



# This Transmission

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## THIS TRANSMISSION

I'm contemplating how to send an email via the bath plug hole  
in the ether, in cyberspace,  
in the dirty water.

This transmission may virtually bind  
the psyche and dark sparse beards of the Chinese,  
the Spanish Mexicans, the Native Americans, Siberians and Inuit.  
It gurgles a message.

There are things much worse than death. Than loss. This pseudo bond  
of life and gain.

Forgiveness.

Some things were written for  
reconciliation.

'It's more about what she represented than who she actually was'  
he said.

'Was that Yoko, Cleopatra or The Magdalene?' I asked.

Sometimes, around 3.28am  
it gets so lonely.

That's the price we pay  
for days unseen.

You know what I mean.

Is it about honesty or effect?

Your life?

What is it— what is it you seek?

What is it— what is it you need?

## FROM PRUSSIA WITH LOVE

Look out on the horizon  
from your castles built on sand  
see me coming with my swing coat  
to your bleak and barren land,

I'm your Alpha, your Omega,  
blood and faeces on my hand  
I'm your Cosa Nostra, barracuda  
past and future man.

From Prussia with love,  
that old Teutonic rendezvous.  
A hologram above  
genteel but brusquely true.

Black cross to eagle pierced for scorn,  
an emotive tourniquettish blue.  
Monkshood, an organic oath sworn,  
spoken, written, cursed, twice bitten anew.

Atonal blessing  
hums in aconite slumber,  
cryptic caressing  
some dumb archimandrite number.

## UNRUIED

In the semi darkness our vision becomes doglike.  
Colourless. But nothing is moving.  
No shadowy figures searching for us.

I think the greyness was our undoing.  
I always knew, instinctually, that it wouldn't suit me--  
cereal, paracetamol and rubbing alcohol.

Down on the lowland the eco system groaned,  
'Here comes man again', and a girl sails at midnight,  
gently adrift upon the ebb and flow of a soft moon's vanishing tide.

## NOW

Once I was beautiful  
A rose among thorns,  
A pale Asian with African hair,  
That's me posing for Modigliani.  
That's me with Jacob Boehme.  
That's me behind The Maid of Orleans.  
In the sea, in the endless sea,  
Dead from typhoid, murdered by Empires or Spanish Flu, the ravages of war, consumption.  
Do you see me? Worshipping the Greek Gods, the Norse Gods,  
Praying to The Son Of Man?  
I have knelt in all their holy places.  
Sing me any hymn in any tongue;  
I know them all.  
I am The Boer, The Troubadour, The Carthaginian, A Flower Girl, Soul Queen Of Harlem.  
Come, comb my hair with scented seashells, fill me with sweetcorn and rainbow trout. Bless this Now.  
My skin is crusted with salt: from The Baltic, The Atlantic, The Red Sea, Dead Sea, The Caribbean.  
The waves tear down temples and cover cities and the sea remembers all.  
I am grateful to live for this one perfect moment.  
For I stood with Alexander when he asked,  
"If the past runs dark with sorrow  
That strikes blind the hour's watchman,  
How will we see tomorrow  
If it's night where the days have ran?"  
And though there are those unawakened  
Whose world is yet lived in narrow streets  
With doors marked 'them' and 'me',  
They too, in time, will know  
The still and endless sea.



## **ANOTHER MAN'S FACE**

I will steal another man's face  
and speak with my mouth his truth.  
Unkissed lips and unkempt hair,  
cursed to bear the sand of two deserts,  
bewitched and wandering  
the wastelands of an unlived life.

## THOUGH

People who drank Turkish coffee with ginger,  
who smoked Gitane cigarettes  
(though monks will douse themselves in flame)  
and watched the late night show alone  
wearing cravats and chewing liquorice  
(though men kill men in some god's name)  
or those who prayed to the moon and sang to the dawn,  
adding milk and egg to their mashed potato  
(though poets starve at the rich man's gate)  
and walked in the springtime through southern fields  
of maize and corn with static hair aglow.  
(and sisters of mercy are drowned in a black fugue state).  
Who had their own time,  
who their own tale would tell.  
Unchanged. All changed.  
Time will tell.

## ST. PETERSBURG DECEMBER 1916

Going out into the field  
does not mean  
going out into the field.  
Nothing is as it seems.  
At the Hotel Astoria there is still the whiff  
of plot and subterfuge.  
Lost files like gulls tossed upon the storm  
of shared misgivings. Bells  
tolling chords unfathomed,  
lie drowned beneath the Nevka River.

Your work here will not be affected.

Each touch yet adds a tiny dab of colour  
to the Tsarina's palette.  
Welcome to this Palace Of Ice  
far from Siberian heavens;  
neither of which exist.  
In St. Petersburg the whisperers  
have scrubbed the pattern from the carpet.  
You sail in a different direction,  
beneath those same fantastic constellations.  
The boat is not missed.

Your work here will not be affected.

## THE HOTEL OF THOUGHTS

Shot him right in the amygdala  
At the hotel of thoughts  
That astronaut of inner space  
A citrusless bitch  
A scurvy dog.  
A thin woman with cracked cigarette lips  
And tattoos is singing.  
And I hear a wonderful endlessness in your breathing.  
Who are you in your black diesel proof shoes  
Smelling of pipe tobacco?  
The only movement is the curtains.  
You will not awaken.  
Moon. Forest. Star. Mountain.  
River. Cave. Sun. Rain.  
The water burns our hands yet still we splash it on to our faces.  
I can taste a distant star in your kisses.

## **AND THE WINDOWS ARE SUCH**

And the windows are such  
that the daylight streaming through  
stipples in filtered beams the image of a face  
that once lit up the gloom.

In stairways built of unshared hours  
and hallways cold as stone,  
passages led us by untouched moments  
to a bleak and empty room.

Love, that hopeful filament,  
has flared and fizzed but for a time.  
Spring has come late or early  
and the Guelder rose tree,  
once cherished,  
blooms unnoticed.  
You, you of unfathomable nature;  
you never sang for me.

Ongoing loss without words. No regret.  
Let us be done now with the tears that two must cry,  
remembering that those who have never truly met –  
should never have to say goodbye.

## CRAB APPLE JACK

Long ago  
When splint pricked night closed softly  
On the mirror of my days,  
Foreskin flint the dark eyed strangers filed  
To grasp the rasping pirouette and snare with semen breath  
Tales told behind the licking posts  
Lily kissed by greenwood  
To bud in springs no more.

Now  
Their jagged patterns slip to skip the nettle fields,  
Spry dandelion clocks of raven hours passed  
Dance young once more  
From ancient glory's hole  
Unnetted  
By the headless hands of reckoned time.

Returned,  
Each denim scabbed companion,  
Borstal spot bulimics  
Sucking sweetmeats from the fatted tongue  
Drank straw dogged through skin  
The split milk spits unleavened leaf,  
Foamed in the fonted bray of the vessel's empty cleft-  
This weakened tomb of stippled oral dusts.

The cloven swines' devoured pearls  
Are vomited as truths  
On the learned's word wise book.

Uptempo beats are ringing rosy,  
Knelled on sacred uptown's pulse;  
A legacy swayed on sub-wayed streets.  
Cubits gauged the savage span of

My banshee basket  
Scaled with the fishing bread's leafy head of writhing tale.  
The gypsum palate, leviathan's bane  
Grained to chalk the coursed red throat,  
A silken johnny on a serpentine tone.  
Rosary truths plunge obscure untruths for gnostic lines  
Imbibed before the legend of the rag torn tooth's  
Crushed and crippled mouth.

Time and the timeless ruin  
Bleach black the bed blessed fable  
That ripple bitter cry  
(a secret whispered down from the darkling druid cloud)  
Runs snakey backed spooling reels that twist froth cobble cogs  
On filmed to fade forever.  
The tapering sails of spewing trades

Are turned untamed  
To a crumbling essene sky.

Breath spayed curses cut from silenced songs  
Behind the hammer drumbeat, eared and stilled.  
These blind, unuttered prayers  
From batted visions of the disc slim death  
Sighed to thighs' desired rhythm  
Or the codpiece womb  
Gripped in blood and drenched  
Through the slow slap swollen rite,  
Spring from the pismire path,  
Scarf the tea-leaf milky way  
To lap the age chipped stars and knock reborn  
Upon the bonehinged temples of the skull.

The man fleshed universe stagnates the heart's heard earth  
(we form red herring pools in the hollow of our chest).

The shards of the death browed dream.

Here, raised on rhyme's unreason  
The shadowed shylocks of my youth,  
The scars unborne in wristed brow or weeping side  
Recall the juggling porno smiles,  
The fatal art of the false dark lash,  
Biro sketched or etched in pain,  
Lips snubbed and blackened  
By the tender bruise of love.

And still  
Those preying hands applaud-  
Dark eyed seekers  
Talmud and torah's esoteric tangleweed  
Tied by the knotted truths of an unsaved savior.  
Worshipping the wounding craft re-crowns Crab Apple Jack  
High upon that tinsel christ crossed tree.

## THE WINTER PALACE

Strange  
    crooked  
        birds  
            fly  
            above  
        The  
    Winter  
    Palace.  
In the  
    snow  
        no  
        footprints.



## REBIRTH

Soft as silence, god's pale ghost  
treads like musk.  
Soundless. Heavy drapes undrawn. Distant.  
The farthest point on a forlorn flat earth.  
Hunched and resigned, fingers thrum,  
thread and weave. Thrive. Wed  
lifelines, births and deaths and rebirths  
cast and recast in a single stitch.  
None, no-one missed.  
I less. Unblind. A tallowed rope of smoke  
intertwined with long binding prayers.  
Tears of disappointment powdered dry,  
sprinkled gently  
with the scented dust of unlit stars.  
Watchful in the parlour of days,  
the stooped sole keeper of the endless night.

## **THE SAME UNVEILING**

(The pleasures we get)

You who come  
from another world,  
another mindset-  
how can I know you?  
(The ways that we live).  
I have no language  
of your coast, but know  
that I, like you, will walk toward  
the same unveiling.  
(The days we forget).  
In the end, each picture  
that emerges is the portrait  
of a man, and the only mystery, is why  
we ever thought there was a mystery.  
(The treasures we give).

Two- breaths- of- non- thought  
surpasses  
twentyfourhoursofastreamofconsciousness.

That silent wise man  
sat at a separate table  
I see him yet.

## **NO ONE CAN FOLLOW ME**

I am the last of The Great Magicians,  
I smoke imaginary golden cigarettes  
and disappear into this velvet maroon settee.  
No one can follow me.

My eyes are the soulful doors  
through which the world can whisper,  
my syncopated hands will rhythmically reappear  
empty but for salient fear.

There is a life behind the walls  
and walls around this life.  
Sackcloth and penance have this appeal:-  
Eternity is ours but never theirs to steal.

Di-analysis disturbulences the head,  
drives the seeker's mind insane,  
Hebrew texts, old tradition  
keeps on depriving tutored fools of any real volition.

Ah, reach beyond me, Lilah child,  
my Samson mane clipped short,  
flash fly dark eyes at some other Nazarite,  
oscillating Pictish whorls alone are my delight.

Welcome to the circus where  
the ringmaster's killed by the clowns  
( he was no digi-shufflemix Lazarus  
but found in the dying to be just like us.)

I am the last of The Great Magicians,  
I am the sackclothed Samsonic clown,  
whisperated, he-brewed, robbed, enwalled,  
unsane, inrich-- long gone when called.

## **ALL OUR MIRRORS**

All our mirrors  
Have been smeared  
By medicine men  
Masquerading as  
Looking glass engineers.

## WHERE THE DEED MEN ARE STILLED

Where the deed men are stilled  
in sleeves of stars  
crows caw a cold dawn,  
irises of rain twinkle on naked branches  
catching a rising light.  
Eyes filled with tears reflecting sorrow.  
Walk this way between the cold earth  
and flowers living, dying, dead.  
A winter sun is  
casting plum red dancing shadows  
upon this,  
a day never seen.

Caressed by the know woman,  
beauty bangled.  
The silver clawed rook in its gilded cage  
stares with one sharp emerald eye.  
A mountain range  
of velvet curtains, drapes and folds,  
carpets, handkerchiefs, scarves and cloths.  
In her pocket a precious stone  
a bead from a faraway future,  
perfumed and spiced like this,  
an hour  
that has never been.

## **DERACINATED**

Deracinated.

Lost.

Facing

winding

snowdrift routes.

Lost.

Chasing

blinding

spendthrift pursuits.

Yet,

there without presence,

those of prescience,

numinous shakers,

nous decimators...

whisper voiceless,

whispered silence,

whisper still

to me

## **HINTERLAND**

Man outside  
in the dark.

She looked the same  
age as her mother.

Spider in the sink.

You remind me  
of no one.

People who shouldn't  
be in prison.

A phone call and  
the night is ended.

Dark eyes  
and a swallow's nest.

It's not true.

On the top of the stairs.

## IRELAND 2016

Rebut chime tapa brave...  
your hotel wifi code for today.  
Glendalough's cloutie tree marks St.Kevin's wishing pool.  
Two coins for my children; the twin baby girls in the graveyard.  
Avoca wool mills. (Our day of silence). Coffee ginger cake.  
Incense and the blood of Christ's dark antithesis is  
the smell of stale cigar smoke and blood  
on the toilet seat at the Catholic church.  
Tir na nog playing in Carlow.  
(I'm a serial killer of time).  
Creedence playing Have You Ever Seen The Rain  
as we buy an umbrella in Dublin.  
Soup and soda bread in Sheehan's on Chatham Street  
and there's a Caravaggio on display,  
somewhere beyond the Easter Rising memorabilia.  
(We are clever people  
handicapped by stupidity).  
Tripping on the tourist train,  
Castle Express, Kilkenny.  
'It's A Long Long Way From Clare To Here.'  
(Are you my kryptonite?)  
Pudding Lane and Butter Slip.  
A watchtower. A boy selling lemonade on the side of the road.  
Enniscorthy, Arklow. Behind the Wicklow mountains.  
A Taste Of Heaven?  
We must attempt to bypass this impasse;  
go back to where you came from,  
come back to where you came from.



## **UP ON THE 12<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR**

Up on the 12th floor  
in squalor,  
foreign men with tattooed  
faces are sleeping.  
Mother, I call you  
but you do not answer.

## BEYOND BARTHOLOMEW

I see  
far beyond Bartholomew's blind eye –  
sight has no meaning  
and bricks, like boundaries,  
are mere illusion.

The eternal Now is never.  
Non attachment clings.  
Saviour, serpent, stone,  
the sum of all things–  
the same. Nothing.

No weeping, no puerile whispers.  
The concealed priestess revealed  
as an unconfirmed rumour,  
without effigy, statue  
sacred book or rigid  
hands to pray.

## **BEFORE THE DAYS**

Before the days of Public Houses

I built a home for fish  
down in the marshes  
and warmed the water  
and fed them bubbles.

In the days when every chimney smoked

I found a corner in the ruins  
and made a crumbling cosy parlour  
far from the mariners'  
cold black bay.

## **REDLILAC DREAM**

(after Paul Celan)

Kiss me,  
arabesque,  
I am the willow weeping  
tears for your tenderness,  
tears for their forgiveness.  
We cannot say goodbye,  
you nor I. You must not say  
'I will set you  
free.'  
In the  
redlilac  
field I carried him,  
a heavy weight,  
my son, my blood, my bone.  
The players of games played on.  
I saw you, distant, young, your  
graveyard smile on milky black  
lips.  
If the road leads only to  
the place of death  
how can I bear him  
long?  
There are flowers growing in the prison;  
today the sun shines,  
you and I walk  
free.

## IN THE ASSEMBLY OF GODS

In the Assembly of Gods  
the Gnostic demiurge  
fits pieces together.  
A pattern will emerge.

Like  
the honey bee  
fallen,  
laden down with  
pollen,  
dying on the pavement  
its amber moment spent.

A frozen tree.  
Imagination.  
Reality.

## **YOU CAN ONLY SEE SEEN**

You can only see seen  
Know known  
Show shown,  
To be becomes been.  
And the seeker is unsought  
The loser lost  
The winner has never really won.  
Alienists became psychiatrists,  
Water that is boiling  
Was once cold.  
'Sprich auch du',  
It's the complexity  
Of living that kills us.

## THE WORD

Things that move like living things  
but are not alive. Do you know them?  
Laughter and effervescent voices

that burble greetings from ambitious rivers.  
Do you hear them?  
Stones with memories of stars and moons,

formed before this spinning world was spun:  
the first corn, reptilian eye, birdsong.  
Slumbering mountains lazily tending

valleys of geese and strange painted faces.  
The sun dried emigrant pebble missing the far away lake.  
The appled thorn. The stippled dragonfly.

Listen with the ear of leaf and fire and sky;  
in the beginning was the word  
and with that word came separation.

## **DENIAL (GOLDEN HOUSE)**

I don't want to teach etiquette in a listed public school  
(I won't be found a low class fool),  
be a broken bottler on some old deserted train  
or an aging actor soaked outside the faux theatre rain.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Mine is a golden house –  
a splendid, golden house!  
On Shit Street.

The pain in her ear has gone  
since she done what she said she had done.  
I won't look up so passers by can see  
all those things the seasoned years have stripped away from me.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Mine is a golden house –  
a splendid, golden house!  
On Shit Street.

They scribble false obits for the suicide  
yet they live inside car tyres, slide  
through homes they've built of compressed bone,  
but I have everything I need, to live at ease alone.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Mine is a golden house –  
a splendid, golden house!  
On Shit Street.



## **BENIGHTED LIGHTLESSNESS**

The same pale winter light  
filters through my window,  
as it did for Pict, Jute and Dane,  
those who made this island home,  
listening with hound and furred kin  
for the sound of wolf or enemy at the door.  
The gathering signs of snow or storm  
from a darkening wood.

Friday night fish fry in Wisconsin,  
Friday night lights in Texas.  
The machine holds neither malice  
nor compassion,  
no sense of power;  
it simply does.

Here are your own tracks. A broken axle and a perpetual night.  
Such darkness. Benighted lightlessness.

## **DOG**

Dog  
chases birds in the garden.  
Watches the tv.  
Couple kissing on the screen.  
It's all black and white.  
Licks his chops,  
having no lips.  
Avoids existential angst by  
licking his balls.  
Never laughs.  
Sniffs at a photograph.  
Barks at a passing cat.  
Sleeps soundly  
in his basket.

## **IN THE WHITE HOUSE OF THE SILENCE**

In the white house of the silence  
the soundless casablanca  
the spinning house of blinding lights  
the twisted house of mirrors  
we talk through muted walls and  
peer in vain through tear stained windows  
and no one here can see us now or hear us  
or be with us .

In this bleak inverted snow house  
deserted, this no-show house  
we wander without murmur  
along corridors of fever  
in the white house of the silence  
the soundless Casablanca.

### **About the Author**

Mike McNamara was born in Ireland but lives in South Wales, UK. He had his Selected Poems *Overhearing the Incoherent* published by Grevatt and Grevatt in 1997. His poetry has been published in *Acumen*, *Aji*, *Dream Catcher*, *Envoi*, *Eunoia Review*, *International Times*, *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *The Lyric*, *New Welsh Review*, *Orbis*, *Reach*, *Subterranean Blue*, *Tears in the Fence* and *The Pterodactyl's Wing*. He is also a published songwriter.