

EMBLEM  
*LUCY MERCER*  
MMXXII

*The heart has its reasons, which reason knoweth not*  
Pascal

### *Emblem*

Which is to say about being encountered by a book – an obscure cloud which has engulfed me in its shadowy context and unreadable language – a composite mass that scarcely resembles the author’s intention – iridised by light, moths, woodworm and bacteria eating – raining remade pictures and scattering its reprints – meanings running like deer into the grey shadow of a wood – like a string I pull it this way – like how wax melts into the gizzard of a turkey – alarming and brightly strange – or the near-fluorescent fractals of a complicated Romanesco broccoli that contains small amounts of cyanide – or something so amorphous it is like what cannot be known – which is also what the divine would be – this lumpy ball thrown into the future – unopenable door appearing in a wall – long phonecall between two ghosts – are these images pillows? – are these images mirrors? – how different my spectre looks within them – while all around a border of tortuous scrollwork brings the inside to the outside, this folly, fol-de-rol – *Festina lente* – ‘make haste slowly’ – by taking one thing and putting it alongside another – stay, *Invenio* – you move the hand that makes this – a thing of words that calls itself – myself –

The ball has to drop to go up  
says my analyst

it is still dropping  
like this book into my lap

like the image of a family  
into a dark well

I am an analyst too Maryann  
an interpreter of maladies

like Mary I bring them about  
so I am prepared

can I believe you  
little book

that the wisdom of god  
is folly to us

that the fool who is silent  
is no different from the wise

that what is elusive  
can be caught in a leaf.

Why these images  
these voices?

Why do you trouble me  
branching vine?

Who can I believe?

The grass carries a sailboat  
which is a quiet flower  
the everlasting pea  
its one-sided magenta sail  
full and ballooning  
as the left ventricle  
in times of trouble  
or this voice in my head  
call it thoughtlessness  
*reanimation is possible*  
*as inertia is impossible* –  
only smaller movements  
as when a boat becomes a flower  
on the patient grass.

And will you, unseen fish,  
your touch still spreading  
circles you cannot see –  
will you show yourself  
to me, if I wait here?

## *Invagination*

Had to make special curtains for my son's – well our – room as the window is so tall; blackout material behind falling starshapes and silver scythes; the whole fall of the curtain – I realise sitting here, waiting for my son to fall asleep – recalls the heavy drapery of that tent; before those stiff little velarii with their green and red socks drew it open to show her; just standing there in the shocking light of the place where there is no outside; covering and covering and covering for

## *Rossalia*

The son turns his sleeping ear towards me  
scarlet from fever,  
how the thermometer's light goes  
from one ear to the other blindly –  
in turn, I cannot tell this face as  
it appears attending, only  
write as light soundlessly in the ear  
seeking the structure of things without respite.  
In The Palace of Dreams of the Red Siècle  
crimson angels and knights doze (but oh  
so cautiously) in their plush pink niches  
as the conversation inside the great hall goes  
anxiously on, *marmor marmor marmor* –  
my son, we have given you our two  
*priscae gentilitatis obsoletum errorem* –  
two old and outmoded pagan  
understandings.  
And now you are asleep, I am fearfully  
examining them with this little battery light –

## Zero

I have undressed myself with salt –  
look, a body of uninfinitesimal holes  
plunging unbearable things inside  
like the patient-doctor relation.  
But I always remember, Ajax.  
I also remember on an empty walkway,  
how she comforted her child even when  
even when, even when, even when  
*Romanum postquam eloquium* –  
the fiercest are tamed. Oh landslides' line  
as when you see houses turn a hill.  
Nothing is clean of bringing absence,  
says me, who doesn't want to give up  
anything.  
There is a gate from which bodies emerge  
like an autopsy. I am not that gate...

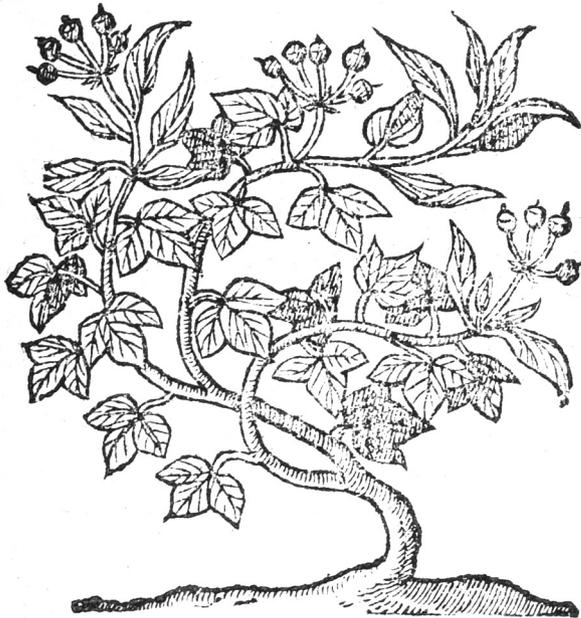
## Single Mother

The sea dropped its findings or unfastened  
as two brief-lit hard parapets unfastened;  
made a wild chronotope out of my body,  
but now, *said Anne*, I am matronly,  
my climaxes perverse in their free  
zigzags of melted sutures, these stiff fingers,  
aliens of no beginning, alone with me,  
another evening in spent moving them  
across my picturebooks: watching *clouds*  
*dream* spray and spray across the silver sss  
ssealed sea

\*

Fell into the matricene *hour* problematic  
ten thousand years of thorny overwhelmed  
mothers flighted spinning in such spheres of fright,  
mothers repeating *Polly-Polly-Poly-glot*,  
mothers sealing ears with moly the plant,  
mothers levering scabs on legs earliest of the sofa,  
mothers plucking hairs like shot birds  
preparing themselves no eschatologies  $\Omega$

*Obscurity*



Poetry: she moves like ivy  
every word re-encoding itself even after  
the hostile earth dry as paper  
becomes uncontrollable ivy

*Unclear*

Where can the eye open without memory?  
Where is the squat grey octagon church?  
The garage? The shop, its glittering repeating floor?  
And a girl running down a drive  
to a house?



*As We Sit in the Dark*



Over sewer-silvery seawaters  
the decapitations of the past  
are watched by pink champions  
two birds loop like a medallion

*This Thing is the Cloud*

It can:  
do nothing/ become a flower  
interleave or wait self-enclosed  
die and disappear

