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eliots face

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On finger-drumming

I have always considered myself amongst the finest finger-drummers in the whole of North London.

Sometimes I will go to a coffee house on a relatively busy day with the express intention of giving a little impromptu finger-tapping concert; I will sit down with a book, as if I were just one of a whole multitude of customers, and begin to gently and un-rhythmically tap until I find a beat.

Then, in a humble but quite effective show of acting vigour, I will slowly lower my book and gaze, in mild awe, at my own hand, as if it were possessed by some sort of musical demon (or, perhaps, that it had been to the crossroads the night before and done a deal with the devil, unbeknownst to me).

Having ‘accidentally discovered’ my talent, I will begin to focus upon my tapping-song with greater energy, perhaps nod my head along to the beat, as it becomes progressively louder. By this point, I will normally have started to drum the knuckles of my other hand (invariably my right) to give the effect, almost, of a full-blown jazz band (I normally refrain from using the full ‘band’, as it were, when in a public library or at a meeting, simply out of politeness). I don't ever cast around to look for people watching me, because I wouldn't want them to be self-conscious at all.

After roughly twenty minutes or so I will simply get up and leave, knowing that the eyes of the whole establishment are on me—but I always space such displays within six months of each other for each coffee house. One doesn't want to become a spectacle.

James Moran

A ship

A ship's spilled
Cargo out at sea
Bobs
A city

Made of blocks
Rocks

On the down turned
Contented line
Of the horizon's mouth

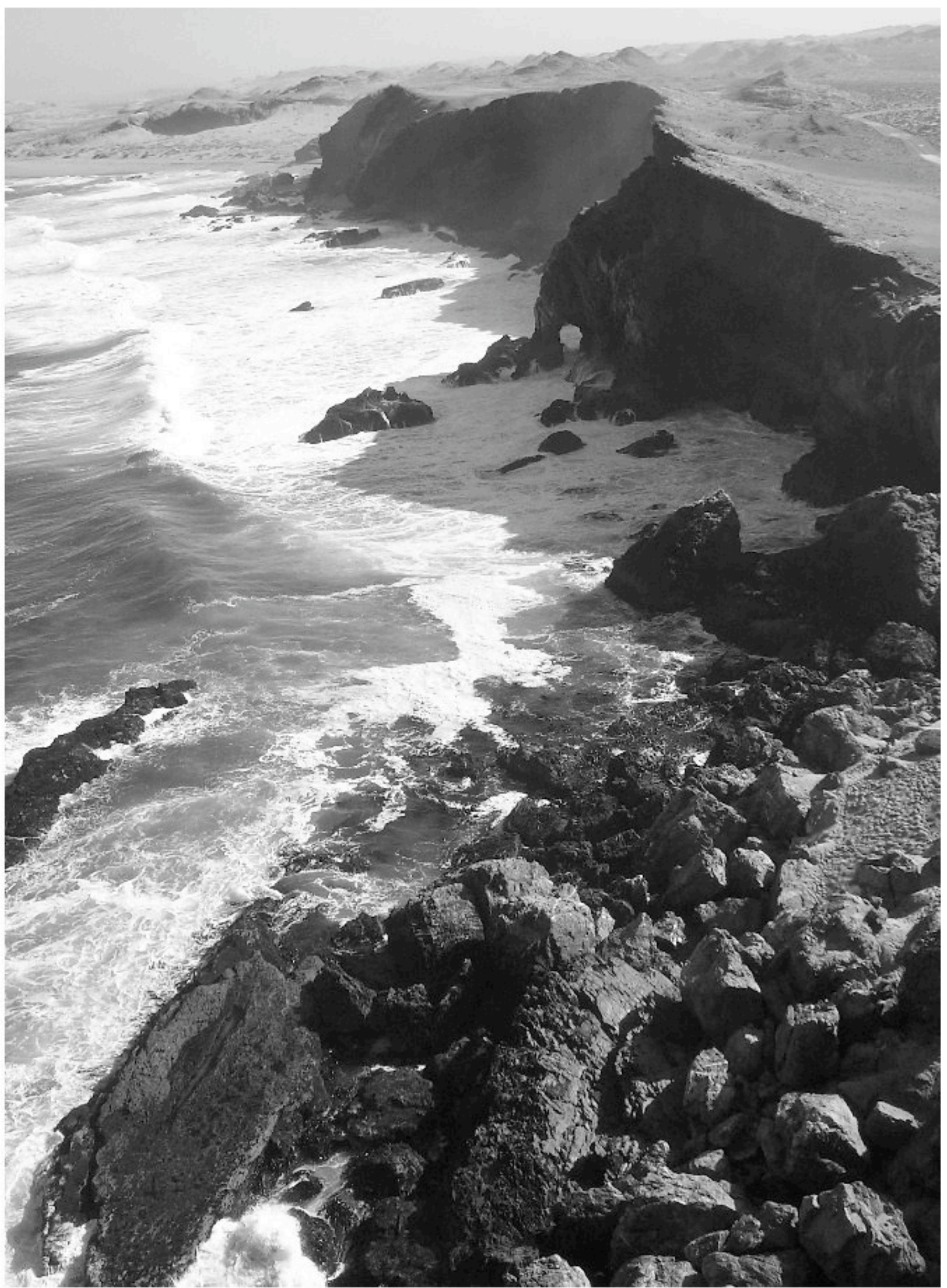
a frenzied
figure
dances

on bloodied lips
Of the ocean

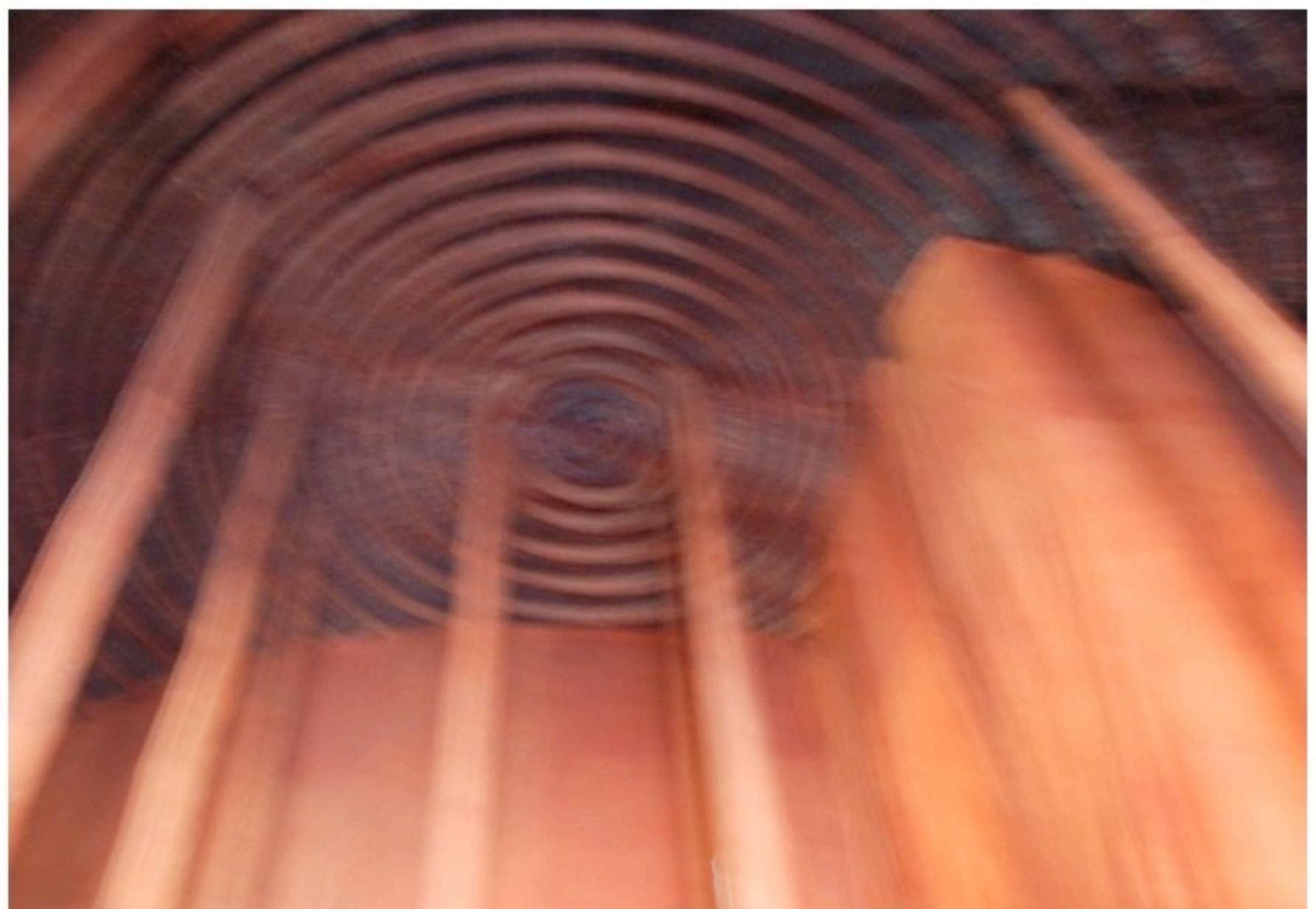
Lashing the cargo
Criss cross
To contain

Without intent or
purpose

Iain Maitland



*Photographs: (above) Soon, You Will See
by Tim Checkley;
(below) by Ssegawa-Ssekintu Kiwuanuka*



*Photograph by
Francesca de
Meillac*



Lost constructions

The sibilance of silent games of hide and seek
The assonance of the dreamy memories we keep
The alliteration of when, what, who; why?
The oxymoron of a bittersweet goodbye

The stycamythia of an argument on the phone
The nostalgia of wishing you were home
The enjambement of life when we were
a two
The lack of rhythm in an existence without you

The onomatopoeia of kit-kats breaking on my tongue
Like words – or the cliché that you never rung
The disunity of a table set for one
The metaphor of a heart that weighs a ton

The personification of your picture on the wall
The dramatic tension of waiting for your call
The irony of a future I didn't intend
The juxtaposition of you and me
Lost its structure in the end

Sarah Waters

(Untitled)

We danced, our feet to synch,
Patterning the floor and hitting junctures
Where the tessellated tiles meet –
Dog tooth precision biting winding soles
And quartered all our moves.

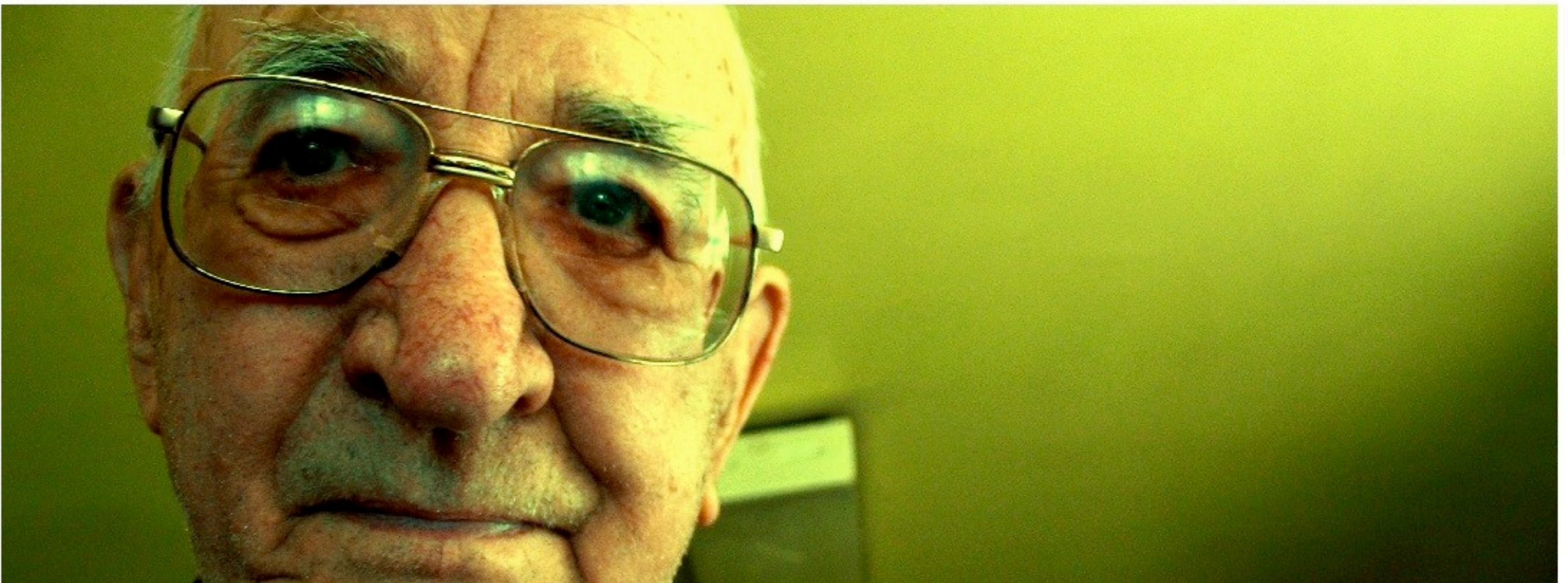
You left, and beat to beat
We danced to different partners
At tune with others' moves we circumcised unity
Fabricated synchronicity with worn out feet.

It is too late, I think, to ask you once again to see me.
You have, I have been told, found someone else.
And I don't think I could bear to stand before you,
To wait, with bated breath, while you consider
Yes or no.

I will forgo this pleasure
Since though it is a pleasure
I would be dancing with stilettos at my feet.

Anonymous

Photograph: Lime George by Brendan Baker





Were you there when they crucified my lord?

Were you there when they crucified my lord?
Three walls leaning to, corrugate rust, and was there a roof?
I don't remember a roof.
Were you there? Waw'khona?

But I remember the dresser. And the bed,
supporting corrugate rust.
Hardly a fire, but gently smoking
as today's water waits patiently and peck go chickens,
chuckle, yes they must stay, this is our home.

Waw'khona? Didn't you hear what they said.
they said 2, they'll be back at 2, and they're bringing the dogs
and they said they'd burn this time,
'Come!'
Perhaps we'd already dismantled the roof.
Perhaps we'd assumed they'd say yes –
Yebo with open arms, grateful smile.
This is our home.
'But the meek will inherit the land
and enjoy great peace.' Eheh you see eh!

Kuyamangalisa kakhulu, khulu, khulu, sometimes
it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

This was their home.

15 mins was all it took,
right after her husband had folded his uniform.
It was pristine, his uniform.

Waw'khona?

Yes. And as we turned to the lorry,
bed, dresser, corrugate rust stacked unceremoniously,
chickens peck peck, peck peck
we looked last time eh at those words
beyond the fence:

I ♥ you I ♥ God

Always it causes me kakhulu, khulu.
Waw'khona, mhla iNkosi izalwa?

Belinda Sherlock

Photograph by Belinda Sherlock; Artwork by Francesca de Meillac



Story in 9 takes

I knew I was in trouble when he rushed at me squalling My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings. Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!

Firstly, his name is Rex. And he's a director, not a king.

My eyes are sealed to the world now so I'm always looking inward. Because I'm out of life's loop I just have my memories. They reel round and round and here I am unable to do anything but watch them. My constant companions, you know? More real than me, I believe.

Reel #1 He was uxorious and I'm giving that Rita Hayworth look like there goes my man, I've done well and he does good by me. Those days were hard, though! We were only young - my Ma and Da said too young for settling. The lady's not for turning, I quipped, and they respected my iron resolve. I stuck it out in that God awful terrace with the catspiss and the truant electricity and our stubborn guests in the bathroom.

Reel #2 Things are on the move! He's got himself a camera-professional and he invited me to do a screen test. I take his invitation and plop myself in front of that lens and haven't a baldy what I'm to do. I scratched my head, and shifted from cheek to the other; I picked my nose, even. Not a clue what to do! He watched it back and said, grumpy like: You've come up lovely. The camera must love you, especially your hair. Well, I was all chuffed and suddenly my ginger curls have been transformed into something altogether more lovely. Auburn tresses, you might say.

Reel #3 It's his first feature length. He's very ambitious and he's got this working title – NEUTRALITUDES – which I joke is funny cos from what he's told me about the film it seems pH neutral. Ha. He gives me this look which got to me, it did. He didn't shout, he didn't even go red. In fact, he went pale and had this dirty smirk, challenging and grave. For the first time I had an inkling to the kind of nasty bastard I'd married.

Reel #4 Quelle surprise, it flunks like a spo in a trig test. The production companies yawn and blink and I've got to deal with his rant about integrity. He tells me that one of the execs asked if I were in anything else. He said no, I got excited and they said let's have a look at her.

Reel #5 The deal is he gets studio support if he casts me as the lead. But they're hedgey, see. There's no storyline to give him, they want to be impressed. I know he ain't got no selling appeal so I run a few ideas past him. What about Patient Griselda, I've known it since I was a nipper and I think it's got potential...

Reel #6 It did brilliant and I did a good job as Griselda. I mean I had no formal training but it welted up and seeped out from somewhere deep inside. It's all flashing cameras and glitzy numbers for us, kid. Success has shined him up, he's looking so handsome. But there's no contenting a man like him. I know what he's done with the camera is unprecedented. He has given me new eyes. Curtiz would have blown his own father for a soundtrack like this one. But for all my affirmation, for all his effort, it's me they want to talk about.

Reel #7 Even the kitchen appliances seem to be urging oscaroscar at us. Griselda's the toast of the town. The favourite in the bookies. But we lose out to another film entitled "pH 7.5". I shrugged and chuckled and he wondered what's so funny, cunt?

Reel #8 We're in a rut and I'm about to leave. He's made it clear that if I go, he's coming with me. Times I think we're like two angels holding each other on the way down. Other times I see him pulling me to the flames. But he's my demon.

Reel #9 He's got that glint in his eye like he's onto something. He's full of ideas - he's not even sleeping they're attending to him so often. I need you to do something for me, he said. Anything, I avowed. I deserved that Oscar. I know, sweetheart, but you were the winner in my eyes.

The reels spurt and splatter then. There are tufts of hair here and there. Flashes of gold and all I can feel is my head shorn and I'm standing very upright on a pedestal.

Darren Craig



My paintings and drawings explore the boundary between the figurative and the abstract and often result from a long process of simplification. I begin with a form that partly represents a person or place and partly explores my emotional responses to it, winnowing away the details through experimental drawings and sketches until I am left with bold and simplified forms that 'sit' together.

My recent work has been influenced by my time spent living next to Stockholm's archipelago in Sweden over the winter of 2006/7. My drawings have changed in form and palette as a result of my responses to iced seas, steel skies, rounded rocks and vast stretches of sky skimmed by low lying islands. Shapes began to orientate themselves towards a seascape and landmasses, yet my earlier practice of simplification and winnowing away detail continues.

Artwork and text by Katherine Cooper



(Untitled)

See, love; love is not an equation;
A plus sign plus a B and
C, two hyphens;
And a way of seeing – Y –
As all the answer ever needed.
Sink under all their aphorisms,
All acrostics,
Now
Known and quantative;



Why continue – love – when all around is torn asunder;
Tear the wise, and pull wisdom from their teeth.
While dotting is the crossing afternoons
With all elastic boredom bound in letters,
Times queued and set in type –
Manacles of minutes are still fetters.

Mark love, love;
Yet it grades into comparison,
Crosses boundaries, bound by trepidation –
Clicks the minutes out with coffee spoons
And waking
Just am not.

Anonymous

I love him

I love him I love him I wish I could have him I have him I have him the future looks dim I hate him I hate him I cant believe I loved him she has him she has him-Bitch.

Sarah Waters



Photographs:
(above)
se reposer
by Tim Checkley;
(opposite)
by David Mack

There is a moaning cat on the lawn

There is a moaning cat on the lawn
Full of his own crotch, rolling
On the scented airs, purring gently
Who cares who cares who cares

Iain Maitland

If she did sleep, her dreams were strange,
and she woke with her white-blond fringe
sticking uncomfortably to her forehead,
nails dug slightly into her pink palms.

When not sleeping she would often make
a heap of blankets and pillows, and lie,
tired at last, safe in a white cocoon.
Sometimes he arrived early from work
and came into her room, bearing gifts.

He'd throw off the covers,
sweep her into a sudden hug.
She clutched at his neck, and he kissed
the top of her head, turned her round to face him.

Presents came in black boxes
with gold lettering embossed on the side.
She ran her thumb over them, tracing
the sweeping path of unfamiliar words.

Once she pulled at the tissue paper wrapping
to find a red duffel coat, slightly too small.
As she tried it on she pulled the sleeves
down over her wrists, so he wouldn't notice.

The toggles were dark, bloody red, and
curved like teeth.
Their sharpness felt vaguely threatening
in her fingers as she threaded them through.

Maggie Tulliver (Poem for an Awkward Child)

We'll cut our hair short, Maggie.
That crunch when the blades meet
is like a joke we tell each other
against their meanness. Like a promise.
Listen: how we can stamp our feet.
It's a drumbeat, Maggie.

Let's run away. I'll wait for you past the fir trees.
Before tea is on the table, say you'll find me.
Say it's not petulance
to hide here; to want to be adored.

Chris O'Rourke

Photograph: Yellow Rita by Brendan Baker



Pippa Passes Out

It's Saturday night
And not ten o'clock
Let's have half-a-pint
Or a ginger gin-pearled.
We're getting quite tight
And the room's on the rock
We're all getting blind
All's right with the world.

Anon (1928)



...eliots archive

Extract from **To Any Dance Partner**

Sweet, since a momentary fate
Links us for good or ill together,
Talk nonsense at a frantic rate,
And prattle blithely of the weather.
Blame, if you like, the floor or band,
Ask if I've seen the Footlights' show;
Tell me the Downing Ball was grand,
But *do not* ask me if I row.

Prate, if your hose is coloured blue,
Of Ibsen, Maeterlinck, and Rousseau,
Tell me the Bible isn't true—
I'll bear it, if you care to do so!
Or if your style's more openwork,
Babble of Hubert Wales and Co.,
And *causes célèbres*—I'll never shirk,
Only—*don't* ask me if I row.

'Landlubber' (1914)

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(the Jesus College magazine, 1885-1959)***

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