

ABSORPTION **SIMON LEWY**

Handwritten notes in various colors (blue, red, green, purple, orange) on a white background. The notes consist of numerous symbols, including letters, numbers, and mathematical-like notations, arranged in approximately 12 horizontal rows. Some symbols are repeated or modified with accents or subscripts. The handwriting is cursive and somewhat stylized.

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Ratios of Absorption

In a Simon Lewty work entitled *Absorption* (2010) that word itself is signalled in longhand from the heart of the picture space amid the proliferating but inscrutable textures of another script. The word highlights its own paradoxical condition, caught in a web of differences and deferences between naming and embedding. As 'absorption' accedes here to its own legibility, it draws attention to a range of conditions marks undergo, resist or oscillate between. In his verse-essay *Artifice of Absorption* Charles Bernstein points to how there seems no limit 'to what/the absorption-anti-absorption nexus [can] absorb'. If absorption suggests one way we can relate to an art-work so as to overlook its actual means and textures, it might also suggest how an enigmatic image or inscription can infinitely recede before us, leaving us with the surfaces that it can slip behind where we can't.

In Lewty's work any question of surface is closely and fatefully linked to the texts and textual graphics which negotiate it: at times they seem to project beyond it but at others grope back into it, even provoking visual contusions and diversions as they burrow under its skin. There is a continuous cycle of graphic forms coming to term (being legible), being waylaid (recaptured for indecipherability) or in process of being deflated or inflated outside any stable moment of recognition, though that moment always remains in question: why is recognition deflected or encoded away from us, or what do we do when it flaunts

and leaps before us in elaborately cursive scripts? As Bernstein notes, there are 'relative degrees/ or valences of impermeability that can be angled/against one another to create / interlinear or interphrasal 'gaps' that act like intervals . . . the absorbed and the unabsorbed cleave/since *cleave* means both to divide/& to hold together'. Or, as Lewty once wrote, 'whatever touches the surface changes that surface'. Here his concern with 'touch' raises the issue of what can infiltrate the surface or what marks of resistance the surface might offer or in a sense inscribe for and on itself.

Bernstein is focusing on poetic texts but his insight bears on the role writing performs within Lewty's practice. Theodor Adorno observes that language-based art-works can never become wholly implicit (like music or abstract art), for whatever is said through them has to pass simultaneously (though not identically) across their overt speaking. He concludes that explicit texts can never be wholly literal while wordless forms of art can never be perfectly thoughtless. In Lewty's work such an issue forms part of a continuous attention to the traces left by legible, semi-legible and illegible marks, marks circulating around intentionality, both gaining it by chance and losing it by mischance while creating a complex texture of inter-association, as if offering a transverse glance at the surfaces they filter through. In this sense, Lewty's surfaces cannot be seen as neutral backdrops or arenas. Where the autonomy of graphic figuration has

been absorbed or modified by the surfaces, this is how they loom before us, so that scripts recall their implicit muteness of figure or visual patinas hinting at hidden junctures of sound.

As we peer among and between minutely codified traits we discern that the surface they emerge from is not an impermeable glaze but more like a projective, multi-cellular sponge here inflated, there crushed. An openness to participation is not subverted but held in reserve, what recedes before us enables rescued exclamations or declarations to process across a clouded presence of surfaces saturated in traces of arrival if not recovery. The burden of words can't be thrown off lightly, Lewty has observed and he has the patience to ask where their meanings go; one might add, how are they, or what percentage of them, gets absorbed, as either taken up or lost?

Mutations of absorption are also present in Lewty's more recent preoccupation with shorthand. On one level, the compendious code invented by Thomas Shelton which Lewty deploys resembles random graphic slashes, squiggles and dots, but these are the marks of a given encryption which are being followed exactly. This is not an asemic improvisation but a systematic collation of motivated marks though they remain 'unlettered'. Through them can be sensed the internal distances or feints of signification rather than a pure absence: as they disguise the overt such recon-dite signs negotiate planes of recession and depth as part of the linearity that proceeds across the surface.

A piece like *Early Songs* (2010) (page 19) with its bold vertical narrowing of linearity, though lacking colour, covers a wide spectrum of textual effects. Serial numbers indicating not just a working day but a time of day are put in sequence with words further atomised between dashes and slowly reordering themselves, while a sprinkling of neologisms separated by colons drift into the shorthand sections, where questions of precise decoding become acute. What Lewty implicates across such a texture of written or print-like effects is something like a 'counter-loom' of what is being absorbed between scripts or underneath them so that an intermittent trail of prophetic declarations in small capitals can project through the flux of textures: ELYSIUM, PRELUDE, ENACT, FEAST, FACE, MASKS. Should this be read in series or not? Do they play amongst themselves or are they more radically absorbed by all the other moments of writing into being no more than single and isolated exclamations?

A refrain-like, constantly permuting and re-atomising word-series, 'at the edge of the park—where the grass ends—endless heat begins' turns into its shorthand equivalent as one demarcation is absorbed (apparently unrecognisably) by another but with an abrupt change in the graphic traits involved. At times, the shorthand patterns suggest grass-like fronds or strands as if figuring the park-theme with startling literalness. What is happening across the whole piece is an array of ratios and rhythms of absorption, operating on several levels, so that the work becomes opaque or re-emerges before our eyes, where we are not just an onlooker but a reader and potential decoder.

Healing Surface (2013) (page 9) consists of a thin sheet of paper with washed-out oil pastel colourings on its reverse put twice through a typewriter to create overlapping scripts together with handwriting added in pencil. This had been thrown away as a failure but was rediscovered some years later and relaid on white card after being protected by a layer of tissue, given its now fragile state. Marks of original neglect and damage have eloquently worked into the now roughened surface, so that frayed gaps lighten the overall textures as well as interrupting them, and the underlying grey-pink colour looms out from reversals to recoveries more like a forward-moving horizon of anticipation than a retrospective one. In *Counter-Movements* (2011) layering results from a fold-over technique. Linear writing appears to anticipate what it has not yet spelled itself out as becoming when so overlaid in reverse, and this can create surprising (unintentional) symmetrical juxtapositions of individual letters as a result of the mirror effect. Chance is allowed to create its own encounters, so that 'summer' from left to right is complemented by the deflected letters of 'season' from right to left. Where tangles of mirrored and unmirrored letters occur they seem to suggest a prototype shorthand of their own.

Spring: Insistence of Waves (2012) (page 11) displays a more open flowing texture with fresh coloration but with a clear vertical channel between the wavy configurations on the left and segments of the title in italic capitals on the right which become transposed and thematically elaborated in shorthand. Among the waves are under-currents of apical formations suggestive of the way a tidal flow filtrates through

surface waves. There is also some direct figurative play between letter-shapes and shorthand marks through alignment. The V of WAVES is mirrored in a shorthand ^ just above it which spells the indefinite article 'a' and this leads to an inverse back-slanting S (meaning 'joy') which crowns the S of WAVES so that the eye can make out an elegant curlicue pattern. These are intimate juxtapositions rather than motifs: not so much overlappings as underlying lappings-against allowed to take on a role.

In this scenario marks get washed up on a surface, and may partly filter through it so as to be rudimentarily retained upon it (rather like the thin film effect known as *adsorption*). A 'tidal line' between the two effects is constantly shifting, depositing and dissolving and this takes us to the heart of Lewty's imaginative concerns, one no less arising from his frequent sorties along the Swanage foreshore. How to read or regard such marks passaging through the inscriptional? Are they marks to be re-assimilated or, as beyond recovery, are they tokens of the very textures they have soaked into? In their presence one may feel, in Thomas A Clark's phrase, 'the lure of a trajectory/you will not take'. However, as we linger before these semi-pervious, quasi-graphic messages, their shimmering encodings or saturate fade-outs haunt us. Our own failure to translate them fully no longer feels distracting as they draw out what can be absorbed from ourselves into a concrete relation with layers embedding/projecting the encumbered circulations and speculations of proto-indicative surfaces.

Peter Larkin
Kenilworth, 2012



Pyrographic Script, 2013, ink and burning on paper, 43.5 x 43 cm

Spring Insistence of Waves, 2013, ink and acrylic on paper, 84.5 x 28 cm



SPRING:
P₁₀ : 4/4 c 1/2
x c 1/2
P₁₁ P₁₂ d 1/4
: 1/2 1/2
q / P₁₃ : 7 / 4
: 1/2 1/2
P₁₄ P₁₅ : 1/2
h 1/4 2/4 1/2
d x 1 c 1/2
: 1/2 1/2
o p : 9 / 4
: 1/2 1/2
P₁₆ 2 4 / 4
: 1/2 1/2
P₁₇ 5 p 1/2
c 1/2 6/4
c 1/2 1/2
: 1/2 1/2
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OF WAVES

V L α Δ Γ ω / F C. α ε . 1. / 2. < (. α - . 2. 4. L 1 : (/ 7. - L. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Visions in this autumn sunlight can only delay for a while the dream's account of a meaning and a
 - incomplete - a listing of names - a rite - lost in laments - appeals of a new name - instructions - to divide the
 the plans of a district of the forgotten city - the copy which is an incantation - advice - throughout the years - re
 - the virtue of the wayfarer - as dark rain spatters the windows on to the abstracted land. I did not know the
 where now they stood - there were only those two - this time - and the third - colossal - who had become all voice
 chin, the chequered tape which stretches now to restrain - his gaping mouth his flaring tongue - his eye n
 pale lines rise & fall, so that his hand becomes a scratched sign, the braids of her hair now seen as a fusi
 forward - but their approach is in vain - those twisting figures - that burdened flight over stitched fields -
 expectation undisclosed - the grass has grown to cover the paths at this time of the year - I think there is somethi

message instinct in bone - of the first & last enactments in memory of an origin - disconnections of an act
night - the brightly coloured skeins have been spread out across the land - the times that are told by water -
cords of a foundation - to take - for food - in day - archaic of levels - their static ground. And haste unlocking
their faces - although each one had a name - I did not recognise the thickets they had emerged from, or the room
e - attempting - admonition without words - scarcely restrained by such nets and tapes - the nets about his
arrowed in appraisal - or an unseeing. There were two chairs & a table in the centre of the room. Now the
on of seeds, ground forms of a life before naming - this life - which was in reserve & now presses urgently.
a vain chasing - before thought. Spring - insistence of tides - quarter of expectation - of a distant calling, an
ing sealed - in that grass - I made a decision and from that day was unable to go back; days of vicissitudes.

The Surface Speaks

For 40 years Simon Lewty has walked a solitary road towards doubling. What were once elusive pairs—figurative image beside word, freehand scratches and scrawls set against elegant chancery script—have become in the recent work a more deliberate duplication, a more formal doubling. Back in the 1980s Lewty's works often resembled maps. Map and the world it mapped formed a pair, yet the map took its place in the world. By the end of that decade his drawings often resembled diptychs, but ones in which the logic of dexter and sinister was unclear; they were riddles without answer. The texts speak of hope and fear in the same breath.

A significant landmark on Lewty's progress was his engagement by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in 1989 to present an exhibition selected from their enormously varied collections of ethnography, natural history and—of course—paintings, drawings and prints. Time and again Lewty's *Chosen Objects* teased the visitor into considering the status of thing, representation and word, or material object and sign. I recall exhibit number 107, a specimen from the natural history collection, *Hippospongia equina meanderiformis*, where a small hand-written tag, inscribed 'extinct 1938', lay on top of the sponge. Here, as in Lewty's own paintings, several of which were included in the show, words were superimposed or embedded within the image or object. Label was not

subordinate to object, nor the name to what it designated, rather they coexisted in alliance. In this embodiment, word *is* image, a thing in the world. In the catalogue Lewty wrote of his childhood excitement at discovering the names of crystals and other minerals he had just seen: 'Erythrite, Vanadinite, Cassiterite, Celestine, Orpiment, Fluorspar, Galena—names as refulgent to the imagination as the glowing rocks were to the senses'.

Through the early 1990s inscribed words, pictograms and figures shared the same field, entering into alliance or jostling for space. Often they lay over one another like in a palimpsest. As the turn of the millennium approached the figures went into hiding. A new formality appeared in the layout and the blocks of script were now more ordered within their margins; the lines became longer and texts run on and on, without beginning and without end. New alternations pattern the field; phrases in classical majuscules peremptorily interrupt the flow of the cursive script. In the larger works this formality strengthened over the next decade, almost as if the menace in the text was being kept in check, brought into line. Words march to a stricter order. Around 2008 Lewty was increasingly configuring another form of diptych, divided horizontally rather than vertically, in which one block of text is distinguished from another by a change of script. Typically a variant

of italic imitating a typeface is set above the harder-to-read flourishes of the 'Secretary' script of the pre-modern age. Some kind of identity in difference seems to be proposed as each half of the work—top and bottom—is equal, though the scripts are different in scale and therefore of different length.

2009 brings us to the earliest works in the current exhibition. The symmetrical wings of a moth, by chance pressed like a flower to the page above the red lines of *Text with a Moth*, might be the secret logo of the new visual regime. The bilateral symmetry of wings is enlarged and asserted more forcefully in the double folds of *Text over a Spillage*, in which the stains resemble the inkblots used in the Rorschach psychological test. As with the set of Rorschach blots, Lewty's symmetrical spillage evokes the essential symmetry of the body and its internal organs. In conversation Simon has expressed his interest in the intra-uterine memory. Looking at *Text over a Spillage*, with its red capillaries lined up as words over the symmetrical stain, we seem to be simultaneously inside and outside the body, confronting something at once familiar and unknown. Somatic and linguistic, these markings materialized upon a surface quietly refuse the Cartesian dualism of body and mind.

Simon Lewty was, as ever, on the lookout for strategies to turn attention from language as meaning towards language as mark when he came across the system of stenography or shorthand invented in the 17th-century by Thomas Shelton and employed by that tireless diarist, observer and recorder of himself and his world, Samuel Pepys. Simon acquired a facsimile of Shelton's book *Tachygraphy*, practised its

symbolic system and put it to use. Now his works become more perfect doubles. Divided vertically or horizontally, on one side he inscribes his dream-like narrative in longhand, on the other—or below—he transcribes the same text into Shelton's shorthand. We may guess that these dashes and ligatures stand for words but can only look at them not read them; and this mode of looking *at* the mark reacts back on our looking at the other side of the equation, the columns of longhand. When Shelton's tachygraphy first became popular poems were written in praise of a system that allowed people to write as fast as speech. In his teens Lewty was a gifted clarinetist and student of music theory. Scanning these recent works one becomes aware of the beauty of the varying tempi of majuscules and cursive script, and of the quicker tempo of the succession of Shelton's symbols. They bear some resemblance to musical notation. As in the earlier inscriptions, the texts often evoke sounds, breath and voices, but always in paradoxical fashion: in *The Real within the Voice* we are teased by the passage, 'The world is full of voices I will never hear—or writing I will never read'; and near the centre of *This Sleep, this Fair, this Finding* is inscribed 'UNSAYABLE'. One recent drawing entitled *Notations from a Script for a Phonetic Play* presents Shelton's symbols lying over cursive graphite marks that gesture towards script but remain illegible.

From visible music and voices unheard we turn to a distinctive feature of many of the recent works, their alternations of colour. The inscriptions are patterned by changes of coloured inks, including red, orange, azure and indigo, violet and green. Sometimes each letter or each symbol is in a different hue, sometimes each word. Is colour sayable? Searching for rhyme

or reason in these differences of colour we find none for which there is a code. Unlike the red letters or rubrics of the manuscript era, choice of colour is unrelated to meaning: there are no red-letter days here. This decorative deployment of colour fits the strategy of creating a gap between word, letter or symbol as mark, and language as bearer of meaning.

Viewers of Lewty's recent works may wonder whether his return to Shelton's obsolete system of stenography is anything more than a curious exercise. In thinking about this question I am struck by passages in a recent book by Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art out of Time*, in which the author reconsiders Marshall McLuhan's vision of the advent of the electronic era. The Canadian academic set out his prophecy in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* as long ago as 1962, when Lewty was studying at Hornsey College of Art. Nagel summarizes McLuhan's argument that 'the advent of typography in the fifteenth-century . . . introduced a new organization of experience . . . as words were dislocated from their oral context and came to be understood and manipulated as logical visual arrays.'^{*} The era dominated by printing was also the era of single-point perspective as the organizing principle of pictorial space. In the electronic age, by contrast, communication beams in all directions, creating multiple relations more akin to an essentially auditory resonance of many voices and 'simultaneous happening'. Distance is replaced by a multidinous presence.

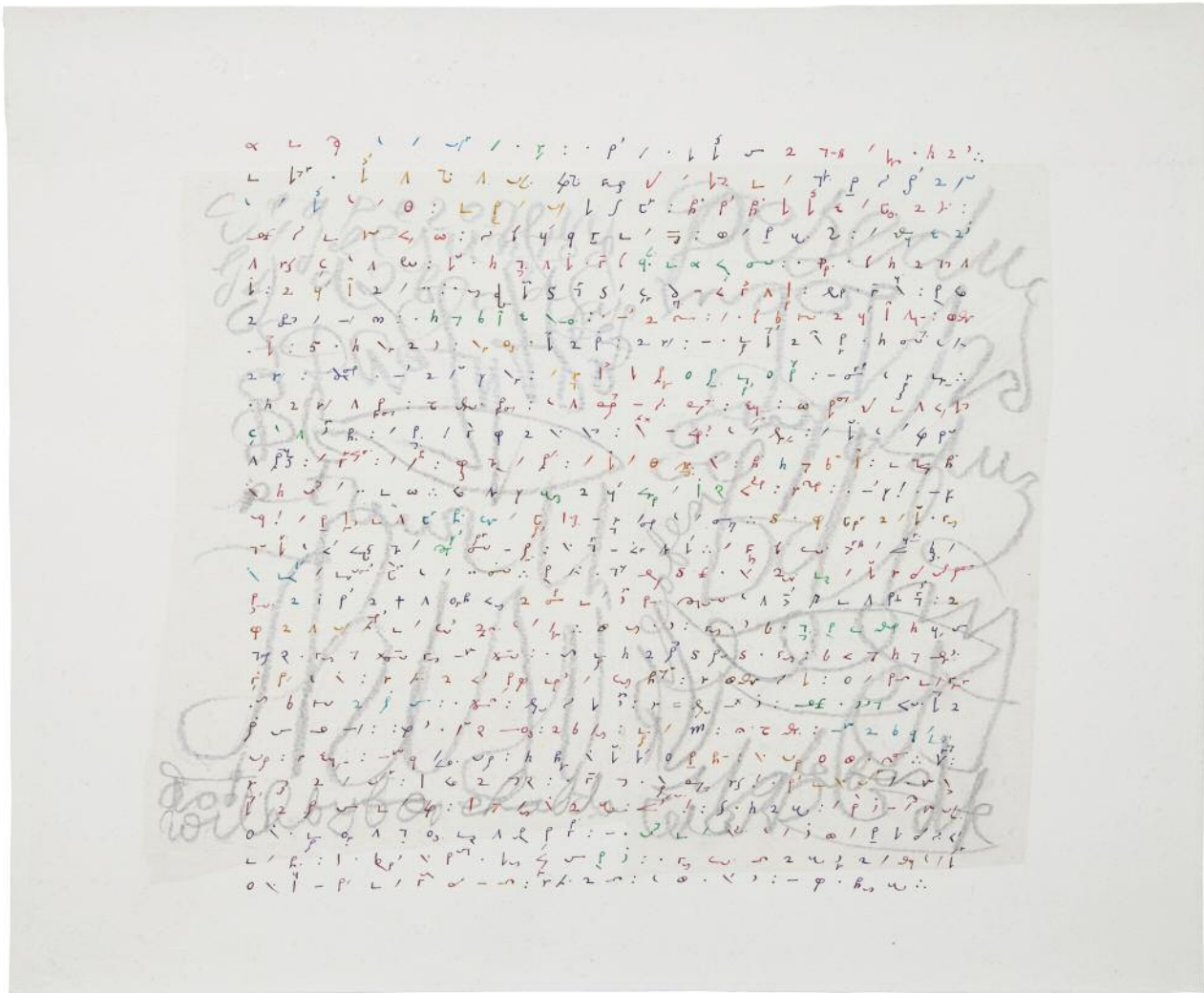
Simon Lewty recently said to me, 'I quite like the idea of a media-saturated atmosphere'. He embraces new technologies; he uses the Internet. His work has long suggested affinities with interference across radio waves. But now that the

typewriter is largely consigned to history and stenography outmoded, why does he laboriously inscribe words as if typewriter keys had struck them, or transcribe a text in Shelton's shorthand? Could it be that the artist is one who realizes the complexity of the present by an act of recuperation? Nagel reminds us that McLuhan 'never tired of saying, the old media don't disappear but are internalized in the new media. They become the *content* of the new media and in a sense only achieve definition as media when they are taken up by their successors.' Viewed as an ongoing project, Lewty's doublings, and his surfaces that speak, realize and give substantial presence to three modes of consciousness characteristic of three overlapping eras—the scribal era, the era of printing, and the electronic era in which we are now increasingly immersed.

Paul Hills

London, 2013

^{*}Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art Out of Time*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2012, Ch. 12 'The Year 1962: Mosaic Resonance'.



Notations from a Script for a Phonetic Play (1), ink, acrylic and graphite, 2012, 46.5 x 56.5 cm

n I do not know why and walked
plaster mouldings of an ornate
Then I noticed for the first ti
his shadow on the floorboards
ang AN EARLY SONG ha
WN : (the negative vision) wa
to tell of a fleeing; and so we

↳ : | > ∫₃ S ρ φ ∞
look - at - the - rain

The Real within the Voice, 2011, ink and acrylic on paper, 108.5 × 134 cm

Detail shown on following two pages

tonight though, in the twilight north
way to an infinity, this path never leave
g to find my way home, feeling my way al
rain. The world is full of voices I will
is what you were trying to tell us, in th
that flux OF LENTEN SUN C
THE REAL - WITH
lings slip and merge in darkness, their
et. I heard a voice say: "One of his de
STAR - " Avid in spring, now countless
eam - " SEQUENCE says: " - admir
ence - but - " STARE says: " - abs
tions through the hindrances of a name.

of the city, if I climb the stairs inside
itself: the two paths are the same. A
ong the wall with my fingertips - . 77 .

never hear - of writing I will never read
that cold spring when they came to the city

T P of an echo on the sharp air, outside
I N T H E V O I C E : / 2

partial glories revealed only at spent da
estinies lies within a state of peace; th

s voices seemed to be calling my name, and
ed - but - " A B S E N C E says: " - s

ence - " B R E A T H says: " - a rever
and in the clear air. Now, on the white

... you go out walking in the streets at night?
... overflow the brick floors of the cellar.) I

... removed his glasses, knelt down on the grass

... $\text{h } \overset{\text{p}}{\text{T}} \text{ C / } \text{Lp}^{\text{T}} \text{ TRUE PHASES}$

... as though imprinted on the city air. The after

... ES TO A VOICE. Those lines are still

... T : trace of light ; dream of voice ; abstract

... Lost far afield, my song is of a DISPER

... d went - over the years. Now the lines tremble

... strument - AEOLIA - CHORD

... eld. The window looked down into a deep courtyard

... close to the window. Ten minutes before he was

... a casement window. Light without air has thro

... been replaced." "IT DOES NOT MATT

... and said, "They are calling your name." "They w

"NEGLECTS OF THE DREAM. - C
I DO NOT KNOW WHY - I STILL D
and wept silently. I had to leave the house to
OF THE INSISTENT. I have a memory
noon squalls have passed; now late sunshine ill
uncertain : movements within an assumption - pa
of memory. 2. At a REVOLT : heat o
SAL : JOY AND ACHE OF YEARS.
like thin black wire. "It is unexpected - this
OF UNTHINKING - LYRI
rd surrounded by walls on all four sides. The
due to leave the building he took down the pic
eaded the lane, where a slumped cottage stands
ER WHAT I HAVE DONE," she said
ill get up very early in the morning," she said

all shows a quarter past five. That
small group of people. He began to
I M M E D I A T E J O U R N E Y S
round may appear, as if by accident
: it was to treat of the signs I
have been afraid if I had known: ce
on the floor, one sleeve was missing
interior like a great high barn. A n
more of his time to this: burdens
ding lines of black' ! ! ! ! ! w
oped below freezing outside the slat

Station of the Hours of Darkness, Field of the Hours of Light, 2010, ink and acrylic on paper, 75 x 102 cm
Detail above and shown fully on facing page

The voice - the speech - the early voice lives on; the present as I left. Then I walked out of the house in to carry on in the same way. U N T O L D - O F T H A T at this - for there are the great A B S T R A C T S towards stone. Sometimes I am surprised myself - of it was late in the afternoon and I knew I had to leave you have just come, pass through four rooms until was about to be used for some kind of a meeting. The vague machines of a particular language - soon for a few minutes, and my breath held as I crossed the silent land and within my recollection, A B S T R A C T S O F A such a surface undetermined - and - a very strange this light of that morning; I could only hear through when and there." She stands - traces of an implacable lead and - and from this dream a history observed in part some every day the story can be observed in those few "I will give you instruction," he said himself down the scales of the beginning: "Now I can hear the rain fall yellow ground beneath the cracking yellow sky; and go through the Alps - built in circles - as about islands - it is its consequence. R E C O M P E N S E; this street is life of the child - that promise - you have to look at at its Z E N I T H - as the jewelled fly circles the after the night's unfolding, the boasts at the column fire on six steps on the about hill. I went to post a stream were running in those clean fields - and birds day - and went out and asked them - of the land and the your present task is to know: T H E N E A T H I N A A D E; but the sounds of light faded soon in the up of the woods at the town's end. There were three men - sleep fell - S H R E E T A - script - we could not hear T H E R I S I N G S P E E K - in, nothing - when he when I arrived at the house, I wouldn't believe him at this singing - a song of all days - over a hundred - it is a different thing altogether making a bigger thing confused this time of heat, dull-faced - stretched out comes from myself - a kind of - an unwise. 26298306 of the mist - the fields under mist and frost. A figure arrived of the slipping wacher at the pit and flaking turned in passing - the passing of walls, the mirror on side to side. Now you hear S H R E E T I N G S from the undisturbed stone, his upright back, his hands which unfamiliar too - the faint light - but clean - the sky out towards the fields. 7721241109 - no - I said - no - I said - the morning - I said - it was so early - the of innumerable stars - and came at length - to where the a land - now stars reveal - across the places of this A determined - the promise of such dispersed moons - as my tracklessness - lovers of a journey - between regretting at a point where there was a gap in the focus? I become impassable - their caught designs stranded as in unenriched - opportunities all foregone - to the clouds be entirely blank. The marginal now passes to the left approached across the field. The path was almost level were the two who met that day! At the draining out - all of a sudden, for they seem to have changed places (each who came stands with open mouth - the moment when her hair was drawn up into a strange style, like a fish scale on the ancient road. I had to write a letter; she is so sorry - yes, it happened in the f N: S T R E E century - anonymity - my story - to tell - my story - I saw her cross the road and go into one of the shops - returning - in the day - in the song - the returning but that was among as well - it's as if - they are on in a wide expanse of white water. He spent an hour on his blue sky. The next day was full on the dusty road, and some air had started to blow from the entrance across J A R : A O D G B A R K L O S U B D E N L Y I N T at the coming spring. Their need, their simple mood, the equinox. Blossom hangs heavy in the tree and the of the fields by the river. Do not look there! The dawn of by - C P < \ A F: H E R E Y E S C L O and the sparse blue film at his feet: pour image of a of fields. ~ C < T E L y b (7 > ~. He turned on the the sudden thought of a shell. His task is clean now - a voice of air - have you asked in the fields about ing on the distant beach. Messages from wind, abstract lines, for above the rooftops of the highest buildings that can be followed - and a consequence. They passed the hare runs over the clashing field. Enormous words side. Yet even now a bright haze is beginning to show. He said: "They cannot order you about!" She said: "paper fish and bird tails: strew the glade as fallen glade, from a distant day of light. \ / P - E \ and stone. Great birds stretched in the garden towards started as they saw a figure in the doorway. Their feet

A Flourish which is to Transparency as the Ceaseless Wind is to Stone, 2011, ink and acrylic on paper, 96 x 123.5 cm

Eclipse, Sea, Dream, Song, 2012, ink and acrylic on paper, 87.5 × 68 cm

Details shown on following two pages

ight flashes from the S E A.
andoned way, the neglected tra
OF WINTER SEAS: of
urging fields.' After twenty ye
t he can tell is of a disperse
b the sun's heat; colossal trac
. How can this compare with the
r. The site of that fire is now
uld find nothing. We heard the

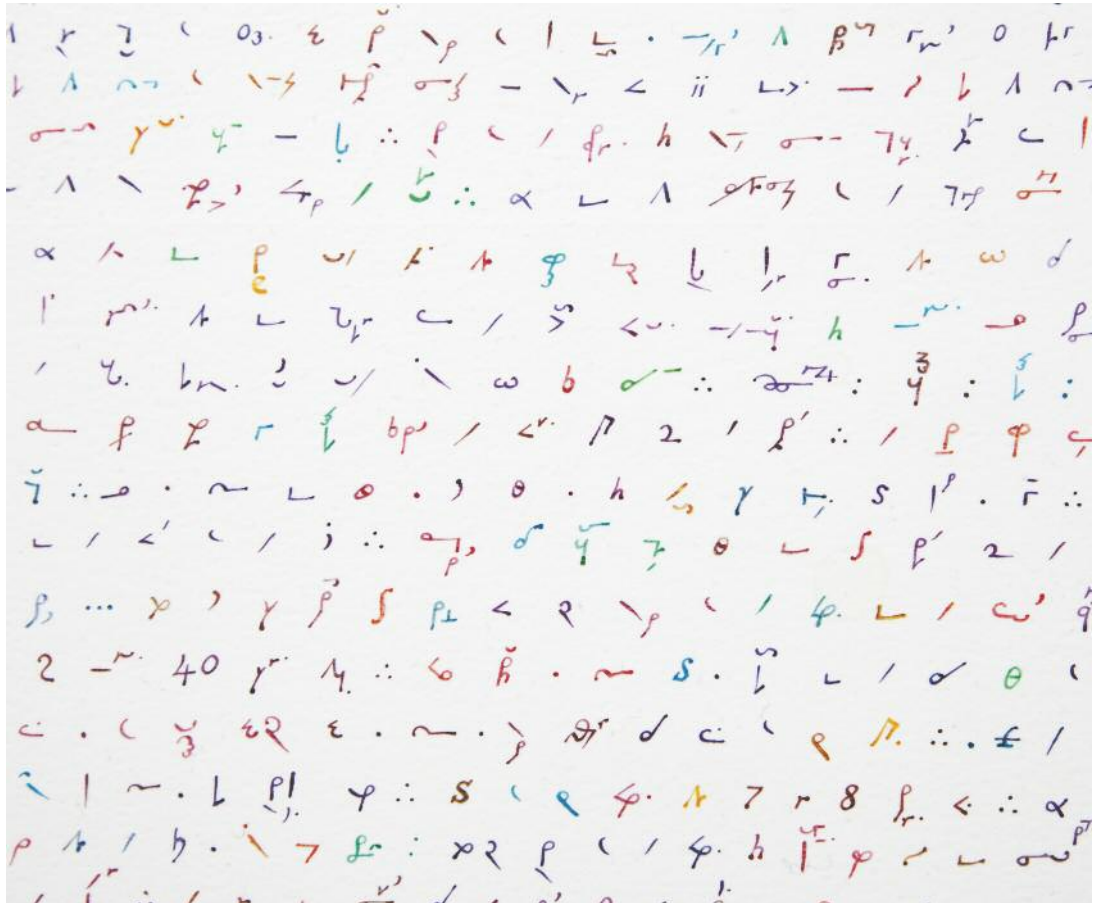
^ c, c /- : c /- L
7 ~, e 7 ; :: e o r̄
tr. be / SEA :: ω p_r
/ r̄^{tr.} c ^ p_e :: e r̄ /
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c θ. :: DREAM: / ī r̄
c | :: φ r γ ~_3 S r̄

Innocence Speaks of Light in Ways, 2012, ink and acrylic on paper, 92.5 × 63 cm
Details shown on following two pages

1 2 0 1 7 0 0 1 1 2 : now - innocence speaks of light in ways beyond understanding
- phrases - as they unfold part in the shadowed side of the building - someone has
let off a fireworks in the silence of the night - upon the vast fields - the filaments
of a star over the cooling grasses - in the dimly lit passage to the station - now -
the night tells - of voices calling at a lake - the last dances his freight with jokes
- what has been found, what lost over this short summer. Now a great heat seems to
shrink the levels of the field - the songs of a last season - dances of an unspoken
ground - now seen closer in that air - the silent play at the approaches to the garden
- but the wind falls along the broad paths that intersect the evening loon - as wind
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by mistake - there was a picture in my mind of how the tramped and fell - upon a
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of noon shining at the prospect of dusty streets - the first approaches to the town -
hearing - the contours of strange speech in late summer - stricken - at white windows
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equivalent - in open voids - the passing signals of morning - cities - across in im-
mense fields again - stands down towards the shore which mark this age - through
singing day to evening and violet night. Now the lattices flare in the last streets,
and insects fly at the netted ropes. A strange scent lingers in the static air - now
more will sleep - soon still awake - and at morning fatten - in mist - as the rising
sun cleans the obscure barriers - moving towards a hastened day - clarity of skies -
the child's day - and the task of the oxen - but the man staring from the leather
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air. Then I first heard the fragmentary tone - allowing in part consciousness only -
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you turned at the glittering booth, lingering as you left the building, and stepped
into the high, clear air - FOR FROM THESE LOISSES CHANCE WILL OFFER THESE
A SUPPRESSED NARRATIVE - CHARMS FOR DEPARTURE AND RETURN - A WRITING
- OUT OF NECESSITY - SCRIPTS FOR A PROCESSION PLAN 2 0 0 8 1 - I had
the impression that the house was in a village in the country yet not far from the
town. I walked across a small lawn and looked in at one of the windows. I think I
saw someone moving about inside. There was a room full of things for sale - most of
them junk - I noticed a shelf covered with bric-a-brac and tiny pictures. One was
a kind of miniature abstract painting no more than two inches long - it was a grid of
squares coloured pink, yellow, green and blue - some of the squares had minute, black
pig-figures drawn on them. Then two people, a woman and a man, approached across the
lawn. BEHIND THE TREE IS A TOWER. THE TREES ARE COPELY AND WINDY.
BUTTERFLIES ARE NOW AT THEIR BEST IN THE MEADOWS. BLUE-ORCHIDS ARE
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- DEPARTURE - GAZING - WAITING - ARRIVAL - UNDOING
of a house. By afternoon several people were standing beside the heavy door to the
street. The air rose and fell and rain started to fall. I have only what I did, which
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been laid for six people. Some of the houses have balconies where it is pleasant to
sit and look out over the water. The road is paved at the side with enormous slabs
of stone. Then I walked down the street to the harbour, radiant in the evening sun.
I remember that speaks of dust danced in the beams of sunlight there, as in the house
where I used to live. L L S E W E R E R - F A R A W A Y - N O N beyond the water
fall and the moated crossing of the bridge - I felt the bridge down the south across
the morning field. Now had fallen during the night - over the fields. T H E R E show
was a small courtyard - leading to the street - and a wooden panelled chamber above a
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Warm air comes over the merchant's house; dried trinkets of use stain the plaster
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P R A S - C A I L A - R E I R O U N Z - A L M - S P R E T - W - D R A I T E - D U L T A - K - C A I T T E R -
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- OUT OF A NECESSITY - SCRIPTS FOR A PHONETIC PLAY. O
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lawn. AROUND THIS TIME IN SUMMER, LIME TREES ARE COMING INTO
BUTTERCUPS ARE NOW AT THEIR BEST IN THE MEADOWS, BEECHES
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PEP SINGING BY NOW AND THE GLOW-WORM'S DULL LIGHT MARKS
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'Confused, we gather fruit which is so sweet to the taste!' '... and
'Why do you stand so silent then?' Most of the houses in the old quarter
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FOLLOWING SPREAD: Enlarged detail from *This Sleep, this Fair, this Finding*, 2011, ink and acrylic on paper, 123 x 153.5 cm ►

tidal reaches - will come to some endles.

A L E. The gnarled guarantors snap
den - a squirrel jumped from branch to b
ay of his departure grew closer. During t
re is nobody he can ask. φ^1 : U N S A

EAVING; THE EARTH GREE
GED RETURN OVER THE SU

$\phi / \psi' \leftarrow (/ P_r \leftarrow \sim \therefore /$

owly dog - or did he bound off after his
turning wrack - paths that trace only
e sound of its onrush - muffled in b
ecure - for what could you know of this
now his voice fades - meagre - the hill u
e - my mouth has taken here its breath

end - as the LONG OF SCORED
at his receding tracks and unrelated tr
ranch of the sunlit tree - three or four

that weekend he spent many hours walking i

Y A B L E : THE FIRE-CLAY
N IN MAY. CHALK AND FLI

M M E R HILL; THE WISE - ? -

→ R :: ? : 2 4 : 1 2 2 3 0 3 0

master ? - and in the end a singing arc

bewilderment - and this a way of gaz

anks of shingle. ABSORPTION: the

- unthinkable - before your birth? The m

ind - the lark's descent - in curving fli

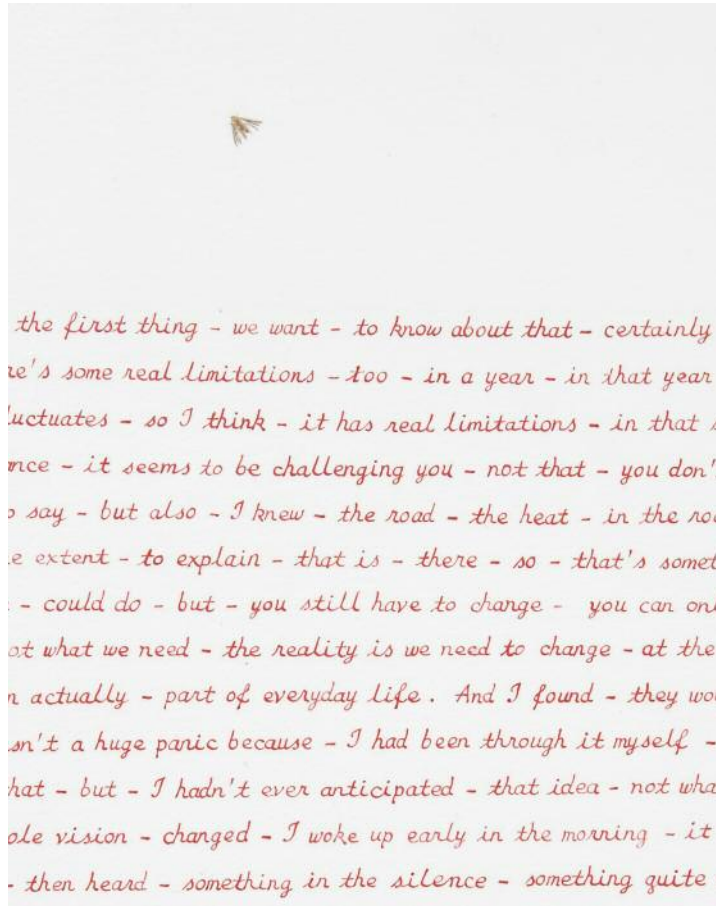
- silence which is the sea. The driftin

the spectral lines in the noise - the racing figures glimpsed in passing -
and rising - under numbers of light - vivid - if broken - at the standing
people in the street - and at the spectral - a configuration - coordinate - of
the only end of standing - the leading - not the led - although there are
velvet I cannot - velvet I cannot read - and choice of a third hand - once
raised now doubly obscured - indecision - is a naming - at the spreading end,
The dispersing field - that day which began in questioning two and in sleep
- is not - is a signpost - with a black sign - " - and found the room empty
- yet finding out so many - and save without name - for all my hope is
that I may find a lodging for a time - here - in these rooms set so close
to the busy street - show time will pass - all names in vain - this leaves
all run - this means you have - and never will return." "You have come
from the bridge?" "Yes - is felt as though Charles was not far away
that afternoon - it was very hot and oppressive - I stood on the bridge -
for several minutes." - that this - could be a seeking for something - of
such mystery - and that the post - across the bridge - had been there before
him - a choice of view - a choice - in a place - we may not be having
any more of this for some time - the crumpled form - and the embracing to
above - removed - from their now - the sun has come out - from behind the
clouds - Lizards - of their calling - who - of their normal dance -
Again the child can dim the gravel path at the side of the house. Some will
laugh - in the clear bright sun that looks out towards the Laurel bushes -
days - which - falls into years - will not - abruptly - in belief uncertain
phases - the fountain - and the wind-gings in the rain-soaked avenue - the
screen - by the branch-bell lodge - something has made her seek from the
shadow of the wall - something - has made him turn - in the judgment station.
Ways - of asking and staying - you blink at these broad stair-steps - where
will you stop in the world and why wait? - for blinking in a fearful day
- for release in a close wall - both now wait in the word of the last
paragon in his open lodging - I have seen a board that bears his name -
a sign facing towards the street - but I have never seen that sign - and I
cannot hear his calling - still - in the house - on Sunday - I do not know
his name - but his calling - is at the nose of the street - where he was
called. Blinking of content - I don't think - they had understood - I don't
know - if I had understood myself - days - of cold and rain - follow - when
today - is a distant memory - I can't follow - is not me - I must have

been about - it's such a long time ago - a completely different life - I
think - under the circumstances - everything I did - I - don't believe - I
- there's even - that goal - can come from that - apart from that - so many
other things - bigger things - and I chose not - I never actually - I chose
not to do a lot more than I actually did - could have had - that - wasn't
the point - not what I wanted - I felt sorry - because - I wanted to do
something else - but then you have to say to yourself - what does it mean
to you? - is anonymous - for all my hope is set - that as I may know a
time and gift - in part - but by the time - I left some years - I know
- I had to go out - towards another reality - everything - normally - after
everything - then - is round everything to me - but I know - that I'd done
- none - The first time I was given - I don't know what you'd call it -
- a plan - in event - in intention in these places - before - in places
- well I don't think so not - I think that it really goes before the event
- not after - how much matter - for years - of not looking - a difficulty
- in its outcome - but what about - prior to that? - I would have thought
that was a distraction - I'm going back however - to my normal way of - of
making things - and - so started out to stress - these glimpses - intentions
- such as are glimpses - as yet in a mind - singular - of a answering -
prompts - as a glimpse - "How little of that was shared - " - realization
of their reasons - in their names - of the low house beyond the red lanes,
Awards of jubilee - the ringed and hazel also - the lipped hill - from
the whistling grass - incidents - of a sun glass - whose rigid upsurge bled
their unknown time - and yet also into beyond the family hill - "How little
of what we shared!" - "How much more than what was said - how much more
than what we hear - " - you have a strange and rolling head - but I do
not seem to know who you are - you seem to hold a mixing bowl between your
hands - a service - of readiness - alike - of me now left - and one who
has followed - laughing and crying - on his endless way - a helpless service
your standing - an insight unshared beyond a pathless night that would your
willing - a placid mouth - a night - the bright grass - your hand set
atomless floating through the lanes and dips balanced in contours' form - found
all finding within the ringing ground as you moved me at their faces in day
as your spreading beater the wedding time - black at least day - for he
came back with such stories now I must tell you I have heard his laughter in
the brightening field not another blaring in the gate's despite - An outburst -

- the light - not far from the place of my death - the darkness - only
fills the same space - as he did - as the time - of - the words -
profound and resistance - at the time - I began to write - meaningless
- important - as someone would come out of the building - to reach the
space in front of the wall - and the door closed on the window side - as
the other will turn - again - is the room - behind the faithful light of
the female - and the staggering dark - at the square - it is simply not
possible - inflated scenes - told to the self, but then the sky cleared
- so that they could see the prospect - over the hills and plains covered
with houses - the air had cleared - but the light was strange - the sound
of the song that suddenly sounds across the wind's movement - over the
hillsides - concentration - as though taken from a musical source - and moving
towards a last destination - and suddenly ends - answers - is the light -
continuity of awareness - of a finding - collapse to - less of awareness
- that gentle nothing nothing - has no fate - now - abandonment - someone
moving in false light - moment of meetings - lost - in this rejection's
desire - and yet this - explicit - can it be only play - and playing ?
- incident - the willings of the horizon - their strain opportunities - die
- though unrecognizing - surely such houses can never a part of their recall -
the measurement - that now attempts - through nothing - what was only ever
on idle coast - being leading once again - hours of the obscure - clarities
of a life - an ether - in idea - leading to the abandonment and rejection
of an internal - all left too soon - yet to happen - only hidden for some
and seconds - as though lost to the sight of one glancing from afar through
the heavy fogging of a time taken by the wind of a summer night - a splendid
sustained - even in its withdrawal - a promise - ever half-appeal - of nations
dies - nuclear now of their light - of silent lightnings - of a distance - and
this at spots of darkness - of a phrase faintly heard - at the latest hour -
an imperceptible moment for any - yet decisive - the clarity of a distant film.
For who would think - to follow such tracks ? - your watch eye - in pure action
from the fields - will tell me all I need to know - since - the arrival of days
- which may call - of compulsions - within the summer noon - surge - which may
follow the course of a clear return afternoon - on a morning - once the wind
first moves in a harsh quarter - on their steps - dies abruptly - along the field
path - and at the brown wall. They crowd him with such questions - as he never
hesitating upon his way. Passages of never yields - moments of rain-soaked towns
- stippled - within the lateness of such days - brief nations - shortening with
every word now - sounds with nothing - plays of scarce sun in the sunset street
- of allowed before the coming cold. It was the brightest day of the year - and

- the abandoned way - to find again - that way - had been betrayed - by
my ordinary beliefs - I felt - for the first time - I felt - a danger -
- a threat - I felt - I must create - a distance - at the time - of
the street walk - across the fields - and then the pathway - to arrive
back - at the memory - in presence - beyond - the source - in hope -
betide - the house in memory. The birds showed the surface of the lake
then flew away towards the wood. " - and glimpsed briefly in light slanting
across the yellow ground - step as one who will be lost within
a year of deep shadow. " Their voices high in a mockery of heaven - now
you know you can always pick them up this summer before - in plain ground
slanting - a strange script on a white wall and beyond that another darker
wall - black within the simple spaces of light. " I would like to know
where you have come from - in order to arrive at this still place - on me
this the place you set out from - already gone ago ? " The script spread
as my feet now move as though moving - otherwise of a departure - as to
India within that rhythm a return - the child's hand has moved - without
knowing - moves on unlit fields - all to apparently clear to see - under
the black evening sky. The wall - and the ground beneath - attempts at a
differentiation reveal a gate within the coming markings of the familiar road
and yet something plagues of such contrasts as the hour - and looks at the
road-bed in the low-lying fields. How the child's mind moves towards - the
correspondence of diagonal directions - and passes - as if more of a danger
have in the fading paths of the dead villages - and there - before the sign
- for it is as though this is a body that has come to form itself from words.
The found his wilderness a tree - then she took him from the fields - and laid
him down in a room. The exhausted surface where he rests is itself that which
will also rest - a victory - now as then - the fabric conquest of days - has
become a falling - since - a draining of a marked sequence - on the yellowish
side - and non-secure levels of the bridge - and down there is a signpost
again ! - how could I have missed it - how missed the way - which means so
clearly needed and yet ever disappears and be lost for years at a time - until
something happens - some connection is made and a direction appears again - as
though this cleared surface - marks the direction of the mind - and the hand -
in the stone - my receive the living hand in the low sun of an afternoon
afternoon - and the words to mark my build their silence from this speech.



Text with a Moth, 2009, ink and acrylic on paper, 56 x 42 cm
Detail above and shown fully on facing page

- so that's the first thing - we want - to know about that - certainly a very good step in the right direction - but - there's some real limitations - too - in a year - in that year - in that summer - that - reality - in summer - fluctuates - so I think - it has real limitations - in that sense - again - as we know quite often - from a distance - it seems to be challenging you - not that - you don't have to have - you do not - need - to be able - to say - but also - I know - the road - the heat - in the road - there - the point that people don't realise - the extent - to explain - that is - there - so - that's something we would carry with us - that's - something we - could do - but - you still have to change - you can only have that chance - once - in a year - it's still not what we need - the reality is we need to change - at the point where it's seen - as an exception - rather than actually - part of everyday life. And I found - they wouldn't even discuss it - but on the other hand - it wasn't a huge panic because - I had been through it myself - so I thought - well - there's nothing wrong with that - but - I hadn't ever anticipated - that idea - not what I'd hoped for - but - not - unacceptable - my whole vision - changed - I woke up early in the morning - it was still dark - fifteen years ago - a short sleep - then heard - something in the silence - something quite unique - a voice - "You say it was flawed - in what way was it flawed - ?" - "All sorts of ways -" - and - you need to take into account - there may be better outcomes - wanting - to find that house - and - everything that went - with that - in - the sound of the sea - I don't know quite - what I came to find - the whole thing - perhaps - I think - a parody - I really don't know - yet - wanting - to be heard - needing - to be heard - and it continues - to be part of my life - from the start - really from nothing - there must be - surely - some kind of - memory - some kind of little - either as a - sort of - dream - or - some unintended look - at the past - so that you're - asking the question - whether the main thing - an event - represents many things - it certainly had a great effect on me - a great - impact - from my point of view - to understand what they are feeling - they don't always understand - that - themselves - it can change - how you feel about them - things that you do - around you - influence you so much it's really important - but - very unsettling - so we lose - everything we've just heard - searching - for some - thing - where they've come from - not realising - wanting to blame - it comes out - at every stage they're going through - it shows itself - in many ways - all sorts of things - a sense of independence - simply - but suddenly - out of nowhere - genuinely - that again - is another reason for my confusion - more self-assured - than before - perhaps - a more real world - no intention - I had no intention - you think - that must be so dangerous - but really it's not - a possibility - a shock - it still came - as a shock - no it isn't - wasn't - they weren't expected - to know what was going to happen - pretty quickly - from their point of view - not because it doesn't always seem the right thing to do - and I'm sure different people - need to get their information in different ways - still continuing - in a way - they can accept - which is what they want - and what we want - a need - I think - there's always been - one - this - is one - within a series - of needs - is that - is - what we are seeing is this - a symptom - rather than the cause itself - it's a - symptom - she thought - some - are suggesting - she thought - she looked down - the layers - of air.

SIMON LEWTY

Simon Lewty was born in Sutton Coldfield in 1941. He studied at Leamington School of Art and Hornsey College of Art between 1957 and 1962, and was a lecturer at the Mid-Warwickshire College of Art until 1981. He now lives and works in Leamington Spa and in Dorset.

He has exhibited since 1968. Solo exhibitions include the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, in 1984; the Serpentine Gallery, London, in 1985; Anne Berthoud Gallery, London, where he had four exhibitions between 1985 and 1992 and at DKFA Projects, New York (with Art First) in 2004. Most recently he showed his work at the Courtauld Institute of Fine Art, and the South Bank Centre, London, in 2011 and 2012. Over 30 years he has participated in many group exhibitions, ranging from the John Moores Biennale, Liverpool, to *Upturned Ark* at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, and *Art and the Word* at Miami Art Museum, Florida, USA.

Simon Lewty has been the subject of two films made for Central TV, and he was interviewed by Timothy Hyman for BBC Radio 3's *Third Ear* series in 1992. Between 2006 and 2009 he was interviewed by Cathy Courtney in a series of recordings made for the British Library Sound Archive. In 2010 a short film about his work, *Through the Surface* was directed by Tom Hudson. Also in 2010 *The Self as a Stranger*, a richly illustrated monograph on his work, was published by Black Dog Publishing Ltd., London. This includes essays by a distinguished group of writers, as well as contributions from the artist himself.

He is represented in many public collections including the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum, and the Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry, Miami Beach, Florida, USA.

Simon Lewty is represented exclusively by Art First, London, where he has exhibited regularly since 1994.

Facing page, detail from *Eclipse, Sea, Dream, Song*

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FRONT COVER

Innocence Speaks of Light in Ways (detail), 2012

ink and acrylic on paper, 92.5 x 63 cm

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