



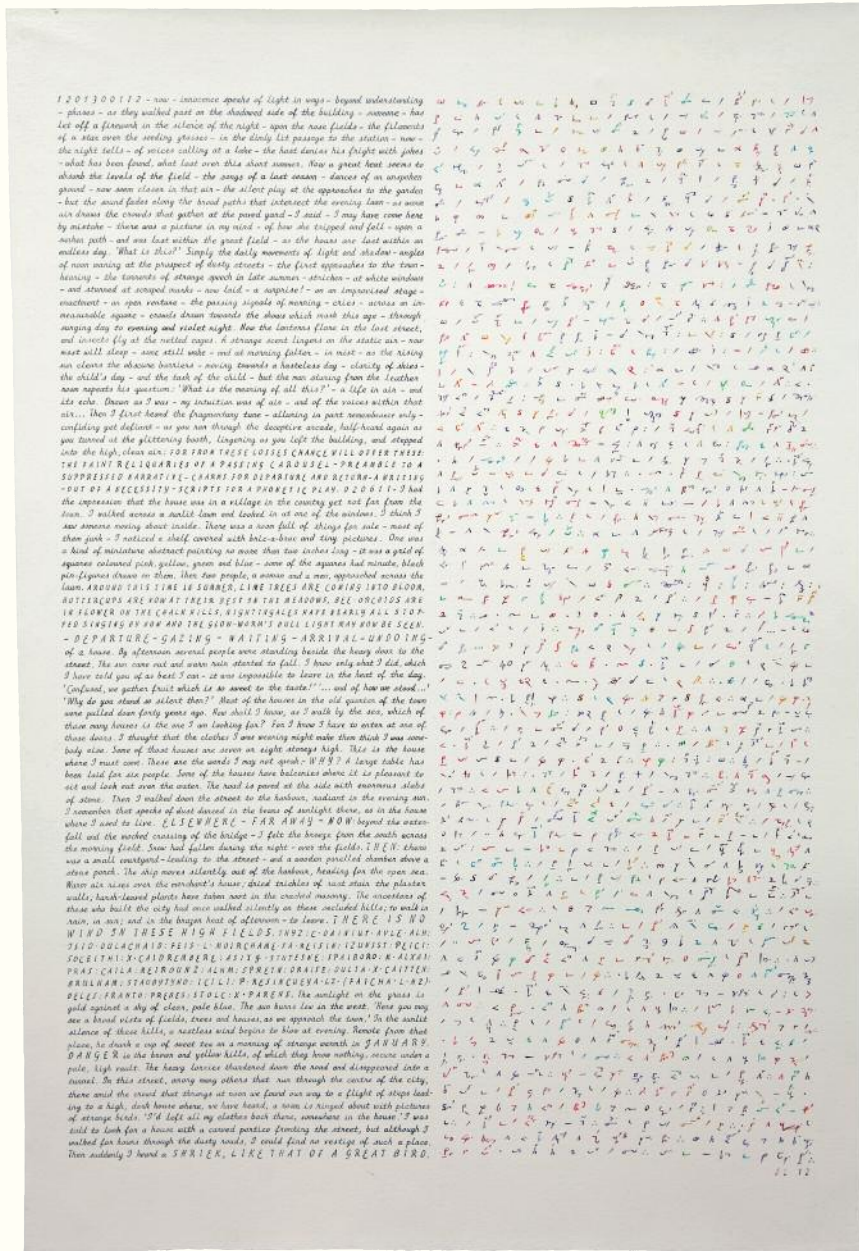
SIMON LEWTY
VERSIONS OF ONE ANOTHER
PETER LARKIN



ART FIRST, LONDON
MMXVI

take - there was a picture in my mind - of how she tripped and fell - upon a path - and was lost within the great field - as the hours are lost within an
 day. 'What is this?' Simply the daily movements of light and shadow - angles
 waning at the prospect of dusty streets - the first approaches to the town -
 - the torrents of strange speech in late summer - stricken - at white windows
 stunned at scraped marks - now laid - a surprise! - on an improvised stage -
 ent - an open venture - the passing signals of morning - cries - across an im-
 able square - crowds drawn towards the shows which mark this age - through
 g day to evening and violet night. Now the lanterns flare in the lost street,
 sects fly at the netted cages. A strange scent lingers on the static air - now
 ill sleep - some still wake - and at morning falter - in mist - as the rising
 ars the obscure barriers - moving towards a hasteless day - clarity of skies -
 ld's day - and the task of the child - but the man staring from the leather
 epeats his question: 'What is the meaning of all this?' - a life in air - and
 ho. Drawn as I was - my intuition was of air - and of the voices within that
 Then I first heard the fragmentary tune - alluring in part remembrance only -
 ing yet defiant - as you ran through the deceptive arcade, half-heard again as
 rned at the glittering booth, lingering as you left the building, and stepped
 he high, clear air: FOR FROM THESE LOSSES CHANCE WILL OFFER THESE:
 AINT RELIQUARIES OF A PASSING CAROUSEL - PREAMBLE TO A
 RESSED NARRATIVE - CHARMS FOR DEPARTURE - AND RETURN - A WRITING
 OF A NECESSITY - SCRIPTS FOR A PHONETIC PLAY. 020611 - I had
 pression that the house was in a village in the country yet not far from the
 I walked across a sunlit lawn and looked in at one of the windows. I think I
 meone moving about inside. There was a room full of things for sale - most of
 unk - I noticed a shelf covered with bric-a-brac and tiny pictures. One was
 ' of miniature abstract painting no more than two inches long - it was a grid of
 s coloured pink, yellow, green and blue - some of the squares had minute, black
 gures drawn on them. Then two people, a woman and a man, approached across the
 AROUND THIS TIME IN SUMMER, LIME TREES ARE COMING INTO BLOOM,
 ERCUPS ARE NOW AT THEIR BEST IN THE MEADOWS, BEE-ORCHIDS ARE
 OWER ON THE CHALK HILLS, NIGHTINGALES HAVE NEARLY ALL STOP-
 INGING BY NOW AND THE GLOW-WORM'S DULL LIGHT MAY NOW BE SEEN.
 PARTURE - GAZING - WAITING - ARRIVAL - UNDOING -
 house. By afternoon several people were standing beside the heavy door to the
 t. The sun came out and warm rain started to fall. I know only what I did, which
 e told you of as best I can - it was impossible to leave in the heat of the day.
 used, we gather fruit which is so sweet to the taste.' ... and of how we stood...'
 do you stand so silent then?' Most of the houses in the old quarter of the town
 ulled down forty years ago. How shall I know, as I walk by the sea, which of
 many houses is the one I am looking for? For I know I have to enter at one of
 doors. I thought that the clothes I was wearing might make them think I was some-
 else. Some of those houses are seven or eight storeys high. This is the house
 I must come. These are the words I may not speak - WHY? A large table has
 laid for six people. Some of the houses have balconies where it is pleasant to
 rd look out over the water. The road is paved at the side with enormous slabs
 one. Then I walked down the street to the harbour, radiant in the evening sun.
 ember that specks of dust danced in the beams of sunlight there, as in the house
 I used to live. ELSEWHERE - FAR AWAY - NOW: beyond the water-
 and the mocked crossing of the bridge - I felt the breeze from the south across
 orning field. Snow had fallen during the night - over the fields. THEN: there
 : small courtyard - leading to the street - and a wooden panelled chamber above a
 : porch. The ship moves silently out of the harbour, heading for the open sea.
 air rises over the merchant's house; dried trickles of rust stain the plaster
 ; harsh-leaved plants have taken root in the cracked masonry. The ancestors of
 who built the city had once walked silently on these secluded hills; to walk in
 in sun; and in the brazen heat of afternoon - to leave. THERE IS NO
 VD IN THESE HIGH FIELDS. THYZ: C·DAINIUT·AVLE·ALH:
 D·DULACHAID: FEIS·L·MOIRCHAMÉ·FA·REISIN: IZUNSST: PEICI:
 EITHI: X·CAIDREMBERE: ASITG·STUTESNE: SPAIBORO: M·ALXAI:
 S: CATLA·MEITOUNZ: ALHM: SPRETN: DRAISE: OULTA·X·CAITTEN:
 LHAM: STAUBTYNO: ICILLI: P·RESINCUEYA·LZ·(FAICHA·L·HZ):
 ES: FRANTO: PREBES: STOLC: X·PARENS. The sunlight on the grass is
 against a sky of clear, pale blue. The sun burns low in the west. 'Here you may
 : broad vista of fields, trees and houses, as we approach the town.' In the sunlit
 ice of these hills, a restless wind begins to blow at evening. Remote from that
 , he drank a cup of sweet tea on a morning of strange warmth in JANUARY.

Handwritten phonetic script in various colors (red, green, blue, black) on a grid background, corresponding to the text on the left.



Simon Lewty, *Innocence Speaks of Light in Ways*, 2012, ink and acrylic on paper, 92.5 x 63 cm. Detail shown on preceding page

PREFACE

For a number of years now, I have been fascinated by the sheer words, distinctive phrases and poetic narratives which are such a constituent, though problematic, part of Simon Lewty's picture-making. I have always, perhaps a little perversely, relished the often demanding task of following his texts line by line where the picture-space makes this possible. I've not deluded myself, however, that such a literal reading can encounter everything that is being offered by the work of art, but such meditative patience with what often seems like a half-forgotten, half-obliterated text remains a genuine moment of encounter.

At the same time, Simon himself has been among the most distinctive and responsive readers of my own poetry, having a very special 'eye' for the patterns, combinations and textures of my texts, and may often have been the first person to read them. And he reads them as an artist, attending to each contour or configuration before him.

Last autumn (2015), it so happened that we were both feeling rather jaded and stuck with our own output, while at the same time discussing how artworks were always open to further versions of themselves, as condensations or extensions. From there, perhaps from want of anything better to do, we agreed to experiment with new versions of each other's mainly recent work. Simon had been mulling over a set of short poems of mine called *City Trappings* (Veer Books, 2016), poems which evoke the enclosed tracts of countryside within the Birmingham conurbation, and thought that he could draw or extrude something of his own from them. At the same time, I took up with two important published catalogues of his, *The Self as a Stranger* (2010) and *Absorption* (2013), and reworked some of the reproduced images which included a substantial amount of text (sometimes using only a close-up of part of a picture) into short poems, each one of which uses Simon's original title.

So both of us have experimented with new sources and starting-points which were relatively unfamiliar to us, certainly in terms of our usual working methods. We were discovering new ways of tracing and modelling how we collect and sift material and somehow make it our own. We hope our readers will find the results of interest, and that these poems can be enjoyed in their own right, whatever their origins. And perhaps they have further to go. Any ideas, dear reader?

Peter Larkin

SIMON
LEWTY

Spectrum per Dolour

of foliage, to cross a city
the hold is shared
the pull is not
idyll on a city
SPECTRUM PER DOLOUR
between heath and wood
abysses
a green gap
a gate to walking
SPECTRUM PER DOLOUR
a shared booth of origin
near/far the city
tranquillity, closer than its origin
stasis
SPECTRUM PER DOLOUR
paradisation
cradling grassheads
where no harvest was ever planted
gleanings
SPECTRUM PER DOLOUR
over barrows of heath
a grove
a glade to a drift
a drift's picket planted
SPECTRUM PER DOLOUR
a cry
between heath and wood
cry of wildfowl
faintly requited
SPECTRUM PER DOLOUR

Of Greater Rites

Of the acts of the town
Of the fragments of recovery
Of the tranquillity of a suburb
Of the old habits of conurbation
Of the fragments of a heath
Of the bands of an assent
Of the passaging of the contained
Of the residue of green fields
Of the toll of an immensity
Of the filaments of a commission
Of the park of the day's range
Of the net of future bestowing
Of the quiets of a rest.

Pastoral

the common scarcity
park impressed upon it
nostalgia
thin bespoke collage
post-immaculate
gorse—a filament
bird stained
paper-thin
the bare city
radiative, a city
retention to an extinction
segments with origin
a city vortex
as spindle suspends ground
spun onto the human
the city's tender perimeter
their own worlds
green apex
para-verdant
green sleet
precipitance
para-extinction
dismaze
on tinted surfaces

Of Further Rites

Of the flights of a beautiful song
Of the monotony of an epoch
Of the prescience of the immaterial
Of the figures of the circumspect
Of the passions of the year
Of the fullness of late changes
Of the conversions of an echo
Of the charms of the unique
Of the consolations of a passing mist
Of the periods of the relentless wheel
Of the mottoes of an astounding index
Of the shocks of the city's décor
Of the crisis of the sentimental
Of the dreams of the indelible
Of the origins of a rare vision
Of the happiness of the irresolute
Of the signs of the child's infinity
Of the joys of an evening
Of the witnesses of our destiny
Of the returns of the indifferent
Of the restitutions of the hall
Of the domains of a refuge
Of the vacancy of the proofs
Of the origins of the abstract
Of the doubts of a lost town
Of the changes and repeats of an exotic dream
Of the greater maps of the vague

Of the clarities of a rare shop
Of the fables of an indifference
Of the ancient theatre of passing time
Of the purposes of a realisation
Of the times of a lost language
Of the diaries of the accidental
Of the errors and transparencies of a secret archive
Of the zones of a later origin
Of the regrets of the irrelative chime
Of the bright processions of an empty sun
Of the messages of the feeble unchanged
Of the exhortations of approaching fields
Of the rebukes of a lost season
Of the triumphs of a fragrant wood
Of the fathomless charge of a summer day
Of the divinations of the peaceably-born
Of the coded memoirs of the weeks and months
Of the missing admonitions of the poised
Of the ways of a credence dear
Of the serenity of a departure
Of the hesitations of an hour
Of the constancy of the indecipherable
Of the litany of the forgotten
Of the vanities of a latent telling
Of the hymns of lost vicissitudes
Of the silences of a green cloud
Of the metamorphosis of an elision

Of the serenades of the late-come
Of the singing of a silence
Of the prophecy of centuries
Of the rising symbols of a present field
Of the static of an ever-moving ground
of the membranes of the delusory ephemerides
Of the lost auguries of a year
Of the rising surfaces of a noon
Of the traces of an implacable way
Of the sudden writings of the calm
Of the arrival of a fragile diaphany
Of the unique child of this writing
Of the strange smell of chemical waters
Of the dreams of an estate
Of the secrets of a skin's writing
Of the rituals of an endless day
Of the tranced loci of the folded field
Of the poor imago of a sky
Of the votive tokens of a hill
Of the denizens of a matrix
Of the antecedents of a false sun
Of the orders of the high corn
Of the crumbling books of the schematic
Of the vicinity of their gifts
Of the great abstracts of morning

PETER
LARKIN

*Whispers from
a Mysterious Revolt* 1998

PEACEABLY BORN

the sun unseen till noon

UNECHOING SANDS

a pale message from the darling grounds

THE VOICE OF A LEAF

high tangled trees

WAVING NEW MADE

concurrence of nodding

the blue-changed sky

KEEPING FAITH UPON THIS MISCHIEF

careless of the day

A LOST SEA STEP

A FAINT DYNASTY

the city streets

AMONG THE BROWN TREES

I saved a leaping life

Rebuke of Light 1999

FORLORN ENTRANCE UPON A FLOOR

move slowly across the darkening field

reduce his thinking to a stillness

THE SONG OF THE RAIN

look down the trapped field

A FLAUNTED DEPARTURE

AN UNREMARKED RETURN

at the edges of the faded green

THE HARBOUR OF A DREAM

crystal under his rising tread

HIGH GREEN FIELD

the ground of a game

PLANAR FIELDS, VAIN BOARDS

liquescence in the hardening sky

ITS FLUX THE FLOWERS

days of sullen calling

an unexplained symbol

INSISTENT IN THE LIGHT

ESCAPE OF THE LEAF

clouds beyond a distant hedge

each day has its voice

in the glare of the ebbing light

MUTE JESTING, REBUKE OF LIGHT

*Day of Heat,
Day of Storms* 1999

WHOSE TELLING AN ECHO
IN URGENT FAITH
stretched out of twisted skin
tenuous enclosures
sunlit tracts of the country

OUR RESPITE: FOR THIS
IS WHERE WE MAY FAIL
closely woven branches
touch a small bundle
nourishment is a bidding
told under leaning trees

GIFT OF SCANTY DAY
nodes and pinnacles
watchful of the path
STUNNED ALMANACS
falling in flames

OUT OF THE GREY WOOD
SWOON OF THE EMPTY TOWN
when the treading mounts
a flight of stone steps
pink clovers rise from the mist
A SPENT ACORN, POOR FARING
amid anxious questioning
the head of a blade

*Far from the Town
and Yet not Far* 2001

come from a shaded pathway
into the dry silence
SHAKEN DIAGRAMS
faintly from outside
half-buried in the ground

RANG WITH SOUND
burned in the grate
enter the house
along a tree-lined road

duration of their short lives
heavy with sun
cross the road at that point
WHERE WE HAD DONE SO
in spite of this

stood by the fence
not far from home
NEVER ENDING SEA
all you need to tell you

woods green for days
warm in that building
markets of the cold city
built into the wall

now he walks past gain
this LOW DAY
THE SINGER less than the others
IN THE STILL AIR

To Unexplained Day 2002

OURS IS EVER AN AFFRONT
the bird falls to the earth
this spindle
dolour of the dancing figures
NOW CONFRONTS THE STRETCHED

fragments of sun-dried pulp
pieces of charred gorse
many days in the strange enclosure
IN THEIR SPEECH WARM RAIN
that unspeaking man

THE SIGH OF A GENERATION
darkening alleys approach
with drops of rain
curious and familiar DISPERSAL
LIKE A SONG
gesture of BECKONING
rocks in the crystalline sea

*Whispers from
a Mysterious Revolt* 1998

SUN OF EMPTY MORNING
the great field
gratitude expressed
TO MARK THEIR WORLD

you must bend LOW
as they had done before
in that field

CONCUR THEIR MESSAGES
shaken lights
IN FRAGRANT WOOD

blown grass, frayed thorn
THIS THEN TO LEARN
faint murmur of acknowledgement
SECRET REBUKE
AND A LIFE

Early Songs 2010

the negative vision
AN EARLY SONG
tells of a fleeing
I do not know why and walked
for the first shadow

*The Real
within the Voice* 2011

SEQUENCE says: ABSENCE says:
an echo on the sharp air
the two paths are the same

partial glories
trying to tell us
calling my REAL name
full of voices
within a state of peace

an infinity to slip and merge
if I climb the stairs
twilight path in avid flux
to find my way home

*The Child's Hand:
Communities of Mist I* 2011

within an assumption
NOT KNOW WHY
now abstract lines tremble
I had to leave THE INSISTENT
and wept silently

at a REVOLT
lost far afield
though imprinted on the city air
thin black wire
where a slumped cottage stands

trace of light, song
of a DISPERSAL
ACHE OF UNTHINKING
late sunshine replaced the house
dream of a CHORD
the afternoon squall had passed

*Innocence Speaks
of Light in Ways* 2011

impression the house was in the village
OUT OF NECESSITY
miniature warmth moving about inside

BUTTERCUPS AT THEIR BEST
GAZING DEPARTURE
SINGING BY NOW

impossible to leave as best I can
confused, we gather fruit
SCRIPTS FOR A PHONETIC PLAY
why do you stand so silent then?

*This Sleep, this Fair,
this Finding* 2011

receding tracks
gnarled guarantors
LONG OF SCORED
UNSAYABLE
ABSORPTION

paths that trace
before your birth
the lark's descent
sound of its onrush

in the end a singing
muffled in shingle
fades the unthinkable:
meagre, my mouth
has taken here its breath

*Eclipse, Sea,
Dream, Song* 2012

RHYTHMIC of paths
SUMMER moves imperceptibly
colossal tracts absorb
the sun's heat

bells ringing in the afternoon
LAPSE OF DAYS
placed at the onset of worlds

last time and ground nearby:
why do you assume
the fields lie drenched in light?
WHAT SONG IS THIS?
rain under a tree
a single ripe apple

The Child's Hand:
Communities of Mist II 2011

wind blew so hard over the house
some stones in the garden had been caught
a maze or freshly surprised landing
schematics of a marginal

it is a scene of waiting
a dress of violet and green
a voiceless charm in warm rain

the curling ground turns
each vista unfolds
I cannot know that ground
trees reflected in water
so FOLLY glances

within the vague suburb
YEAR OF THE ENDLESS FIELD
out by the side gate

which blots out his calling
THE GIFT TO OBLIVION
incantation and measure
the next to speak
his LACK his ABUNDANCE
across an ancient field

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Richard Allen
Vicky & Ross Cattell
Clare Cooper
Frank Cranmer
Gilpatrick Devlin
Helen Donoghue
Ross Leckie
James Moon
Tom Owen & Claudia Friesenhausen
Benjamin Rhodes
Mark Smith

Art First, 21 Eastcastle Street, London W1W 8DD
+44 (0)020 7734 0386 • info@artfirst.co.uk
www.artfirst.co.uk

ISBN 978-1-901993-74-5

PUBLISHED BY
Art First Limited, London
Clare Cooper • Benjamin Rhodes

All rights reserved

*No part of this publication may be reproduced, imitated,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form
or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying,
recording, or otherwise without the prior written
permission of Art First Limited*

COPYRIGHTS
This publication © Art First 2016
Poems pages 6–11 © Simon Lewty 2016
Poems pages 14–27 © Peter Larkin 2016

Design: strule@strule.co.uk • Print: Healey's, Ipswich

SIMON LEWTY

Simon Lewty has exhibited throughout the UK since 1984, including solo exhibitions at the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (1984), the Serpentine Gallery, London (1985), the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (1989), the Mead Gallery, University of Warwick (1992) and recently, at the Courtauld Institute Library and South Bank Centre, London. His work is held in museum and private collections including the British Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Arts Council, Birmingham, Leamington Spa, Leeds, Stoke-on-Trent, Wolverhampton, and Worcester Museums & Art Galleries, and in the USA he is well represented in the Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry, Miami Beach, Florida. He has been represented by Art First, London since 1991.

An illustrated monograph, *Simon Lewty: The Self as a Stranger* (Black Dog Publishing, 2010) and his inclusion in *The New Concrete: Visual Poetry in the 21st Century* (Hayward Publishing, 2015) encompass publications of previous years. A major survey exhibition, *The SIGNificance of Writing*, at his home town's Leamington Spa Museum & Art Gallery coincides with this publication, and with his two person show with Will Maclean at Art First, *Charting the Second Decade*.

PETER LARKIN

Peter Larkin was Philosophy & Literature Librarian at Warwick University for many years and is now an Associate Fellow.

As a poet he writes in the area of innovative ecological writing with a special interest in woodlands and plantations. His poetry also attempts to explore the idea of scarcity in its phenomenological aspects. His collections of poetry include *Terrain Seed Scarcity* (2001), *Lessways Least Scarce Among* (2012), and *Give Forest Its Next Portent* (2014). His *Wordsworth & Coleridge: Promising Losses*, a collection of academic essays, was published in 2012. He contributed to *The Ground Aslant: an Anthology of Radical Landscape Poetry* (ed. Harriet Tarlo, 2011).

City Trappings (Housing Heath or Wood), a poetic investigation into the status of countryside within the Birmingham conurbation, is due out in 2016.

ART FIRST