

Peter Donnelly

Underground

I: Quiet Vortices and Scuba Diving

The clock ticks insistently and the idea
Is cocooned and wombed in the underbelly
Of my thoughts, well below the *terra firma*
Of conscious cognizance. Agents move secretly
Beneath, swish and whisk currents unknown to me
Into the murky waters. Do they dictate
My future? Am I actually at their mercy?
Every man is the architect of his own fate.
I'm not relaxed enough today to inundate
Myself with them – for profound scuba diving:
It is not possible to estimate
Which vortice today is strong or strengthening.
To the sibyls the angels convey
What's to secret mirth and open dismay.

II: Faultlines

*Istanbul,
Ancient beauty,
Was Constantinople and
Before that Byzantium,
Yet sits pretty now on a
Massive faultline.*

Shock waves detected and the seismograph
Flutters madly to record the subterranean
Activity: faultlines etched early in life,
Or even before? Virtual plates in the cranium
Shift and slip. Still though, the continuum
Of consciousness is deeper and ever-deepening;
More than ever now I desire to come
Back to my older and better being.
It is further away than ever when I am speaking.
Somnambulantly in their huge masses
And dimensions, the plates are jostling,
Perhaps, to be clear of the others.
Contact: the earth shuddered ever so
Slightly. The *terra firma* will never know.

Dresden Porcelain

I

Like Dresden Porcelain her hands
Were and they held both bounty
And glamour more or less lightly
And easily in their flats and slants

Made on an oak table
In autumn, in summer.
Sunlight over
Varnished brown, and the treble

Tones reached by her voice
Occasionally when she was exercised
By certain points of her narrated
Quotidiana. Sometimes her mother's

Spirit seemed to jar silently
In the air and swill a bit
Inter-generationally at
The wood and space about the crockery,

Aggravated, I fear, by crepuscular
Noiselessness and the hay less golden
In the field gaping through the Venetian
Blinds. Then swelling darkness spectacular.

II

Crepuscular rays spraying
All through France,

The
Evening clink-clacking
With pétanque.

The Banker's Characters

The minute detail of the girders of distressed
Assets photoshopped into my dream
Which was intense, shaky, fast.
And in the superdepths, a ream
Of figures in a boardroom; they were
Represented by two or three figures.
The financial meltdown was a super-dense blur
For me. Was heavy. Was made of weeks
Blowing their memory-rafters with data
From the Dow Jones and FTSE.
I have friends in America;
Undercover and under-fire, they speak to me
Now. I swear, we'll speak also then,
When all in this country's in ruin again.

Floating Tone

*the wood-pigeon's concerto for oboe and strings,
allegro, blowing your mind.*

—Paul Muldoon

I

Mellifluous like the breath
Coming back off the cork in a woodwind
Instrument – this was her voice – sweet, clean, speedy, speaking
Of sweet goddam nothing with me.

Yet God somehow had edited, elucidated her score,
And certain syllables ensconced themselves
A bit deeper in her speech than in mine:
Time clipped and held for split-seconds
That certain notes may swell their waves.

II

When the muse was
Mute, I knew,
She actually dulcet-whispered
Reverberations that skipped and skimmed, and shifted,
And echoed through and on and across

The bedrock of the brain.

III

Autotuner in certain cases
Comes as standard,
Wired into the mind's hardware.

I can hear her in her tune.