

button for

forward

drive on

in the day

and drinks

like wine

itself

The

Disabled

Dimension

Adrian Fox

Pen Points Press

Adrian Fox

The Disabled Dimension

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Butterfly Flutter By

nature opens up
the door and drifts
like time itself

"I thought I would never write again as my mind was like an infant's, a clean slate but every day on the stroke ward when all the other head injury patients went to the day room to watch TV. I went to the end of the corridor and watched nature in all seasons. My mind was like porridge gruel. It felt like I was doing time; then I woke up one morning like a blues song with a poem in my head, and I wrote it down in a school kid's scrawl."

Genuine Touch

I killed a wasp in the bath-
room with Seamus Heaney's'
Electric Light.

The sound of yellow
and black squelching
against the windowpane

and the soft-back cover
like a sudden charge
of blue.

The Dream

Snippets of silken shadow.

The dream it seems I've been
having all my life flickers
in the light of day.

A catalyst without ink to stain,
undulating through silkscreen
frames, images appear.

White on white, in sleep it was
a bomb-blast of colour; all that
remains is shadow, words

I stored for this poem
lie fragmented
on the page.

The Art of Stroke

Stroke is a big bang inside
memory of life, implodes within.
Wallace Stevens said the theory
of poetry is the theory of life.

Stroke almost struck at the core
of my being but it struck my bal-
ance instead of my brain, the force
of life would have killed me.

Balance has saved my life but
I will never walk again. Stroke
is a formless, twisted thing but
you have to read to write to
draw on art as memory.

To form form, so these blogs
are my past rewritten. Memory
is only the words that I wrote?
To remember not to forget.

All my memory was wiped, for
over ten years now I have been
the disability locked in me.
Compelled to write black hole poetry.

That day I awoke from a stroke/coma
seconds after they declared me dead.
I woke to find a butterfly floating
through my formless mind. This
is the butterfly effect. Art has been
my saviour showing me the light,
the truth, the way.

I have to write this down before
there is another big bang.
This is just a theory that holds
truth in me, so remember
not to forget.

Erika

In your eyes I saw the Danube
move like your smile drifting
from the black sea inland to
the map you drew me in the bar.

I asked you for your language
and it swept through me cutting
crevices and peaks in the scent
of your hair. I reached you on
page 104, b7 of the illustrated
atlas of the world.

The scent of your flesh through
the window here in Ireland like

the mist of a Transylvanian dew.

Stroke Down Blues

Caught in this mumbled moment
of dis-abled sectarian blues
looking down at my wheelchair
and my Frankenstein boots, then
up into grey skies and the sent-
timental route, mid-way is
my blister packs and my
overdosed life looking
from this moment with
nowhere to go

sitting here in limbo
with nowhere to go
sitting here in limbo
in a state that doesn't
want to know. Sitting
here in limbo with
only words that flow in-

to this current sea.

Words of wonder, words of snow
words that drift onto this page
and find their own show
its own way down

sitting here in limbo
where time is moving slow
sitting in a moment that
doesn't want to know but
drip, drip, drip, down

sitting here in limbo
just sitting here in limbo. (fade)

Nectar

The streetlight casts a pastel hue up
on the frosted glass, encasing the night-
shadow in a nectar amber glow.

Time was of the essence: 20:14 or 14:02.
time was trapped in time by Virgil's
honeyed bees.

The cameos are coming down from the gallery
like a poetic seal. The fresco came off
the wall and the great organ pipes of the Ulster
Hall are tap-toeing Seamus Heaney's elegy.
He is hanging proud.

There is a dead dog here and a mother's beat,
I can feel it through my feet. Humbled
humanity came out of the wood-
work and settled all around forming a human-
chain encased in peace.

Positive Suicide

I woke in an A&E ward sobbing
my heart out realising that people
around me cared.

I had reached rock bottom,
I had nothing to live for.
I was visited by the psychiatric team,
two guys that held my life in their hands.

I had on a Velvet Underground t-shirt
The one from the Andy Warhol album,
the one with the big banana, my fav
album of all time.

So, the conversation began with their love of the Velvet.
Then it got down to the nitty-gritty: do you think
you'll ever harm yourself again, they asked.

Have you ever heard of positive suicide, I said,
and both nodded intrigued. I didn't try to kill my-
self I said, I committed suicide to live, not to die.

Even when I was taking the tablets
I knew what I was doing and why.
I had nothing to live or die but to do any of the two
you had to gamble, gamble on life after - all life is a
gamble.

Ah Ha

A sleeping tablet
One naproxen
Two co-codamol
Bottle of Guinness
Double vision watching
A film called *Paterson*.

Charging my wheelchair
Sitting in my bedroom
Going nowhere

My blister pack was
Posted through my dis-abled door
I heard it crumple

This is no-body's fault
But mine, drip, drip, the rain to
Wash this dusty world

A Stamp of Approval

Pat looked from the third-floor window of the block of red brick council flats. She watched the bridge part in the centre over the murky Thames to let the cargo boat flow through. While watching the bleak surroundings, she wrapped a small porcelain figurine in newspaper, lost in thought unaware she twisted it so tightly it tore.

I will miss my family, she said to herself a sadness coming over the grey enclosed summer's day, the factories surrounding her landscape, pumping filthy fumes. It's best for the children, she spoke as if answering herself.

She shook her head as if waking from a hypnotic trance and wrapped the figurine in another sheet of newspaper and placed it in the half-filled chest that stood on the floor beside others already filled.

The pictures were removed from the wall,
the un-smoke-stained squares stood like
a stamp of approval to vacate the premises.

From a Letter to My Mother

The warmth of spring beams
Through my window. I hope
That you are well, I am picturing
You feeling spring, within your
New found home. I wish I could
Do more for my sister, Stephanie.

Did you receive, the post-card?
Molly Malone, Dublin, St Patrick 's Day.
I felt that you were there, was great.
O Donoghues and Foleys
Such a friendly air.

I love you, Dublin, strength
Of mother's character.
Evoking wonderful memories
Of my childhood, feeling it all
Through you.

All's Well That Ends

A friend rang-
How much are flights to London?
Why?
My father is dying,
What would you do?
I'd be on the first flight out.

I'm not sure if I'll make it?
I advised on directions and destinations.
I hope everything goes well.

Hybrid of Humanity

"It's not hard to be civil" - Patty Keogh (my Mum)

My breakfast used to go down
Like plastic toast and rubber eggs
until Sarah the carer bought me
A poacher; now they go down
silky smooth. Now the careers
can care without getting egg
on their face.

It's what we all want in the end:
just a little tender touch, a hy-
bird of humanity.

The simplicity of life is set
in the embryo, the yolk of ex-
is-tense. Life is not hard-boiled
even if it is shell-shocked.

Bloom

The world goes on and on and on
but I'm here and here and here.
A plastic urinal looks up and blooms
between the wheelchair and the dis-
abled toilet. I've been reading poets
and poems and poetry but can't find
a link to my home. Poetry is out there
in the meadows and trees but I'm
locked-in alone. I put a search into
Google for poets who took a stroke:
nothing came up. I turned away
in my wheelchair to see my leg-
lifter and my grabber catching rays
of sun on my profile bed so I suppose
the only link is the sun coming in
and this pome going out. A pome
from a un-romantic, un-academic
spineless confessional poet, there
I said it, that word – *poet* – but I'm just
a shadow of my former self living
a stanza in me.

Fireweed

for David Craig

Shaving with virgin steel, in the pulsed
tension of a hand, in the misted con-
dense-station of age. The blade cries
like a sharp tongue, licking red release.
The residue of my past lies at the bottom
of the sink. I pull the plug and it falls away
into the menstrual sewers of loss. I wipe away
the mist from my reflected self, bloody war
on a winter landscape. Recycled pulp on
my face hardening like a second skin I must shed
and reappear wounded.

Sun-Shine

I don't do politics but
politics does me, I don't vote
or watch the news. I'm
building a wall down of dis-
ability. Brexit and Trump
ulre but not in my world.

No monetary value in dis-
ability, you don't need to
be a billionaire. Well-fare
is all that I live off?

World peace is none of
my business, poetry like
sun-shine is free.

Please help me to build
a wall of humanity, Please
give me a voice. I woke
this morning with the blues.
I woke up this morning.

Spring Shadows

Spring shadows, thick and black.
they make a tree look like a tree
within a tree. A lazy lonely mid-
Day as if the shadow was painted
by Edward Hopper. The shadows
fall in this sun against the cloud-
less blue like it didn't need any
more to be today. The shades
of yesterday are with us, cele-
brating this glorious sunshine
falling upon contrasting light,
being.

A Poem Inside a Poem

A poem inside a poem
revealed it-self to me
showing a slant of ages
like an image within
an image.

Coming out of dark
a bi-focal trick in the eye
of concentration to go
deeper and deeper into
grey matter.

Grey Matter

I look around this room and realise my muse
has exhausted the theme of light and dark
but the shadows still fornicate.

I've used the bed-rail, the wheelchair
and the stand-by beacons to keep me
from drowning in dark.

My piss-pot is angled like a shooting star
blazing my trail of hope.

My positivity comes from the well
of treasure, the source that we call God.

Whether it is or isn't I think the well
of human spirit is a vessel of magic
that keeps us whole and I always
make love with my light in the dark.

Woe

be-gone, woe be-tide

Be tide of woe be gone inside.

The current sea washes over me

Melancholy feet of poetry.

The poem fathoms deep and wide

The river of forgetfulness is mine

And it flows out of me.

Rap Door Run

The Da was a baby in a basket
left by a blood red door.

The first sounds he heard
were the rap on the door
and her footsteps
running away.

Beautiful Tears

for CG and Basho

Beautiful tears trip me,
overwhelmed by it all.
My sadness is a wonder,
teardrops slash my pond.

Adrian Fox was born in Kent, England in March 1961. His family moved to Belfast in 1967 when he was 6 years old. He spent most of his youth in the riot torn streets of Ardoyne in North Belfast.

Adrian studied under the great poet Jimmy Simmons. Many of his poems have been translated into Hungarian, Filipino and Indonesian, as well as his poetry has also appeared in Libyan newspapers. During the late 1990's and early 2000's he read in Hungarian universities as part of the Program for Peace.

He has an M.A. in Creative Writing and his work has been published by *Poetry Ireland*, *Cyphers*, *Honest Ulsterman*, *Black Mountain Review*, *Poetry Guild*, *Poetry Society* and *Coffee House*. A selection of his work appeared in the anthology *Breaking the Skin* (Black Mountain Press, 2002) and *Hide Dada, Hide* (Lapwing Press 1999).

As a tribute to all those who died during the troubles in Northern Ireland, Adrian and the folk singer Rodney Corder created the CD *Violets*, based on the *Lost Lives* book, where every person who died during the Troubles of Northern Ireland are listed.