

HYDRANGEA TRANSLUCENCY

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“transience” previously appeared in *E.ratio*.

“the maker” previously appeared in *UCity Review*.

hydrangea translucency

hunched converts

barricade the only road out

they huff 'n puff into groups -

with long-stemmed bazookas

tucked under fierce thoughts

all walks of life front up uniformed / and ready

to take sides

choose colours / mascots / a sponsored drink

the blue hydrangeas hang heavy now

mine enemies

have chosen the ghettos to play in / have infiltrated the ranks /
intermarried / mongreled-up their relationships
and encouraged a squashed-in / each-to-themselves
failed mentality

I've chosen to be

where forests of tower blocks

peer down from penthouse heights where sacrificial lambs

breed randomly

oblivious of the promised slaughter

once cut

the blue hydrangeas stoop to conquer

with you the day's heat

has a lot to do with people's actions — it's a question
of summing up a scene — charging at the logo'd
firebrands — splitting asunder the cordons
of *do not enter this estate* — a question of how to proceed
to the piled-up resistance further on

a strange translucency makes the going clearer

we're set on blowing the *hostiles*

straight up the chorusing chimneys

you show me

 a gap in the horizon's wall

 and mates rates for a holiday

 free of book-banging rages

 you display mug shots

in favour of John the Baptist

I smell meat loaves cooking
 cooling
 being sliced
 for human consumption

the house I built

floats on a red sea of dyed grass

porn king

the breeders of night queens

are out

stepping the cobbles

talking to cars

cars talking up questions

I walk grafton gully the city's khyber pass

wearing my clone-made shirt

I frequent the lotto shop

the white horse pie-cart

the gents bog for inspiration

I'm what's described as

a man with a shallow-trenched spine

a thin stem balancing a head

an undersized mahatma gandhi

no flasher

six-packing his muscles / no

star-struck visage on the blink

**

you've decorated my room
for ladies only

strung up daisy chains / fluorescent exhibits /
fragments of a diary

windows advertise / lights out /

roofs become observatories

the antarctic night suddenly melts

customers

don't complain
don't soil their mitts

on hills stretched tight

like silk

**

feet rhythmically stomp

underground

there's life in the earth's grubby aorta yet

the city drops its guard

and ladies in their recklessness

emerge / brighten streets and bars

begin chat shows

of rent a few moments in second heaven

you decorate more than your share
of pygmalion faces

you gather up one person's artefacts /

shattered like glass

another's labelled for disposal

a person of no fixed abode

holds onto her smooth operator

who does the talking / the texting / the taking on

of battles behind buildings

**

I'm described as

a seizure of words

an overused product

a tribe-torn society

I play in a mercenary's dugout

by the sea

and often the morning's the great spoiler

spinning into the eyeballs of revellers

caught out in the sun

I play blind man's buff in the fog

and the pink pussy cat / slowly

pulls in her neon claws

night vision permutations

1

time ticks across great white spaces

and a park

snatches fried bits from nocturnal diners

from the labyrinth

of unspoken reflections at my mouth

I take your hand to satisfy my habit

night's calligraphy

flashes for Garners for Beggs on Broadway

the wind pipes in the future

and an arrow in the brown eye of the haberdasher

suggests more than trespassing

2

you smile

and amuse yourself

this is where boy kisses girl

girl kisses poppies

dropped from the sun

you enter the long room of your studio

to speak to a microphone

to an audience beyond light bulbs and phosphorescent definitions

you enter the property of propaganda

the mental-made pamphlets

the black 'n white posters

the mutilated architects of 'once were warriors'

I take your hand (presuming)

it'll make a difference

it'll join opposing forces

put icing on the sponge cake we're about to eat

(presuming) it'll help us to survive

the brief season of one man

taking the profits from many women

3

time ticks and the park pumps up its chest

lies in its fragrance

never closes never opens
the fountain swells the jowls of its lion
a gargoyle just spits

each night you float in the lagoon
your mouth chewing at the moon

Ophelia's holes
are eyes for the stars

your red hair knotted amongst weeds

your face

worth salivating for ...

4

like an anachronism

wanting the world to migrate

I prepare our lives simultaneously

the junk mail tells it all

transience

I grab my share of the industry

there's much to put on display

to be repeated

enough for everybody

to feel their eyes watering

as if you were born in a grotto

to satisfy requirements

/ individuals smell

of old clothes old furniture this crowded house /

they smell of putrefaction

photocopied heads

they dangle my image from a ceiling

glossy banners flapping at a dysfunctional system

hangers-on spill outside on bright cold days

to drug up on frosty white crystals on the emptiness of streets
the stripped bareness of gardens the skeletal indifference
of huntaway messiahs

they're constantly alert
to the horizon lying down
a silhouette of contours
of statues
mollycoddled
and dipped into the sun's red box

such is the transience
of migratory things

I flick forward the shadow of a wind wand / snap
at yellow bones

others like you hoof it with shrieks the frivolity
of cohabitation they go

with pieced-together memorials
the precious gifts of living within a pantomime

convincing themselves

all is constant
no need for refurbishment
the sweeping out of books
the eradication of overstayers

you were made with certain duties in mind

one look / slits the bellies of clouds

heavy on hills

the rain bloats the dirt

houses regroup

after the seventh day

(to hell with keeping it holy)

hostilities resume

knocking the tops off makeshift enterprises

I call the shots

I shift the points of the compass

I point you towards magnetic north

or where it should be

the maker

if you want to

say it

but whatever / say it / with meaning

private lessons in persuasiveness
don't come cheap

you scribble in a church / a river /
locals at a golf course / a plaza

some hotheads perform like sheep

I watch them change /

you change

this town lives on a damaged decorative hill

refugees steal boxes

for rooms for cardboard caves / to sleep in

the battle on the outside

has come inside

and no one's resisting

no one's shutting gates

refugees steal cardboard boxes

to pray in

hide in

to live out their tenures

you accept the change

money talks

machetes talk

our songs are the same

the shit's the same

say it with meaning

accept the maker's head on a plate

for what you want

a word from him doesn't come cheap

a word lasts a day

then gets immured in wood or clay or stone depending ...

on who you think you are you were you could be

depends (being the operative action)

you take pleasure in crushing bugs

kicking in the skulls of thine foes

parading pigs for people

but that's fine I watch proceedings

on how you respond like a brother / where the farms start

and the roads peter out

whether to accept the much-handled talk of the town

to venerate something which has lost its eyes /

ears / its showman's glitz

say mum's the word / not on your bloody nelly /

bottom's up

say nothing

I swivel the half mounted

half paid-for bastard around

IAIN BRITTON was born and educated in Palmerston North, New Zealand. He spent many years living and teaching in London. He now teaches at a large independent school for boys in Auckland. Since 2008, he has had six collections of poetry published mainly in Australia and the UK. His poems have been published widely in such US magazines as *Reconfigurations*, *Harvard Review*, *BlazeVOX*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Pool*, *And/or*, *The Tower Journal*, *Zoland Poetry*, *Interrupture*, *The Missing Slate*, *Cricket Online Review*, *E.ratio*, *UCity Review*, *Vanitas*, *Jacket* and in eBooks with The Red Ceilings Press *Ten Poems*, and the Argotist *songlines*. A forthcoming full collection with Lapwing Publications (*druidic approaches*) is out now in the UK, plus a pamphlet from Like This Press in August. Greendoor Publishing (Aust) will be publishing a chapbook soon too.

