

Lawrence Upton

from
looking up

Three large dogs gather over northern Deptford

Three large dogs gather over northern Deptford,
side by side, odd steps, up and down, skew-whiff,
a furry staircase heavily, panting.

They go still then, seemingly lying on the air,
expressionless. They neither bite nor growl.
And now they start to disintegrate.

One head

just goes, leaving the neck open, terminal.
Front paw pairs shatter as if they're missile hit.
A neck bends like a vacuum cleaner tube

drawing on dust and cloud through severing skin;
shoulders follow it down, distorting too,
while the still-connected skull hangs below,

each jaw lax and separate; the teeth glitter
as they wobble in indirect sunlight.
And finger tips we cannot see pluck eyes.

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Plum Pudding Island (Wantsum Way)

One could imagine locomotives hauling
those dark rain clouds; obviously heavy;
stems of supersaturated dead trees
on a rapid overflowing wide river,
swelling still sucking on surface ground spate
ejected from the fulling muddy fields

between upturned noisy apparatus
or an appearance of something like that
and a full up bubbling cosmos upturned
sustaining and perhaps containing... what?
one cannot, after all, see all shown there
towards the brightness of the setting day;

and this not loud at all, not at all loud,
drapes in ganging insubordination,
vertical irregularities straight up,
pulled-back-stuff dropped, a conflict within the whole,
(if one were to see all that can be shown,
in a single composition) clashing

synthetic colours denying synthesis,
garish soiled plastics, not protecting
a growing bleakness from an emptiness,
that're seemingly pegged down despite the hard wind
which makes those held up by the passing freight
shudder with harsh imposed explanation

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from **Faversham** (in Flood Lane)

Something approaching a blue deep square
tilts, angularly severally, reflects
broad splaying bristling light scattering
back from a hidden sun and out
into the unobserved universe;

and, where wet may be drying, gleam
persists; it's splintering as if bulbs
were blowing in large analog kit,
leaving harsh blacknesses like bar codes
printed and scribbled on blankness.

Round the might-have-been square not-square
are they shiny flowering root crops?
before rain mauve against pale blue
swamped with red and swamping with green
plus what might be spatulas of cloud

though there is nothing else up there
of a kitchen; only plastic shards
from packaging, juices caught glistening
in the broken seams, an aircraft
like an attracted fly, hovering

apparently, distance making
difficult earth-based comparison
of speed and vector, a viewpoint
countering quite descriptive standpoints
as same times as everything's moving.

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from Sutton High Street # 1

an east-rushing flight of swans, roughly chopped
by unseen unheard machine guns firing;
a highly-decorated Christmas tree,
the tree itself pulled out by a large seagull;
three mud banks giving way to a tide swelling;
a man in a low motor vehicle, racing
glittering prancing horses to a blank film screen

a very big army is assembling
some feet above the ground over Mitcham –
their voices do not carry much up here
even as they come much closer, the wind
against them

a blank screen

an armed convoy

going east, trundling, stately but menacing;
a diseased liver cut fresh from a torso;
a blank screen;

denatured blood;

a raiding

party that's unashamedly looting:
it spreads like smoke and individuals
are blurred and unidentifiable;
and now they go east and are out of sight –
others follow swiftly, many hiding
themselves among innocent hard-working folk;
and, higher, are crowds of loyal citizenry
filling Trafalgar Square and down Whitehall
and overflowing Parliament Square,
all cheering. They're blocked in, cut off, kettled,
nearly constrained by police before some
and then a great many escape control,
starting fights on the embankment, persons
thrown into the river to much laughter --
a helicopter films; no one intervenes;
blank screen

an exploding turkey; a knot

of grey infiltrators; a house on fire
damped down by hoses, a whole street on fire;
startled mermaids; a pigeon looking for food;
spilled yellow paint glinting on old cobbles
a warship firing her guns heads out south east;
an oil tanker, on fire, hits rocks; blank screen;
old stone carvings reproduced in plaster

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from Morvah

People are tramping on the floor, heavily;
someone else's ceiling; they're not visible;
only the boots show up – no legs; perhaps,
a wispiess, nothing too substantive;
a door, or might be an overcoat, upon
an armchair which we cannot see much of.
Everything which can be perceived is straining,
accompanied by a howling sibilance.

The door or clothing folds back rapidly
yet without agency. Strains of the song
“Resurrection shuffle” soundtracks the world
below the windblown sky as we might scare
frogs and small mammals by treading duck boards,
making them scamper. The door, if it is
a door, soundlessly closes half of the sky,
darkening air with shadow becoming wet.

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from Mousehole

ropes through watery mud drying at low tide
stretch out over Helston and the Meneage;
chunks of broken plastic ready to float;
heavy curtains at a nearby blank window

no house at all, nor any frame, just glass,
and smeary, glittering from indirect sun;
a seagull, between us and nothing, glissades,
eventually to Earth, slowly; but now
it is gliding as if it might always

away from building, out on its own,
stuff that's beginning to condense; combines
and forms itself to a monstrous figure,
limb widening from a torso, which becomes
another limb, so that, all arms and legs,
it spreads itself bright through the empty sky,
kicking its own footholds, grabbing at air
compliant cooperative making itself
spacier in its own spacious void overhead

there is no end; only continuation

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