

Lines following p.7
ballad p.8
'The Days Go Just Like That' p.9
Coastal Scene p.10
Pillar of Smoke (1964) p.11
Tableaux p.13
Listening In (Fresh Claim for Asylum) p.19
Happy Accidence p.20
Sounds Inside p.21
Gigha p.23
Listening In p.24
Borderline Decisions p.26
Listening In p.27
'We don't just hear you, we listen' p.28
Cloud Study p.29
You just know p.38
A Mess p.39
Colouring In p.41
Sky Pavilion p.47
Dew Point p.48
Pavilion Complex p.50
pigeon grey p.52
The art of trying p.53
Forum Bar p.54
Computer Fraud and Abuse Act p.55
[the nameless other boys] p.56
Cloud Study p.57
The Days Just Go Like That p.62
Plinth p.63
The Word Pavilion p.64

Coastal Scene

to pollute or purify the air
or the air's fringes
what's the difference
down here
in the ditches
and the skatepark put
naturally with the cesspit

Pillar of Smoke (1964)

beyond there is a hut smoked out by
paintball the man loved the game
because of very few rules the chance
he might be mistaken as benign in his mask

men play at boys playing men
the chemical smoke tinged by artificial
colourings like cake mix pushed,
without pain, to the back of the phrase

behind black smoke is guy ropes
like hurt behind the fingernail
pressed to see if it is dirt or bruising
the flattened veneer of canvas

Cornice

Or that which you have already seen, and not retained.
The safety curtain never lifted. The curtain painted.

That season our feelings were fixed in the room's corners,
out of view but not invisible. Ornate not ostentatious.

The white cube gallery was invented in response, he said,
to what was seen as a crisis of cornice, throwing us.

We needed theatre's frayed edge to be on the surface,
baroque, felicitous. His voice sounded fulsome yet cold

and in that moment it was the length of the room.
I was lost and missed the quaint corners joining decor

and form and that which we cannot hear or hold in view
or square with the venetian blinds we struggle to see through.

Conus

Or square with the venetian blinds we struggle to see through,
the market square, the blackboard's flimsy boarder, repressed boy's

faded capriccio stuck badly to the bedroom wall. The teacher
had been saying that just because the world depicted precedes

the film it's no less made, the rear-view traffic no less art.
The frame tempers chance: what is made in the finding

is found in design. His delivery was well practiced, but I found him
hard to parse among the poem's phrasing, the ventricles of its heart,

low extremity of the spinal cord. In the operating theatre
is the intricacy of parts any more on view? Collateral rarely offers

a dress rehearsal, this much is true. The frame might be found,
discarded or applied, the onus is nonetheless on you.

HAMLET: Nor did you nothing hear?
GERTRUDE: No, nothing but ourselves.

Listening In
(Fresh Claim for Asylum)

He is telling me again about the head and the heart,
that the head won't think without the heart which beats,
and the heart that beats for god, or because god gave it to us
or because god lives in us. Can you create a plant like that?
No. So god exists. Much of our allotted time is taken up with this.
Or that the head is a satellite broadcasting out, while
the ears receive; they're small, by comparison, with less potential.
I half-listen, trying to think of the poem by George Herbert
which is about the majesty of god's creation, and not
the plant pot's harsh plastic clutching after terracotta,
the lucid green of his coffee cup, the dehydrated box of tissues.
At the urinal, I listen to him shit. Sound contained poorly
within the stall. It shakes, unembarrassed, articulate. The outside
blue we enter differently is a blank slate, incorrigibly deep.

Happy Accidence

'What does your wordless absence say'
if I speak language then language
confides against its better nature – I
hear it rounding closer in on quiet

the mind's ear leans in in awkwardness
at rest only at its own crests,
pushing penny coins off the steel
shelf without much premeditation or will

your rhyme there for the foot to find
a stirrup – nonsense catches, clots
then folds together in cheery pleats,
a mound of fabric compact for being neat

Sounds Inside

a private moment splintered with observation

I am overhearing a documentary on Radio 4 about music cultures in UK prisons, listening to the friend I am currently living with, a medical professional at the local prison, listen

as he tries to manage the weekend kitchen, clearing up after his boisterous child, the clamour of clutter re-joining the kitchen's ambience, his son

has opted not to harass him while I am in the living room, one of two living rooms I might choose from, where I amble about in order to linger

longer than I would if I was in there with him, talking idly so as to avoid his son's chaotic attention, and discover that my friend likes the programme more than I anticipate, given

what he's seen and heard, how left-to-die the industry is in the broader hierarchy of attention, and notice that my friend's rhythm in the house as the owner – though I want to qualify this

with the conditions unique to him: part-owner, late in life, no help, etcetera – is different from mine as lodger, and the over-identification with the family I feel

in my satellite proximity, a position that feels precarious though well intentioned, demonstrable love offset with what's pragmatic – a balance we all, by degrees, manage, though my friend

is invested more than most in alternative kinship in a lived way, indeed, has been more present this year than any member of my family, and – since this isn't about me – he truly believes

that medical aid be provided indiscriminately, a fact not distinct from why he's dedicated so much time to working in prisons, why he has begun to see so much life

in terms of structure, during the irregular time off he gets for childcare – the rhythm of the supermarket on weekday afternoons, the gym in which toddlers trampolined

supervised behind nets for fifteen-minute periods, with its smell of socks, I suppose, the baptist church perched awkwardly on a double roundabout, its Monday playgroup

costing a few pounds, his mortgage, with its morbid scaling and punitive fees, paid for by his work at the prison, this all being, broadly speaking, a means of organising experience,

which would be a convenient basis for a poem, the space articulated between my listening and his, the interaction of domesticity and kinship, a diagram