

*an urban monotone*

i lay these words before your mind like bricks  
yet tentative suggestive as the way  
a skein of geese is pointing is mutating  
in our autumn sky our springtime sky  
this place is just a building site: puddles  
are malingering the weeds repent  
cigarette butts fleck the clods of mud  
the scaffolds cordon off and then the bricks  
which crumble into bits within my upturned  
palm wet clay remains clod up my hand  
as my fingers web and dry to scattering sand  
wind blown thoughts as white as hebridean  
you lay these bricks before my mind like words  
quite square quite boxed apartment blocked i'm teasing  
down the walls from inside out the syntax  
capitals full stops i breathe a pause  
that moment when we realise we're touching

## *Cutting up the heat of glaciers*

Beyond the road,  
the daily sense of blinking water,  
awake despite ourselves.

We spent the morning indoors.  
Workshopping planetary dead ends:  
Could we climb this one?  
How did the last one begin?

A washed up pier. The first man  
and the first woman are left to grow  
in the purposeless heat.

Constellations of paperweights,  
sea ice – which should not have  
been possible – liquid fossil clocks  
seen from the angle of the sun.

Our focus held the concentration  
of anniversaries, burning years.  
Take these bits of aeroplane,  
traffic cone and secondhand whale.  
A preference for averages  
risking routines of change.

Whose house were we really in?

We decide to build it here,  
before we can catch hold of  
anything more wonderful

Submerge our globes in little alchemy,  
mouthfuls collapsing into tables,  
doll's head trucks passed by, by music,  
eyes I thought we had put out

Every day is a beautiful day,  
we hoped, the scale of windows

The more we looked,  
The more it simply wasn't there

## *Oval*

### *i. the consultation*

The rubber gloves were outlined in a single word;  
no free hand glimpse, a blackened felt tip border, sure,  
precise, holding in their milky vagueness just  
above his right hand shoulder, white on light, on white.

His voice seemed slurred, like hearing under water,  
shwas of sounds, one word and rubber gloves that held  
their germs within and washed me cold at twenty one  
degrees. A dettol touch of facts and probabilities

were interspersed with quips about daytime tv shows,  
banana smiles and jokes on ways to “boost your chance  
of living if the news is bad”. I felt the touch  
of rubber down my spine, its pulling, catching stroke.

Outside I saw in gamma vision, children’s book  
of blues and greens and yellows. Shirking reds, I crossed  
the road and cars slowed down but didn’t beep their horns.  
A single word was spreading everywhere today.

### *ii. the invisible*

The invisible is happening everywhere today –  
today i see it clearly – self aware machine of me.  
I watch my breath as bloody streams of oxygen,  
drowning life from inside out. Doubts appear  
quite clear in neurone etch a sketch –  
steroid hormones more than just a concept,  
painting classes, body easel, model me, now  
studying my songs in cycles, looped vibrations,  
body halo, frequencies – the invisible is happening  
everywhere today – today I see it clearly –  
nano seconds burst to life in technicolor flashes,  
gravity appears in multi tangled parachutes inverted  
down, the solid ground a trembling myth, as the air  
and water merge in waves which overlap on  
everything we see. We are touching at the edges.  
Separation into me. A kneedle or a knife.

*iii. the separation*

I'm standing balanced on a stepping stone,  
my ovaries are cradled in my hands.

I rock them gently, whisper words which float  
like dandelion parachutes, carried  
back to me in altered sounds of birdsong,  
running water, silence of the hills.

Intertangled cirrus feathers stroke my  
hair, the sunshine dapples me through newborn  
leaves, the breeze is diffident, the air  
is pungent with mitosis, time is blurred.

I free my clasp, and passive, watch one flow  
downstream. Bumping, trundling, as a  
single oval pebble smoothes its way to sea.

*iii. the rain*

I thought myself the centre of the earth, then,  
waiting by the full length window, staring at the rain.  
Years of science ditched, no need to travel seismic waves  
through crust and mantle. Magnetic fields originated  
there with me, leaning on the shoulder of a friend,  
a haze of anaesthetic hangover, dripping at the edge  
of consciousness, smudging borders around my musings  
on the worst case possibilities, scenarios and fears  
of diagnosis. I watched the rain drop archipelagos  
disintegrate upon the window panes, islands drowned.

No-one would have guessed it in my isolated gaze,  
yet activity was spiralling around me. Ambulances  
wailed emergency, as I watched the automatic doors:  
opening, closing, opening on a watercolour car park  
filling up for visiting. A father rushed the multi coloured  
jackets of his children round the puddles from his car.  
Beyond - the road - the daily mental illness of the rush hour  
as my lift arrived. I timed my exit through the sliding doors  
deliberately and splashed directly through the puddles.  
Rain drops fell upon me like the arrows of a cold front,  
pointing at me, reaching out to me, and coming near.

*v. the mirror*

I'm wearing no clothes. Right this minute, now,  
my eyes averted down as though i am ashamed.  
Centred in my parents' room – the door is shut -  
a certain sign, a symbolic line of suture. My scar is  
six inches long, its darkened, slightly crooked smile  
which makes me tilt my head like nurses do.  
I slowly stroke the bruises of my swollen side  
as I try and figure if the dent I feel is really there.  
My skin appears to droop and sag around my fingers  
in contrast to the fullness that I felt before.  
My fingers knead my new found lack of symmetry,  
a half aborted womanhood. The doctor promised me  
“the woman left will end up working twice as hard.”  
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*vi. the lather*

It wasn't tangerine and fizzy sweets.  
No euphoric bursts of blossom,  
not a primal scream nor dew drop tears.

I wore the phone call factual, cold,  
my mother's smiling arms around  
my shoulders felt like just another layer of clothes,  
as the radio droned with background news:

paralysis had moved.

Inching out beyond my metricality,  
as if I needed scientific proof -  
a single atom rhyming with release.

The fingers of benignancy  
are lathering my back  
and wiping clean my body armour.

## *Uncompletement*

i.

like these words  
forever fragments  
uncomplete  
themselves once  
more

a single bud  
of spring becomes  
the first no longer  
unfurling leafs  
a slightest

variation another  
year to autumn  
ends recede to increments  
and a single leaf  
uncurves towards

ii.

like these words  
forever fragments  
uncomplete  
themselves once  
more

a single bud  
of spring becomes  
the first no longer  
unfurling leafs  
a slightest

variation other  
constellations  
as angles shade through  
greens beyond  
another autumn

ends recede to  
increments of change

and a single leaf  
uncurves towards  
this earth

its crusted corners  
carve out lines across  
an early frost  
these serrated edges  
both potential loss

iii.

like these words  
forever fragments  
uncomplete  
themselves once  
more

our conversation  
will elide  
sliding meanings  
into silence  
the hang of it

a single bud  
of spring becomes  
the first no longer  
unfurling leafs  
a slightest

variation other  
conversations  
our angles shading  
greens beyond  
another autumn

ends recede to  
increments of change  
and a single leaf  
uncurves towards  
this earth

its crusted corners  
carve out lines across  
an early frost  
these serrated edges

both potential loss

the release of  
falling soundlessness  
no speech of a leaf  
revolving on it  
just turning turning

## *Fountainbridge*

“ADELE 19” is plastered  
9 times over  
on a billboard  
by the broken brewery  
in Fountainbridge

the bridge which used  
to span the road  
with beer with a clock  
on it has gone now  
so we’re all out of time

but there never was  
a time for fountains here  
only a namesake pub  
which spouts with smoke  
- or men in tracksuits -

smokescreens this is  
Dundee Street not the way  
towards dundee  
so paint your trainers whiter  
dance it’s saturday night