

The Mind's Eye Sees Red

I was paid a visit today by a bird-woman:
a *Coccinella magnifica* flew into my head
and, instead of bouncing off and flying on,
she alighted, stayed; folded in her real wings.

I smiled and was delighted
when, on reflection, I felt her waiting;
her paired elytra glistening,
perfectly centred on my brow
as a red, black-dotted bindi.

With glee, the mind's eye said:
Imagine me a world – as Lennon did.
Choose carefully your Lennon;
there's more than one beetle to be
spotted in heaven, and earth, or sea.

I guess – if my hearing was poor
or my spelling unsure
I could easily have ended up bitter:
biting on a citrus fruit; or kneeling
beside him and his Marx – red-faced
all set to go – waiting for the starter's gun
on my marks; but . . . no matter.

Paint the country flat, said the mind's eye:
the common foetal eye of a nation –
natural before it is born;

and so, I paint it side-on as a dream-line
bleeding on the lowest edge extreme
of my canvas; above it only sky

where gold bars weigh light . . .
as a feather on finches' wings,
gently buffeted, burnished;
all a flutter in a wind of seed, as they dust
sub-atomic glitter onto teasel, dandelion,
thistle-crown; and I am down
downwind of it all – weighting, weighing;

contemplating the alchemy of these gifts
as they parachute sideways into the dull cold
bars barring the open window to my dark cell;
into the hardened pig-iron steel
to soften it . . . to soften it

to soften the un-taped silence . . .

that's what I can't hear any more
as I hear my own voice return – boomerang,
come at me; words spilling out
of my head, my mouth – leaving my lips
then back into my own (captive) ears.

I too am captivated (for a short while)
until I hear myself getting in the way
of it all as my slowed-down thoughts
get muddled in the repeating double-take

of what I have just said, relayed through the
headphones; thoughts slowing with every echo
of what I said, then heard then said
again and again in the double, double-take:
the getting in the way refrain: the reflection
of daydreams creating refraction, distraction,
dislocation from the comforting fake of the 'here
and now' of me; as past, present and pluperfect

concur once more, once more . . . once more
once more within this constant bore
within this monotone looping of *musak*
or the monstrous drone of complicit computers

or the – only black,
or the – only white of the button-pressers,

the pen-pushers,
the bean-counters,
the form-tickers –
the form-makers:

the fuckers that roll out miles and miles of red tape
with the sickly smiles that the lickens of gummed
stamps have; their coated tongues raw – bleeding
like flayed tapeworms ingested into the furred-up cycle
of forever-overlapping roles; rolling out more
and more red-taped carpet for the Gala-Nights
of tuxedoed farmers as they queue up frozen
as welly-booted penguins: good men, flightless birds
out of water, standing still for their hand-outs –
awaiting pats on their backs as lambs to the slaughter:
men forced to diversify, intensify,
to go against the grain – forced to spill their guts
on their own precious family land, to make more rivers
of liver-fluked blood for *them* to wade through; springing
more and more floods of bloody tape to enable *them*
to infect all our sluggish livers, or to clog-up already
gasping lungs in the yellow bile and red bureaucratic
phlegm, of the takers and the fakers who rust and blunt
the very scalpels (and the knives)

of able and keen surgeons and healthcare givers;
who – because of *them*,

can't cut through it all to even save lives.

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