –

[She speaks]

and Mother yes listen close
at last i will address you
o Maiz in your own linguae

ignota for i now know
the timbre tonality
of your l o n g *unsettled* song

could continue in this tongue
until i take my command
of our beneath-meniscus

underwater avalon
 so listen to my answer
that i am still your daughter

and he who might have become
another son i have locked
like an incubus in rock

have entombed he who loved me
in shade and i was spinster
woman widow witch womb a

will-o'-the-wisp wilding guide
 Nenive Nenive Nenive I
hear him calling through closed eyes

and shall never sleep for shame

*

i settled onto the glatisant's back
left them alone to choose their own new king
this was never meant to be my music

a glass bell rings
 one - by - one my harp strings

Snap

Æ u o u a e

*nulla gloria
nulla honestate decoratos*

this is mousike

—

Programme Notes

—

*'You propose to musicate language; you
want language to be heard as music.'*

- Daniel Charles -*

* John Cage, *For the Birds: John Cage in conversation with Daniel Charles* (London: Marion Boyars Inc.,1981), p. 151.

Introduction

During a radio broadcast on poet librettists, Michael Symmons Roberts addressed the notion that poets “think of themselves as being closer to music than any other form of writer.”¹ This was furthered in the same broadcast by Don Paterson’s confession that he is reluctant to allow his poetry to be set to music because the music is already fixed in his poetic lines: “How can somebody set a poem that I’ve written? I’ve already set it.”² Due to the prevalent musical patterns used within poetry, and the integral sound structures underpinning his language use, Paterson is proclaiming that it is not only unnecessary to set his words, but that it would be potentially damaging to the pre-existing musicality of the verse to do so. Such thoughts on the musical nature of poetry are far from being new to the contemporary writer, but can easily be traced back through a pathway of poets who have either had the musicalities of their verse expounded upon by critics or who have chosen to write essays and make notations on these ideas for their own development, until we reach the writers of ballads and other older musical-poetic traditions. Whilst many of these past thoughts of musical poetry lie either in a regularity of rhythm or rhyme patterns, as can be noted in works such as Alfred Lord Tennyson’s ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’ with its regular two-stress lines of dactyls and trochees and strong recurring rhymes,³ or Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *The Song of Hiawatha* with its unyielding trochaic tetrameter,⁴ it is interesting to consider how music is maintained in contemporary poetry where frequently regularity of rhythm, rhyme and metre are considered either to be of lesser

¹ Michael Symmons Roberts, ‘The Poet Librettists’, Radio 4, 6th September 2014, 3:30pm.

² Don Paterson, ‘The Poet Librettists’, Radio 4, 6th September 2014, 3:30pm.

³ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’, in *The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890), pp. 222-223.

⁴ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ‘The Song of Hiawatha’, in *The Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1868), pp. 327-395.

importance within poetic composition or are actively avoided as an outdated mode of writing.⁵

Despite the International Association for Word and Music Studies (WMA) only having been established in 1997, explorations into this cross-genre field have been made repeatedly throughout the centuries. These studies are not only extensive, but are also highly diverse, including such disparate works as Joshua Steele's 1779 *Prosodia Rationalis*, which lays out new forms of notation to direct a reader of poetry as one would direct a musician,⁶ the musician-poet Thomas Campion's 1602 *Observations in the Art of English Poesie*, which advocates the replacement of rhyming verse with a more musically-influenced adherence to sound and line lengths,⁷ William Bedell Stanford's 1967 *Studies in the Greek theory and practice of euphony*, which addresses the phonetic qualities of words,⁸ and the explorations of sound analysis in poetry made by early twentieth-century Russian Formalists.⁹ In spite of the grounding element that the WMA has provided since its formation, word and music studies still present a very broad subject area, covering a diverse array of specialisms and approaches (e.g. semiotics, creation of national identity through opera, modernist literature, and relationships of words and music in song cycles, to name but a few areas covered in the WMA's fourth published volume).¹⁰ Although there are still widely differing views amongst students of contemporary literature and music studies, Professor Steven Paul

⁵ As is suggested by the continued trend towards writing in free verse in many contemporary collections.

⁶ Joshua Steele, *Prosodia Rationalis: or, An essay towards establishing the melody and measure of speech* (London: J. Nichols, 1779).

<<https://ia801407.us.archive.org/1/items/prosodiarationa01steegoog/prosodiarationa01steegoog.pdf>> [accessed 30th October 2015].

⁷ G. B. Harrison (ed.), *Samuel Daniel, a defence of ryme (1603); Thomas Campion, observations in the art of English poesie (1602)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966).

⁸ William Bedell Stanford, *The Sound of Greek, studies in the Greek theory and practice of euphony* (California: University of California Press, 1967).

⁹ For discussion of these studies see: Amy Mandelker, 'Russian Formalism and the Objective Analysis of Sound in Poetry', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 27 (1983), 327-338.

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/307860>> [accessed 1st March 2015].

¹⁰ Suzanne M. Lodato, Suzanne Aspden and Walter Bernhart (eds), *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, iv (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002).

Scher, one of the major figures of this field prior to his death in 2004, has written that despite scepticism with regards to the combining of two art forms, and uncertainty as to the degree of ‘metaphoricity’¹¹ that exists when discussing one art form through the language of another, ‘musico-literary relations promise a rewarding territory for critical exploration within the larger framework of the study of literature and the other arts.’¹² Scher was of the opinion that the furthering of interdisciplinary scholarship in this area would be beneficial for both literary studies and musicology, and further, in ‘A Theory of Verbal Music’ he writes of how these studies might also be extended into practice based explorations, the poet engaging in the creation of ‘a ‘verbal piece of music,’ to which no composition corresponds’.¹³ It is from this point that I wish to begin my explorations, looking to how this same form of ‘verbal music’ may have previously been created by poets that perhaps saw less distinction between the two art forms, and also considering the writings of other contemporary poets that draw attention to music within their works, asking whether it is with this same form of ‘verbal music’ that they have engaged, or if instead it is merely the idea, or metaphor, of music that has guided their writing.

Many of the comments that address the issue of music in contemporary poetry, particularly those that are to be found in the reviews or cover-notes of new volumes, are fairly lazy metaphors, used because of the lingering assumption that poetry has a musical aspect. Examples of such metaphors, to choose but a few, can be found in the cover-notes to Rachael Boast’s 2013 collection, *Pilgrim’s Flower*, which speaks of how

¹¹ Eric Prieto, ‘Metaphor and Methodology in Word and Music Studies’, in *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, ed. by Suzanne M. Lodato, Suzanne Aspden and Walter Bernhart (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 49-67 (p. 51). <http://www.academia.edu/580418/Metaphor_and_Methodology_in_Word_and_Music_Studies> [accessed 19th October 2015].

¹² Steven Paul Scher, ‘Notes Toward a Theory of Verbal Music’, *Comparative Literature*, 22 (1970), 147-156, p. 147. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1769758>> [accessed 21st October 2015].

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

her poetry sings with a ‘Pitch-perfect’ lyricism;¹⁴ in the comments about Mark Tredinnick’s *Fire Diary*, in which Judith Beveridge proclaims his poems full of ‘A strong and graceful music’;¹⁵ and Szirtes’s description of Matthew Sweeney’s *The Night Post* as containing ‘the ghost of a flute or pennywhistle’ because one cannot read the poems without hearing their ‘simple but sophisticated cadences as music.’¹⁶ What do these assertions actually tell us about the poetry that they are supposed to describe? Perhaps the reader is meant to infer that Boast’s poetry invokes the emotive contemporary lyric poem with an unwavering ability, or that her verses maintain the memorable qualities of song; that Tredinnick has formed a series of powerful sound relations and metric pulses that encapsulate the qualities of pitched music; and that Matthew Sweeney is able to bring a romantic ideal of woodwind sounds into the cadences of the written word. However, whether or not these interpretations are those which were intended, they still insist upon a musicality of language which may be little stronger than that which is held within any other contemporary poetic work. For an art form in which precision and exactitude of word choice are key, such descriptive phrases feel unconvincing and ill-considered to say the least. Are these truly the contemporary equivalents to the rich, musically dense poetics of the past, or are there perhaps new ways in which we can develop twenty-first-century verse forms to recapture the beauty and intensity of oral/aural poetics within the context of the printed page?

This thesis is my endeavour to find an answer to such queries; to ask why a musically rich poetry is desirable, to discover whether one can create a true musical poetic for the contemporary poetry scene, and, if so, quite what this might entail. To do this I shall begin by tracing the roots of poetry back to their proposed origins, in *Oral*

¹⁴ Rachael Boast, *Pilgrim’s Flower* (London: Picador, 2013), Back cover.

¹⁵ Mark Tredinnick, *Fire Diary* (New South Wales: Puncher and Wattmann, 2010), Back cover.

¹⁶ Matthew Sweeney, *The Night Post* (London: Salt, 2010), Back cover.

Traditions and Musically Orientated Poetics (pp. 228-246), before exploring examples of, what I believe to be, key moments in the history of musical-poetry, moving from ancient Greek euphony and alliterative Anglo-Saxon writings to the more recent Black Mountain and Beat poets. This will be followed by *An Introduction to Music in Poetry* (pp. 247-271), in which I shall use Irving Godt's definition of music¹⁷ to discuss the close relationship between this art form and poetry from a contemporary perspective, including an in-depth discussion of the use of musical terminologies when talking about poetry. Here I will also consider the relevance of viewing music and poetry as a single art form and how changes in contemporary music might serve as a model for changes in poetry.

In the chapter following this, *Solstice in the Borderland and the Story Poem* (pp. 272-287), I shall turn to a discussion of the individual narratives of my two poems and how I have endeavoured to form my own verse in light of integral moments in the history of musical poetry. The focus here will be upon the chief components of the narrative poem, which, as a primarily performative art form, contains an essence of the sound relations of oral traditions even when in a written format. Following on from this discussion, *The Appropriation of Musical Forms and Structures* (pp. 288-315) shall return to the thoughts on form outlined in chapter two, and, alongside considerations of contemporary poets such as Joanna Boulter and Tony Conran, will address how both of my poems are constructed around separate musical forms and individual musical structures, and what this adds to the written verse. Finally, placing *Solstice in the Borderland* alongside the work of contemporary poets including Monk, Morley and Minninnick, I shall discuss issues of *Melody and Harmony Within Language* (pp. 316-

¹⁷ Irving Godt, 'Music: a practical definition', *The Musical Times*, 146 (2005), 83-88, p. 83. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30044071>> [accessed 12th September 2014].

348) and will conclude by attempting to demonstrate how this mode of writing might be of worth in the wider poetic field.

Oral Traditions and Musically Orientated Poetics

In nineteen thirty four, with the publication of the somewhat gloom-laden overview of the then contemporary music-scene contained within his volume *Music Ho! A study of music in decline*,¹⁸ Constant Lambert distressed musicologists and critics of the London classical scene by expressing his lack of faith in the development of a Western classical music filled with renewed vigour for the future. Indeed, in the republication of this book after the Second World War, Lambert pressed so far as to suggest that with the death of Alban Berg (1885–1935) modern music also died. Since that time many composers have of course continued with their endeavours to progress the art form, but, of these developments, those that seem most striking are from musicians who have chosen to combine elements of the old with the new. In the current era, with contemporary composers frequently rejecting tonality as a basis for their work in favour of atonal sound structures or traditional modes, connecting with a sense of pre-Baroque modality is perhaps easier for musicians than it had previously been, and many now use this to great acclaim, not least among them being the Scottish composer James MacMillan. This return to modality was a technique that first began to appear within sacred music with the work of composers such as Gabriel Fauré, who were perhaps seeking to recapture an angelic purity for music through modal passages of reflective, evanescent harmony,¹⁹ unhindered by the domineering, late nineteenth-century operatic presence inhabited by the likes of Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner.²⁰ As is demonstrated particularly in his *Strathclyde Motets*, by weaving a tapestry of old and new techniques, MacMillan forms a music of multiple dimensions in which the

¹⁸ Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A study of music in decline*, 2nd edn, (London: Faber & Faber, 1947).

¹⁹ Eric Blom, 'Fauré, Gabriel (Urbain)', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), iii, pp. 38-46 (p. 41).

²⁰ Although similar returns to modal and pre-modal musics can be seen in secular works also if one looks to such composers as Arvo Pärt, Gorecki, and even Ralph Vaughan Williams.

medieval harmonies of organum parts,²¹ and also the later, polyphonic style of writing, collide with the rich layering of contemporary chordal patterns.²²

To a poet interested in the concept of a musically centred verse, these developments in the works of current musicians ask an interesting question about how one might also recover and revive the rich musicalities of past poetries for the contemporary poetry scene. The medieval musical styles with which contemporary composers are currently working are often those involving a degree of metric freedom far greater than those heard during the Baroque and Classical periods. This is in part because a number of these rejuvenated styles were originally concerned solely with the clear setting of religious texts (where hearing and understanding the words is the key element)²³ and thus spoken rhythms, in which freely flowing melodic lines pulse over unrestricted stresses, are an essential feature of the music.²⁴ These composers are looking back to a point in history where poetry and music were still intertwined as art forms, reclaiming the old to further the development of the new; with the wealth of material this has offered to musicians, perhaps poets should follow suit. Although we are supposedly currently in the middle of an English-language poetic renaissance,²⁵ Carol Rumens claims that there has been a steady decline in the mainstream audience of poetry in recent years which she suggests may in part be linked to the fact that poetry is a less immediately visceral form of music, and, with the ready availability of music that can impact an individual without any deliberate engagement, certainly a less

²¹ See also James MacMillan's *Sonnet* in which two voices move for some time in parallel fifths, creating a piece that is not grounded in major/minor tonalities but instead reclaims a monastic, modal presence. [James MacMillan, *Sonnet* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 2010).]

²² James MacMillan, *The Strathclyde Motets*, 2 vols (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2014, 2011).

²³ Walter H. Frere and Alec Robertson, 'Plainsong', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), vi, pp. 811-821 (p. 817).

²⁴ A musical pattern admired by poets such as Gerard Manley Hopkins, contributing to the ideas that formed his *Sprung Rhythm*.

²⁵ Ruth Padel (ed.), *52 Ways of Looking at a Poem* (London: Vintage, 2004), p. 1.

accessible form.²⁶ It is, however, interesting to note that spoken word poets such as Disraeli and Kate Tempest have increased in popularity in recent times, perhaps emphasising the importance of sound and musicality in poetry once again.²⁷ As such, this suggests the perfect opportunity for the creation of a new, musically-aware sense of the written word, to find the gaps between the numerous contemporary collections lauded as musical, and to build a true, fully formed musical poetry. In developing this new perception of such a poetic style, it is perhaps helpful to follow the precedent set by musicians and return to past eras for inspiration; to look to integral moments in our poetic history in which poetry and music were still intrinsically linked.

In his article on the development of primitive music, P. R. Kirby writes that ‘Of prime importance is the inter-relation of speech and song in remote times’,²⁸ these being viewed as two integral parts of a single performative art form. Whilst there is no firm evidence to support this notion other than combined anthropological studies of tribal cultures and academic deduction, the direct ancestors of poetry are presumed to be either the primitive song²⁹ or the chant of prayer³⁰ depending on the differing developments of specific cultures. It is impossible to confirm when song first emerged within the various civilisations of primitive humanity, our earliest known examples having had to wait for the emergence of written texts to be recorded, but it can perhaps be deduced from our knowledge of mankind’s development of expression that song

²⁶ Carol Rumens, *Self into Song* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2007), p. 49.

²⁷ Whilst spoken word poetry is an integral part of the contemporary poetry scene and a clear descendant of past oral traditions, I shall not be granting more than passing references to this form of poetry within the main body of this thesis. The reason for this is that my primary concern is for the rediscovery of music within the printed poem, and, as my own poetry is composed with an awareness of the printed page and is to be submitted in this silent, printed form, contextually it makes a greater degree of sense to discuss these written poems in terms of other written works than to place them alongside a less-closely associated genre of contemporary poetry.

²⁸ Percival R. Kirby, ‘Primitive Music’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), vi, pp. 921-927 (p. 921).

²⁹ Cecil Maurice Bowra, *Primitive Song* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1962), p. 275.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

appeared initially as an extension of dance.³¹ Over time, our ancestors began to introduce vocalisations into dances, presumably as an endeavour to express greater emotion or meaning alongside their movements, later progressing to more constant, rhythmic patterns of sound. As language systems developed, words also became a prominent part of these vocal expressions. Chant, both unpitched and melodically ordered,³² began to emerge alongside the music and rhythms accompanying dance, and, as this happened, poetry was formed.³³

These early creations of poetry (or song) were not merely a means for expressing the moment; whilst many were glimmers of emotion, prayer, or praise, a number of the dances that they accompanied were also ritualistic or conveyed stories.³⁴ They were moments in time that would be repeated again and again and their meaning would need to be both remembered and explained.³⁵ As such, sound became far more than just an endeavour to intensify the feelings expressed by dance;³⁶ it gained its own power and importance. Meaning was leaving movement and finding its way into words. As poetry developed over time and across cultures it began to gain a greater sense of independent power and grew as an art form. The rhythms and sound patterns that were constructed as part of music to accompany dancing³⁷ developed new purpose as a memory aid and as a means for maintaining the interests of an audience.

³¹ Bowra, p. 262.

³² These early songs would have possessed little more than simple melodies, serving as a means to aid memory and to create a shared experience for a group of people. With this in mind, it is worth noting, however, that within tonal languages, and those where inflection plays a dominant role in meaning, even in unaccompanied, unpitched chants, a strong sense of melodic patterning would still exist (indeed, it has been proposed that the more widespread use of tonal languages by primitive peoples potentially played a firm role in the development of sung melodic lines). [George Herzog, 'Speech-Melody and Primitive Music', *The Music Quarterly*, 20 (1934), 452-466, p. 452.]

³³ Bowra, pp. 61, 63. [I wish to reiterate here that these assertions are little more than reasoned conjecture, however, they do demonstrate the manner in which primitive musics are still bound to language today and present a feasible historical connection between these two media.]

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 264-265.

³⁶ One of the purposes for which Bowra believes they were originally introduced. [*Ibid.*, p. 262.]

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Although the roles of poetry may have adjusted as time progressed, its emergence as a performative art was certainly not forgotten, being kept alive by the bards, trouvères and storytellers of various cultures. The story poem has taken a number of forms throughout its history; yet, due in part to its primarily oral nature, the rhythmic underpinning of lines and the patterning of sounds remained integral within the creation process for all of these forms. One of the grandest figureheads for the story poem is the Greek Epic. Epic poetry, as we receive it today, brings together the sense of written works and the spoken word to create an art form in which a musical presence is maintained despite the silence of the page.³⁸ W. B. Stanford was of the impression that, despite our lack of knowledge of how ancient Greek should sound, euphony was integral to the creation of this form of poetry. He brings to light, for example, Homer's use of repetitive vowels and avoidance of 'consonantal clashes' in the description of a beautiful remembered scene of an amorous dalliance in *The Iliad*.³⁹ The atmosphere of this particular scene is thereby conjured through the selection of harmonious vowels, unhindered by consonantal harshness, to form an almost mimetic pattern of words.⁴⁰ As any trained singer is aware, the vowels of a given line are the notes (the air flow) of the line, consonants serving merely as a means to shape the individual sounds around this,⁴¹ and thus, when singing, one endeavours to maintain a degree of constancy within the vowel sequence. By using repetitive vowel patterns in the above section, Homer has eased the 'flow' of this line, and thereby increased the melliflence of the passage.

³⁸ Michael D. Hurley and Michael O'Neill, *Poetic Form, an introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 120.

³⁹ William Bedell Stanford, *The Sound of Greek, studies in the Greek theory and practice of euphony* (California: University of California Press, 1967), p. 88.

⁴⁰ i.e. A quality of sound appropriate for a beautiful scene. This is in effect a form of word painting, similar to that used by composers when setting a text to music.

⁴¹ Franklyn Kelsey, 'Voice-Training', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), ix, pp. 43-66 (p. 59).

Whether or not one agrees with the principles of euphony, or believes that such ideas have a place in discussions of poetry, it is foolish to deny that ideas of sound have played a role in the compositional process in the past, for, as Stanford writes of Plato: ‘Specially valuable for our enquiry is his recognition that the phonetic qualities of Greek words should be considered in the light of three main properties: ease of pronunciation, beauty of sound, and mimetic power.’⁴² Euphonics formed an area of interest for Greek writers and rhetoricians that played a far greater role in their creative process than critics are often inclined to acknowledge. For Plato, and for at least some of the more prominent classical Greek writers, the musical qualities of individual words and an understanding of how these affected the beauty of the overall line were integral to composition.

Whilst not as unduly concerned with ideas of euphony and phonoaesthetics as the Greek writers were, Anglo-Saxon poetry does still demonstrate a heavy reliance upon sound patterns. Dense lines of ‘vocalic alliteration’ are an important part of poetic composition for this period of our literary history.⁴³ Alliteration served several purposes for the Anglo-Saxon writer; not only were consonantal repetitions and echoes probably used as a mnemonic aid, they also acted as a means to bridge the space between the half-lines that served as a standard metrical unit in the poetry of this era, the alliterative sounds frequently coinciding with the stress of the line.⁴⁴ Indeed, sometimes, as is the case with *Genesis B*, the alliteration of the line may at times be of even greater importance to the poet than the metre around which it is constructed.⁴⁵

Perhaps this suggests to us, as readers, that the writer of *Genesis B* was a poet of lesser

⁴² Stanford, p. 14.

⁴³ Bernard F. Huppé, *The Web of Words: structural analyses of the Old English poems Vainglory, The Wonder of Creation, The Dream of the Rood, and Judith* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1970), p. xiv.

⁴⁴ John Porter (trans.), *Beowulf: text and translation*, rev. (Ely: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2008), p. 10.

⁴⁵ Adeline Courtney Bartlett, *The Larger Rhetorical Patterns in Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), pp. 70-71.

quality than the writers of our other surviving texts from this period, but whether or not this is the case it certainly demonstrates the emphasis that the Anglo-Saxon writer placed upon alliterative effects and the importance of sound relations within the line.⁴⁶ This confirms for us again that, despite our primary connection with these texts being through the silent medium of the written word, there is an underlying aural dimension to the text; an awareness of a consonance and concord of sound.

In England, the interest in alliteration as a poetic tool reached its peak with the development of Middle English alliterative verse. Consonance of word patterns were elevated to such a degree that they became the predominant force in directing the poetic line, as well as a means for dictating tone through interchanges of very strict alliterative passages and more informal lines (as Lawton illustrates with two contrasting sections from the *Morte Arthure* [lines 3844-7 and 3496-8]).⁴⁷ Again, specialists in the field confirm that this stylistic patterning indicates a progression from the ‘demands of oratory and declamation’⁴⁸ rather than from the visual aspect of the written word. Although a consideration of the orality of these lines provides a means for understanding how a musicality might have existed in the poetics of past eras, from a creative perspective it is important to also remember that, as Bernard Huppé has suggested in the introduction to his volume analysing the structural make-up of Old English poetry, the use of similar patterns within contemporary verse may not hold the same allure for a twenty-first-century audience, for whom conversational cadences are preferred to ‘poetic discourse’, due to a distaste for sounds that feel deliberately placed

⁴⁶ It is worth noting that these alliterative effects are based entirely upon aural connections rather than the visual spellings of words.

⁴⁷ David Lawton, ‘Middle English Alliterative Poetry: an introduction’, in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), p. 2.

⁴⁸ Angus McIntosh, ‘Early Middle English Alliterative Verse’, in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), pp. 20-33 (p. 24).

and thus forced and unnatural to the ear.⁴⁹ Indeed, this same sense of maintaining a more colloquial tone is acknowledged by Rumens in *Self into Song*: ‘Our poetic convention requires the line to fit in with current speech habits’ rather than the ‘elevated language’ used in past eras.⁵⁰ Whilst these statements do seem to suggest that overt sound-patterning should be avoided in contemporary poetry, one cannot ignore the current, immensely popular, spoken-word poetry scene in which artists feel at liberty to use regular metres, alliteration and rhyme-rich lines.⁵¹ The distinction perhaps comes from our separation of the written from the spoken word, the latter of which is frequently controlled by the passions of the speaker and calls in a very real, physical voice to the audience, whilst the former must speak silently in the measured tone of a private reader. Both styles ‘fit in with current speech habits’⁵² in terms of word choice but, in my opinion, in terms of formal relations between words, the popularity of free-verse and less immediately obvious form-orientated sound patterns in written contemporary poetry perhaps demonstrates how this preference takes a stronger hold over the written word.

This is not to say that when it comes to the written word, sound patterning such as alliterative techniques should necessarily be confined to Old and Early Middle English poetry; in the midst of his writing on the development of Epic poetry, Paul Merchant makes mention to how a resurgence of alliterative techniques left not only Langland’s *Vision of Piers Plowman* resonating with echoes of Anglo Saxon poetry such as *Beowulf*,⁵³ but that the same might even be said of Edmund Spenser’s work which maintains its coiling alliterative sequences despite the newer, fast-paced

⁴⁹ Huppé, p. xiv.

⁵⁰ Carol Rumens, *Self into Song* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2007), p. 51.

⁵¹ e.g. Kate Tempest, ‘Icarus’, *Kim-Leng Hills*, Youtube, 13th June 2011. <<https://youtu.be/yv5fggapRwQ>> [accessed 27th October 2015].

⁵² Rumens, p. 51.

⁵³ Paul Merchant, *The Epic* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1971), pp. 42-43.

Elizabethan pulse.⁵⁴ Thus, we find a continuation of strong oral techniques appearing well into the Early Modern period, and, if we look to the twentieth century, examples of effective, unforced alliterative verse may still be found in works such as Auden's 'City Without Walls' (e.g. 'Those fantastic forms, fang-sharp, / Bone-bare, that in Byzantine painting')⁵⁵ or Ted Hughes's 'The Hawk in the Rain' (e.g. 'Thumbs my eyes, throws my breath, tackles my heart, / And rain hacks my head to the bone, the hawk hangs').⁵⁶

Within oral poetic traditions, a musicality of language in which sound relations and sonic patterning provide a constant accompaniment to the movement of the idea is a concept that, although serving at times quite different purposes, exists across time-periods and cultures. However, the idea of a musically rich text is not restricted purely to imitative sound relations; it is also an issue of rhythm and of metric stability. Unlike the rigid iambic and trochaic metres and strict insistences upon syllable counts that we find lying beneath verse patterns in later centuries (particularly the Victorian era⁵⁷), the stresses and metric structures of pre-Early Modern poetry are less restrictive in nature. There is no prescribed syllable count to adhere to within the poetry of these eras; rather, as is the case with both Anglo-Saxon and some Middle English verse, lines are divided into halves, each half-line generally containing two dominant stresses.⁵⁸ In this manner the over-riding passage of words with their alliterative strengths are granted a greater degree of freedom as lines are not restricted in terms of length or by the expectation of a repetitive patten from a set pattern of metric feet.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

⁵⁵ W. H. Auden, 'City without Walls', in *City without Walls, and other poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 11-14 (p. 11, ll. 1-2).

⁵⁶ Ted Hughes, 'The Hawk in the Rain', in *The Hawk in the Rain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 11, ll. 9-10.

⁵⁷ e.g. see: W. H. Auden and Norman Holmes Pearson (eds), *Poets of the English Language: Volume V, Tennyson to Yeats* (London: Heron Books, 1972).

⁵⁸ Porter, p. 10.

⁵⁹ Whilst I claim these lines to possess greater 'freedom', I am aware that, as McIntosh describes, early Middle English verse (as with all verse forms) contains its own sets of rules to which the writers generally adhered. I merely propose these non-syllabic forms as freer as a means to demonstrate how a

Although the metres of subsequent poetries became focussed around sequences of alternating stressed and unstressed syllables, as mentioned above in relation to Spencer, the complexities of these verse forms still maintained the essence of oral poetry. The use of blank verse by the playwright-poets kept alive these forms of poetic verse as a language designed to be heard. A prime example of how this might be used can be found in Christopher Marlowe's 'Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships, / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium? / Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.'⁶⁰ Here we find that despite the regularity of the metric pattern, the lack of solid rhyme scheme or of dominant consonantal or assonantal patterns, a musical presence is maintained throughout the lines. This is formed from a combination of sonic relations in phrases such as 'topless towers' and 'make me immortal', and the pointed assonance of 'this', 'ships', 'Ilium' and 'kiss' alongside a pattern of stresses which are able to adjust the line's pulse through the varying weightings placed upon each syllable. This latter effect is particularly noticeable within polysyllabic words, but also when one looks to the line as a spoken phrase, whereupon it becomes clear that '**this**' holds greater weight than '**face**', and that '**burnt**' and the first syllable of '**Ilium**' must be more dominant than '**topless towers**'.⁶¹ Furthermore, the final line of this quotation contains an additional unstressed syllable, placed between '**Helen**' and '**immortal**', which both emphasises the caesura and strengthens the awe-like wonder of the long 'uə' vowel in '**immortal**'.⁶²

rejection of some elements of later forms might connect the contemporary poet with an older, more orally/aurally centred poetic. [Angus McIntosh, 'Early Middle English Alliterative Verse', in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), pp. 20-33.]

⁶⁰ Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, text of 1604*, ed. by William Modlen (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912), v. i. 91-93 (p. 50).

⁶¹ Rumens also acknowledges this same sense of varying lengths and strengths of syllables in the English language, highlighting their importance within the composition of written verse. [Carol Rumens, *Self Into Song* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2007), p. 50.]

⁶² Bold text is used here to indicate stressed syllables within the line.

It was, in part, from elements of blank verse and an understanding of oral practices that Modernist poets at the beginning of the twentieth century began experimenting with a poetic style that was not reliant upon a regular metre, but that instead focussed on a voice for which stress was an organic underpinning of the line, not a rigid structural guide. Hobsbaum writes of the complexities of creating poetry in free verse, describing three varying strains of this form, which he terms ‘free blank verse’, ‘cadenced verse’ and ‘free verse proper’.⁶³ Of these three the first and last are both drawn from blank verse, cadenced verse standing alone (although with origins of a not dissimilar period to blank verse) as a technique that is formed from the poetical qualities of the 1611 King James Bible. In describing these poetic forms, Hobsbaum reminds the reader that whilst the ideas of free verse are of a less restrictive nature there is still a shape to the poetic form (with a particular emphasis on an ‘aural shape’) that guides both the reader and, indeed, the poetic thought through changing tempi, linguistic intensities, and dynamics.⁶⁴ It is from these techniques, particularly those such as Walt Whitman’s cadenced free verse, that the Beat Movement began to devise its lyrical prose-like lines. Allen Ginsberg, the iconic voice amongst these artists, helped to establish a poetic sound which, unlike more formal writing, was created to be heard and addressed itself directly to an audience. In his introduction to *Howl*, William Carlos Williams portrays Ginsberg’s poem as a text of a seemingly religious nature, placing the poet as a prophet seeing ‘with the eyes of the angels’,⁶⁵ divulging his wisdom to the people. Whilst not technically writing in any stable form, Ginsberg inhabited his sounds and rhythms as a performative art form in the manner of the *trouvères*, *jongleurs*, and bards of the past, telling stories (‘Howl’, ‘Kaddish’, ‘At

⁶³ Philip Hobsbaum, *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 95, 100, 112.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-118.

⁶⁵ William Carlos Williams, ‘Howl’ for Carl Solomon’, in *Howl, Kaddish and Other Poems*, by Allen Ginsberg (London: Penguin, 2009), p. viii.

Apollinaire's Grave', 'Europe! Europe!'⁶⁶) and challenging his audience with rhetorical questions ('America'⁶⁷).⁶⁸

At a similar time two very different schools of thought were also experimenting with the sonic integrity of English-language verse; the collected Black Mountain poets in America, and in England, appearing at first glance in a far more traditional light, the imposing figure of Dame Edith Sitwell. Under the influence of Charles Olson, the Black Mountain poets were interested in the idea of an 'Open', or 'Projective', verse. Through the projective they were endeavouring to reclaim poetry from the printed page and to bring back a freer lyricism, an improvisatory feeling to verse in which the flow of the line is directed by breath in conjunction with the ear.⁶⁹ As Rumens relates in her discussion of Olson's essay, this is not the poetical breath of inspiration, *in spirare*, lauded by the classical writers, but a physical exhalation of air, a phrase imbued with 'the energy of the voice'.⁷⁰ Thus, despite its written format, the poetry being created by those of the Black Mountain College bore a far closer resemblance to oral poetics, and perhaps to the physicality of the dancing body that also existed in prehistoric chants. This is demonstrated particularly effectively by the opening to Jonathan Williams's 'Reflections from *Appalachia*':

⁶⁶ Allen Ginsberg, *Howl, Kaddish and Other Poems* (London: Penguin, 2009), pp. 1-13, 36-61, 73-77, 65-68.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 22-25.

⁶⁸ For evidence of the use of these devices by *trouvères* see, for example, the discussion of Jacopone da Todi's poem of captivity in: Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1968), pp. 215-217. [Also, for the repertoire of *joglars* see: Dronke, p. 26.]

⁶⁹ Charles Olson, 'Projective Verse' (1950). <writing.upenn.edu/~taransky/Projective_Verse.pdf> [accessed 22nd October 2014].

⁷⁰ Carol Rumens, *Self Into Song* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2007), p. 61.

dawn songs in the dews of young orange trees;
and ranging orisons; and wordless longings

sung in tranquillity's waters sliding in sun's
light;

and benisons sung in these trees...⁷¹

Within Williams's verse, individual phrases are permitted to flow into one another through patterns of sound relations, internal consonance, and rhyme, to thus stitch together separate lines. As mentioned above, when approaching a piece of music, a singer will often choose a common vowel shape as a focus in order to travel through the line with greater ease, for, just as a string player will endeavour to avoid multiple string crossings, which takes additional bow length, a vocalist wastes breath through changing sound shapes. In this same manner, Williams uses related sounds in conjunction with his breath-directed lines to maintain the strength of the phrases. Thus, the above passage is latched together not merely by the idea that is conjured but by the constant 'ŋ' repetitions found in 'songs', 'young', 'ranging', 'longings', 'sung' and 'sliding', by the 'nge' of 'orange' and 'ranging', and by the rhyme of 'orisons' with 'benisons' amongst other, lesser assonantal and consonantal appearances.

In contrast to this, Sitwell might be seen as taking a less radical approach to poetic language. Much of Edith Sitwell's poetry is constructed around ideas of song, folk music and oral traditions, as is evidenced by the titles of many of her collections.⁷² One collection that is of particular interest in understanding Sitwell's poetic musicality is *Façade*, a series of poems composed with a musical basis that were later placed alongside traditional music⁷³ by the young William Walton to form the combined performance piece, *An Entertainment*. It is perhaps very telling of how Sitwell regarded

⁷¹ Jonathan Williams, 'Reflections from *Appalachia*', in *Jubilant Thicket* (Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press, 2005), p. 272, ll. 1-5.

⁷² *Rustic Elegies, Bucolic Comedies, Street Songs, The Canticle of the Rose* et c.

⁷³ Pitched notation, as opposed to a poetic music.

this work with a musician's ear, that she should choose to describe it with the words of the poet-musician and madrigalist Thomas Campion, proclaiming that her poems 'warmed themselves at fantastical fires and danced in the light of glow-worms'.⁷⁴ In the various poems that make up *Façade*, Sitwell was experimenting with dance forms and rhythms as part of an endeavour to capture a sense of music through her choice of words.⁷⁵ This becomes more apparent when one hears the works spoken aloud,⁷⁶ for, contrary to the impression given by one reviewer in the Daily Express following the first performance,⁷⁷ the recitations in this work were not just stressed rhythmically 'in a dispassionate voice'⁷⁸ but, rather, had far more in common with the reading techniques used by beat poets such as Allen Ginsberg, in combination with the singing style known as Sprechstimme.⁷⁹ As Glendinning acknowledges in her discussion of *An Entertainment*, when first this joint work was presented to an audience it was dismissed by a number of critics, particularly the poetry of the piece which many considered as either trivial or nonsensical due to its seemingly abstract ideas and rhythmic patterns which are at times redolent of child-like chanting games.⁸⁰ However, despite the initial scathing comments, *An Entertainment* later gained acceptance and became part of the standard concert repertoire for chamber orchestra. The quality of Sitwell's work should never have been in doubt; it merely required the rise of the Beat Movement and a change in public opinions of oral poetry and musicality of verse to find its place in the literary landscape.

⁷⁴ Edith Sitwell, *The Outcasts* (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1962), p. 9.

⁷⁵ Victoria Glendinning, *Edith Sitwell: a unicorn among lions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 71.

⁷⁶ Edith Sitwell, '1929 Edith Sitwell FAÇADE Constant Lambert William Walton HMV Model 1A Record Changer', *Sanfranphono's channel*, You Tube, 16th March 2011. <<https://youtu.be/vAEFAU9P8Do>> [accessed 30th October 2015].

⁷⁷ Richard Greene, *Edith Sitwell, avant-garde poet, English genius* (London: Virago, 2012), p. 156.

⁷⁸ Glendinning, p. 78.

⁷⁹ Unlike Sprechgesang, with its connotations of recitative, Sprechstimme simply applies rhythm and pitch to the set patterns of the spoken word.

⁸⁰ Glendinning, p. 78.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was another writer who found himself unable to settle into the poetic conventions of his day. In an era where the poets of renown were hailed for the musical quality of their work,⁸¹ Hopkins saw a musicality that was severely lacking. There have been numerous articles written on the various sources of Hopkins's inspiration, taken from his letters and notations on poetic creation, but it is interesting to note that the two areas from which it is claimed that he drew the vast majority of his ideas for a new poetic voice and for his sprung rhythm, are the Welsh language rules of *cynghanedd*⁸² and the musical traditions of monastic singing, known as plainchant.⁸³ As a composer of music Hopkins unfortunately had little ability,⁸⁴ and his musical understanding was frequently inhibited by a level of bias (tantamount to prejudice) towards the rather surprising combination of old ecclesiastical chants⁸⁵ and the works of Henry Purcell,⁸⁶ yet, as various scholars have acknowledged, he was not without sparks of insight such as his insistence that a modern system of harmony 'could not arise till the old system and its tuning was got rid of',⁸⁷ an idea that actually began to appear in Western music in the subsequent century through Jazz quarter-tones, A-tonal compositions and Modal works amongst other forms. Hopkins was interested in the construction of a new system of music based upon older techniques, with plainchant

⁸¹ An idea that Hurley brings to our attention as part of a brief discussion of musical thought in relation to Tennyson's poetry. [Michael D. Hurley, 'Rhythm', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Matthew Bevis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 19-35 (p. 24).

⁸² Gweneth Lilly, 'The Welsh Influence in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins', *The Modern Language Review*, 38 (1943), 192-205, p. 193. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3717459>> [accessed 8th September 2014].

⁸³ Pamela Coren, 'Gerard Manley Hopkins, plainsong and the performance of poetry', *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 60 (2008), 271-294. <<http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/60/244/271.full.pdf+html?sid=31204327-5e79-44f0-9767-6cd28d74746e>> [accessed 8th September 2014].

⁸⁴ William L. Graves, 'Gerard Manley Hopkins as Composer: An Interpretive Postscript', *Victorian Poetry*, 1 (1963), 146-155, p. 151. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40001210>> [accessed 20th November 2014].

⁸⁵ Kevin O'Connell, 'The Second Muse of Gerard Manley Hopkins', *The Musical Times*, 1901 (2007), 49-62, p. 51. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25434496>> [accessed 31st October 2015].

⁸⁶ John F. Waterhouse, 'Gerard Manley Hopkins and Music', *Music & Letters*, 18 (1937), 227-235, p. 230. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/727755>> [accessed 31st October 2015].

⁸⁷ C. C. Abbott (ed.), *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 253.

and medieval modal sounds forming a major part of this revised system, and it is these same ideals that one might also recognise vibrantly surging through his poetry.

Plainchant lines in their simplest form were originally melodies dictated only by patterns of words and length of breath.⁸⁸ When these syllabic lines were later developed into the neumatic and melismatic styles of melodic composition, melismata would cloud stresses and frequently extend beyond the abilities of a single breath,⁸⁹ however, the underlying pulse of the words remained an integral element in this style of singing, music repeatedly being considered secondary to words.⁹⁰ Indeed, even as late as 1579, in a letter to Cardinal Sirleto, the musician Cimello asks that any potential reformers of chant have a knowledge of the workings of metre alongside a knowledge of how the accents of the text and the clarity of words may be maintained, with particular reference to the setting of syllables (how syllables should be joined, not separated, and how ornaments should only be used in conjunction with the written word to aid the text).⁹¹ This sense of an unmeasured, purely word-orientated music with its meditative, time-stretching melodies⁹² presumably appealed to Hopkins's religious sensibilities as well as his musical taste for a melody-led sound.⁹³ Coren, referencing Geoffrey Hill, writes of how liturgical chant could well have been one of the integral inspirations in the creation of sprung rhythm alongside Hopkins's own cited sources of Greek metres, Anglo Saxon poetry and Miltonic verse.⁹⁴ Sprung verse follows a pattern of strong stresses (one to each foot) around which may be scattered any number of lighter syllables known as outrides. As we can see from our considerations of past oral poetics,

⁸⁸ Coren, p. 271.

⁸⁹ Pérotin's twelve minute polyphonic setting of the twenty two words in the text to *Viderunt Omnes* being a prime example of how musicians would make excessive use of melismata to extend chant.

⁹⁰ John A. Emerson, 'Plainchant, §II', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), xiv, pp. 805-832.

⁹¹ John Rayburn, *Gregorian Chant: a history of the controversy concerning its rhythm* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 6.

⁹² Coren, p. 271.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-3.

Hopkins was not necessarily an innovator in his approach to form; however, by engaging in a dialogue about such techniques (and using his own newly coined terminologies), he was instrumental in reviving ideas that were on the verge of vanishing.⁹⁵ To Hopkins, poetry was a sounding device. When he writes of his work it is in relation to the ear, the silent page serving as little more than a container for a performance, and it is this desire to find an appropriate means for a declamatory voice that perhaps truly represents his need for the recitative-like nature of plainchant. Poetry stood as a means to sing with a music in which melody and a rhythmic freedom were the chief articles of worth.

The second area in which many of Hopkins's critical writings seem to be focussed is Welsh verse and the precision of *cynghanedd*. As with plainchant, *cynghanedd* is an essentially oral practice that falls at the pivot point between words and music; it is a tool that enables a writer to 'compose beautiful lines, lines that sing.'⁹⁶ The guidelines for *cynghanedd* are extensive and complex, however, in terms of line patterns, they are for the main part concerned with equally measured consonantal repetitions dictated by the fall of stresses within a line. This is the element that caught the attention of Hopkins and found its way into his process of poetic composition. It is interesting to note that in describing his work with Welsh verse forms Hopkins refers to *cynghanedd*, not in terms of 'harmony',⁹⁷ but through the alternative translation: 'consonant chime'.⁹⁸ For an English-language writer, such an interpretation perhaps made greater sense than *harmony* for it fitted with the traditional alliterative techniques existing already within English verse. Hopkins's extensions of consonance for his own verse can be found particularly through the use of, at times, lengthy tangles of

⁹⁵ Philip Hobsbaum, *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 54.

⁹⁶ Mererid Hopwood, *Singing in Chains: listening to Welsh verse* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2005), p. 49.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Lilly, p. 193.

‘compound words’⁹⁹ to create that additional ‘chime’ of sound, reinforcing the musical presence in his line. In her article on Hopkins’s use of Welsh poetic ideas, Gweneth Lilly writes that, due to his intense interest in music, Hopkins ‘must have been immediately attracted by the loveliness of sound which *cynghanedd* is capable of producing. These melodic potentialities he exploited to the full’.¹⁰⁰ Examples of the use of these ‘melodic potentialities’ (i.e. consonant chime coupled with rhyme patterns and a changing, stress-directed metre) may be found throughout Hopkins’s oeuvre,¹⁰¹ and whilst the degree of success achieved by the poet may at times be questionable due to the manner in which complexities of sound disrupt the sense of the line,¹⁰² the commitment to his chosen form and the explorative use of elements of *cerdd dafod*, suggested by Lilly in the above quotation, demonstrate a clear understanding of sonic patterning and of how these effects may be utilised to create a true form of musical verse.

I have approached Hopkins last in this discussion for I feel that whilst a number of twentieth-century writers were also interested in the musicalities of language, by connecting the metric, rhythmic, euphonic, and sonic patterning of oral poetics with the language guided musics of the pre-Classical eras, Hopkins created the most in depth study of musical poetry of the last century,¹⁰³ and, in so doing, paved the way for the development of a new, musically rich poetic voice. Unfortunately however, despite his various studies in the field (revealed through the letters and critical writings of the poet and through his poetic creations), he never quite bridged the gap that would allow for

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 194.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 203.

¹⁰¹ For close analysis of the sound structures of Hopkins’s poem ‘Felix Randal’ in relation to ideas of harmony, see pp. 268-269.

¹⁰² See, for example, ‘Tom’s Garland’, for which Bridges felt the need to provide Hopkins’s own ‘crib’ to the poem in order to guide the reader through its complexities. [Robert Bridges (ed.), *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 114-116.]

¹⁰³ I describe it in this manner, for although Hopkins’s work was produced in the nineteenth century, it was not until the early twentieth century that it actually appeared in any great measure.

the composition of a true musical poetic: music formed solely through the medium of words. By combining elements of the printed oral poetics detailed above with contemporary poetry collections, in which a musicality of language and verse seems to be either an integral issue or a prominent focal point, *Solstice in the Borderland* serves as an exploration to further the work of persons such as Hopkins and his successors in the field of musical poetics, that a true, contemporary musical verse form might be brought into existence.

An Introduction to Music in Poetry

Glenn Gould, the twentieth-century pianist famed for his recordings of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, was a musician who took particular interest in the potential musicalities of the human voice. Over the course of ten years Gould created a series of three 'documentaries' in which recorded world sounds and voices were carefully layered into a form of contrapuntal music.¹⁰⁴ In her essay on Gould's verbal counterpoint, Deborah Weigel quotes Bruno Monsaingeon's assertion that despite the unconventional format of this work, Gould's documentaries 'are, nonetheless, true musical compositions in the structural sense, exploiting all the rhythmic, contrapuntal, and harmonic parameters of the spoken voice'.¹⁰⁵ For Monsaingeon, in spite of the different forces being used and the clear stylistic differences between Gould's documentaries and more conventional compositions, these works may still be considered as music due to the taking of the natural musical elements of the human voice and other recorded sounds, and the establishment upon these of controls, formed from traditional compositional rules. In this regard Gould's works are actually very closely aligned with the work of electroacoustic composers, with only one difference: one may still discern literal meaning from the sound patterns due to the dominant presence of words in the musical texture.

Although my particular focus within this thesis is written poetry rather than audio-recordings, Gould's documentaries do demonstrate how through the use of traditional rules of composition one might create music from patterns of words. In a number of his academic articles in the field of Words and Music, Eric Prieto makes a

¹⁰⁴ Deborah Weigel, 'Musical and Verbal Counterpoint in Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould', in *Word and Music Studies, Volume 7: Word and Music Studies: Essays on Music and the Spoken Word*, ed. by Suzanne M. Lodato and David Francis Urrows (New York: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 181-196 (p. 184). <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/aber/reader.action?docID=10380575>> [accessed 19th September 2015].

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

point of drawing attention to the idea that ‘the application of concepts from one art to objects from the other is an inherently metaphorical act.’¹⁰⁶ This he expounds upon in considerable detail in ‘Metaphor and Methodology in Word and Music Studies’, in which it is declared that in the further continuation of Word and Music studies practitioners must ‘Accept and embrace the inherently metaphorical status of *all* attempts to apply terms from one art to objects in another.’¹⁰⁷ [*Emphasis mine.*] To a certain degree I believe that Prieto is quite correct in his assertion that when we use language that is specific to one art form to talk about another, it is frequently metaphorical. If one speaks, for example, of a poetic line modulating or arpeggiating (language that is based upon tonal movements and issues of pitch) one is clearly employing an element of ‘metaphoricity’ to describe similar patterns, ideas or interpretations of the musical forms within poetry. However, I do not believe that this must apply to ‘all attempts’ as Prieto insists,¹⁰⁸ for there are numerous articles within musical discourse that are not solely dependent on pitch, such as structure, rhythm, articulation and dynamic. All of these elements can be, and frequently are, used within poetry also, and thus that metaphorical layer is not an issue.

I would like to propose that, between these two particular art forms, there is also the potential for a half-metaphor when transferring terminologies between the two media. By this I mean that there are certain terms which may be used non-metaphorically in discussions of both media, but that perhaps do not quite translate identically between art forms. An example of this is to be found in the term harmony. When used in discussions of music this word is generally associated with fixed pitches

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁰⁷ Eric Prieto, ‘Metaphor and Methodology in Word and Music Studies’, in *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, ed. by Suzanne M. Lodato, Suzanne Aspden and Walter Bernhart (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 49-67 (p. 51). <http://www.academia.edu/580418/Metaphor_and_Methodology_in_Word_and_Music_Studies> [accessed 19th October 2015].

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

and frequently viewed only in terms of the vertical plane rather than the horizontal; however, this is more of an assumed identity for the word rather than a given definition.¹⁰⁹ As was called to attention in our discussions of *cynghanedd*,¹¹⁰ harmony is perhaps not necessarily so much about issues of pitch, whether sounded one after another or at the same time, as about concord and cohesive relation within the line.¹¹¹ This, therefore, is not a concept restricted purely to traditional musical forms, but is, rather, a descriptive term that might be used for all organised sound, calling to attention consonant chime, assonance and other companionable sounds when considered in terms of poetry.¹¹² To declare these terminologies as no more than metaphor serves to both devalue the musical precisions of composition within poetry and to further separate two art forms that have been drawn from a single root.

Before we can ask how a true music might once again be formed through poetry, particularly if we are to avoid falling into the trap of creating pastiche poetry, it would perhaps be prudent to assess quite what we consider music to be. It can be very easy to assume a liberal approach of declaring music, or indeed any art, to be whatever people say it is, or wish it to be,¹¹³ yet in his essay published by *The Music Times*, Irving Godt rails against taking this somewhat permissive, unrestricted approach to describing music. As a challenge to the current trend for interpretive freedom, Godt forms his own, prescriptive definition:

¹⁰⁹ These separate concepts of harmony (vertical and horizontal) will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter alongside musical examples from Bach (pp. 267-268).

¹¹⁰ pp. 245-246.

¹¹¹ As one can see from reviewing the etymology of the word ('from Latin *harmonia*'), although the musical term *harmony* is generally viewed as referring to simultaneous pitches related to a tonal centre, in its wider field it also includes counterpoint (related pitches on an horizontal plane), and, perhaps most importantly, merely the sense of a 'concord of sounds'. [Ian Brookes, Michael Munroe, Elaine O'Donoghue and others (eds), *Chambers Concise Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrup Publishers, 2004), p. 536.]

¹¹² This is a point that will be elaborated upon further later within this chapter, alongside discussions of melody.

¹¹³ Irving Godt, 'Music: a practical definition', *The Musical Times*, 146 (2005), 83-88, p. 83. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30044071>> [accessed 12th September 2014].

Unwanted sound is *noise*. *Music* is *humanly organised* sound, organised *with intent* into a recognisable *aesthetic entity* as a *musical communication* directed from a *maker* to a known or unforeseen *listener*, *publicly* through the medium of a performer, or *privately* by a performer *as listener*.¹¹⁴

Whilst it is difficult to accept all of the assertions made by Godt within this essay, especially those which disqualify natural sound from the realms of music, providing we bear in mind that this statement is focussed upon music within the Western tradition, and is thus not necessarily entirely prescriptive when we translate such a definition to variant forms, we may still use his words as a means for determining the true essence of music, even within the realms of poetry.

If one were to rework this definition, replacing the word ‘music’ with ‘poetry’, Godt’s statements would still provide a fitting description for this alternative aural art form: Poetry is a series of organised sound shapes; specifically chosen words placed into a recognisable aesthetic form. Poetry, as with music, is communicated from creator to audience either publicly through the medium of a performer/speaker, or privately by a performer as solitary reader. Unlike music, however, poetry performed privately is most commonly performed in silence. Whilst at first this may seem potentially problematic, it does not necessarily negate the idea of a musicality of verse and nor does it detract from the aural nature of poetry, for, as Quintilian writes, ‘The use of letters is to preserve vocal sounds and to return them to readers as something left on trust.’¹¹⁵ Thus, just as music notation is used as a means to record sound, in Quintilian’s opinion the written word too is only a means for containing sound.¹¹⁶ For an art form in which sound patterns, rhythm, and metric phrasing are essential it is important to note

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

¹¹⁵ William Bedell Stanford, *The Sound of Greek, studies in the Greek theory and practice of euphony* (California: University of California Press, 1967), p. 3.

¹¹⁶ Such a stance does of course ignore the visual element of written poetry, a device which can be used to great effect (as in George Herbert’s ‘Easter Wings’), and an element that I have used within my own writing (e.g. ‘The Moment of Borders’, p. 213) as shall be discussed later in this commentary.

that these elements are not lost in the written word. In spite of the silence of the page, I believe that due to our familiarity with language as an art form in which we have been trained from early childhood, when a reader looks to a text, even when reading it in silence, they have the ability to hear the sounds and rhythms of the written word in the same manner that a skilled musician is able to hear the overall soundscape of a work of music printed as a score. Whilst a silent performance is of course not equal to hearing the work as it was intended, this does not mean that it is not a valuable resource for analysis and study, and, more importantly, as a means for recording.

It would of course be foolish to declare that all written language is, or has been, placed exclusively as a form of recorded sound. As part of his own research into the separation of written and spoken aspects of poetry, Richard Bradford writes, ‘modern poets have written themselves into this critical debate and have produced forms that can only be fully appreciated if we acknowledge silent reading as an experience separate from, if not entirely independent of, oral performance.’¹¹⁷ As is evidenced by the many shaped poems (and, indeed, by the shaped musical scores) that have been produced, as well as poems that make extensive use of white space and exploded verse forms, Bradford is quite right to assert that there is an important graphical element to many poems that cannot be ignored. I do not wish to deny the entirely visual element of poetry, however, as the primary focus of this project is musical poetry, for the purposes of this thesis I shall for the main part be discussing these visual elements (particularly with regards to my own compositions) within the context of sound and as part of a means to demonstrate how visual elements may influence oral interpretation.

In this respect, and with the assumption that a written work is one that is awaiting realisation, the poem may be viewed as a form of musical score, silent only

¹¹⁷ Richard Bradford, *Silence and Sound: Theories of Poetics from the Eighteenth Century* (London: Associated University Presses, 1992), p.132.

until it is brought into life by the reader. Indeed, for works crafted in exploded verse forms we might perhaps go further and acknowledge that, without formal indications of fixed pitch, dynamic, tempo or articulation, and being entirely reliant upon its shape on the page, such poetry has a very close affinity with the visual score. The visual score is a form that contemporary composers occasionally utilise if they wish to establish a control, but grant a greater degree of freedom to their performers than a conventional score may allow, or if they wish the piece to be interpreted by performers unaccustomed to reading conventional notation (groups of children, for example). The form usually consists of some brief written instructions which might explain instrumentation, desired effect, duration, pitch, or purpose, to be read prior to performance, and a visual element, such as lines, colours, shapes, or images to guide the musicians through the performance. An excellent example of the visual score is to be found in the musical instructions to Nia Williams's vocal duet *Soundweave*, premièred for S4C as part of the 2012 Bangor New Music Festival.¹¹⁸ In this piece the vocalists are instructed to begin on a shared pitch before following the directions of one of the two coloured lines to gradually raise or lower pitch 'by approximately one tone.'¹¹⁹ By removing precise indications of pitch and duration from the score, the focus between the performers becomes highly intensified and the work's musical presence revolves entirely around the bending of pitch effects created as the lines on the score direct the performers to slowly move to and from moments of unison.

The written poem, particularly one in which white space or less-common formatting choices become a prominent feature, may be viewed in a similar light to this form of score; whether one is reading silently or aloud, the layout of the poem upon the

¹¹⁸ Nia Williams, *Soundweave* (unpublished score, 2011-2012).

¹¹⁹ Nia Williams, 'Guidance on how to perform Soundweave Duet' (23rd November 2011), p. 1, from Williams, *Soundweave*.

page alongside the various other printed effects¹²⁰ can dramatically affect the way in which the piece is read. Just as Williams's score asks for vocal adjustment through moving lines rather than being restricted by conventional notation, poetry that makes use of non-traditional effects can guide the reader into new, less conventional, realisations. As Bradford writes in relation to 'the pictorial metaphor', 'It is almost as though their shape on the page creates something like the visual equivalent of onomatopoeia'.¹²¹ Although he refers here to how, in its silent form, poets use the shape of the poem on the page to intensify meaning, these same assertions may also be seen as a guide for performance. An example of how this might be simply formed can be drawn from Skoulding's 'Room 204' which ends with the lines:

The bird sings with its fingers

Twice

The bird
sings with its fingers

Twice

I repeat¹²²

Carol Rumens has spoken of how she believes the essence of poetry to be 'silence: that is, silence used as a major part of a rhythmic structure.'¹²³ By extending the white-space in the lines through additional spacing and the spread of the text across the page, Skoulding is not only creating a visual echo, as can be seen above in both the written words and layout of the text, but is also encouraging different vocalic interpretations

¹²⁰ e.g. Bold or Italic formatting, changes in text size, or symbols.

¹²¹ Bradford, p. 47.

¹²² Zoë Skoulding, 'Room 204', in *The Museum of Disappearing Sounds* (Bridgend: Seren, 2013), p. 61, ll. 19-24.

¹²³ Carol Rumens and Isabelle Cartwright, 'Carol Rumens: Interviewed by Isabelle Cartwright', *The Poetry Ireland Review*, 36 (1992), 8-14, p. 8. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25577392>> [accessed 8th November 2014].

through the insertion of lengths of silence. In his *Prosodia Rationalis* Joshua Steele suggests ‘that poems should not be printed in lines, but as a kind of musical score.’¹²⁴ This he then proceeds to demonstrate through the introduction of a wide array of symbolic notations to guide the reader’s placement of emphases and dynamic changes, a notion which was later adopted, albeit to a far lesser degree, by Gerard Manley Hopkins for the demarcation of stress. Despite the lack of additional notations in Skoulding’s poem, by separating words with varying lengths of rest, and spreading the text across the page, the visual score is perhaps evoked, posing an invitation to the reader to interpret how this might affect the sound shapes of the work.

Unlike most collections, Geraldine Monk’s *Escafeld Hangings* includes a CD recording of one of the poetic sequences within the volume: ‘Mary Through the Looking Glass’.¹²⁵ In its written form this poem includes an array of changes in formatting, spacing, text size, and symbol use,¹²⁶ and thus the inclusion of this sound recording presents a rare opportunity to hear how these entirely graphical elements might be vocalised in the realisation of the written score. One of the particularly intriguing lines of this sequence in terms of text formatting, is ‘This IS **no** AGE to **be** IN **sane** IN.’¹²⁷ Through the use of two different forms of written emphasis, Monk adjusts the stresses of the line to create a percussive, almost syncopated, rhythmic pattern, thus displacing the expected rhythms of the text. In Monk’s recording of the text this line is repeated several times over, the words layering and overlapping in the manner of an echo. Monk begins by emphasising the capitalised syllables before adjusting after several repetitions to cast a greater emphasis upon the syllables

¹²⁴ Bradford, p. 117.

¹²⁵ Geraldine Monk, *Mary Through the Looking Glass*, Geraldine Monk and Ligia Roque (West House, 2005).

¹²⁶ Geraldine Monk, ‘Mary Through the Looking Glass’, in *Escafeld Hangings* (Sheffield: West House Books, 2005), pp. 57-75.

¹²⁷ ‘Mary Through the Looking Glass’, p. 64, l. 11 (book), track 7, 0:21-0:35 (CD).

highlighted by bold text; however, despite these changes of emphasis, she maintains throughout her strict rhythmic insistence upon a pattern of a paired 6/8 and 3/4 bar to create a sound that is not dissimilar to certain Latin dance rhythms (such as the Huapango).

From a similar comparison of other sections of Monk's text and vocal recordings one can find a number of further examples of how the written poem asks to be interpreted and realised in vocal performance. The recorded version of the line 'IamIamIamIamafr¹²⁸' demonstrates how a firm sense of dynamic and tempo changes may be embedded into a text. In its recorded form this line follows a crescendo as the text increases in size and diminuendos as the text returns to its original state. Furthermore, through the compression of the written text (the removal of spacing from between the words) Monk encourages an *accelerando* in the line as the reader speeds through the repetitive sounds prior to the closing alveolar 'd' of 'afraid'. At other moments within the text, Monk makes use of symbols in place of the written word to convey meaning. An example of this falls at the end of the fourth section of the sequence, in the lines 'the gasping / mouth of mirror / is endless / gawp of sprat. // () (o) () (o) () (o) () (o)'.¹²⁹ Here the poet portrays through symbols the gasping shape of an opening and closing mouth as described in the preceding lines. Due to having been crafted in a more highly codified state than formal language, this passage might prove challenging for those endeavouring to create an audible realisation of the text. In Monk's recording this pattern is dramatically rendered as a series of gasping breaths, almost sounding as the hiccupping intakes of a figure in their death throes, rather than the unvoiced mouthing of the sprat. Although Monk's interpretation and subsequent performance of the written text may not be the same as another

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 67, l. 15 (book), track 10, 0:29-0:34 (CD).

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 63, ll. 4-8 (book), track 5, 0:58-1:16 (CD).

reader's, through a comparison of the visual and aural versions of the poem, one begins to understand how a written poem may be viewed as a form of score, open to varying interpretations, and silently awaiting realisation.

Thus far this chapter has looked primarily to critical arguments for a musical consonance in language drawn from past eras; however, these discussions are not merely restricted to the studies of euphony popular in the 1960s, to historical changes in poetry, and to frequently sentimentalised, uncritical Victorian writings. In recent years a number of respected contemporary writers have also addressed the idea of the musicality of language and the consideration of poetry as a musical presence. Most notable amongst these are Ruth Padel, Carol Rumens and Fiona Sampson, all of whom have spoken on this same subject as part of a public lecture series on contemporary poetry hosted by the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Unlike many of their predecessors, these three writers approach the topic from a purely analytical stance, and in doing so have, to a certain degree, together succeeded in forming a rule book as to how one might create a more musically rich poetry. Each of these poets has a personal connection to music either as performer, critic, or reviewer, through which they find their own means to address the creation of contemporary poetry, whether that be the viola voice and harmonic principles of Padel's writing,¹³⁰ the strictly formalistic aspects of counterpoint discussed by Sampson,¹³¹ or Rumens's thoughts on the new forms of music and metre offered by female poets.¹³²

Alongside these critical writings on the musicality of poetry, many writers have also made individual sorties into aspects of musical poetry through their creative practice, creating numerous poems and sequences specifically based on musical ideas. These include poetic segments relating to a specific musical work such as Jonathan

¹³⁰ Ruth Padel, *Silent Letters of the Alphabet* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2010).

¹³¹ Fiona Sampson, *Music Lessons* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2011).

¹³² Carol Rumens, *Self into Song* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2007).

Williams's sequence poems formed from interpretations of Mahler's symphonies¹³³ and Kemp's 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik',¹³⁴ poems focussed around musical themes like O'Siadhail's 'Tremolo',¹³⁵ and Oram's sequence on Medieval Modes,¹³⁶ and lengthy patterns intent upon recreating the shapes of musical forms, for example Conran's *All Hallows*.¹³⁷ Where I feel these examples are lacking however, is that each writer seems to only focus on particular elements of music in their works rather than endeavouring to construct a complete musical presence for the poetry. As Fiona Sampson acknowledges before beginning her quest 'for the lyric missing link', present assumptions about the musicality of verse are decidedly confused.¹³⁸ By combining the creative practices of others with the aforementioned critical writings on the musicality of verse and the compositional practices of Western musicians I wish to propose both a means for accepting and considering poetry as an extension to music, and also as a means for composing poetry *as* music.

At this point it would perhaps be prudent to highlight the fact that within these discussions of music I shall be focussing predominantly upon concepts drawn from the western classical music tradition rather than extending this dialogue into the realms of world musics and contemporary popular music forms.¹³⁹ Any sections within this commentary that seemingly contradict this statement, such as the discussions of folk music and recorded 'heard sounds',¹⁴⁰ are included because these particular musical ideas have also been used by western classical composers, and have thus become a part of this same musical heritage. The reason that I have chosen to take this particular focus

¹³³ Jonathan Williams, 'Mahler', in *Jubilant Thicket: new and selected poems* (Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press, 2005), pp. 47-98.

¹³⁴ Will Kemp, 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik', in *Nocturnes* (Blaenau Ffestiniog, 2011), p.40.

¹³⁵ Micheal O'Siadhail, 'Tremolo', in *Collected Poems* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2013), p. 634.

¹³⁶ Peter Oram, 'Ladders', in *White* (Clunderwen: Starborn Books, 2001), pp. 25-41.

¹³⁷ Tony Conran, *All Hallows: symphony in 3 movements* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1995).

¹³⁸ Sampson, p. 11.

¹³⁹ e.g. Jazz, Pop, Punk, Rock et c.

¹⁴⁰ e.g. Birdsong and wolf howls.

throughout my project is primarily because that is the tradition into which I have been born, and, as a classically trained musician, the one in which I have received my entire musical training thus far; also, due to the familiarity that most Europeans have to western music, however slight, this seems a suitable area upon which to base the majority of the following discussion. Furthermore, although a number of western composers have drawn on popular contemporary influences and world musics within their writing,¹⁴¹ owing to the fact that this project is already endeavouring to create music in a less-conventional form¹⁴² it seemed sensible to focus my attention upon more commonplace western musical styles, such as the ideas drawn from military, dance, folk and ecclesiastical traditions found in this project, in order to establish the idea before proceeding to engage with equally valid, yet less commonly used, musical styles which are perhaps beyond the scope of a project of this size.

The creation of a traditional work of music involves a number of formal considerations for a composer. These include form, melody (constructed from patterns of pitch, silence and rhythm),¹⁴³ harmony, voice, dynamic and articulation.¹⁴⁴ At first glance some of these features may not appear to be transferable to poetry, or suitable for use outside the realms of music; however, for the creation of a true musical poetic, I feel it is essential to consider how *all* of these elements might be used in the composition of poetry, whether metaphorically or as a direct translation between the two respective media, rather than merely looking to individual aspects as seems to more commonly be the case when poets draw upon musical stimuli.

¹⁴¹ In this regard George Gershwin and John Foulds are particularly notable, respectively, for the jazz-influenced *Piano Concerto in F* and the seldom heard *A World Requiem* with its wealth of Indian influences.

¹⁴² i.e. Music created through the medium of poetry.

¹⁴³ Eric Taylor, *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, 2 vols (London: ABRSM, 2005), ii, p. 171.

¹⁴⁴ Whilst this discussion, as I have previously mentioned, is focussed primarily around the traditions of Western music, these compositional devices are common to most musical systems but may bear different weightings of importance in different cultures.

Form, as is evidenced by the vast array of volumes addressing this issue, is an integral part of the creation of poetry. Even for those writers working in free verse or through varying degrees of free form poetics, forms still appear; rules relating to metre, rhyme and lengths of line, alongside numerous other structural considerations, may be adopted or constructed by the poet to guide their work. With music and poetry finding a commonality in their adherence to form, this perhaps provides an initial bridge point between the artistic media. It is not just traditional, formal structures that are of importance in poetic creation; as Tom Chivers writes in the introduction to his volume on contemporary uses of form in poetry, 'Form is not something merely to be ignored as irrelevant and old fashioned [...] In any vital literary culture, form must be subject to repeated renewal.'¹⁴⁵ In observance of Chivers's suggestions for repeated renewal, a study of the mechanics of musical forms and their importance in the compositional process presents an interesting way of not only reconnecting poetry with music structurally, but also of providing a means to revise and develop new literary forms.

As with poetry, musical forms provide rules to guide the hand of the composer. The main difference between these particular media falls in the scale of the art work; a musical work such as the song suite, concerto or symphony is not really comparable with a single forty line poem, for example, for the arc of progression throughout the work is significantly smaller within the poem and is significantly less likely to encompass the same amount of motifs and motivic development as is to be found in a large scale orchestral work. A symphony such as Beethoven's opus 67 (symphony number five in C minor) in which there is an interconnectivity of sound passing through four lengthy movements to form one fully integrated musical whole perhaps

¹⁴⁵ Tom Chivers (ed.), *Adventures in Form: a compendium of poetic forms, rules & constraints* (London: Penned in the Margins, 2012), p. 15.

demonstrates an ultimate example of the phrasing arc for a work of this type.¹⁴⁶

Enclosed within this arc are separate movements which each contain an array of themes and musical ideas. In linguistic terms this scale of musical work is perhaps the equivalent of the novel, which Paul Merchant proposes as being a possible contemporary equivalent to the Epic poems of the past,¹⁴⁷ or of the poetry collection.¹⁴⁸

The contemporary poetry collection is seldom constructed simply as an anthology of poems by a single poet, but instead commonly exists as a complex interplay of ideas and related themes. Owing to this, one might perhaps view the contemporary, thematically linked poetry collection as a modern, and somewhat abstracted, variant of the epic poem. In my opinion, in order to create a greater sense of order within the thematically linked collection, it is important to turn to form as a means of connecting an otherwise untamed whole. By making use of pre-constructed musical forms as the structural basis for these poetry collections, one creates a sense of connectivity for the thematic material and for the development of ideas whilst also creating a suggestion of those older forms of poetry in which verse was presented with musical accompaniment. Furthermore, as many of these musical forms have their origins in pre-Baroque traditions and have developed over the past four hundred years alongside our understanding of how Western music should be presented, they not only provide a well-honed set of rules for how and when new themes may be presented and how to develop these, but may also appear familiar to a Western audience and thus feel less intrusive to the reader than newly constructed forms.

¹⁴⁶ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 5 in C minor*, ed. by Max Unger, revised edn (New York: Dover Publications, 1976).

¹⁴⁷ Paul Merchant, *The Epic* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1971), pp. 71-78.

¹⁴⁸ Following his writing on the novel, Merchant also discusses how modern poetry has the qualities and features of the Epic, but, rather disappointingly, fails to extend his assertions to encompass the thematically connected poetry collection as Epic poem. [Ibid., pp. 83-94.]

With the current popularity of free verse and free form poetics, old forms may seem an unwelcome restriction that we are reluctant to place upon our work, and yet, it is important to bear in mind that without some semblance of formal structuring we perhaps reduce the overall impact of the poetry.¹⁴⁹ By granting attention to the form of the entire collection instead of merely focussing upon individual segments, I would argue that one is able to maintain a strict adherence to form without inhibiting the openness and freedoms (preferred by some contemporary poets) of the sections of verse held within. If the poetry collection were composed in a similar manner to the symphony, using traditional musical forms as a guide to the over-riding structure, one might not only increase the musical integrity of the poetry therein, but also create a series of far stronger thematic links throughout the collection, forming a more united and powerful poetic whole.

In a similar manner to the dominance of the 'line' as a unit of poetry, an insistence upon a specific melodic line within music has been a major feature throughout the development of Western music, originating perhaps with the restricted human ability to produce more than one overtly dominant vocal line at any one time within solo chant and song. Certainly, it is back to the aforementioned song accompanying primitive dance that Ringer suggests one might trace distinct solo voices.¹⁵⁰ Melody does not necessarily have to be a 'tune' riding above an accompaniment; even within instrumental music and music for multiple voices there is frequently a sense that there must exist at any one time a line of more prevalence within the musical texture. C. H. H. Parry, for instance, writes of how the term 'melody' may also be used in relation to a line which, despite being so deeply embedded within a

¹⁴⁹ As Hurley and O'Neill declare in their introductory guide to form: 'Form is a poem's principle of life.' [Michael D. Hurley and Michael O'Neill, *Poetic Form: an introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 1.]

¹⁵⁰ Alexander L. Ringer, 'Melody', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), xii, pp. 118-127 (pp. 118-119).

texture that it cannot be isolated as a distinct tune, 'it nevertheless stands out from the rest by reason of its greater beauty.'¹⁵¹ Although Parry's assertion here seems somewhat subjective, it does present the notion that we, as listeners, are eager to find a melodic line within music, and, indeed, that composers are equally keen to include a sense of melody within the musical texture even if there is not an overt melodic line.

Isolating a melodic line within spoken verse at first glance seems straightforward. Fiona Sampson, in the opening of her discussion on the possibilities of musically melodic lines in poetry, succinctly summarises this notion with the assertion that 'Melody can usually be sung'.¹⁵² It is through this sense of the breath of melody and the physicality of the sung phrase that she finds a connection with Beat and Black Mountain poetries alongside ecclesiastical antiphony. This suggestion perhaps implies that the melodic line exists through the lyrical movements of written phrasing encapsulated in line and stanza lengths and through the common starts and stops of written punctuation and the line break. To extend Sampson's suggestions, I propose the following comparison between musical and poetic phrases as a comprehensive means for analysis and for poetic composition from a musically orientated perspective:

As all instrumentalists and vocalists are aware, a single line of music is formed through a layering of assorted phrases, for which, although the length of each is at times dependent upon one's instrument, the shortest phrase is always the creation of a single note: the movement from the decision to begin the sound into the opening of the created sound, the growth of the note, its closure, and ultimately the end of its human production where the resonance is left to the controls of its environs. This phrase, I would propose, is the equivalent of a syllable, or one sound shape in a word, in poetry. For string players, the next phrase would consist of a chain of individual pitches linked

¹⁵¹ C. Hubert H. Parry, 'Melody', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), v, pp. 666-669 (p. 667).

¹⁵² Fiona Sampson, *Music Lessons* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2011), p. 14.

together by a single stroke of the bow, thus a down-bow (π) creates one phrase, regardless of the number of pitches contained within it, and the up-bow (v) that follows this creates the next. This perhaps serves as the equivalent of a word: a changing set of sounds grouped into one body.

The importance of understanding musical phrasing when viewing poetry perhaps becomes more apparent when one realises the potential this might have for improving the reader's ear. Vowel modification is an integral part of performance for the classically trained vocalist and thus an acute awareness must at all times be held for the changing shapes of both the poetic and musical lines in order to preserve the quality of timbre and beauty of overall sound. By encouraging the consideration of the grouped sound shapes of a poetic line in a musical light, the reader is granted a singer's perspective and thus can be trained to see and hear more easily the vowel adjustments and consonant clashes in the line, and thus will begin to appreciate more fully the musical potential of verse.

After the shorter arcs mentioned, phrased groups become more easily recognisable within a musical composition, not least because in post-Renaissance manuscripts composers and editors divide groups of notes into bars, thus creating short individual phrases. Within the context of language these bar-length phrases may be translated into small clusters of connected words, perhaps into either independent, or independent and subordinate clauses. The next phrase of importance frequently follows small arches of sound, such as a line of song held in one breath by a vocalist, traditionally consisting of small regular groups of four bars.¹⁵³ Within language these are perhaps the arcing length of a line brought to a close by the presence of a line

¹⁵³ 'The most common type of phrase is four bars long.' [Eric Taylor, *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, 2 vols (London: ABRSM, 2005), ii, p. 175.]

break,¹⁵⁴ or a pattern of text between punctuated divides. In musical compositions such short melodic phrases of grouped bars are frequently linked with other similar sets of bars to form extended melodic patterns, which, within the contexts of poetry, may be viewed as the equivalent of stanzas. This leaves one final arc of phrasing to consider: the complete poem; one long body of work or a series of stanzas that link together to form a connected whole. In terms of traditional composition I would propose that the completed poem is structurally comparable to the chorales of Johann Sebastian Bach,¹⁵⁵ musical works that are constructed from the aforementioned four bar phrases, and that within only twelve or sixteen bars present an idea, expand upon it through thematic development, and then provide a closing resolution.¹⁵⁶

Alongside structural analysis, I would like to propose a further idea in the discussion of poetic melody. From the more abstracted perspective of poetry, where even harmonic density must be encapsulated to some degree within a single line of text, melody is as much an ethereal entity as a physical presence on the page. In her volume *Silent Letters of the Alphabet*, Ruth Padel writes of how in music a note does not sound alone as an isolated, single pitch, but instead also rings with harmonics and overtones.¹⁵⁷ These natural overtones Padel relates to the resonances of both sound and sense that play above the words in a poetic line, writing that ‘Unheard resonances are the ideas and other words set going in every reader’s responsive imagination, which

¹⁵⁴ Indeed, it is this desire for a line length guided by breath that Olson advocates in his essay on *Projective Verse*.

¹⁵⁵ e.g.: Johann Sebastian Bach, *Chorales 25, 26 & 367*, ed. by Louis Ashton-Butler (unpublished score, 2012).

¹⁵⁶ The structural similarities between poetry and music considered here do not necessarily demonstrate either a new way of reading or of writing, but, again, by holding in mind the structural parallels between these two art forms, I feel that both poet and reader become more receptive to hearing the music within verse.

¹⁵⁷ Vocalists know these as formants. Indeed, it is the number and quality of formants that distinguishes a trained singer from a less-able vocalist.

power their whole relation with the poem'.¹⁵⁸ To extend this notion I would argue that, as it is perhaps the reader's interaction with a poem that is the integral element of a work,¹⁵⁹ Padel's unheard resonances actually create the melodic line for the poem. Although harmonics within Western music are rarely used independently from their fundamental as anything more than a 'special effect' in a piece,¹⁶⁰ a number of World musics, particularly those associated with ancient tribal traditions, make use of overtones as a primary focus in the creation of song.¹⁶¹ In the Mongolian nomadic tribes of the Gobi Desert, for example, singers follow a complex series of patterns and rules to guide an improvisatory music designed to depict the landscapes in which they live. Many of these techniques involve the splitting of notes to form a bass fundamental over which a descant-like melody of overtones is created. These fluting lines are the *idea* of the singer's surroundings (a soundscape to imitate, recreate and inhabit a landscape) sailing high above the dark and earthy fundamentals. In poetry, as has been asserted above in relation to Padel's suggestions of overtones in poetry,¹⁶² the written line may be viewed as the equivalent of those fixed fundamentals, above which multiple overtones, in the form of the reader's interpretation of the text, may emerge. Thus, the melodic line is to be found in the thought patterns and interpretations of the reader. To return to the words of Parry, it is this single voice or idea of greater beauty

¹⁵⁸ Ruth Padel, 'Hooked Atoms, Harmony, Holding Together', in *Silent Letters of the Alphabet* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2010), pp. 40-44 (p. 40).

¹⁵⁹ Ruth Padel, 'The Dative Case: On communication, giving poems to other people and the desire to be understood – or maybe sometimes not', in *Silent Letters of the Alphabet* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2010), pp. 66-87.

¹⁶⁰ Eric Taylor, *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, 2 vols (London: ABRSM, 2005), ii, p. 201.

¹⁶¹ Despite this claim, there are of course a number of fine examples of the use of flageolet notes to form melodies in Western music, particularly for string instruments, as can be seen in the first movement of Ridout's *Concerto for Double Bass*, which includes an extended melodic line played on the nodes at the end of the finger board. [Alan Ridout, *Concerto for Double Bass and Strings* (London: Yorke Edition, 1975), p. 10.]

¹⁶² Padel, pp. 40-44.

emerging from a perfectly interwoven texture of sound that is the melody at a given moment in time, not merely an air or tune dominating the music.¹⁶³

As briefly mentioned above,¹⁶⁴ for many, the assertion that written poetry with its inability to simultaneously sound multiple lines can contain harmony perhaps seems an unlikely possibility. However, this assumption is frequently because the nature of harmony is misconstrued as being an entity that can only exist on the vertical plane in musical manuscript, as blocks of connected sound, rather than occurring also on the horizontal line. Melodies, alongside a number of other given voices and accompanying lines, are also generally constructed around an harmonic centre, containing patterns of related pitches. Dahlhaus succinctly defines this compositional process as ‘the combining of notes simultaneously, to produce chords, and successively, to produce chord progressions.’¹⁶⁵ As Dahlhaus suggests, musical harmony can appear in several forms; as simultaneously sounding pitches (harmony on the vertical plane) and as related pitches occurring as part of a progression (harmony on the horizontal plane). Within poetry, however, the most immediate sense of harmony is to be found on the horizontal plane, through the use of consonance between the words of a line.

Bach’s partitas for solo violin provide a suitable simile for the harmonic strength of a poetic line’s ‘solo voice’. Within *Partita I. in B minor* for instance, the opening to the Allemande is rife with both double and multiple stops.¹⁶⁶ Due to the shape of the bridges on the instruments, members of the viol and violin families are unable to bow more than two pitches at any given time which means that multiple stops must be played as pairs of pitches in quick succession, allowing the continued

¹⁶³ C. Hubert H. Parry, ‘Melody’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), v, pp. 666-669 (pp. 666-667).

¹⁶⁴ pp. 249-250.

¹⁶⁵ Carl Dahlhaus, ‘Harmony’, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), viii, pp. 175-188 (p. 175).

¹⁶⁶ Johann Sebastian Bach, *Partita I. in B minor* (n.d.), pp. 10-11. <<http://japanese.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/1/14/IMSLP01305-BWV1002.pdf>> [accessed 16th November 2014].

resonances of the strings to overlap and form the written chord. Later, in the Courante of the same work, a bass line is constructed beneath the roving melodic voice through the striking of a series of low notes in the midst of the main line.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, through its rhythmically simpler pattern and frequently arpeggiating movements, this section of music elegantly demonstrates the chordal progression of the piece.¹⁶⁸ For poetry, if, as Padel suggests, melody is to be found in the ethereal resonance of ideas rather than the written word,¹⁶⁹ this same harmonic strength is perhaps constructed in part through the grounded, earthy written line and the weight of the body of the stanza. However, as with the arpeggios of the *Partita* (and as briefly related above), it is also manifested through a weaving of sound relations into the pattern of words. These sound relations are created through combinations of well-known poetic techniques such as consonance, assonance and alliteration, alongside rhythmic similarities, or what might be described as ‘Companionable’ words.

There are a number of excellent examples of this rich layering of harmony to be found in the works of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who, through his dense interplay of sound sequences makes a powerful, if unsubtle, use of companionable words. In his sonnet, ‘Felix Randal’, Hopkins writes, ‘Pining, pining, till time when reason rambled in it and some / Fatal four disorders, fleshed there, all contended?’¹⁷⁰ As well as following a conventional rhyme scheme throughout the poem, these two lines are also imbued with sound relations, from the paired consonants (P, T, R, S) and fricative alliteration of ‘Fatal four’ and ‘fleshed’, to assonantal vowel patterns that gradually change shape as the line progresses (ai-i, ai-i, i-ai, ε-i: ...). As can be seen in this example, the use of companionable words not only creates an harmonic density within

¹⁶⁷ Eric Taylor, *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, 2 vols (London: ABRSM, 2005), ii, p. 196.

¹⁶⁸ Bach, pp. 12-13.

¹⁶⁹ Padel, pp. 40-44.

¹⁷⁰ Gerard Manley Hopkins, ‘Felix Randal’, in *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. by Robert Bridges (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 48, ll. 3-4.

the melodic line, but also provides the poetry with a lyrical quality in which sonics lead the movement of the words.

Characteristics of harmony may also be built into the texture of poetry through the timbre and dynamic of any given sound, thus the colour and intensity of words become an important focus within the composition process, particularly when it comes to the placement of companionable words. Just as the timbre of a musical note includes all of its qualities, the timbre of a word relates to every aspect of its creation including the regional accents and dialectical anomalies of the reader.¹⁷¹ Written poetry, specifically that which is composed with conventional spellings and so is yet to be granted the dialect of a reader, perhaps stands therefore as the equivalent to creating a series of melodic lines but leaving the choice of instrumentation unrestricted. This is not to say, however, that the poet has no control over timbre or dynamic; both of these musical elements can be controlled in language through the choice of supporting words, increasing the onomatopoeic nature of particular phrases and the dominant words of such through the sound-shapes of their fellows. An example of this would be William Schwenck Gilbert's lines in the operetta *Iolanthe*: 'We are Peers of highest station / Paragons of legislation.' Here, alongside the heavy and hardly mellifluous Latinate vocabulary, we see a play upon open modified vowels (peers),¹⁷² the use of repetitive double consonants to separate words (highest station), rhotic consonants between vowels to encourage a roll of the tongue from vocalists (paragons), and use of plosive sounds, all of which work together to create the effect of a group of upper class, pernickety, pedantic old men. Here also is the word 'legislation', which, through its clear 'l' lateral, slides into the main body of the word when sung so that it is heavily

¹⁷¹ Indeed, this perhaps emphasises the lifelessness of an unread poem.

¹⁷² Due to the length and pitch of the sung word, a performer would undoubtedly choose to modify the vowel to avoid sounding the extended, coarsely nasal 'ee' sound shape.

emphasised, immediately filling the characters with a sense of pompous self-importance.¹⁷³

Dynamic colour can be formed within a line in a number of different ways, for, like timbre, it is not formed of any one element. In music, written dynamic indications are generally focussed around two letters for ease of expression: *f* and *p* (forte and piano). This frequently leads musicians into the misconception that these are volume indications: *forte*, when translated as loud, gives the implication that *piano* must mean quiet. This is quite wrong however, for *piano* translates more correctly as ‘soft’ which is an entirely different request. ‘Quiet’, with its hard velar ‘kw’, pivotal diphthong and sharp alveolar close, is a barked command and leaves a musician playing in an icy, tentative lack of sound. ‘Soft’ on the other hand, with its gentle sibilance, small warm vowel and dental close is, like ‘piano’, a calm yet carefully placed indication to remove the force of dynamic.¹⁷⁴ Thus, from this fairly basic example, one can see that words contain their own dynamics through the clusters of different sound shapes by which they are formed; this then leaves room for a poet to explore and utilise these inbuilt musicalities by the careful placement of words within the line.¹⁷⁵

The density of musical language, formed through the rhythm and metric structure of a line, allows considerable ground for further manipulation within the compositional process. Thus far we have only discussed how one might compose a music that reaches to form a pure liquescence of sound; it is important, however, to also exploit the possibilities offered by the forming of discordant sounds and effects to jar the reader or audience. Hypothetically it is possible to create a beauty in music solely

¹⁷³ William Schwenck Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, ‘Entrance & March of Peers’, in *Iolanthe: or the Peer and the Peri* (London: Chappell & Co., [1882]), pp. 36-48 (p. 40).

¹⁷⁴ Eric Taylor, *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, 2 vols (London: ABRSM, 2005), i, pp. 78-79.

¹⁷⁵ Whilst this is, of course, easier to follow within music or in abstract verse where one does not necessarily need to take meaning and an awareness of syntax into account, it is still an issue worthy of consideration when making word choices.

through the use of discords and to then rely on timbre and tone of instruments used and the ears of both musicians and audience to fuse these sounds together. This is different to atonality as here we are demanding that there is some semblance of tonal centre against which we are pitching our discords, which, by definition, an atonal work does not have. Although primarily concerned with visual effects,¹⁷⁶ free form poetry, with its proclivity to expand verse across the page,¹⁷⁷ to break words with spacing¹⁷⁸ or syntactical devices,¹⁷⁹ to escape conventional spellings either for dialectical purposes or as part of word-play,¹⁸⁰ to make use of compilations of found texts,¹⁸¹ and to adapt font sizes and intensities through the use of italics and bold settings,¹⁸² abandons for a moment the patterns that are expected within language to create its own form of discords. Through these devices the audience is jolted for a moment, but providing an expected comfort is, or could be regained within the poem, this disturbance should not distress or cause the reader to lose attention, but rather may intensify their connection with the work either through the drawing of focus by the discord or through the resolution that must succeed this.

As Fiona Sampson has said, although music is frequently considered a mysterious art form by its audiences, emotionally charged and uncontrollable, ‘the thing about being a musician is, firstly, that it demystifies music so utterly.’¹⁸³ When considering the musicalities of poetic verse it is integral that music, which was at one

¹⁷⁶ As previously discussed, in my own opinion, if one considers the written text in the same way one may view a musical score, aural and visual effects can be used to enhance one another (just as Peter Maxwell Davies’s score to *8 Songs for a Mad King* is shaped, with one movement created in the image of a bird cage, and thus is flexible both in rhythm and form to the degree that very rarely will two performances sound alike).

¹⁷⁷ e.g. Meirion Jordan, ‘Cat, Cé Fidach’, in *Regeneration* (Bridgend: Seren, 2012), p. 37.

¹⁷⁸ e.g. John Goodby, ‘III’, in *Wine Night White* (Swansea: Hafan Books, 2010), l. 54.

¹⁷⁹ e.g. John Goodby, ‘I’, in *Wine Night White* (Swansea: Hafan Books, 2010), l. 67.

¹⁸⁰ e.g. John Goodby, ‘III’, in *Wine Night White* (Swansea: Hafan Books, 2010), ll. 55-61.

¹⁸¹ e.g. Jules Boykoff, *Once Upon a Neoliberal Rocket Badge* (Washington DC: Edge Books, 2006).

¹⁸² e.g. Geraldine Monk, ‘Mary Through the Looking Glass’, in *Escapfeld Hangings* (Sheffield: West House Books, 2005), pp. 57-75 (p. 67, ll. 14-15).

¹⁸³ Fiona Sampson, ‘The Poet Librettists’, Radio 4, 6th September 2014, 3:30pm.

time studied in universities alongside the other mathematical sciences as part of the Quadrivium,¹⁸⁴ is considered from a scientific, analytical perspective, rather than defaulting to the common position of choosing to view music as an elevated and unattainable art form. Whilst a study of musical poetry is a prime means for focussing with a greater intensity upon the interplay of sonics, which are the underlying guide to the formation of a true aural poetic, an insistence upon musical verse is not necessarily a cry for a return to sound poetry and to performance as the sole space in which poetry might exist. In consigning this oral and aural shape to the silence of paper, the words (the notes and neumes of poetry), style, rhythmic stress, musical direction and changing voices all find their place upon the page. Printed poetry brings together aural and visual dimensions of poetry to become a direction for performance: a silent score awaiting realisation.¹⁸⁵ Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, once wrote of how within ecclesiastical music ‘Sound should not be given precedence over meaning, but sound with meaning should generally be allowed to stimulate greater attachment.’¹⁸⁶ Poetry that allows for a pronounced use of sound relations, rhythm, silence and melodic flow, but without overly imposing harmonic textures and distracting musical constructs, perhaps holds the key to extending verse, to finding ‘Something beyond the word.’¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ David L. Wagner, ‘The Seven Liberal Arts and Classical Scholarship’, in *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages*, ed. by David L. Wagner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 1-31 (p. 1).

¹⁸⁵ Philip Hobsbaum, *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.183.

¹⁸⁶ Aelred of Rievaulx, ‘The Vain Pleasure of the Ears’, in *The Mirror of Charity*, trans. by E. Connor, 2 vols (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990), ii, pp. 209-212.

<http://cistercians.shef.ac.uk/cistercian_life/spirituality/Liturgy/appendix1.php> [accessed 18th December 2014].

¹⁸⁷ Sampson, ‘The Poet Librettists’.

Solstice in the Borderland and the Story Poem

Poetry has long been used for the recording of popular history;¹⁸⁸ indeed, in medieval Europe, where history was not considered a learned discipline,¹⁸⁹ poetry served as one of the primary public means for remembering and sharing vernacular histories and biographical accounts.¹⁹⁰ It is the importance of history as a powerful tool for teaching and for the development of society that I believe has maintained it as a prominent focus within literature, as is suggested by the opening lines to *The Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*: ‘At this time one should recollect the brave deeds of our ancestors, who strove to seek honour in loyalty, and one should speak of such things as could be profitable for many people.’¹⁹¹ People wanted history, and more, they still want and need it, for as Kleist beautifully summarises, ‘The history of the world is the judgement of the world’,¹⁹² and thus it plays an integral role in societal development and progression. In the current era, with written histories, public lectures and televised documentaries readily available, one might argue that the use of poetry as a means by which to provide historical information has become obsolete. Furthermore, with the widespread popularity of the novel, and in this instance particularly the historical novel, the story poem as a genre has perhaps lost its place as a contemporary art form. However, narrative and the compulsion to compose stories is an integral part of all poetry, whether this is merely the description of a brief instant, a single moment in time, or a

¹⁸⁸ Friedrich Heer, *The Medieval World: Europe, 1100-1350*, trans. by Janet Sondheimer (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1993), pp. 229-230.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁹⁰ Even today our main sources of information on certain important persons from history, such as Fouke Fitz Waryn, Eustace the Monk and William Marshall are drawn from the romances detailing their lives. Without these poems they would still be shadows burgeoning in the margins of court documentation. [For more information on the creation of story poems from historical figures, see: Glyn Burgess (trans.), *Two Medieval Outlaws: Eustace the Monk and Fouke Fitz Waryn* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), pp. viii-ix.]

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

¹⁹² Heer, p. 231.

lengthy, intricately detailed tale,¹⁹³ and thus, even if few poets are willing to embrace longer poetic forms in the current era, the concept of this is not lost.

Whilst the aforementioned vernacular histories and medieval romances were a means for recording fact and for remembering the deeds of heroic family members, these were also tales written down primarily for entertainment, constructed within an old poetic tradition rich in myth, legend and symbolic gesture and so, although these documents do undoubtedly contain elements that might be described as historical fact, in keeping with the traditions of balladic and epic poetics, there are also numerous fantastical devices thrown into the texts as if these too were ‘fact’. This is where poetry again may become important in the recording of history; through its flirtations with fiction and use of metaphor as a means to carry truth across a divide,¹⁹⁴ a clearer picture may be granted than is to be found in a purely ‘factual’ account. This is because the use of these devices also calls for a degree of imaginative interaction from the reader which is not required by conventional history books, thus encouraging the reader to both engage, and become emotionally involved, with the written characters and to view them as real, well-rounded beings, rather than merely reading them as historical figures.¹⁹⁵ *The Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, for example, is widely inaccurate in its chronology, genealogy and character identification, even before the abandonment of order, engagement in piracy and slaying of dragons, yet through this text we can find an understanding of the hero’s motives, his sense of injustice, and the dangers of courtly life portrayed through exaggerated responses to situations and by the author’s choice of

¹⁹³ Michael D. Hurley and Michael O’Neill, *Poetic Form: an introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 212.

¹⁹⁴ Ruth Padel, *Silent Letters of the Alphabet* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2010), p. 14.

¹⁹⁵ It is for these same reasons that Living History has become increasingly popular in recent years. In the words of Ian Mortimer: ‘As soon as you start to think of the past *happening* (as opposed to it having happened), a new way of conceiving history becomes possible.’ [Ian Mortimer, *The Time Traveller’s Guide to Medieval England* (London: Vintage books, 2009), p. 1.]

focus within each description.¹⁹⁶ Thus, just as Adrian May acknowledges in his writings on the use of myth in contemporary creative writing, one might perhaps say that when approaching the real, the use of myth may actually allow for an extended and more intense understanding of a truth.¹⁹⁷

The two poems that together create *Solstice in the Borderland* are built upon the rich traditions of oral story telling practices, combining the magnitude and size of the epic with the symbolic devices and images of balladry and the romances.¹⁹⁸ The first of these, ‘Un-sained Strings’, is designed to relate the very real histories and stories of specific persons and places of the past, whereas ‘Chase of the Beast Glatisant’ delves further into the ideas of what constitutes truth by creating a deliberately unrestricted reworking of a traditional British legend. Also, as a means to explore the various elements that play a part in narrative, I have endeavoured to isolate the ideas of place, person, philosophical purpose and plot from one another, and to use the separate sections of the two poems as a means to grant each of these elements their own moments to shine as primary focal points.

The opening poem, ‘Un-sained Strings’, relates the history of the Shropshire market town of Ludlow, mapping the town geographically and in time through the stories of those that have lived there. Despite being an English town, as a primary fortification in the Welsh/English borderlands and the home to the Council of the Marches, for a considerable period of time Ludlow was, in all but name, the capital of Wales. This poetic sequence, as is exemplified by the introductions to each of the three movements, explores the process of recording place and of ‘mapping’ through language. The introduction to the Prelude asks ‘How could I write a place I did not

¹⁹⁶ Burgess, pp. 89-198.

¹⁹⁷ Adrian May, *Myth and Creative Writing: the self-renewing song* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 43.

¹⁹⁸ This includes the presence of formulaic passages (an integral feature in many works from this genre). [Paul Merchant, *The Epic* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1971), pp. 8-9.]

know? *What is Ludlow?*'¹⁹⁹ As part of an endeavour to answer this fundamental question, the poem begins an exploration of the town, focussing predominantly upon location in the first movement, on the violence of the Marcher court in the Intermezzo, and on individual persons from the town in the final movement.

The notion of mapping towns and cities through poetry is not a new idea of course, having been tackled by many notable poets in recent years including Ciaran Carson, Desmond Graham, Geraldine Monk, Zoë Skoulding and Deborah Tyler-Bennett amongst others.²⁰⁰ However, it is from the older, less focussed work of A. E. Housman that this sequence gains its most important impetus. First published in 1896, Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* became synonymous with the sense of endless summer and timeless England that was Edwardian Britain. Just as composers like Vaughan Williams and Holst were collecting folk tunes and using them within their music and traditional folk dancing was once more being made popular at the beginning of the twentieth century, Housman eschewed the challenging tone that was being adopted by writers striving towards Modernism, such as Thomas Hardy, in favour of an older poetic tradition.²⁰¹ That is not to say that Housman's work does not hold an inner darkness and a challenging view of the past, but that in terms of form and content there are none of the demands of the then contemporary writers who found such great merit in the metaphysical poets. In section XL, we are given the following lines:

¹⁹⁹ p. 17.

²⁰⁰ Collections in order of artists listed: *Belfast Confetti*, *after Shakespeare*, *Escafeld Hangings*, *Remains of a Future City*, *Revudeville*.

²⁰¹ Michael Schmidt, *Lives of the Poets* (London: Head of Zeus, 2014), pp. 528-529.

What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.²⁰²

In these lines we find nothing complex in terms of form, merely a very simple balladic pattern of ABAB rhyme across lines of tetrameter and trimeter. Here Housman describes an illusion, playing upon the nostalgias of his audience. In querying the hills of the horizon, the farms and churches, the falseness of this scenery is revealed, which the answering stanza then confirms for us: it is a scene that is long gone, if it ever existed at all, and one to which we cannot return.²⁰³

Due to the naming of Ludlow on several occasions throughout its pages, and in spite of its inability to create an honest representation of the area, *A Shropshire Lad* has become the poetic work most commonly associated with the town; for this reason it is this piece that forms the basic poetic structure for the content of 'Un-sained Strings'. Each of the sixty three segments of my poem is formed from a phrase, word or idea that appears in the corresponding section from Housman's collection. Thus, the order of poems appearing in *A Shropshire Lad* forms the order and direction for the poetic segments of my folksong suite also. These guiding influences are intensified by the underlying sense of loneliness that can be found in the narrator's voice throughout Housman's collection. In my own work this loneliness is displaced from the masculine narrative voice and reconstructed in the recurring figure of the spinner woman, a representative for the voices of the many solitary spinsters and widows of the town.

²⁰² A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* (London: The Richards Press Ltd, 1947), p. 57.

²⁰³ Perhaps most telling of all is that 'The Land of Lost Content' is now the name of a small museum in Craven Arms, the building in question being a house packed with household items from the last seventy years, designed to play upon the current nostalgic trend for 'Retro' and 'Vintage' items and thus the glorification and false ideals of a past era.

Excluding the musical quality of the verse, other than this initial impetus, ‘Un-sained Strings’ and *A Shropshire Lad* have very little in common, for where Housman creates a picturesque image of a bucolic past, I have endeavoured for the main part to recapture the realities of Ludlow, building a truer history from the prettified, sentimentalised images of Housman’s collection.

The use of additional, non-poetic found texts within this poem also form an integral part of the creation of the whole. Through the combination of clashing lingual systems from various time periods one creates a dissonance, in the vein of poets such as Ted Hughes, Geoffrey Hill and Basil Bunting, to bring a greater degree of honesty into what might otherwise appear to be a fairly contrived form of poetic verse. The integration of disparate language systems in this manner is therefore merely an extension of Hughes’s views ‘that nicely turned verse [...] created a barrier before reality’.²⁰⁴ By breaking apart barriers of time and bringing period texts and, more importantly, the ‘real’ words of my characters into these poems, I am creating a degree of truth in which figures of the past are not merely reclaimed to suit the purposes of the present, but in which they are also permitted to speak for themselves. The found texts of these verses are generally quite obvious within the poetic texture due to discrepancies and anomalies of spelling or curiosities of phrase.²⁰⁵ Examples of such can frequently, although not exclusively, be seen in the lines of ‘Un-sained Strings’ in an italicised form, such as ‘*derkgrenemedlie*’²⁰⁶ and ‘*caulde foulist wyndy rayny day*’,²⁰⁷ or within the more dominant presence of the Brilliana Harley epistles²⁰⁸ and the

²⁰⁴ A. Kingsley Weatherhead, *The British Dissonance: essays on ten contemporary poets* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1983), p. 5.

²⁰⁵ A list of all found texts and sources may be found in the notations pages (appendix I).

²⁰⁶ p. 25.

²⁰⁷ p. 80.

²⁰⁸ pp. 37, 72.

written orders and documents of the Marcher Court²⁰⁹ in which the clashes of time and lingual system become more overt due to the quantities of found material used in relation to the newly created verse. Whilst these clashes of time periods encapsulated by the found texts do create a sense of dissonance, it is a sense of dissonance not dissimilar to that which is heard in Tavener's 'The Lamb', where the listener finds reassurance in the knowledge that ultimately the unexpected intervals and harmonic dissonance will resolve to a tonal centre. In 'Un-sained Strings', each moment of lingual dissonance is likewise resolved, and the poem in its entirety is brought to a close by a return to similar imagery and a setting of the same geographical location in which the poem began.²¹⁰

Owing to these constant manipulations of time, one might argue that the format of this work is not dissimilar to David Lloyd's *The Gospel According to Frank*, in that the overall linearity of the narrative is divided into separately titled poetic segments which do not always conform to the natural progression of time, nor, necessarily, do they conform to 'truth' (when truth is viewed as a concept of reality). As Gigliotti writes in relation to Lloyd's collection, 'The poems intentionally blur the line between the individual life and its larger (-than-life) significances, [...] between *historia* and *mythopoesis*.'²¹¹ Truth and time become secondary when the figure of Frank stands as a multitude of different beings to so many different people, and it is this that Lloyd endeavours to capture when he places Frank in a paradoxical world of timeless impermanence as both the creator and the created.²¹² Through its transient portrayal of Ludlow as a feature that refuses to be fixed into a single time-progression, 'Un-sained

²⁰⁹ e.g. p. 59.

²¹⁰ p. 89.

²¹¹ Gilbert L. Gigliotti, 'Foreword', in *The Gospel According to Frank*, by David Lloyd (Fort Collins: New American Press, 2009), pp. 13-21 (p. 17).

²¹² David Lloyd, 'V. Not I', in *The Gospel According to Frank* (Fort Collins: New American Press, 2009), p. 29.

Strings' likewise endeavours to form a timelessness that might represent both the town's multiple 'personalities' and constancy through changing eras.

Although the creation and development of dissonance forms an important part of 'Un-sained Strings', and, indeed, the project as a whole, these integrations of disparate lingual systems and time periods are not placed solely to create dissonances in the poetic texture. As with all of my uses of clashing times and eras this is part of an endeavour to highlight the metaphor of the solstice *as* a borderland, a pivot point between an understanding of history as a selection of times and as a continuous progression of time.²¹³ This notion is drawn from Sandra Billington's essay on the solstitial celebrations of the Germanic peoples, in which she quotes P. E. Ariotti's assertion that there is little evidence to suggest that ancient peoples other than the Greeks separated 'Time from its contents ... Time was its own contents. Events were not *in* time, they *were* times'.²¹⁴ The implementation of a solstitial celebration at a *fixed* moment in time, abstracted from the movements of the world and from its celebrants' lives, is therefore a concept that is unlikely to have existed for early peoples. Owing to this, the acceptance of the solstice as an unchanging recurring moment in the year is representative of a change in thought pattern; solstice represents a pivot, or borderline, within the borderland of early peoples' understandings of time.

As is suggested by the title, borderlands, in varying degrees of abstraction, form an integral part of this concert and serve as a means to link the two poems, drawing the concert into a united whole. Alongside the obvious liminal space between music and language which this work claims to explore, these borderlands are made manifest in

²¹³ This particular consideration of the solstice and of the idea of borderlands forms an important underlying idea to the concert as a whole, but is granted particular attention at the very end of the second poem when it becomes the theme to the fugue.

²¹⁴ Sandra Billington, 'The Midsummer Solstice as It Was, Or Was Not, Observed in Pagan Germany, Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England', *Folklore*, 119 (2008), 41-57, p. 44.
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30035459>> [accessed 23rd January 2015].

several ways within the poems in terms of both thematic content and of the four elements of narrative structure mentioned above (place, person, philosophical purpose and plot). Both ‘Un-sained Strings’ and ‘Chase of the Beast Glatisant’ are situated in a borderland between Wales and England; for the former this particular borderland is a combination of geographical location and purpose (to maintain ‘quietnes within his ma:^{ties} dominion and principalltie of Wales’²¹⁵) but for the latter, although also including some suggestions of geographical placement within the Marches, this space is less about division, and more concerned with utilising the shared Welsh and English legends of King Arthur to find a point of unity.

As has been briefly mentioned above, the concert title also draws on the idea of the solstice. For many, the symbolism of the solstice may not extend past the contemporary image of white-robed druids celebrating midsummer at Stonehenge, but this is only a tiny part of what solstice might represent. Although the midsummer solstice has undoubtedly been observed in many ancient cultures around the globe (as is illustrated, for example, by the archaeoastronomical site in Chaco Canyon which accurately marks both solstices and equinoxes through different moving patterns of light and shadow across a pair of spiral petroglyphs²¹⁶), it is not the celebration itself that is important, but rather, why it was being celebrated. For the pre-Christian Germanic peoples from whom our own solstitial celebrations were drawn, it has been proposed that a winter celebration would be of far greater importance than any festivities in summertime when the people would be making use of the long days to travel on the seas and trade abroad.²¹⁷ It was, therefore, the winter solstice which would in all likelihood have received most attention, being a time when the men were at home,

²¹⁵ David Lloyd and Peter Klein, *Ludlow: An Historical Anthology* (Chichester: Phillimore and Co Ltd., 2006), p. 24.

²¹⁶ Anna Sofaer, Volker Zinser and Rolf M. Sinclair, ‘A Unique Solar Marking Construct’, *Science*, n.s., 4416 (1979), 283-291. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1749388>> [accessed 23rd January 2015].

²¹⁷ Billington, p. 45.

the nights long and the landscape barren. This would not necessarily have been a time of celebration, but it would have been a moment when the people would have been brought together by the encroaching darkness and would in all likelihood have shared in storytelling alongside other communal entertainments to pass the time away. Thus, the placement of ‘solstice’ within the concert’s title helps to not only establish the sense of borderlands and the notion of a pivotal moment between times, places and beliefs, but also brings to the fore an allusion to the fact that the poetry within the concert is part of that same communal, oral storytelling tradition.

Taking as its theme an idea that has recurred time and again in poetic forms and writings with strong ties to oral forms, ‘Chase of the Beast Glatisant’ helps to dramatically enhance this sense of oral storytelling. This second poem is based upon tales of King Arthur and the popular idea of the Grail Quest, beginning on the evening of Arthur’s death and relating the events that would inevitably subsequently ensue as interested parties vie for accession to the throne. Unlike ‘Un-sained Strings’, which takes truth and the revelation of historical fact as a primary focus, this poem is concerned only with the reconstruction of a legend. In keeping with the many occult elements of the pre-existing tales, both in their Celtic mythological roots and in the later, Christian romances, the succession in this tale is to be dictated by supernatural means, and thus, the hunt for the mythical Questing Beast (the Beast Glatisant) is announced. Underlying this task is the presence of the wizard Merlyn, who, bound in his stone prison, is the instigator of the quest and who, despite his situation, still manages to maintain at least a small controlling influence over the various events detailed in the poem.

In *Autobiography of Red*, Anne Carson takes the fragments of Stesichoros’s *Geryoneis*, built themselves upon the tenth labour of Heracles in which the character of

Geryon is of no greater importance than his dog Orthrus and of considerably less importance than his herd of cattle,²¹⁸ and reconstructs Geryon as a real figure in the late twentieth century. Interestingly, Carson has described this verse novel as being ‘like architecture because the poem, the original ancient poem which does exist, is in the center’ around which the reader moves from room to room, catching glimpses of the main central room, the original poem, in passing.²¹⁹ The major character for ‘Chase of the Beast Glatisant’ is the figure of Nenive, maiden of the lake, the victim of Merlyn’s infatuation. Just as Carson builds Geryon from a moment in a myth, I have drawn Nenive from Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur* and constructed her reality around this brief connection with the Arthurian Magus.

As with Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King* I have chosen to avoid the more traditional name, Nimue, for this figure as I feel this name carries the burden of being the ‘beguiler’ of Merlyn. Thus, just as Tennyson changed the name from Nimue to depict the character of Vivien as a conniving, ambitious woman,²²⁰ I have retained the name utilised by Helen Cooper in her edition of *Le Morte D’Arthur*, where magic repeatedly gives way to reality,²²¹ as part of an endeavour to allow Nenive to exist as a real person, albeit a real person with a command of necromancy and a suggestion of the undine, who has merely been a victim of circumstance prior to the poem’s beginning. Despite the focus on different groups of characters in each of the movements of this work, it is Nenive’s storyline that is followed as a constant throughout the poem, and her actions that guide the narrative’s development. In a similar manner to the device

²¹⁸ Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, 2 vols (London: The Folio Society, 2000), ii, pp. 451-462.

²¹⁹ Will Aitken, ‘Anne Carson, The Art of Poetry No. 88’, *The Paris Review*, 171 (2004), p. 7. <<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5420/the-art-of-poetry-no-88-anne-carson>> [accessed 12th December 2014].

²²⁰ Christine Poulson, *The quest for the Grail: Arthurian legend in British art 1840-1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 143.

²²¹ For example, Merlin’s incarceration, and thus removal from Arthur’s court occurs on page 59 of 527 pages, after which the court receives only occasional magical influences. [Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D’Arthur: the Winchester manuscript*, ed. by Helen Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).]

used at the beginning of each new section in *Jason Smith's Nocturnal Opera*²²² and frequently in older novels also, each movement is introduced by a segment of prose describing the events detailed in the ensuing section of poetry.²²³ Each of these prose descriptions begins with an announcement of how the subsequent section is a part of Nenive's own storyline, or how it relates to her tale.

In keeping with the tradition of episodic digressions found in epic poetry,²²⁴ and as mentioned above, 'Chase of the Beast Glatissant' frequently diverts from the presence of Nenive as merely a central character and places her instead in the role of 'omniscient narrator', guiding the reader through the tale and revealing the various episodes that occur within the main narrative.²²⁵ These digressions include the description of Arthur's life in the first movement, the dream-like prophecies of the second movement,²²⁶ the presentation of additional voices in the third movement, and the journeys of the questing knights in movement four, alongside the introduction of a psycho-spiritual/religious element throughout the poem via images of Hildegard von Bingen and allusions to the Gospels.²²⁷ These digressions also provide a means for the introduction of further symbolism drawn from balladry such as the 'Catalogue of Haut Couture' sequence which re-imagines the manner in which clothing serves as an integral means for discussing taboos and demonstrating changing statuses and emotion within the balladic tradition.²²⁸

²²² Nick Malone, *Jason Smith's Nocturnal Opera* (Blaenau Ffestiniog: Cinnamon Press, 2007).

²²³ pp. 95, 125, 170, 182.

²²⁴ Rodney Delasanta, *The Epic Voice* (Paris: Mouton & Co. N.V., 1967), p. 26.

²²⁵ A form of narrator that Delasanta declares as being a prominent feature within the epic. [Ibid., pp. 38-40.]

²²⁶ A sequence based upon Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Vita Merlini* but without the insistence on providing answers to the expostulations held therein.

²²⁷ Predominantly through the images of the Gospel creatures (such as those found in the Book of Kells). Each movement of 'Chase of the Beast Glatissant' holds one of these images as a minor focus throughout: 1- winged man, 2- winged lion, 3- winged ox, 4- eagle. 'Un-sained Strings' also adopts an element of this, calling our attention to the human aspect, by presenting the image of the winged-man on several occasions.

²²⁸ Edith Randam Rogers, 'A Symbol for All Seasons', in *The Perilous Hunt, symbols in Hispanic and*

The 'Catalogue of Haut Couture' sequence, which takes the images of elaborate fashion designs as its primary focus, provides a degree of transient uncertainty as a grounding motif to the *marcia funebre e danza, alla sognare*. The use of this pattern as a presence in the second movement was part of an endeavour to provide a framework for Nenive's dream sequence and the journey to Avalon, but at the same time to intensify the sense of the traditional story poem and the balladic in what might otherwise seem a somewhat static moment in the narrative progression. Furthermore, by bringing a sense of traditional symbolic languages into this prophetic, *Vita Merlini*-like section of writing through the recurring balladic imagery of clothing, attention is drawn to the need for a reader to focus upon the importance of each individual image and to consider how the interpretation of such might aid their understanding of the whole. Thus, the overall intention of the movement is described to the reader through the symbolic status of one of its primary motifs and we find, as Rogers writes regarding the importance of symbolism in balladry, 'that somehow we know much more than we are told in words'.²²⁹

The separate tales seen within this poem are essentially miniature grail quests, the idea of a 'Grail' becoming a different object for each of the three knights that appear in the fourth movement. In the tale of Palomides, the Saracen knight who takes over Pellinore's hunt for Glatissant in *Le Morte D'Arthur*,²³⁰ the knight finds his path diverted to one of the precursors of the physical grail, the cauldron in Annwn.²³¹ The second knight is Dornar de Gales, son of the mad King Pellinore,²³² who is likewise distracted from his hunt for Glatissant. Unlike Pellinore, Dornar abandons his quest

European Balladry (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1980), pp. 58-89.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²³⁰ Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur: the Winchester manuscript*, ed. by Helen Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 22, 211.

²³¹ [Charles Squire], *Celtic Mythology* (New Lanark: Geddes & Grosset, 2006), pp. 293-294.

²³² Malory, pp. 240, 463.

because upon the discovery of his maddened father he finds a more important duty to fulfil: the care of his parent and the search for a cure to Pellinore's mental disturbance. The final character journey is that of Constantine, prince of Kernow, who in other tales is detailed as Arthur's successor.²³³ Whilst he is not responsible for the capture of Glatissant, unlike the other knights he does not abandon his ambitions to become king. Within this poem I have endeavoured to provide Constantine with both a reason for leaving Kernow and a moral dilemma with which to wrestle, thus creating an internal journey to match the physical trials of quest. To this end, Constantine is formed as a young man who is pursued by the guilt of the death of his lover following a brief same-sex relationship. Whilst 'such relations' are avoided in Old English elegies and heroic literature as shameful portrayals unable to 'ennoble' their audiences,²³⁴ I have chosen to include this idea as part of the tradition of writers of Arthurian literature to adjust details to suit contemporary issues;²³⁵ just as Arthur's Celtic presence is transformed into the Christian prince of medieval romance to serve as a moral figure for the contemporary audience, I have chosen to combine the Christian element with the queer to fulfil this same purpose.²³⁶

Unlike 'Un-sained Strings', with its non-linear, 'timeless' narrative progression, 'Chase of the Beast Glatissant' perhaps finds its contemporary counterparts amongst long narrative poems such as Alice Oswald's *Dart*, a poem that could be seen as a prime example of the importance of narrative and as the twenty-first-century equivalent

²³³ Ibid., p. 526.

²³⁴ Allen J. Frantzen, *Before the Closet: same-sex love from Beowulf to Angels in America* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 105.

²³⁵ Chrétien de Troyes being the master of using Arthurian legends to convey 'to his courtly audience everything they needed to hear while at the same time concealing everything which could not be openly expressed for fear of offending against contemporary ecclesiastical and secular morality.' [Heer, pp. 141-146 (p. 142).]

²³⁶ At the time of writing, the Pilling Report had recently been released by the Church of England and the Standing Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales was in the process of creating its own report on the Church's approach to Same-Sex Partnerships.

of balladry.²³⁷ Within this poem Oswald follows the journey of the River Dart from its source on Dartmoor down to the sea, allowing her linear narrative to progress through a pattern of organically changing voices.²³⁸ It is from this particular work that I have drawn certain elements of the written format for my own poem. Through *Dart* a variety of changing poetic forms are used and developed as voices change and interact with one another. These are guided and highlighted by the use of marginal notations which explain who the speaker is, give additional information that the reader might not know, and at times even interact with the main body of the text as can be seen through the insertion of the rhyme ‘Dart Dart / Every year thou / Claimest a heart’²³⁹ and later, after the mention of a death in the river, the call for ‘silence’.²⁴⁰ Whilst I have chosen to separate the individual segments of my own poem with titles and page breaks, it is predominantly the marginal notations which narrate the story, describe the changes of speaker throughout the poem and provide additional information to guide the reader.

Like *Dart*, the journey of ‘Chase of the Beast Glatisant’ is both a physical pilgrimage between destinations and a journey through time, moving from the death of Arthur back through a remembrance of his life, followed by Nenive’s journey to Avalon and the subsequent journeys of the questers in their hunt for Glatisant. However, this is not merely similar in terms of narrative progression. One of the elements that particularly interests me about *Dart* is that although we know that all of the voices and sounds captured by the poem are the voice of the river, the reader still gets the sense of a very definite presence moving alongside the water, recording the various voices and stories that are met along the way but not necessarily impacting or

²³⁷ Michael D. Hurley and Michael O’Neill, *Poetic Form, an introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 212.

²³⁸ The voices and stories of people and places met along the journey, including the voice of the river itself.

²³⁹ Alice Oswald, *Dart* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), p. 13.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

controlling the narrative development. It is this same sense of an uncontrolled narrative progression that I have endeavoured to capture throughout ‘Chase of the Beast Glaisant’. Although the protagonist, Nenive, has some control over the questing knights and narrates the story for the reader, she actually has little impact upon the narrative development, merely moving alongside the time-progression, watching events unfold rather than influencing them.

Whilst the closest contemporary equivalent to the poems of *Solstice in the Borderland* would probably be verse novels, I would refute the assertion that these should be considered as such. Unlike the verse novel, which appropriates the traditional story poem and endeavours to make use of verse to show an extended narrative or narratives, this work deliberately eschews expected narrative conventions in favour of its primary aim: to exist equally as a musical piece and as a poetic work. Just as Anne Carson has spoken of how *Autobiography of Red* originated as a novel before being transformed into poetry, *Solstice in the Borderland* began as a soundscape before becoming poetry.²⁴¹ It is here that I feel the difference between the verse novel and the poetic symphony lies.²⁴² The story poem, which would at one time have been performed by a ‘*joglar*’ reciting words above a musical accompaniment,²⁴³ lends itself particularly well to the notion of constructing a more intensely musical verse, for, as discussed above, by combining the sound relations held by oral poetics with this secondary element of the medieval lyric, the poetic line can perhaps be extended to become both spoken word tale and the essential musical accompaniment encased within one body.

²⁴¹ John D’Agata and Anne Carson, ‘A _____ with Anne Carson’, *The Iowa Review*, 27 (1997), 1-22, pp. 20, 22. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20154415>> [accessed 12th December 2014].

²⁴² I use symphony here merely to signify lengthy musical forms.

²⁴³ Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric*, 2nd edn (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1978), p. 26.

The Appropriation of Musical Forms and Structures

In his article on the use of musical foundations within poetry, ‘Transposing Music: An Intermedial Perspective on German Modernist Poetry’, Rolf Goebel asserts that ‘when musical structures, meanings, and performance practices are transposed into the textual materiality of poetry itself, these aspects of music cease to be musical and instead become *literary* effects.’²⁴⁴ For Goebel, any reference to, or use of, musical forms and structures within a poetic text are merely metaphorical; there is no true cross-over between musical and poetic forms, only comparative structures.²⁴⁵ To a certain degree I would concede that Goebel’s assertions are correct; a poem composed in the form of a musical work will not be the same as the musical work, and those elements that are recognisable technical features will be referred to as literary effects because of the particular medium being used. However, in my opinion, this does not negate the fact that these patterns and structures are, in effect, inherently the same. To imply that there is nothing overtly musical about a musical form once it has been transposed into a different artistic medium is problematic, not least because one is then faced with the question of what actually makes a form musical at all. According to C. H. H. Parry, the basis to all musical forms is the creation of ‘a series of identities and differences which the ear can recognise’ used in varying degrees of repetition and contrast.²⁴⁶ Form is a devised pattern of changes and returns utilised by composers to help plot the placement of material within a creative work, but it is also a fundamental part of music because it

²⁴⁴ Rolf J. Goebel, ‘Transposing Music: An Intermedial Perspective on German Modernist Poetry’, *The German Quarterly*, 86 (2013), 294-310, p. 306.

<<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gequ.10184/epdf>> [accessed 28th August 2015].

²⁴⁵ Whilst Goebel’s argument is centred upon a specific group of poets (Hesse, Benn, and Rilke), from a particular period in time, these same assumptions are made time and again in studies of Words and Music as can be seen from the discussions of Glenn Gould’s spoken contrapuntal documentaries (see above).

²⁴⁶ Charles Hubert Hastings Parry, ‘Form’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), iii, pp. 429-445 (p. 429).

helps to establish the principle of organisation that Godt claims separates music from base sound.²⁴⁷

Musical form can be roughly divided into two groups: rhythmic forms, which are most commonly associated with prolonged use of recognisable dance steps or rhythms, and underlying structural patterns, which dictate the direction, and changes and returns, of the overall musical work. Ultimately, although both of these categories may control melodic and harmonic elements such as chord progressions and utilise pitch-orientated conventions, the bare essence of form is the mathematical mapping of music. Due to this, when musical ideas are transposed into poetry, these forms can potentially be recreated without any great loss to the rhythmic structure. A waltz, for example, might easily be captured in verse through lines made from strings of dactyls or, for a less heavily accented pattern, in iambic trimeter, and a March can be simply echoed through lines in trochaic tetrameter. The recreation of structural patterns such as sonata or ternary form are equally straightforward as these do not demand fixed rhythmic structures, but merely present a plot for the development, changes and returns that are to come in the piece.²⁴⁸

Some might argue that, as these same principals of form exist within poetry already, it is unnecessary to bring forms from a different medium to disrupt the established canon of recognisable shapes. This argument however is one that not only opposes the evolution and development of poetic form, but also serves to discredit concrete forms, which perhaps have a closer affinity to the visual, image-centred arts. By drawing musical forms into poetry one is not inhibiting poetry by inflicting additional controls upon it, but is instead widening the diversity of underlying structures and bringing to the fore what is, despite not being pitch orientated, one of the

²⁴⁷ Irving Godt, 'Music: a practical definition', *The Musical Times*, 146 (2005), 83-88, p. 84. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30044071>> [accessed 12th September 2014].

²⁴⁸ See description of Sonata form, p. 304.

key elements of music. A concern in this debate is that, despite not truly being a structural issue, key distribution is also quite commonly directed by structure.²⁴⁹ Although this is not possible for poetry due to the lack of tonal centre within this medium, there are parallel ideas in verse that might be used to represent the notions of a tonic and dominant, such as a movement to and from a particular, established register (or colour), theme, image or voice.

Given the articles described above, I believe that Goebel's implication that transposed form becomes no more than a mere metaphor within poetry²⁵⁰ is problematic, for although a form in itself is not overtly musical, it is an integral part of the foundation and mathematical support around which a musical work is composed, and thus, when directly translated, does not lose its musical make-up. However, in aspiring to a more musical presence in poetry than the mere use of base forms, for example the capturing of emotive character and varying tones and textures, issues may begin to arise as these elements interrupt rhythmic characteristics. An example of this within my own work is to be seen in the Dance²⁵¹ and March²⁵² movements of 'Un-sained Strings' for which I have for the main part eschewed the simple dactylic and trochaic metres discussed above, in favour of capturing a different sense of the forms in question. In this regard, some credence may be given to Goebel's suggestion that poems merely making use of these forms as a guiding pattern become 'examples of *ekphrasis* that give textual presence to sonic evanescence and visual immediacy' without actually being a true musical creation,²⁵³ because in truth the underlying structural pattern, whilst definitely there, does not create a strong rhythmic grip upon the poetry. There is, however, considerable precedence for this use of a less overt sense

²⁴⁹ C. H. H. Parry, 'Form', p. 432.

²⁵⁰ Goebel, p. 306.

²⁵¹ pp. 43-62.

²⁵² pp. 63-89.

²⁵³ Goebel, p. 306.

of form within music to be found throughout the Romantic period and onwards. Beethoven, for instance, was of the opinion that ‘Form must drop into the background and become a hidden presence rather than an obvious and pressing feature’ within music.²⁵⁴ From this I believe that one might conclude that whilst form is essential, it should not be the primary guiding force for a composition and, actually, perhaps it is when we place it as such that musical poetry becomes merely a crude mimicry of music rather than expressing its own musicalities. To this end, whilst I refute some of Goebel’s assertions that through the transposition of musical technique the end result is nothing but literary effects,²⁵⁵ I do believe there is room for seeing the very clear differences between poetry and music, and, indeed, between traditional poetry, musical poetry, and traditional music.

In the preface to Joanna Boulter’s 2006 collection, *Twenty Four Preludes & Fugues on Dmitri Shostakovich*, the poet explains that the original premise to this piece was to re-imagine Shostakovich’s life through a mimicry of the composer’s opus eighty seven, creating a series of twenty four preludes and fugues through the medium of words. In translating preludes and fugues, a pairing of one of the freest and one of the most complex musical forms, into literature, Boulter endeavours to find a poetic equivalent: ‘free or invented forms in the third person’ for her preludes, and ‘strict poetic form, in the first person, as the voice of Shostakovich’ for the fugal sections.²⁵⁶ Interestingly, Boulter states that ‘it proved too difficult to make each pair of poems shadow the mood and, still more, the musical content of a corresponding pair of piano pieces’ and thus it is through structure alone that these poems replicate Shostakovich’s

²⁵⁴ C. H. H. Parry, ‘Form’, p. 439.

²⁵⁵ Goebel, p. 306.

²⁵⁶ Joanna Boulter, *Twenty Four Preludes & Fugues on Dmitri Shostakovich* (Todmorden: Arc Publications, 2006), p. 7.

musicality.²⁵⁷ Having established her musical structure the poet proceeds to use this pattern to create a narration of the composer's place within an intense period of social change in the U.S.S.R. and to freely explore the very real human being behind the façade of public position and politics. Owing to this primary focus upon a singular character, this work has the potential to be categorised as a verse novel, and yet, through its fragmented body, non-linear progression and lack of conventional narrative devices, I personally feel that it should instead be considered as a collection of separate works bound together purely by theme and by its strict relation to musical structures.

Within the structural composition of my own poetry I have endeavoured to follow similar rules to Boulter to create appropriate poetic forms and sequences of forms using patterns drawn from traditional musical structures, exploring the various ways by which one might realise these different structures. The two poems that together create this concert are formed in the manner of a folksong suite and a symphony. As with traditional music forms, these structures are each created from a series of deeper structural layers and so may be broken apart into patterns of individual poetic motifs. Alice Oswald, in the creation of *Dart*, came to view the river as a songline guiding the progression and development of her poem.²⁵⁸ By recognising the overall melodic, harmonic and formalistic shapes that the poem is to encapsulate (through an understanding of the work's subject matter), finding an appropriate musical lexicon with which to work perhaps becomes a far more natural, and consequently far less arbitrary, process. Furthermore, this same understanding of the musical purpose of the work (such as Oswald's songline, and my own folksong suite and symphony) grants the piece a firm impetus, and an unwavering pattern to guide the poem.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Alice Oswald, *Don't Ask Me What I Mean: poets in their own words*, ed. by Clare Brown and Don Paterson (London: Picador, 2012), p. 208.

In the vein of compositions by musicians such as Vaughan Williams and Holst, I divided the opening work of *Solstice in the Borderland*, the folksong suite, into three separate movements: Prelude, Intermezzo and March. As with Vaughan Williams's and Holst's suites, each movement, whilst united by a common theme or idea, contains its own constructed devices and has its own specific focus.²⁵⁹ The Prelude is created in a similar manner to Boulter's writing of the form, albeit on a much larger scale, in that it establishes an overall sense of the town whilst following a decidedly improvisatory pattern of poetic forms.²⁶⁰ This movement is composed in the manner of a theme and variations, a form which takes as its guiding principle a sense of 'Variety within unity, secured by the reproduction of limited musical material in changing aspects'.²⁶¹ There are several common interpretations of this description which are regularly followed by composers,²⁶² but, in short, all that is really required when using this form is a sense of developed material, unified by either a present underlying motif or pattern, or the ghost

²⁵⁹ As a form, the suite has a varied history. The term itself has been used to describe numerous, and often disparate, works from a range of musical periods. Originally a suite consisted of a series of instrumental pieces (frequently dances), which were designed to be performed as a sequence. These were distinguishable from the sonata in that there was seldom any tonal contrast between, or contrast of mood, rhythm and tempo within, movements. [Robert Donington, 'Suite', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), viii, pp. 164-171 (pp. 164-165).] Although still rarely making use of shared motivic materials and musical themes for the separate movements, the 'Suite' later became more relaxed in form and the term has now come to simply refer to groups of short works linked by common theme or idea, placed together for performance (e.g. Holst's *Planets*). [H. C. Colles, *Ibid.*, p. 171.] Despite this relaxation of terminology however, some works, such as those that employ forms like the allemande, gigue, saraband, courante et c. or that caricature folk-songs and rustic dances, still perhaps maintain a sense of the original form. See for example Gustav Holst's *St. Paul's Suite*, *Brook Green Suite*, *A Moorside Suite*, and *First & Second Suite for Military Band*, and Ralph Vaughan William's *English Folksong Suite*, *Partita for Double String Orchestra*, and *Phantasy Quintet*, all of which are formed from a series of individual movements, linked by stylistic qualities and the overriding idea, but, unlike Romantic and twentieth-century symphonies, use only occasionally shared motivic materials.

²⁶⁰ The prelude was originally brought to the suite form to serve as an introductory movement to the whole. It was supposed to follow a decidedly improvisatory, 'measureless' course, and was described by Couperin as being 'a free composition, in which the imagination follows all that occurs to it.' [Donington, 'Suite', p. 165.]

²⁶¹ Robert Donington, 'Variations', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), viii, pp. 670-687 (p. 670).

²⁶² A comprehensive list may be found in *Ibid.*, pp. 671-677.

of an underlying motif or pattern.²⁶³ When selecting a form with which to open the poem this pattern seemed particularly apt as it allowed for a gentle exploration of the town, pursuing a gradual development of the sights and sounds that I wished to depict, rather than demanding an immediate establishment of ideas. Furthermore, as Colles writes regarding the modern Theme and Variations, ‘The 19th century made the form plastic in the hands of the individual composer, and after ‘Don Quixote’ all things are possible.’²⁶⁴ As a composer wishing to cross the boundaries between music and poetry, a form that is no longer subject to extensive rules and restrictions, and that may be manipulated by the composer to suit the required style, offers an appropriate, and sensible, means by which to initially present the notion of musical poetry to the reader.

In ‘Un-sained Strings’, the theme is presented as a far off view of the town of Ludlow, seen from Brown Clee Hill, intertwined with the idea of the spinster who forms a constant presence within this first collection. From here the individual variations based upon this opening theme move the poem into different parts of Ludlow and through a variety of different voices without any true sense of time progression to thus form an image, a colour of the town and its people, without the restrictions of linear narrative. This does not mean that the individual, numbered poetic sections are not interrelated however, but rather that each variation must exist as an expansion away from the original theme yet also contain an underlying influence of the poetic sections preceding it. As such, this opening section, or theme, is designed to form an overriding scenic representation of Ludlow, portraying important features of the town and making allusions to its history, with each of the subsequent variations mapping a smaller section within the confines of the area.

²⁶³ e.g. A recurring harmonic progression or bass line beneath a changing melodic line in the first instance, or a melody that has been developed from its original iteration but is still recognisable as containing key elements of the original despite being a different melodic line in the second instance.

²⁶⁴ Henry Cope Colles, ‘Variations: Modern Works’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), viii, pp. 686-687 (p. 687).

The Intermezzo movement of this work is in the form of a dance or, more specifically, a waltz. The placement of a dance section as a dividing body is a device frequently used within compositions of musical suites.²⁶⁵ This, I believe, is in part because the dance movement creates a lighter feeling to the music, strongly moved by recognisable rhythms. Through the use of a traditional, and in many cases constant, rhythmic pattern, a very obvious change from the preceding and subsequent sections is created, thus perhaps allowing the composer a chance to pursue more aurally challenging sequences to either side of this. Part of my decision for the structural creation of this dance movement was that it would be in part an exploration of phrasing, with each line representing a crotchet beat of the rhythm, each stanza representing a bar, and each poetic section representing a thematic phrase. Thus, longer lines have a feeling of greater harmonic density and rhythmic complexity than shorter lines.

The consistent use of tercet patterns for each section of the dance forms a sense of interconnectedness and constancy through which a series of echoed figures may appear, thus making the varied voices of Ludlow's past the primary focus for the movement. An example of this can be seen in the following stanza:

sitting in the cloisters at Trim
I let the handfuls of ermine tails run
through my fingers like rats like dry living water²⁶⁶

Here we are granted an echo of the Norman Marcher lord and Justiciar of Ireland, Geoffrey de Geneville, through the reference to elements of his family crest and mention to his inherited de Lacy lands in Ireland. Unlike the other movements, in an endeavour to replicate the flowing qualities of dance through a reduction of the levels of control placed upon the poetry, this information is given without the constricting

²⁶⁵ C. H. H. Parry, 'Suite', pp. 169-170. [See, for example, Ralph Vaughan William's *English Folksong Suite* and *Phantasy Quintet*.]

²⁶⁶ p. 54, ll. 7-9.

presence of any firm grounding in terms of footnoted place or person. In a similar manner to the Prelude, the second movement avoids a linear narrative, allowing instead the music of the line to link and propel the piece forward; however, through the underlying narrative of the rape case brought before the Council of the Marches during the Lord Presidency of the Earl of Bridgewater, and the repeated returns to this tale, the musical structure is granted a constant (which creates a greater sense of regularity), thus capturing the frequently repetitive nature of waltzes.²⁶⁷ The use of this running narrative also exposes the true purpose of an intermezzo movement within music: to serve as a ‘linking division’.²⁶⁸ Joanna Boulter frequently uses her preludes to open an idea that will later be explored in the subsequent fugue. This is particularly noticeable in the section beginning with ‘Prelude for a hard winter’. Here, the fugue draws the themes of a cold, icy winter from the prelude to form the scenery over which the voice of Shostakovich speaks.²⁶⁹ In a similar manner to this, the Intermezzo’s moving narrative relating to the March Council draws on both the scenic reproduction of the first movement and the more violent creation of persons in the final movement, to bridge the space between Prelude and March.

The third movement, or song, in this suite is a March constructed in an arch form. The arch form is a structural pattern in which thematic material is presented

²⁶⁷ To declare that all waltzes are repetitive is a slight exaggeration, however, if one traces the roots of the form through its history one finds that in both its early creations and after its adoption into concert repertoire the waltz is commonly constructed in binary, ternary or rondo form. [Mosco Carner, ‘Waltz’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), ix, pp. 165-172.]

²⁶⁸ When used in relation to the suite, the term ‘Intermezzo’ perhaps comes from the insertion of ‘intermezzi’ before the final gigue. Parry suggests that these were added as a ‘concession to popular taste’ as they were generally lighter works which ‘preserve[d] their dance character more decidedly and obviously than any other member of the group.’ [C. H. H. Parry, ‘Suite’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), viii, pp. 164-171 (pp. 169-170).] I refer to it here as a ‘linking division’ for although the intermezzi were originally introduced as an interlude between movements, through their shorter and more simplistic character, the two movements to either side began to seem more alike in contrast to this. [See also Edward J. Dent, ‘Intermezzo’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), iv, pp. 516-517.]

²⁶⁹ Boulter, pp. 12-13.

around a central, mirroring pivot point.²⁷⁰ Imitating this within ‘Un-sained Strings’ I have created a series of poems that mirror one another, either through the poetic form used or through internal thematic material or content; thus, although there is interlinking material between successive poetic sections, the predominant connections throughout the movement emerge from the parallels in the arch. In homage to the military nature of much of his famous *A Shropshire Lad*,²⁷¹ in which ‘Soldiers inhabit the poems even when they are unseen, “drumming like a noise in dreams”’,²⁷² the central point of this arch, and thus the integral pivotal moment of the March movement, is the poem relating to Housman. The March as a musical form originated within the military as a means to excite ‘ardour in armies advancing to battle’,²⁷³ before later being appropriated by classical composers for both its dramatic potential and its ability to stimulate a shared sense of stirring emotive response from the audience.²⁷⁴ Later, particularly in Britain, these same works would frequently be claimed by the various military regiments and arranged to serve for a period of time as regimental tunes.²⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that Housman’s poems have repeatedly found service in times of war, or in commemoration of such, in a similar manner to the way in which tunes based upon military Marches were later appropriated by the military.²⁷⁶ In the construction of my third movement I have endeavoured to draw this same sense of a military echo from

²⁷⁰ e.g. A B C D C B A.

²⁷¹ p. 78.

²⁷² Michael Schmidt, *Lives of the Poets* (London: Head of Zeus Ltd, 2014), p. 533.

²⁷³ Henry George Farmer, ‘March’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), v, pp. 564-567 (p. 564).

²⁷⁴ As is evidenced by the at times almost frightening patriotic power of such works as Haydn’s *Kaiserhymne* (famously also known as *Das Lied der Deutschen*), and the ‘Song of Liberty’ and ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ tunes drawn from Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*, (numbers 4 in G major and 1 in D major, respectively), the latter pair of which are both underpinned by a constant pulsing crotchet pattern from large sections of the orchestra.

²⁷⁵ Farmer, ‘March’, p. 566.

²⁷⁶ Indeed, *A Shropshire Lad* was most recently recalled in the 2014 release of *Centenary: Words & Music Of The Great War*, a commemorative CD by actors Jim Carter and Imelda Staunton and the band ‘Show of Hands’.

both Housman's work and from the March form itself, placing the frequently turbulent political and military nature of the town as the main focus for this section of the suite.

Owing to the strictly rhythmic presence of a March, I have endeavoured to bring into the poetry an insistence upon slightly more restrictive rhythms to replicate this, and also, in direct contrast to the freely flowing dance movement, to allow the reader a greater amount of background information in the form of footnotes, to aid their journey through the poetic material. Although this might at first seem an arbitrary 'trick', it does create a guiding line to the poems which acts like the unrelenting 2/2 tread underpinning a March movement in traditional musical composition. Whilst this is not a technique that Boulter makes specific use of within her poetry, she does periodically add short notations beneath her titles, or as extensions to these, to furnish the audience with the required information to help place that particular poem, thus forming a similar sense of increased understanding and, as such, creating a far stronger foundation for the poetic material to lie upon.

Boulter's *Preludes and Fugues* are guided in their structural progression by a sense of connected narrative portraying the entirety of Shostakovich's life, not just the period in which he was creating his *Opus 87*. This same sense of progression, whether linear or non-linear, is an element that naturally forms an important part of many poetic novels and long poetic narratives, but it is also an important part of certain musical styles known as 'programmatic' works. Programmatic compositions are pieces of music that follow a progressing storyline which is narrated through the counterpoint, musical colouration and the descriptive scenic 'painting' of the work.²⁷⁷ The symphonic poem, a phrase devised by Liszt in the mid-nineteenth century, is a musical composition that has few guiding rules other than that a programme governs 'the style and course of the

²⁷⁷ Percy C. Buck, 'Programme Music', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), vi, p. 941.

music',²⁷⁸ or, in other words, that it is a programmatic composition. In its initial form the symphonic poem musically paraphrased 'the thought, feeling and colour' of a pre-existing poem, but this soon developed into the creation of entirely original works of music that simply encapsulated a similar spirit.²⁷⁹ It is this same idea of drawing a new musical narrative from a pre-existing story that underpins the second poem, 'Chase of the Beast Glatisant', in which a programmatic symphony is constructed from the journeys at the close of King Arthur's life.

Through its subheadings of both a 'Symphony in 3 movements' and 'a poem', Tony Conran's 1995 collection, *All Hallows*, is presented not only as a form that exists as a liminal entity in the space between two artistic media, but also as a single, unified art work.²⁸⁰ It was this, in combination with the lack of a contents page to precede the collection, the use of which might otherwise imply a collection of poems rather than a single poem, that first led me to query whether a poetry collection could exist as a poetic form in its own right, as a contemporary equivalent to the lengthy story poems of the past. Despite Conran's use of individual titles for each of the poetic sections, there is a sense of unifying continuity to the collection as a whole, created through the repetition of thematic material, such as the idea of mapping that creates a central focus for the movements of the wassailers in the third movement,²⁸¹ and the similarities between the individual poetic forms used. Each of the three movements in this set is opened with a new title page, the first containing appropriate epigraphs and the third bearing a brief notation of relevant information to assist the reading of this section, yet despite these brief pauses in the progression of the work there is still a sense of unity to the piece, the opening and close of each movement serving merely to allow a moment

²⁷⁸ H. C. Colles, 'Symphonic Poem', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), viii, pp. 206-207 (p. 206).

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ Tony Conran, *All Hallows: symphony in 3 movements* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1995), p. 3.

²⁸¹ This is particularly noticeable in 'Maps' one and two and 'Map into Heraldry'. [*Ibid.*, pp. 44, 46, 48.]

of reflection before continuing through the work. Following the poem, Conran provides a ‘Programme Note’ which, in a similar manner to Boulter’s preface, serves to explain the choices of form and how the poetic sections exist within a musical, structural context. As Conran writes, ‘Though individual sections are given titles, they should not be read as separate poems’, but rather, these should be seen as ‘chapter headings’ to guide the reader.²⁸² Again, although he refers to chapter headings here which might imply the verse novel, through the very clear explanations of his musical structures, Conran is insisting that this work more rightfully fits within a musical context and so should be read as such.

All Hallows is composed in the form of a symphony that embodies both a sense of the early Classical, through the construction of three quite individual formal movements, and also the post-Beethoven ideal of maintaining a degree of musical connectivity and ‘a unity of mood’ between movements.²⁸³ Although Conran rightly states that there is no singular form to a classical symphony and thus provides a disclaimer for any arguments against his own appropriation of musical forms, he then proceeds to describe the strict progressions of Sonata Form through the first movement and the Scherzo and Trio of the second movement. It is interesting to note at this point that despite beginning with a very restrictive set of rulings with regard to form, Conran, like Boulter,²⁸⁴ becomes freer with musical structuring as the poem progresses so that the third movement merely gains the description of a Wassail, which, despite hinting at an older musical tradition, cannot truly be considered as a set musical form. Whilst the poet does allow a series of recurring themes to guide this final movement, the

²⁸² Ibid., p. 57.

²⁸³ F. H. Shera, ‘Symphony’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), viii, pp. 208-250 (p. 223). [As reference for assertions regarding early Classical (Mozart and Haydn) see Ibid., p. 218.]

²⁸⁴ ‘In practice, this plan relaxed somewhat as the work progressed.’ [Joanna Boulter, *Twenty Four Preludes & Fugues on Dmitri Shostakovich* (Todmorden: Arc Publications, 2006), p. 7.]

musicality appears less as a structural element and instead follows a more improvisatory, language-led music. In this current, post-Beethoven era, where composers continue to aspire to and build upon Beethoven's body of symphonies, the final movement of a symphony regularly maintains a rigid sense of structural integrity that guides the musical line through a progression of themes to culminate in an elaborate, climactic closing section.²⁸⁵ Indeed, even in the works of Haydn and Mozart, whilst often lighter in character, strict sonata and sonata-rondo forms were generally in use for the final movement of a symphony.²⁸⁶ Conran's decision to follow a progression that seems a closer representation of a variation theme, returns the reader to the idea that perhaps the poet is more concerned with the finding of an older, less-constructed music than the opening of this work might have indicated, especially when one recalls that Conran describes the third movement, as being underpinned with a Quête,²⁸⁷ to thus suggest that same unrestricted child-like musicality that caught the ear of Sitwell.²⁸⁸

'Chase of the Beast Glatisant' is constructed as a symphony of the post-Classical style, divided into four separate movements yet ultimately forming one extended narrative. This is not dissimilar, structurally, to Tony Conran's *What Brings You Here So Late?* which, unlike his earlier collection, *All Hallows*, does not specifically claim to be written in the form of a symphony yet still encapsulates this specific musical form, perhaps even to a greater degree than the earlier work due to its freer musical line and flowing continuity of sound in spite of both 'chapter' and 'movement' divisions.²⁸⁹ This later poem makes use of thematic material and imagery to guide the musical structure of the piece that the line may progress uninhibited by a

²⁸⁵ Shera, 'Symphony', p. 224.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 218, 224.

²⁸⁷ Street carolling by children.

²⁸⁸ Victoria Glendinning, *Edith Sitwell: a unicorn among lions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 78.

²⁸⁹ Tony Conran, *What Brings You Here So Late?* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2008).

more intense restriction of physical form. For the main part I have endeavoured to encapsulate this same progression through the four separate sections of ‘Chase of the Beast Glatisant’ via the use of a largely linear narrative and a regular thematic return in the text, as well as a strategic use of repetitive verse forms (as will be discussed further in relation to the second movement).

The sense of an inherent modality of music²⁹⁰ guiding the underlying progression of *What Brings You Here So Late?* encouraged me to turn for inspiration to the symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Henryk Górecki, both of whom have famously experimented with modal music within the symphonic art form.²⁹¹

Ultimately, due to the church’s influence, the movement of western music from four, to eight,²⁹² to twelve, to seven,²⁹³ and finally to the two modes that have formed the foundation to the majority of music since the Baroque era, a western response to the various modes is as mixed as their progression. Each mode is formed of a separate, yet equally valid, pattern of consecutive tones and semi-tones to cover an octave. However, due to three hundred and fifty years of heavy focus upon the Ionian or Aeolian modes within classical music (equivalent to the contemporary major and minor keys) a western audience finds the less common modal sequences ‘unnatural’ to hear despite the equality of temperaments throughout the modes.²⁹⁴

The intriguing possibilities of de-familiarisation and of abusing western familiarity through the use of only occasional patterns from an expected system, led me

²⁹⁰ When we describe music as modal we are referring to a piece that has an harmonic centre, but it is a centre that is formed from a non-tonal (but not atonal) pattern, such as the traditional harmonic patterns of folk music or the religious modes that form the basis for ecclesiastical chant.

²⁹¹ See Górecki’s third symphony and Vaughan Williams’s first, second, third and seventh symphonies, most notably the seventh (*Sinfonia Antartica*).

²⁹² When Pope Gregory introduced the further four (plagal) modes to fit between the four Ambrosian (authentic) modes, his fourth mode corresponded with the first Authentic mode to sound the same.

²⁹³ These seven are seen as the set series of medieval modes.

²⁹⁴ Folk music’s propensity to fit around the Dorian and Mixolydian modes means that, whilst less common, western audiences are still receptive to these additional scales. [Information on modes drawn from: R. P. Winnington-Ingram and H. K. Andrews, ‘Modes’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), v, pp. 797-804.]

to the consideration of how one might construct a similar sense of the various modes within poetry, using both elements of major and minor tonalities and also those patterns that feel further from that which is considered the tonal norm.²⁹⁵ My mimicry of modality was placed predominantly within the changing poetic forms used to hold each segment of text, thus, as the progression of the symphony focussed upon a modality that related to either Ionian or Aeolian,²⁹⁶ a sense of more traditional forms dominated the narrative, and as those relating to the less frequently used modes were reached, a sense of uneasy or curiously weighted verse forms began to emerge.

The first movement, ‘allegro on the death of a king’, is constructed in sonata form, using a sense of traditional modes to guide the levels of adherence to regular or traditional poetic forms. The common structure of sonata form runs as follows: Slow Introduction (occasionally in the dominant key); First Subject (tonic key); Bridge; Second Subject (dominant key); Development (opening in the dominant key, this explores the previously presented themes progressing through a series of different keys); Recapitulation (first and second subjects reappear as music remembered, separated by another bridge); Coda.²⁹⁷ Despite my decision to follow this sonata progression, the notion of change between a tonic and dominant was impossible to recreate for neither entities exist within poetry. To overcome this difficulty I created a progression through the traditional medieval modes,²⁹⁸ as if my composition was to follow regular musical notation, and then designed a structural poetic pattern to match this. Whilst the first subject follows one long and undivided sequence, the second

²⁹⁵ The Locrian and Lydian perhaps form the most ‘unnatural’ sounding patterns of the seven modes due to the semitone bridge between the fourth and fifth notes of each sequence, a bridge that appears in neither major nor minor scales. Indeed, the Locrian mode was rejected as impracticable and never used. [H. K. Andrews, *Ibid.*, p. 803.]

²⁹⁶ Roughly, the modal equivalents of our contemporary major and minor scales. [Ibid., p. 802.]

²⁹⁷ Robert Donington, ‘Sonata’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), vii, pp. 886-908 (pp. 889-890).]

²⁹⁸ This is not a technique that would ever have been used with a traditional understanding of modal music, but, as it presented considerable scope for alternative developments of musical patterning both in terms of traditional music and in poetic music, it seemed an interesting notion to pursue.

subject (which musically moves into closer reflection of the Ionian mode) is formed of a series of three sonnets. For the development section the music moves through four separate ‘modalities’, modulating noticeably as the narrative progresses, as can be seen through the choices of form and visual appearance of the poem,²⁹⁹ before the recapitulation section is finally reached with a repetition of the first subject. This demonstrates a similar use of structural patterns to those found in Conran’s *All Hallows*, particularly in the second movement of this work where the respective form-based shapes of *scherzo* (three short bursts) and *trio* (a single divided sonnet) help to focus the soundscapes of the poem.

The second movement, ‘marcia funebre e danza, alla sognare’, is composed in ternary form with the A section constructed as a March and the B section following a dance pattern.³⁰⁰ In contrast to the March section found in ‘Un-sained Strings’, the March for this poem is not grounded by the placement of footnoted facts, but is focussed instead around a series of carefully constructed forms. When the March reappears, although the content is completely different and the length of the poetic sections change, the pattern of forms is replicated precisely. The dance section for this movement also takes a vastly different stance, not merely allowing freedom through somewhat abstract content, but making use of free form poetics to match the dream-like ‘danza, alla sognare’ indication. Furthermore, underpinning all three parts of this movement are suggestions of folk rhythms and structural motifs which exist outside of the confines of their poetic forms, as can be seen in ‘Maiden’s Song’:

²⁹⁹ See pp. 105-116.

³⁰⁰ Ternary form is a fairly simple structural pattern that was particularly popular during the Baroque era where it appeared as an extension to the two part binary form. It consists of three sections, the first and last being the same but for additional ornamentation in the latter, and the middle section serving as a contrast to this, frequently appearing in the relative minor or major. [Eric Blom, ‘Ternary Form’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), viii, p. 396.]

As we walked i wove a crown
of cowslips mixed with eglantine
yet long before the circlet could be set

upon
a sovereign's head
the flowers wilted wet with blood³⁰¹

Despite the constant, alternating pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables throughout this poetic section, the rhyming words and assonance seldom fall at the end of lines or in predictable places, and, due to the irregular line lengths of this particular form, the entire segment feels free-flowing and unrestricted. In this regard, not only does the piece avoid being confined by its form, but it mirrors the rhythmic freedom of folk music, which has a propensity to freely change time signature and metric pattern to suit the required stresses of the words.³⁰² The combination of these various elements allows for the creation of an unrestricted, almost ephemeral quality, mimicking the sense of otherness and the unknowable captured by the bearing away of Arthur's body to the magical kingdom of Avalon, and the mysterious lines supposedly inscribed upon his tomb: 'Hic iacet Arthurus, rex quondam rexque futurus'³⁰³ in other tales of King Arthur.

Dreams, those private, personal, and sometimes very powerful unrestricted and involuntary meanderings of the mind, have frequently been used to great effect within art works. Whilst not necessarily recording or utilising real dreams, Nick Malone uses the dream sequence as the premise for his poetic sequence *Jason Smith's Nocturnal Opera*, allowing the transient, visceral quality of dreams to lead his entire narrative. At the beginning of Malone's poem our protagonist, who is part epic hero, part everyday

³⁰¹ p. 162.

³⁰² Although this is not a steadfast rule of course, numerous examples of songs containing changing time signatures and metric patterns are to be found (e.g. 'Death and the Lady' [Ralph Vaughan Williams and A. L. Lloyd (eds), *English Folk Songs* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 28.]).

³⁰³ Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur: the Winchester manuscript*, ed. by Helen Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 517.

man, lets 'his hollow frame / fall back on the bed' filled with weariness, before the spirits of night grant him a renewed energy as he enters the dream world.³⁰⁴ Through the use of these lines, Malone requests a suspension of disbelief, asking that his reader accept that the following work is the description of a dream. The indication from the outset that the text is describing a dream is a technique that I have chosen to replicate at the beginning of the second movement to 'Chase of the Beast Glatissant' as I feel that this takes away the uncertainty that may otherwise distract the reader from what is being said within the poetry. Despite the fact that his poem is predominantly a dream sequence, not afflicted by the attributes of reality, Malone brings the work to a close with an intriguing line: 'Stranger than dreams are the earth's buried seams'.³⁰⁵ It is this sense of reality holding a strangeness beyond, but that is only acceptable through, dreams that perhaps keeps artists returning to them. Within my own poem, the use of a more surreal, and at times bizarre, sequence of imagery, unrestricted by the conventions of usual narratives, allows the text to escape into a freer form of musical verse that refuses to be contained by traditional verse forms, structures, or patterns of narrative progression, as can be seen in the exploded verse forms used throughout the B section of this second movement. However, unlike Malone, who only tells his reader that there are stranger things than dreams, I have chosen to play upon this idea further by insisting that Nenive awakes at the point where the movement returns to the March form, thus implying that the strange sequence of images that appear in the journey across Avalon are real, but a part of reality that might only be reached through dreaming.

To form a mathematical strength, this entire movement is ultimately also constructed around rules relating to the golden section. Many composers are known to have made use of the golden section within the composition of their art works, but one

³⁰⁴ Nick Malone, *Jason Smith's Nocturnal Opera* (Blaenau Ffestiniog: Cinnamon Press, 2007), p. 6.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

artist particularly renowned for such endeavours is the Hungarian musician Béla Bartók. Unlike other instances of this device within music, Bartók's usage in the construction of both form and harmony is as strict and as significant as traditional western laws of composition.³⁰⁶ In terms of form, the 'centre of gravity' in the respective movement or work is indicated exactly by the golden section, for example, in a work of 443 bars the 274th indicates the beginning of the recapitulation.³⁰⁷ In my own work, this same mathematical insistence dictates the placement of particularly strong thematic elements within the poem and thus maintains a sense of a stylised control guiding the general progression of the work. The B section of the second movement, for example, can be divided into two groups of eight segments, formed around the central Catalogue of Haut Couture sonnet. By using the golden section to divide each half of this dance (the two sections to either side of the aforementioned central sonnet) and also the B section as a whole, three moments of climactic importance are introduced into the sequence at the ϕ division. There is also a fourth climax that occurs within the dance; this is the dominant climax for the entire movement, found from imposing the rules of ϕ onto the entire sequence of forty five segments. The pattern of Haut Couture sonnets that run throughout this movement further emphasise this connection to the golden section through both the use of the sonnet form, a sonnet finding its volta at the point of ϕ , and the adherence to the Fibonacci Sequence in the numbering of the individual sections.

Having passed the climax of the movement by the return to the March, although there is a recapitulation of structural movement to the work, the content is decidedly different, with a far stronger insistence being placed upon the physical narrative and linear progression of the piece. In terms of form this is irrelevant except where the

³⁰⁶ Ernő Lendvai, *Béla Bartók: an analysis of his music* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1979), p. 18.

³⁰⁷ $443 \times 0.618 = 273.774$ [Ibid.]

requirements of the narrative insist upon a shortening or lengthening of segments,³⁰⁸ stunting or engorging certain elements of the music to suit. Through these adjustments I break away from traditional interpretations of Ternary form, in which the repetition of A is not a recapitulation as much as a re-exertion of the original material, elaborated upon only with unwritten ornamentation, to create instead, like Conran in the Scherzo and Trio to *All Hallows*, a distorted echo of the opening to the movement.

The third movement, ‘scherzo of the questing beast’, is constructed as a nocturne and follows a fairly quick paced progression through the more traditional scherzo and trio form, in which repetitions of both sections occur several times in an alternating pattern.³⁰⁹ This differs from Conran’s interpretation of the form for he chooses to repeat the scherzo section alone, in a pattern more commonly used for a minuet and trio, rather than following the multiple reiterations described by Corder.³¹⁰ Just as Boulter uses the fugues within her collection to indicate Shostakovich’s voice, the various voices of my third movement appear as part of the structural pattern, the trios sounding the voice of Glatisant and the scherzos being formed of two parts, each providing the voices of a separate knight and Queen: the questers and voices of wisdom.

To close the symphony I have elected to follow a pattern of musical changes moving from a swift March into a slower, adagio section, before following an accelerando into a lively dance, then finally ending with a short fugue. Each section of this movement is used to represent a separate element of the final stage to the quest, the tempo indication for each serving to describe the specific stage of the journey. Unlike both Boulter and Conran, I have deliberately maintained a rigid structure through to the

³⁰⁸ As can be seen in the comparison of ‘Maiden’s Song’ (above) with its equivalent, ‘Funeral of a VIP in the Rain’ (p. 131).

³⁰⁹ Frederick Corder, ‘Scherzo’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), vii, pp. 480-482.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 481.

end of this work. Although neither poet provides the reasoning for their decisions to relax the strict formalistic rules that govern their musical poetry, it seems in part, certainly with Boulter's collection, that it is due to the difficulty of working with musical forms through the poetic medium and the sense that these are at times overly restrictive.³¹¹ For my own musical work I feel that any allowance of unstructured freedom, particularly in this final, most integral movement of the work, would detract from the concert as a whole. As discussed above in relation to Conran's *All Hallows*, since the creation of Beethoven's ninth symphony, the final movement of similar works has frequently been imbued with a sense of encompassing a complete symphony in miniature form.³¹² As such, particularly when this closing movement must also stand as the lingering impression of a completed concert, its importance grows, and thus, architecturally, I believe that the structure must remain firm and strong through to the end in order not only to more fully support the musical material riding above, but also to maintain the intensity and momentum of the work.

It was owing to this desire to maintain structural integrity through to the end of the concert that I elected to end the sequence with a fugue, one of the most structurally complex musical forms with which to work. According to Vaughan Williams, the fugue must consist of several voices of equal importance which in turn sound a single theme before individually extending away from this in a polyphonic manner, the theme being restated independently by one or several of the voices at integral points throughout the piece, including either the closing moment or immediately prior to a short coda.³¹³ The dilemma of recreating this complex polyphonic system through words at first saw the

³¹¹ Joanna Boulter, *Twenty Four Preludes & Fugues on Dmitri Shostakovich* (Todmorden: Arc Publications, 2006), p. 7.

³¹² Shera, 'Symphony', p. 224.

³¹³ Ralph Vaughan Williams, 'Fugue', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), iii, pp. 513-521.

creation of the fundamental line in ‘Beau-Geste Effect’³¹⁴ as the fugue’s theme. This theme then reappeared in a variety of iterations, including anagrams and extensions of phrase, with other layers of verse being placed alongside it to represent both the traditional recurrence in different voices and the overlapping melodies of polyphonic writing. However, whilst this did honestly represent the fugue in a fairly literal sense, due to the reader’s inability to read more than one line at a given time, as written poetry it proved repetitive and difficult to develop into anything beyond merely whimsical allusions to quest and prophecy. The resolution to this problem was, naturally, to reduce the theme to a single line or idea that might return in various guises as a form of chorus without impeding the necessary progression of the poem.³¹⁵ I also brought together onto one page all four of the initial iterations of the theme that each of the voices might be allowed to sound, as demanded by the form, but without granting an unnecessarily heavy weighting to the opening of this section. The decision to set the four stanzas in this less conventional shape was to give the impression of polyphonic sound through layout; each stanza, or voice, is created equal, each being able to stand alone, with no one being given precedence over the others. Furthermore, due to the decreasing number of syllables in each line, all four stanzas work together to draw the reader into the more intensely focussed centre.³¹⁶

Whilst free form poetics and exploded verse forms might not at first seem to hold either prominent poetic or musical structures, as discussed above in relation to reading the written poem as a form of score, that does not mean to say that this element is lacking from the text. ‘LXII’ from ‘Un-sained Strings’, for example, makes extensive use of white space and the deliberate placement of words upon the page to increase the

³¹⁴ p. 215.

³¹⁵ ‘and at that pivot point between times and time solstice came’ [p. 213.]

³¹⁶ Ibid.

musicality of the language.³¹⁷ This use of word spacing to increase musicality occurs throughout the section but is perhaps particularly noticeable in the line ‘we spoke of the ma the ma tics of mu sic’.³¹⁸ If we remind ourselves of the words of Carol Rumens, that poetry is defined by ‘silence used as a major part of a rhythmic structure’³¹⁹ we begin to see how silence, when extended into the main body of the line, might also increase the power of the line. Silence is the moment of pause, or reflection, within the line that allows the words or notes to ‘sound’. Within this particular phrase, the regular, equal separation of every syllable encourages the reader to further articulate the line, accenting every syllable instead of following what would be the more common emphases: we **spoke** of the **ma-the-ma-tics** of **mu-sic**.³²⁰ The subsequent lines in this section take this same use of silence surrounding sound, and extend the idea further, making use of the white-space in the text to recreate the sense of the words through their shape on the page:

the precision
of note to
page perfectly measured³²¹

Here spacing is no longer used to increase the accents in the line, but instead becomes a tool to offset the flow of sound, stippling the lines with moments of pause, thus emphasising the mathematical precision of word placement, reflecting the meaning of the words, and, through varying degrees of distance within the text, taking away from the reader the reassuring consonance of regularity and certainty.

³¹⁷ p. 88.

³¹⁸ Ibid., l. 22.

³¹⁹ Carol Rumens and Isabelle Cartwright, ‘Carol Rumens: Interviewed by Isabelle Cartwright’, *The Poetry Ireland Review*, 36 (1992), 8-14, p. 8. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25577392>> [accessed 8th November 2014].

³²⁰ Bold text indicating a stressed syllable.

³²¹ p. 88, ll. 23-25.

Gottfried Leibniz once commented that ‘Music is the pleasure the human mind experiences from counting without being aware that it is counting’.³²² If one views music as nothing but sound production held together by rules and process, as John Cage suggests one should, mathematics and science should hold a strong role within the composition process.³²³ As such, creating a strong numerical foundation for a piece of poetry will hopefully create a greater musical dimension to the composition. Numerically, *Solstice in the Borderland* is structured entirely around the number nine, by which I primarily mean that both poems are constructed from a number of segments that is a multiple of nine.³²⁴ In part this is due to my own opinions of the immense poetic quality of a number for which, when multiplied by any positive integer, the individual digits of the resulting numbers may be successively added together to eventually once more form the number nine;³²⁵ thus, any progression returns to the original to create a cyclic whole. There is also the musical strength of an intervallic ninth, for it is both the first of the compound intervals (which hold strength due to the amount of space between the two pitches) and also because a major or minor ninth is a compound major or minor second (a second holding strength due to the dissonant closeness of the two pitches). Thus, the interval of a ninth represents a constant fighting away from the regularity of a consonance of pitch and an escape from the tonic, just as a seventh symbolises a leading note (a return to the tonic).

In relation to *Solstice in the Borderland*, this numerical value represents both a structural poeticism and suggests an extension of music and a drawing away from

³²² Marcus du Sautoy, *The Music of the Primes* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2004). <<http://plus.maths.org/content/music-primes>> [accessed 25th August 2012].

³²³ John Cage, *For the Birds: John Cage in conversation with Daniel Charles* (London: Marion Boyars Inc., 1981).

³²⁴ 63 and 108 sections respectively.

³²⁵ e.g. $9 \times 11 = 99$. The resulting digits are then successively added: $9 + 9 = 18$, $1 + 8 = 9$.

traditional form. For the creation of ‘Fermata’,³²⁶ the penultimate segment of the concert, I have taken the sixty third section of ‘Un-sained Strings’³²⁷ as a foundation and extended the lines to follow a standard pattern of nine syllables.³²⁸ Nine is the excess in music, the extension into something new, and it also has the capacity to be so within poetry. Although ‘Fermata’ does not demonstrate a metric regularity, through the dominant tradition of pentameter and tetrameter in English-language poetry, the nine syllable line presents a prominent challenge to this expected *tonic* of poetry. To this end I have also used the nine syllable line periodically at integral moments within the poetry of this concert as a contrast to shorter lines to accentuate either particularly strong or dissonant imagery and word patterns. An important example of this can be found in ‘At the Abattoir’,³²⁹ a section constructed of predominantly unregulated line lengths with the majority containing no more than seven syllables. The only exceptions to this pattern are five lines of nine syllables each and a single line of eight syllables, the latter of which being a deliberately weighted line, falling at the point where the stanza lengths stop decreasing, and containing only three stresses: ‘malingering cold of the dead’.³³⁰ Of the five nine-syllable lines, the first two are descriptions of the abattoir building, designed to form a sense of discomfort at the moment when the building is entered. Rather than merely creating unease within the stanza, the other three nine-syllable lines, all of which fall within the closing stanza, work together to emphasise and further extend the dissonant imagery held therein: ‘only when i saw the upturned heads / horrific in their gaunt expression / [...] did i know their face each one as Him’.³³¹

³²⁶ p. 218.

³²⁷ p. 89.

³²⁸ Although each stanza also contains an eleven syllable line and closes on a seven syllable line.

³²⁹ p. 202.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, l. 26.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 35-38.

A second numerical value of importance within this work is four. The intervallic fourth in music is one of only three intervals that bear the description ‘perfect’, and the only one of these to not exist within the overtone based ‘klang’ chord.³³² As mentioned above, the number four holds an important structural position within western music systems also, for there has been a propensity, even within folk traditions, for an insistence upon composing phrases in short, four bar groupings.³³³ This is perhaps due to an ease for creating a symmetry or regularity within sections, or possibly also due to its merits as a length of phrase for singers.³³⁴ Within ‘Chase of the Beast Glatisant’ sequences of four provide a strong overriding arc, leading the audience towards the work’s close. These divisions run roughly thus: of the four movements, the fourth movement is divided into four segments; the fourth segment (the fugue) is formed of four voices framed by four appearances of the theme; the final segment of the fugue has four stanzas; the fourth stanza has four lines; the fourth line is formed of four words, of which the last is the integral, closing word of the sequence. Although this may at first seem an unnecessary, arbitrary rule to follow, it does create a sense of progression to the work, mimicking the questing nature of the final composition, so that each layer gradually becomes a tighter fold leading to a single point which might then be closed in by the coda.

Both Boulter and Conran are specifically interested in the musical structuring of the collection as one body, which, whilst other poets have attempted this to a lesser degree or from a literary perspective, perhaps places both poets as the forerunners in the creation of a new art form. The Poetic Novel is something of an undefined entity, existing as an extension to both the poetry collection and to traditional epic poetry, and

³³² Indeed, the perfect fourth does not truly occur in the overtone series until the 21st position.

³³³ Eric Taylor, *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, 2 vols (London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2005), ii, p. 175.

³³⁴ Again drawing to our attention Olson’s ideas of breath guiding length of line.

it is to this form that lengthy poetic works are most often compared. However, through the inclusion of these guiding musical structures and patterns, Boulter and Conran set their works apart from poetic novels and create more musically complex works, and furthermore, through these musical additions they create poetic works that do not need to necessarily rely on traditional literary devices. Whilst Boulter and Conran are certainly not alone in their endeavours, these two poets have unashamedly reconnected with musical structuring, and in doing so have brought the use of a structural musicality for poetry into the public eye.

Melody and Harmony Within Language

Just as the poems of *Solstice in the Borderland* are both constructed in distinct and very different structurally experimental forms, they are both also created to explore quite separate modes of harmonic and melodic composition, both in the individual movements and segments and in the fundamental harmonic ideas underpinning each poem. This diversity of musical approach within the sequence is perhaps not dissimilar to a regular twenty-first-century concert pattern, in which programmes frequently include works from an assortment of musical periods or by composers of different nationalities, resulting in clear variances in style and technique. As the aim of my concert is to address previously uncharted ground within both poetic and musical composition, I feel that it is appropriate that this should also include a variety of differing musical explorations.

Despite the wide array of melodic and harmonic techniques that appear through these poems there is one concept that is to be found repeatedly occurring: the reinterpretation and transcription of heard sounds into poetic language. This is a device that has been used by many classical composers, from Beethoven's insertion of birdsongs into his sixth symphony and Vaughan Williams's vast creaking tors and howling winds in *Sinfonia Antartica*, to Olivier Messiaen's precise seven volume transcriptions of birdsong for piano, *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*. As Messiaen revealed about his creative process, 'In dark hours ... I go into the forest, into fields, into mountains, by the sea, among birds ... it is there that music dwells for me, free, anonymous music, improvised for pleasure.'³³⁵ Known for his deep interests in ornithology and for his belief in the importance of bringing birdsong into music (as is demonstrated by the

³³⁵ Stuart Waumsley, *The Organ Music of Olivier Messiaen* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1975), p. 45.

devotion of an entire chapter to this subject within his ‘Technique de mon langage musical’ (1944)),³³⁶ Messiaen explains in this quotation the integral role of the music of the natural world upon his life and upon his own compositions. Just as Messiaen utilised these natural sounds within his work, poets have endeavoured also to record birdsong through words, their own form of music. Most notable amongst these in recent years is the poet David Morley who has created a series of poems formed around the voices of birds in the midst of his collection *The Gypsy and the Poet*, a sequence which focuses on the relationship of John Clare (a poet thoroughly immersed in the tradition of writing poems ‘found’ in nature³³⁷) and Wisdom Smith.

Morley opens the majority of these bird poems with an epigraph, drawn from a volume on recognising various avian species,³³⁸ which portrays the common sounds of each bird through a phonetic description. It is from within each of these epigraphs that the poems are grown, and thus the reader begins to recognise a sense of the rhythms and articulations of the birds’ songs recurring through their own home language of words. The willow tit, for example, is described as producing two short notes followed by a series of three longer, lower, coarser pitches. This Morley replicates within his lines, as can be seen in the following fragment: ‘skids side / slides skywards’.³³⁹ The two words that open this citation are monosyllabic and use a combination of sibilant and plosive consonance around the ‘i’ vowel to form sharply accented sounds.

Although the third word in this example is also a monosyllable and similarly makes use of the sibilant opening and the alveolar plosive to stop the word and draw it to a close, the use of the clear ‘l’ lateral in this word elongates the sound, forming the longer note suggested by the description of the bird-call. This is equally apparent in the bi-syllabic

³³⁶ Felix Aprahamian, ‘Messiaen’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), v, pp. 722-724.

³³⁷ David Morley, *The Gypsy and the Poet* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2013), p. 37.

³³⁸ ‘The epigraphs are phonetic descriptions of bird-calls from the *Collins Bird Guide*.’ [Ibid., p. 93.]

³³⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

‘skywards’, for which the use of ‘y’ in place of the ‘i’ vowel forces an adjustment of mouth shape to create the change between the ‘ai’ and ‘ɔ:’ sounds occurring in this word, thus giving the impression that the syllables have become distended. A further example of this replication of birdsong within Morley’s poetry occurs in his poem ‘Great Tits’. The epigraph to this piece describes the birdsong as ‘a simple seesawing ditty with slightly mechanical intonation’.³⁴⁰ Such a pattern becomes most noticeable in Morley’s lines ‘clingers climbers / ringers rhymers’ for which the ‘ŋ’ sound in the opening of each line provides a metallic resonance to hint at the mechanical intonation described, whilst the rhyme and mimicked rhythm found in the second line form the musical see-saw feeling mentioned.³⁴¹

As previously discussed, understanding the sound patterns and vowel modifications required within a line are common currency for singers. Unfortunately, unlike the singer, a reader of poetry rarely takes any great length of time to consider the sound shapes in a line of verse, and yet these are an integral part of a poem’s construction and can be used to create a number of effects within the line. Just as Morley describes the bird calls mimicked in his poems through epigraphs to provide the reader with a guide as to what should be heard in the text, within my own work I am endeavouring to encourage the reader to pay far closer attention to the music of the written word by reading with their ears as well as their eyes so that they might begin to hear the important sound patterns held within the text without requiring any prior explanation.

In a considerable number of the poetic segments of *Solstice in the Borderland I* play upon various rhythms and sound patterns drawn from nature. The most obvious of these are found, as with Morley’s work, in the mimicries of birdsong. This occurs as a

³⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 51.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

particularly noticeable effect within ‘An Advent to Decide’ from ‘Chase of the Beast Glatisant’.³⁴² For this segment I dissected the words used as the fundamental line in ‘Beau-Geste Effect’³⁴³ before reconstructing them in a revised order. By adjusting the text in this way I found a freedom to play with the musicality of the words and the sound-shapes of the original piece, that the two sections might not only reflect one another in an imperfect, yet balanced, manner,³⁴⁴ but also allow for the integration of more pronounced mimicries of the natural world.³⁴⁵ For this section birdsong is woven into the main fabric of the poem, separated only from the dominant melodic line by the use of italics, so that the sense of nature interacting with a more human perspective is strengthened. The most interesting element of replicating birdsong is found in the degrees to which meaning is allowed to remain, for example ‘*let-go let-go*’³⁴⁶ retains a different level of emotive meaning to ‘*withwithwithwithwith*’.³⁴⁷ To a certain degree this is due to the iambic pulse combined with the sense of command in the former, in contrast to the swift staccato movement held in the constant repetitive stressed syllable of the passive latter call. Furthermore, the soft ‘w’ consonant and the lisping ‘th’ sound of the latter call create an airier, less forcibly plosive presence than the combination of the hyphen conjoined alveolar and velar consonants in ‘*let-go*’. Thus we see how widely differing birdsongs, and indeed any ‘heard’ sounds, can be captured through simple considerations of the euphonic qualities of words.

Earlier within the concert I have endeavoured to further this same translation of pre-existing musics in a more subtle fashion, pointedly choosing not to isolate the

³⁴² p. 198.

³⁴³ p. 215.

³⁴⁴ By this I refer to the way in which the use of shared words and phrases brings a sense of recapitulation, or ‘music remembered’, into the work.

³⁴⁵ After the first iteration, any repetitions of the fundamental line may be subjected to manipulation (e.g. the creation of mimesis) for the sense of the phrase will already have been conveyed and thus might become secondary to the additional musical qualities.

³⁴⁶ p. 198, l. 14.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., l. 12.

birdsong included within segments of text from the main poetic language. An important example of this is to be found in section X of ‘Un-sained Strings’ amongst the swelling patterns of rhymed similes. Just as there are an assortment of common names for many wild plants and flowers which vary depending on region to as diverse a degree as dialect and accent, countryside lore and tradition boasts an array of phrases that purport to convey the essence of birdsong.³⁴⁸ Whilst at first the application of fanciful phrases to mimic vocal patterns may seem to be more of an issue of rhythm than of harmonic texture, through listening to the changing phonetic qualities one is still able to isolate a dominant sense of adjustments to pitch and thus find a considerably fuller melodic line within these selected words than one might at first suspect. It is this same sense of uninhibited recreation of song that I have aimed to replicate within the aforementioned pattern of similes. The line ‘i wear my skin like coarse ground Szechuan pepper’,³⁴⁹ for example, is formed around an undemanding iambic pentameter, closed by a feminine ending, yet the pattern of notes follows a far more complex line which displaces the simple base rhythm. The opening of the line moves through a sequence of vowels, returning to the ‘ai’ sound on alternating syllables, thus a series of fluting adjustments is formed: ‘ai - εə - ai - i - ai - υə’. As the placement of the repeated syllable begins on the first beat, it displaces the iambic metre, allowing the notes to ride above the fixed beat of the line. Although no longer working against the metre, this pattern of alternating repetitions is echoed by the ending of the line, in which the repeated vowel is the harsher, accented ‘ε’. The move to the second part of this line comes through a placement of two long vowels (υə - αυ : ‘coarse ground’) to form a weight in the centre of the line with a darker character, thus the ‘ε’ notes seem brighter and sharper in

³⁴⁸ A prime example of such phraseology being the Cheshire description of the Yellowhammer’s vocalisation: “A little bit of bread and no cheese.”

³⁴⁹ p. 28.

contrast.³⁵⁰ This melodic phrase ends with the following pattern: ‘αυ - ε - ρ - ε - 3:’. By avoiding any repetition outside of the two chosen vowel shapes that form this line, the other vowels become a lesser part of the melody, adding to the line but playing little part in its direction. In effect then, these lesser vowels take the role of auxiliary notes and passing notes (non-harmony notes) in that they are integral to the line, but occur outside the main harmonic movement, or dominant sound patterns, of the line.³⁵¹

In spite of the fact that vowels form the predominant weight of a note and the main body of each sound, the consideration of consonants in the composition process is equally important, for consonants create the shape and set the specific, individual tone for every note.³⁵² Such notions naturally become more noticeable within a sung line due to the placement of melismatic passages and the frequent prolonging of tones extending the length of the heard vowel; however, as the creation of sound remains the same, it is still worthy of consideration when constructing a spoken line. The consonants within the above simile (‘i wear my skin like coarse ground Szechuan pepper’) are placed, for the main part, to form an alliterative consonance of harsh sibilant and velar plosive sounds. Sibilant sounds, due to their creation at the front of the mouth, pressed between the teeth, often have a lingering presence and are notes upon which a person will rest.³⁵³ As such, even if the line were to be spoken in a monotone, there would yet be a shape to the line in which lower points would occur, influenced by these moments of sibilant relaxation. In contrast to this, the velar plosives are a much harder sound, formed further back within the mouth against the soft palate, and thus form a darker, more

³⁵⁰ By darker I refer to the timbral qualities of these particular vowels (οα and αυ) in comparison to sharper, brighter vowel sounds such as ‘i’, ‘a’ and ‘e’. [For more on vowel shapes in the English language see: Franklyn Kelsey, ‘Voice-Training’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), ix, pp. 43-66 (pp. 58-59).]

³⁵¹ Eric Taylor, *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, 2 vols (London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2005), ii, pp. 110-114.

³⁵² Kelsey, ‘Voice-Training’, pp. 58-60.

³⁵³ Cardiff School of English, Communication & Philosophy, *Consonants* (Cardiff: Cardiff University, [n.d.]). <<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/encap/contactsandpeople/academic/tench/consonants.html>> [accessed 6th September 2015].

supported note within the line.³⁵⁴ ‘Szechuan’ adjusts this pattern slightly, for here the inclusion of a ‘z’ after the opening ‘s’ increases the resonance of the tone in these consonants, gently darkening the syllable, but without overpowering the ‘s’. Although ‘s’ and ‘z’ may be seen as a connected pair of alveolar fricatives, ‘s’ is the voiceless component of this partnership and thus, in comparison, the additional resonance that appears in the voiced ‘z’ creates the impression of a darkened tone and adds a sense of timbral depth to the note.³⁵⁵ As ‘Szechuan’ is a word that has existed in several variant forms, created as part of an attempt to capture the sounds of a tonal language far removed from English, the placement of this initial pair of consonants can be viewed as a deliberate decision based heavily upon the tonal and timbral qualities that they together produce.

The various increases and releases of tensions discussed above are further aided by the rhotic ‘r’ notes held within the two long central syllables (‘coarse ground’). The letter ‘r’ is one which is frequently ignored within the English language (unlike Italian or Welsh where a rolled ‘r’ is an integral part of speech and thus is always sounded). Excluding those occasions when ‘r’ appears as the opening letter of a word, or where the consonant appears before a vowel, there is frequently an uncertainty over how best to approach shaping this letter and thus, even if it remains only at a subconscious level, the mind focuses attention around this sound, adjusting the movement through the line.³⁵⁶ Placing paired rhotics within the middle of the simile creates a lingering presence for this part of the line and focuses the attentions upon the centre of the phrase, thus emphasising the aforementioned change between vowel patterns. By increasing our understanding of the place and importance of both consonants and

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Richard Ogden, *An Introduction to English Phonetics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 89-91. <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/aber/reader.action?docID=10391754#>> [accessed 16th November 2015].

vowels within the written phrase, and how these bare skeletal aspects of words can be used to shape the poetic line within a musical context, we begin to not only compose, but also read with a musician's ear and thus hear more clearly the created soundscapes of poetry.

There are two words within each of the simile lines of part X that maintain a particular importance for the patterns: the closing word of each phrase and the word 'like'. The use of 'like' serves two purposes; firstly, to grant the phrase a place within the context of a poem, making the line a simile,³⁵⁷ and secondly, to create a musical impetus for the pattern of words. Although each species of bird has its own song pattern, the process of singing remains the same, with a passing of air through various valves and pipework to form vibrations. The word 'like' represents this well for the clear 'l' lateral that opens the syllable allows for a quick movement of soft sound before the voice strikes the hard 'k' that closes the word by stopping the air flow. Thus, the process of beginning to sing, a movement of air beginning prior to the formation of a note, is mimicked.³⁵⁸ The closing word, in contrast, is designed to encapsulate the closing note of each line of birdsong and thus must replicate not only the notes created but the silence that follows the phrase, which varies depending on the songs of the particular bird. It is the immediacy of the close that becomes the important issue. Whether this demands the two short pips of the line previously under discussion (pepper) which contains a sense of continuance even after the word has ended in a similar manner to the drawn out nasal syllable of 'fringe', or a sharp close where the word is stopped abruptly and clearly as in 'mint' or 'quick', each line creates a sense of ending, yet each also leaves a lingering presence, imbued with a suggestion that the song may

³⁵⁷ This is perhaps a double simile. It is not just, as the line suggests, how the character wears their skin that is being described. 'Like' also gives a suggestion that this is a representation of another element; in this case, birdsong.

³⁵⁸ Kelsey, 'Voice-Training', pp. 56-57.

once more begin.³⁵⁹ To this end, one can see that through a consideration of euphony and the individual sound shapes of words one can both create more complex systems of sound and also maintain a greater level of control over the musical presence of the work even after it has passed into the hands of a reader.

A slightly different form of recorded sound is to be found in ‘Beau-Geste Effect’;³⁶⁰ here, one of the most recognisable forms of animal overtone use is utilised to shape the direction and layout of the poetic section. The beau-geste effect is a form of vocal deception practised by small groups of wolves, in which the animals howl as individuals in canon, allowing their descending glissandi, and the overtones rising from these, to cross and intertwine, creating the impression of much larger groups being present.³⁶¹ This particular section of poetry is visually based upon images of ‘breaking’ wolf howls³⁶² which have been captured in sonograms and reproduced in journal articles by Passilongo,³⁶³ and by Theberge and Falls,³⁶⁴ in which the *x* axis records time and the *y* axis records frequency. These sonograms I have turned on their side so that the fundamental line lies along the left-hand margin of the page with its differing line lengths representing the rise and fall of the modulating howl. This concrete element is made more prominent by the placement of two further blocks of text, shadowing the primary theme, and, indeed, taking over from the fundamental towards the bottom of the page where the text gradually fades beneath the strong bold colouration of the second column.

³⁵⁹ p. 28.

³⁶⁰ p. 215.

³⁶¹ D. Passilongo, A. Bucciante, F. Dessi-Fulgheri, and others, ‘The Acoustic Structure of Wolf Howls in Some Eastern Tuscany (Central Italy) Free Ranging Packs’, *Bioacoustics*, 19 (2010), 159-175, pp. 171-172. <<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tbio20>> [accessed 17th April 2012].

³⁶² By ‘breaking’ howls, I refer to the breaking apart of the fundamental tone, to create strong, independent overtones.

³⁶³ Passilongo, p. 168.

³⁶⁴ J. B. Theberge and J. Bruce Falls, ‘Howling as a Means of Communication in Timber Wolves’, *American Zoologist*, 7 (1967), 331-338, p. 334. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3881437>> [accessed 14th June 2013].

The sense that the second pillar of text has grown from the fundamental line comes initially from the text itself, which opens by declaring that ‘*there is an overlap / of voices*’, before continuing with a poeticised description of the beau-geste effect, including a detailing of harmonics. This is combined at first with a very simple use of assonantal rhyme between the two voices, which, as the second stanza of the fundamental opens,³⁶⁵ gives way to an echoing of words and imagery. Through the use of this echo effect a suggestion of the initial overtone in the harmonic series is formed, for the first overtone sounds a perfect octave above the fundamental.³⁶⁶ Furthermore, by creating this greater connection between the first and second columns of the segment, the difference between these and the more distant third column is emphasised. The final column opens as the second stanza of the fundamental line begins; unlike the central column, which consists of a series of centrally aligned couplets, this final pattern is formed of five tercets of short lines which meander back and forth across the right hand side of the page. The dancing, waltz-like patterns³⁶⁷ of this final column match the faint upper image of the sonogram which demonstrates the second layer of overtones, sounding for the main part at a compound fifth, a twelfth, above the fundamental.³⁶⁸ By constructing this upper line in a clearly separate form from the other two columns, and by avoiding any true assonantal connection with the other columns, we create a more transient shape, reflecting the suggestion of the parallel fifths depicted in the sonograms to thus create the first vestige of harmony.

³⁶⁵ That which begins with the line ‘touch my lips with burning coals’.

³⁶⁶ An octave has a ratio of 2:1 and thus, whilst not technically a unison, acoustically is a perfect consonance. [L. S. Lloyd, ‘Intervals’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), iv, pp. 519-524 (p. 520).] The sense of an echoing ghost note is created because despite having different frequencies, the ratio between these two pitches creates ‘the effect of unison on the ear’. [Eric Blom, ‘Octave Unison’, in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), vi, p. 173.]

³⁶⁷ So described because the column is composed in three-line stanzas in a similar manner to the waltz movement of ‘Un-sained Strings’.

³⁶⁸ Eric Taylor, *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, 2 vols (London: ABRSM, 2005), ii, pp. 212-213.

Alongside the various natural sounds recorded above, an additional melodic shape that I have endeavoured to encapsulate within parts of this concert is, like some of the rhythmic and metric extensions found in Gerard Manley Hopkins's writing, heavily influenced by the changing impulses, freedoms and restrictions of chant.³⁶⁹ Quite how such overtly musical devices can be made manifest within poetry is perhaps a point of some contention, however this can easily be explained if one returns to the composition of the unison line with its unaccompanied, unmeasured movements, free from the restrictions of bar lines and implied accents. Pamela Coren writes of chant that 'The phrase itself is the speaker, part of a linear structure moving to and from moments of pause and silence'.³⁷⁰ Free verse poetry and other contemporary forms, with their 'unmetred' lines and irregular stresses, underpinned by the shadows of metric stability and order,³⁷¹ and similarly moving to and from moments of silence,³⁷² are a prime example of poetic forms which hold a similar shape to the flowing rise and fall of chant.

Although neither element can truly be formed within verse except in a purely metaphorical state, a sense of the simple parallel harmonies found in the organum parts of early ecclesiastical music,³⁷³ and the melismatic developments that formed a part of the compositional processes of persons such as Pérotin,³⁷⁴ might be brought into the

³⁶⁹ Pamela Coren, 'Gerard Manley Hopkins, plainsong and the performance of poetry', *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 60 (2008), 271-294, p. 271. <<http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/60/244/271.full.pdf+html?sid=31204327-5e79-44f0-9767-6cd28d74746e>> [accessed 8th September 2014].

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

³⁷¹ Michael D. Hurley and Michael O'Neill, *Poetic Form: an introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 33-34.

³⁷² 'If asked to define the very essence of a poem I'd probably say silence: that is, silence used as a major part of a rhythmic structure.' [Carol Rumens and Isabelle Cartwright, 'Carol Rumens: Interviewed by Isabelle Cartwright', *The Poetry Ireland Review*, 36 (1992), 8-14, p. 8. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25577392>> [accessed 8th November 2014].]

³⁷³ Anselm Hughes, 'Organum', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), vi, pp. 361-362 (p. 361).

³⁷⁴ Wilfrid H. Mellers, 'Pérotin (Perotinus)', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Eric Blom, 5th edn, 9 vols (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1954), vi, pp. 674-675.

poetic line through the openly improvisatory progressions of the verse.³⁷⁵ By this I refer to the way lines frequently feel as though they are growing organically from a sound pattern or passing idea found within preceding lines, extending outwards away from a fixed point. Numerous examples of this can be found throughout both of the poems, but this becomes particularly prevalent within the dance section from movement four of ‘Chase of the Beast Glatissant’.³⁷⁶ In this segment, which bears the title ‘A Hint at Glamourie’, the narrative is encapsulated by an elusive, dancing structure and thus frequently gives way to the music of the language, as can be seen in the lines ‘no / fin de fortitude fin de fate nor / monstrous figure faced in fury’.³⁷⁷ This passage begins as an extension of the opening pattern to preceding stanzas (in the form of a shared starting word) before moving through focussed sound patterns (witnessed here in the fricative alliteration) to reach the narrative’s target in the shape of Glatissant, that ‘monstrous figure faced in fury’.³⁷⁸ Furthermore, within the three sections that take the voice of the Waste Lands’ Queen,³⁷⁹ a sense of antiphonal interaction (another important performance technique in monastic chant) is created through the placement of stanzas, which leap back and forth across the page. This sense of interaction through separation perhaps grants the piece a less pre-planned, more organic feeling, which, when combined with the breath-guided line lengths, forms the unrestricted, forward-moving qualities of chant discussed above.

As a demonstration of how melodic and harmonic devices are utilised in the individual segments of *Solstice in the Borderland* I shall turn to close analysis of

³⁷⁵ As organum is a pattern of parallel movements between several simultaneously sounding voices (simple harmony) and a melisma is when several notes are used to set a single syllable, these cannot be translated directly into poetry, for the former requires multiple voices and the latter requires an extension of syllables across multiple pitches.

³⁷⁶ pp. 209-212.

³⁷⁷ p. 209, ll. 9-11.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., l. 11.

³⁷⁹ pp. 180, 197, 207.

sections of 'Un-sained Strings'. In the compositional process this opening poem was the first piece created and served as an experiment in the basic ideas of poetic melody and harmony. As such, this piece lays the foundation for the other work in terms of melodic and harmonic content and thus is the most appropriate poem for close analysis. Whilst this discussion is based upon examples taken from the finished poem, the ideas detailed here provide not only a means to aid the reader, but also a series of tools that were integral to the creation of a more musical poetry during the compositional process. Indeed, it is perhaps within the process that these compositional techniques are of greatest importance as a consideration for the work, and through their use the concert as a whole has been imbued with a far richer musical presence.

The subheading to 'Un-sained Strings' describes the poem as 'a folksong suite in F major'. The notion that a poetic work may be settled within a particular key is of course arbitrary, for although our western system of musical keys is not a fixed system, working within our current acceptance of a 440Hz concert pitch A we are able to consider the various implications of particular key signatures drawn from the music of past composers, working in the assumption that they all sound within the same series of set frequencies.³⁸⁰ Frequently, the key of F major appears to be used to form music that is redolent of the pastoral scene, for example Bach's *Pastorale in F major for organ*, the characteristic opening of the second movement to Vaughan Williams's *Pastoral Symphony*, and Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony in F major* (which was later entitled 'Pastoral Symphony' and exists as a programmatic work pursuing a narrative based in

³⁸⁰ As Peter Maxwell Davies has described, it is worth bearing in mind that 'particular focal pitches have particular expressive connotations' to a musician, and thus, even if the composer in question does not possess perfect pitch, transpositions of a work from its original tonal centre can dramatically change its character and emotive qualities. [Paul Griffiths, *Peter Maxwell Davies* (London: Robson Books, 1981), pp. 128-129.]

country scenes).³⁸¹ It was with these ideas in mind that F major was chosen as the key in which ‘Un-sained Strings’ would be composed. By writing with this particular tonal centre in mind, the associations we grant to this pitch are placed upon the poetry despite the fact that written poetry is not pitched.

Another reason for choosing this key is to play upon the colourations of the particular sound. The Russian pianist and composer Scriabin was particularly interested in the colours of the music with which he was working. He made studies of how others saw particular keys, matching them with his own thoughts, notably finding that amongst numerous other discrepancies, despite their shared wish to read music in terms of colour, he and Rimsky Korsakov viewed tonal colourations in an entirely different light to one another.³⁸² Perhaps then it is not which colour an artist sees in sound that is the important factor, but how they use the colours that they do see to create their work.³⁸³ The hue of F major provided a basis for the music of ‘Un-sained Strings’ in that this colouration was used throughout the poem to help focus the direction of the language and the degree of interaction between the various segments. Aside from this colouration there are also several hints of a tonal centre created through direct allusions to musical key signatures to be found in the poem. These are for the main part discovered through three isolated mentions of the note B^b,³⁸⁴ a reference to bubbling ‘F arpeggios’ in the river Teme,³⁸⁵ and also through a series of letter names in section LII,

³⁸¹ Interestingly, it has been suggested that F major (and A major as spring becomes summer) is the most common key of the blackbird, the songs of which have been cited as possible sources for a number of motifs in Western classical music. [Sylvia Bowden, ‘The Theming Magpie: The Influence of Birdsong on Beethoven Motifs’, *The Musical Times*, 149 (2008), 17-35, pp. 25-30. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25434536>> [accessed 2nd March 2015].]

³⁸² Tom Douglas Jones, *The Art of Light & Color* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972), p. 103.

³⁸³ It is perhaps worth mentioning however that my own colouration of F major is closer to Rimsky-Korsakov’s than Scriabin’s in that it is a warm, peaceful green.

³⁸⁴ ‘B^b black / holes’, p. 18; ‘play a final scale / B^b / swallowed by wedding bells’, p. 42; ‘low as that long / strong B^b’, p. 86.

³⁸⁵ p. 20.

'D F A B^b C[#] F E D cold trumpet calls', which describes a slow trumpet melody in D minor,³⁸⁶ the relative minor to the key of F major.

The opening segment in the Prelude to 'Un-sained Strings' forms the lyric theme for the movement; from this, all of the other parts that together create this section are constructed. This also sets a theme that will reappear in not just the final section of this same poem, but also at the close of 'Chase of the Beast Glatissant'.³⁸⁷ This segment opens with a fall, the narrator tripping into the scene with force, dragging the reader alongside to land face to face with a sheep skull: 'i first found it in falling / tripping on the Clee'.³⁸⁸ The imagery presented here forms a rich texture of ideas including a harkening back to Biblical traditions in the form of The First Fall, geographical representation through mentions of specific locations, historical material in the metaphor of the demise of the wool trade and the image of the war memorial, musical intention through the harpist and allusion to specific tonality, the timeless paradox of the black hole, and a sense of Baudelaire's aesthetic views of beauty in ugliness. The use of such a dense interweaving of concepts and thoughts beneath what is essentially a fairly simple melodic line creates a sequence of stanzas that is musically and linguistically baroque in feel. Whilst this may not immediately seem a desirable effect for the opening 'poem' of a collection, in the context of the theme and variations form through which this movement is composed, a pattern that seems simple yet is imbued with rich harmonic and melodic potential is essential for the development process to work. This wealth of material available for expansion is particularly desirable when the variation form is removed from its original musical context, for the melodic content no longer has the same capacity for manipulation through orchestration, inversion, pitch

³⁸⁶ p. 78.

³⁸⁷ See 'Fermata', p. 218, and discussion of same, p. 314.

³⁸⁸ p. 18, ll. 1-2.

displacement, or other purely formalistic approaches to thematic variation and thus requires a replacement outlet for the development process.

The linguistic patterns of this opening theme are playful in their relations, following the notion of word painting to heighten the musical language in an almost madrigal-like manner. Word painting is a term used within composition to describe the portrayal of the written word through musical effect, such as the echoing across voices in the ‘Te-whit, te-who’ chorus patterns of Thomas Vautor’s *Sweet Suffolk Owl* which mimics the natural call and response sounds of the tawny owl.³⁸⁹ By bringing these effects into poetry also, one gains an additional effect through which to influence the reader, which serves perhaps as a sonic equivalent to the shaping of concrete poems such as Herbert’s ‘Easter Wings’.³⁹⁰ Dissecting the opening stanza, one is met with a series of slippery fricatives, ‘i first found it in falling’,³⁹¹ which, when teamed with the feminine ending to the line, become evocative of the character’s unsteadiness. This smoothness is immediately stopped at the line break, with the second line opening and closing on a hard occlusive, the alveolar ‘tripping’ followed by the velar ‘Clee’, each posing as a physical obstruction in the line to trip the narrator.³⁹² The stanza closes with the results of these obstructions: a suspension in the air through the long vowel sound of ‘over’ followed by several bumps through the sharp jagged syllables of ‘ant-constructed’, to land heavily in the thick velar close of ‘tussock’.³⁹³

Word painting within the poetic line can be presented in varying forms as can be seen from the various plays of language that continue throughout the stanzas of this poetic section; these appear particularly prominently in lines such as ‘her long bone

³⁸⁹ Thomas Vautor, ‘Sweet Suffolk Owl’, in *The Oxford Book of English Madrigals*, ed. by Philip Ledger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 303-309.

³⁹⁰ George Herbert, ‘Easter Wings’, in *The Temple: sacred poems and private ejaculations* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1968), pp. 34-35.

³⁹¹ p. 18, l. 1.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, l. 2.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, l. 3.

ovine-scented nose'.³⁹⁴ Whilst the word 'long' has an elongated shape through the nasal 'ŋ', with its brief 'ɒ' vowel it does not truly reflect its own meaning. How then, one might ask, does this demonstrate word painting? It is within the description of the sheep's skull, the point of reference for the suggestion of length, that the music is constructed of words containing the stretched 'oo' vowel. Length of sound and image is thus formed within the physical descriptions of the skull. Several stanzas later in the segment, this same use of syllabic interplay occurs, to very different effect, in the lines 'the woman sits / knits harp strings into a web of sinews'.³⁹⁵ Through the use of rhyme within the lie of the line, and to bridge line breaks also, the reader is presented with the sense of an overlapping of multiple layers. This, when used in conjunction with the short sharp series of syllables progressing through an array of vowel shapes creates a suggestion of interweaving sounds, mimicking in sound the physical actions of the woman mentioned.

The closing stanza of this same segment speaks of the cross standing in Ludlow's Castle Street as a memorial for those killed during the First and Second World Wars:

and in Castle Street those opium stones
 grate s l o w l y cross
 weather together and blossom
 barbed by metallic end-of-autumn birds³⁹⁶

Although the creation of this image does not necessarily make use of word painting to enhance the written picture, it is still present for the subversion of this given image, for the formation of a picture of time progression, and for the geological changes for which the Wenlock and Ludlow areas of Shropshire are famous. In the second line of this

³⁹⁴ Ibid., l. 5.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., ll. 15-16.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., ll. 18-21.

quatrain the musical effects become particularly pronounced, for whilst this line only contains three words, amounting to four syllables, the line is severely slowed by a visual spreading of the letters in the central word, 'slowly'. This forms an elongated pivot for the descriptions of the changing stones, mimicking the length of the process and thus adding a suggestion of timelessness, or, alternatively, creating the implication that in its entirety this poem is to cover a vast expanse of time. The opening and closing words of this line are monosyllabic and are formed of clustered, changing consonants that the pronunciation of these words might hold an almost onomatopoeic quality reminiscent of the process itself. 'Grate' opens with a velar sound, followed immediately by a rhotic consonant moving into the harsher 'er' vowel before closing with the alveolar 't'. The process of this syllable's creation is thus a movement through a series of harsh sounds, progressing from the back of the mouth through to the front. 'Cross' follows a similar process but, unlike 'grate', moves into the slipperier compression of air found in its sibilant double 's' close, indicative of the formation of sedimentary rocks through a compression of tiny particles.

A final manner in which word painting is manifest in this segment comes through the adoption of a sense of a more 'natural' form of music, which is to be found within the melodic hints towards the sounds of birds and the universe at large. Although this has been extensively addressed already in this section, we now turn to a deliberately artificial variation of this form and how this might be used to create specific effects. The more prominent assertion of this artifice is encapsulated within the closing line of this segment: 'barbed by metallic end-of-autumn birds'. This image depicts the visual peculiarities of the Ludlow memorial cross yet also resonates with the idea of a silent and harsh mimicry of birds, suggestive of the 'capturing' of birdsong that occurs in the later sections and also in the second poem. Mention of the sounds of

the universe is to be found in the passing reference to ‘B^b black / holes’.³⁹⁷ Here an allusion to the recorded pitch of a particular black hole is formed³⁹⁸ alongside a simile of the thumb piano and as part of a description of the sheep skull. Through the use of the latter two images which give suggestions of the first technological revolution (sheep skull)³⁹⁹ and a mechanical music (thumb piano), a natural music is again placed within the artificiality of human creation.

The first variation in the Prelude is formed of six quintains and an envoi of hexasyllabic lines.⁴⁰⁰ Although without a fixed pattern in terms of rhythmic regularity or rhyme scheme, this segment is constructed around a combined use of inner rhyme and companionable words so that a sense of harmonious, musically-aware sonic relations becomes the main focus for the progression of the line. Whilst the inner rhymes of this section consist predominantly of alliterative and assonantal half-rhymes and visual-rhymes to form a sense of musical movement without the over-powering presence of a heavy and controlling sonic pattern, there is also a constant sense of the arising presence of companionable words in the form of part-repetitions, as can be found in the lines ‘But now expansion, but / Now extension, but now / Pretension’.⁴⁰¹ Here rhyme is a dominant feature of the musical line; however, I feel that it is the differences between the words that are important rather than the similarities, for the repetitive phrase is used simply to catch the attention of the reader and propel them through the work whilst the changes in pattern develop the sense of the phrase.

Repetition is an effective tool within both music and poetry, and yet, by furthering this

³⁹⁷ Ibid., ll. 6-7.

³⁹⁸ Lynn Jenner (ed.), *Interpreting the ‘Song’ of a Distant Black Hole* (Maryland: Goddard Space Flight Centre, 2008). <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/goddard/universe/black_hole_sound.html> [accessed 28th November 2012].

³⁹⁹ A revolution formed from the rise of the wool industry, beginning late in the twelfth century and flourishing through the following two hundred and fifty years to see cloth manufacture as Ludlow’s leading industry until at least the fifteenth century. [David Lloyd, *The Concise History of Ludlow* (Ludlow: Merlin Unwin Books, 2005), pp. 40-41.]

⁴⁰⁰ p. 19.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., ll. 11-13.

and allowing a development of the line through displacement of the stress pattern, alongside the repeated end syllables, one creates the impression of a rising sequence, thus building the tensions of the phrase.⁴⁰²

Throughout these lines, the aforementioned rhythmic displacement of the phrase creates a secondary musical complication. As this motif is formed of five syllables set within the hexasyllabic line, the voice is displaced with every recurrence. This not only changes the tempo by encouraging a quicker movement towards the rhyming words of the lines, but also makes each recurrence feel very different to the last due to the adjustment of emphases caused by the position of the line break. Line breaks play a strong role in establishing the melodic features of this particular segment of the poem, whether for the effect they have upon the emphases of an otherwise predominantly free musical line, or for the more extreme ‘splicing’ of words found on several instances, as is found in the phrase ‘Deconstructed the con- / Structed tomb’.⁴⁰³ Despite their interest as compositional techniques, neither of these devices may be heralded as either new or original within the scope of poetic creation; indeed, the former (rhythmic displacement) has a lengthy history and the latter (splicing of words), whilst used to a lesser degree, has precedent within a number of contemporary published poems such as Peter Oram’s ‘IV. *Flow my teares...*’⁴⁰⁴ in which the division of the word ‘Reviled’ allows for a clever continuation of an acrostic formed from the opening word of each line. Within this second segment of ‘Un-sained Strings’ there are two uses of this same technique in which the effect is made more striking by being placed across stanza breaks. Whilst this might at first prove disconcerting for the reader, it creates an underlying dissonance to

⁴⁰² A rising sequence is when a musical phrase is repeated immediately after its primary declaration, but raised a degree higher in pitch. The descending equivalent is a falling sequence.

⁴⁰³ p. 19, ll. 2-3.

⁴⁰⁴ Peter Oram, ‘IV. *Flow my teares...*’, in *White and other poems* (Clunderwen: Starborn Books, 2001), p. 48, l. 8.

the phrase that can, in its wider context, help to build a stronger musical presence for the text.

The first of these dissonances is formed from the word ‘comforter’: ‘snow-day comfort- // Er, or perhaps’.⁴⁰⁵ Through this division of the word several effects are established, the first of which is a simple tying together of stanzas drawn apart by an enforced yet arbitrary regularity. My decision to do this was also to create a visual mimicry of the narrative portrayed in this segment which describes the ready destructions of what had previously been considered holy or untouchable grounds. This is emphasised by the use of the second word broken by a stanza break, ‘re- // Ligion’,⁴⁰⁶ which through its division plays upon alternative uses of the ‘re-’ prefix to suggest a repetitive ‘re-creation’ or ‘re-newal’ of theological thought. Dividing ‘comfort- // Er’ also allows for the forming of a new voice within the line, for this break causes the second stanza to open with the words ‘Er or perhaps’, a series of companionable sounds for which each of the opening three syllables is closed with the hard rhotic ‘r’ consonant. This effect creates a brash, harsh sound, reflective of the speech patterns of a particular group of wearers of the ‘Ugg-boot’, mentioned in the opening stanza, the conversations of whom invaded my sound recordings in a similar manner to the birdsongs discussed above.

As this poem progresses there is an increased insistence upon the use of pre-existing factual information and primary and secondary written sources as a part of the poetic texture. This not only forms a secondary layer for the writings by making even the recording of the human a recreation of the real, as has been the endeavour with the natural world, but grounds the poetry within the realms of truth, even if only as a partial truth. This is a technique that performs a major role in the writings of Michelene

⁴⁰⁵ p. 19, ll. 5-6.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., ll. 15-16.

Wandor, particularly in her collection *The Music of the Prophets* which follows the stories of the Jewish people in Britain at the time of the Commonwealth, focussing particular attention upon Menasseh Ben Israel and his interactions with Oliver Cromwell.⁴⁰⁷ In using pre-existing materials the poet is faced with a number of dilemmas, for not only do the words bear the weight of their original usage, but also, unless the quotation is formed from poetry or song, the likelihood of these older texts being imbued with the desired lyric qualities or of them easily interweaving with the musical languages of the contemporary poet is not great. Thus, unless dissonances and cacophonous sounds are the desired effect, a different approach must be followed in order to form a suitably harmonious dialogue between these opposing systems. Although Wandor approaches these difficulties in several ways, it is important to note that there is never an attempt to either disguise the borrowed texts or to bury them beneath her own poetic language. At all times Wandor portrays the taken language as an integral part of the poetry's music, as can be seen in the following passage:

Wherefore I humbly entreat your Highnesse, that you would with a gracious eye have regard unto us, and our Petition, and grant unto us free exercise of our Religion, that we may have our Synagogues, and keep our own publick worship, as our brethren doe in Italy, Germany, Poland, and many other places, and we shall pray for the happinesse and Peace of this your much renowned and puissant Common-wealth.⁴⁰⁸

Within this section Wandor recreates Menasseh's plea to Cromwell for the right for the Jewish people to freely worship in England. She maintains the stylistic patterns of period writings both in terms of phraseology and sentence structure, and also makes use of seventeenth-century spellings and capitalisation of letters to very firmly fix this segment within an historical context. However, there is also a series of subtle

⁴⁰⁷ Michelene Wandor, *The Music of the Prophets*, (Todmorden: Arc Publications, 2006).

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31, ll. 9-15.

adjustments occurring through the prosody of this particular verse that heighten the musicality of language.

Despite the free-flowing lines, half-rhymes pepper the phrases, drawing together the various lines of an otherwise lengthy sentence. The recurring ‘i:’ vowels form a prime example of this, appearing in the words ‘humbly’, ‘entreat’, ‘regard’, ‘free’, ‘Religion’, ‘we’, ‘keep’, ‘Italy’, ‘Germany’, ‘many’, ‘happinesse’, ‘Peace’, ‘renowned’ and ‘puissant’. Thus, each line is connected through a gentle assonantal link around which more dominant rhymes, those containing a degree of consonance as well as assonance such as ‘Highnesse’, ‘us’ and ‘happinesse’ or ‘Petition’, ‘Religion’ and ‘brethren’, may be placed. Whilst none of the words mentioned form end-rhymes, there is still a strong sense that these guide the progression of the words and the development of this sentence. The line breaks, despite featuring only after what at first glance seem inconsequential words, play an important role in the musicality of the segment also for they encourage a gentle pause at the point of progression into a new idea, thus emphasising the melodic development. Additionally, by displacing the line breaks, that weaker words fall at the end of the line and stronger words appear at the opening, a mimicry of the effects of trochaic metre is formed through grammatical sense to thus embody the commanding pulse of such a metre without feeling its domineering rhythmic presence. Furthermore, by leaving gentler line endings, the language becomes less demanding, encapsulating the sense of plea or request of which the words speak.

Within ‘Un-sained Strings’ the use of borrowed texts is particularly prominent in the two versions of Lady Brilliana Harley’s letters.⁴⁰⁹ Lady Harley’s epistolary writings provide a rich and interesting account of seventeenth-century life in a wealthy household in the lead up to the English Civil War. The lively and opinionated language

⁴⁰⁹ pp. 37, 72.

that she committed to the page enables a twenty-first-century reader to form a strong impression of both Lady Harley's voice and character and to gain an unusual viewpoint of the society and politics of the time. By reforming these letters as epistolary poetic segments the melodic character of Harley's writings are maintained through the character and shape of her voice, yet the harmonic quality is increased through a dominant focus upon particular themes within the letters and upon fragments with a greater musical potential.⁴¹⁰ To this is added a contemporary dialect that is in keeping with the strong characteristics of the older text yet is also designed to contain companionable sounds to thus enhance the musicality of the older writings. This is particularly noticeable in the couplet 'something is amiss nothing wrong in this but even my father's ientell fiseke / has no effect & he desire you send downe a littell Bibell to preserve us'.⁴¹¹ Here the play upon the sharp breaths of sibilance, particularly in conjunction with the 'r' and 'ar' vowels, travels throughout the line as it changes back and forth between seventeenth-century and contemporary text. Thus, what was originally merely a harshness of sound in 'father's ientell fiseke' becomes a dominant feature throughout the couplet, suggestive of a person in discomfort through its likeness to hissed inhalations of pained breathing.

In the same manner that I have adopted and adapted musical structures for poetic forms, another technique that I have made prominent use of as part of the harmonic language, and thus the melodic language also, is the emulation of particular musical styles through the choice of subject matter. Part VI of 'Un-sained Strings' opens in strict decasyllabic lines which it resolutely follows for the first three stanzas. This segment plays upon folk tales and the creation of songs from such tales, forming a rich texture of fable from faint foundations of fact. The opening stanza serves to depose

⁴¹⁰ Fragments that I believe have a more euphonious quality.

⁴¹¹ p. 72, ll. 15-16.

reality as the primary system for the reader by forming a linguistic pattern redolent of dreams. The narrator declares that they can hear a woman singing in the movement of the water before they close their eyes and gently ‘settle into *rhythm settle into / rhythm settle into rhythm settle / into rhythm into repetition*’.⁴¹² Through the repetitions of these words and the peculiarities of the typography there is a suggestion that the words are rippling across the page beneath tired eyes, blurring into sleep. Musically this then forms a similar pattern to the gentle relaxation of music into a familiar and long expected key after a period of sustained removal from the tonal centre, as the word ‘repetition’ is finally gained.

The strict regularity of this section’s syllabic pattern collapses with the line ‘and in the fire warmth her wires stretched and sang’ so that the description of the harp’s song is created within a previously unseen freedom of form and shape.⁴¹³ The lines then proceed to arpeggiate from a common word or sound, as can be seen in the following pattern of words: ‘through the claws of Niskai / through flailing trails of waterlogged wool / through unwinding / unlacing / unrestraining cords’.⁴¹⁴ By ‘arpeggiate’ I refer to the way in which each line extends from a common, or recurring, figure (‘through’ in the first three lines followed by ‘un-’ from the third line onwards). Like an arpeggiating chordal pattern, these lines slowly develop from related sounds to create an harmonious, yet organic progression of sound. In this manner, the tale continues through three further segments, each closed with the gradually developing chorus line ‘I ran I ran I ran I run’.⁴¹⁵ To this degree VI makes use of an almost *cerdd-dant*-like style of music in that there are two dominant melodic elements of equal proportions working as one body (the separate musics of the words and of the

⁴¹² p. 23, ll. 7-9.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, l. 28.

⁴¹⁴ p. 24, ll. 3-7.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 12.

underlying musical forms).⁴¹⁶ This also plays upon the older styles of storytelling mentioned in the narrative, in which the ‘melody’ of the tale would be placed alongside an accompanying tune.⁴¹⁷ By making use of such techniques therefore, ‘Un-sained Strings’ is not only reconnected with musical forms, but also finds its placement within a heritage of overlapping music and literature reconfirmed.

Through an endeavour to capture an element of song or past music within poetry, a writer might make use of titles or lyrics that are particularly recognisable to the target audience in the hope of influencing the overall soundscape for their reader. Later within section VI, mention is made of a specific piece of medieval music in the form of an italicised quotation: ‘*ther is no rose of swych vertu as is the rose that bare Jhesu*’.⁴¹⁸ Through the inclusion of this quotation, the desire to imbue the segment with an additional layer of musical impetus becomes manifest, for the centuries-old melodic line, in part due to its modal nature and recent resurgence in use, carries a considerable weight of sonic imposition into the poetic line.⁴¹⁹ When this line is then succeeded by the stuttered ‘alleluya’ there lingers within the sounds a sense of intonation and melisma drawn from the original medieval carol in spite of the clear manipulations of the line and the lack of written pitch marked on the page.⁴²⁰ Thus, memories of the original sounds of a particular piece of music are drawn into the main texture and soundscape of the poetry.

This is similar to the idea of a virtual relationship between words and music, which is addressed by Laurence Kramer in his article ‘Speaking Melody, Melodic

⁴¹⁶ Cerdd Dant: About (Wales: Cymdeithas Cerdd Dant Cymru, 2011). <<http://cerdd-dant.org/about.html>> [accessed 12th November 2015].

⁴¹⁷ Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric*, 2nd edn (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1978), p. 26.

⁴¹⁸ p. 24, l. 22.

⁴¹⁹ Even if the tune is not known to the reader, through the given words and the use of older spellings, the sense of ecclesiastical Christmas music drawn from a past era is carried into the poetic line, still partially creating the effect discussed above.

⁴²⁰ p. 24, ll. 23-24.

Speech'. The author describes this concept as occurring 'when a musical phrase associated with certain words is used motivically, but without the words being either uttered or sung.'⁴²¹ One of the numerous examples provided by Kramer to demonstrate this concept is Mahler's mournful echoing of *Frere Jacques* as a funeral March within the slow movement of his *Symphony number 1 in D major*. The listener may pick up on this tune and recall the words that commonly accompany it, but, as is acknowledged, 'what we are to do with this information the melody does not say.'⁴²² Although Kramer is writing specifically about how this relationship is iterated within a musical work, the virtual connection may be equally apparent within the composition of poetry and will undoubtedly permit additional musical interpretations within the set pattern of words.

To this end, throughout my concert references to music appear, in part to remind the reader of the importance of music within poetry, but predominantly to bring additional sounds and textures to the work and to imperceptibly inform the reader's interpretation of the melodic dimensions of the poems: to train the reader to hear the music in these lines. Obvious examples of this may be found in parts XXVII and XXXVI, the former of which is designed to fit within the madrigal style and thus each line ends with a refrain of '[*fa-la la-la la-la la*]',⁴²³ a pattern that has become iconic in the style of madrigal singing and which sets the character of the section as a good-humoured, but slightly bawdy, camp song. The latter of these examples not only quotes from elements of Elizabethan verse theatre in the words 'weed, wide enough to wrap', which refers to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,⁴²⁴ but also echoes a popular Dowland song in the line '*fine knacks for ladies, cheap, choice, brave and*

⁴²¹ Laurence Kramer, 'Speaking Melody, Melodic Speech', in *Word and Music Studies, Volume 7: Word and Music Studies: Essays on Music and the Spoken Word*, ed. by Suzanne M. Lodato and David Francis Urrows (New York: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 127-143 (p. 127).

<<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/aber/reader.action?docID=10380575>> [accessed 19th September 2015].

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁴²³ p. 49, ll. 3, 6 and 9.

⁴²⁴ p. 58, l. 5.

new’,⁴²⁵ and the racy Weelkes madrigal ‘Strike it up Tabor’ through the running pattern of words: ‘*Fie! Fie! Fie! Fie! Fie! Fie! Fie!*’⁴²⁶ By bringing these pre-existing patterns into the poetic line, period music may be brought into play, to thus form a stronger soundscape in the mind of the reader and again to encourage the reader to focus upon the sounds of the poetry.

It is not merely through the use of a thematic continuity that melodic constancy and harmonic relation are formed. Interweaving between the various segments of these poems are integral sonic relations, creating a sense of interconnectedness to the whole. An example of such sonic recurrences is to be found in the use of linguistic enharmonic equivalents such as the paronomasia (or pun) and homophones, which create an aural repetition within the line and yet a sense of difference and progression is also formed through the change in definitive meaning of the word used. Within ‘Un-sained Strings’ a use of one such lingual interplay comes between sections III and V on the word ‘Warden’. In the first instance, ‘rummaging through fallen wardens’, this word refers to fallen fruit by the roadside, wardens being a type of pear,⁴²⁷ whilst in the second it speaks of church wardens: ‘around aisle / striding wardens’.⁴²⁸ In creating this connection of sound, the two sections become intrinsically linked, so that they begin to draw notes also from one another in terms of thematic and intended sense. Thus, the ‘fallen wardens’ become more than mere fruit, for, with the Christian echoes of part V and in context with the rest of the poetic imagery of part III, the falling fruit perhaps begins to conjure images of the idea of the First Fall and the fruit of Eden. The later poetic segment treats the information of III in a very different manner, perhaps allowing a sense of the delicate descriptive imagery of the natural world to convert the

⁴²⁵ Ibid., l. 1.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., l. 13.

⁴²⁷ p. 20, l.26.

⁴²⁸ p. 22, ll. 11-12.

church wardens featuring in part V into mimics of the faeries of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: 'some to kill cankers / in musk rose buds'.⁴²⁹

Sonic relations are found too through a use of recurring sound shapes to bridge section changes within the poem, forming a flowing constancy through the verse. Between parts XIV and XV a shared phonetic shape draws the sections closer, to create the impression that the second of these sections has grown organically from the soundscape of the first. XIV closes with the repetitive susurrations of 'crumbled to ash / to ash / to aaa *shhhh* ...', creating a soft, *dolce*, texture from which rises the hushing sibilance of 'Shush, my love, I'm just the yellow feathered / jongleur' that opens part XV.⁴³⁰ In drawing apart the word 'ash' so that vowel and consonant sounds stand as separate entities the sense that the succeeding poem has emerged from the former is intensified.

The language of XV, whilst forming a poem in its own right, maintains throughout a sense of the dream-like qualities with which it begins, carrying the previously mentioned sibilance through to the segment's end. Of the sound shapes chosen within this sonnet, emphasis is placed upon a use of musical terminologies, onomatopoeia, repetitions and prominent internal rhymes. These devices create a dense pattern of cyclic sound due to the interplay of intensely overbearing sonic relations, as can be found in the lines 'weather dripping / dank as decay, as tripping disarrayed / through pouring rain, through ooze-greened passageways, / trails ablaze',⁴³¹ and the rhythmic freedoms of the frequently elongated lines, such as 'morendo, dying away on a breath'.⁴³² This dream-like quality is further exemplified by the use of conversational,

⁴²⁹ Ibid., ll. 13-14.

⁴³⁰ pp. 34-35.

⁴³¹ p. 35, ll. 3-6.

⁴³² Ibid., l. 10. [I describe this phrase as elongated for, despite consisting of the same number of syllables as the previous lines, this phrase is lengthened by the moment of rest created through the breathy close of the Italian term in conjunction with the subsequent caesura.]

spoken endearments, thus forming the impression of a lullaby, or similar shared words of comfort. As can be seen from the combinations of these various effects, bridging the white space between sections not only forms an interconnectedness of segments but also grants the poem ('Un-sained Strings') as a whole the sense of a stream of consciousness. This is particularly effective within the first movement, for demonstrating that preceding and succeeding segments are related heightens the impression that they each exist as variations upon a single theme (as demanded by the chosen form), and thereby increases the sense of an overriding musicality.

A final element of importance in terms of harmony and melody in poetry is the use of sonic development as a guiding force for the language used. This is one of the dominant features of Robert Minhinnick's 'An Opera in Baghdad'.⁴³³ By sonic development I refer to the manner in which the definitive 'sense' of words becomes secondary to the sound within the creation process, so that the sounds of one phrase present a sonic palette from which the sound shapes of subsequent lines may be drawn. Within the fourteen parts that make up this sequence, Minhinnick repeatedly returns to familiar patterns, phrases and ideas but in an expanded and developed form, thus creating a sense of recapitulation, of music remembered, within an otherwise fairly organic progression. The sequence opens 'Here's a feather. / Made of fire. / Where's my father? / Made of fire. / All this fiddle. / Made of fire.'⁴³⁴ Maintaining the airy push of fricative sounds, the alternating lines are gently manipulated so that each gives the impression that it has been formed from an adjustment of the previous phrase. 'Feather' becomes 'father' through a mere adaptation of the 'ε' vowel into an 'α:' sound, and then 'fiddle' is formed through a further vowel adjustment alongside the hardening of the soft 'th' consonant into the alveolar 'dd' and the compression of the closing rhotic

⁴³³ Robert Minhinnick, 'An Opera in Baghdad', in *King Driftwood* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2008), pp. 19-26.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. 19, ll. 1-6.

consonant into ‘l’. This sense of sonic development becomes less focussed on mere adaptation and more musically prominent as the poem continues into the later sections as can be seen in the opening to part two: ‘Saddam? / He ran / dressed as a beggar. / Dressed as a businessman. / Yes, Saddam Hussein, he ran away.’⁴³⁵ Whilst one can easily isolate the assonantal, consonantal and alliterative devices that drive the musicality of this poem, the manner in which the stanza progresses does not feel rigidly planned, but, rather, the sound shapes seem to expand through the phrase, making use of line breaks and repetition to aid this sense of organic progression.

Section XLI of ‘Un-sained Strings’ makes particular use of sonic development, with individual lines and phrases forming a foundation from which new word patterns may emerge and evolve. This begins with the repetition and development of the line ‘our shoes and stockings’⁴³⁶ which opens as a rhyming extension to ‘soil clad rocks’ (rocks/stockings).⁴³⁷ The repetitions of this line, whilst only adjusting very gently, serve to form a basis for the more obvious developments of later stanzas in which, as with Minhinnick’s poem, the words provide both an impetus and a means for the progression of the verses. This is particularly obvious in the following stanza:

some old adage
 some old rhyme
 anytime you come here
 come near
 come closer dear⁴³⁸

Dominant rhymes run through the stanza, clearly linking the ‘some’ of its opening and the ‘come’ of its close, alongside which flowing ‘ai’ and ‘iə’ vowel shapes sound. It is not only the rhymes that aid this progression however, but also, as with Minhinnick’s

⁴³⁵ Ibid., ii, p. 19, ll. 1-5.

⁴³⁶ p. 64, l. 6.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., l. 4.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., ll. 14-18.

use of line breaks, the spacing and layout of the stanza. The use of visual shape heightens melodic flow through this pattern for it causes paired sound shapes to fall alongside one another, thus intensifying the call for the attentions of the reader upon these specific points of focus.

This segment of the poem continues in a similar vein, with a primary focus being granted to sonic development throughout the stanzas. In this manner the sense of a stream of consciousness is exemplified, for this development of sound is echoed in the development of thematic material and subject also, to thus form a euphonious constancy and equality between the sounds and sense of the poetry. This becomes particularly evident between lines sixty eight and seventy three:

at my pedal press
 and she still dressed
 in lady smocks
 in liquid samites
 in passions carnelian
 carmine bright wine ⁴³⁹

The line is pushed from a discussion of the loom and spinning wheel into a musing on clothing through the rhyme of ‘press’ and ‘dress’. Beneath this movement, however, there remains a constancy of pulse, formed by the alignment of words and the use of space. Thus, the image of work is maintained whilst the thought process continues above it, from weaving process to the finished, worn fabric.⁴⁴⁰ The attention that is granted to clothing here links these lines back to lines 25-28 of the same segment, in which clothing designed for ease of undressing is discussed: ‘and my mother always hated buttons / buttons that undressed you / oh so gently / quick as nakedness’.⁴⁴¹

Through this a sense of returning is built into this section, seen particularly prominently

⁴³⁹ p.65, ll. 37-42.

⁴⁴⁰ Interestingly, however, none of these completed ‘fabrics’ are formed from cloth. Our narrator clothes herself in interwoven fabrications rather than the woven fabrics of her loom.

⁴⁴¹ p. 64, ll. 25-28.

in suggestions of the river's presence ('liquid samites') and the interplays of adulthood and childhood. Again, these returns of past musical ideas are based upon the similar progressions of Minninnick's 'An Opera in Baghdad', and create an eddying, cyclic feeling of progression to the whole. The final stanza firmly fixes this in place with its sudden, abrupt return to the opening stanza, as if with the lines

'mixed with melancholy misery / purpose for gott ?'⁴⁴² the very limits of sonic development and mental progression had been reached.

⁴⁴² p. 66, ll. 8-9.

Conclusion

The intrinsic relationship that exists between music and words is an element that has provoked considerable interest, and elicited numerous creative responses from artists composing in both media. Although in many cases this relationship only forms a small part of the completed art-form, in both poetry and in music its presence is still clearly felt within the works. Just as I have endeavoured to press this relationship further within the field of poetry, one composer that makes a more extensive use of the interplay of these elements through the medium of music is Dr Jeffrey Lewis.

In several of the early performances of Jeffrey Lewis's choral *Sacred Chants*, the texts to the works were read aloud separately in Latin and then in English translation before the performance of each movement.⁴⁴³ This separation of text from the sung line grants both words and music the room to exist as entities in their own right, with neither being granted precedence over the other, and also perhaps places the listener in a similar position of exploration and discovery to that which is faced by the composer, in that words, then meaning, then musical response are gradually revealed. Through these repetitions of the fragments of text, followed by Lewis's beautiful, hypnotic musical textures,⁴⁴⁴ an intensely focussed, highly charged sense of meditation is created. Indeed, the separation and repetition of text in order to form this sense of meditation is an element which the composer has described as being an integral, and very moving, part of the overall artistic experience, and one which should always be included in performances of the chants.⁴⁴⁵ In my opinion, unset, musically-influenced verse, with its heavy emphasis upon the repetition of ideas, phrases, rhythms and

⁴⁴³ Jeffrey Lewis, *Sacred Chants I-XI* (Bangor: Cathedral Press, 2012), p. 88.

⁴⁴⁴ David Kenneth Jones, *The Music of Jeffrey Lewis*, 2 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Manchester, 2011), i, p. 20.

⁴⁴⁵ Jeffrey Lewis, 'Jeffrey Lewis in Conversation with David Jones part 2', *Cathedral Press*, Youtube, 18th April 2013. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2viH00Aefpg>> [accessed 4th November 2014].

sound-shapes brings a similarly extended meditative quality to poetry. Through the additional focus of this musical presence, the scenes, images and emotions portrayed by the words are enhanced as they have the power to become more captivating and more memorable for the reader, in the same way that orchestral or choral sounds and emotions have the ability to linger in the minds of an audience long after the music has stopped.

Despite the clear importance of words and word-setting within choral writing, it is interesting to note that Lewis's approach to texts in the *Sacred Chants* is far from conventional, with vowels being stretched beyond the confines of the written word,⁴⁴⁶ text being entirely absent from the main body of the movement,⁴⁴⁷ language being laid out through musical code,⁴⁴⁸ and on the whole a primary emphasis seemingly being placed upon the presentation of a musical texture rather than text. Alongside the setting of individual words and phrases, this divergence from more traditional ideas of word-setting and word-painting grants the *Sacred Chants* 'a sense of intense contemplation and concentration, of having passed beyond mere illustration or illumination'⁴⁴⁹ to form a reinterpretation, or re-imagining, of the underlying sense of the words through the medium of music.

In my endeavours towards the creation of a more musically-aware form of poetry for this concert, the aspects of Jeffrey Lewis's choral music mentioned above proved to be of particular interest. Although the specific artistic media with which we

⁴⁴⁶ As in 'Aeterna Christi Munera', for which the 'a' vowel that closes the first and last word is used as a sustained sound between individual words, between full iterations of the text, and in separate vocal lines whilst the text fragment is sounding in a different voice. [Jeffrey Lewis, 'Chant VII: Aeterna Christi Munera', in *Sacred Chants I-XI* (Bangor: Cathedral Press, 2012), pp. 42-47.]

⁴⁴⁷ e.g. 'Laudate', for which there is an optional unaccompanied alto solo line to precede the movement before the organ plays the entire chant as a wordless solo. ['Chant VI: Laudate', in *Ibid.*, pp. 27-41.]

⁴⁴⁸ Chant VIII, for instance, is constructed as a passacaglia for which the theme (beginning on the pedals) is a five note pattern based upon the letters of Luciano Berio's name. Furthermore, the choral lines are sung to the various vowel sounds that form this name rather than words or the true name. ['Chant VIII: Passacaglia in Memoriam Luciano Berio', in *Ibid.*, pp. 48-59.]

⁴⁴⁹ Jones, vol. ii, p. 322.

are working, and our motivations for creation, are perhaps quite different, the exciting returns that Lewis makes to older musical styles within a contemporary medium, the use of music as an explorative meditation upon an idea, and his own particular relationships between words and music, present a number of useful questions to also bring to poetry. For example, in a similar manner to the way in which Lewis is more interested in creating expressive meditations through music than in clear word settings, I am less concerned with the creation of a clear musical setting, but instead focus my attentions upon the exploration of music within words, and the potential this has for strengthening verse. Lewis's assertion that the role of music is 'to prepare and elevate the mind'⁴⁵⁰ is therefore also of considerable interest when approaching musically influenced verse. To write poetry with an awareness of the musicality of language, in both the assimilation and separation of these two elements, creates the potential to focus and intensify a reader's interaction with the verse and to grant it a quality that can affect a reader with far greater strength than the mere proposal of an idea or an image. This is not a new concept to bring to poetry of course, but rather one that was once prevalent when poetry was yet primarily an oral art form and that deserves to once more be brought to the fore within the composition process.

Solstice in the Borderland is a concert that brings techniques designed for the composition of orchestral works into the field of poetry. Here, the appropriation of such devices as harmony, melody, tonality, orchestral structures, and other formal ideas used within the construction of contemporary western classical music, works in conjunction with a sympathy for the euphonious patterns of language to reinvigorate the musical nature of verse within twenty-first-century poetics. Through these studies I believe that I have demonstrated how poetry may be constructed around a true musical centre, not

⁴⁵⁰ David Jones, 'Jeffrey Lewis in Conversation with David Jones part 2'.

simply suggesting a link between music and verse as many past poets have done, and have laid a firm foundation for the creation of a more musically-aware poetic through which both poets and musicians may develop their art forms.

Due to the dominant focus upon the musicality of language within this concert, it is perhaps fair to acknowledge that for this particular series of poems the image and narrative have been allowed to settle as a secondary entity, subordinate to the sound and musical presence of the text. This is not to say that narrative is lacking, merely that, alongside ‘the image’ as a poetic function, it exists purely as an extension of the musical structures and is developed through the sequential layering of the lyric. By focussing upon individual moments for the separate fragments, the image becomes an integral feature that stands, like a chord, as a moment within a greater whole.⁴⁵¹ My primary reasons for choosing to focus upon sound over narrative and image within this project have been to draw attention to an element of poetry that I feel has been neglected in recent years. However, I believe that these two important parts of poetic composition should ultimately be used to aid one another, and thus should be granted an equal weighting during the creation process (as they were when poetry still existed primarily as a performative art form).

Although this concert has been presented as a written document, this does not mean that its reception is restricted purely to the silent study of the private reader. Through the layout of these works, which include footnotes, epigraphs and side-notes to describe the changing voices of various sections, alongside the use of white space to add silence to the text, the written word becomes an instruction manual for a reader, thus creating the potential for performance. However, whether treated as a score awaiting realisation through the medium of audible performance or in the form of silent

⁴⁵¹ In a manner that is not dissimilar to the pattern of lyrical images that together form Selima Hill’s *Bunny*. [Selima Hill, *Bunny* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2001).]

reading, due to the constant reminders created by the use of musical terminologies and ideas alongside at times fairly dense sound relations, the soundscapes and inherent musicalities of the poems might be heard by the reader as if they were sounding aloud within the concert hall. In his poem ‘My Quaker-Atheist Friend, Who Has Come to this Meetinghouse Since 1913, Smokes & Looks Out Over the Rawthey To Holme Fell’, Jonathan Williams takes time to explore the process of writing poetry, concluding that, ultimately, what is important is the taking of ‘solid, common, vulgar words // the ones you can touch, / the ones that yield // and a respect for the music...’⁴⁵² As has been explored throughout *Solstice in the Borderland*, my own thoughts on this matter are not dissimilar to Williams’s. I believe that a desire to shape the music of language is one of the few elements that truly separates the creation of poetry from the writing of prose, and thus it is important to understand the individual musicality of language when approaching poetic composition.

In order for the music of these poems to sound as it should, the reader must follow the requests of Gerard Manley Hopkins and not merely read ‘with the eyes [...] but take breath and read it with the ears’.⁴⁵³ As part of my endeavour to increase the musical presence within verse I have brought a singer’s understanding of sound shapes into the composition of poetry, and so, whilst this has aided my own understanding of companionable words and the possibilities that these offer, it also requires a certain level of understanding from the reader. To encourage the reader to open their ears to this additional, often underused, element of poetry I have made extensive use of musical terminologies and ideas within the set of poems, in varying degrees of ‘metaphoricity’, to provide ‘clues’ as to where the focus should be placed. Also,

⁴⁵² Jonathan Williams, ‘My Quaker-Atheist Friend, Who Has Come to this Meetinghouse Since 1913, Smokes & Looks Out Over the Rawthey To Holme Fell’, in *Jubilant Thicket, new & selected poems* (Washington: Copper Canyon Press, 2005), pp. 300-301, ll. 26-29.

⁴⁵³ Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. by Robert Bridges (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 97.

through the insertion of the 'Pre-Concert Talk' at the beginning of the work, the reader is provided with several specific musical ideas that they are asked to listen out for as they move on through the main body of text.

Just as I have turned to several poets that have been critically overlooked in recent years, such as Sitwell and Housman, and their work within the establishment of musically orientated poetry, this project creates the potential for considerable future development. The most natural progression for musical poetry is, as Fiona Sampson has acknowledged, the extension into abstract verse for which sound might be the only commanding factor within the line.⁴⁵⁴ Unfortunately, abstract verse leaves little room for the greater integration of music with narrative and the image, and thus this should not be the only development of musical verse; rather, an understanding of how the elegance of sound may be used in conjunction with meaning to create a more meditative, reflective form of verse should perhaps be maintained. I have focussed primarily upon the creation of poems through orchestral forms and devices within this project; however, an interesting development in the future would be to explore further musical forms to see how they might stimulate other developments in this field. This should include the consideration of forms that are perhaps closer to the choral tradition without crossing that delicate line in which musical poetry might default into libretto.

In his conversations with John Cage, Daniel Charles states 'You propose to musicate language; you want language to be heard as music.'⁴⁵⁵ For my own work within the realms of musical poetry this statement is only partly true. Unlike Cage, it has not been to a *newly* musicated language that I have aspired in *Solstice in the Borderland*, but rather to the reclamation of pre-existing musicalities as a tool for writing, and to the 'retraining' of a reader that they might once more hear these subtle

⁴⁵⁴ Fiona Sampson, 'The Poet Librettists', Radio 4, 6th September 2014, 3:30pm.

⁴⁵⁵ John Cage, *For the Birds: John Cage in conversation with Daniel Charles* (London: Marion Boyars Inc., 1981), p. 151.

interplays of sound in spite of the silence of private reading. In the beginning poetry was a form of music. I do not propose a return to the past, but rather, as has been the case within the classical music scene (exemplified by the works of contemporary composers such as Jeffrey Lewis), I believe that the re-appropriation of this almost abandoned concept should certainly be considered and then explored by poets. For too long poetry has been a silent art; as Carol Rumens writes, ‘There are times for poetry to sing, times for a good tune and a firm beat.’⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁶ Carol Rumens, *Self into Song* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2007), p. 66.

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Appendices

– Appendix I –

Notations and Sources

Page 2 –

Epigraph one taken from: Song of Solomon 3.4 (King James 1611 Version)
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Epigraph two taken from: William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. by G. B. Harrison (London: Penguin Books, 1997), II. 3 (p. 50, ll. 9-10).

Page 5 –

Lines 4-8 are based on words in the spoken introduction regularly used by ‘Chapter House Theatre Company’ in their summer tours.

Page 8 –

Line 31 taken from: William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by A. W. Verity (London: Cambridge University Press, 1912), I. 4. 224 (p. 27).

Page 16 –

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Page 18 –

‘Clee’, ‘Heartstrings’ and ‘Knit’ taken from: A. E. Housman, ‘1887’, in *A Shropshire Lad* (London: The Richard’s Press Ltd., 1947), pp. 1-3, ll. 1 and 13.

Page 19 –

‘Cherry’ and ‘Eastertide’ taken from: ‘II’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 3-4, ll. 1 and 4.

Page 20 –

‘Monday’ and ‘Ludlow market hums’ taken from: ‘The Recruit’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 4-6, ll. 9 and 10.

Page 21 –

‘Sunrise’, ‘Vaulted shadow’, ‘Leather’ and ‘Cumber’ taken from: ‘Reveille’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 6-7, ll. 3, 5, 15 and 17.

‘The most renowned of merchants’ taken from: David Lloyd, *The Concise History of Ludlow* (Ludlow: Merlin Unwin Books, 2005), p. 40.

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‘Goldcup’ and ‘Thieve’ taken from: ‘V’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 8-9, ll. 1 and 18.

Lines 13-14 taken from: William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, ed. by G. B. Harrison (London: Penguin Books, 1994), II. 2 (p. 41, l. 10).

‘Honourable, worshipfull and / gentlemanlie companie’ taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 66.

Page 23 –

‘Sunken eye’ taken from: ‘VI’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 10, l. 7.

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Page 24 –

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Page 25 –

‘Mist blew off from Teme’, ‘Blithe’ and ‘Blackbird’ taken from: ‘VII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 11-12, ll. 2, 3 and 6.

‘Blewmedlie’ and ‘Derkgrenemedlie’ taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 43.

Page 26 –

‘Lammastide’ taken from: ‘VIII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 13-14, l. 19.

Page 27 –

‘Gallows’ and ‘Forlorn’ taken from: ‘IX’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 14-16, ll. 3 and 10.

‘Keeping sheep by moonlight’ taken from: ‘IX’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 14-16 (p.15, fn).

‘Fayre houses’ taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 96.

Lines 10-41 taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 94.

Page 28 –

‘Silver-tufted’ taken from: ‘March’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 17-18, l. 16.

‘April is in my mistress’ face’ taken from: Thomas Morley, ‘April is in my Mistress’ Face’, in *The Oxford Book of English Madrigals*, ed. by Philip Ledger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 24-26 (p. 24). [Use of *Mistress*’ instead of the correct form *Mistress*’s is to more closely represent the rhythmic pattern of the original madrigal, in which, of thirteen iterations of the word, eleven are set to two notes (as a disyllabic word) rather than the expected three. Furthermore, *Mistress*’ is the spelling utilised by Ledger in the above volume, and the form that most singers seem to settle upon in performance (in my own experience).]

Page 29 –

‘Gold wool of the Ram’ and ‘The rusted wheel’ taken from: ‘March’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 17-18, ll. 4 and 6.

Page 30 –

‘The storm-cock sings’ taken from: ‘March’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 17-18, l. 5.

Page 31 –

‘Here the couch is gravel’ and ‘Darnel’ taken from: ‘XI’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 18-19, ll. 10 and 12.

Page 32 –

‘Heats of hate and lust’, ‘The nation that is not’ and ‘Lovers lying two and two / Ask not whom they sleep beside’ taken from: ‘XII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 19-20, ll. 5, 9 and 13-14.

‘Lieing with his cozen Alice Nixon in bed between his wife and her’ taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 86.

‘And here the maiden sleeping sound, / On the dank and dirty ground’ taken from: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, II. 2 (p. 43, ll. 23-24).

Page 33 –

‘Pearls away and rubies’ and ‘Sold for endless rue’ taken from: ‘XIII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 20-21, ll. 5 and 14.

‘Henry Kyngstone of Ludlow’ taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 43.

Page 34 –

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‘Geoffrey Andrew’ and ‘The Palmers’ Guild’ taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 51.

Page 35 –

‘They mirror true’ and ‘Jonquil’ taken from: ‘XV’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 23, ll. 2 and 16.

Page 36 –

‘The nettle on the graves of lovers’ taken from: ‘XVI’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 24, l. 3.

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Page 37 –

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Page 38 –

‘Miles around’ and ‘Fancy passes’ taken from: ‘XVIII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 25-26, ll. 3 and 5.

Page 39 –

‘Home we brought you shoulder-high’, ‘Early though the laurel grows / It withers quicker than the rose’ and ‘The garland briefer than a girl’s’ taken from: ‘To an Athlete Dying Young’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 26-28, ll. 4, 11-12 and 28.

Page 40 –

‘Azure meres I spy’ taken from: ‘XX’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 28-29, l. 14. Lines 1-2 are based on the traditional nursery rhyme ‘London Bridge is Falling Down’.

Page 41 –

‘In summertime’ and ‘In steeples far and near’ taken from: ‘Bredon Hill’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 29-31, ll. 1 and 4.

Page 42 –

‘Peal upon our wedding’ and ‘Oh, noisy bells, be dumb; / I hear you, I will come’ taken from: ‘Bredon Hill’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 29-31, ll. 18 and 34-35.

Page 44 –

‘The street sounds to the soldiers’ tread’ and ‘A single redcoat turns his head’ taken from: ‘XXII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 32, ll. 1 and 3.

Page 45 –

‘The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair’, ‘Lads for the liquor are there’ and ‘That will carry their looks’ taken from: ‘XXIII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 33-34, ll. 1, 3 and 8.

‘Conformable to ancient law’ taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 127.

Page 46 –

‘Wholesome flesh decay’ and ‘Nerve me numb’ taken from: ‘XXIV’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 35, ll. 9 and 10.

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Page 49 –

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Line 9 taken from the writings of Henry of Huntingdon, recorded in: *Ludlow: An Historical Anthology*, p. 6.

Page 50 –

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Page 51 –

'Windflower' taken from: 'The Lent Lily', in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 43-44, l. 6.

Page 52 –

'Bed of mould' taken from: 'XXX', in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 44-45, l. 11.

Page 53 –

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Page 54 –

'Twelve-winded sky' taken from: 'XXXII', in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 47, l. 2.

Page 55 –

'Stedfast' taken from: 'XXXIII', in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 48, l. 5.

Page 56 –

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Page 57 –

'Bleach the bones' and 'Screaming fife' taken from: 'XXXV', in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 51, ll. 10 and 14.

Page 58 –

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Line 13 taken from: Thomas Weelkes, 'Strike it up, Tabor', in *The Oxford Book of English Madrigals*, pp. 226-267 (p.267).

Page 59 –

'Keep my head from harm' taken from: 'XXXVII', in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 53-54, l. 34.

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Page 60 –

'Scattered their forelocks free' and 'You hollo from the hill' taken from: 'XXXVIII', in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 55-56, ll. 6 and 16.

Page 61 –

‘The golden broom’ taken from: ‘XXXIX’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 56-57, l. 2.

Page 62 –

‘Those blue remembered hills’ and ‘The land of lost content’ taken from: ‘XL’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 57, ll. 3 and 5.

Pages 64-66 –

‘Purple crocus pale’ and ‘Lady-smocks a-bleaching lay’ taken from: ‘XLI’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 58-59, ll. 13 and 16.

Lines 13, 19, 31, 57 and 87 are based on the traditional country counting game ‘Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor’.

Line 23 taken from: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, III. 1 (p. 50, l. 28).

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‘The thymy wold’, ‘And poised a golden rod’, ‘Serpent-circled wand’ and ‘Merry guide’ taken from: ‘The Merry Guide’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 60-63, ll. 2, 8, 60 and title.

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Page 69 –

‘With ruth and some with envy come: / Undishonoured’ taken from: ‘XLIV’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 67-68, ll. 22-23.

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Page 70 –

‘Balsam grows’ taken from: ‘XLV’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 69, l. 4.

Footnote information taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 28.

Page 71 –

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Other words taken from: *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley*, pp. 3-4.

Footnote information taken from the introduction written by T. T. Lewis in: *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley*.

Page 73 –

‘Rive the heart’ taken from: ‘XLVIII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 73-74, l. 14.

Other words used in stanzas 1, 3, 5 and 7 taken from John Powell’s memorandum of the destruction of Queen Elizabeth I’s seal, in: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 339F

Page 74-75 –

‘Jesting, dancing, drinking’ taken from: ‘XLIX’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 75, l. 7.

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Page 76 –

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Page 77 –

'Manful like the man of stone' taken from: 'LI', in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 78-79, l. 26.

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Page 78 –

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Page 79 –

'Tastes of brine' and 'The true lover' taken from: 'The True Lover', in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 80-82, l. 28 and title.

'Grenemedlie' taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, p. 43.

Page 80 –

'Rose-lipt' and 'A lightfoot lad' taken from: 'LIV', in *A Shropshire Lad*, p. 83, ll. 3 and 4.

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Page 81 –

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Page 82 –

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Page 83 –

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Page 84 –

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Other information taken from: Martin E. Speight, *The Great House: number 112, Corve Street, Ludlow, 1270-1980* (Birmingham: Studio Press, 1980).

Page 85 –

‘Felon-quarried stone’ taken from: ‘Isle of Portland’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 87-88, l. 4.

‘And seeing there was no place to mount up higher, / Why should I grieve at my declining fall?’ taken from: Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*, ed. by Charles W. Eliot (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1914), V. 6. 62-63

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Page 86 –

‘Hollow fires burn out to black’ taken from: ‘LX’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 88-89, l. 1.

‘Sound music!’ taken from: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, IV. 1 (p. 71, l. 21).

Page 87 –

‘Than the quick’ taken from: ‘Hughley Steeple’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 89-90, l. 4.

Footnote taken from: *The Concise History of Ludlow*, pp. 133-134.

Page 88 –

‘Malt does more than Milton can / To justify God’s ways to man’ taken from: ‘LXII’, in *A Shropshire Lad*, pp. 91-94, ll. 21-22.

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Page 89 –

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‘Wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?’ taken from: William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. by T. J. B. Spencer (London: Penguin Books, 1996), II. 2. 125 (p. 89).

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Page 98 –

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Lines 23-24 based upon ‘Philomel with melody, / Sing’ from: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, II. 2 (p. 41, ll. 21-22).

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Lines 27-29 based upon Genesis 1.8 (KJV).

Page 100 –

‘Weather-beaten’ taken from: Thomas Campion, ‘Never Weather-beaten Saile’, in *Penguin’s Poems for Life*, ed. by Laura Barber (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 309, l. 1.

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Page 104 –

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Page 109 –

Lines 16-17 taken from: Bernard Cornwell, *The Winter King* (London: Penguin, 1996), pp. 344-350.

Line 20 based upon ‘There’s rosemary, that’s for remembrance’ from: *Hamlet*, IV. 5. 174 (p. 139).

Page 110 –

This segment taken from: Charlotte E. Guest (trans.), *The Mabinogion* (New York: Dover Publications, 1997), pp. 99-100.

Although Guest translates *Gwyddbwyll* as ‘chess’, reference to the game in its correct form may be seen on <<http://www.britannia.com/history/docs/rhonabwy.html>> [accessed 1st September 2015].

Page 115 –

Lines 5-6 drawn from: Margaret Baker, *Discovering the Folklore of Plants* (Oxford: Shire Publications Ltd, 2008), pp. 115-116, 118-119 and 152.

Page 117 –

Lines 24-26 taken from: *Le Morte D’Arthur*, p. 59.

Page 119 –

Linguae ignota taken from: *Riesencodex*, pp. 933 (nasciul) and 934 (sapiduz).

‘Viridissimis virtutibus et aerumnis apostolorum’ taken from: *Dictionary of Literary Bibliography*.

‘Symphonia armoniae celestium revelationum’, the title to Hildegard’s song cycle formed from her songs, hymns and sequences, taken from: *Dictionary of Literary Bibliography*.

Page 120 –

The tale of Twrch Trwyth taken from: ‘Kilhwch and Olwen, or the Twrch Trwyth’, in *The Mabinogion*, pp. 63-93.

Page 128 –

Lines 10-12 based upon: Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (London: Vintage, 1996), pp. 42-43 and 53.

Page 133 –

Line 3 based on: Matthew 8.12 (KJV).

Page 138 –

Butterfly names and colourations taken from: W. F. Kirby, *The Butterflies and Moths of Europe* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1903).

Page 143 –

Lines 20-22 based upon ‘Exit, pursued by a bear’ from: William Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, ed. by Ernest Schanzer (London: Penguin, 2005), III. 3. 57 (p. 54).

Lines 22-28 based upon image of Hermione from: *The Winter’s Tale*, V. 3. 20-100 (pp. 107-110).

Page 145 –

Lines 7-12 based on the traditional nursery rhyme ‘Rock-a-Bye Baby’.

Page 146 –

Line 2 taken from: Psalm 130.1 (KJV).

Page 149 –

Lines 8-17 based upon Agnes Denes’s artistic work, ‘Tree Mountain – A Living Time Capsule’.

Page 150 –

Imagery based on the words of Taliesin in: Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Life of Merlin, Vita Merlini*, trans. by John Jay Parry (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1925), p. 25.

Page 152 –

Names of the eight women taken from: *Vita Merlini*, p. 27.

Page 157 –

Line 11 based upon: Laurence Binyon, ‘For the Fallen (September 1914)’, in *The New Dragon Book of Verse*, ed. by Michael Harrison and Christopher Stuart-Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 182, l. 15.

Page 167 –

Depiction of the Dead City based upon: John 14.2 (KJV).

Page 175 –

Line 11 taken from: ‘Never Weather-beaten Saile’, in *Penguin’s Poems for Life*, p. 309, l. 1.

Page 176 –

Lines 9-10 taken from: William Shakespeare, ‘King Richard III’, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. by W. J. Craig (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), pp. 596-634, V. 4. 7 (p. 633).

Page 178 –

Lines 1 and 38 taken from: Charles Trenet, *La Mer* (London: Chappell & Co., 1945).

Page 180 –

Lines 18-19 taken from: Ian Mortimer, *The Time Traveller’s Guide to Medieval England* (London: Vintage Books, 2009), p. 198.

Page 181 –

Line 21 taken from: ‘Macbeth’, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, pp. 846-869, I. 7. 46 (p. 851).

Page 184 –

‘Sing again’ taken from: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, III. 1 (p. 50, l. 28).

Page 185 –

‘Ad te omnis caro veniet’ taken from the Requiem Mass:
<<http://www.requiemsurvey.org/latintext.php>> [accessed 28th August 2015].

Page 188 –

Line 2 taken from: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, II. 1 (p. 37, ll. 9-14).

Page 189 –

Lines 17-18 based upon: Psalm 121.1 (KJV).

Page 192 –

Line 3 taken from: *The Winter's Tale*, I. 2. 108 (p. 10).

Page 194 –

Line 12 based upon: William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by A. W. Verity (London: Cambridge University Press, 1912), II. 2. 21 (p. 37).

Page 198 –

Imagery drawn from: Isaiah 6.5-7 (KJV).

Page 200 –

The description of Caer Sidi and the Cauldron drawn from: [Charles Squire], *Celtic Mythology* (New Lanark: Geddes & Grosset, 2006), pp. 261-264 and 293-296.

Page 213 –

Theme to fugue (repeated in variation pp. 326-331) based upon information detailed in: Sandra Billington, 'The Midsummer Solstice as It Was, Or Was Not, Observed in Pagan Germany, Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England', *Folklore*, 119 (2008), 41-57, pp. 44-45. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30035459>> [accessed 23rd January 2015].

Page 215 –

Imagery of left hand column drawn from: Isaiah 6.5-7 (KJV).

Form drawn from sonograms depicted in: John B. Theberge and J. Bruce Falls, 'Howling as a means of communication in Timber Wolves', *American Zoologist*, 7 (1967), 331-338, pp. 332 and 334. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3881437>> [accessed 14th June 2013].

Page 216 –

Lines 1-10 based upon image of Hermione from: *The Winter's Tale*, V. 3. 20-100 (pp. 107-110).

Line 15 taken from: *The Winter's Tale*, I. 2. 108 (p. 10).

Page 219 –

Hildegard's lingua ignota taken from: *Riesencodex*, p. 928.

Page 220 –

'Nulla gloria nulla honestate decoratos' taken from Hildegard's *Liber Vitae Meritorum: Dictionary of Literary Bibliography*.

– Appendix II –

Phonetic Alphabet

a	h <u>at</u>
ɛ	b <u>e</u> t
ɜ:	f <u>ur</u>
i:	m <u>e</u>
ɔ:	r <u>aw</u>
ʊ	p <u>ut</u>
aɪ	b <u>y</u>
ɔɪ	b <u>oy</u>
oo	g <u>o</u>
ɛə	h <u>air</u>
θ	t <u>h</u> in
j	y <u>ou</u>
ʃ	s <u>he</u>
ɑ:	b <u>aa</u>
ə	ag <u>o</u>
ɪ	f <u>i</u> t
ɒ	l <u>o</u> t
ʌ	c <u>u</u> p
u:	t <u>oo</u>
eɪ	b <u>ay</u>
aʊ	n <u>ow</u>
ɪə	h <u>ere</u>
ʊə	p <u>oo</u> r
ð	t <u>h</u> e
ŋ	r <u>ing</u>
ʒ	vis <u>ion</u>

Brookes, Ian, Michael Munroe, Elaine O'Donoghue and others (eds), *Chambers Concise Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrup Publishers, 2004), p. xiv.

- Appendix III -

Misereri in old Reds

Andante

Solo Sopranani

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Solo sopranani to sing with main choir until their respective lines begin.

ff Overtones to be pushed, sounding at the 8ve.

ff Overtones to be pushed, sounding at the 12th.

Mi - se - re - ri. Mi -

Mi - se - re - ri. Mi -

11

ff

I beat scar-let pa - per pop - pies

mp *f*

mmm ahhh Mi se - re -

f tutti nat.

- se - re - ri. Mi - se - re -

f tutti nat.

se - re - ri. Mi -

20

with my i-ron ham-mer to an - vil with my i-ron ham - mer 'til the pe - tals bruised (the

mf

ri. Mi - se - re - ri. Mi -

mf

ri. Mi - se - re - ri. 'til the Mi -

mf

se - re -

28

pe-tals bruised) pur ple and fa-ded to mi-se-ri-cords (be-neath the) tone (tone tone) tone tone

se - re - ri. tone tone tone

- se - re - ri. tone tone tone

- - ri. Mi - se - re - ri. tone tone tone

36

rit. - - - - - A tempo

$\text{♩} = 80$

of new-ly meld-ed me-tal blooms blooms blooms blooms

of new-ly meld-ed me-tal blooms blooms

of new-ly meld-ed me-tal blooms blooms blooms I pinned each

of new-ly meld-ed me-tal blooms blooms blooms

50

in-to its in-di-vi-du-al Mi-se-re-ri. the cei-ling

Mi - se-re - ri. in-di-vi-du-al pat-tern mo - sa-icked the cei - ling

soft falsetto

soft marb-led flower blooms mo - sa-icked the cei - ling

full voice

in - to its in - di - vi - du - al pat - tern

58 *pp* *p* *cresc.*

oo re-built your pic-ture as if it were con-struct-ed

with a layered sil-ver es-sence re-built your pic-ture as if it were con-struct-ed

oo re-built your pic-ture as if it were con-struct-ed

with a layered sil-ver es-sence re-built your pic-ture as if it were con-struct-ed

66 [*ff*] *ff* *ff*

of wea-thered gold (of gold) Mi-se-re-ri. Mi-se-re-

(of gold) of wea-thered gold (of gold) (oh...)

of wea-thered gold (gold) Mi-se-re-ri. Mi-se-re-

of wea-thered gold Mi-se-re-ri. Mi-se-re-

77 *ff* *f* *f* *f*

Ahh...

ri. Mi-se-re-ri. Mi-se-re-

ri. Mi-se-re-ri. Mi-se-re-

ri. Mi-se-re-ri. Mi-se-re-

85 2nd soloist enters

Ahh...

ff

ri. (oh...)

(...ld) Mi - se - re -

ff

ri. Mi - se - re -

ff

ri. Mi - se - re - ri. Mi - se -

93

mp

that

mp

(...ld)

mf

ri. that

soft falsetto solo

mp

- ri. that ly -

mp

re - - - ri. that

97 $\text{♩} = 96$ *mp* rit.

ly - ing a - wake through the night I might watch your face flut - ter in up - drafts of

ing

98 $\text{♩} = 64$ *p* *ppp*

of air

of air

air air of air

tutti nat. *p* *ppp*

of air

p *ppp*

of air