

extract from OUT OF TIME by Jay Ramsay

'All by the light of a strange sun'

All by the light of a strange sun
where we know where we're going, or don't
but it's in the glow that comes
as we meet and exchange
rising up within your eyes

and the ground of your face

echoed in this winter light today
these days, of sun appearing and vanishing
leaving us in shadow, then brightening...
fine as a needle threaded in silver cloud
pointing the way without hands

where we're all interwoven as we're meant to be
and where the future is: these Advent doors
framed in azure possibility—
even as we're still bound to what we've been
living this moment of our lives, which is the mystery.

THE WEST DOOR

It hovers somewhere like an invisible curtain
in the middle of the M4, between junctions.
A double door, maybe, that can open both ways.
You have passed through it many times on your way to me;
when will you now ?

And as I ask the question
it swings open, into the symbolic
air that is also the real sunset...
because we don't know the time for love or dying,
dying or love.

Lao Tzu rides towards the mountain pass,
my father moves quietly through his latter days
and you are coming to talk to me about 'us'.

Maybe what moves in your heart will find you there
where the borderline shimmers like rain;
maybe you will be miles this side of it
before you realize you've driven beyond
without having to go back again.

In this kingdom where we live now
everything we do is surrendered,
everything is for love.

ON HARESFIELD BEACON

Everything is in God.

The day, the hour, the moment...
the sky stretching open as I drive
choosing to go to this height

Then parking in the crowded lane
in the cloying mud at the verge,
walking back to move the car in closer...

And still the moment-to-come preserved,
across the open heath ground
unmissable and unguessable, given,
you: standing as if rooted to the spot

your eyes staring, asking *Do I know you ?*

Pausing as strangers do, caught between
bemusement and a curious *deja vu*
I repeat my name. 'Again !' you demand
in your strident Dutch accent, as you explain

that this is how the stroke has left you
sometimes quite unable to finish a sentence
(having forgotten where it began,
suspended, open-mouthed, in the gap between)

so like a poem, that races on beyond
what the hand can keep up with
only to arrive breathless, and find it gone...

As we stop time now, standing
slowed down to this synchronous moment
each syllable spelt out (again, *R.a.m.*)—'Ah !'
as you grasp it at last, visibly relaxing

your voice beginning to flow in its channel
eyes sparkling grey, cheeks flushed apple-red
in the cold clean brightness, the intense clear
azure of the sky above us, surely heaven-sent...

And as your gift to me there, finally leaving
glancing over my shoulder to wave, as I walk on
taking the brief descending path on my quest
into the still deep-frosted woodland

to know finally
everything has its being in God
every moment, meeting, journey

where all we need to do is allow it,
letting You be...

there is our road

and no missing it.

SCINTILLA

for Anne Cluysenaar

Suddenly: at some point near or beyond midnight, when you've been driving for longer than you can think clearly,
the real
reality occurs to you—simply and almost overwhelmingly

that it is all happening at once, all of it: being born, dying, falling in love, parting...

grieving, killing, lying, laughing...

running scared, dancing for joy, screaming aloud, starving

...as the veil tears

—all that has been held apart for the sake of sanity, clarity, individuality—

all of these brightly imaged scintillations like fragments of film gathering around a single point,
a single cone,
shining in this darkness

this moment, this *now* of reality that can't be uttered because it is everything—

seeing that

it can only be

as all of us, finally, choose it

AT THE HOTEL LEUSDEN

As an exercise, imagine arriving nowhere
that is familiar: a hotel in the middle of Nowhere
your driver guided by a female voice instructor
her voice soothing, but firm. And the hotel
with no obvious entrance as you circle around it
finally entering up a half-hidden ramp; as if to a castle.
The reception staff courteous, a simple form to sign
with only your name required (the only thing
you have to leave behind). Then finding the escalator,
the 4th floor leading you down a corridor
to your *en suite* room with its touch-button key.
And entering, a huge king-sized double bed
(that you later discover is two lonely singles merged)
with its gold and orange covering, desk, TV
and veiled curtained view out to trees, an echoing road
all filling its odourless void in the longed-for silence
as you spread out a few of your books and papers
and take out some of your crumpled clothes: what is it
that makes them look so strange and incidental
abandoned even, as they will be, disowned?
You have at last arrived nowhere, where the Self lives
where you won't need anything, not even your mobile phone.

Central Holland