

KLAUS HØECK
PALIMPSEST
GYLDENDAL

Klaus Høeck

Palimpsest

on a century

Translation John Irons 2013©

THE PICTURES

SEEDBED
(1972)

restoration's tak
ing place under the paper
while these words are

being read and up
in the left corner of the
poem there's a so

ny loudspeaker but
what's become of the artist
himself (the poet

if you like) try and
find him on the basis of
this hint: the year's 1972

I'M TOO SAD TO TELL YOU
(1970)

the picture's implo
sion into the poem and
the poem's into

itself as a sec
ret code from the previous
century perhaps

from another po
et or from cape cod where there
is still a fragrance

of mandarins and
salt from the ship's cemete
ry of miracles

THE ANGEL OF MERCY
(1934)

what is a centu
ry – a container of noth
ingness or a black

box that is full of
curios the angel of
mercy for exam

ple created out
of watercolours five-point
ed stars and plaster

four years before my
own appearance in the twen
tieth century

PORTRAIT OF NAAOTWA SWAYNE
(1988)

i haven't got the
faintest idea who the per
son in question is

i have never met
her nor does she know me so
i am the person

who is anonym
ous in relation to her
farewell then we

*shall never meet a
gain on the bonny bonny
banks of the poem*

STUDY FOR HOMAGE TO THE SQUARE: BEAMING
(1963)

let us pay tribute
to squares rectangles and all
four-sided figures

(also those from the
sixties in neon colours)
to parallelo

grams that have been drawn
in the sand at blåvands huk
the green rhombuses

that gleam in the night
from cyberspace as well as
from computer screens

THE LARGE TRANSPARENT THINGS
(1958)

already here things
begin to go wrong (and they
began to go wrong)

already as far
back as nineteen fifty eight
transparency cap

sized into blue and
white on the great expanses
of the sky the in

visible stranded
in the obscurity of
private collections

TREE BONES
(1974)

could one imagine
a track (a railway track that
consisted of thir

teen sleepers that had
been impregnated with cre
osote) could one

imagine such a
track running from the footboard
of childhood up to

its historical
terminus in ace galle
ry in vancouver?

HIP HIP HOORAY
(1949)

if astral bodies
are what are haunting these ver
ses then they are ap

partitions from au
schwitz or buchenwald without
shoes and without rose

bushes unshaven
ghosts that are in search of a
sylum which they have

hereby been granted
and therefore in chorus shout:
hip hip hooray?

STANDING NUDE
(1921)

carved out of pali
sander mahogany or
teak which were the pre

ferred types of wood back
then – long live the twenties which
by the way i know

absolutely bug
ger all about but i re
ly on art which in

brief glimpses shows us
much more of the truth than his
tory ever does

SAM'S SPOON
(1990)

ah well it can hard
ly be my own baptismal
spoon of three-towered sil

ver for that was pawned
(i refer you to: in nom
ine page twenty

eight) – it is in ac
tual fact not a spoon at
all neither on its

imagined handker
chief nor on paper – *sam's spoon*
is not sam's spoon

CRUSADERS
(1949)

we were the ones who
otherwise thought we were com
pletely different

and actually
we're as like each other as
one brush is the next

one we're the ones there
behind ideas' plexiglass
united right in

the eye of the re
volution of silverglue
and polyester

METAMORPHOSIS
(1935)

this poem is proof –
proof that a piece of poe
tic writing is not

organic and does
not belong to any dy
namic system this

poem will never
change it will never under
go any meta

morphoses it will
never die and thus it will
never be buried

JOSEPH STALIN GAZING
(1979)

up along the top
edge of the picture there are
traces of green and

black enamel paint
as if the whole surface had
been sprayed with varnish

one could almost think
we were dealing here with some
kind of car paint shop

but it is joseph
stalin who's gazing at le
nin over the edge

THE TOTEM
(1945)

there is a contact
on this side put the plug in
and let us see what

happens did you get
an electric shock or did
the poem simply

short-circuit – did you
get onto the same wavelength
as another world

full of unknown ob
jects did you have this great sense
of liberation?

HOUSE
(1966)

there's no question of
it being our house – that is
called cyborg and it

lies here on this side
of the millennium tang
led up in paper

streamers whereas that
house over there has been paint
ed in acrylic

and has been placed on
the boundary between two
and three dimensions

HEAD OF EOW: PROFILE
(1972)

it could possibly
be an eye-witness to mass
ive terror bombard

ments of hanoi it
could possibly be a fic
tion a freeze-dried snap

shot of absolute
ly nothing at all it could
possibly be that

but in fact it turns
out to be the head of the
artist's own mistress

WALKERS BY THE SEA
(1954)

*come with me to
the sea to the sea of love
where i find a heart*

stone for you my be
loved where all time reigns (and
where all the time it

is of course now) *come
with me to the sea to the
sea of love to*

*the sea of orchids
to the sea of jason to
the sea of baal*

HINBA
(1978)

raspberry marme
lade all over the place and
i mean everywhere

have you got the mess
age raspberry marmela
de prince smeared right in

a whole decade dunked
in raspberry marmela
de the universe

the heart raspberry
marmelade smeared in rasp
berry marmelade

TRIPTYCH
(1972)

i found myself in
this year of the lord in pur
gatory's first cir

cle raised high above
generalities between
three mirrors that were

cracked in a shoe-box
which i decided to call
my home while i stu

died to become an
idiot in a prince of
wales chequered jacket

COSTUME DESIGN FOR 'ORIENTAL FANTASY'
(1915)

while fifty thousand
french soldiers were falling and
thirty-five thousand

german soldiers were
doing likewise in the win
ter battle at cham

pagne this costume was
drawn in pencil and gouache
the intention be

ing for the hero
to wear it in an ori
ental fantasy

FOUR MEN (WITH GUNS POINTED AT THEIR HEADS)
(1988)

can in other words
(these) an art of terror be
created no mat

ter whether the vic
tims happen to have black plas
tic bags pulled right down

over their heads or
their faces are merely hid
den behind four large

white plates mostly for
the sake of the onlookers
zat iz ze kvestion?

190 x 30 x 7.190 x 30 x 7.50 x 42 x 1
(1993)

if i stack elev
en blocks of magnolia
wood (that measure 19cm

in height 27cm in width
and 38cm in length) on top of
each other will they

together then weigh
a total of 73kg? – i
don't know but they will

then reach a height of
209 centimetres which is
higher than i am

ABSTRACT SPEED
(1913)

as if something has
passed by at a fearful vel
ocity or as

if something's just be
gun to accelerate as
if two forces that

are mutually op
posed are holding each other
in check as if green

and blue cancel each
other out in a double
saltomortale

SLEEPING GIRL
(1943)

'joy division' is
the first association
that occurs to me

in this particu
lar context 'the east front' the
second one – what does

the jewish woman
dream who is about to be
raped in some german

field brothel or oth
er? – and 'atrocities exhi
bition' the third one

THE SINGING MAN
(1930)

can bronze sing and if
the answer's in the affirm
ative in what key?

we are at any
rate dealing here with one of
the first examples

of 'entartete
kunst' which the nazis never
theless did not man

age to destroy e
ven though the song of that name
is by mendelssohn

TRANSSEXUALIS
(1991)

the clinical light
the snap hooks from the lifted
ice-box that is chock-

full of epo and
implants the fitness equip
ment the plasma as

well as all the sur
gical instruments for self-
amputation i

left the last decen
nium without a trace of
sadness and remorse

FIRST AND THIRD
(1987)

my own projections
from back then are far more beautiful than the green

video portrait
of a vietnamese woman
on the back wall of

the staircase far more
beautiful because they are
of you beloved

dressed in a red opera hat and otherwise
sweet fanny adams

YELLOW AND BLACK BOATS
(1985)

the two-boat mirroring
is a philosophical problem which won't

find its solution
either in my taking the
floor with a poem

and reading aloud
'in my taking the floor and
reading the poem

aloud i'm reading
aloud' – it's only the poem's
trompe l'œil

THE GLEANER
(1978)

when i was small i
used to turn the mirror upside down so as to

see whether i too
came to be upside down later I would try to

put everything in
its right place so as to see
whether i had found

my own just like the
woman who is gleaning corn
in the picture here

ZYDECO
(1984)

i take out a piece
of paper and draw with a
coloured pencil a

black board which i then
attempt to erase once again and i then write

the word 'zydeco'
on the board with various
ly coloured letters

and finally the
poem which ends as follows:
'don't read this poem'

EIDOS
(1940)

there is no danger
afoot and everything breathes
peace which is a lit

tle unusual
since the inner and the out
er picture have a

marked tendency to
agree then unless starfish
agrees with dunker

que and mussel shells
with the battle of britain
there is something wrong

CULTURE — NATURE
(1971)

i have myself found
a dead moth lying in my
right trainer which turns

out to be a small
mediterranean flour
moth (ephestia

kuehniella) which
has perished so far from home
in its fateful en

counter with culture
and its sarcophagus made
out of foam rubber

INDUSTRIAL FACADES
(1975)

the castles and temp
les of our time: the cooling
towers camelots might

y hourglass on the
horizon the ilion
of the terminals

the refineries
the holy flame of the pyr
olysis the a

ropolis of the
shipyards like vine leaves over
the sky's espalier

PERFORMERS
(1948)

why can animals
not act comedy? – because
they're incapable

of duplication
do not know themselves and there
fore cannot ima

gine themselves as the
female snake charmer and the
clown as you or i

can – who for exam
ple has seen a st bernard
play charlie rivel?

MILLE FILLES
(1939)

a thousand girls born
and portrayed on a lacquer
tray in gold bronze in

the same year that war
broke out and was then scattered
to the four corners

of europe like arms
and legs of dolls that had been
ripped off like the de

capitated head
of a doll with bright-blue eyes
that were made of glass

CLUB NIGHT
(1907)

i know my mater
nal grandfather was in new
york in nineteen hun

dred and seven and
that he appreciated
the noble art of

self-defence – so it's
not so odd that that i try
to localise him

among the throng of
onlookers – could it be him
in the wing collar?

FOR DARKNESS
(1971)

it was here – not in
to the hell of judecca
that lucifer plum

meted – just look at
the enormous wings that un
fold from the wall com

ical and majes
tic at one and the same time
almost like kitsch at

night they are lumin
ous with polyurethane
here in milwaukee

CITY ACTIVITIES WITH SUBWAY
(1930)

now we have to go
forty years back in time (al
most sideways like a

crab) to arrive at
a frieze on one of the walls
of the great city

a work that mixes
cartoon with rococo ceil
ings and advertise

ments like a precurs
or of graffiti arts a
merica of today

BARAQUE D'DULL ODDE
(1961)

which life prisoner
normally sits inside be
hind this chicken wire

on the chair standing
in front of the yellow and
brown towel cloths is it

a man who misses
gulag treblinka or chi
lon – what has become

of him has he gone
off to the lavatory
right at this moment?

1822-NOW
(1993)

come let us take a
walk together into the
neon light of the

large institutions
let us find our data in
the registers – have

they got anything
on us did you find your own
portrait among the

photographs or this
poem in the archives un
der a pseudonym?

LE ART
(1987)

*cres-lite pearl
alcoa liquitex pearl
sturdy bolt and*

*nut co new york
ny usa pearl 3m staedtler
pearl winsor and*

*newton pearl formi
ca x-acto pearl alcoa*

*liquitex pearl
sturdy bolt and nut co
new york ny usa*

RHYTHM IN FOUR SQUARES
(1943)

a meander bor
der of more recent date in
green red and black an

imprint of a T-34
tank's crawling treads from the bat
tle of stalingrad

a trigylph and tri
bute to the defence of the
the tractor factory

that is how i in
terpret this oblong picture
sixty years later

SISTER
(1991)

i have left my el
der brother behind in the
twentieth centu

ry on a plinth of
brown papier mâché deco
rated with silver

stars and nails as in
a horseshoe so as to guar
antee him luck – no

i left my brother
behind in a clay urn at
holmens kirkegård

GIRLIE DOOR
(1959)

in my salad days
we didn't used to burn brid
ges but doors i can't

remember why we
did so it didn't have a
nything at all to

do with blake and there
weren't any pinups that had
been stuck up on them

neither marilyn
monroe nor ava gardner
we simply burnt them

CAGE
(1986)

a cage of green la
ser beams that only birds are
capable of pass

ing while human be
ings are for ever imprison
ed inside by the

cyberspace of their
own thoughts for ever shut out
from the presence

of this great imme
diacy and from being
together with god

UNIQUE FORMS OF CONTINUITY IN SPACE
(1913)

it is natural
ly not the work of art it
self that expresses

and realises
the formula of steel pride fev
er and speed which can

best be seen from the
fact that this statue of bronze
has stood stock still e

ver since the specta
cular death of the artist
on the western front

THE MAP OF THE WORLD
(1971)

it is really quite
thought-provoking and it al
so gratifies one's

vanity that den
mark's the most eye-catching na
tion in the embroid

ery of the world
but unfortunately and
in actual fact

it's of course greenland
that's been covered with a dan
ish flag and cross-stitch

RELIQUARY
(1990)

it would have been more
reassuring if the sec
ond-hand installa

tion made out of cook
ies and biscuit tins had been
erected and this

poem had alread
y been written as far back
as in nineteen hun

dred and forty-six
but then the two of us had
hardly been born yet

VISION OF EZEKIEL
(1912)

as a boy i cut
out the battle of brávell
ir in red yellow

and blue glossy pa
per and now i see others
have imagined the

destruction of jer
usalem and the temple
in quite different

spiritualist
ic colours just before the
start of world war one

NUDE AGAINST DAYLIGHT
(1908)

on this side i saw
you on the border of the
colours in a new

century behind
a light curtain of light i
saw you almost com

pletely liberat
ed from my visions and cell
ophane paper of

conceptions i saw
you just as in reali
ty: das weib an sich

HAMMERING MEN
(1984)

that's how it is in
all workplaces a mechan
ical slogging a

way for capital
even in the postal and
telegraph service

where i was employed
for some years – so it's my let
ters and poems ly

ing scattered over
the floor – this one is number
ten thousand and one

SUNDAY AFTERNOON
(1967)

one half of the world's
population is busy
eating itself to

death while the other
half is in the process of
starving (though not

of its own free will)
consider this intercon
nection while you are

lazily digest
ing your sunday lunch among
your fat relations

CROUCHING BATHER
(1906)

i have seen you in
a shawl of seaweed on the
stone at fogsand like

some mermaid of cer
amics or phtalate esters
i have seen you in

more than one sense and
the cubism of three di
mensions i have seen

you in a bronze sta
tue from another centu
ry my beloved

CELL III
(1991)

the dream chamber ap
parently contains: some sort
of parsley mincer

(from theresien
stadt?) a collar bone (from ber
gen-belsen?) a door

without any hand
le (from ravensbrück?) a leg
that has been ripped off

(from treblinka?) and
last but not least a block of
plaster (from dachau?)

KISS
(1995)

what becomes of the
colours and all the years
what became of the kiss

es – the midsummer
night's kiss what became of it?
did it end up on

a five by four me
ter large screen of vinyl like
an inkjet print that

is still owned by the
photographer with ras
tafari dreadlocks?

HALF-CASTE CHILD
(1957)

this poem is not
completely genuine a
computer's been in

volved in bringing it
into existence nor is
it completely ar

ian 'shalom' – what
a right sow's ear – or apple-
pie danish just look

here 'pear' – that is *this*
poem ruined – it's a right
mulatto poem

TILED PATH STUDY WITH BROKEN MASONRY
(1989)

study of the word
'flisegulv' (danish for flagged
floor) in this poem –

it consists of two
nominals and nine letters
(six consonants and

three vowels) at the
base of the structure there are
two relata and

two descriptors it
is quite unsuitable for
use as a terrace

BIRD IN SPACE
(1927)

but what bird? – it is
not a carrier pigeon
at any rate whose

flight is far more hor
izontal across the land
map of the centu

ry perhaps a bit
tern or heron in the lake's brass
no i think it is

a swift on its way
through the eye of the needle
of the universe

COMPOSITION WITH THE ACE OF CLUBS
(1913)

a whole century's
house of cards lies collapsed here
in discord with it

self as in a dream
or vision a long time be
fore itself as

art can – the true pre
sent and future research – hur
rah for the ace of

clubs and hearts and all
that fell on the floor for the
trump card of defeat

FRICA AS FEAR
(1950)

man and woman in
red profile of terra cot
ta on their oppo

site sides of middle
of the years held together
by their difference –

nothing has changed in
this picture exactly the
same forces are in

volved the very same
heart that has been torn to pieces
the very same love

LEACHING OUT FROM THE INTERSECTION
(1981)

put on your gold-rimmed
glasses and read the next verse
in which such collec

tions of words as 'tins
of food' or 'cotton panties'
and 'plastic bag' are

defiling poe
try with what is quite liter
ally refuse from

the great scrapheaps and
landfills of literature
and reality

TABLE AND CUPBOARD WITH EGG-SHELLS
(1965)

it looks a bit like
the hatching place for the art
of the previous

century – the emp
ty egg-shells on display in
their showcase the jays

that have long since flown
away and what i wonder
to myself can be

concealed in the locked
drawer of the ivory-col
oured bedside table?

LABOUR
(1978)

the large cloth-A on
plywood the soft angora-A
knitted three decades

ago in cata
lonia as a begin
ning of the laby

rinth of the red clew –
has all that labour proved to
be a waste of ef

fort now that the small
art fascists are here once a
gain with their ‘pure’ art?

KUNST KICK
(1974)

stand here on the top
step of this stanza kick me
down the stairs to this

stanza (prefera
bly with an adidas train
er) and another

couple of steps down
to the bottom of the
stairs in this third stan

za if you’ve read this
poem now you’ve contribu
ted to a kunst kick

WITHIN AND BEYOND THE FRAME
(1973)

tear this page out of
the book before you have read
it and paint it in

black and white stripes with
a speedmarker so that it
resembles a juven

tus liga flag now
read the poem – then you will
understand what the

title means and why
there’s only a penalty
kick when awarded

TODAY IS THE TOMORROW YOU WERE PROMISED YESTERDAY
(1976)

get a publisher
to reproduce this poem
as a gelatine

silverprint mounted
on aluminium that
has the dimensions

101.6 times 152.4 centi
metres and have three copies
done then hang them up

on a power py
lon located somewhere in
the vicinity

STORM IN THE JUNGLE
(1931)

further back in the
century there are lightning
flashes in the wa

tercolours while ex
otic dreams come forward out
of the mirrors and

the fairytales live
their own quiet lives in the
shadow of death – there

are less than ten years
to go before we end up
in ragnarök

SACKING AND RED
(1954)

sure enough the wounds
would heal the major wounds through
which the most beauti

ful left humani
ty: stalingrad leningrad
hiroshima sure

enough the wounds would
be bandaged up with sack dress
with glue and with vi

nyl paint sure enough
they were going to be trans
formed into great art

SPHERE ON A CYLINDER
(1969)

if this poem was
a sphere of brass coated with
chrome and positioned

on a cylinder
of steel you would be able
to mirror yourself

in it you would be
able to see that you are
only a quite or

dinary person
that you will die one day like
everybody else

STATIONARY I
(1990)

in stingsted wood i
take six almost identi
cal photographs of

the thuja trees with
a pentax camera then
i have them devel

oped and printed on
cibachrome paper and placed
in steel frames and fi

nally i go out
and place the six photographs
back in stingsted wood

SELF-PORTRAIT
(1927)

this posthumous self-
portrait in black and white can
not of course be of

me who was born e
leven years later and fur
thermore i have ne

ver in my life worn
any kind of car-goggles
only sun-glasses

and my hair has ne
ver been smarmed down with brylcreem
so it is not me

OBUS
(1972)

in the early nine
teen seventies i used to
have a war-shell stand

ing on my desk as
a lamp stand that via my
maternal grandfa

ther original
ly came from the danish na
vy it was not a

reminder of the
vietnam war and i don't know
what became of it

THE BLIND
(1986)

in a sense all of
us are blind we do not see
reality wrap

it up in ima
ges of the sea when it is
as beautiful as

it can be with sea-fire
and flash-light (and i do not know
just how many pi

xels) write it down
in small pithy statements and
poems like this one

SPIDER ON THE WINDOW, MONSTER IN THE LAND
(1992)

as previously
stated: who sees the spider
in his own eye the

monster in his own
heart? – no one much more prefers
all the mirrors the

fairytale the oil
on the canvas than the
cruelty of re

ality unfold
ing in bosnia-herce
govina this year

THE CAFÉ
(1931)

café dan turèll
café sommersko bo-bi
bar andys bar – for

a while we used to
live there *day and night* used to
play pinball while the

wars ebbed away and
other ones conquered the moon
for a while we used

to pay tribute to
the ancient motto: the ca
fé lives the guests leave

MIDDAY
(1960)

the midday's painted
steel without a base the sun
without its column –

there you are then – what
were you doing yourself on this
particular date

in the sixties? – were
you playing table tennis
or were you perhaps

crossing the north sea
with sheets from the steel rolling
mill in fredriksværk?

FUNERAL OF THE ANARCHIST GALLI
(1911)

i open up the
base of a cornflour packet
then fill it with sun-

dried tomatoes green
and red peppers (not in it
self all that anar

chistic) pineapple
prawns anchovies aspara
gus garden peas beans

and to top it all
off cream of tartar and voi
là 'pizza galli'

THE INN OF THE DAWN HORSE
(1936)

i never found my
self in the nooks and crannies
of surreali

sm among rocking
horses and ectoplasm
neither in the large

park landscapes at mal
maison nor in my own per
sonal dreams i did

not find myself a
nywhere else than in the lime
bespattered mirrors

STILL LIFE WITH JUG AND BOTTLE
(1965)

my friend also paint
ed over the sixties on
hardboard covered ov

er our youth with a
crylic paint set pieces and
partitions decor

ated with *wild life*
more than he did with *still life*
with alumini

um paint or with gold
more than he did with natu
re morte and plaster

COMPRESSION
(1970)

i consider my
bike a yellow bugatti
i am very fond

of that bike not least
because of its name it's got
the lot plenty of

gears a foam rubber
saddle – the works – i wonder
what it would look like

in a poem? – as
here like compressed alumi
nium mixed with words

BATHING WOMEN
(1900)

at the gasworks har
bour it was possible to
swim under the wood

en construction of
the baths into the women's
section and there was

a rumour circu
ating back in the nineteen
forties that a boy

with blue eyes had been
blinded by the bathing at
tendant's boiling tar

LOOP MY LOOP
(1991)

who is able to
tie a knot in his own pe
nis or tie a reef

knot in a mettwurst
who is able to tie a
loop in his own ap

pendix or plait his
intestines together who
is able to put

a curl in his tail
or the poem without con
juring with language?

BOUQUET WITH FLYING LOVERS
(1934)

in our wedding photograph we seem more to be
dealing with a 'lover

ing couple with flying
bridal bouquet' of dark
red roses that appear

to be floating
around in a distinctly
gold frame

and a homemade passe
partout made out of turquoise
coloured cardboard

ETRUSCAN ROMANCE
(1984)

a stele that has
been made out of used words and
chromium-plated

panels windcreens that
have been crumpled in serious
accidents at

column of partial
sentences and smashed up cylinders
under blocks of monolith

ument to the car
cemeteries of the twentieth
century

THE DINNER PARTY
(1979)

or the great supper
that has been modelled out of
mixed media the

vast hors d'œuvre and
the gigantic gorging binge
among all the dishes

ning buddies and shitting
buddies in the european
union and nato – and

does shit from pâté
de fois (en passant) smell better
than that from rice?

COMBS OF THE WIND
(1977)

i was on cuba
that year in the aerosol's
blue republic king

neptune lifted his
trident high about male
cón and the hotel

hilton the tuning
fork of the winds had been
hammered into the rock

and whistled in the
empty bottles the revolution
was still young

SONG OF LOVE
(1914)

what is the difference between *song of love* and *love song*? – is it the

same as happens to be the case with the two complementary colours

blue and orange or is it more a kind of colour blindness as

it is between green and red – is it masculine versus feminine?

WRAPPED COAST
(1969)

i wrap a gauze bandage around my right hand that i have dipped in red

ink after which i seal it with gaffer tape then i write this poem

to which i do not give the title 'wrapped hand' (see above) even though

for perfectly obvious reasons it is a cack-handed poem

KIDS
(1995)

if this was a photograph of my own daughter she would have been eight

years old by this time and had the name rita for that is what had been

agreed on and had it not been for the fact that she was flushed down the

toilet by fate or by a stroke of coincidence or maybe god?

RES IPSA
(1983)

the stone from ene bær-odde i begin by wrapping in cling film

so tightly and precisely that one cannot see the film with the naked

eye after which i remove the polystyrene again and re

place the stone on the window-sill once more – *so much for 'das ding an sich'*

JOHN
(1971)

*once i had a
friend by the name of john
(now where could he*

*be?) his necessi
ty was greater than his ta
lents he wanted more*

*than he was able
didn't want to shut up shop
was unable to*

*say stop we all ha
ve a friend named john who
is dead and gone*

IN THE COURSE OF TIME II
(1994)

*oder wie die zeit
vergeht – look at your watch
and read the date check*

*the movement of the
red numbers and replace them
moving them backwards*

*and forwards deter
mine the exact omega
hour – when you have read*

*this poem approx
imately twenty seconds
of your life have passed*

ARIADNE OF NAXOS
(1913)

*back once again in
a cloud of talcum powder
back once again in the*

*time before the cen
tury's own myths of lies and
tall stories had been*

*born and had become
reality back to the
love fantasies of*

*oil on canvas that
belonged to what was very
much a different age*

OSTEND
(1954)

*what did my mother's
glass case contain behind its
leaded glass two cut-*

*glass rummers and a
cup with 'good luck' on it in
gold bronze – the expec*

*tations and dreams of
a generation – i do
not remember was*

*there a glass case that
had been manufactured in
belgium there at all?*

MINSTER
(1987)

a cathedral in
a cathedral in one piece
of divine nonsense

no in that case rath
er a church on the asphalt
with spires of car tyres

hub caps and nuts and
bolts as a tribute to the
holy catholic

recycling of things
*and the resurrection of
debris and matter*

THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY
(1931)

the memory of
persistence stalingrad kursk
passchendaele

midway el ala
mein omaha sword gold ju
no utah beach ver

dun leyte dien bien
phu mukden pearl harbour i
wo jima ypres:

the persistence of
memory that turns time in
to a camembert

REQUIEM FOR M OPPENHEIMER
(1985)

i enter all the
commemorative poems
on friends and fami

ly all the epi
taphs and obituaries
that i have written

for poets and for
musicians all that i have
written i then ent

er in this one sing
le poem which in that way
abolishes time

UTOPIA
(1988)

i did not search for
U's grave or for T's cross they
searched for me i did

not search for O's wreath
it found me i did not find
P's sunrises they

searched for me i did
not find I's polygon and
A's transcendence they

found me i searched for
a utopia and i
found a topia

NEW YORK UNDER GASLIGHT
(1941)

nothing at all has
altered since back then there were
the same colours and

neon lights the same
skyscrapers and letters that
flatten out the di

mensions the same stars
and stripes over queensborough
though – come to think of

it – the world trade cen
ter wasn't there either in
the nineteen forties

TWO CAN PLAY
(1983)

is the soul despite
everything not of roses
calcium or pa

per is it more di
vided into two inter
connected circles

that appear at a
physical level in gal
vanised steel welded

with nails and rivets
into an unbreakable
unity and whole?

POLITICAL DRAMA
(1914)

okay the colours
rotate more the opinions
do so more quickly

and the points of view
are centrifuged in towards
the middle as if

red and green are flung
off the disc to the left while
the blue disappears

to the right in black
and the rest ends as said in
a mushy melee

GIRLS IN SWIMMING COSTUMES
(1928)

polka dot biki
ni classic tie-striped mo
dels geometri

cal costumes *morning*
fashion evening design mo
dels of the night and

my own beloved
in watercolours as a
dancer out at the

funen coast point of
fogense pynt in a bal
let by diaghilev

THE SLEEPING TOWN
(1914)

alpha sleep: profound
and black and full of ivy
the naked women

and female sui
cides of beta sleep draped in
sheets and roses the

gamma state and fenc
ing scenes of the rapid eye
movements i woke up

in precisely this
year at rigshospitalet
in copenhagen

MY EGYPT
(1927)

my god – an attack
of the shits in long johns if
one ever drank a

ny water from the
nile and went around in such
underwear or had

been in egypt for a
ny reason whatsoever
and had not by a

ny chance died in *lan*
caster in the united
states of america

HOMAGE TO CÉZANNE
(1900)

the picture in the
picture and the poem in
the poem – that kind

of problem is not
going to concern us a
ny longer nor what

particular paint
ing by cézanne is being
paid homage to here

we must first and
foremost maintain that a poem
is words on paper

LONDON: THE BRIDGE AT SOUTHWARK
(1905)

did i manage to
cross this bridge once in the past
or did i burn it

behind me beneath
a sky that resembled an
overturned glass *sweet*

and sour sauce
back then in the past when i
was pursuing blake

in paradise street
but did not find anything
not even his shoe

UNIVERSE/WORLD'S PLATFORM
(1972)

imagine that the
poem is a point that is
outside itself (not

really the slightest
bit stranger that imagi
ning it as a point

that is inside it
self) if such a conception
is possible you

can according to
archimedes move the world
from your writing desk

BERKELEY NO. 52
(1955)

i was not at a
rate in usa in nineteen
fifty-five rather

the opposite i
was in sorø at the time
where the sky was blue

but judging by what
i can see here (and i still
put my trust in art)

the light in berkeley
was orange (muted by ru
bidium) that year

WIRING THE UNFINISHED BATHROOM
(1962)

this poem is not
quite finished yet work is still
going on at the

level of the first
stanza the workmen are still
lugging words around

unlike with a house
work begins at the top and
ends at the bottom

so now there is on
ly one more sentence needed
now it is finished

LIBRARY FOR THE BIRDS OF ANTWERP
(1993)

quite shamelessly i
would here draw your attention
to the fact that

i once wrote a song
book for blackbirds in the pre
vious century

this i will now be
gin by mailing to the li
brary in antwerp

and afterwards will
send a leather-bound copy
of the work in kind

THE 7TH HISTORY OF THE HUMAN FACE
(1993)

i too remember
these posters from the nineteen
seventies in which

the members of the
rote armee fraktion were
portrayed as psycho

paths from kreschmer's books
with the aid of manipu
lated photos that

made them seem to be
suffering from barber's itch
(even the women)

DEDICATED TO SADO-MASOCHISTS
(1922)

in a way and i
would emphasise in a way
all of us are of

course sadomaso
chists so that the poem here
is in a way de

icated to e
verybody (even the pope)
i am not saying

that everyone is
a sadomasochist just
saying: in a way

CONTRA-COMPOSITION
(1924)

art does not depict
the world (nor does it depict
itself) it does not

have enough in it
self – art seals the gap that ex
ists between soul and

body between lan
guage and reality art
heals the world occa

sionally with the
aid of remarkable con
tra-compositions

THE ONLY GOOD ONE IS A DEAD ONE
(1993)

i have often been
asked whether i am a ter
rorist myself in

the light of the books
i have written – ulrike
marie meinhof

for example – i
have kept silent until now
here's my answer:

a lawyer doesn't
have to believe the same as
the one he defends

RELIEF NO. 12A
(1936)

reichskanzler adolf
hitler opened the olym
pic games in nineteen

hundred and thirty-
six plucked an eagle out of
the stone and sent it

soaring into the
sky apparently controlled
everything except

for relief number
12A which came into be
ing out of nothing

HOMAGE TO MANOLETTE
(1954)

i saw a bull calf
of the jersey breed (which is
the most aggressive)

roar in defiance
at the sea – roar well that's
overstated but

make a noise and i
realised that it's neither
a question of e

motion or reason
but one of belief – *homa
ge to the bullcalf*

PORTRAIT OF LILY DAMITA
(1925)

the poem doesn't
lie – already for the sim
ple reason that it

is not a matter
of truth but is more a the
odicy – so it

is completely and
utterly irrelevant
who the fuck lily

damita is or
if the lilies around her
are as black as coal

LATE AFTERNOON
(1935)

how is abdullah
öcelan getting on now
i wonder – is he

actually still
alive – has he been paci
fied by pharmaceu

ticals have elec
trodes been connected to his
testicles? i ask

myself these questions
on a late afternoon down
by langesø lake

DIMPLED CHEEKS
(1955)

the poor in spirit
have been compensated with
butterfly wings and

great orgasms the
shakings are wild and raise a
storm in the dimples

and in what the rest
of us are inclined to call
absolutely no

thing whatsoever
in the world in other words
in god's own kingdom

BICYCLE WHEEL
(1913)

this genuine bi
cycle wheel that has been fixed
to a stool was signed

by duchamp himself
and subsequently put on
exhibition as

art these everyday
objects known as ready-mades
revolutionised

people's conceptions
of what can be said to be
artistic value

THE LARGE HORSE
(1914)

a black stallion
at hindsholm gave my hair a
nip and then a snort

i took this as a good
omen a norwegian po
ny tried to bite me

i gave it an up
percut i get on really
well with horses know

the names of all the
derby winners by heart – all
power to the horses

SAILING BOATS IN THE PORT OF DEAUVILLE
(1935)

i draw a line in
the poem – this far and no
further if any

one reads any fur
ther it is at their own risk
so it is one's own

fault if one ends up
somewhere in the neighbourhood
of deauville and o

maha beach where the
reading and understanding
run into the sand

THE FIRST PEOPLE (I-IV) (THE FOUR SEASONS)
(1990)

the spring abortion
in green shot with a polar
oid camera

the summer abor
tion in red watercolour
on see-through plastic

the autumn abor
tion in mixed shades of grey on
a sheet of plywood

the winter abor
tion in black and white as sketch
or charcoal drawing

LA MALINCHE
(1988)

dear little woman
what have you got in your hair? –
glass beads and hen's feath

ers – *dear little wo*
man what have you got in your
bra? – balls of wool and

stones – *dear little wo*
man what have you got under
your skirt? – snake's skins and

bast – *dear little wo*
man what have you got in your
panties? – aids and hiv

MATISSE INSTALLATION
(1994)

what is it the ro
coco figure and the mon
key in the striped trous

ers are saying what
is it all the doll's heads of
bakelite are say

ing in great admir
ation at the sight of la
dance? – they're saying:

m ma mat mati
matis matiss matisse
matisseprick

DEATH AND THE MASKS
(1927)

some of these fools' heads
and these clowns seem somewhat fa
miliar to me

these fatuous masks
that are grinning and laughing
at death – no i am

not mentioning a
ny names and it is of no
consequence at all

when it comes to it
death does not have any re
troactive effect

TORSO IN METAL FROM THE ROCK DRILL
(1913)

section rock drill
herewith honours the proto
type of the centu

ry's first robot which
later developed into
industrial ro

bots and into mu
tants in the star wars films and
later still into

the cyborgs which in
clude among them the one that's
written this poem

ELEPHANT OF CELEBES
(1921)

it isn't a va
cuum cleaner but nor is
it a mud pump it

isn't an ocean
but nor is it a sky that
has planes from the first

world war crashing down
out of it it isn't a
winnowing machine

from the sudan
or a poem but nor is
it the opposite

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW
(1992)

the cage is empty
the bird has flown and the fly
the problem's been solved

but how or in what
way remains unknown all
that is left behind

are these cables and
wires that have been welded to
gether on the lime-

blue surface these im
plements of penitence made
out of steel and iron

TIMES SQUARE AT 3.53 PM, WINTER
(1921)

precisely nine years
later i myself stood on
times square in the

winter light at 3.53pm
i carefully checked every
thing sony and the

coca-cola ad
verts in the centre of the
picture beefsteak char

lies it was all cor
rect – the only difference
was that i was there

DANCE MARATHON
(1934)

les lanciers mid-cen
tury in the gymnasi
um with no girls – first

figure: trip up sec
ond figure: paraffin third
figure: circassi

an circle with la
dies at the king's ball at so
rø academy

fourth figure: punch up
fifth figure: end-of-season
dance farewell goodbye

ITALY
(1968)

italy galva
nised and suspended from a
meat hook with the toe

of the boot pointing
upwards (like a certain per
son once with his head

down from a petrol
pump) the map of italy
that has been cast in

iron as a model
that's been conceived by members
of the red brigades

PHASE FOUR OF SITTING
(1968)

band zero were play
ing monopoly while power
was being shared at

other tables where
the stakes were not soft brown su
gar and expendi

ture were not porter
band zero were playing lu
do while money was

being paid out at
other board games in the dan
ish arts foundation

THE JACK OF CLUBS
(1957)

if you draw *the knight*
of wands it means departure
absence flight maybe

even emigra
tion and if it is followed
by *the page of cups*

there is a danger
ous rival involved in your
love affairs the card's

also said to poss
ibly be the harbinger
of unusual news

VILLAGE CHURCH
(1957)

the archetype of
village churches is situ
ated on skarø

i do not know
exactly when it was built
in the small ceme

tery four english
pilots lie buried (*time sure
flies*) so one cannot

say that the date or
the year are what connect one
with eternity

BAD BOY
(1981)

yes you secretly
spied on your mother through half
closed venetian blinds

yes you masturba
ted on the sly while you took
a close look at her

vagina yes you
stole from her handbag yes
you had the urge to

go ahead and rape
her yes sigmund freud was in
disputably right

UNTITLED
(1991)

the poet's writing
desk: a compass a magni
fying glass a stone

from neruda's grave
the testament the 20th cen
tury art book a

photo of the be
loved a medal from the
chess federation

a brass anvil writ
ing paper the biro and
this poem – oopsi!

SIX FOOT LEAPING HARE ON STEEL PYRAMID
(1990)

here the hare leaps in
from heartland in over the
lines and the stanzas

in over the poem's
pyramid chases itself
in figures of eight

leaps over its own
shadow because it is e
ven faster than light

or thinks so at least
i think it's leaping out a
gain at heartland here

FOR ELLEN
(1975)

turn on the strip light
ing in the kitchen and let
it stay on constant

ly day and night un
til it burns out by itself
or is turned off by

some other random
person allow it to stay
on constantly as

a demonstration
a reminder a recol
lection of itself

THE END OF GOD
(1963)

as if god was an
easter egg as if god was
a pink easter egg

as if god was a
pink easter egg that was peppered with
a great many holes

as if god was a
painted pink and oval piece
of canvas that

had been perfora
ted by a hundred and fif
ty jabs of a lance

RIVOLI
(1989)

i take out my wa
tercolours and a sheet of
watercolour pa

per with a broad brush
and loose strokes i paint two thirds
of the surface an

orange-yellow
colour (aureoline)
the last third part of

the paper's painted
lighter (grass) green i call the
picture: rivoli

MY STUDIO: VIEW OF PARIS
(1939)

i am unable
of course to give a satis
factory account

of *my studio*
while sitting in it so i
take a photo of

it with a self-tim
ing release camera – yes
there i sit with my

back to everyone
looking out: *view of nature*
everything's ok

UNTITLED
(1956)

there's a free hand then
the fifties on the table
or on the paper

marshall aid chester
field cigarettes the ko
rean war my first

chess tournament my
very first girlfriend my first
unhappy love af

fair my first poem
(on rhododendrons i think)
my last innocence

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON
(1995)

let us celebrate
a thirty-fifth anniver
sary with silver

and olive branches
let us celebrate human
ity's greatest a

chievement in the twen
tieth century with neil
armstrong's famous words:

'the moon isn't made
out of green cheese but out of
emmenthaler cheese'

LEIGH UNDER THE SKYLIGHT
(1994)

i saw my body
naked in the triptych of
the mirrors this morn

ing sub specie
aeternitatis – okay
okay it's also

only on loan but
if i was to be used as
a model i would

like to be painted
with sable-hair brushes ra
ther than with hog-hair

COMPOSITION
(1930)

just think that the col
ours yellow red blue and green
composed into a

pattern that looks like
a church stained glass window can
lead to a crema

torium – just think
that perfectly ordina
ry figures that cause

you to think of eve
ning light just think that they can
lead to majdanek

SOLDIER'S HEAD IV
(1965)

what became then of
the other three soldiers – does
one of them rest at

ypres under the
poppies is a second one
hiding away in

khe-san and a third
one among the spiders in
dien bien phu and the

fourth one what has be-
come of all the rest of his
corpus delicti?

RAT KING
(1963)

bang – that took care of
a rat right between the eyes
bang – that's another

one gone you'd think it
was a shooting booth bang –
and that was a third

remember they're liv-
ing creatures being shot at
bang – another one

gone what a load of
shit to be undertaking
I am the rat king

DISTANT RAIN
(1995)

who remembers yes
terday's rain (still completely
fresh with camphor and

menthol) not to men-
tion the rain of the previ-
ous century who

remembers it? – on-
ly the mediate is re-
called and passes a

way while all that is
immediate is recap-
tured and here to stay

CONSTRUCTION IN SPACE: CRYSTAL
(1937)

crystal night anti-
cipated carved out of per-
spex the year before

the year with radi-
i out to all of the syn-
agogues and the bus

inesses that were go-
ing to be branded with the
hexagram a mi

ni-model oddly
enough constructed of shat-
terproof acrylic

DANCER
(1934)

the muse of the dance
has a heart of sheet-metal
and a skirt of weld

ed copper the muse
of the dance has hollow shoes
of light alloy and

a face that does not
exist the muse of the dance
is seventy-eight

centimetres tall
and is bolted to its plinth
in a pirouette

BIRD SWALLOWING FISH
(1913)

i have on the oth
er hand seen a fish swallow
a bird not a fish

of black-green bronze or
of niello but a real
live large pike that swal

lowed a charming lit
tle duckling in the lake of
sorø sø – *and death*

*swallowing an ar
tist in the trenches around
neuville-saint-vaast*

THE INVOCATION
(1903)

a hundred years la
ter i look at the picture
in the twenti

eth century art
book on page one hundred and
fifty-six a hun

dred years later i
myself go outside into
the morning rain i lift

up my arms in the
direction of cyberspace
and say: www.god.com

A GREENHOUSE: SUN, WATER, PLANTS, FISH, PEOPLE
(1993)

there is a kibbutz
inside the poem and a
greenhouse in which there

are sun water plants
fish people and a poem
in which there is a

kibbutz and a green
house in which there are sun wa
ter plants fish people and a

poem in which there
is and so on in a nev
er-ending cycle

DIEGO
(1950)

a century dies
away – what became of it
did it disappear

in packs of lies dic
tated by men of power did
it become a doc

umentary film
that fades away at this ve
ry moment or did

it become this bust
of bronze and art *by the*
name of diego?

FLYING SHIT
(1994)

once one of my bud
dies and i made our own cal
culations as

to how much filth and
muck (excreta) there really
was floating about

in the øresund
we arrived at one turd per
cubic metre of

water an un
settling result even though
it is fictitious

ECSTASY
(1910)

stone in ecstasy
and why not if you consi
der the fact that ec

stasy means be
ing taken elsewhere – pulled out
of oneself and hence

not subject to out
side influence as when tak
ing methylenedi

oxymetham
phetamine – after all it
is called being ‘stoned’

QUEEN RIQUI
(1994)

consider (or rath
er) read this portrait as a
palimpsest of text

that has been laid on
text picture that has been laid
on picture from blank

verse via the sonnet
form to cybernetic hex
ameters from queen

mariana of
velázquez to daisy by
a danish painter

THE HUNT
(1911)

at this sight of ri
ders in red jackets with their
hunting horns and their

hip-flasks an old fan
tastic idea of mine comes
to life once again

i fire a bazoo
ka at the hunting party
as an act of re

venge against all the
mutilated deer birds and
foxes in the world

WEDDING GOWN
(1989)

my beloved's wed
ding gown is ivory-col
oured and without a

ny sleeves it is neith
er of silk nor tulle but of
synthetic mater

ial it doesn't
hang in a museum but
in a wardrobe it has

n't cost a fortune
and will only be put on
show in this poem

MISTY AND JIMMY PAULETTE IN A TAXI, NYC
(1991)

in a couple of
years i would myself be sit
ting in a yellow

cab without shock ab
sorbers on my way down sec
ond avenue on

my way towards the
21st century gaining in
spiration for a

new poetry col
lection but i didn't know
it myself just then

FUTURE
(1985)

read the next page and
then the one after that and
keep on doing so

read the next page and
then the one after that and
keep on doing so

read the next page and
then the one after that and
keep on doing so

read the next page and
then the one after that and
keep on doing so

MAPLE LEAF LINES
(1987)

do life-lines exist
in nature in a similar
way to how they do

in palmistry? – earth
quake fault lines seismic fault lines
in the sea-bed – ma

ple leaf lines? and is
is then possible to de
cipher the desti

ny of the centu
ries on the basis of a
study of these lines?

MERCENARIES IV
(1980)

strip cartoon heroes
mercenaries without pay
against a background

of cinnabar-red
paper people in the home
guard who do it from

inclination film
actors that fire off blank car
tridges: the vis

ions actually
became reality in
the 20th century

THE ICE CUTTERS
(1911)

the ingredients:
four centilitres of gin
two centilitres

of chartreuse (yellow)
a dash of orange bitter
stirred with plenty of

ice – and your alas
ka drink's ready – and now the
trick: add a spot of

ice blue aftershave
from williams voilà – you've one
ice-cutter drink – cheers

HEAD OF SCREAMING MONSERRAT
(1942)

that year pluto and
venus stood in the sign of
leo (several times

in conjunction) sat
urn and uranus in gem
ini – it was a

hard year in which to
enter the world – if you list
en long enough you

can hear behind these
words a head of bronze that's call
ing out to the sky

USA TODAY
(1990)

pick a word in the
next verse they are blue red and
silver-coloured

blue red silver blue
red silver blue red silver
blue red silver blue

like an ameri
can lottery the price in
creases with each number

take a word home with
you and insert it in one
of your own poems

HYSTERICAL
(1995)

this poem is a
documentary poem writ
ten in two versions

one of which that al
so had the title 'hyster
ical' was even
tually consigned

to the scrap heap be
cause of its total lack of
credibility

the other version
is therefore the only piece
of true evidence

ONE YEAR THE MILKWEED
(1944)

one year with what? which
weed or flower are we talk
ing about? – milkweed

in latin ascle
pios for which i can find
no danish equi

valent in either
flora or a dictiona
ry – so one year in

the sign of a weed-flower
a year in the name of failed
assassinations

A CASE FOR AN ANGEL II
(1990)

whose spirit is it
in the process of taking
off here from the sculp

ture centre in tok
yo on wings of fibreglass
like a glider that's

cast in plaster whose
spirit is it standing read
y here to throw it

self headlong over
the edge of a new centu
ry on wings of lead?

THE ENCHANTED ONES
(1945)

blessed are the vic
tims all of the dead from sachs
enhausen auschwitz

theresienstadt –
you name them m-a-a-n
blessed are those in

ecstasy all the
tortured and the enchanted
from the gas chambers

for they shall inhe
rit the kingdoms and the re
publics of the world

PEAK
(1991)

when i reached the sum
mit of ben nevis after
innumerable

exertions and va
rious attacks of angst and
giddiness i dis

covered there is a
path leading directly up
to the summit a

path so wide even
a formula one ferra
ri could drive up it

THE POTATO GILDS THE POTATO
(1978)

this installation
could also have been given
the name: hommage à

philalèthe be
cause the magisterium
succeeds here in its

green elixir where true
gold can be seen gleaming the
lucky devil ('po

tato' in danish)
the common potato the
golden potato

STILL LIFE BEFORE AN OPEN WINDOW: THE PLACE RAVIGNON
(1915)

it's true of course – life
for the most part just slides
calmly and quietly

by without any
one taking any notice –
here or as in ra

vignon almost cu
bist in front of or perhaps
rather behind an

open window till
death or a woman gives it
a bit of a shake

DEDICATION TO OSKAR PANIZZA
(1917)

dedicated to
green and red (something like the
pheasant cock's colours)

dedicated to
my brand-new suit of thai silk
dedicated to

the runners in death's
marathon race dedica
ted to all the liv

ing that managed to
cross the chalk line into the
third millennium

HEAD
(1975)

there's no doubt about
it we saw it (the head – ed.)
and we confirmed the

victim's identi
ty – there's no doubt about it
here one sees the head

of the ameri
can hostage that was found in
a fridge in riyadh –

there can be no doubt
whatsoever that art is
ahead of itself

THE CRUCIFIXION
(1941)

this poem's a co
py poem of numerous
crucifixions in

words and in pic
tures of the actual
event and as such

it's helping to fin
ance terror activities
everywhere in the

world (according to
the danish customs and ex
cise authorities)

GERMANIA
(1993)

all i need to do
is to quote from my collec
tion winterreise:

'german sun german
sun and and and and and ger
man sun german sun

and and and sun oh
what a spiritual ship
wreck there on welfare's

coasts' to emphasise
the title of this poem as
well as its meaning

CU SEE ME
(1995)

once again art is
both inside and outside the
systems in order

to provide a plaus
ible explanation of
the prisons (the pol

itical ones) stamm
heim for example linked to
guantánamo

done with the aid of
day-glo neon tubes and roll-
a-tex stucco bars

I'M DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS
(1967)

sung by a male-voice
choir a cappella in the
seventh circle of

hell near phlegethon's
banks – bass: joseph stalin bar
itone: benito

mussolini and
francisco franco tenor:
adolf hitler and

joseph goebbels fals
etto and castrato: au
gusto pinochet

A WOODLAND FLUTE
(1990)

there is always the
sound of a flute down through the
millennia and

the centuries from
some open window or oth
er in some distant

forest a japanese
or a chinese one or at
this particular

moment by mozart
coming from a stereo
system in morud

IN THE HOOD
(1995)

i openly con
fess that i have cut the hood
off my mainsail-win

tercoat because it
seemed a complete cock-up to
me and made me re

semble the tollund
bog man and that i have thrown
it out and that it

was stupid of me
because it could have been shown
as a work of art

QUEENIE
(1995)

when it comes to it
the artist could just as well
have got to take a

cast of himself in
silicone rubber before
his death for then peo

ple could have seen him
as a visitor at his
very own grave in

an installation that
was an absolutely true
copy of nature

MONKEY PUZZLE
(1988)

kaleidoscopi
cally the big city would
look like this from a

bove: like spermata
zoa in acrylic on their
way nowhere and ev

erywhere an eter
nal grafitti enclosed in
its own puzzle

a jigsaw puzzle
of colours and shapes that are
constantly changing

MADAWASKA-ARCADIAN LIGHT-HEAVY
(1940)

madagascar – no
madawaska – this is not
some sort of alco

hol test more a test
of one's powers of memo
ry: what was it took

place in nineteen hun
dred and forty? – i must re
fer in that case to

collective memo
ry: the second world war and
yes – madawaska

UNTITLED
(1961)

spontaneous art
is perhaps the most unfree
and restrictive art

bound as it is by
the unconscious which it does
nothing else than re

peat without being
able to change it merely
reiterate it

doing so in a
shower of aggressive cuts on
aquamarine blue

FOREIGN BODY
(1994)

all bodies are when
it comes to it alien
in the sense that no

one knows their own bo
dy except superficial
ly (quite literal

ly) no one has an
idea what is taking
place in the flesh's

dark niches no one
can work out just what wild flow
ers will blossom there

THE SPIRIT OF OUR TIMES
(1919)

the spirit of the
age is fortunately not
the same as the spi

rit which is eter
nal and is therefore not con
fined by the rulers

figures and tape mea
sure of temporality
is not limited

by the network and
portals of finitude not
by space time or light

SUN DANCE
(1951)

what does the sun dance
on whitsun morning – rhumba
jive or viennese

waltz? it is at a
ny rate (as everyone knows) close
to the heart of dark

ness at light's centre
but also closer to its
own the most self-

evident (that no
one believes) or maybe the
sun dances breakdance?

SAILING SHIPS IN THE HARBOUR
(1911)

via my mater
nal grandfather i cover
the beginning of

the century – he
told me that the summers were
warmer the colours

were brighter back then
and now i can see that he
was right for as i've

mentioned before i
believe in art the sails were
really orange-green

FRANZ WEST
(1995)

on the other hand
the spirit has to be man-
ifested (why i

do not know) perhaps
as a row of alumi-
nium chairs with col-

oured upholstery
(why i do not know) or
as illumines

cent fields (i do not
know why) or as these forty
words (in the danish)

ABSTRACT COMPOSITION
(1934)

back in time now
with the aid of the time ma-
chine of art that pro-

vides the most reli-
able evidence and doc-
umentation of

the present time all
the way back to cones and sem-
icircles which in

some way or anoth-
er dominated the year
nineteen thirty-four

THREE FORMS
(1934)

as mentioned: the year
nineteen hundred and thirty-
four would seem to have

been occupied by
balls and ellipses of gra-
nite both vertical

and horizontal
geometry even though
it is a bit dif-

ficult to ima-
gine an entire year hewn
out of smooth marble

VOLUTES
(1939)

five years later the
spiritual climate would
seem to have become

a bit more inde-
terminable spiral-shaped
figures have now ta-

ken over the can-
vas the centre of which is
perforated by

red and yellow ar-
rows as in the large maps of
the general staff

MANGANESE IN DEEP VIOLET
(1967)

it could not have been
more beautiful – beat music
blossomed in deep vi

olet like a john
ingram rose when it is at
its absolute peak

nothing could have been
more beautiful than these man
ganese-coloured lakes

and these five-pointed
stars at the bottom of the
collective psyche

CONTINGENT
(1969)

the contingencies
are always legion when one
compares them with what

is actual which
calls for a great deal of hard
work even when it

hangs down like flayed ox
hides of fibreglass from the
ceiling or like wash

ing that's made of la
tex – at times it even calls
for a brain tumour

INASMUCH AS IT IS ALWAYS ALREADY TAKING PLACE
(1990)

disjecta membra
in a different way in
cyberspace or

on sixteen tele
vision screens the artist scat

tered to the solar
winds and images
in each separate room an
eye that looks for its

gaze a foot its leg
for ever separated
by light particles

AN ENTERTAINMENT
(1990)

the four verses of
the poem like four projec
tors that display words

in this partic
lar instance to entertain
you while time passes

to take your mind a
way from all thoughts of your in
escapable death

to catch hold of your
attention for the moment
that the poem lasts

THE PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF DEATH
IN THE MIND OF SOMEONE LIVING
(1991)

in the poem too
death only appears alle
gorically as

a five-metre-long
tiger shark in green formal
dehyde for exam

ple to conquer the
fear and suspicion that death
is perhaps just a

physical pheno
menon and otherwise no
thing nothing at all

BALCONY WITH FISH
(1943)

big and small at times
there's simply no difference at
all while bat and ball

are always mates three
fish on a plate and lenin
grad a siege was its

fate we need food by
the crate all the inhabi
tants had to live off

was rats and hate and
world opinion couldn't care
less at any rate

NEAT LAWN
(1967)

that type of building
with that type of lawn we used
to refer to as

parrot town when i
used to go with extra post
from house to house the

bungalows and ar
chitects of the spirit
(NB spirit in

quotation marks) all
neat and tidy and with their
immaculate lawns

APPARITION
(1949)

it could be so ma
ny apparitions that of
the unknown soldier

for example or that
of field marshall bernard law
montgomery but

i prefer to be
lieve it's that of the artist
himself which is vi

siting us today
on canvas reproduction
and in the poem

PROTECT ME FROM WHAT I WANT
(1988)

or rather protect
me from everything that i
do not want for

instance that i do
not want (dare) to combat so
cial and econo

mic injustices
for instance that i do not
want (dare) to direct

ly contradict power
manifestations and ro
ma (treaty of rome)

NIGHTHAWKS
(1942)

i believe i can
recognise humphrey bogart
sitting at the bar

and next to him
there is spencer tracy while
the woman is more

difficult to de
termine – or could it perhaps
be philip marlowe

no it's the artist
himself who is yet again
stealing the picture

THE FEATHERED PRISON FAN
(1978)

i myself have seen
the white peacocks at ege
skov castle behave

in a more socia
ble fashion than any po
et who is reading

his own poems out
loud i have seen them spread out
their white albino

sequins as if they
were performing the pavane
of the century

ARAMOANA NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR
(1984)

just before i fall
asleep i imagine that
i am painting a

white figure seven
on a stone which i allow
to sink in water and

then i wake up at
exactly 7am the
next morning can the

subconscious perhaps
be programmed like that with
the year eighty-four?

PLUM GROVE
(1994)

the old plum trees down
in the back garden do not
trigger off any

thought in my mind of
the war in bosnia-her
cegovina or

of mutilated
castrated soldiers that are
surrounded by play

ing curious children –
what do they then make me think
of ten years later?

THE HISTORY OF CHINESE ART
(1987)

a literary
historian phoned me and
informed me that his

dog had devoured one
of my major works which had
thus been transmuted

into what one could
call absolute shit – i asked
him to thank the dog

for the insight it
gave me into *the histo*
ry of my own art

ANTWERP I
(1992)

antwerp number two:
we took a taxi into
the city from the

outermost quay (we
in this case being the crew
of the m/s embla)

we did not study
sculptures of iron and ala
baster i must

state the simple hon
est truth we got completely
and utterly pissed

GYNTIANA
(1992)

it obviously
continued during the fol
lowing years but now

in other pubs in
other poems and in oth
er pictures that i

do not know any
thing about perhaps in bleck
ede or in ca

fe de flore or
in galleri michael
werner in cologne

DECADE: AUTOPORTRAIT
(1962)

i have got my be
loved to take a photo
graph of me in front

of the car – an a
zure-blue fiat punto with
four doors and stan

dard equipment – there
i stand then in reali
ty in the picture

and in the poem
dressed in summer shorts about
forty years too late

ABSTRACT HEAD
(1928)

is it at all poss
ible for a head to be
abstract – as an

african mask with
holes for its eyes or with
rainbow stripes does such

a thing as an ar
chetypal head exist with black
strokes for its nose and

mouth or is it just
a thought is it nothing but
a mental image?

DORELIA IN A BLACK DRESS
(1904)

anne-marie
in a black dress against a
background of black car

bon paper with a
red hair-ribbon in the year
two thousand and four

as the last woman
so far in a black dress in
an unending ser

ies of women por
trayed in black dresses in the
history of art

DANCERS
(1987)

*let's dance dancing
in the street grease dancer
in the dark priva*

*te dancer dance
into the fire break dan
ce dirty dancing*

*saturday night fe
ver dance gipsy dance
dancing (singing) in*

*the rain top hat
www.myowndance
collection.com*

DEAD DRUNK DANES
(1966)

can you find yourself
in the picture can you find
yourself in this hur

ricane of colours
in this gibberish of cre
ation and decre

ation of begin
ning and end after all you
are a dane aren't you –

d.d. dane – so make
the effort of taking a
proper look dammit

INCIDENT AT THE MUSEUM OR WATER MUSIC
(1992)

i listened to the
plashing water of the foun
tain of the hanging

gardens the whole night
long because i was una
ble to fall asleep

i was unable
to fall asleep because i
listened to the plash

ing water of the
fountain of the hanging gar
den the whole night long

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH CROPPED HAIR
(1962)

i dig out a pho
tograph of myself from the
time when my hair was

darker than it is
now –with a yellow speed mark
er i colour the

hair in the photo
graph piss-yellow and write a
long the bottom edge:

self-portrait with piss-
yellow hair – after which i
sign the work of art

SWINGING
(1925)

my father was in
leeds at this point in time in
order to get fur

ther training in the
drapery industry which
later resulted

in a business that
specialised in manufac
turing ties in the

classical style but
also ties that had advanced
and abstract patterns

EDGAR WARPOL: THE MAN WITH SUITCASES
(1967)

how many suitcases
of leather of aluminium
of can

was or of plastic
even of snakeskin how many
suitcases was

lises bags briefcases
can you lift at one time? –
can you beat edgar

warpol's record and
become the ahasverus
of the century?

MOTHER AS A MOUNTAIN
(1985)

my now deceased friend
(*salutations in the spirit*)
used to construct

mountains out of plaster
and sugar that he mixed
with lime precipitate

tate and colour pigments
positioned on white-painted
sheets of hardboard

in a glass case the
tallest of them still goes by
the name: mitr-enf-snee

ONE THOUSAND DAYS ONE MILLION YEARS
(1993)

i check the time it
is zero zero seven
teen the numbers gleam

tremblingly clear in the night –
'the hands whip time to foam' is
what people said in

the old days now i
have to make do with these fiery
characters of

neon this memento
tekel on the wall: zero
zero seventeen

PLUSH KUNDALINI AND CHAKRA SET
(1987)

let us together
celebrate one of the century's
great discoveries

eries: the kundalini
fire is six metres
and seventy centimetres

timetres high it
is of plush and discarded
toy animals and

is housed in a private
collection somewhere in
california

GREEN RELIEF WITH BLUE
(1993)

are we dealing with
a much more concrete relationship between form

and content than previously assumed in the sense that the circum

ference of a picture indicates the length of the ideal type

scale in the picture itself (area of the figures and colours)?

POST-PARTUM DOCUMENT: DOCUMENTATION V
(1977)

whose soul is here like a butterfly transfixed to the paper of the

book impaled on a pin in whose collection of insects fixed to its

word who has let it be captured by the searchlight of language on the

sheet of the poem?
have three guesses have three guesses
es have three guesses

SPIRITUAL HEROES OF GERMANY
(1973)

apart from those in charcoal already written and mentioned: richard

wagner caspar david friedrich and joseph beuys
i myself add three

further ones on my own account with a biro in this hessian

temple: joseph paul gabel hermann herring and adolf hynkel

SOLLIE 17
(1979)

one would actually think it was a question of a live install

ation – my best friend's actually sitting like that on the edge of

the bed actually staring like that out the window and his flat

actually looks like that or is it rather than some kind of happening?

UNTITLED
(1988)

the figure is half
skeleton and half a suit
half skull and half a

pair of sun glasses
half a rib cage and half a
paper boat half a

radius and half
a spear in short the figure's
a synthesis of

eternity and
temporality of ev
erything and nothing

GROUP OF ARTISTS
(1912)

where three artists are
gathered in their own name there
is always a risk

of one of them e
ventually committing
suicide because

they in their hyper
sensitivity mirror
and reflect the deep

est psychoses of
society in an in
nermost xenon light

BIRDS BURIED IN SNOW
(1970)

in summer i bu
ry the birds in jurispru
dence and in winter

in a mixture of
salt and snow or in pure snow
whenever there's a

fimbul winter most
ly small birds perhaps in or
der to maintain a

certain balance be
tween them and the fewer large
predatory birds

LAND OF LAKES
(1975)

if it isn't fin
land it must be the lake dis
trict that's intended

the place where i was
going to travel so as
to write poems with

holes in that would have
represented the blue col
our of quintessence

and the blue gener
ation of the entire
youth revolution

MOONRISE AND SUNSET
(1919)

like a japanese
haiku the moon and the sun
balance on a beam

that is made up of chalk
strokes in the same picture or view
of the same field of

clover halfway between
the drawings of childhood and
up in the lefthand cor

ner i do declare
there is nothing less than the
star of bethlehem

FC-11 ANTHROPOMETRY — FIRE
(1961)

all of us know ex
actly what will happen if
one plays with matches

so how much worse things
will turn out if one begins
to tease fire itself

and it will be quite
catastrophic if there is
a woman who is

dragged through fire and col
ours – consider your own heart
beat for example

JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES
(1901)

my goddaughter has
the same name as that which i
now see engraved in

gold leaf and gilding
so that i will not complete
ly forget what is

already far too
late and only now gives me
a small prick with a

sewing needle in
the heart but who lost his head
in the new version?

CHIEF
(1950)

there isn't any
locomotive that snorts its
way through my childhood

like a dragon of
iron there isn't even
an industrial

landscape with coal mines
from the same period and
there's absolutely

no helicopter crash
anywhere in this poem –
only the poem

INSTANT TEMPLES
(1970)

you can become your
own cross (in a gravel pit
near marienbad

for example) where
the only thing you have to
do is to lie down

as a live central
axis while old railway sleep
ers form the arm – you

can also simply
go and stand in your garden
with your arms outstretched

LONDON: LARGE THAMES VIEW
(1926)

how many times is
it that i've been in london?
not very many –

now i'm here again
in the spirit and the mer
douce colours of age

i cannot quite see
where i am standing perhaps
at the embankment?

okay – that which is
essential remains the same –
and never changes

SMILING LANDSCAPE
(1967)

suggestion: you could
write the first line and then let
me write the second

or the opposite
(like the chinese once used to
do) or we could write

what is known as a
cut-up poem together
(whatever that is)

you could write: 'smiling'
(or whatever you feel like)
and i write 'landscape'

MOTHER WITH DEAD CHILD
(1903)

it is as if gre
nades and bombs that are dropped from
planes do not kill a

nybody as if
it is only suicide
bombers that kill – it

is as if an ar
my's tanks does not mutilate
any civilian

as if only a
partisan and guerrilla weap
on injures children

STALIN IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR
(1982)

or rather joseph
stalin's spectre is contemp
lating what in the

mirror? – (a ghost as
everybody knows casts no
shadow and has no

mirror image) jo
seph stalin's spectre is on
ly sitting at a

mirror quite by chance
wondering what punishment
would be suitable

THE VISIT
(1967)

what is it? – hash per
haps fried eggs or a gener
al staff map of the

battle of el a
lamein? – no it's a woman
of the annunci

ation with thighs out
stretched in an orgy of red
and vertical lines

down through the poem
which says something else than what
is there on the page

BEAR AND POLICEMAN
(1988)

the swedish police
had quite a bear with a sore
head in its deten

tion in malmö that
time way back in the eighties
a teddy bear that

had been guilty of
attempting to capture a
sweeper a bear that

they sent home the next
morning with tokens for the
bus and the ferry

OUTSIDE KILBURN UNDERGROUND, SPRING
(1976)

i became an un
derground expert in no time
from jubilee to

central line all the
colours of the underground
quite literally

the stone roses deep
est down in the basalt the
underground publish

ers the politi
cal struggle in the cellars
of capitalism

TITLED (ART AS IDEA AS IDEA)
(1967)

if an idea is
carried out to the letter
we're dealing with an

act of the spirit
with an act of freedom a
repetition name

ly of reali
ty – while the slightest devi
ation from the i

dea leads to something
else to something that is more
involuntary

UNTITLED
(1990)

who are the lamps burn
ing for? – i am not thinking
of all sorts and va

rieties of pa
raffin lamps they burn for the
living – nor am i

thinking of lamps that
are to be found in churches
and on graves they burn

for the dead – but the
three lamps in the poem – who
are they burning for?

COBALT NIGHT
(1962)

*cobalt crossed by
rose de cobalt sprayed o
ver with cobalt vi*

*olet that's been smeared
in azul de cobalte dipped
in kobaltblau crossed*

*by death sprayed
with bleu de cobalte that's
been bespattered with*

*cobalt green splashed
over with azur cobalt
crossed by the night*

WE ARE NOT WHAT WE SEEM
(1988)

i am (*we are*) a
danish citizen sixty-
five years old have been

born in copenha
gen at rigshospitalet
(*not*) at three forty

on the morning of
the twenty-seventh of no
vember (*what*) nineteen

hundred and thirty-
eight (*we*) in the midst of a
violent (*seem*) snowstorm

DEATH
(????)

we represent death
as anything at all as
an admiral for

instance or a skel
eton with a scythe or an
androgynous me

diocrity be
cause we're so bloody afraid
of becoming no

thing – but suppose pre
cisely god (in a posi
tive sense) is nothing?

ORGANIZATION OF GRAPHIC MOTIFS II
(1912)

randomideanness
is perhaps the greatest dan
ger that exists in

this type of orga
nisation of colour ma
terial and words

in what are ingen
ious and witty combi
nations that only

turn in upon them
selves and their own dates in the
course of history

INTERIOR OF BEEWAX CHAMBER
(1994)

where have the bees got
to – shouldn't there have been mil
lions of bees like there

are out among the
dog roses – have they lost their
way in the ima

gination of the
artist? – if that is the case
i'll call them back in

swarms to these verses
just place your ear close to the
poem and listen

THE REUNION
(1945)

on cuba i was re
united with my hopes and
dreams perhaps also

with myself far re
moved as i was from the ve
nom and poison of

capitalism split
as i was by the emblems
of a new impe

rialism – on cu
ba i was reunited
with my own heartbeat

SOLDIER IN A WOOD
(1911)

the cruise of neo-
imperialism and cruis
ing as a replace

ment for the crusade –
put your cross or we will put
a cross (over you)

you shall by all the
powers of hell (it used to
be those of heaven)

vote for democra
cy as we understand it
if not we'll kill you

PUBLIC LOVE
(1990)

nørrebro inun
dated with flowers and can
dles in love and sor

row felt for persons
who are only known to them
from the pages of

glossy magazines
public love is orange with
black ribbons public

love on the other
hand is just as corrosive
as caustic soda

TWO SISTERS WITH A CELLO
(1913)

my goddaughter played
the violin at her fa
ther's funeral (a

suite of bach) so
heart-rendingly askew and
out of tune that my

grief almost left me
along with the notes in some
quiet consola

tion that the fune
ral service was not perfect
death not consummate

HEAD OF A WOMAN WITH NECKLACE
(1929)

do i have to go
all the way to paris to
get any further

am i to praise this
head of terra cotta that
defines the room in

order to be a
ble to write down or perhaps
be able to write

off the past which is
standing there in the form of
a bust with closed eyes?

BAR 'N' GRILL
(1937)

i don't understand
people who don't like to eat
a big mac – i mean

i'm not saying that
you ought to go around eat
ing burgers morning

afternoon and eve
ning that of course would be just
as unhealthy as

only eating joints
of roast pork to shift to a
danish counterpart

STILL LIFE WITH NUMEROUS OBJECTS
(1923)

at certain moments
when the world picture under
goes an eclipse (which

results from dirty
glasses) i see precisely
the previous cen

ury as such a
collection of things and ob
jects that have been re

duced to a muse
um of curios that there
was once a use for

THE ACROBATS (THE PARROTS)
(1933)

i want to be the
white clown and my wife can then
be the circus prin

cess – who in that case
is going to be the buff
oon and who the tight

rope walker above the
century's abyss? – there must
also be room for

a sword-swallower
and a dachshund trainer is
that something for you?

SEATED YOUTH
(1917)

uranus took him
just as he did so many
other young men that

year the artist him
self as well and the tired
pale youth of coloured

plaster that someone
or other ought to say to:
'young man you can on

ly die once' although
it would already then be
a trifle too late

THE TWO FRIENDS
(1923)

as far as i'm con
cerned people can fuck each oth
er to death or screw

each other to death
as long as it takes place in
love man and woman

woman and woman
man and man as long as it
takes place in love for

there cannot be a
nything perserve between two
who love each other

THE SURRENDER OF BARCELONA
(1937)

in this context it
is rather boring to be
a real madrid

fan but i have al
ways held with the royal club
paid tribute to the

white colour rather
than red and blue – sorry bar
celona can i

make amends by be
ing an expert at the cat
alan opening?

THREE CUBES WITH ONE HALF-OFF
(1969)

such is the cage of
geometry: quite open
and full of light raised

in painted steel ac
cording to a divine plan
quite impersonal

as if the artist
had not been involved in a
ny way whatsoev

er in the project –
you can see it on display
up in humlebæk

GIRL WITH HAIR RIBBON
(1965)

the small dots are not
gooseflesh or bloodshot veins but
in fact a copy

of a screening tech
nique from the printing press that
causes the woman's

face to come out to
wards you in what seems to be
an almost offi

cial way that eli
minates any kind of per
sonal reference

GARDEN CAFÉ ON THE ELBE
(1922)

how many of the
guests at this café i won
der survived the fol

lowing decade or
to put the question anoth
er way can it be

fortunate to die
before one's time has come be
fore ravenbrück can

happiness consist
in becoming an impress
ionist painting?

SEATED WOMAN
(1916)

there was broadly speak
ing very little else for
a woman to bu

sy herself with at
this period apart from
turn herself into

a weird statue of
stone (later cast in bronze) and
sit down and wait for

the men who were
dying like flies in the trench
es of world war one

UNTITLED
(1920)

if i had become
a painter instead of a
poet the picture

(which therefore became
a poem) would perhaps be
able to be char

acterised as ab
stract or concrete and not
naturalistic at

all but rather as
a four-sided circle or
as a red poem

A LINE IN JAPAN
(1979)

on my window sill
there lies a long row of stones
that originate

from danish shores which
i have walked along i do
not take photographs

of these unconceiv
ably beautiful stones all
that i do is con

nect you with this long
row of stones in the final
line of this poem

(MEN IN THE CITIES)
(1987)

it almost became
a trend in the eighties to
leap out of the win

dow either imma
culately dressed in a suit
or only in one's

underwear both a
mong young men and old mostly
in the cities pro

bably because the
houses out in the country
were much too lowrise

WOMAN IN THE BATHTUB
(1968)

while women as al
ways prefer the naked truth
in the bathtub pho

tographically
much more beautiful and with
out blood (roman style)

clinically clean
and just right for doing por
traits of for the then

artists who are just
following a long tradi
tion in death's (slip)stream

SAF GIMMEL
(1959)

to be quite honest
i can't tell you what the mean
ing of the painting

is what all these col
ours that are burning with pa
raffin at the bot

tom of the picture
signify i can only
say that they are more

beautiful than the
second day in the moha
mmedan calendar

MARKET SCENE, NORTHERN TOWN
(1939)

naturally i
recall workington up in
the north as a di

amongd in a moun
tain of slag in the midst of
capitalism's

waste and environ
mental filth right out to the
irish sea which stinks

of shit and urine:
*a working-class city is
something to be*

ARE THERE NOT TWELVE HOURS OF DAYLIGHT
(1959)

if a poem can
be painted (as in this case
with white acrylic

letters on a back
ground of black hardboard) then a
painting can also

be composed (as in
this case with black letters of
printing ink on a

background of white pa
per) or maybe it's one and
the same work of art?

THE GARDEN
(1992)

who is it who's in
the process of raping an
acacia tree

who is it who's stand
ing with his trousers round his
ankles and is co

pulating a stone
who is that bald-headed mid
dle-aged man who is

plundering and ex
ploiting nature to the last
dollar and farthing?

THE HUMAN CONDITION
(1933)

or the opposite
stunt: the picture of real
ity in the pic

ture of the picture
(ad libitum) which never
theless still presup

poses the real
ity which the picture finds
itself in and which

in the final in
stance can't itself be inclu
ded in the picture

RECLINING NUDE
(1932)

it is understand
able that woman is ex
tolled in eternal

red chalk and pastel
both standing lying down and
leaning backwards both

naked and partial
ly dressed or completely in
a walking costume

although it is of
course neither sufficient or
satisfactory

SUPREMATIST COMPOSITION
(1920)

imagine that all
the vowels in this poem
are orange coloured

and that all the con
sonants are completely black –
if it was possi

ble you would see the
words that were most orange stand
out while those that were

black would retreat and
in that way you'd form the su
prematist poem

VIOLIN OF INGRES
(1924)

my beloved re
minds me more of a clari
net (to remain with

in the puns of art)
a yamaha clarinet
of plastic high-pitched

and clear in tone as
silver or gelatine and must
under no circum

stances whatsoe
ver be referred to as a
'goodman clarinet'

1/2 x SERIES (BLUE)
(1932)

can one think of po
etry being used in an
iq-test this one for

example in which
one of the questions is what
does blue have to do

with triangles? and
another one asks you to
decide whether there

is a connection
between semicircles and
serial killers?

ACHROME
(1960)

refrain from reading
this poem it is not a
nything for you to

read – it is complete
ly colourless as if it
had been dipped in ka

olin – but if you
are unable to desist
then read it out in

the toilet af
ter which you yourself know what
it's to be used for

CARDINAL
(1972)

what became of god
in the twentieth centu
ry – could it be that

he was on holi
day – did he leave the kingdom
to the generals

power to the dic
tators and glory to the
cardinals in their

patinated cloaks
of bronze their hats to hide what
wily birds they were

THOMAS IN A CIRCLE
(1987)

i in my circle
you in your circle we in
our circles that in

tersect each other
eulerian or mega
rian evil or

good circles that are
turned in on each other like
marking rings in child

hood the whole human
race in its enclosed circle
of platinum

SIBERIAN DOGS IN THE SNOW
(1909)

my own dachshund is
hopping about in the snow
on an old piece of

film taken with a
video camera once
a long time ago

nothing hops around
in nothing it is dots and
lines the previous

century is no
thing else than a film composed
of light and shadows

COLD MOUNTAIN 6 (BRIDGE)
(1989)

a cold turkey a
cold shoulder a cold dip a
cold buffet a cold

morning – *what can i*
say – that is what it feels like
right here and now as

if you are total
ly alone in the world on
cold mountain among

the heart's mountains where
the map looks like a short-cir
cuted cardiogram

NEW YORK EARTH ROOM
(1977)

the last time i was
in new york i stayed in south
gate tower on the

corner of sixth av
enue and thirty-second
street in room one

hundred and ele
ven which therefore from the floor
and two foot up is

still full of my me
mories or rather full of
memories of me

FOUR-MASTER OFF THE CAPE-MAINE COAST, NO.1
(1933)

all boys have folded
innumerable paper
boats and have put them

out to sea in di
verse puddles and gutters i my
self am most proud of

that particular
ship i made out of an it
alian lire

banknote in order
to display my contempt for
capitalism

RIDER
(1951)

if all the horses
here on funen were to throw
off their riders and

instead were to get
together so as at one
and the same moment

to let off a u
nison proper horse-fart then
the island would take

off like a hot-air
balloon towards the katte
gat – *that's all folks*

CHILDREN SITTING ON A BENCH
(1994)

so there we all are
then my former schoolmates and
i sitting as if

carved out of wood as
if we hadn't moved
since way back when (al

though some of us are
already dead and for that
very reason im

mobile) there we all
are inside at the very
centre of movement

UNTITLED #10
(1989)

a transformer be
tween mind and matter between
consciousness and the

unconscious can it
possibly look as follows:
a square that measures

one hundred and eight
y-three times one hundred and
eighty-three centi

metres of acryl
ic that has the appearance
of galvanised zinc?

IN THE GRASS
(1934)

i lie down in the
grass in order to take an
afternoon nap and

in order to ex
perience the innocence
of the green shadows

but the smallest crea
tures too fight for supremacy
among the col

ours and here guiltless
ness only reigns because no
one knows what guilt is

THE DANCE
(1910)

place your right foot in
the verse here and your left foot
on the paper pull your

stomach well in and
push out your poem allow
the words speak for

themselves follow the
dotted line starting at the
sign one and ending

up at figure four
now you have both read and danced
the famous rhumba di-puh

UNTITLED
(1951)

does the subconscious
resemble a portion of
shellfish salad ho

locaust ordina
ry squiggles or red-wine stains
on a piece of blot

ting paper stains that
cause me to answer that they
resemble a ror

schach test more than they
do a nasty turn or fab
ulous animals

SPLITTING
(1977)

it's only a pa
per house a trick photo
the house has not been

sawn in half (as can
be seen from the shadows on
the lawn which straddle

out further than the
split in the picture indi
cates) but the split is

symptomatic of
the intellect of the twen
tieth century

ZERO DOLLAR
(1978)

i produce a false
dollar bill on my scanner
(is this legal i

wonder) then i re
place the white house with fort knox
and instead of george

washington i put
uncle sam and write *in mam*
mon we trust and at

the bottom: zero
dollar – is then this poem
also *counterfeit*?

VOLCANO SERIES
(1979)

the fountain's fountain
heads that sing like nightingales
leaping water great

amounts of leaping
water as at villa d'es
te leaping water

that glitters like pre
cious stones leaping water that
spouts forth champagne foam –

let thousands of foun
tains extinguish all these fe
minine volcanoes

FIBONACCI IGLOO
(1972)

word number one and
word number two and word num
ber three and word num

ber five and word
number eight and word number
thirteen and word num

ber twenty-one and
word number thirty-four and
word number fifty-

five are all to be
imagined as existing
in bright-blue neon

LANCES
(1994)

a lot of grill skew
ers have been in action this
summer two pork chops

have been impaled three
tomatoes and a green ca
piscum brought down four

frankfurter sausa
ges run through and killed five steaks
cut down in their prime –

the hunting bag has
been larger than it normal
ly is this summer

AT THE CYCLE RACE-TRACK
(1914)

the ordrup track closed
down the amager trotting
course closed down but not

ludomania
(capitalism's surro
gate wealth) why bother

to work when one can
become a millionaire with
a number combi

nation why slave a
way better to try your luck
at playing bingo

UNTITLED
(1978)

i myself tend to
believe that the unconscious
is best caught in a

net as butterflies
are or as fish in a trawl
net as words in the

network of language
or in the poem's lobster
pot more than in these

spontaneous show
ers of ink or indian
ink down on paper

SUMMER
(1938)

somersault summer
on glossy paper where ev
erything breathes peace and

no danger as yet
a couple of years' collage and
pure innocence in

red and yellow and
blue before hell breaks loose be
hind the horizon's

light where real battle
ships will soon come on the scene
and shoot down the sun

UNTITLED
(1956)

like a gravestone with
out a name or a grave with
out a stone or a

stone without a grave
(as i saw them being used
as filling out at

the landfill) what hap
pened that year? – the revolt in
hungary if i

count backwards the o
lympics number something or
other – who won gold?

OPPOSITE HARMONY 70027/94237
(1938)

forty light emit
ting diodes next to each oth
er in a dark room

that continuous
ly counts anything and no
thing or itself num

bers with forty di
gits that continuously
change in relation

to each other like
a cosmic timepiece that's count
ing eternity

WOMAN WITH WILD FLOWERS
(1907)

it's easy enough –
i present my beloved
with a bouquet of

roses with this po
em fixed to the cellophane
like a floragram –

now comes the hard bit
how's this possible before
the poem's finished

(which is not until
now) when i've already gi
ven her the roses?

SELF-PORTRAIT
(1919)

look at me – how in
teresting i am look for
example at my

long-suffering ex
pression how interesting
it is or look at

my blue scarf that's been
so nonchalantly arranged
goodness gracious me

how fascinating
i am to be sure it's al
most unbearable

HANDS OF THE PUPPETEER
(1929)

it looks more like an
operation than a pup
pet performance (ar

tery clamps wound re
tractor surgical thread myr
tle leaf probe) who

is manipula
ting the puppeteer's hands (with)
whom are his hands ma

nipulating who
is the puppet who is the
man and who is god?

CHB 4
(1941)

if i tore this po
em to pieces (which i will
do at some point in

time or other be
cause it is only a draft
of the poem you're

now reading yourself)
the scraps would descend like white
rose petals down in

to the wastepaper
basket that's standing bottom
right in the picture

COMPOSITION WITH BLUE AND YELLOW
(1929)

you look in through
modernism's church window
of leaded glass in

yellow and blue be
hind which god scarcely exists
any longer nor

conversely if you
look out through the squares of the
canvas up towards

the infinite emp
tiness of the night sky that
is studded with stars

WATERLILIES
(1920)

the one flower after
the other the one brushstroke
after the other

the one word after
the other repetition
has more to do with

reality than
with itself repetition
is the categor

y of the spirit
the repeating by transcend
ence of immanence

FAMILY GROUP
(1948)

i don't have a fa
mily any longer just
an album eaten

away by the ni
trates of time and oblivi
on photographs that

look as if they were
on fire or lay on the
sea-bed pictures un

der which there ought to
stand: *'it is not personal
it is poetry'*

STILL LIFE
(1945)

it was presumab
ly very quiet in the
arsenals of art

that year quiet and
faded (as if the sun had
been burning for too

long) in the light of
the greatest crime of the mil
lennium quiet

and alpha-white or gam
ma-coloured as in some na
ture morte or other

MOTHER
(1991)

the woman's face framed
by ginger hair cabbage leaves
and a necklace of

brussel sprouts and dill
the man's head placed in slices
of cured meat and

viennese sausa
ges – mother cabbage and fa
ther bacon mother

earth and father sun
*it is an old story of
love and glory*

LOS ANGELES YELLOW PAGES
(1971)

the local direc
tory for two thousand and
four bogense ot

terup søndersø
the yellow pages – if it
exists it exists

here the local di
rectory's your local mar
ketplace that's also

found on the inter
net here's your local selec
tion from a to z

SEVEN REDS FOR GEORGIA O'KEEFFE VI
(1992)

three cheers for my
lounge suits the first cheer for the
dark double-breasted

one of wool and po
lyester that has carried
me both to fune

rals and festive oc
casions the second cheer for
my new grey thai silk

lounge suit that makes me
look bloody smart and final
ly the third (long) cheer

CHECKERED HOUSE
(1943)

strangely enough it's
often the defects in a
work of art that em

bellish it a lack
of a sense of perspective
can make a picture

deeper grammar that
has been misunderstood may
all of a sudden

lead to a far more
beautiful poem than the
purest poetry

PANCHO VILLA, DEAD AND ALIVE
(1943)

on the one hand the
partisan on the other
the fascist on the

lefthand side the guer
rilla on the righthand side
the army on the

right side of justice
the hero and on the wrong
side the villain – the

one who lives by the
submachine gun will die by
the submachine gun

UNTITLED
(1991)

and now it is time
to consider if there is
anything missing from

the previous cen
tury perhaps something per
sonal i would like

to place in the emp
ty frame a märklin loco
motive for exam

ple but as can be
seen from the bottom line there
isn't anything

THE COMPUTER PROJECT
(1989)

the wall as an ar
cade amusement game complete
ly visualised

in red green blue and
yellow colours that are pro
jected in n-di

mensions onto the
one print-out after the oth
er with the excep

tion of the final
all-encompassing cyber
netic jet-ink-print

THE DANCE OF LIFE
(1900)

who stumbled over
the threshold of the decades
when the dance got hot

or over his own feet? –
did you miss two steps in the
viennese waltz did

n't you ever fall
into the samba rhythm
were you one of the

wallflowers? – which mul
berry bush did you go round
completely alone?

WASTELAND
(1986)

other wastelands – that
time under the water as
far as the frogman's

goggles can see fields
of nitrate and lands of phos
phorus that i have

walked or swum across
myself that are full of dead
starfish on an in

verted sky that is
as barren and as infi
nite as the desert

SKY
(1956)

choose yourself a piece
of sky the window facing
west for example

stand every morning
at precisely eight o'clock
on the selfsame spot

observe the clouds' herds
of bison and buffalo
on their way across

the sky – how ridic
ulous the remainder of
the day's business is

TANGO
(1919)

did i forget the
tango? – it's probably be
cause i've never danced

precisely that dance
which is the epitome
of elegance – there's

simply not enough
cherrywood or plaster in
me to be able

to do justice to
the tango's deathly beauti
ful concentration

LANDSCAPE FROM A DREAM
(1936)

reality could
just as well be a portent
about what would la

ter happen in a
dream as the opposite and
if dream and real

ity are iden
tical serious compli
cations can quite well

arise as to which
is which and as to what is
a portent of what

WINDOW OR WALL SIGN
(1967)

a poem like this
one painted in metre-high
letters in vari

ous colours on a
house end in brande with the
following statement:

art only reveals
reality it adds and
subtracts just nothing

the poem does not
add anything nor does it
subtract anything

LAST SICKNESS
(1953)

just like that does my
mother-in-law looks at me
not from a canvas

but from the corner
room's double exposure of
blue colours just like

that affectionate
ly and matter-of-factly
from the life of a

whole century she
has become her own myth now
and her final cure

ROYAL TIDE V
(1960)

look at what the tide
has washed up to us from the
sea of the centu

ries large crates that are
full of gilt bits and pieces
that have been stacked up

on top of each oth
er into a museum
for lost property

look how we stare like
the sheep down at the shore where
the junk drifted in

ONEMENT III
(1949)

a line or bounda
ry or limit traced in the
sand divides and brings

together at the
same time two halves otherwise
perhaps irrecon

cilable or insep
arable – such a red ar
tery can para

doxically e
nough like the poem create
oneness and onement

IT LEFT HIM COLD — THE DEATH OF STEVE BIKO
(1990)

random police re
port from the twentieth cen
tury: the prison

er slipped on a drop
of sweat stumbled and fell down
over a new sti

ga table as a
result of which his head dropped
off the bruises on

the body are the
result of collisions with
table-tennis balls

FEBRUARY (GRANITE)
(1956)

time that has been
cut out in hardboard filled in
with pencil strokes like

large faulted earthcrusts
that are grating against each
other like ice-floes

or like the granite
of continents time which as
the one prerequi

site of everything
can neither be comprehend
ed nor be defined

80TH ACTION
(1984)

the eightieth cru
cifixion took place in prinz
endorf in austri

a as a double
performance a live human
being (an actor)

in a bloodstained shift
with his head pointing upwards
and a slaughtered bull

(a corpse) with its head
pointing downwards on the oth
er side of the cross

CLOUD MOUNTAIN
(1983)

denmark's himmelbjerg
et is not of galvanised steel
and does not reach up

into the clouds but it
is nevertheless higher
than one metre and

seventy-seven
centimetres above the
surface of the floor

and a lot more beau
tiful than cloud mountain in
washington d c

GLENROWAN
(1956)

i will never man
age to get down to austra
lia *down under*

although i would like
to see the sparkling mountings
of the southern cross

but it is not pre
dicted in the tarot cards
nor is it in my

horoscope i am
not destined to crash in a
plane in glenrowan

DEEP SOCIAL SPACE
(1989)

i decide to dis
appear for an hour in
the co-op up in

søndersø to rub
shoulders so to speak with kitch
en rolls to become

one with the lettuc
es to carry out a stage-
diving into the

cold counters – in short
to get completely lost in
the supermarket

ANOTHER TIME
(1973)

art as a safeguard
a wholly impersonal
barrier against the

world that's how it al
so can manifest itself
as a shield a mod

ern masai shield in pea-
green colours rhomboid in shape
and decorated

with stripes so as to
pick up the sharp spears of all
the many glances

SEA AND LIGHT CLOUDS
(1955)

all of that i saw
out at kore sand so long
ago that i am

no longer able
to distinguish the memor
ies from the true fa

ta morgana of
mother-of-pearl which in vi
sion after vision

started to merge and
showed me the transitori
ness of everything

WASHINGTON AND BEETHOVEN
(1979)

it almost sounds more
like the name of a firm of
bookmakers than a

furniture store – it could
also turn out to have some
thing to do with a

pair of ventrilo
quists but in actual fact
it is an address

in los angeles –
now that's something that is
definitely weird

BÓLIDE 18, B-331 (HOMAGE TO CARA DE CAVALO)
(1967)

i take a photo
graph of a photograph of
a black box that con

tains a bag of red
earth and a photograph – then
i take a photo

graph of the new pho
tograph and go on repeat
ing the process eight

een times and carry
this out in honour of ca
ra de cavalo

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT NO. IV
(1930)

like a clapper in
its bell and to be sure like
the devil himself

up in the pulpit
like a black bean on its bean
stalk like a poke bon

net that has a veil
and (now we are getting near
er) like the immense

violet orchid
of the genitalia
opened to the night

BEDROOM ENSEMBLE
(1963)

i have mentioned the
hotel apartment on the
corner of seventh

avenue but not
that its bedroom resembled
this one like two peas

in a pod the same
box mattresses the same fur
nishings apart from

the fact that there was
no rope hanging in front to
keep the public out

GREEN JAZZ
(1962)

gosh how ugly it
is in this particular
case not deafening

ly so but heart-rend
ingly ugly it looks like
a piece of smoked sad

dle of pork garnished
with red and green peppers or
a sawn-over thigh

bone with marrow like
all jazz it's so ugly that
it is beautiful

PAINTING FOR THE WIND
(1961)

when you have read this
poem tear it out of the
book and cut it in

to small pieces each
letter separately put
them in a ruby

glass bowl for exam
ple and place them out in wind
y weather somewhere

or yourself scatter
the letters to the four winds
poem of the wind

NIGHT LIGHT 25/3333CB
(1989)

night light in broad day
light a strange paradox the
light in the light in

stead of in the dark
the cold counters the
low-voltage light from

the hospitals and
the computer screens that hum
faintly i very

much prefer 'nightlight'
the rose in kolding's geo
graphical garden

MY NURSE
(1936)

there was actual
ly a factotum in my
childhood who i dom

inated in the
most bizarre way – i forced her
to carry me on

her shoulders so that
i was able to ride her
like a horse or to

go with me on cross
ings with the harbour's motor
ferry every day

ELTON JOHN
(1973)

who the fuck is john
elton? – he is not a pseu
donym for regi

nald kenneth dwight
and therefore he is not a
student from the roy

al academy
of music he does not know
bernie taupin and

he is not the per
son who composed *candle in
the wind* – *who is he?*

SLEEPING LEAVES
(1990)

i'm talking about
a work of art that no one
except the artist

has seen (unless the
photograph of the work of
art is the work of

art and not the work
of art itself) i'm talking
about art as a

hole in the ground where
palm leaves have been laid to rest
in a sleeping bag

TABLE OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD
(1930)

one would have thought that
this table would have been round (like
the one at came

lot or like the ba
bel table out in vollsmo
se) and had not been

a square one and un
approachably made of ce
ramics one would have

thought that precisely
this table could solve the squar
ing of the circle

SMOKING ROOM: STILL LIFE
(1923)

there were many smok
ing rooms at our school where smok
ing was of course for

bidden – one was right
out under the open sky in
the breaks another

one was secret and
was down in the boiler room
while the most cunning

place of all was to
openly smoke away in
our very own rooms

TV-GARDEN
(1936)

in front of the ferns
in the back garden my old
video came

ra takes pictures of
the new camera which at
the same time takes pic

tures of the old one –
both shootings are shown on se
parate tv screens

set up in the rose
bushes and behind the haw
thorn respectively

PSYCHE
(1974)

it is not toma
to ketchup neither heinz nor
del monte that is

coming out of the
wound that the woman in the
picture in this po

em inflicts on her
self with a razor blade nor
is it red wine eith

er it is blood and
body art as the ulti
mative work of art

I WAS A RICH MAN'S PLAYTHING
(1947)

the poem formed and
created by something more
and different than

a small specialised
language (a code of large words
a golden glossa

ry so to speak) the
poem formed and created
by the whole language

ads atrocious puns
flashes in the pan cartoons
also this poster

WANDERING JOURNEY
(1983)

pacman on an out
door trip perhaps on a pic
nic pacman *on the*

run in the green maze
in search of various chees
es and berries it

looks like pacman in
the midst of the vert anglais
clair chrome pacman who's

been caught in a host
of olive-green nuances
and in turpentine

TALE OF THE SEA
(1920)

the sea is merci
less like a piece of white pa
per that lies complete

ly blank in the morn
ing when the sea is still as
a millpond and just

as blank in the eve
ning at ebb tide – nobody's
ever been able

and nobody will
ever be able to write
'a tale of the sea'

SYSTEM-PAINTING-END
(1969)

since a system is
nothing else than a set of
variables it

is difficult to
imagine how a system
painting could ever

be brought to a con
clusion – that the artist does
not know his own va

riables does not
make the work of art any
less systematic

HELICOIDAL TREE
(1988)

there isn't any
tree inside the tree there is
n't any fractal

feigenbaum tree there
isn't any tree-idea
there isn't any

proto-tree there is
n't any eight-metre-high
spiral tree in front

of stacked firewood there
is a seed from which a new
tree is growing up

THEL
(1976)

what words got caught in
the poem-trap in the course
of the night? – let's have

a look: corten steel
turf a photograph of dart
mouth college in han

nover a complete
ly triangular molehill
with various clus

ters of trees – and that
is not forgetting the word
'poem-trap' itself

WHAT FALLS TO THE GROUND BUT CAN'T BE EATEN
(1991)

follow me through the
doorway of words into this
laotian myste

ry – will we find the
answer there as ten thousand
tears in the small grove

of bamboo trees or
will we find the poem it
self in the clearing

and furthestmost in
the stillnesses after an
entire century?

CATAX
(1929)

the words fade and the
images from the previ
ous century are

bleached by purgato
ry and other colours are
written over by

other words dwindle
in the light sink down into
deeper transparen

cies down to the in
visible down into il
legibility

LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON
(1907)

i couldn't really
care less about nineteen hun
dred and seven – it

is only a num
ber in the row of years reach
ing retirement cut-

off age (a centu
ry marks oblivion) i
only pay atten

tion because of the
art: what magnificent wo
men that year produced

SELF-PORTRAIT EXAGGERATING MY NEGROID FEATURES
(1981)

just look at the blood-
shot eyes and the cauliflower
ears the lips aren't all

that beautiful eith
er they mostly resemble
some prawn salad not

to mention the nose
for that is as flat as a
frying pan there's de

finitely something
of the nigger about him;
can you say: massa

SEATON DELAVAL
(1941)

as if the memo
ry had been given a coat
of blitz lacquer that's

how it gleams like a
bad conscience about something
that is not my fault

at all i really
can't do anything about
it that my playmates

happened to get killed
in a bomb attack during
the second world war

VENUS OF THE RAGS
(1967)

take a photograph
of your beloved naked
(buy a porno mag

for want of something
better) clip the figure out
of the photo and

paste it over the
poem here as a collage
when you have read it

through – little poem
written there who is the love
liest anywhere

DIPTYCH
(1954)

as can be seen the
right- and left-hand side are not
the same only on

the surface – the red
and green fields are not iso
morphous in the white

book of the centu
ry – that which the dead wrote and
that which the living

write about one and
the same event do not e
ver completely match

OPIUM SMOKER
(1982)

i myself only
ever got to smoking a
few joints and some pot

before i had a
bad trip and lost my mental
balance for a brief

moment which dissolved
into cellulose paint and
red polka dots dur

ing which time i
met the man with the star and
the rainbow hammer

FULL FATHOM FIVE
(1947)

the five fathoms could
perhaps constitute the depth
of these coinci

dences where cigar
ette ends nails and buttons play
a greater role or

maybe five fathoms
down in the individual
subconscious and in

the collective me
mory where the entrophy
approaches zero

CUBIST NUDE
(1913)

i do not know why
precisely nineteen hundred
and thirteen has be

come so important
in this connection i can
only record the

fact that once again
a nude woman comes in on
to the scene clad in

full armour (in the
poem that is) from this year's
many arsenals

SALEM COVE
(1916)

let's take a breather
just like we once did out at
the seaside let's just

for a brief moment
forget the conflict in the
middle east unpaid

bills and health that is
becoming a bit dodgy
for it is really true

light is actually
made up of dots if you screw
up your eyes a bit

JOKE
(1987)

*a salesman's car
broke down on a lonely road
and he asked at*

*the only house
in sight: "can you put me up
for the night?" – "I can"*

*said the farmer – "but
you'll have to share the room
with my young son"*

*"how about that" – gas
ped the salesman – "I am
in the wrong joke"*

SELF
(1991)

there isn't even
a common or garden thick
head a fathead and

lunkhead or a shit
head but *a bloody fool* who
seriously believes

that the self consists
of four litres of blood fro
zen into a head

on a platter when
the self is a relation
that relates to god

IN THE LAND OF THE GERMANS
(1947)

with 'parsifal' and
other express trains powered
by electrici

ty and the libi
do's blue apocalyptic
current i drove from

sachsenhausen to
dachau and back again from
stammheim to buchen

wald and then drove all
the way from *deutschland* to *ger*
many and back again

(YELLOW WITH CIRCLES I)
(1996)

the mind's frisbees float
ing like haloes (or like
compact discs) in

over the threshold
of a new millennium
from four years before

to four years after
floating in an ultimate
game that is won at

nineteen and that ap
plies to nothing less than re
ality itself

BEREAVEMENT
(1970)

i begin to cross
out the picture that this po
em refers to with

a green colour pen
cil of the brand caran d'ache
the first strokes i place

diagonally
up in the left-hand corner
and continue to

erase until the
grieving artist's portrait has
been covered over

DORIC CIRCUS
(1979)

re-use or borrow
ing is when it is express
ly stated in one

way or another
if not we are dealing with
plagiarism at

best with theft at worst –
this also happens to ap
ply to the world of

art (circus) now it's
hereby been announced on the
poem's notice board

FALL '91
(1992)

fall rhymes with *tall*
but were women really that
tall in the fall of

nineteen hundred and
ninety one? – there's
something wrong with my

short-term memory –
but even so were they real
ly two metres tall

as is being sug
gested – or was it only
the female dummies?

OPHELIA AMONG THE FLOWERS
(1905)

*long ago and far
away many years later
i myself loved an*

ophelia who
did not know the language of
flowers who did not

know that rosemary
is for remembrance and that
rue means contrition

and yet who never
theless sacrificed herself
for the sake of death

THE DANCE
(1988)

it's unbelieva
ble just how much dancing went
on in the twenti

eth century if
we are to believe art (and
we have to do so

as the only re
liable source of what ac
tually took place)

dancing went on both
in broad daylight and in moon
light as here and now

BLACK PAINTING NO. 34
(1984)

*black black black
black black black black
black black black*

*black black black
black black black black
black black black*

*black black black
black black black black
black black black*

*black black black
black black black black
black black black*

PORTRAIT OF AMBROISE VOLLARD
(1908)

i too once wrote a
poem to my publisher
for two reasons part

ly because i quite
liked him and partly in or
der to ensure the

publication of
my next work but when the po
em was finished the

publisher was dead
so the poem became an
in memoriam

DON QUIXOTE
(1952)

all forms of mental
strife are invisible are
hardly revealed by

the slightest physi-
cal quivering or any
tremor of the mind

itself if the leap
is infinitely great it
seems infinitely

little the higher
faith's knight rises up the small
er he seems to be

794-1 ABSTRACT PAINTING
(1993)

it could look a bit
like an infrared satel-
lite photo of a

battlefield in bos-
nia hercegovina
the long heat lines of

napalm the green and
blue parameters but there
is only putty

that has been smeared out
across the canvas using
a rubber roller

AUGUST
(1995)

august was like that
according at least to the
julian calen

dar flickeringly
full of colours the sequins
of the leaves light rhom

buses confusions
cascades of op-art and post-
impressionism

not all that very
long ago at the bien-
nale in venice

ABSTRACTION ORANGE
(1972)

orange was first called
abstraction as a work of
art and then became

the carcinogen-
ic agent orange di- and
trichloropheno-

xyacetic a-
cid (take *that*) which was dropped o-
ver the vietnamese

forests crops and po-
pulation by the airforce
of the usa

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARMS
(1928)

i've said it before
and i'll say it again: it
is art that changes

the world and vice
versa – words are the best wea
pon they do not kill

anybody but
are able to change a mind
the poem hits the heart

with something else than
machine-gun bullets – long live
the revolution

PARTS OF THE BODY: FRENCH VOCABULARY LESSON
(1961)

i never got to
learn french in the sixth form slept
mainly during those

lessons now the chance
has come let's begin: narine
means nostril teton

means nipple and poils
means pubic hair but next to
the cunt it says u

biques – is that what it's
really called in french? – how ve
ry interesting

UNTITLED
(1929)

yet another point
outside space a so-called time
warp i wonder what

it may contain? win
dow glass that someone has cut
themselves on or a

music stand that has
been deep-frozen in dry-ice?
without words the as

sociations be
come purer but also in
comprehensible

THE CATHEDRAL
(1907)

what gloves would match these
hands of bronze – batting gloves
from cricket perhaps

or a pair of kid
gloves or rubber gloves or gloves
to protect one from

aids as at the den
tist's – iron gloves or of silk – per
haps a generous

dollop of hand lo
tion would be enough before
they're folded in prayer?

AMERIKA VI (SOUTH BRONX)
(1986)

i take out my book
honeymoon and read the po
em bronx to myself –

after which i spray
the whole page over with glit
ter spray to make de

corations (an old
trick i have made use of on
earlier occa

sions) till it looks like
that picture which this poem's
been written over

F 111
(1965)

death also had its
very own poetry just
listen: *spitfire*

tomahawk flying
fortresses lancaster mus
tang and swordfish i

myself only lacked
a *hell cat* jet fighter in
my collection of

coloured cards from the
ersatz coffee series 'wea
pons of victory'

MARILYN MONROE
(1962)

my generation
was not all that wild about
marilyn she was

too cute for us it
wasn't her we used for wank
ing purposes we

preferred the nudist
mags from the tobacco ki
osk so it is not

my sperm that has
ruined all the colours on
that poster of her

UNITED STATES II
(1976)

that's what ameri
ca is black and white in all
respects hero and

villain at one and
the same time white acrylic
and black tempera

divided down the
middle by the bible belt
that only dreams sur

pass and the words of
poems and horses when they
are grazing at night

RED ON MAROON
(1959)

red red red red red
red red red red red red red
red red red red red

red red maroon red
red red red maroon red
red red maroon red

red red maroon red
red red red maroon red red
red red maroon red

red red maroon red
red red red red red red red
red red red red red

TWO CLOWNS
(1935)

it's you and your op
posite neighbour me and my
neighbour it is man

as such no matter
if we knock each other off
our perches or sing

serenades no mat
ter if we believe or doubt
it is always a

human basic con
dition to be a clown for
crying or laughing

TROPICAL FOREST WITH MONKEYS
(1910)

alias any
stock exchange in the western
world the new york ex

change for example
which i visited before
twin towers lay in

ruins the new york
exchange downtown looks like a
tropical rain for

est – a bit odd to
realise the world's run by
a cave of monkeys

A NATURALIST'S STUDY
(1928)

what is it hanging
on the wall to the left next
to the seven eggs

on a string is it
a farewell letter from the
artist's wife or just

a common or gar
den shopping list: sugar salt
and porridge oats? it

can't very well be
that for a number of ex
tremely good reasons

NOISE
(1963)

quiet please – can
you hear anything down there
from the previous

century can you
hear anything else at all
except your own heart

beat your own breathing –
quiet please the poem is
utterly silent

it does not say a
single sound or a single
word *it makes no noise*

WINDSOR 6
(1965)

layer on layer
of cream looks white on windsor
white on titanium

white on time's blind spot
on word and image that start
to fade beneath new

truths that are coated
over and become lies which
are then covered with

pigments and zinc white
and broad sweeps of the brush that
pale like everything

LOST RECORD
(1940)

i am writing this
poem as a protest a
gainst nuclear pow

er and as a re
minder of humanity's
greatest crime against

itself (almost for
gotten) i add my name un
der the bottom line

duplicate it and
write it out into the world
as a chain poem

DEATH
(1985)

toy death with a blue
caparison on its horse
of polyester

golden even when
death happens to be a wo
man in this game with

chopped-off arms of dolls
and teddy bears but in the
same way as it is

impossible to
practise life one can
not play oneself dead

THE BURNING BUSH
(1982)

beware mister
president – it is a da
ngerous name to go

round with (just read on) –
i take off my adidas
trainers and take out

a press photograph
of the forty first (and third)
president of the

united states of
america and proceed
to set fire to it

MR POOR'S FAMILY
(1991)

i have myself re
ceived a letter with a plea
for financial help

from a certain vi
olet nammugi who lives
in kampala u

ganda's embassy
explained to me that the let
ter was a swindle

even so i was
prepared to pay because of
her beautiful name

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH MODEL
(1927)

yet another fuck
ing self-portrait – have the ar
tists no shame whatso

ever – no fortu
nately they are completely
shameless if they are

not in the process
of staring themselves in the
eyes (as their own mo

dels) they are spending
their time writing a poem
about it instead

BARCELONA FAN
(1979)

the top hat of his
tory is at least four me
tres high and two me

tres wide – how can i
be sure of that? – i have just
extracted this huge

spanish fan with pre
cisely those measurements out
of it – although who

it has belonged to
and who has used it i am
unable to say

RECUMBENT FEMALE NUDE WITH LEGS APART
(1914)

an almost lifelike
picture: precisely such have
i seen my beloved

ed every morning
for the past twenty years and
now i am taking

a poem of this
tableau in black and white for
your benefit so

you can read for your
self how beautiful my beloved
really is

SELF-PORTRAIT
(1912)

now again – okay
the most recent photo of
me is only a

couple of months old
i don't do anything with
it don't make inci

sions in it don't pour
potash all over it don't
do any drawings

on it – so i look
completely ordinary:
an elderly man

REAR VIEW OF A WOMAN SITTING AT A TABLE
(1924)

just sit down right there
sideways on the chair the high-
backed one made of oak

i want you to turn
your back towards me place one
arm on the roco

co table and the
other wound round the arm-rest
gaze fixedly in

to the yellowed wall
paper – now picture and po
em match each other

BLUE NUDE WITH SWORD
(1980)

the cheerful kitchen
of the eighties dipped in blue
emulsion paint just

like the naked dancers
(with and without a sword)
the great buffet of

the decade with smashed
china of every conceivable
style and blue

where one helped oneself
from the shelves and then called it
postmodernism

EYE BODY: 36 TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS
(1963)

if art and life are
the same thing art does not exist
if there is no

difference there is
no reason to talk about
art the document

tation is the work
of art of each performance
(not itself) in this

particular case
it is a huge photostat
and a small poem

AFTER US THE FLOOD
(1995)

a new kind of imperialism
is on
the march is rolling

through the third world in
the shadow of flaming cannons
planes and rocket

attacks and in the
last resort nuclear weapons:
democracy

at all costs whether
you want it or not is the
order of the day

UNITED ENEMIES
(1993)

palestine bound to
gether by the blue stripes in
the israeli

flag and towel cloths
that have come from gaza bound
together by the

wall of concrete imprisoned
together by barbed
wire killed together

by suicide bombs
and by liquidations bound
together to death

CIRCLE
(1925)

vicious or good – her
meneutic megarian
or eulerian

what kind of circle
is it so full of triangles
lines and rectangles

les so much at odds
with itself is it the circle
of the horizon

zon or your own limitation
(do not disturb
any of my squares)?

WHY AND WHAT (YELLOW)
(1988)

i think that i can
answer both questions although
in the reverse or

der – what? – it is an
section of a map of man
hattan (i can re

cognise madison
square garden) why? – partly in
order to pay hom

age to new york and
partly to show around the
world of art (yellow)

THE DANCERS
(1972)

the book's last dance is
being carried out by four
plastercast women

they are not dancing
breakdance or jitterbug it
looks more as if it's

ballet – the nutcrack
er suite perhaps – caught as they
are in an abso

lute stasis of mo
tion frozen into the cen
tre of gravity

GAME OF CHANCE NO. 2
(1949)

if you throw a one
they are partisans if you
throw a two they are

terrorists if you
throw a three it is guer
rilla warfare if

you throw a four it
is murder if you throw a
five it is the fight

for liberty if
you throw a six it is crime
i threw a seven

TILTED ARC
(1961)

in a certain way
this tilted piece of corten
steel is reminis

cent of a wrecked so
viet nuclear submar
ine in the middle

of new york dark and
threatening so removed as
fast as possible

now there's only pic
ture and poem left as proof
of this assertion

CANNONS IN ACTION (WORDS ON LIBERTY AND FORMS)
(1915)

*bbooumm bruit et
lumière 100 000 volt
eventrement sou*

*lèvement de la
terre soldatsmachines
avancer avan*

*cer émanation
de gaz puants courbe
graduelle vers*

*la terre 100 000
éclairs déchirements
SZSZSZSZSZSZSZ*

DEATH ON THE BEACH
(1945)

john wayne storms up the
beach in heavy artille
ry fire robert mitch

um seeks cover va
rious anonymous ac
tors meet their death on

omaha beach it
is d-day over and o
ver again every

day in black and white
or perhaps eastmancolor
somewhere in the world

UNTITLED (NO. 122)
(1983)

the decade's proto
type is represented in
this particular

instance by an a
nonymous woman a blond
who is hiding her

face behind her hair
and even though she is dressed
in a model's cos

tume she looks nervous
there in her accorded thir
ty seconds of fame

CHALLENGING MUD
(1955)

you don't have to wall
ow around naked in vol
canic ash fill a

small bag with earth for
your own grave or go and dig
out your wellies from

somewhere or other
and set out across the fields
on a november

day then you will un
derstand what is meant by the
term 'the naked earth'

MORNINGTON CRESCENT NUDE, CONTRE-JOUR
(1907)

backlight veflinge
nude model roughly a hun
dred years later – the

basic conditions
are the same only the circum
stances have changed a

little bit and the
words have altered here and there
the colours too per

haps – how reassur
ring it all is veflinge
nude model backlight

ANTIBES: THE PINK CLOUD
(1916)

*hiroshima: the
white cloud sixth of august
eight fifteen a.m.*

*nineteenforty
five enola gay and
little boy 60 kg*

uranium-235
80000 killed instantly and al
most 120000 all told

the pure down-to-earth
and sacred poetry of
what are just the facts

ZAPATA
(1931)

emiliano
zapata started his re
volutionary

activities to
gether with the village pea
sants and continued

the struggle until
he fell in an ambush and
was killed by govern

ment soldiers now he's
back from the dead as zapa
ta tortilla crisps

VOLTRI VII
(1962)

sun chariot an
no sixty-two made out of
wrought iron and dis

carded agricul
tural implements drawn in
to its own sacred

stillness after the
considerable noise the
combine harvesters

made in the middle
of the century drawn in
to a museum

TRAIN
(1993)

if this train of red
glass beads pulled out of the va
gina like a ro

sary if that is
the regalia of the
female sex then what

is the masculine
counterpart – a budweiser
that is held in the

left hand a remote
control and a shot gun that's
within easy reach?

SPIRAL JETTY
(1970)

like juliane
høj on the home latitudes
like a galaxy

out there in vast end
less infinity a gi
gantic piece of con

fectionery crea
ted by god himself (by sub
stitution of an

other) a huge sand
wich cake to crash into in
a helicopter

UNTITLED
(1956)

that year i turned eigh
teen even though time did not
pass eight hundred years

ago at any
rate only as a something spun
out in rubidium

or as colours stacked
up in black a long way off
in a private col

lection where the dust
is still falling like pepper
fifty years later

THE BOY IN BLACK
(1924)

in fact i wore black
thirty years later i wore
a black uniform

that was double-breast
ed tailor-made and without
any turn-ups on

the trousers brass but
tons on which a phoenix rose
out of the ashes

black tie white shirt black
shoes and socks – *bloody litt
le soldier boy*

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH PATRICIA
(1936)

self-portrait with cop
per apple-pancake pan self-
portrait with heinz toma

to ketchup self-por
trait with shrovetide barrel for
bashing self-portrait

with elastoplast
self-portrait with newspaper
cutting of the der

by winner patri
cia garbo self-portrait with
painting of myself

SKY GODDESS/EGYPTIAN ACROBATS
(1987)

imagine that the
letters are some kind of ac
robats (egyptian

perhaps) that are climb
ing and leaping in the rack
of the poem that

a is a small ro
ly poly that b is a
girl with ducks legs that

c is juggling with
balls etc etc join in invent
the rest for yourself

SELF-PORTRAIT
(1907)

it isn't me who's
staring sullenly and dis
trustingly at you

from the picture or
rather from the poem but
a younger red-haired

man who is very
scared of being consigned to
oblivion now

as the century
approaches at a highly
disquieting speed

TRAP PICTURE
(1972)

study the poem
more closely letter by let
ter word by word sen

tence by sentence i
mage by image examine
the syntax more care

fully and the re
lation between the word class
es (don't forget the

implied or hidden
meanings) and then tell me what's
not quite right somewhere

COUNTRYSIDE
(1952)

we're at the seaside
the prussian-blue streak furthest
to the right of the

poem indicates
it while the cadmium-yel
low squares in the mid

dle of the picture
would seem to imply autumn
fields (perhaps down at

glænø) strengthened by
the red rectangle that's down
on the bottom line

SUPREMELY BLACK
(1985)

'snow-white washes coal-
black' (as the old advertis
ing slogan that sud

denly comes into
my mind – so precisely and
poetically ex

presses it) can be
brought quite naturally right
up to date under

the motto: *paper*
white makes the poem
supremely black

BROOKLYN BRIDGE
(1918)

i looked at this bridge
full of veneration (that's
admittedly a

gross word but i am
unable to find a bet
ter expression for

what i felt – unless
it should just be: gosh) i saw
the bridge exactly

like that: a mesh of
cables and prisms like a huge
aeolian harp

CAGE FOR SOUND
(1994)

the golden horns re
discovered in seattle
but without any

gold and without a
ny horns found as pure sound locked
inside a bamboo

construction on wheels
so far removed from the home
country's plaster cast

so far removed from
all conceptions of a gold
en horn made of gold

UNTITLED
(1951)

cadmium yellow
aureolin jaune de chrom
clair permanent

yellow amaril
lo de napole new gam
boge indian

yellow jaune de
mars jaune citron cadmi
um pale nea

pelgelb giallo
brillante chiaro gum
migutt citrongul

SEA FLOOR MOVEMENT TO RISE OF FIREPLACE STRIPPING
(1992)

or napoleon
bonaparte meets marilyn
monroe at jægers

pris hunting lodge or
twenty electric light bulbs
all commit hari

kiri or a piece
of empire furniture made
of sea-salt or... there's

plenty to come up
with if your imagina
tion should run riot

'SOUTH WABASH AVENUE' CHICAGO
(1992)

let us for examp
le saunter down south wabash
avenue even

though none of us comes
to chicago let us turn
off to the left in

the poem (picture)
into diamond's steak house –
that got your taste-buds

working didn't it
now you're hungering for a
real burger aren't you?

ENTRANCE TO A LANE
(1939)

from the one extreme
to the other via nel
lerudgyden from

the one century
to the other from asphalt
to fields that are har

vested via the
poem from chicago to
hindevad via

the picture and from
the extreme of fantasy
to reality

UNTITLED
(1932)

can one see through a
poem or is one's gaze stopped
by the letters and

the paper? if one
knows the poem by heart are
there chinks that open

out onto eter
nity? – i cannot answer
either of these ques

tions but i think the
the poem illuminates time
lights up existence

CHILDREN PLAYING WITH FIRE
(1947)

we didn't pee in
our beds at night even though
we had fired mortar

grenades in the home
guard up on the common at
melby we were far

too busy coughing
away and trying to put
out the large heather

fires that we ourselves
had been the unwitting cause
of in the first place

THE RIBBON OF EXTREMES
(1932)

through my whole pro
duction there runs a ribbon
of incomprehens

ibility (like
a milky way) a string of
paradoxes a

very thin möbi
us strip that binds words and sen
tences and ima

ges together to
the whole that makes the poems
comprehensible

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC
(1946)

if on the other
hand you open the door to
room number two hun

dred and one in writ
ing's image (or is it the
reverse?) you'll stand at

the poem's centre
of gravity where it is
hung up in itself

in its own five-point
ed star and is therefore in
comprehensible

ACTION PAINTING II
(1984)

an action poem
must be a poem that does
what it says and to that

extent is honest
ly concrete and keeps its word
like this poem which

chatters away nat
ters away blethers away
until a stop's put

to it which takes place
in the space of just a few
words not now but now

OCHRE
(1963)

asphalt asphalt as
phalt asphalt asphalt asphalt
asphalt asphalt as

phalt sand sand asphalt
asphalt sand sand sand asphalt
sand sand sand sand sand

sand ochre sand sand
sand sand sand asphalt asphalt
sand sand sand sand sand

canvas canvas sand
asphalt asphalt asphalt as
halt asphalt asphalt

COMPLEX CORNER RELIEF
(1915)

what do we find in
the poem's doghouse? – this sculp
ture of iron zinc

and alumini
um created by the ar
tist of the revo

lution rejected
by the regime but restored
to favour again

now that it's become
a sales object which cannot
do any more harm

EXCELSIOR
(1934)

higher higher still
although height cannot be said
to have any height

whatsoever here
nothing is either high or
low the pleiades

hang precisely as
they wish to in their heavens
nailed to the light high

or low at the ve
ry most height lost its height and
distance its distance

PIETÀ APOCALYPSE
(1972)

and i saw precise
ly how three became one (al
most like the nail-clip

per in the old days)
i saw it happen against
a background of squig

gles circles and ma
gical figures i saw it
happen in a pic

ture and one of the
three was actually wear
ing a black bow tie

WOMAN AND COSMETICS
(1963)

mirror mirror in
the poem who is the fair
est in the land? read

er great is your beau
ty's gleam but sisley from pa
ris is fairest with

the gleam of youth and
l'oreal and schwarzkopf and
elizabeth ar

den and not least he
lena rubinstein is the
fairest in the book

PARTITION OF PLACE
(1994)

art is in art's debt
the poems hang out togeth
er as thick as thieves

and marking rings pic
tures are palimpsests that are
superimposed on

each other statues
share exactly the same space
as the notes the ar

tists are standing on
each other's shoulders like 'the
flying wallendas'

CHARIOT MK IV
(1966)

swing low sweet chari
ot i hear singing inside
myself at the sight

of this iron sculpture
which looks more like a parsley
chopper than a tank

that's celebrating
the machine age's black ar
canum and motion

or is sneering at
it – it is up to you to
decide for yourself

FREE
(1992)

pay me a visit
here in hedeboerne
let us meet in the

kitchen and i'll show
you a work of art – i crack
an organic free

range egg into the
non-stick frying pan and then
fry it over a

low heat – and voilà!
(it is not the fried egg that
is the work of art)

KANGAROO DREAMING
(1986)

dreams exist for the
sake of reality be
cause it cannot it

self decide that it
is reality but on
ly in relation

to some other and
therefore the kangaroo dreams
in order to re

charge itself again
to reality like a
battery at night

UNTITLED
(1959)

nor does the year fif
ty nine say a blind thing to
me – there must have been

a war going on
somewhere or other in the
world and my belov

ed was five years old
apart from that the year seems
to me to be as

anonymous as
the terrazzo table-top
in the scullery

UNIVERSAL ART
(1963)

i can well under
stand that the sun sets in this
picture of gold bronze

and that the moon stands
in four quarters and that the
signs of the stars and

the symbols for man
and woman animals and
fish numbers and let

ters but i lack (not
any more) the world tree that
holds up the heavens

PLAYBOY BUNNIES
(1985)

who has woven these
prototypes in the contrast
ing colours of pea

green and tomato
purée? – not penelope
and not the artist

himself but female
factory workers in a
weaving mill women

who perhaps themselves
would have been porno models
knitted out of wool

QUEEN 2
(1988)

a thuja more than
it is a cone more than it
is a flame more than

it is a laurel
leaf more than it is a thun
derstone more than it

is a flick knife more
than it is a spearhead more
than it is a lance

more than it is a
bronze stele more than it's a
queen more than queen two

RAYZOR
(1982)

transcendence does
not take place in fluorescent
light if an image

is to be found for
what occurs the link between
a ray and a ra

zorblade is not a
bad idea – here at the rim
of thought where it wants

to include or ex
clude itself so as to think
the unthinkable

PINK OVAL LANDSCAPE
(1964)

i don't know what it
might be i can't simply think
it away since the

thought has arisen
and i am also unab
le to include it

in my thought because
the thought would in that case think
itself i will hand

it over to it
self hand it over to this
pink oval landscape

BODY
(1990)

the soul will proba
bly manage decide most things
for itself – the spi

rit has its own pre
serves together with god up
there somewhere while the

body is left to
itself and to laws it can't
ultimately con

trol the body is
in every respect out on
a limb high and dry

FIRST PART OF THE RETURN FROM PARNASSUS
(1961)

parnus was a res
taurant on the other side
of the lake which we

used to sail over
to in a motorboat driv
en by a former

foreign legiona
ry with one leg just as in
the myth in order

to play mini-golf
just for glory – parnassus
no longer exists

RELATION IN TIME
(1977)

that's probably how
it is: increasingly en
tangled and entwined

*as time goes by and
tears* when it really hurts be
cause your hair is in

extricably mat
ted and plaited in a gran
ny knot even though

everybody knows *that
sooner or later we shall
all sleep alone*

THE MOULIN DE LA GALETTE IN SNOW
(1923)

there is a mill like
that one in ulstrup of no
use or beauty a

ny more on the stub
blefield of oblivion
imploded into

its own history
into itself ripped out in
fragments in glimpses

of time and darkness
to its own now each time that
you read this poem

THE FLIGHT
(1962)

we ourselves fled in
an egg-shell to funen and
moved into a shoe-

box that was lined with
a sky made of tissue pa
per we ourselves fled

from the horrors of
the twentieth century
to a fairytale

that was more beauti
ful so as to remember
the moment itself

VEGA YONGÍY-2
(1972)

language happens to
be so – we must learn it high
or low what we want

to say's almost the
same as a new computer
game what was meant to

be so fine and tall
often turns out very small
twixt the words are seen

on rare occasions
glimpses from afar of the
newest star vega

ART IS USELESS, GO HOME
(1971)

that's precisely why
you are to go home and read
this poem which has

not cost a single
penny to produce nor will
it bring in a brass

farthing either (set
expressions retain their worth
despite the deva

luation) for the
simple reason that art's by
nature free of charge

COMPOSITION NO 4045
(1955)

here the actual
rent can be seen the crackling
in the oils the

attempt to explain
oneself it is almost like
seeing gödel's proof

expressed in cera
mics: white squares that have been bro
ken through by black squares

in the middle of
the picture that it is un
able to contain

NANTES TRIPTYCH
(1992)

i have my own trip
tych placed on the internet
www.triptychon.dk

the rebellion is
born in the kurdish mountains
<http://kurdistan.life.nu>

resistance contin
ues on afghanistan soil
<http://imagine.stop.to>

the guerrilla strug
gle and death in palestine
<http://palestine.learn.to>

HOUSES OF THE BANKS OF THE SEINE AT CHATOU
(1906)

the houses in fo
gense do not lie along
the seine but on the

kattegat and al
though i've never been to par
is they look like the

picture and depic
tion (those watercol
ours i painted as

a boy) the houses
in fogense look like that
kind of house (pictures?)

THE NEWSPAPER
(1910)

why is it that the
words in the newspaper are
forgotten almost

before they have been
written down while the poem
lives? – it is because

dead words relate to
time and to time alone and
die with it while the

living words of po
etry relate to what is
time's prerequisite

TOMORROW MORNING
(1929)

time's prerequisite
cannot be the morning of to
morrow nor that of

the day before yes
terday because time in that
case would contain its

own explanation
(which is always present and
is omnipresent)

time's prerequisite
can therefore be nothing else
than eternity

THE STUMBLING-BLOCK
(1991)

eternity is
the stumbling-block against which
time is shipwrecked or

founders and is ground
ed (read in a more gentle
register of voice)

has its foundation
eternity is the found
ation stone cornerstone

that takes exception
to time eternity is
the stars' chopping block

A REAL WORK OF ART
(1995)

the racing horse's
name was far west and i loved
that horse but it was

not a real work of
art because it was crea
ted spontaneous

ly while all art comes
into being in the doub
leness of immed

iacy – a photo
graph of the horse could have been
a real work of art

THE GOLDEN LIGHT PENZANCE
(1935)

such a three-master
also hung in my childhood
home on its way through

oil and marine paints
the light was not golden but
grey like that from the

shell of an oyster
i have no idea where
it is now – where was

it heading? – how time
solidifies and sets in
art and in crackling

SOUP CAN
(1961)

i take a tin of
campbell's tomato soup that
is exactly si

milar down from the
shelf pour it into a sauce
pan heat it stir it

with a spoon – out in
to the soup plate with it – some
bread with it umm! how

tasty this secu
lar and non-alcoholic
communion is

A TALE FROM THE DECAMERON
(1916)

but which one? – the one
with the man in the apple
tree or the one where

he is stuck in the
barrel's cream of tartar or
some other one? per

haps a completely
new story written and paint
ed on top of the

other ones a ne
ver-ending palimpsest a
cross the centuries?

MY FAVOURITE TRACK
(1944)

on the gramophone
the goldberg variations
are spinning round and

round just like the cd
player with avalon and from
the walkman comes the

sound of cheesecake from
the video there is tu
randot and from the

recorder comes save
a little smile in uni
son and on one tape

TWO MUSICIANS
(1917)

what are they up to
what is the number that they
are playing can it

be green dolphin street? –
we will never get to know
and perhaps that is

a good thing – then we
can avoid the intoler
able spiritu

al stench that always
surrounds the genuine ar
ticle – pure music

CINDERELLA
(1994)

cinderella stinks
say the feminists cinder
ella's burka's been

sewn by tailor birds
say the lesbians cinder
ella's shoes are of

glass and she can on
ly wear them if one of her
toes is chopped off says

the women's liber
ation movement – now that was
a real fairytale

THE VISITOR
(1952)

or vanitas and
memento mori or the
jolly roger there

are a host of names
for it – i once was the own
er of a skull when

i was studying
medicine but all you need
to do is to cross

your arms beneath your
own head so as to ensure
you remember it

PEARLS ROLLED ACROSS THE FLOOR
(1994)

*pearls rolled a
cross the floor cannonballs stack
ed as high as they*

*will go burnt rubber
upon the garden wall pe
arls rolled across*

*the floor concrete
pommelled to sane under
foot glass scratched by*

*diamonds pearls
rolled across the floor pe
arls before swine*

REST
(1994)

it is not collaps
ible with a blue-striped back
out of canvas there

is no seat made of
moulded foam rubber between
its arm-rests it is

made out of spruce wood
with knots in it bought at weh
renbergs furniture

store i rest my case
says the chair on which i've sat
for the past ten years

(HOUSE)
(1993)

my friend's daughter showed
me the paradox in her
own special way we

had built a model
of the house we used to spend
our holidays in

it stood on the ta
ble inside the house and looked
like the spitting im

age of it – one eve
ning the little girl upset
the house on the floor

SOS STARIFICATION OBJECT SERIES
(1974)

i am modelling
four small figures out of used
chewing gum and plac

ing them in a cer
tain way in the poem here –
the first one looks like

my deceased cat the
second like some buddha the
third reminds one of

a miniature mount
everest and the fourth most
ly looks like itself

20:50
(1987)

twenty fifty or
ten minutes to nine and what's
happening then? – i'm

watching a TV pro
gramme – in the middle of a
football interna

tional – so it can't
be that what then? – i give my
self plenty of time

i wait – twenty fif
ty all that happens is that
it's twenty fifty

PROJECTION ON SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE
(1985)

the unconscious is
being projected – that we
know but that does not

mean that all project
ions are unconscious this ap
plies both to the sym

bol of the swasti
ka in the picture that is
being referred to

and the poem that is
right on this very page with
its star of david

ST ADOLF DIAMOND RING
(1913)

i once gave my be
loved a diamond ring as
a present that looks

like one of my own
poems the stone is not all
that big but even

so it catches the
light exactly like that word
which causes the po

em to hang in it
self floating in its own cen
tre of gravity

HAYING
(1939)

we had our own hay
ing take place in our neighbour
rugård's fields of grass

last week and today
gigantic tractors have com
pressed the hay into

bales something which is
rather similar to what
happens with my own

language machines which
have compressed the words into
these bales of poems

CELLO CHICKEN
(1983)

the car bonnets that
have been used in making this
work of art are black

and white and since the
year happens to be eighty-
three they may be from

a toyota and
morris minor respectiv
ly in which case we

have a toyota
cello and morris chicken
or vice versa

FIELD HAND
(1985)

is god a cripple –
is god's left hand an arti
ficial one he once

in a while unbuck
les and lays aside on a
fallen tree-trunk out

in the field to rest
for a bit in the midst of
his continued la

bours with creation –
does god show that much soli
darity with man?

WAITING FOR THE LONG CAR
(1948)

the limousine from
new york the six-metre-long
automobile that

has been finished in
black with the black windows and
mahogany bar

the six-metre-long ca
dillac of fame is something
we're all waiting for

to drive us all the
way along fifth avenue
complete with escort

PAINTING
(1959)

malachite mala
cithe malachite malachite
malachite mala

chite paynes grey titan
ium white titanium
white black black black ti

tanium white black black ti
tanium white black black paynes grey
titanium white titan

ium white paynes grey white
black black black black black black black
malachite white white

UTOPIA — REALITY-I
(1971)

twenty-seven light-
emitting diodes next to
each other each of

which runs through the al
phabet which uninterrup
tedly spells out a

nything at all or
nothing at all or itself
twenty-seven light-

emitting diodes
now spelling their way to e
ternity's poem

THE TONES

KING NEPTUNE

is your head floating
on the kattegat poet
like a buoy with a

blinking light so ma
ny years after your death which
was not due to the mae

nads but simply to
old age and liquor can you
hear dexter gordon's

saxophone above
the waters' breeze of ashes
and cherry blossoms?

LOVE FOR SALE

did you sell love for
nine red roses poet or
for a verse with a

most doubtful caesu
ra did you prefer to ex
press yourself in your

poems than in that
poem that was growing in
side you did you sac

rifice your belov
ed to be able to reach
one floor higher up?

SATIN DOLL

are there women in
hades (at hotel styx) with
rimmel mascara

and breasts like a ship's
figurehead? – that you now know
because you are dead

while i just couldn't
care less because i will be
waiting for my wo

man for an eter
nity in heaven or in
the circles of hell

BODY AND SOUL

is it only the
body that dies or does the
soul rise up from its

opposite like cal
cium and roses? where does
it then find itself

in the meantime in
which tower of nothingness
on which shore among

the mussel shells of
the poem isn't life just
as large as death is?

I WANT TO BLOW NOW

even though my en
tire family is gone each
and everyone of

them I don't give a
hoot as I blow across an
empty wine-bottle

because death only
manages a stalemate
in the ultimate

game where just as ma
ny have been among the liv
ing as now are dead

I GUESS I'LL HANG MY TEARS OUT TO DRY

well then poet? – is
there anything in it? – are
your poems hanging

out to dry in pa
radise or is it only
here below that a

tear is shed over
their dirty underwear which
occasionally

is aired in the news
papers and in highly ob
scure anthologies?

BIG FAT BUTTERFLY

the dead awaken
in me like butterflies that
flutter off into

the dark still blinded
by light but free of all my
memories and fan

tasies and fi
nally liberated from
all my dreams about

them – perhaps it is
only now that they encount
er their final death?

SOUL SISTER

you took so much love
with you on that ultravi
olet day in sept

ember but without
my realising it i
got it back again

in some reflection
or you gave it back to me
in a far larger

gleam of infrared
that was far more incompre
hensible than death

CHEROKEE

or your head on a
stake poet maybe simply
on a totem pole

surrounded by buzz
ing bluebottles just as in
the period of

criticism but
now with that feather in my
cap that you are in

violably down
there on the bed of your po
ems' mighty ocean

JUST FRIENDS

there are creaks coming
from my mother's mahoga
ny sideboard and though

i of course know that
it isn't her soul that is
seeking me i lis

ten intensely as
if that were the case as if
it were possible

to wrest some sort of
portent or another form
of friendship from death

THREE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

and now it's going
to have a sock on the jaw –
at not one nor two

but three o'clock in
the morning death was socked on
the jaw forty years

ago by tete
montoliu niels henning ør
sted pedersen a

lex riel and dexter
gordon – death was given a
real sock on the jaw

WHERE ARE YOU?

does death play the sax
ophone? – that is one of the
types of question which

if formulated
the other way round is like
the title of a

crime novel: death plays
the tenor saxophone and
in this particu

lar case it fits in
to the bargain as the sax
ophonist is dead

IT'S YOU OR NO ONE

listen – that's the way
it is: it's you or no one
that is the way love

is and life as well
that not even time is ab
le to change because

that which has been can
not be changed one jot or tit
tle and because death

itself is so ut
terly dependent on life
as it is on love

ONCE I HAD A SECRET LOVE

it is hardly a
ny great secret that most of
today's young poets

are carrying on
a secret affair with death
which they visit at

cemeteries in
the dead of night or with which
they race against on

motorcycles in
order to demonstrate their
immortality

POLKADOTS AND MOONBEAMS

this album i de
dicate to you poet al
though and because you

are dead as a door
nail although and because there
are neither polka

dots nor moonbeams on
its kitchen-blue cover al
though and precisely

because there is no
other reason whatsoev
er for doing so

THE SHADOW OF YOUR SMILE

i visited the
poet's grave yesterday and
said lots of things to

him – got no reply
whatsoever apart from
the roses that are

still in flower no
apologies no expla
nations no forgive

ness no crocodile
tears not even the slightest
shadow of a smile

SUMMERTIME

we live with the dead
half of the time also when
we are asleep and

during the summer –
is it a waste of time or
an enrichment or

simply a conver
sation we have with ourselves
in order to fill

the complete void of
consciousness just like the di
alogues in phaido? TJEK!!

WAVE

i heard you up by
the sea yesterday inside
my head i heard you

like a long solo
that was entangled in the
rugosa bushes

bitter with salt and
iodine as if you on
ly existed in

side me and not out
there in the nowhereness of
the eternities

TENOR MADNESS

can you really? – can
you also hear me behind
the gales and gusts can

you hear my coughing
and throat-clearing my teeth's chat
tering in your fan

cy – can we actu
ally hear each other at
all or is it just

as it is while one
is alive where there is just
nothing to be heard

YOU HAVE CHANGED

did you really love
life so much and the world that
you had to return

in order to strike
the ruby glass that stands on
my writing desk if

for nothing else then
for the sake of the second –
did you really love

life so much poet
that you felt impelled to vi
olate all its laws?

DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES

the shadow of beau
ty falls between the roses
and the words like a

cool wine that is spilled
out on a hot summer's day
down over the po

et's own grave in some
way or another in the
final verse of the

rubaiyat *cor*
ny and cool as immortal
ity itself is

THERE'S NO GREATER LOVE

do the dead also
love each other (a true and
genuine necro

philia) as they
occasionally did when
they were alive or

are they held apart
in separate univers
es that are only

kept together by
words or as in this case by
a deep saxophone?

STICKY WICKET

since no person can
experience his or her
own death alive let

alone describe it
in any way everything
that has to do with

it ought to remain
unspoken and quite silent
and not these pathet

ic moods and feelings –
but that just happens to be
the way poets are

DARN THAT DREAM

just as the poem
seals the joints between language
and the world just as

the tree pulls the sky
down closer towards the earth
is it then music

al notes that possess
the art to reunite the
living and the dead

for one brief moment
to transcend this incompre
hensibility?

MONTMARTRE

i'm giving you the
fuckfinger poet you dead
pig the whole works in

fact because you posed
a lot more than you ever
composed because you

chose to make yourself
up instead of to get
yourself down (off your

pedestal) and fin
ally because you wore a
cloth cap – so fuck you

JELLY JELLY

or what about the
renaissance poet whose grave
faces north and is

full of silicon
and shards of glass whose poems
nobody reads al

though they're at the roy
al library which are no
longer contained in

any consciousness
any more what became of
him among the stars?

DIDN'T WE

didn't we use to
call you king of the poets
although you yourself

would rather have been
called king of the beggars or
king of the birds or

king of the castle –
didn't we even so give
you precisely the

title of the id
iot with the laurel wreath
didn't we do that?

SOPHISTICATED LADY

not even eury
dice had such a hatpin
as you queen of all

the poets one as
razor-sharp as a haiku
through velvet velour

and heart it is just
as useless now as your mir
ror is even emp

tier – but what a
look between you and the death
that lurks within me

RHYTHM-A-NING

i am sick and tired
of all these people covered
in white make-up that

populate vari
ous films dressed in white lounge suits
or in white dinner

jackets with a pink
carnation in their button
holes in my poems

the dead just appear
as themselves as dexter gor
don for example

SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE

did you steal from left
and right poet? – of course you
did even though it

was only bits and
pieces from the arsenals
and apple cores of

your colleagues did you
steal words and images? – of
course you did so there's

no need at all for
you to lie about it your
lies are true enough

WILLOW WEEP FOR ME

let's have done with all
of it let's have done with all
these tears and with all

these notes of music
my words to the dead right here
at the very root

of the willow tree
where the famous baroque po
et once used to sit

and masturbate while
he tried to exorcise both
his own sex and death

BROADWAY

once a long time a
go i stood with my belov
ed on broadway close

to miss saigon the
atre early in the morn
ing and saw the dust

shimmering in the
sun as if it could bear the
entire world i saw

the ashes of the
dead like a huge kodak co
lor commercial show

STAIRWAY TO THE STARS

it is as if the
stairway leads downwards and not
upwards to the stars

but downwards like a
decayed green cellar staircase
each time a dead per

son's buried down there
in its own centre of gra
vity as if god

does not exist up
in heaven but down at the
centre of the earth

I WAS DOING ALL RIGHT

i was listening to
'I was doing all right' when
the telephone rang

and there was a voice
that attempted to sell me
some shares – 'listen' i

said 'I don't want to
make money' and then placed the
receiver down on

the table and so
he was able to hear 'I
was doing all right'

YOU HAVE CHANGED

did you really love
life so much and the world that
you had to return

in order to strike
the ruby glass that stands on
my writing desk if

for nothing else then
for the sake of the second –
did you really love

life so much poet
that you felt impelled to vi
olate all its laws?

FOR REGULARS ONLY

this poem is for
regulars only people
who are fond of dex

ter gordon's music
of dead poets who find them
selves in precisely

the same place as he
does himself among the a
nemonies or in

the mirrors – every
body else is to stop their
reading instantly

SOCIETY RED

in death's republic
everyone is equal there
perfect democra

cy reigns the flag is
black with the white rose the num
ber is thirteen – all

of that is common
place my dear poet try and
come up with something

else that you can a
muse us with while you still have
some hair on your head

IT'S YOU OR NO ONE

listen – that's how it
is it's you or no one that
is the nature of

love and of life not
even time can alter that
in any way be

cause that which has been
cannot be altered one jot
or tittle and be

cause death itself is
deeply dependent on life
and reality

ASCENSION II EDITION

and now the time has
come it is time to take dex
ter gordon off the

stage and to bring john
coltrane into the poem –
so play dammit play

ascension the se
cond edition play so both
listener and read

er shit their pants play
so it's just like having your
bollocks torn off you

ASCENSION I EDITION

play nigger play for
the white man play ascension
the first edition

play for the white clown
so that his ears turn a bright
shade of red and his

toy saxophone boils
over with vinegar play
metro goldwyn may

er off the stage and
right out into the wings play
like mount zion

THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY GHOST

why does this number
sound so bloody awful
and the poem too?

why does it sound just
like pigs being slaughtered and
like boiling water?

why does it sound just
like an epileptic fit
complete with foaming?

because nobody's
able to take the holy
spirit in his mouth

COMPASSION

the snow of the dead
is heavier and deeper
than memory and

like it both of them
melt at the advent of spring
where other dreams blossom

some in winter a
conite and snowdrop and in
coltrane's music – is

that then what compassion
is a moment's liberation
from the dead?

LOVE

imagine to your
self now that you're sitting in
your kitchen a late

afternoon listen
ing to 'love' from the below
mentioned recording

imagine that – then
you will hear a puff – no not
a sigh but precise

ly a puff or rather
er you will hear a breath from
the realm of the dead

CONSEQUENCES

all alone in the
world with his saxophone – who
can it possibly

be except mr
coltrane photographed on the
back cover of the

little booklet that
accompanies the compact
disc first medita

tions where he is stand
ing in a white shirt surround
ed by microphones

SERENITY

it sounds like emer
alds being crushed in a mor
tar together with

crystal violet
and stars or like ringing eve
ning bells that are full

of blue tones it sounds
like loose change that is jangling
in your pocket or

like john coltrane's
saxophone it sounds even
cleaner than death does

SUN SHIP

we sailed round manhat
tan my beloved and i
we sailed on a sea

of sunlight up east
river and down the hudson
in a circle of

fire while we drank co
ca-cola and listened to
john coltrane with our

inner ear and we
were immortal for almost
one complete second

DEARLY BELOVED

did you kiss your moth
er-in-law at the moment
when she died? *what a*

clumsy poet – what
bad timing precisely when
time ran out in a

spiritual jet
lag or came to a halt in
the chess-clock of e

ternity – *what a*
prickhead of a poet men
tioning this at all

AMEN

all those that i have
loved or almost all of them
have disappeared now

through a hole in the
poem gone overnight
in a maelstrom of

words and ashes i
haven't any idea what's
become of them but

i believe in the
dead and am therefore what's known
as insane – amen

ATTAINING

to practise death or
to play or maybe to act
as if one was dead

is just as (i will
refraining from using the word
meaningless) but just

as distinctly odd
as writing poems to some
one who's dead that i'm

doing so despite
this is to keep the possi
bility open

ASCENT

the baker bakes that's
the way it is – the butcher
slaughters *that's a fact*

the poet writes po
ems without a doubt the mas
turbator mastur

bates – filthy swine – the
dreamer dreams the sleeper sleeps
the living person

lives the dead person
doesn't die – that's the whole dif
ference isn't it?

LIVING SPACE

mud and mire coltrane
for the advanced and for the
larks perhaps i ought

to start paying clos
er attention to start
listening better

space outside is al
most alive with signs of spring
everything's humming

with life in some way
or other it's a little
bit hard on the dead

UNTITLED

death is only a
word until it supervenes
as anything but

a word and then it
doesn't have a single word
to say – not a sing

le letter not ev
en those of gold bronze that are
to be found on grave

stones it's almost the
diametric opposite
when it comes to life

DUSK-DAWN

from time to time most
things take place in the twilight
and half-light any

way very rarely
at high noon or beneath the
splintered quartz of night –

when did you last man
age to hit existence right
on the head bang on

target poet – when
you loved yourself or when you
died by your own hand?

UNTITLED

at a distance and
without my glasses i thought
i could make out: black

petals which seemed to
me to be a both beauti
ful and mysteri

ous title for a
john coltrane album but since
i am not quite sure

i prefer to re
member the cover as the
one that's untitled

THE LAST BLUES

i've no idea
if yellow or black bamboo
is used for the reed

of a saxophone
and i'm not the slightest bit in
terested either

but i am on the
other hand that coltrane played
his last blues sever

al years before the
bamboo plants all flowered in
a collective death

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

i admit that some
times it can be difficult
to listen – hard as

a constipated
stomach to follow the paths
of the soprano

saxophone and then
there are those moments when the
note breaks through from the

other side when col
trane lets go of the dead man's
mother of pearl keys

PURSUANCE PART 4-PSALM

on certain Sundays
i sing at the top of my
voice and with might and

main karaoke
to hymns that i love on oth
er special days i

content myself with
miming the words in silence
in a race with death

as a kind of play
back of verses and melo
dies i hardly know

RESOLUTION

the decision has
been taken that's the end of
that i'm shutting

down the death quartet
no matter how beautiful
ly it's been played (like

sea anemones
on the sea-bed or the south
ern cross) so there's al

so time to say thank
you and goodbye i am pull
ing the plug out now

APPLE JUMP

but who falls down in
to language again like a
ripe apple? – dexter

gordon does full of
notes that are to be controlled
from the stage of the

poem and if there's
anything that's absolute
ly dead certain it's

that one must refrain
from throwing words if one lives
in a glass poem

I'LL REMEMBER APRIL

of course i will re
member precisely the month
when the dead poets

show themselves in the
mirrors with branches of for
sythia in their

hair and a raised in
dex finger: do not ever
forget us for we're

the ones who procure
you your food you self-impor
tant little asshole

SKYLARK

what sort of larks are
rising into this air hole
in between the notes –

do they come from the
dream and where are they flying
off to on the glass

wings of the morning –
are they rising to meet with
death? – what sort of ques

tions are there that are
more disquieting than the
answers to them are?

A LA MODAL

it can be as simple as that – a scale and three chords and it's in the

bag life can also behave as simply as that on certain days when

death is to be found on the opposite side of the great belt bridge a

day that lasts eternally even though it only takes ten minutes

ALL CLEAN

did everything turn out so resolved did the posthumous reputation

fall into place – did you manage to straighten the lies into truths

and vice versa did you get to touch up the overall picture

poet so that you could lie down and fall asleep in your own poem?

SUNSET

or did you write your
own obituary in
various differ

ent versions so as
to be on the safe side the
side of the page where

the poems are – look
i am standing now on one
leg now the other

look i am walking
off now into the sunset
where every word counts

ON THE TRAIL

we move on in our
old tracks almost blindly each
day while we observe

the wellies' brand-mark
in footprints in the mud – we
diverge just a bit

woo-oosh – the meed of
life the pheasant all blood and
feathers scattered to

the four winds it's oth
erwise sounded like a sax
ophone all winter

ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE

a great deal can be
said about you my beloved
and i've both said

and written a great
deal among other things that
your arms are sticks in

water hollow with
twigs and smoke and that your right
knee resembles the

masada rock but
i've never asserted that
you are a poem

DARN THAT DREAM

just as the poem
seals the joints between language
and the world just as

the tree pulls the sky
down closer towards the earth
is it then music

al notes that possess
the art to reunite the
living and the dead

for one brief moment
to transcend this incompre
hensibility?

STRAIGHT NO CHASER

thank you – on the rocks
and without any miti
gating circumstan

ces on an empty
stomach and fasting heart that's
what poetry's like

i mean: a piece of
poetry that pleases eve
rybody isn't

up to much it's a
bit like jazz music without
tenor saxophones

THE THEME

that's how long a time
it takes – the instant – or so
short a time if you

like the number a
mong all the other numbers
so long the theme is

precisely sixteen
seconds is the duration
neither more nor less

check it for yourself
with your stopwatch if you don't
believe my poem

JUST FRIENDS

there are creaks coming
from my mother's mahoga
ny sideboard and though

i of course know that
it isn't her soul that is
seeking me i lis

ten intensely as
if that were the case as if
it were possible

to wrest some sort of
portent or another form
of friendship from death

MISTY

from time to time it
sounds a bit like rimbaud's mag
nificent youthful

and almost prophet
ic nonsense as if the mu
sic was being played

directly from the
score directly from illu
minations where

an ermine is dis
appearing among the tones
and words in the mist

RED CROSS

over in stingsted
wood those trees that are to be
felled are marked with a

red cross in the fair
ytales they are marked with a
white cross and in the

poems they are marked
with a black line (although it
is done in the margins

nowadays) just as
in the old days across the
forehead of the lie

SO WHAT

i have also played
the saxophone once in nør
rebrogade street

no less – right up on
the third floor under the at
tic where only god

could hear the prayer
of the notes even though they
made a helluva

noise and i did so
out of vanity pure and
simple – and so what?

IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD

when one has reached the
age when one can neither shit
nor piss reached the age

when one can neither
live nor die it happens now
and then that one can

start surreptitious
ly to listen to 'in a
sentimental mood'

even though dexter
gordon god help me plays it
on the soprano

STABLE MATES

did you shit on your
colleagues poet and they on
you or both one and

the other? – did the
horse droppings fly through the air
before they landed

in diverse collec
tions of poetry where they
even so fertil

ised the roses in
spite of only being made
of hand-made paper?

HALF NELSON

i was never as
close to death (my own it should
be noted) as when

i executed
a double saltomorta
le with reverse screw

down a staircase in
valkendorfsgade street or
perhaps never as

far away from it
than in this leglock than in
this deadlock of death

I CAN'T GET STARTED

how did it all start –
how was it i got started?
i simply don't know

and what's even worse
i haven't the faintest how
it is all going

to end how i am
to tie the bow of vani
ty and slip out of

the poems before
death catches me in the mid
dle of a sentence

ANOTHER HAIRDO

i have met poets
with a crew cut and cropped hair
others done prussian

style and some with a
prince valiant hairdo just
one with grey hair be

fore his time and two
as bald as a coot i have
met poets with hair

in all of life's col
ours and those with death's final
watercomb treatment

DEXTER DIGS IN

tombeau de gor
don – you're the one who is dead
and not your saxo

phone – there we have the
answer to all those who keep
on confusing life

and art those who be
lieve that that pain is one
and the same that's your

triumph and victo
ry in the midst of death's black
and violet blues

NURSERY BLUES

babies that's what poets
are each and every one
(speak for yourself – that's

just what i'm doing)
they either want to perform
the whole time or they

simply refuse to
do so (speak for yourself) want
to be awarded

all the prizes and
gold medals on offer – poets
are just babies

LULLABY FOR A MONSTER

it is the poet
par excellence the poet
as such the poet

and as such we are
dealing with drunk as he (or
she) is with neuro

ses traumas and fabricated
stories sleep sweetly
now you little

monster in your dreams
of your own magnificence
until you wake up

GREEN DOLPHIN STREET

dexter gordon re
alised the simple fact that
no work of art can

contain life – he there
fore played for dear life in
order to over

come the strange para
dox that his entire life
consisted of jazz

but that jazz is not
life as soon as it is played
like ‘green dolphin street’

BORN TO BE BLUE

born to be dead
who realises that fact
better than the po

ets even though they
put a bold face on it and
pay homage to life

or write in praise of
the frozen emeralds of
love who knows that bit

ter after-taste of
aluminium better
even when lying?

TANYA

who is tanya
is it the name of a wo
man in a secret

agent film or a
lion at givskud zoo a
tributary per

haps? why all these stu
pid questions when i happen
to know perfectly

well than tanya
is the final track on a
steeplechase record?

THE APARTMENT

the apartment in
south gate tower on se
venth avenue

in new york is close
to being the nearest i
have ever come to

the feeling of be
ing at home even though it
was a hotel a

partment and i on
ly happened to live there for
a single fortnight

WEE-DOT

did your head turn in
to a tiny dot poet
into fly shit on

the paper or in
to a full stop in your last
poem that you va

nished behind in a
whirl of words and meaningless
ness did you console

yourself with the fact
that the higher you rose the
less you would appear.

OLD FOLKS

i am now cate
gorised as old even though
i still listen to

jazz (and an old age
pensioner doesn't listen
to dexter gordon)

just listen here grand
pa – haven't you kept up with
the times at all who

the bloody hell is
this dexter gordon *and who*
the fuck are you?

STROLLIN’

were you strolling a
round the free port area
at night among dah

lerup’s warehouses
and the custom house in whose
slate roof the north star

was splintered in or
der to find apparitions
or death or yourself?

there’s no need to be
distressed about that all po
ets have done just that

CANDLELIGHT LADY

my wife loves candles
common or garden white ste
arin candles (al

so the coloured ones)
lights that float on the water
japanese stone lamps

and lights that have been
lit to burn for the dead she
loves candles to such

an extent that this
poem has been written in
the light cast by them

ANTABUS

i have never been
on antabus because i have
have never tried to

drink myself away
from my angst but have kept a
tight hold on it part

ly because it hap
pens to be a human con
dition and partly

to escape having
to write far too many po
etic hangovers

CHEESE CAKE

it's just as diffi
cult every time even though
it's the same grip the

same ingredients
and almost exactly the
same words that are used

or the same routine
it is just like starting all
over from the be

ginning each time one
is going to prepare one's
own homemade cheese cake

MANHA DI CARNEVAL

dear dexter gordon
i cannot remember how
many quartets you

have played in i have
n't the faintest idea
if you performed in

an orlon sweater
on the manha di carne
val but i know that

your saxophone sounds
just like the plum trees that are
in blossom right now

SECOND BALCONY JUMP

i know poets (most
ly and partially from my
self) and i am real

ly fond of them e
ven though they are mad as
hatters and lack a

ny kind of a sense
of reality (whatev
er that is) i am

fond of them even
when they get to perform their
final somersault

I'LL REMEMBER APRIL

of course i will re
member precisely the month
when the dead poets

show themselves in the
mirrors with branches of for
sythia in their

hair and a raised in
dex finger: do not ever
forget us for we're

the ones who procure
you your food you self-impor
tant little asshole

THE THRILL IS GONE

like a long and tat
tered saxophone solo in
broad daylight out of

a window that is
wide open or at night so
that the ruby glass

es start to rattle
as if the dead are toasting
with them like a long

saxophone solo
without a saxophone it's
sounded up to now

CRY ME A RIVER

*cry cry cry cry cry
me a river cry cry cry
me a river cry*

*cry cry cry me a
river cry cry cry me a
robber cry cry cry*

*cry me a river
recorded live at montmar
tre jazzhus copen*

*hagen november
nineteen sixty two
so much for sorrow*

SUITE

and from here there is
no way back (and there never
is in reali

ty) because life it
self consists in taking leave
and forgiving (just

as when one prays for
forgiveness or when one
forgives others their

trespasses) so as to
reach home to the place where one
really always is

THE WORDS

ODE TO THE AIR

the air is sharp with
brass scorches the lungs like salt
petre i take a

breath breathe in breathe out
fourteen times a minute live
by breathing in the

air on this candle
mas and the rest of all my
days until my breath

ing ultimately
gives out like the air in a
sunken submarine

ODE TO THE ARTICHOKE

whose heart i have nev
er consumed neither raw nor
marinated but

have only seen done
in oils in a canvas by
de chirico a

mong shadows and night
expresses that are driven
by the libido

ah heart of jesus
sweet and violet as a
full-ripe artichoke

ODE TO HAPPINESS

it makes me extreme
ly happy to open a
tin of sardines (les

célèbres d'henri
VI of course) por
tuguese with phosphor

us like making a
hole in time or an egg or
in a poem and

fishing out the first
words that have the smell of 'the
olive' and of 'oil'

ODE TO AMERICA

*once upon a
time in america
(before the fall*

*of the twin towers)
I fucked my wife in
the middle of new*

york as in a film
that i had not yet seen and
that i therefore was

unable to know
how it ended as is pre
cisely the case now

ODE TO THE ATOM

turn to page one hun
dred and thirty three in the
second volume of the en

cyclopedia –
there you get a glimpse into
god's own workshop in

the bottom right-hand
corner the hermet
ic formula and

periodic sys
tem of the atoms: la rhé
torique des dieux

ODE TO A CHESTNUT ON THE GROUND

come along with me
down hedebovej to the
old chestnut tree that

is standing in full
armour and livery with
morning stars and hand

grenades at the read
y let us become as child
ren once more and form

animals from the
fallen chestnuts with long thin
legs made of matchsticks

ODE TO THE ONION

i take an onion
from the shopping bag's plastic
and cut it in half

strictly speaking its
saturnian rings around
the middle of ev

everything could just as
well be the centre of the
universe as of

fear around its nu
cleus of nothing around
its fear of itself

ODE TO CLARITY

the sun is clear it's
as clear as daylight and light
in geometry

and a red aalborg
is clear and conversely as
clear as mud night can

be scintillating
ly clear and the darkness has
its bright moments the

one and only thing
that is not at all clear is
clarity itself

ODE TO COPPER

when is copper love
liest? – is it as kettles
and saucepans or as

the stock exchange dra
gon spire perhaps as large etch
ings strewn over with

salt or as bracelets
that blacken during solar
eclipses or is

it perhaps when they're
to be found in dutch natu
re morte paintings?

ODE TO THE HAPPY DAY

it could be today
when my blood pressure is nor
mal and my cat looks

at me with gooseber
ry eyes my wife with aqua
marine and death on

ly from the pages
in the newspaper where e
verything's as usu

al a perfectly
normal day a brief instant
of eternity

ODE TO ENERGY

it's eight o'clock in
the morning i carry a
cup of ceylon

garden tea with me
up the stairs and i place it
on the window ledge

as far as i re
call from distant physics les
sons i have now col

lected some form or
other of energy (here
with fictionalised)

ODE TO ENVY

envy is neither green
nor yellow it is complete
ly colourless but

it tastes as bitter
as aluminium and
it smells of congealed

blood it can also
be heard in the way the voice
gives a small dry crack

it resides in the
heart as a ten-armed octo
pus and really hurts

ODE TO HOPE

the future will un
deniably come (just read
on for a bit word

by word) whereas fate
keeps you waiting hour after
hour not to mention

that which is to come
at some point or other which
is entirely in

god's hands – so there's on
ly hope that one's able to
pin one's poem on

ODE TO FERTILITY

for every duck that is
shot two more go on flying
and when two heifers

are slaughtered three more
are secretly born if three
pigs are given a

blue stamp four more grunt
at the sky and if four hu
man beings kill each

other five more re
arise – what a marvellous
abundance of life

ODE TO FLOWERING

i own a money
tree or paradise tree or
whatever the name

of it is (crasu
la) that has only flowered
once in forty years

but what a show like
the milky way on a star
ry winter evening

since then i've treated
it too considerately
if the truth be told

ODE TO THE BLUE FLOWER

every blue flower
is in a way the blue flo
wer of poetry

no matter whether
it grows in kalundborg or
over in stingsted

woods no matter whe
ther it stands in an ode or
in a sonnet if

you get what i am
(not) saying and (not) writ
ing between the lines

ODE TO FIRE

you could help me make
this poem a bit more au
thentic by tearing

out this particu
lar page and setting light to
it with a lighter

in the bottom left
hand corner while you are read
ing it to yourself

till the flames have trans
formed it into the ashes
of resurrection

ODE TO THE THREADS

i'm surfing out a
cross the internet's frozen
trelliswork of stars

connect up my thought
processes and my nervous
system to this me

ga-sized spider's web
made up of invisible
threads wallow in giga

bytes and broadbands and
do a search for the following
ing address: www.god.com

ODE TO THE ORDINARY HUMAN BEING

we're all ordina
ry human beings despite
our various neu

roses and differ
ent hair and skin colours in
spite of the differ

ence itself – it's so
simple – to our own crea
tor and to death (which

are one and the same
thing) we are all ordina
ry human beings

ODE TO RESTLESSNESS

when i was young i
used to say to myself: why
are you running a

round in the wood here
go home – and when i was at
home why are you sit

ting staring here go
off to the woods – nowadays
i say to myself:

when i'm at home i'm
at home and when i'm in the
woods i'm in the woods

ODE TO WINTER

green winter green bar
ley green turnips green rape the
winter has turned green

and white nowadays
like the nigerian flag
down over the pe

tro chemical iron
age of the fields gleaming with
rain and oblivi

on the winter has
turned green with salts phospor
us and nitrogen

ODE TO THE LABORATORY ASSISTANTS

who right at this mo
ment are in the process of
checking my blood (san

gre brava or dra
gon) its combinations of
letters and numbers

its mysterious
colour of madder lake and
altar wine – let us

hope that the result
is influenced by this a
pocryphal poem

ODE TO LENINGRAD

the place that is no
longer there but that now on
ly has an exist

ence in history
books and in the symphonies
or in poems that

start to give way word
by word as memory it
self and the flames in

the human heart per
haps it is only the name
that has disappeared

ODE TO THE BOOK (I)

which has not been writ
ten yet and in which this po
em which is not com

pletely finished yet
will appear on page something
or other under

the above title
ode to the book (I) which once
it has been written

will end up there where
life begins or there where life
closes where life opens

ODE TO THE BOOK (II)

conversely (i.e.
the opposite pages – the
ones printed in bask

erville) or behind
the pages' mirrored writing
the books continue

there where life comes to
an end the poems stand verse
on verse like an e

pitaph to time and
themselves or the poems that
never got written

ODE TO RAIN

is it raining in
brussels my beloved? – i
haven't a china

man's chance of knowing
if it is but you know how
fond i am of rainy

weather send me an
e-mail and tell me if it's
raining in brussels

all you need to write
is: drizzle light rain downpour –
that's more than enough

ODE TO FIREWOOD

all of scarlatti's
sonatas transformed into
stacks of firewood out

side the kitchen win
dow the skeletons of dreams
so to speak the en

tire apple planta
tion utilised as fuel
on the rubbish dump

of miracles from
where new poems have alread
y been written down

ODE TO BEING OUT OF SORTS

take a glass of pick
led herring out of the fridge
put it back again

don't take a glass of
pickled herring out of the
fridge don't put it back

again take a glass of
pickled herring out of the
fridge or don't do so

put the glass of pick
led herring back into the
fridge or don't do so

ODE TO THE SEA

the sea is – there is
nothing that is more so than
the sea it is simp

ly there – heavy with
being and its own necess
ity more utter

ly different from
humanity than any
thing else only god

himself beyond words
the sea is that song no bod
y will ever sing

ODE TO BIRD-WATCHING

i know both the a
mateur (with his pair of field
glasses and his hard

boiled eggs) and the pro
fessional birdwatcher be
hind his camouflage

net and his tele
photo lenses and i my
self watch the birds ev

ery day but the great
est aficionado is
still my female cat

ODE TO THE RIGHT TO MOCK (IMPRIMATUR)

fuck i say fuck (censored) and his beard as well fuck
(censored) give him a

turbanful of shit
burn the (censored) flag and the
embassy to the

ground fuck (censored) and
its utterly sick legis
lation fuck i say

fuck the right to mock
every other person in
(censored) x's name

ODE TO NIGHT

at night i sleep for
the most part – it's as simple
as that – or perhaps

i dream that i am
awake or that i am a
sleep and am dreaming

that i am dreaming
it is extremely simple
when daytime is o

ver i lie down so
that i can sleep in nighttime's
nightly privilege

ODE TO NUMBERS

one two three and
counting the numbers kneaded
into each other

one two three and
counting kneaded into let
ters at the bottom

and colours *red blue*
orange and counting knead
ed into the ar

cana of the e
lements *one two three through*
four and counting

ODE TO HARVEST

i cut an h and
an a out of a piece of
brown glitter paper

and after that a
black r and a correspond
ing v from the back

page of the day's news
paper i round off by draw
ing a bright yellow

e and s and t
with a speedmarker and voi
là ode to harvest

ODE TO THE BIRD SOFRÉ

or the phoenix that
once rose up out of the brass
buttons of my un

iform out of a
secret fire and ashes as
all hearts do that burn

in the furnace of
night and in actual fact all
the other birds each

of its own kind e
ven those that have been folded
from tissue paper

ODE TO THE HUMAN COUPLE

yes it is us two
who are on my beloved
in this ode it is

us two standing there
in the turquoise coloured pas
se partout it is

us who are looking
at each other in kodak
color lighting it

is us enjoying
our fifteen minutes of e
ternity and fame

ODE TO THE PAST

whatever became
of it locked up in photo
graphs and museums

or behind the news
paper's prison-bars of let
ters and images

pale with purgato
ry – the past only exists
here and now suspend

ed in the blood and
as great losses of memo
ry within the mind

ODE TO POVERTY

when i see how the
multinational compa
nies wheel and deal in

discriminately
with human destinies how
they exploit nature

to their own advan
tage how they make use of their
vast wealth to increase

it yet further that
is when i start to pay hom
age to poverty

ODE TO POETRY WRITING

if i'm not writing
poetry i'm playing chess
and if i'm not play

ing chess i'm watching
handball on television
and if i'm not watch

ing handball on te
levision i pretend i'm
listening to my wife

and if i'm not listen
ing to my wife then i am
writing poetry

ODE TO THE FOLK POETS

halfway through my life
i found myself in a dark
social securi

ty office astray
with not a penny to my
name the only thing

i owned was my hair
a pair of spanish boots and
a book of poems

from all the world's peo
ples which i then read aloud
for my caseworker

ODE TO SPRING

einleitung – largo
vivace rezitativ
chor snowdrop ari

e rezitativ e
ranthis terzett und chor re
zitativ crocus

daffodil *freuden*
lied – can you hear the spring e
ven though it is more

than two hundred years
old and it took place far a
way in vienna?

ODE TO A CLOCK IN THE NIGHT

i don't know what the
time is here in the darkness
because the clock is

not switched on i for
got to do so and therefore
find myself in a

temporary time
lessness like an astronaut
floating between heav

en and earth between
life and death in a moment's
brief eternity

ODE TO RIO DA JANEIRO

hello – have you been
to rio de janeiro? –
yes i was last year

good – describe the ci
ty in four words which you think
characterise it:

the sugar top the
jesus figure copa ca
bana cockroaches –

thank you for parti
cipating have a good Sunday
all the best – goodbye

ODE TO SIMPLICITY

how difficult is
it then? – it has only ta
ken forty years so

and so many bro
ken hearts indicated by
just as many red

admiral butter
flies two and a half weddings
and thirteen funer

als to produce this
the very simplest of odes
it is that simple

ODE TO LONELINESS

my mobile tele
phone is a siemens i have
switched it on now just

phone me my belov
ed say that you love me *I*
need it – send me an

sms please leave
a message on the ansa
phone tell me that you

you simply cannot
do without me or say what
ever you feel like

ODE TO THE THIRD DAY

and then god said: let
the earth put forth green shoots and
it came to pass and

god then mixed himself
a whacking great portion of
waldorf salad with the

all the trimmings the
whole caboodle lots of cel
ery and of whipped

cream the first portion
in the world and god tasted
it and it was good

ODE TO TIME

what is a now? – is
it now or is it now is
it a moment or

is it an eter
nity? – does it have the size
of a keyhole or

that of a bloodshot
eyeball does it last as long
as a life or on

ly the time of a
prelude by robert de vi
sée when is it now?

ODE TO THE EARTH

i walk out across
heartland this early morning
it is cold i give

a molehill a heart
y kick – ow dammit – i move
all the way from point

a to point b and
back again which as is com
mon knowledge is the

same length i walk out
across heartland and confirm
the dust can bear me

ODE TO THE TOMATO

the best thing i know
is a hard-boiled egg salt pep
per rye bread and a

fresh tomato con
sumed in nature for exam
ple on stengade

strand where the beech casts
its shadows over the heart
and langeland draws

its long stroke no there's
nothing as danish as a
spanish tomato

ODE TO THE SEA-STORM

what in the world is
a sea-storm? – i mean a storm
is a storm and does

not only rage over
a sea – consequently ode
to the storm which does

all of us a power
of good from time to time when
it clears things up in

all our ancient crap
when it drowns out all of our
rubbish and nonsense

ODE TO THE LOUNGE SUIT

correct – i chose the
dark lightweight lounge suit of i
talian silk that time

at the funeral
and bingo death seemed to re
cognise me alright

because he himself
was walking around in a
double-breasted gior

gio armani lounge
suit and wearing a light-blue
tie that matched it too

ODE TO SILENCE

quiet please
ruhe bitte can we have
some silence belt up

can we have just a
bleeding minute's silence god
dammit just so that

it will be possi
ble to hear god coughing shut
your arsehole will you

while the first snow is
falling like the feathers from
a hen that's been plucked

ODE TO MELANCHOLY

strangely enough the
cherry tree has become the
symbol for melan

choly in my po
etry – this could have to do
with the fact there are

so few remaining
cherry plantations in den
mark or conversely

that misery oc
curs relatively rarely
in my poetry

ODE TO VALPARAISO

it is just as strange
to write poems about a
city where one has

never set one's foot
but that's the way it is with
writing poetry

it invents most of
it and lets imagina
tion rule over the

rest – so why not send
a greeting to valparai
so's orange-blue flag

ODE TO CESAR VELLEJO

my apologies
my name is johnsen i can't
help it it's not my

fault my apolo
gies that it is not ali
baba (that would have

opened other doors
in a trice) or césar vel
lejo for in that

case this poem
would have been quite different
my apologies

ODE TO SUMMER

summer music the
summer's scent of carbon four
teen summer's white wine

the summer's ice cubes
summer trio for flute vi
olincello and

guitar the summer's
dwarf elder among the dark
pine trees where the po

em comes to a halt
the words come to an end and
the summer begins

ODE TO LIFE

it is not possi
ble to think a single in
dividual and

therefore impossi
ble to think oneself or one's
beloved as a

nything else than con
cepts just as thoughts about life
are not anything

else than thoughts while life
continues in each indi
vidual person

ODE TO WINE

for the past thirty
years i have drunk a bottle
of wine a day red

white or green you name
it maaaaan if you add that up
that makes approxi

mately twelve thousand
bottles give or take a few
so it is hardly

surprising that
one finds it necessary
to piss the whole time

ODE TO OLIVE OIL

i open the fridge
it is cold outside cold in
side and cold in the

heart today (the day
that dear selma is going
to be buried) i

take out the bottle
of cold-pressed olive oil and
empty it over

the paper i pour
oil onto the words there i
anoint the poem

ODE TO BARBED WIRE

pink moon caught in barbed
wire over in the lange
sø woods along the

top of the fencing
on which i have torn my skin
on innumera

ble occasions when
i wanted to get into
the game shelter now

i cut the moon free
with a bolt cutter so it
can shine full again

ODE TO SAND

sand is like the se
quence of numbers and the po
em: one can always

add another grain
of sand a number a word
in an infinite

series when is one
then dealing with a pile an
amount a poem? –

we simply do not
know but we close our eyes and
make a decision

ODE TO SMELL

anton laurits fre
derik larsen i can still
remember your smell

half a century
later hardly what you looked
like or your taste nor

am i able to
hear you any more or feel
the alabaster

of the top of your
head but you still smell just like
a slice of spelt bread

ODE TO THE NAKED TRUTH

i can hear my wife
in the shower and i
ease the door ajar

so i am able
to see her naked susan
na in the bath or

artemis who's watched
on the sly by some peeping
tom – ugh how disgust

ing how did it all end? –
i'll either be turned into
a stag or get stoned

ODE TO THE COAST'S CACTUS

i drive down to the
north coast with a cactus i
have been taking care

of for many years
there i place it decora
tively on an up

turned yawl where it now
stands and fits into the po
em *it is time to*

say goodbye i hope
that it will get on all right
in these foreign parts

ODE TO SOCKS

can one put one's trust
in one's socks? – i doubt it they
will either run a

ladder or will dis
play holes that are bigger than
craters on the moon

finally the left
one will vanish in the wash
ing machine and the

right one in the spin
dryer – no socks are complete
ly untrustworthy

ODE TO THE WATERFALL

up at the shopping
centre in søndersø a
painting is on dis

play of a water
fall that by some optical
illusion looks real

(as if it is fall
ing) if you hurry you can
manage to acquire

this particular
painting for the neat sum of
five hundred kroner

ODE TO THE ANDES MOUNTAINS

in raunkjær's diction
ary volume two column
twelve hundred and fif

ty there's a photo
of the andes mountains – with
a speed marker i

colour the sky green
the summit snow pink the
ridges bright red and

blue under the new
picture i write: homage to
the cordilleras

ODE TO THE SKULL

whose skull – it is yours
or yorick's or one that is
from an anatom

ical institute? –
i knock on my own with a
bony hand – hello

is there anyone
at home? – behave like a true
skull like the one

on a jolly ro
ger or a bottle of tecar
bontetrachloride

ODE TO CRITICISM (II)

how i have cursed cri
ticism and its arro
gant patent leather

shoes when it has called
my work a writing desk drawer
with a loudspeaker

conversely though – how
is poetry to avoid
starting to self-os

cillate and choking
without this hard necessa
ry criticism?

ODE TO THE SOUTHERN CROSS

i imagine that
i have seen the southern cross
with my own eyes from

malecón on cu
ba above the seahorse heads
of the clouds and why

not one imagines
so many things to oneself –
indeed what is ul

timately and pushed
to its logical conclu
sion not imagining?

ODE TO THE UNSETTLED DAY

the sun shines today
then it rains then the sun shines
all over again

then all sorts of o
ther things happen then nothing
happens then all sorts

of other things hap
pen again then the sun shines
then it rains then the

sun shines all over
again – can it be put a
ny clearer than that?

ODE TO THE DIEGO OF THE NIGHT

one of the poets
of perdition perhaps con
signed to obliv

on where we all end
up beneath bittersweet night
shadow and snowdrops

one fine day among
the letters that more resem
ble graffiti than

they do a collec
tion of poems more an e
pitaph than gold bronze

ODE TO EROSION

the undertaker
recommends the urn that has
been made of a ma

terial which e
rodes extremely slowly so
that the ashes will

successively be
come one with the surrounding
soil just as the words

will also ulti
mately grow completely in
comprehensible

ODE TO THE SEA SPACE

if i write the sea
space in this poem and i'm
doing that now 'the

sea space' then at the
same time i promise to pay
a million euro

and a crate of ex
port beer to anyone who
can change as much as

a single letter
of 'the sea space' i have writ
ten in this poem

ODE TO THE STARS

a one-pointed star
is nonsense the mercedes
star has three points of

nickel that of na
to has four the five-pointed
pentagram on the

stars and stripes the star
of david and the seven-
pointed maersk star the

emerald of the
pleiades can one imagine
a two-pointed star?

ODE TO THE THE PHARMACY

in former times phar
macies used to have a smell
of salts phosphorus

and flowers of sul
phur something metaphysi
cal something with john

keats' letters now the
pharmacy is a place where
you fetch pills that have

ominous-sounding
names for illnesses that are
not just imagined

ODE TO THE COAST'S FLOWERS

let a thousand ro
ses blossom – you say – down by
the coast – i answer –

behind the dikes down
by the coast – you continue
in the vast fields of

nurseries i in
sist on saying – or rosa
rugosa – you sup

plement – then a thou
sand roses must wither i
conclude the poem

ODE TO THE SEAGULL

long before the time
of bird influenza i
sold my grandparents'

royal copenhagen
seagull service at the law
yers' auctions – they were

beautiful there hov
ering on their blue porce
lain above the three

waves on the reverse
side nailed to memory's cen
tre of gravity

ODE TO THE LIVER

i hardly dare write
this ode to my own liver
it is doing fine

inside me in its
membranes that are gleaming and
smooth like the blade of

a sword when treated
with oil can it take another
couple of glass

es before i tell
it one day it itself will
become fried liver?

ODE TO THE LIZARD

very few people
ever get to see a lizard's
zigzag lightning

across the ground before
it's gone that fragile
life that is greater

and more beautiful
than death itself perhaps they
only found the cast-off

stump of its tail as
the only evidence of
the presence of fear

ODE TO A NIGHTTIME WASHERWOMAN

who is it washes
clothes in the morning? – the large
laundries do just that

who washes during
the day: cloths and bed-linen?
my wife does just that

who washes in the
evening – their dirty under
wear? I do just that

who washes clothes
at nighttime? – only a woman
in a poem

ODE TO THE MOON

on a piece of hard
board i draw a circle with
a radius of

five centimetres –
that i colour ebony
black with acrylic

paint then cadmium
orange after which i paint
it lemon yellow

finally i cover
the circle with white that
shade known as pierrot

ODE TO THE SEA-MOON

i now have recourse
to my watercolours (the
best quality from

windsor and newton)
the moon above the sea de
serves them and the most

expensive water
colour paper imported
from france but when it

comes to the crunch i
glaze the moon completely blue
onto the sea's blue

ODE TO THE SEA-RAIN

it's raining over
fogsand it's raining over
kattogat it's rain

ing over the sea
it's raining as in certain
passages of bar

tok's piano con
certos it's raining behind
the mirrors and in

the poem it's raining
on the sea – how delightful
to bathe in the rain

ODE TO HANDS

with my right hand i
unzip my jeans and pull out
my male member with

my left hand (the one
with the simian line and
the high lunar mount)

i then shift my one
eyed monster from my left hand
into my right and...

take it easy now –
really easy i'm just go
ing to have a pee

ODE TO DON JORGE MANRIQUE

i'm going around
with a scrap of paper in
my pocket that says:

coplas por la muer
te de su padre – it's a
memorandum to

remind me that i
am to borrow jorge man
rique's poem col

lection from the li
brary read it and write an
ode to the poet

ODE TO THE HARE

one hare concealed it
self in the christmas roses
to the south a se

cond in a patch of
clover to the east a third
right up against the

house but the most cun
ning hare hid itself from the
fox in absolute

ly nothing outside
our windows hid itself in
what was wide open

ODE TO THE SMELL OF FIREWOOD SMOKE

firewood smoke swirls up
in the memory sharper
than grated wasa

bi and it fills out
the sinuses resulting
in a final sneeze –

no forty years or
fifty have passed – somewhere or
other everything

is the same as be
fore is itself just like the smell
of firewood smoke

ODE TO THE POTATO

I am a lucky
potato the man says in
the commercial spot –

what is a lucky pota
to? – one that doesn't get eat
en? hardly it ends

up going rotten
one that *is* eaten? hardly
that's what happens to

most potatoes and
what's lucky about ending
up as the squitters?

ODE TO MY FEET

'forwards' – i say to
my feet what on earth am i
to say to my feet

if i don't say that
to them? – 'forwards' i repeat
all the way to the

chemist's shop in bo
gense such a pair of sen
sitive feet of clay

deserved to be well
protected by *dr scholl's*
odour control

ODE TO PAUL ROBESON

the voice from the wide
open windows of childhood
the echo of the

backyards in the bright
days of spring giro four hun
dred and fucking

thirteen going at
full blast the deep bass voice and
soundtrack through inner

vesterbro all the
way over from ameri
ca: *ol' man river*

ODE TO THE ROSE

it is high time to
bring the paper roses out
into the light of

day from their anon
ymity on boxes of cho
colate and in the

glossy pages of
diverse garden magazines
they too deserve all

due praise and roses
for their contribution which
has hereby been done

ODE TO JEAN ARTHUR RIMBAUD

arthur rimbaud
never became my poet
i don't owe him a

nything have nothing
outstanding haven't borrowed
stars and purple from

his arsenal my
relation to him is com
pletely pure and ob

jective almost in
nocent – that's why i see his
greatness so clearly

ODE TO THE SECRET LOVE

paradox upon
paradox mysteries of
salt and roses how

is one to write a
bout one's secret love without
betraying it? – per

haps the secret lies
precisely in what is ob
vious? here then are

the seven words of
my poem as i promised
you in broad daylight

ODE TO THE SUN

the sun is shining
day and night is working un-
ceasingly is scorch

ing every self-im-
portance and every sorrow
it shows us the world

as it is neither
more nor less and it lights up
swindle and humbug

and it burns off the
whole crap no one under the
sun can hide himself

ODE TO SOLIDARITY

if you write a po-
em about kosova and
i one about kur

distan or x writes
about sarajevo and
y tibet and z

afghanistan (per-
haps in a writing break with
the left hand) then it

ends up with all the
small words being inscribed in
a larger poem

ODE TO TYPOGRAPHY

when this poem col-
lection (that includes this po-
em) is one day to

be printed i hope
it will either be with the
straightforward basker

ville font or with the
golden palatino – you
who are reading the

poem now know which
of my wishes has ulti-
mately been fulfilled

ODE TO CORN

corn – half the popu-
lation of the world lives from
that word is fed by

that word both because
humanity lives from bread
and not from bread a

lone two billion a-
nimals live from corn without
being able to

pronounce the word ‘corn’
which is why i say the word
corn on their behalf

ODE TO WALT WHITMAN

walt whitman old
poofter with stardust on the
blue drill of his shoul

ders i have not in
vestigated if you were
gay because i could

not care less – there is
nothing perverse between two
people that love each

other it is the
absence of love that promotes
that which is evil

ODE TO BEES

i'm a bonapar
tist sovereignty is not
a subject for dis

cussion – on the oth
er hand i am unable
to accept demo

cratic absolu
tism and am therefore not
a bonapartist –

what that has to do
with bees is something you must
work out for yourself

ODE TO THE MONTH OF AUGUST

the poems i write
are neither reality
nor poetry what

the hell are they then?
stuff and nonsense or some third
possibility

just like the month of
august which is also dark
er than one would sus

pect darker than in
sleep even though the sun's in
the sign of leo

ODE TO THE BRICKLAYER

the bricklayer from
særslev says: that is the lar
gest floor that i have

ever laid – i an
swer him by laying the tiles
down in the po

em fifty square met
res of terracotta a
small banqueting hall

one letter after
the other over the fired
potsherds of the dead

ODE TO THE ALBATROSS

i have published just
one single book at the al
batross publishing

firm and it went as
was inevitable no
one read my book and

the publishing firm
went down the drain (but the cap
tain's still alive) what

do i want to say
with *that*? nothing except that
which i am saying

ODE TO A DEAD CAROB TREE

i think that the baker
y's name was ambassadeur
(how strange) and i think

that it sold carob
bread that had a taste like that
which coca cola

has nowadays but
i am absolutely sure
that i'm unable

to tell you what the
fruit of a dead carob tree
actually tastes like

ODE TO THE SEA'S ALGAE

most people think that
the more one is alone the
more one is oneself

as for example
in the forest (waldeinsam
keit) or on the sea

bed (öd und leer das
meer) one is only oneself
in relation to

god and one is so
both among human beings
and the sea's algae

ODE TO THE WALLFLOWER

what sounds best – wallflower
or stock – is that the one that
smells so strongly of

urine – i wonder
what it tastes like – is it at
all its colour of

dirty yellow and
of rose pink that i consid
er – that is what it

feels like but is it
true is it the same flower at
all we're dealing with?

ODE TO THE MYRRH TREE

in a roundabout
way (encyclopedias
and garden books) i

arrived at the myrrh
tree and saw that it was *that*
woman who had giv

en birth to adon
is i wonder if it grows
in denmark in a

botanical gar
den perhaps if not we'll hard
ly get any spring

ODE TO THE TUNA FISH

tuna in oil tun
a in tomato and in
coconut milk and

tuna in chilli
and in pineapple and tu
na in curry sauce

but first and foremost
and best of all: tuna in
salt water in the

sound before nineteen
sixty and in the atlan
tic four metres long

ODE TO THE FISHING CUTTER

the rear mirror and
railing of which were smashed by
a hawser in an

attempt to tow ms
embla (on which ship i was
an ordinary

seaman) to karlskro
na for the salvage money
because we had been

rammed by a russian
submarine once in the pre
vious century

ODE TO THE BICYCLE

language cheats – we know
this perfectly well it dis
torts magnifies re

duces invents things
and problems that do not ex
ist we know this per

fectly well but just
forget it from time to time –
bicycle – i then

say to remind my
self – bicycle – then i have
hardly said too much

ODE TO THE WOODS

i am squatting down
on a photograph on the
back of a book that

is called *the woods* which
is a translation of the
first part *skovene*

of a book that i
wrote a long time ago as
a fairytale that

is completely dif
ferent from the place in which
i now find myself

ODE TO THE SHIP IN A BOTTLE

the late dan turèll
once said when the subject of
conversation fell

on j p jacobsen
that his poems were like bot
tle peter's small ships

inside their bottles –
i can perhaps add here as
a post mortem that

his own poems look
like real three-masted schooners
out on the high seas

ODE TO THE DIVER

this is the sort of
thing we read in german les
sons what was it the

diver brought up to
the surface from the depths down
there? – a beaker or

a goblet i think
it was and what have i my
self brought up to the

page from the great depths
of the words – you are reading
the answer right now

ODE TO A DIFFERENT CACTUS

from the one that stands
on an upturned yawl at fo
gense sand (see else

where in the collec
tion) a cactus that is on
its winter holi

day out in the gar
age along with a bego
nia and fuchs

ia before they're to
go out onto reali
ty's naked terrace

ODE TO SAINT DIEGO STREET

i allow this street
to represent all of the
streets that i did not

walk down along all
of the possibilities
that i did not re

alise all of the
dreams that are lying there just
waiting for rea

lity all of the
streets that i've only seen on
yahoo travel maps

ODE TO THE HIGHWAY

the highway on the
other hand i can just go
out onto when i

feel like it right out
side the door – reali
ty that always de

mands a sacrifice
of that possibility
which perished – i can't

on the other hand
go out onto rugård high
way at the same time

ODE TO THE LORRY

i have often dreamt
of sitting in such a sca
nia vabis of

sounding the horn of
placing all my poems be
hind me and saying:

rubberduck calling
crazy horse on the mobile
but perhaps in that

case i would rather
just be sitting at home and
writing this poem

ODE TO THE TEA CADDY

there was seldom a
ny tea in the old tea cad
dies but instead there

were small coins post
age stamps and old recipes
keys that didn't fit

into any locks
any longer – they have now
been replaced by tea

packets with twenty
tea bags in each one – so that
has solved that problem

ODE TO A LORRYLOAD OF WOOD

my father died in
a silver grey toyota
while overtaking

a lorryload of
wood – the timbers suddenly
slid sideways down from

the trailer flatten
ing the car in which my fath
er and dog both were

death sometimes comes in
what is the most extraor
dinary of ways

ODE TO THE ABANDONED HOUSE

every twenty third
of december we have for
almost twenty years

spent in the empty
gamekeeper's house over in
stingsted wood during

the crown of winter –
i can't tell you why it is
probably simply

a habit that it
is hard to get rid of like
christmas eve itself

ODE TO THE PLUM

plums roll down into
the abyss of time and dis
appear *that* no one

is capable of
stopping not even god him
self – th atit is so

tragic is since plums
are particularly jui
cy and taste extra

good it's a conso
lation though that we will find
them again some time

ODE TO THE COLOUR GREEN

many poems and
ballads have been written to
the colour blue not

to mention the col
our red – the psychologists
have also been out

and about when it
comes to white and black and to
catholicism

but i say: the one
who chooses the colour green
is in love with life

ODE TO THE SPOON

what is it about
that spoon now i bleeding well
want to know it is

there some professor
of literature or oth
er or is there some

perfectly ordi
nary reader who can ex
plain to me why it

is i continue
to be so interested in
my baptismal spoon?

ODE TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR

no one can conceive
the beginning of the u
niverse or that of

life or the first day
because the thought can neith
er think itself away

or include it i
have no idea why science
fills us with that sort

of nonsense let us
celebrate new year instead
each and every year

ODE TO THE SPERM WHALE

ten years ago six
teen sperm whales stranded on the
west beach of rømø

island where they died
from stress in the course of a
day and night they

immediately ap
peared on the front pages and
TV news the whales steered

directly into
the encyclopedias'
immortality

ODE TO OLD AGE

at my age the phe
nomenon occurs that the
future from a sta

tistical point of
view is now shorter than the
past even though neith

er period ex
ists as anything else but
the present and seen

in that light the prob
lem diminishes into
a hypothesis

ODE TO THE FORMER STATION BUILDING

closed down in farstrup
a long time ago as a
station and sold to

a vet i think it
was now without any tracks
to and from real

ity in and out
of dreams without any sig
nals and platform on

ly confirmed by the
disintegrating approach
ramps of memory

ODE TO A STAR

of all the possi
bilities i choose aakjær's
may-night star over

his childhood hills for
that one i remember clear
est among the ma

ny millions of stars
when we sang it in radi
ance down in sorø

where it still now crack
les with electrolysis
on walpurgis night

ODE TO A FEW YELLOW FLOWERS

we are not dealing
here with roses or with tu
lips this time and de

finitely not with
crocus and eranthis or
with dandelions that

are going to be
used for snaps but instead with
those daffodils i

planted in cyber
space one time at the address
www.daffodil.com

ODE TO FLOWERS

from flowers i learnt
not to create any un
necessary fuss of

myself by which i
mean to simply get on with
my work *no matter*

what to get the fuck
ing poems written from flowers
ers i learnt not to

create any fuss
of myself since i've alrea
dy been created

ODE TO THE COCK

every morning we
take a very early run
and reach a small house

in the wood where a
cock immediately starts
to crow although it

is still pitch-black and
now we are afraid that it
will soon end up as

coq au vin because
we're wakening its owner
at this early hour

ODE TO THE GLOBE

i have bought a globe
that has a light inside it
at the supermar

ket – if it is to
going to be an exact
model of the globe

there must be a lit-
up globe on it somewhere and
so on and so forth

ad infinitum
*aha – that old problem in
a new disguise*

ODE TO THE FLORAL DECORATION

is there any truth
in a floral decora-
tion the history

of which is so short
that it does not have a his-
tory – gerbera

rosebud and greener
y gathered for a moment
in clay and oas

is ode to a flor-
al decoration that's
beyond lies and truth

ODE TO STAMPS

sent from place a to
place b from you to me in
phthalocyanin

and in other clear
colours with perforations
and postmarks from one

place to another
place with something i don't know
to that which i do

blocks of four that are
made up of secrets and de-
clarations of love

ODE TO THE LEMON

it is indeed a
good thing that it wasn't film
actors who performed

in the resistance
movement during the second
world war but that it

was instead real fight
ers with real sten guns that li
quidated real in

formers and that ac
tually died a real death
such as haagen schmith

ODE TO LIGHT

light cannot of course
conceal itself in darkness
(just look for exam

ple at how magnes
ium flares up and turns in
to darkness an e

ven greater darkness
than before) only in what's
completely clear in

itself can light hold
its own can light hold onto
what is its secret

ODE TO THE SEA'S LIGHT

the sea's light has in
a way a quite different
nature can contain

darkness within it –
even though it cannot con
quer it and the night

but full of salt and
violets it is lit ev
ery morning again

in atlantic mir
rors and it casts blue reflec
tions over the world

ODE TO THE APPLE

apples want to be
eaten they have no other
justification

than to be eaten
all these nature morte
paintings with tasteful arrange

ments of apples in
bowls that are made of ruby
glass are and remain:

a load of cock-teas
ing – apples want to be eat
en and become shit

ODE TO THE BUTTERFLY

on the contrary
i do not want any more
to be tattooed with

a butterfly on
my left shoulder before i
die not with an au

rora or with an
admiral which otherwise
is my imago –

the metamorpho
sis will take place in spite of
this to perfection

ODE TO THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS

does it tug at the
heartstrings when the great config
urations of birds

begin to fly in
over heartland triangles
wedges parallel

ograms illumi
nated by the sunset does
it tug at the heart

strings for other reas
ons than longing and impulse
than when you were young?

ODE TO A DEAD MILLIONAIRE

i have may god strike
me dead become a million
aire at a late age

and without wanting
to for unfathomable
reasons and quite in

nocently i'm sor
ry about it and this ode
is therefore not ad

dressed to me person
ally as can also be
seen from the title

ODE TO THE STAG

of course a stag is
to be standing by a wood
land lake (also in

various paintings)
where on earth should it other
wise be standing – on

the motorway or
on the tip of a red tri
angle? – no the stag

must of course be mir
roring itself in the wood
land lake's sunken gold

ODE TO THE ORANGE

the first orange is
hanging at the very top
of the poem still

the second orange
is a jaffa blood orange
that comes from jaffa

the third orange is
a spanish one and freshly
sprayed with pesticides

the last orange is
roundly rolling around here
in the last stanza

ODE TO THE CLOUDS

what did i call the
clouds the last time i wrote them
across the paper

sky – herds of bison
full-rigged ships towers of shav
ing foam the frozen

breath of god? – shall we
not simply make do with
confirming the un

fathomableness
of the clouds their quantity
and their great beauty

ODE TO A WAVE

in a way it's com
pletely unnatural to
pay homage to a

wave with an ode to
a woodcut of a wave that
will never reach the

shore at mount fuji
to a wave that will for ev
er stand carved in your

gaze as ivory –
just as unnatural as
art happens to be

ODE TO AUTUMN

i pour out a glass
of warm saké and allow
it to stand until

the liquid is cold –
then i pour it back into
the bottle and screw

the top back on – what
in all the world has *that* got
to do with autumn?

i don't know perhaps
it's just the fact that it is
autumn – *you tell me*

ODE TO THE PANTHER

rilke and the panth
er blake and the tiger *how*
clever the poet

new exercises – who
wrote about the lion and who
about the ele

phant – old homework from
the writing school i myself
wrote about the cat

and dachshund and now
about the panther in its
circle of powder

ODE TO WORRY

it worries me that
i have now started to pray
to god in german

it worries me that
the guantánamo camp is
still in existence

it worries me that
it's become more difficult
to get a boner

the mere fact that time
just happens to be passing
at all worries me

ODE TO THE STONE

anyone who's read
my poems will know that stones
are very close to

my heart i have sowed
my words on stones and built
their house upon sand

and absolutely
nothing whatever here is
the final poem

for the final stone
(whichever) that's fallen like
a load off my mind

ODE TO THE OLD POET

variations on
a theme of my own taken
from the eighty sixth

hexagram: 'who's sit
ting by the shelter a mouse
clutched in his hand?' – an

old poet is the
one doing it who's mailing
this message to a

disbelieving world:
www.many_small_words_become_
a_bigger_poem.dk

ODE TO THE VIOLET

one would actual
ly think that violets sym
bolised life but that

does not happen to
be the case on the contra
ry they are connect

ed with death in a
secret spiritual af
finity because they

are both greener and
more than anything else are
closer to the earth

ODE TO IRRIGATING THE FIELDS

here in denmark on
funen land register no.
one venteløkke

irrigation is
not with water but the pur
est alchemy of

slurry which transforms
death into life's second green
ness – now my neighbour's

driving out with his
tanker and hoses goddammit
how it reeks of gold

ODE TO SALT

i cannot remem
ber what it means to strew salt
on a bird's tail but

just to be on the
safe side i fling a handful
of coarse kitchen salt

over my left should
er without turning round and
only hope that the

salt from my mother's
house has retained every bit
of its potency

ODE TO THE SAW

in my time at school
my woodwork teacher threw a
saw at me since when

i have had a dis
tinctly strained relationship
to saws although i

fully realise
their poetry – just listen:
the handsaw of win

ter fretsaw of spring
compass saw of summer and
hacksaw of autumn

ODE TO THE FUTURE

i've already written
how to set about it: read
the next verse and the

next verse and then con
tinue page by page and go
on doing this read

the book until it's
finished and start again from
the beginning the

future is found e
verywhere in that book which you
are reading right now

ODE TO THE STORM ABOVE CÓRDOBA

to start with i have
never been in córdoba
and secondly i

haven't the faintest
idea about córdoba
and thirdly the storm

took place in matan
zas and fourthly i just
couldn't care less a

bout córdoba – *end*
of córdoba end of thun
der end of poem

ODE TO THE WALTZ OVER THE WAVES

the waltz over the
waves' needlepoint lace of foam
their slight and great move

ments over the death
mask of the ocean bed the
waltz of the waves which

means nothing whatso
ever but which dissolves and
repeats itself time

and time again like
a never-ending mantra
across the waters

ODE TO THE HAPPY JOURNEY

i'm talking about
travelling on the spot where
the movement strangely

enough is greatest
at its own centre i'm talk
ing about the long

est journey of all
a depth of more than seven
ty thousand fathoms

i am talking a
bout repetition's happy
journey on the spot

ODE TO THE HOUSE OF ODES

and my publisher
who said these immortal words
to me when i start

ed to grumble a
bout the state of things in gen
eral: a bloody

poet like yourself
ought to be quite over the
moon about bestsell

er writers that hap
pen to pay for the publi
cation of your books

ODE TO THE ELEMENTS

we saw fire to
day down in the water which
had been muddied with

earth and clay beneath
a cloudless sky that reflec
ted us as the fifth

of the elements
or more precisely: we saw
two salamanders

engaged in a ma
ting game down by the pond in
vædehule wood

ODE TO CELERY

which is shy and a
ristocratic and smells of
silver amalgam

it comes from murci
a (in this particular
case at least) and is

low in carbohy
drates is most frequently used
in waldorf salads

and has therefore had
the leading role in a num
ber of feature films

ODE TO EUROPE

europe your twelve stars
will not help you in the least
entrophy is spread

ing from one country
to the next country like a
prairie fire or

anthrax you're also
producing losers en masse
in the third world *don't*

*be a winner all
the time don't be a cast
le of victory*

ODE TO THE UNIVERSE

if this ode was a
description of the uni
verse it would of course

not be able it
self to be included in
the same universe

(where would it be in
that case?) fortunately we
are only dealing

with an ode of hom
age so the problem is more
or less fictitious

ODE TO DOVES

doves follow me e
verywhere even in dreams tur
tledoves ring and wood

pigeons collared tur
tle doves are flying around
me cooing kicking

up a din shitting
on my head i can't do a
thing about it but

am a little bit
proud is it that holy spi
rit business perhaps?

ODE TO LOBSTER SOUP

we're eating a lot
of fish at present nearly
every day perhaps

that's the reason why
my eyes this morning look as
if they had been ly

ing in lobster soup
all night long for we did in
fact eat lobster soup

manufactured by
royal greenland for our dinner
yesterday evening

ODE TO A MUSSEL SHELL ON THE WATER

great naval battles
were fought around isseho
ved off samsø in

the previous cen
tury large fleets went to the
bottom of the sea

and disappeared with
out trace armadas of mus
sel shells led to vic

tories of myself
or to defeats no one can
recall any more

ODE TO THE BEETROOT

if i say beet-root
what do you answer you an
swer bee-troot and i

repeat the colour
of beet-root and you maintain
the colour of bee-

troot (is that perhaps
what they call dialectic
materialis

m?) i say beet-root
and you say bee-troot – *let's call
the whole thing off*

ODE TO LACK OF CLARITY

just think if every
thing was quite clear – how boring
just think if every

thing was bent in ne
on how dull with all that blink
ing in the lakes' mir

ror just think if po
etry was pure and transpar
ent with spirit's liqu

or just think if sec
recy and muzziness did
n't exist how dull

ODE TO POLYESTER

i saw polyes
ter in ishøj fiery
red as is fit and

proper dressed like
leviathan it stood in
its ark and ruled the

world and when i read
aloud to it from the book
of psalms it divid

ed itself into
dacron terylene teto
on and trevira

ODE TO THE PUBLISHING FIRM

the publishing firm
nuancer only issued
very few books it

had no address and
no money paid the printer
a bottle of whisk

y the publisher
was a friend of mine who was
only seventeen

it was the world's best
publisher because that's where
i had my debut

ODE TO J M

you phoned me after
all these years and asked me if
perhaps we should meet

but i could hear from
your voice that everything was
as it had always

been that absolute
ly nothing had changed and that
therefore neither had

the reason for us
parting in the first place what
ever that had been

ODE TO A HAPPY NIGHT

of a thousand and
one nights why not take this par
ticular walpur

gis night where the vi
olets are gleaming with salt
and electroly

sis and the clouds are
lovelier than in a pic
ture by prince eugene

why on earth not take
such a night and turn it to
account for one day

ODE TO ENTROPY

or more precisely:
to neg-entropy that spreads
out or that once used

to spread out in my
early sonnets quite liter
ally as a vi

rus that was to count
eract every form of pa
tina a red lead

against rust and path
os and every kind of nor
dic intensity

ODE TO EXPECTATION

once in the previ
ous century a paid a
visit to a col

league on expecta
tion avenue who had a
blackboard standing in

his study – before
leaving i wrote on it in
chalk: if p then q –

i wonder if that
is the formula for all
our expectations?

ODE TO CORRUPTION

take a seat in your
fiat punto (or whate
ver car you now hap

pen to drive) and drive
to the little belt bridge drive
across it and turn

to the left along
the E45 till you reach chris
tiansfeld get out

at god's acre cem
etery and read aloud:
sown in corruption

ODE TO LEAF-FALL

which tree wilts most beau
tifully or most spectac
ularly – is it

the fired clay of the
beech one thinks of first or
the lit paper lamps

of the sycamore
it could also be the close si
milarity be

tween the staghorn su
mac and the amazon par
rot – what do you think?

ODE TO THE YELLOW FLOWER

that roars at the sun
like a lion bloodyhell
how lovely it is

self-evident like
haydn's symphonies oh
how lovely it is

more commonplace than
reality itself oh
how lovely it is

more yellow than blue
bloodyhell how lovely it
is god's dandelion

ODE TO ASH

i remember the
filled ashtrays with a certain
melancholy – how

they reeked but with a
cosy smell at any rate
in retrospect – the

fly ash flaky ash
and the fine ash that was more
silvery than the

sandy beach that one
fine day will eventual
ly look like my own

ODE TO GUANTÁNAMO

i believe i have
seen the base of guantána
mo without knowing

it or without be
ing aware of the fact that
i was seeing it

that time i was on
cuba in the seventies
i can recall the

course of events but
only remember santi
ago's vanadium

ODE TO NEEDLES

although i have nev
er sewn so much as a but
ton onto a shirt

i nevertheless
pay homage to the needle
because i have used

it for so many
other purposes e.g.
to extract a splint

er from my thumb or
to clean the holes in the head
of my bathroom shower

ODE TO THE MAD PERSON

which actually
means: all the poets in the
world who desperate

ly or frenziedly
attempt to keep themselves out
of the lunatic

asylums and the
mental hospitals which for
the very same rea

son are sometimes re
ferred to as sky-blue in cer
tain lands further south

ODE TO PEACE OF MIND

i can't remember
what i am to remember
and i've forgotten

what i am to for
get i can't remember what
i am to forget

and i've forgotten
what i am to remember
for just a brief mo

ment i find myself
in a state of utter now
ness and peace of mind

ODE TO FROST

that congealed all of
sorø lake into a black
marble surface that

we carved mysteri
ous hieroglyphs into with
our skates what was it

i wonder that stood
there what was it that we wrote
down in our subcon

scious is this poem
some sort of decoding of
that secret message?

ODE TO STALINGRAD

i have always ha
ted such designations as:
the earth's greatet po

et or: mrs bo
dil ipsen and: denmark's best
painter – but now i

make an exception:
the world's best painting hangs
at silkeborg art

museum has been
painted by jørn and has the
title: stalingrad

ODE TO SNOW

think of the snowfall
of childhood inside the glass
dome when you shook it

think of the plaster
church and the small artifi
cial fir trees think of

all the snowflakes that
would swirl around inside your
brain think everything

else right out of your
mind also this poem then
let just the snow fall

ODE TO DUST

i pick up a hand
ful of dust – what in the world
does it consist of?

a handful from the
other side of the road has
a quite different

composition – earth
clay dust – transitoriness
dust seems to me to

be much longer last
ing than so much else pile of
dust grain of dust dust

ODE TO MUSIC-LISTENING

what appeals to me
so much about haydn's mus
ic is you get what

you hear – man bekommt
was man hört – the same applies
to poetry i

sincerely hope – you
get what you read for if the
words meant something else

than precisely what
is there on the page why not
write that something else?

ODE TO MORNING PRAYERS

in all my teenage
years king frederik the sixth
used to stare down at

me from the walls of
the great hall at sorø a
cademy during

morning prayers each day
he saw me preparing my
first lesson or sit

ting there half-asleep
instead of singing hurrah
for our danish king

ODE TO DAY

the day per se the
day an sich the day as such
every day the ev

eryday if you like
although every day in a
certain sense is a

d-day on which the
decisions are taken great
and small good and bad

just as they are now
when i decide that the po
em is to end here

ODE TO FRACTALS

in the old days (in
other words when i was young)
fractals belonged to

a class of curves that
were regarded as patha
logical whereas

nowadays now that
computers have carried out
further calcula

tions they're assigned to
beauty itself (just look at
julia set: sphinx)

ODE TO THE EQUINOX

my friend and i wrote
a joint poetry collec
tion called equinox –

it was full of moons
reeds gauloises and circle-brand
coffee attempted

to solve problems that
did not exist and it con
cluded as follows:

it is neither wood
pecker machine gun nor a
haiku it is now

ODE TO THE PHEASANT

that circles round in
the garden as if on rails
mechanically

in its own patterns
perhaps more as in a shoot
ing booth brilliantly

coloured with alche
my like a chinese kiosk
or a summerhouse

but make no mistake:
the pheasant is both a cou
rageous and wise bird

ODE TO RAPE

what is bluer than
the sky above rape that is
in flower – what is

greener than the woods
behind rape that is in flow
er what is blacker

than the soil beneath
rape that is in flower what
is yellower than

rape that flowers in
the month of may? – the rape now
flowering in may

ODE TO THE PAIR OF DUCKS

real ducks do not have
such names as donald duck or
anders and real ducks

will certainly shit
from a great height on both carl
barks and walt disney

real ducks are abso
lutely alive and kicking
and are killed with shot

real ducks finally
end up on the dinner ta
ble when it's autumn

ODE TO WHAT LIES AHEAD

the seconds pass and
take me with them that is what
the future feels like

as if i have no
influence on it whatso
ever while what lies

ahead brings time to
me because i too have had
a finger in the

pie i myself have
devised a plan of and formed
the time horizon

ODE TO RICHES

i hereby bequeath
(in accordance with and with
the consent of my

beloved) my en
tire fortune (properties
car and securi

ties) to the danish
state which has always provi
ded me with support

and has helped me e
conomically though not
always morally

ODE TO POETICS

which i have always
believed should be contained in
the poems themselves

as a quintessence
that makes the work whole and does
not separate it

into various
books does not split apart
the heart and reason

but gathers the pa
radox of the poem in
a spread peacock's wing

ODE TO MAY

wherever the green
month of may happens to be
it doesn't help since

death's gaze is precise
ly green and it stared then and
looked at me from an

unexpected quar
ter when my friend suddenly
died in the greenness

despite the fact his
eyes were even browner than
chocolate buttons

ODE TO A CLOCK IN THE DAY

what is it that's beep
ing? – it sounds like an elec
tronic clock but which

one and why? – it is
not the alarm clock and it
is not the comput

er clock either it
is not the travelling clock
or the baking o

ven clock – suddenly
the sound stops again – well that's
a very strange thing

ODE TO SØNDERSØ

i log onto søn
dersø's website – good grief
does a town really

want to be present
ed in that way: with photos
of a wheelie on

the homepage – just click
here for further informa
tion about the scheme

at the following
address: kommunen (the @
sign) søndersøkom.dk

ODE TO FELLOWSHIP

i share a common
table and a common bed
with my wife i share

my poems with my
audiences here at home
abroad and on the

internet i share
a strange language with my cat
and with the birds i

share life with every
living creature on this earth
and also with death

ODE TO THE THIRD NIGHT

and there was evening
on the third day and god called
the darkness night and

he went out into
the kitchen and mixed the world's
first nightcap and he

drank it with great re
lish and thereupon he lay
himself down to rest

on his divan and
at once fell asleep and god
dreamt that all was good

ODE TO SPACE

i might just as well
be perfectly frank from the
outset and make the

following statement:
ode to outer space which ex
pands with a velo

lcity that corres
ponds precisely to the vel
ocity with which

the mode of percep
tion expands within human
consciousness – what else?

ODE TO THE PLANETS

to mars in libra
to venus in the second
house and then to mer

cury that governs
reason after which comes ju
piter's trigons and

saturn that slows down
time while uranus actual
ly shortcircuits space

and neptune or plu
to which wink from the very
top of the world tree

ODE TO CHIVES

when chives start to come
into flower (*purple heart of
the chives*) it is time

for smoked herrings and
for the other rituals
of summer (new ones

each year) dylan and
new morning bare legs and shorts
long walks along the

seashore and the fields
that are now a mass of vi
olet chives in flower

ODE TO WOODLAND SOLITUDE

i take a map of
stingsted wood with me across
to stingsted wood and

find the exact lo
cality on the map where
i'm actually

standing in real
ity the place that is marked
on the map is called

kohave – at that
intersection there's perfect
woodland solitude

ODE TO THE READER

to my reader here
in denmark and abroad: print
this poem in green

latex or in rub
ber on an orange-coloured
T-shirt and walk a

round with it on at
your place of work no matter
if it is a folk

high school or a beer
depot try sleeping with it
on as well – thank you

ODE TO SOUND

i heard the sound when
inside my mother's stomach
or to be more pre

cise i've been told i
heard the triumph march from verdi's
opera aida

at the danish roy
al theatre sixty se
ven years ago nev

ertheless in my
opinion that particu
lar opera stinks

ODE TO DESIRE

the apple trees are blos
soming at present right out
side my window they

look like desire it
self a hundred candles all
ablaze wavetops of

salt *cockatoos on*
a string fluffy balls of cot
ton tampons of cot

ton wool i had such
a sudden desire to com
pose an ode to them

ODE TO THE SOLSTICE

i am sorry to
come with this message: the sum
mer solstice foundered

this year and sank at
the northernmost jetty in
bogense harbour and

not only that it
was also bloody cold i'm
sorry about that

on behalf of drach
mann and what will shu-bi-du
a sing about now?

ODE TO DEATH

imagine you see
me standing at assistens
cemetery on

a late afternoon
in september at the grave
of michael strunge

in the process of
reading out this poem with
the aid of a toy

megaphone this po
em the refrain of which is:
death's not a poem

ODE TO COCA-COLA

the last time i drank
a coca-cola was in
a bar near the om

onia square in
athens it had been mixed with
rum into a cu

ba libre and i
drank so many that i had
a blackout since when

i've touched neither co
ca-cola nor bacardi
rum for that matter

ODE TO PETROL

forty years ago
i used to fill the car with
esso and british

petroleum and
introduced their stamps as a
refrain in my po

ems nowadays i
use metax ok or shell
depending on the

current day's price so
you could say that something has
changed over the years

ODE TO GRAVEL

with my right index
finger i write 'gravel' in
the cat's gravel have

i then gone beyond
the old schism between the
word and the object? –

not at all now this
is no longer a matter
of gravel but of

cat's gravel in which
there stands gravel that's a quite
different matter

ODE TO THE SECRET

there is no secret
in behind the secret the
small secrets lie on

the bed of the soul
where they rot and decay the
large secrets on the

other hand burn off
the heart with cinnobar the
greatest secret of

the lot is that there
there's absolutely no sec
ret whatsoever

ODE TO THE HORTENSIA

i am planning a
hortensia garden like
that at lykkesholm

castle this poem
is a mental blueprint of
paving stones and urns

that will contain al
um so that the flowers will
be blue and not pink –

visit me in a
couple of years and see its
realisation

ODE TO MY SHOES

at *star sko* in bel
linge i bought a pair of
black lloyd shoes with red

heel stripes that were made
of rubber in bellinge
i bought the galosh

es of fortune – it
takes almost a life to wish
oneself to the place

where one already
is to buy that which i in
fact already owned

ODE TO THE RAINBOW

at a concert in
the stadium called idræts
parken (back then) bob

dylan and carlos
santana played beneath two
gigantic rainbows

one would have thought that
good fortune was divided
equally – but no

that day carlos san
tana made utter mincemeat
out of bob dylan

ODE TO HIMMELBJERGET

go to silkeborg
go on board the good ship 'the
falcon' (not the one

called 'the golden plo
ver') with your beloved eat
prawns and drink white wine

while sailing up the
gudenå river gaze at
himmelbjerget mir

rored in julsø lake
kiss your beloved it's ea
sy to be happy

ODE TO THE BRAIN

the brain looks like a
cauliflower or a small
mushroom cloud it weighs

more than a kilo
and it contains all your thoughts
except for the ve

ry last thought because
thought is unable to in
clude or exclude

itself and una
ble to contain the final
encephalogram

ODE TO RESEARCH

most of research has
to do with causes and ef
fects but not with the

primary cause which
of course is a freely act
ing cause – i have no

idea what re
search can make out of that par
ticular fact – it

would seem to me that
in that respect it has a
serious problem

ODE TO THE PLEIADES

for every letter
in my collected works there
are millions of stars

but the pleiades are
that constellation which i
have looked at most fre

quently on lonely
winter nights and which i am
now hearing for the

very first time be
ing performed by les percus
sions de strasbourg

ODE TO THE INTELLECT

whatever became
of the poem in all these
speculations all

these poems in the
poems in the poems in
an ever deeper

self-reflection an
ever deeper perdition
of words in words in

words what became of
the poem itself in this
lorenz attractor?

ODE TO THE MAN OF THE DAY

hitman shoots spider
man with an x-ray pistol
spiderman shoots super

man with a laser
cannon superman kills bat
man who just mana

ges to do away
with pacman who polishes
off hitman until

i switch off both the
game machine the computer
and the poem now

ODE TO GROWTH

everything grows ap
parently the number of
words from day to day

the universe ex
pands velocity increa
ses the seconds ac

cumulate – it would
appear that only death is
pulling in the op

posite direction
even though the number of
the dead increases

ODE TO DRY LAND

in this instance land
register no. one in
venteløkke which

is now called heartland
and which cost precisely the
same as the actu

al surveying of
the plot of land marked off with
the small red and white

posts that delimit
the extent of my private
table d'émeraude

ODE TO THE GALAXIES

i do not even
see the galaxies at night
only in the i

magination and
fantasy or in the ra
diant photographs

of the stellar at
las where they gleam like butter
flies like heads of hor

ses and sea ane
mones in the enormous
archipelago

ODE TO THE SUPERMARKET

where in some way or
other i always manage
to grow calm among

the frozen food count
ers beneath the artifi
cial lighting perhaps

since everyone here
becomes each and everyone
or one and all and

the motto other
wise is: a day without shop
ping's a wasted day

ODE TO THE FLOWERS OF THE MEADOW

word out and flower in
flower out and word in leaf af
ter another poem

after stalk after
poem where's it all leading? –
nowhere it is not

moving from the spot
because a flower does not hap
pen to be going

anywhere else than
there where it has its root and
the poem its word

ODE TO THE COD

the funen region
al dish boiled cod with the trim
mings is a deli

cacy just listen:
capers chopped onion and egg
diced beetroot smoked streak

y bacon and grat
ed horseradish new pota
toes and mustard sauce

the cod is to be
treated decently for it
gives its life for us

ODE TO MY EXCREMENT

i shall avoid go
ing into details or seal
ling my excrement

in tins but if it
hadn't been for it what would
then have become of

me? – i would either
have ended up exploding
or i would have been

obliged to stop eat
ing altogether – it is
as simple as that

ODE TO GILLETTE

it is actually
funny to empty a brand
new spray canister

of shaving foam in
to the handbasin at one
go and see it filled

with arctic mountains
you should try it at least once
in your life though you're

in your mid-sixties
and a bank manager – it
costs just 25 kroner

ODE TO THE ELEPHANT

i can't remember
from my nose to my mouth but
the elephants in

givskud safari
park i remember as well
as those in kipling's

jungle book so may
be there's some truth in that
talk about ele

phants' memories may
be it is so strong one can
never forget them

ODE TO POSTMEN

for fifteen years i
did a postal round in char
lottenlund whose dis

tricts smell of lilac
i know all the short cuts through
the attics and the

hedges i know which
letters and magazines can wait
or be discreetly

dumped respectively –
so just phone me if you are
to be a postman

ODE TO REALITY

strictly speaking it
is no different from wak
ing up every day

and saying good morn
ing my beloved every
single day over

and over again
from repeating one's life (the
consciousness raised to

the square of itself)
strictly speaking it is no
different at all

ODE TO FANTASY

go outside on a
clear moonlit night and observe
the moon's disc notice

mare imbrium's
mark of cain and the length of
the copernicus

crater fencing scar
or mare nubium's sponge
base (find something for

yourself) isn't it
great with all that fantasy
to no good at all?

ODE TO REPETITION

west wind i say to
the west wind and say it a
gain several more

times after each oth
er but what possible help
can it have to re

peat a word the re
petition is of real
ity (the imma

nence repeated trans
cendently) repeti
tion is that of life

ODE TO FINGERS

i point out to the
birds in the garden with my
index finger and

the cat looks at my
index finger i go on
pointing at the birds

in the garden with
my index finger my cat
continues to look

at my index fing
er – the cat has definite
ly got the message

ODE TO NOBODY

my beloved has
travelled to jutland all my
family have de

parted this life my
friends are scattered to the four
winds relations and

acquaintances re
main silent and out on he
debovej i meet

nobody – therefore
i am dedicating this
ode to nobody

ODE TO THE COWS

i have always had
a secret dream of eating
breakfast together

with the cows and now
we're doing just that unfold
ing the car table

on a field in thy
where the cows are literal
ly shitting on us

splatch munch splatch munch splatch
it's the shit that will put the
meal on the table

ODE TO MUTENESS

it would give me ex
ceedingly great pleasure if
it was possible

to get a signer
to express this ode in sign
language or even

better to have a
mime ensemble dressed entire
ly in white (or with

out clothes on) as a
tribute and benefit per
formance to muteness

ODE TO VANILLA

well-nigh fifty years
ago there was a sudden
strong smell of vanil

la in lejre (i
mentioned this in a poem
from back then) i don't

know why – for the tør
sleff factories do not lie
there – who can help me

to unravel the
great mystery of the va
nilla in lejre?

ODE TO KIMS A/S

american grill
crisps are as is known wave-shaped
which means that they fit

perfectly in the
grooves of the palate like sea
weed on the sea bed

samsøgård crisps on
the other hand lie nicely
on the tongue like stones

but don't taste better
for that reason (a bit salt
ier – down the hatch

ODE TO THE SPOTTED WOODPECKER

'spotted woodpecker'
i write so as to move on
as it were poems

are a bit like wood
peckers in the early sum
mer i feed them and

bury the ones that
fly straight into the window
pane the rest must man

age on their own which
is why i also end the
ode with 'woodpecker'

ODE TO NOTHINGNESS

nothingness can neith
er be imagined nor thought –
if it were able

to be it would be
something and not nothing does
nothingness exist? –

if it did it would
once more be something and not
nothing – therefore one

can conclude that noth
ingness does not exist and it
is just nothingness

ODE TO KEITH RICHARDS

when i think of keith
richards i feel happy his
guitar playing is

his own affair and
i don't wish to comment more
closely on his sing

ing or cocaine or
his fall out of a palm tree
what i feel is this:

jeez what stamina
what powers of resistance
against all odds – wow

ODE TO THE COLUMBINE

i phone de danske
spritfabrikker in order
to find out what has

become of the co
lumbine snaps the sweet and gold
en aroma of

my youth – i've never
ever heard of that one – i
hear a voice say in

a strong aalborg ac
cent ah ah oblivion's
taste of bitterness

ODE TO PAUL VERLAINE

i have only read
one single poem by paul
verlaine and it was

a bad one i could
n't remedy matters by
reading further in

obscure antholo
gies in leather bindings with
gilt edges but pre

fer instead to com
pose this ode to him by way
of consolation

ODE TO UNHAPPY LOVE

which has now been moved
from søndermark cemeter
y's section five no

three hundred and two
to the same cemetery's
section one no twelve

hundred and ninety
eight and laid to rest on the
twenty-ninth of march

two thousand and five
after some twenty three years
in eternity

ODE TO THE DANISH TROTTING DERBY

i get my wife to
take a photograph of me
by the magnoli

a just as i have
taken photographs of her
so many times in

another poe
try collection – one two three –
the photo's taken

now i look a bit
like last year's derby winner:
'I am a photo'

ODE TO EGOISM

the one piece of ru
binstein cake is consider
ably larger than

the other i do
a few calculations and
then invite my friend

to choose first obey
ing in this case the para
doxical law of

good manners he takes
without blushing the larger
piece – well i'll be damned

ODE TO THE ALPHABET

according to phai
don's the twentieth centu
ry artbook a is

brown b almost tur
quoise c corn-blue e olive-
green h midnight blue

n grey and o o
range-coloured r old rose while
c is a lemon-

yellow i don't real
ly know what my opinion
is on that subject

ODE TO PABLO NERUDA

who wrote ameri
ca down word by word flower by
flower kill by kill scru

pulously and mag
nificently in a stream
of poems that smould

er like a lava
flow over a whole conti
nent continuing

like rings that go on
spreading in the blood and that
reach the furthest heart

ODE TO JULY

why is july so
yellow between green woods why
isn't it sky-blue

when the sky happens
to be blue or white like the
shaving foam of the

clouds? – july is yel
low because a lance armstrong
an indurain and

perhaps a basso
will be riding across flat
screens throughout the world

ODE TO THE GARDENER

shall i replant the
elder tree? – the gardener
looks at me in dis

belief it's nothing
but a weed – so as to a
void folkloristic

explanations i
say that the tree origi
nally comes from my

parents' garden – now
he really thinks that i'm nuts –
and maybe i *am*

ODE TO THE JAY

the two jays that are
making a right mess of my
feeding place i call

laurel and hardy
although they're not particu
larly funny and

not nearly as shy
as it says in books on birds
but are admitted

ly beautiful – you
can see a stuffed specimen
out at rungstedlund

ODE TO 'THE WAITING HAWTHORN'

which is said to be
several hundred years old
and is now support

ed by a rusty
pipe close to rugård castle
perhaps it is a

plague hawthorn or al
so a tree by which one used
to wait for something

or other to pay
the price of life (turnpike mo
ney) for example

ODE TO SEAWEED

shake a portion of
instant miso soup made by
asaje impor

ted from japan in
to a litre of boiling
water and mix well

watch the large rectang
ular pieces of seaweed
become quite sea-green

everyone knows sea
weed's beautiful – few that soup
from it yet more so

ODE TO THE PRIMROSE

words too find it difficult to keep abreast of things
are being replaced

all the time to say
the same thing (primula for
primrose) stand so strange

ly empty and illegible as the writing
on a doctor's prescription

scription – then the poem saves me when irreality is greatest

ODE TO SYRINGA REFLEXA

it's true enough – syringa reflexa smells like
newly washed linen

and the poem insists on reality unlike language that's self-

sufficient listens mostly to its own vowels
it's true enough – sy

ringa reflexa gleams with watercolours from
faber and castell

ODE TO THE DOLPHIN

michael strunge loved dolphins – i don't know whether
he ever saw a live

dolphin or whether he just had related in
some way to flipper

on television but he succeeded in convincing me of the excellence

of dolphins despite the fact that i too
had never seen one

ODE TO USS INTREPID

on the bridge of which i have stood together with
my beloved and

eaten ice cream in new york harbour while i imagined the dives of

the kamikaze planes in imagined mirrors
and smoke columns that

raised their slender spirals from the sea battles of
the pacific war

ODE TO THE BEACHES

i draw a line in
the sand at fogense point
from one mussel shell

to another one –
on the one side seaweed reigns
supreme while on the

other lyme grass does
and never the twain shall meet
i draw a corres

ponding line of words
in the poem and it says
here and no further

ODE TO LUCK

(or ode to the bot
tle in the ship) i do not
remember in which

port we were lying
only that i had concealed
a extra packet

of lucky strike in
my left rubber boot when the
customs officer

suddenly gave the
right one a well-aimed kick – that's
what i call luck – maaan

ODE TO A THIRD CACTUS

which does not stand on
an upturned yawl at fogen
se sand (see elsewhere

in this collection)
nor does it stand in the ga
rage along with a

begonia (see
somewhere else again in the
collection) but stands

out in the sun's burn
ing arena as agreed
with me beforehand

ODE TO ROADS

my poems are get
ting increasingly simple
perhaps because life

has become simpler
there is no longer any
more to understand

it's straightforward just
follow the road that's going
to end some place or

other just as it
began some other place – it's
really dead simple

ODE TO SHORT CUTS

there are no slip throughs
(as there are in the ozone
layer) no short cuts

(as there are in sting
sted wood) there is no other
way of being in

one's body reason
is unable to escape
from its paradox

belief is una
ble to escape from its cross
it is that simple

ODE TO THE COFFEE MACHINE

the coffee machine
snores aloud as if it had
bad dreams at other

times it has to be
cured from its calcifica
tion at times a shake

of vinegar is
enough then it's back in action
the coffee machine

brews the coffee and
i write poems about it
it is that simple

ODE TO THE WASTEPAPER BASKET

read the title of
the poem one more time and
unless you happen

to feel that we are
dealing with a homage to
a woven basket

inlaid with tea ro
ses and pieces of light-green
wallpaper you know

exactly what you
are to do with the poem
after reading it

ODE TO THE HOME VIDEO

small scenario:
i record you with a vi
deo camera

while you record me
and a third person records
us who are in the

process of record
ing each other while a fourth
cameraman films

the three of us who
are in the process of film
ing each other etc.

ODE TO THE PEAR

the pear isn't a
fraid of anything at all
not even of it

self or god when the
time has come it is picked or
it lets go of its

hold and falls to the
ground without a murmur with
out uttering a

single word (not e
ven 'bump') all honour to the
pyrus comunis

ODE TO THE COLOUR GREY

if the colours are
mixed together (subtractive
ly) the result will

be (as is known) black
and if the colours are turned
round (additively)

white results and if
white and black are mixed we get
grey and this ena

bles us to veri
fy the well-known theory that
all theory is grey

ODE TO THE KNIFE

i hereby confess
that i am the lucky own
er of an illeg

al flick knife that has
a blade that is seven cen
timetres long (stain

less steel) i can men
tion this without a qualm be
cause it is in a

poem and is there
fore fictive although every
word of this is true

ODE TO THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR

as a boy i used
to produce powder (or what
i called powder) which

consisted of flowers
of sulphur potassium
chlorate and charcoal

which i used to ignite
just before new year in card
board holders – no bang

came out of this but
the last day of the year was
a right stinkeroo

ODE TO THE RHINOCEROS

everyone remem
bers brutalis the rhino
whose psyche was wound

ed how unruly
he was on account of a
lack of love and care

how human he had
actually become un
til the day when he

came to meet love in
reality and died a
most happy rhino

ODE TO IMMORTALITY

i simply cannot
understand all these thoughts a
bout the possibil

ity of there be
ing proofs of human immor
tality – one on

ly needs to die and
then one has become immor
tal seeing that one is

completely una
ble to die twice – then one has
become immortal

ODE TO THE NEW STATION BUILDING

it looks like some gi
gantic cardboard box (with red
arrows that point out

how the thing is to
be assembled) and it's un
commonly ugly

but i'm actually
very fond of ugly things
partly an für und

bei sich but also
because they help to define
what is beautiful

ODE TO THE STARRY SKY

we lay on the 'him
melterrasse' in ulstrup
and counted shooting

stars we looked up at
the kaleidoscope of saint
lawrence night and on

ly wished for each oth
er nothing more was needed –
the night would only

have been totally
blissful if it had been bliss
fully forgotten

ODE TO A RED STONE

which was to have been
included in a differ
ent poem collec

tion but got forgot
ten in a desk drawer where i
have found it once more

three words deeper in
the vocabulary and
a thousand stanzas

later but which i
now insert in its correct
place between the lines

ODE TO PATIENCE

from the stones i learnt
the lesson of patience to
wait long enough to

lie completely mo
tionless like a stone out on
the roads even more

silent than granite
mindless in the mind like flint
which will probably

cause my enemies
to stumble over me at
some point or other

ODE TO THE CHICKEN

chicken india
mexicana itali
ano and natu

rel all from the co
op with herbs and spices hot
wings in chilli ma

minated thighs and
drumsticks (poulet en sarco
phage) it really is

quite an exotic
ornithology that we
are dealing with here

ODE TO CLAY

i search for certain
coordinates out in heart
land where a sun's ray

crosses a cat's ear
three paces to the left of
the orange-flowered

hawkweed (or devil's
paintbrush) north of the shadows
there i find what i'm

looking for – a lump
of clay which i lift up – look
i can bear the dust

ODE TO THE ARMCHAIR

ah here we have the
panton people – the upholst
erer says when we

carry yet anoth
er chair into the workshop
this time corn-blue and

well chromium-pla
ted one would think you both in
vested – but no i'm

not the one strongly
in favour of the panton
chair – it is my back

ODE TO THE PICTURE BOOK

during the second
world war i collected
series of pictures

'weapons of victo
ry' and since i lacked the one
picture i got my

grandmother to buy
forty packets of danish
chicory coffee

at one go but not
the right one – and the moral?
if only i knew

ODE TO THE STRAWBERRY

i place a strawber
ry on the paper and look
at it – what the hell

am i to write? – that
it tastes delicious – we all
know that – that it is

beautiful and it
can give you an allergy
and a strawberry

nose? – nothing new i
can write? – yes, each strawberry
is shockingly new

ODE TO DARKNESS

what would light be a
ble to do without its dark
ness? – light needs darkness –

not so as to be
able to hide itself (light
is only able

to do that under
a bushel) but because light
wouldn't be light at

all without darkness
because darkness also hap
pens to define light

ODE TO SEA DARKNESS

and the darkness gath
ered on the beds of the seas
in the great oceans

it reigned completely
unrestrictedly and e
ternally and in

the human mind it
took root and spread out so it
became possible

for man to distin
guish light from darkness and choose
freely between them

ODE TO THE LILAC

the wild lilacs are
the loveliest although the
andenken an lou

is späth hybrids that
stand in a square at the ma
riebjerg ceme

tery spreading their
fragrance over the dead al
so have their own par

ticular beauty
so it is the wild lilacs
that symbolise life

ODE TO WHEAT

in the time around
seven sleepers day i no
tice for the first time

that the wheat turns blue
at this time of year – it is
strange however that

it should take me al
most seventy years to as
certain such a simp

le fact what in all
the world is it that one goes
around staring at?

ODE TO THE CRAB APPLE

hai t'ang is what
the wild crab apple is called
in chinese – they are

inedible ex
cept as jelly when eating
pheasant or game but

they smell like the nape
of your beloved's neck be
neath the hair if you

split them both sourish
and quite intoxicating
malus silvestris

ODE TO THE MOTH

i saw a tiger
moth in rudme in broad day
light at the spot where

it had crashed to the
ground under a gleaming sun
what was a moth do

ing anyway fly
ing around in the heat of
midday – i saw a

tiger moth in rud
me like a silk screen painting
on the mind and heart

ODE TO A DEAD POET

when lean nielsen
in his heyday was reading
aloud at a ca

fé in aarhus he
ground to a halt every time
he tried to say: spo

ghatti dish spaghet
to dish spighetti dash – he
never managed to

get it right – spaghet
ti dish – now the flaming thing
has been written down

ODE TO THE FAWN

i have re-entered
my childhood have regressed to
use another word

am watching the car
toon film bambi searching back
wards – *one's childhood*

what a lot of crap
bambi on the ice bambi
in the forest fire

bambi quite alone
in the world – good grief what a
load of bull (fawn) shit

ODE TO THE AVOCADO

i eat an avo
cado every day it comes
from israel and

resembles a hand
grenade – it's all the same to
me i would also

eat it if it came
from palestine and it re
sembled a lump of

plastic explosive –
the avocado has its
own rights in the world

ODE TO CLOUDS AT NIGHT

i allow my thoughts
to roam out across the fields
like clouds at night that

have such a pecu
liar light to them as if
they were dreams painted

in pictures by prince
eugen and i hardly know
any longer how

to express it but
make the attempt with these words
one's old age – how true

ODE TO THE TIDE

the tide comes at the
right time every day it in
undates the beach at

fogense with great
precision and dead objects
from life's shipwreck with

exactly the same
degree of precision it
leaves the sand full of

empty beer cans and
plastic detritus – just call
it eternity

ODE TO THE DOGDAYS

in summer right in
the dogdays it can sometimes
happen that the words

stiffen and the poem
coagulates like junket
used to do on the

window sills in for
mer times or curdle in
thunderstorms something

that resembles this
ode over which i now sprink
le crumbled rye bread

ODE TO THE CAT

my cat is three-col
oured – therefore it is a fe
male cat which it is

black white and reddish
shading in such interest
ing patterns that i

ought perhaps to of
fer the rights to use them
to kenzo or to

gucci as a de
coration on a pair of
ultra-trendy tights

ODE TO PAIN

and so what if the
shit should end up hitting the
fan and the paper's

used up so what if
the bridges have been burned and
the road's a dead end?

so not a single
thing not the tiniest thing
just as long as you

hold the throttle o
pen and live out every bit
of your love and pain

ODE TO HEINZ TOMATO KETCHUP

do i get paid by
the heinz group for making use of
precisely their brand

of tomato ketch
up in this poem? – not at
all so why am i

doing it? – because
there are a few braised pota
toes left over in

the selfsame poem and
the heinz ketchup just happens
to be close at hand

ODE TO AUSTIN GRANDJEAN

those letters are not
to be white but verdigris
green like horse piss – the

words fell briefly and
concisely and so did the
cover of one of

my poetry col
lections arise which other
wise gleamed with roses –

the graphic artist
and the maestro always got
the final sharpness

ODE TO NIKE

i prefer nike
rather than adidas for
various differ

ent reasons the most
important of which is the
name and its ety

mology: the head
less goddess of victory
with wings of stone strange

ly enough i hap
pen to run in shoes from a
sics made in china

ODE TO SUGAR

i return home from
middelfart with my mouth dry
the sky is fiery

blue it is as hot
as hell thirty degrees cen
tigrade what i need

is liquid i find
a coca-cola lime light
in the refriger

ator sugar-free –
ye gods the taste is just like nor
wegian *øllebød*

ODE TO THE HAMMER

hammer and plane ham
mer and bicycle pump ham
mer and skewer ham

mer and cane hammer
and golf club hammer and broom
stick hammer and

rolling-pin hammer
and field marshal's baton ham
mer and blind man's stick

hammer and barker's
stick hammer and meat hammer
hammer and sickle

ODE TO THE MOMENT

at the moment i
am writing this sentence down
in this poem and

now i am writing
the next sentence down in the
poem and so on

ad libitum but
i do not capture the mo
ment even though pre

cisely that makes up
eternity's atom in
temporality

ODE TO THE THUNDERSTORM

when i listen to
the thunderstorm above heart
land and at the same

time hear the pastor
al symphony by beetho
ven it is hard to

decide where the sing
le clap of thunder comes from –
i will leave that to

the poem and to
you who are reading it at
this very moment

ODE TO LETTERS

the dance of the let
ters over the paper in
the infinite's com

binations of words
and sentences linguisti
cally crammed with mean

ing ultimately
without meaning or with a
meaning no one un

derstands any more
on a palimpsest of e
ver deeper layers

ODE TO QUINTESENCE

the extract of sum
mer concentrated in di
verse bottles and ca

rafes on the maho
gany sideboard: the yarrow
snaps next to the la

dy's bedstraw and vi
olet snaps (may-dew added)
and common tansy

snaps almost as in
holger rosenkrantz's al
chemistic workshop

ODE TO LEMON BALM

it all began so
well in the supermarket
where we bought lemon

balm and put it in
the salad we ate and af
terwards planted it

out in the garden
where it now grows in all the
flower beds i spend time

weeding – just think to
have to pull up so much me
lissa by the roots

ODE TO INDIFFERENCE

i simply don't care
whether fck or brøndby win
the football match on

sunday don't give a
shit i just don't fucking care
i doesn't make my

balls sweat to hear a
bout fck's faggots and brøndby's
clodhopping yokels

i find both clubs a
matter of indifference
i am an ob fan

ODE TO NATO

or the world commun
ity (as it is also
called) which decides who

is going to be
bombed and who has a licence
to bomb and to man

ufacture bombs (nu
clear bombs) and who is al
lowed to sell bombs which

decides everything
just as the empire used to
do in the old days

ODE TO FOUR ROSES

this poem is drugged
in a certain way since i
am intoxica

ted while writing it
from three glasses of four ro
es bourbon whiskey

(i've also eaten
two cabbage sausages from
højer – but they're not

on the positive
list) is the poem then to
be disqualified?

ODE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

as it materi
alised itself for a brief
moment in the in

stallation called the
holy spirit between blood
transfusions and wine

bottles between calf's
tongues and mirrors in order
to demonstrate how

ordinary and
infantile our conceptions
actually are

ODE TO DANDY

gumlink – i say be
cause it says gumlink on the
factory we are

driving past in vej
le right now – i remember
gumlink well but i

had repressed the fright
ful name that has now replaced
dandy which ought to

have stood there on the
factory but now only
stands in the poem

ODE TO SOUP

the soup canon: chick
en soup and campbell's tinned soup
shark's fin soup or knorr's

dried soup that comes in
packets bird's nest soup or
soup that is wholly from

oats miso soup and
wakam soup soup that is based
on sago and soup

that has been made from
nothing but a sausage stick
or from a poem

ODE TO A FEATHER IN THE WIND

on the window pane
the one directly facing
my writing desk a

feather is flutter
ing in a spider's web a
small white feather brought

here by the wind and
by chance to tell me the fair
ytale of how five

bullfinches ended
up as one feather in a
poem in a book

ODE TO THE CARROT

the carrot is call
ing me i can hear its voice
in my sleep – it wants

to be pulled up out
of the soil somewhere or oth
er here on funen

away from the che
micals and to lie on its
lit de parade with

its green crest on top
of its helmet – its voice sounds
like ove sprogøe's

ODE TO AMBIGUITY

snatches of a con
versation at the uno-
x station in søn

dersø: is the time
really five minutes past nine
it looks a bit dark

er than that? – my friend
says pointing at the gleaming
neon figures – what you

are looking at is
the price of diesel fuel i
tell him in reply

ODE TO GLASS

through which i see most
of the world nowadays – the
windows in the house

that face all four di
rections of the compass the
large verandah doors

facing the sunset
the car windows the lenses
of my glasses and

my grandfather's mag
nifying glass for the small
print in the contract

ODE TO COLGATE

yet another person dead
i don't know why i go out
into the bathroom

and brush my teeth when
i have read the announcement
in the paper but

good grief how i foam
about the mouth as if the
holy spirit was

upon me or an e
pilectic fit – what else can
i possibly say?

ODE TO INERTIA

this poem is to
be read like a tv com
mercial in which a

voice says something else
than the actor who does not
say anything out

loud but mimes in a
different language – so it
says something else than

what is said or than
what can be read further down
in the subtitles

ODE TO THE RIGHT OF CITIZENSHIP

the right as an im
migrant to be treated in
precisely the same

way as the own in
habitants of the country
neither worse nor bet

ter and particu
larly not better (that kind
of suppressive pa

tronising is spot
ted at once) the right to a
full citizenship

ODE TO EXPECTATION

everyone knows the
story of the joy of ex
pectation fewer

know that of the pain
of fulfilment how all the
run-ups and the dreams

disappear and the
expectation itself is
suddenly snuffed out

by reality's
alarm clock that rings so vi
olet and strident

ODE TO VANITY

at the moment of
writing i'm sitting newly
shaved in a hand-sewn

shirt from hongkong with
a silk tie that matches it –
i do this in or

der to be able
to write that i do this with
authenticity

my final act is
to place a rose branch down a
cross the poem here

ODE TO THE CROPS

a bean man with a
potato nose and arms of
asparagus as

well as a carrot
sticking out above his balls
of tomatoes plus

legs of corn-sheaves and
turnips in the pockets knees
of beetroot – you've not

clapped eyes on the likes of him
before a brand-new giusep
pe archimboldo

ODE TO THE RED FLOWER

in your red cotton
panties my beloved back
then when we believed

that everything would
continue that we were im
mortal back then i

did not yet know that
i would be leaving this world
without understand

ing anything at
all without any answer
to a fucking shit

ODE TO THE FLAME

at the same time that
bent faurschou-hviid (also
known as the flame) fell

fighting nazism
a danish poet wrote po
ems of homage to

exactly the same
ideology – both of
them were born in the

year nineteen hundred
and twenty one – youth is no
excuse whatsoever

ODE TO THE AIRPORT

of all the airports
i have flown from or i have
landed in gander

is closest to my
heart although i only sam
pled its distinctive

atmosphere for a
bout twenty minutes on my
way to cuba – i

left nothing behind
in gander and took nothing
with me from gander

ODE TO THE EYE OF A NEEDLE

why should a camel
attempt to pass through the eye
of a needle or

a rich man for that
matter seek to enter the
kingdom of heaven

where his wealth's not worth
a single penny – why not
instead simply thread

the eye of the need
le with perfectly ordi
nary button thread?

ODE TO MENTAL DERANGEMENT

it is harder to
pretend to be mentally
deranged if one is

so than if one is
n't – but very much harder
to pretend to be

mentally deranged
if one isn't so than if
one is – or it is

even harder to
be mentally deranged than
pretend to be so

ODE TO THE COLD

where is it coldest
in the world – is it at the
north pole or at the

south pole in the phi
lippine trench or the summit
of mount everest

is it in the cor
ridors of power in dan
te's hell or perhaps

in your own deepfree
zer? – it is coldest of all
in the human heart

ODE TO MENTAL HOSPITALS

i have visited
many people at skt hans
hospital – poets

ex-wives and other
members of the family
and have always felt

myself just a lit
tle bit at home out there at
roskilde fjord and

in actual fact
there is not all that big a
difference either

ODE TO THE SOVIET UNION

that fought the dragon
of nazism and strangled
it in the mud and

talcum of lenin
grad and cut off its head at
the tractor factor

y of stalingrad
with steel and vanadium
and ended up be

coming a fire-spew
ing dragon itself just as
in the fairytales

ODE TO FOG

the kyrie e
leison of the foghorn
out from the sound in

the early dawn where
my poetry had its be
ginning so many

years ago – i go
down to the water to hear
once more the complain

ing sound of my youth
now i just happen to be
in copenhagen

ODE TO GRANITE

i can still manage
to establish a fami
ly grave in stone

paradisbakke
granite for example with
dates names and titles

all done in gold bronze
or with some well-chosen words –
but am i going

to? hardly and why
not? – why make a mockery
of eternity

ODE TO PERIODS OF TIME

it has taken me
sixty-seven years seven
months twenty-two days

fifteen minutes and
forty-five seconds to com
pose this particu

lar poem which you
have now (almost) finished read
ing in the space of

approximately
twenty-one seconds unless
you are dyslexic

ODE TO INFINITY

let's pay a tribute
to the mathematician
évariste galois

who did not pass an
arithmetic exam at
the same time as he

solved the equation
of the polynomials –
if only we might

solve that of infin
ity although we fail the
finitude exam

ODE TO THE DOGDAYS

that are burning down
in the fields of wheat and turn
ing the words darker

(titian's old trick of
rubbing the surface of the
picture with ivo

ry black and drying
it off again) and the po
ems a trifle me

lancholy because
the summer will very soon
be *dead and gone*

ODE TO THE PEACOCK

that is strutting a
round up there at harritslev
farm in the circles

of its own vani
ty or that flew into the
windscreen of the bus

for the same reason
to mirror itself and fin
ally displays its

desire at ege
skov castle clad in an albi
no sequin costume

ODE TO SCHULSTAD

in the old days it
used to be called light rye bread
dark rye bread or whole

meal rye bread now though
it's fitman or forester
bread – i don't care much

which that bread from that
factory has kept me a
live for over sixty

years i demand rye
bread be introduced on com
munion tables

ODE TO ROUTINE

i sit down at my
writing desk at nine o'clock
as usual wind

up my gold watch check
the ansaphone of the mo
bile phone pick my nose

a bit confer with
my various papers se
lect a particu

lar ballpoint pen from
many others and then i
start to write this ode

ODE TO MODERATION

or the golden mean
the line that quintus hora
tius flaccus has

traced through poetry
all the way down to the pre
sent age and these words

that do not go be
yond their own meaning or their
own significance

but remain within
the approved metamorpho
ses of the poem

ODE TO APRIL

that once again ri
ses up from the sea bed full
of mother of pearl

and clouds like the curves
of nasdaq and dow jones on
the paper sky of

the newspapers so
all is reassuringly
the same as ever

in the new mille
nium although not quite it
is a year later

ODE TO THE COMMUNE

forty years ago
i lived in a commune in
gentofte among

yew trees blackcurrant
bushes and silver paper – the
final break-up was

not due to either
financial matters poli
tical ideas

or love affairs but
the question of who was to
mow the lawn and when

ODE TO THE THIRD DAY

and god awoke from
having been sozzled with a
huge hangover but he

nevertheless sang
the praises of the third day
and god said: wine and

spirits are to stand
on each and every shelf for
wine is my son's blood

and all spirit is some
thing holy – then he lifted
his cup in a toast

ODE TO THE CATEGORIES

the sun gleaming through
its fishbone its tensed up ca
tegories without

which it would be quite
impossible for these words
to be written

reason has under
stood that it has understood
nothing and therefore

can now safely de
vote itself to categor
ising creation

ODE TO METEORS

that now and then create
panic in a distant
flock of sheep but are

soon forgotten a
gain just like the meteor
ites and the shooting

stars which we otherwise
were prepared to put so
much trust in with our

wishes that are not
fulfilled until long after
they've been forgotten

ODE TO THE CUCUMBER

the curved type it should
be noted – *recht ist recht krumm*
ist aber nicht schlecht –

my forefather the
obaldus von hoeck once wrote
in the seventeenth

century – so already
back then my family
had fallen foul

of the euro passport
regulations and capitalisation

ODE TO THE DEAD-CALM SEA

dead calm sky-mirror
all of the world's great thinkers
ultimately

have recourse to god –
it is only mediocrity
that continues

uses all the speculations
ad absurdum to
something that in a

nother dialect
is referred to as reason
sky-mirror dead calm

ODE TO THE TIE

ties lead their own lives
they have their own special agenda
– blue domi

nates over red and
yellow-striped dominates
over flowers silk is

a must polyester
is out – i myself am
wearing a white ken

zo tie today with
a light-brown pattern – i wonder
what that can mean?

ODE TO SILENCE

silence reigns supreme
in the innermost depths of
stones in a disturb

ing way like birds that
are circling high in the win
ter sky as opposed

to the stillness that
is always there with a con
stant sound silence is

the deepest sound found
in nature silence has some
thing to do with death

ODE TO MELANCHOLY

i am not a me
lancholic have never been
one and will never

become one there is
too much blood and yellow gall
in my system but

i have always pre
ferred casper david friedrich's
'melancholia'

to the one by al
brecht dürer which seems much too
black for my liking

ODE TO JBS

i have bought ten pairs
of pants with the brand-name of
jbs which otherwise

is only adver
tised for at boxing matches
(what does jbs stand for

by the way – jutland
boyswear something?) ten pairs of
brand-new pants complete

with flies – now it is
all a question of not piss
ing in one's trousers

ODE TO BROVST

i called for silence
with a paper knife against
the glass and travelled

to havanna with
czechoslovakian air
ways – my life changed i

was never the same
again which i natural
ly enough wouldn't

have been either
had i decided instead
to travel to brovst

ODE TO AN INDIAN SUMMER

it sounds quite golden
almost shakespearean or
like the lighting in

a bergman film i
don't really know what it is
or where when – perhaps

in the middle of
october between fungi
and boleti pre

cisely where i am
now standing well into my
sixty-seventh year

ODE TO MILK

as a child i spat
out my mother's nipple when
i was to be breast-

fed and as a boy
i built castles of porridge
with moats for the milk

as a grown man i
much preferred other drinks to
semi-skimmed or full-

cream milk it is on
ly in my old age that milk
is on the programme

ODE TO PETROLEUM

petroleum is
not black we all know that what
colour is it then? –

that we do not know
just as nobody under
stands *the word of death*

and so we call the
both of them petroleum-
coloured for lack of

something better and
only say by so doing
that we do not know

ODE TO THE BALL OF WOOL

that has rolled all the
way over here from my mo-
ther's knitting basket

straight across zealand
right across the great belt bridge
all the way from my

childhood to my old
age through the funen fruit plan-
tations and heartland

finally ending
up in this ode where a cat's
now playing with it

ODE TO THE UNKNOWN

no one it goes with
out saying knows the unknown
just as no one is

able to think the
unthinkable that happens
to be how the laws

of logic function
therefore reason and courage
have to go beyond

their own limita
tions in order to gain know
ledge of the absence

ODE TO SEAWEED

that singes with sil
ver and chlorine in the sin
uses up at the

north coast where every
morning we fight with morta
lity that makes the

flesh creep and gives us
gooseflesh when the sun rises
like a mantra be

hind bogense and
the seaweed begins to smoke
down on the sea shore

ODE TO HEARING

i wake up in the
middle of the night and lie
listening for a

long time it's complete
ly still in the house stock-still
i can't even no

tice my own heart beat
ing – then it is that i hear
a silver source that

is springing in the
darkness; my wife's peeing
with the door open

ODE TO THE NASTURTIIUM

indian cress nose
tweaker nasturtium monks cress
flashing flower tropa

eolum pelto
phorum (a flower by any
other name would smell

as sweet) you know it
well the small trumpet that tastes
better than it sounds

and looks better behind
your beloved's ear than a
longside the carport

ODE TO THE BLUE AD NEWSPAPER

on the occasion
of my seventy-fifth birth
day i hereby a

nounce that my first col
lection of poems yggdra
sill bound in leather

(by axel jensen
in ordrup) with gold-printing
is for sale – price as

agreed since we are
dealing with an ofici
onado copy

ODE TO THE WC

my friend was once trapped
in the toilet the door got
completely jammed and

he was in such a
panic that i had to help
him out of a win

dow – he later died
in another toilet was
that a case of chance

one of fulfilment
or was it just a glimpse in
to absence itself

ODE TO THE EPIPHYSIS

where the soul has its
dwelling in a castle that
is no bigger than

a fir cone between
its four hillocks the soul that
does not weigh any

more than nineteen grams
and that smells of calcium
and roses intoxic

icated with me
latonin in its very
own special darkroom

ODE TO CRITICISM (III)

lord byron once wrote
that the bad poems in a
book make up the dark

night sky without which
it would not be possible
for the good poems

to shine brightly now
the dear critic can specu
late if the quota

tion is false and if
that should prove not to be the
case if it is true

ODE TO SIRIUS

the star above vef
linge is burning brightly
tonight high up in

the mobile phone masts
but fitfully like a de
fect fitting that on

ly god can repair
it could be the north star i
am talking about

but more probably
it is sirius that is
barking from childhood

ODE TO VIAGRA

no – i simply don't
dare i have seen far too ma
ny of my elder

ly friends and acquaint
ances keel over with blood
clots and corona

ry thromboses when
they have taken the little
blue rhombus-shaped pill –

no thank you i pre
fer all things considered a
low-voltage sex life

ODE TO THE MEN OF THE NIGHT

who do not only
freeze in dante's hell with their
hearts full of alu

minium or who
lie on their lits de parade
with their heads pointing

northwards but who con
tinue to sit in certain
ministries to this

very day and who from
there administer the pur
est deeds of darkness

ODE TO THE MODES OF PERCEPTION

i have mentioned ear
lier the poem's swindle
with time and now men

tion its fraud regard
ing space even though these prob
lems are common i

do this to empha
size that the poem does not
essentially re

late to the modes of
perception but to what are
their prerequisites

ODE TO THE HORIZON

which i'm opening
at this moment with an oy
ster knife so that the

light can slip in be
tween the cloud cover and the
sea's surface up here

at fogense where
we bathe every morning and
watch the horizon

spreading out more and
more towards the mother of
pearl of the unknown

ODE TO THE BLACK HOLES

the poem also
has its black holes that suck mean
ing into themselves

like an image in
to an image we are hard
ly talking about

meaninglessness or
about a deeper meaning
simply about a

loss of a meaning
that is now no longer grasped
(like a palimpsest)

ODE TO THE FISHING INDUSTRY

a first-class fish shop
should definitely smell of
iodine and salt

and not of fish any
one knows that who has a sense
of the maritime

but not perhaps that
with a slight whiff of citrus
and scent of cunt we

find ourselves in the
more sublime regions of the
fishing industry

ODE TO WOODLAND FLOWERS

those nominated
are: viola sylvestris
for its role in spring

the rosebay on the
pushpin of summer the white
campions that are

still flowering in sep
tember while the poem is
being written and

last but not least the
blackberry winter played by
keith jarrett himself

ODE TO THE FUNERAL

the funeral ca
non: president kennedy's
funeral with horse

boots and gun carriage
(were shots fired over his grave?)
princess diana's

public funeral
service in black and orange
the funeral of

danish king christi
an the tenth when i burst in
to a flood of tears

ODE TO ESPRIT DE VALDEMAR

who the hell uses
hair lotion nowadays? – no
body not even

those who are bald
nevertheless esprit de
valdemar contin

ues to be manu
factured the green spirit that
i have standing out

in the bathroom – it's
so good for polishing spec
tacle glasses with

ODE TO ISLAM

when i was seven
years old and lived in skive
i was opera

ted on for phimo
sis – when i say opera
ted that's perhaps a

bit of an exag
geration but it hurt at
any rate roughly

the same as being
circumcised with no anaes
thetic i should think

ODE TO THE UNREAL

my writing desk is
made of oak although i'm not
sure a griffin's been

carved in its wood but
it could be a sphinx it has
belonged to my ma

maternal grandfather
unless my memory's play
ing me tricks my po

ems take off from it –
real ones or unreal ones i
do not know which

ODE TO CHESS

i don't know why it
is i that prefer the black
knights rather than the

white and that i al
so like to play with the black
pieces perhaps it

is because i like
to be in opposition
or to be the play

er in the final
position and to lie in
wait with the last move

ODE TO NAILS

at sorø aca
demy i had a big toe
nail treated with crys

tal violet for
a fungal infection it
didn't help though and

one evening in the
dorm it fell off and in the
dark i asked my mate

in the next bed if
he would like a burnt almond
he said that he would

ODE TO OMAR KHAYYAM

many years ago
i bought an omar khayyam
rose (or so i be

lieved) from a nurser
y in løve and i wait
ed for it to bloom

a bright pink but when
it came into flower it
was a deep crimson

and from that i learnt
not to waste time and words on
forgotten roses

ODE TO THE HEDGEHOG

which i most often
meet in its train of blood and
intestines out on

the motorway where it
doesn't cheat any hare or
any car driver

for that matter eith
er as in the fables but
just steams violet

with petrol at the
end of the road with no
further conclusion

ODE TO KANSAS

another discon
certing sign that things are go
ing the wrong way is

that i have started
to resemble my german
teacher from my time

in the sixth form now
it's a question of making
sure the next step is

n't a beret and
kansas overalls like those
my stepfather wore

ODE TO THE SENSE OF SMELL

what a helluva
stench there is here – i've forgot
ten to close the mi

crowave or it's the
cat that has aimed badly at
the litter tray – can't

you smell it there is
one helluva ghastly pong
in here it's not you

sitting there farting
away while you are reading
my poems is it?

ODE TO INSTANT POTATO

i can't resist the
temptation but take a bag
out of the instant

potato pack and
i clip off a corner of
the foil then i sprin

kle the powder out
after me in a thin trail
all the way down from

the kitchen and up
into the poem just as
in the fairytales

ODE TO THE TOES

it's a pity for
the toes they are almost name
less and anony

mous only the big
toe and the little toe have
identity – what

about the others? –
for the time being they will
just have to make do

with these names for the
time being: index toe mid
dle toe and ring toe

ODE TO ALL THE UNIVERSE

what applies to all
ness applies to nothingness
they cancel each oth

er out into non
sense e.g. allness must con
tain nothingness if

it is to be an
allness and where will nothing
ness get rid of the

allness? – even the
poem about these enti
ties ends as rubbish

ODE TO OSAMA BIN LADEN

on a picture col
lage i replace osama
bin laden's turban

with a cloth cap and
his kalashnikov rifle
with a golf club – is

that supposed to be
funny? – not in the slightest –
what then is the point

of doing it? – why then
this and why then that why then
is my dog a cat?

ODE TO THE FOUR-LEAFED CLOVER

passion's clover of
iron in my hand picked on
a lucky day out at

heartland where i gave
it to my beloved pas
sion's four-leafed clover

which brings so much good
luck but which itself ends up
dried and pressed to death

in the most unluck
y fashion between two pa
ges of a bible

ODE TO CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

nor did baudelaire
become the great source of in
spiration for my

writing of poe
try which in a way is strange
filled as it is with

the orchids of dark
ness and passion – perhaps this
is because i have

no command of the
language as i mainly slept
through my french lessons

ODE TO OCTOBER

in this year of grace
when no revolution took
place at most some sour

comments about the
soaring prices of oil and
opposite direc

tion of the showers of
rain i too have always ha
ted this particu

lar month of the year
which is so full of the crack
ling of gamma rays

ODE TO CHARLOTTENLUND POST OFFICE

with its vine leaves of
cement pilasters and li
noleum floors where

i learnt to become
a decent person among
other people while

i distributed
letters from pillar to post
on my crepe rubber

soles – that is the best
school in the world for any
prospective writer

ODE TO THE EVENT

this poem relates
to (is based on) an actu
al event namely

to the fact that you
at this very moment are
in the process of

reading it word by
word sentence by sentence line
by line until your

reading of the po
em comes to a final halt
at this precise spot

ODE TO THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

in my younger days
i successfully managed
to keep myself out

of the trade uni
on although i was in great
need of it – now that

i'm a person of
independent means i'm in
a trade union

though i've little use
for one – (as if it only
had to do with me)

ODE TO CLARITY AND PURITY

to get things perfect
ly clear a clear message but
pure poetry and

pure art pure sport but
a clear conscience a clear sky
reality that's crystal

clear a clear complex
ion and clear eyes but a pure
heart and a pure race

pure madness and pure
rubbish ode to what's clearly
pure and utter piss

ODE TO STRAW

the great straw wheels with
spokes of straw roll on towards
nothingness if we

do not consider
them and come to a standstill
fixed by our gaze for

a moment while we
drive past in our fiat pun
to on our way out

towards the sea con
tinue then unconcerned
ly their slow motion

ODE TO EZRA POUND

goddammit ezra
pound now you're sitting there on
your throne of cello

phane almost backwards
in history with your sing
able mathema

tics purely and simp
ly because you respect glor
y's bitter taste of

silicon purely
and simply because glory
is your own concern

ODE TO NOVEMBER

november's special
offers are more than usu
al a pure cornu

copia: fifty
rolls of toilet paper for
half price six anni

versary bargains
prizes and a birthday sale
free balloons for all

the children as well
as poems for the adults
www.triptychon.dk

ODE TO JUTLAND

sometimes i find my
self wishing that there was no
thing else left except

long trips to the sea
or days spent in jutland be
neath an open sky

one as blue as the
shell of a mussel a place
where there is nobo

dy who can reach me
neither by a mobile phone nor
in reality

ODE TO THE SMALL-LEAFED MAPLE

i've now arrived at
the small-leaved maple at the
foot of which i placed

a motor-saw in
an earlier poem in
another book the

time has come it is
to be felled as it gets in
the way of the light

but i let it stand
in the shadow – darkness is
also to be praised

ODE TO A BOUQUET OF ASTERS

i place a bouquet
of asters in one of the cones
made of tin that are

found in cemete
ries and drill it into the
ground at the grave of

my parents-in-law –
words fall pitifully short
here besides which they're

completely indif
ferent to death don't know a
nything about it

ODE TO ARBOUR ZENA

what is arbour ze
na? – is it a detergent
with special colour

effect or a piece
of music by keith jarrett
with red and yellow

leaves or is it that
tree beneath which the uni
corns come together

once a year in or
der to show themselves in the
grove of poetry?

ODE TO THE PORPOISE

that crowns the bathing
season and summer with for
ward and backward leaps

over and beneath
the horizon we ourselves
will never reach for

obvious reasons
the porpoise's epic
cles along the edge

of vision that clear
ly demonstrate the problem
of infinity

ODE TO M/F KONG FREDERIK IX

my favourite fer
ry home port: gedser call sig
nal: oyyo construc

tion site: elsinore
shipyard main engine: two bur
meister & wain speed

in knots: sixteen put
in service on every con
ceivable route in

denmark renamed: ri
ky broken up at alang
beach in india

ODE TO MEADOWS

out in the meadows
the sun is standing on its
column of black mar

ble like an arrange
ment in a surrealist
ic film or a me

taphysical in
stallation and is shining
quite naturally

as it should behind
the posturing through all i
mages and poems

ODE TO CORKS

put the cork in the
bottle and keep your wishes
for better times you

only have three of
them as you well know from fair
ytale so do not

waste them on red wine
and white wine or vino ver
dhe let them out of

the bottle at just
the right moment as your faith
your hope and your love

ODE TO FORMULA ONE

i went to have a
look to admire michael
schuhmacher's red fer

rari at the ex
hibition at aros art
museum and it

was beautiful and
life-asserting but i fell
for ronnie petterson's

black-finished lotus
racing car with its gleam of
death and ill-fortune

ODE TO A FOURTH CACTUS

that does not stand on
an upturned yawl (see elsewhere
in this collection)

and does not stand in
the garage with a bego
nia (see somewhere

else again in the
collection) and not in the
sun's arena (see

elsewhere yet again)
but here in the incorrup
tion of the poem

ODE TO OXFORD STREET

so oxford street must
symbolise destiny where
i stood in london

and was about to
cross the road on the trail of
william blake and

therefore was contin
ually looking over
my left shoulder's salt

when a voice called out
stop as a car came hurtling
past from the right

ODE TO DEAD-END ROADS

dead-end roads are al
so important the neces
sary mistakes life's

trial and error the
holzwege of romanti
cism in the pro

ximity of death
not to mention the cul de
sac of human thought

as well as that of
love the ultimate choice be
tween art and money

ODE TO NESCAFÉ

instant coffee
instant time instant po
em's freeze-dried seconds

words as powder the
moments released by boiling
water with added

saccharine the a
toms of eternity that
have been spooned down in

to time and poem
stirred into a foaming cup
of cappuccino

ODE TO MOUNDS OF STONES

the earth's gall stones the
field's kidney stones and my thir
ty-two heartstones wrung

out fallen down and
collected into a mound
of stones at the wood's

edge as a reef of
incomprehensibili
ty against which the

sea of time breaks and
foams invisible and be
yond understanding

ODE TO CHURCHES

i sit down inside
padesø church one late af
ternoon the light

stands stock-still in the
church interior not a
sound can be heard it

smells musty and earth
y the taste is acrid no
thing happens abso

lutely nothing – that
is how it must be if one's
faith is to be pure

ODE TO THE PHOTOGRAPH

at an interval
of one hour i took two i
dential photo

graphs of my study –
that is to say on printing
and closer exam

ination of them
i saw that there was a fly
on the wall in one

photo but not in
the other – i wonder what
story it could tell

ODE TO THE PUMPKIN

no snagged-toothed mouth
or a triangular nose
and eyes have been carved

out of the yellow
body of a pumpkin nor
has a candle been

lit inside the head
of the aforementioned pump
kin it is not hal

loween and further
more nor does any pumpkin
exist – *that's spooky*

ODE TO THE COLOUR ORANGE

the essentials of
orange: my wife's coat and skirt
made of thai silk the

orange order the
shirts of the dutch football team
the t-shirts of the

u s marine
corps the orange revolu
tion in the ukraine

oranges that have
come from valencia and
agent orange

ODE TO THE MIDDLE DAY OF THE YEAR

the middle day of
the year is mathemati
cally speaking ju

ly the second (and
not midsummer) except when
it is a leap year

in that case there is
no middle day but a no
thing in the night be

tween the second and
the third of july (the black
cauldron of the sun

ODE TO A DOBERMANN PINSCHER

what is the dog's name?
the same as you – what do you
mean by that? – that it

has got the same name
as you – you can't possibly
know what my name is –

no but the name of
the dog's the same name as you – what
a load of crap it's

a joke that's as old
as the hills – yes but that's the
name of the dog too

ODE TO THE CONSTELLATIONS

i cannot see that
the constellations resem
ble animals or

fabulous creatures
nevertheless the human
mind has projected

its fantasy up
onto the vault of the sky
and used it to ex

plain everything twixt
heaven and earth that self
same fantasy too

ODE TO WITHERED LEAVES

that rustle like tin
in the yard outside where they
whirl and swirl around

the last of the be
gonias what a widder
shins dance of death round

summer's thorns – there is
hardly anything else one
can do than to rake

them together and
to sweep them in under the
poem like used words

ODE TO THE HEN

the hen pheasants have
light-yellow eye make-up on
and mussel shells strewn

all over their plu
mage but that is not the most
remarkable thing

about them in the
winter they perform their dis
appearing trick no

body can see them
again before the follow
ing spring – where are they?

ODE TO VEGETABLES

i have some sort of
strange preference for vege
tables that are un

popular brocco
li for example or squash
and brussel sprouts not

to mention hari
cots verts i wonder if this
has to do with my

urge to be in op
position or perhaps i've
just got a strange taste

ODE TO THE THIRD

there is the light and
there is the darkness does a
third possibili

ty exist? – the twi
light for example or the
dawn? – does that halfway

boundary between
light and darkness exist as
a zero – is hu

man kind itself this
boundary itself this third
possibility?

ODE TO WINDMILLS

this poem has been
nominated for an a
luminium trout

for its salty and
acrid sea-mist which rolls up
through sydslugen not

far from blåvands huk
like chlorine gas from a world
war and for its thoughts

which circle around
the windmills out at the off
shore bar of horns rev

ODE TO SIBERIAN CRABTREES

that stood in my child
hood garden and perhaps still
stand there and that blos

som in unseen noc
turnal mirrors as if no
thing in the world had

happened since back then
time and eternity co
verged into a dis

tant point that sucks e
verything into it as now
sixty years later

ODE TO THE FIVE-POINTED STAR

which i took posses
sion of from a tin-box that
stood behind lud

vig holberg's sarco
phagus in sorø chapel
it is made of tin

and placed on my writ
ing desk – who on earth would have
believed that the grand

master of reason
was somebody who was con
cealing such secrets?

ODE TO A SAMURAI SWORD

which has the name nu
ning and can wound everything
except itself it

arrived here direct
ly from japan in a spe
cial wooden box as

a token of love
from my beloved and as
a symbol i have

n't the faintest i
dea what to use it for
except as itself

ODE TO BEST FRIEND BIRD FEED

*solsikkefrø sol
rosfrön auringgonkukan
siemeniä*

*sonnenblumenker
ne sunflower seeds graines
de tournesol zon*

*nebloempitten
with love from best friend
i only hope that*

no russian or span
ish birds will turn up at the
bird tray and poem

ODE TO A CORRESPONDENCE CHESSPLAYER

you never sent me
your thirty-fourth move because
death happened to get

in the way quite lit
erally not as a com
bination between

rook and knight but in
the form of an illness – so
somewhere in the spi

rit our chess match will
remain undecided for
all eternity

ODE TO BISON OXEN

i go out to the
bison farm ditlevsdal to
say hello to the

bulls mooses and ju
piter who are also known
as the beef brothers –

there they stand – what an
amazing fact what in all
the world am i to

say? – i can't think of
anything apart from: *what
a lot of bullshit*

ODE TO A LIME

i roll a lime in
through the poem it is one
helluva beauti

ful fruit like a green
golfball or like the egg of
an unknown bird – you

cannot see it be
cause it has long since rolled out
of the poem a

gain on the other
side over the edge of the
table out of sight

ODE TO SADNESS

bonjour tristesse
my entire generation
is familiar with

both the book and the
film and even if they are
equally bad they

both catch a depress
ion typical of the age
that is not half as

deep as that my fe
male cat went through when she was
no longer on heat

ODE TO CUMULUS CLOUDS

or cummelum clouds
as a member of *bandet*
nul referred to them

at a poetry
reading where i myself lift
ed my glass to the

sky so as to at
tract the cumulus clouds down
and to mix them with

gin and vermouth and
cocktail cherries as a tri
bute to that same band

ODE TO FOAM ON WAVES

that gleam like flower
ing apple plantations when
seen from above in

a bird's eye view e
normous patterns which i al
most seem to recog

nise but which are al
ways new like an image of
life itself where the

repetitions are
also only possible
in absentia

ODE TO PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

during which i sort
of hop over one thing or
another (as when

varnishing a floor)
so as to devote myself
to some third thing that

i can't really de
fine and therefore simply let
time pass by i.e. pre

tending that any
thing can happen while nothing
actually does

ODE TO KITTENS

that i did away
with using ether and buck
ets of water once

and buried in the
dark behind the statue of
light in amor

park over by the
national hospital where
i myself came in

to the world sixty-
eight years ago – can it
get more pathetic?

ODE TO ILLNESS

sooner or later
some illness or other will
catch up with me and

finally kill me
i know neither the illness
nor its latin name

but let it be some
form of meagre consola
tion that if illness

did not exist life
itself would succumb and be
certain to perish

ODE TO FIELDSTONE WALLS

that run along the
edges of woods and field lanes
separate fairy

tale and reali
ty spirit and nature the
one invisible

the other visi
ble leading in to the place
where life relates to

its own emergence
i.e. to itself i.e.
its own creator

ODE TO THE DEAD POET

now you don't have to
strike a pose any longer
or read aloud at

every conceivable
moment and when your fi
nal tall stories have

evaporated
your poetry will have to
try and manage on

its own in the world
all on its own in the night
of the long poems

ODE TO THE YEAR'S LAST FLOWER

which i found out at
heartland late in december
more beautiful than

a daisy although
it happened to be a dai
sy and i natu

rally picked it not
because it represented
the totality

and where else was it
to be an adornment in
what other bouquet?

ODE TO QUANTITIES

who counts the stones in
the field or the ears of corn
who counts the number

of raindrops and the
dead birds who keeps an account
of the number of

flowers or the grains
of sand that are swept off the
great dunes at råbjerg

mile who counts the
number of poems or
hairs on your own head?

ODE TO PEPPER

i peel an egg and
cut it into slices as
i also do a

tomato i place
the slices alternately
on a piece of coarse

rye bread without but
ter then i sprinkle a lit
tle salt over the

food lastly a pinch
of black pepper over the
poem – *et voilà*

ODE TO THE SCREWDRIVER

*so it's two screw
drivers and no cocktail?* – that
is more or less how

my attitude to
tools and implements can be
summed up and to screw

drivers in parti
cular so i will have to
make do with the po

em's mental screwdriv
er which in its own way screws
the world together

ODE TO THE NOW

there is that differ
ence between the now and the
moment that the for

mer gathers and joins
together the world while the
latter spreads and pulls

it apart one could
say that the former consti
tutes eternity's

atoms in the world
the latter the world's atoms
in eternity

ODE TO THE MOBILE TELEPHONE

i am so pleased with
my mobile telephone it
is as if one is

in contact with the
entire world the whole time sim
ultaneously

as if one even
on a dark december af
ternoon is connect

ed to all of hu
manity which can call you
at any moment

ODE TO LIGHTNING

lightning strikes – what else
is it supposed to do? – right
then lightning strikes a

distant solita
ry tree and i start to count
the seconds and write

it down what i mean
is i count and i write the
clap of thunder down

in the poem's ab
solute stillness – what else am
i supposed to do?

ODE TO QUARKS

that whirl and twirl a
way in everything like small
snowstorms and dia

bolos that spin round
and round or like tops that are
whipped through the power

lessness of thought out
around nothingness's cen
tre of incompre

hensibility
that perhaps not even the
creator can grasp

ODE TO MY TYPEWRITER

once a long time a
go the tom cat pissed all o
ver my typewriter

(an old torpedo)
because it was perfectly
well aware that af

ter a month of con
finement indoors it would be
let out of the house

just as now forty
years later i do likewise
with its feline ghost