Memory Fictions

polyvocal speech for two voices

Lawrence Upton

Argotist Ebooks
For Tina Bass
Memory Fictions
These poems were written during Autumn 2011 and into the start of the winter; and revised in the spring of 2012.

Numbers 1, 2 and 3 of these poems were circulated to colleagues and friends, and in particular to Tina Bass, in a .doc word-processing file under the title Three Memory Fictions / for Tina Bass; and performed by Bass and Upton at Writers Forum Workshop on 17th September 2011.

I thought the work had some promise; and Tina and I enjoyed working with it; so I continued. A number have been published by the magazine Sugar Mule, with thanks to editor M L Weber. (See Author's Note at the end.)

Lawrence Upton
April 2012
Memory Fiction 1

expressive behaviour without inclination

discontinuity leads into a tunnel

to lie less in receiving the cause of silence

forgetting follows domesticity

particularity of imaging eyes look everywhere

first retelling if you imagine such a thing

expressive behaviour without inclination discontinuity leads into a tunnel

to lie less in receiving the cause of silence

forgetting follows domesticity particularity

eyes look everywhere first retelling if you imagine such a thing
the other a flashlight

these long-term figures

through a false --

by means of painstaking experiments

the tongue of an enemy

finds itself rather ill

darkness to crush him

attending difficulties

climbing slowly

implying a failure

no interference from anyone

grief and excitement

around the fact of giants

grief and excitement
Memory Fiction 3

the word loses meaning

the panic

the word loses meaning

lying

the word loses meaning

the coughing

shutting in his face

likelihood of distortion and change

not the resurrection

intoxication

to correct anticipation just made

sitting a place and meditating

to correct the anticipation just made

figure beneath the tree

to correct the anticipation just made

parallel with it

from horizon to horizon
Memory Fiction 4

expressive behaviour without inclination

discontinuity leads into a tunnel

to lie less in receiving the cause of silence

forgetting follows

particularity of imaging eyes look everywhere

first retelling if you imagine such a thing

domesticity
Memory Fiction 5

the other a flashlight

these long-term figures

climbing slowly

darkness to crush him

attending difficulties

no interference from anyone

implying a failure

around the giants

finds itself rather ill

the tongue of an enemy

grief and excitement

grief

excitement
Memory Fiction 6

a word loses meaning

panic

the word loses meaning

lying

the word loses meaning

the coughing

the coffin shutting in his face

likelihood of distortion

likelihood of change

not the resurrection

intoxication

to correct the anticipation just made

sitting in place and meditating

to correct the anticipation made

figure beneath the tree

to correct the anticipation made

parallel from horizon to horizon
she spoke

¿with truth?

poor thing

it is much darker
calmly enough

as far as I can see
furtive

so powerful
murmuring

she stammered thrice
brooding

uncontrollably bodiless
unseeing

clasping her body
quite ruthless

dulled
for what seemed a long time

as of aging fire
wheedling

she would never be able to imitate

watchful
talking quietly

adventurous
keeping

and enlarging
wistfully
maintaining her desire
and bold
restlessly
devoid
¿of?
devoid
and somewhat of a dog
¿big eyes?
huge
a sort of shallow
yes!
miserable
yes
a slight tremor
awkward
awkward
Memory fiction 8

Well I’ll leave you now
but...
I’m sure I could bring you anything –

but so it is!

but so it is

it’s not a great fuss

no

I do myself

¿what?

I do fuss

you are unsubmissive

I’m privileged

of course not

I am

I don’t think so

please yourself

¿want to talk to me?

¿what?

¿that I please myself?

don’t bother about me

¿yes?

I’ll tell you what
oh
another idea
I shall go without another word
touchy

no
quite the contrary

of course not

but so it is

I don’t think so

I’m sure

like so many

I’m privileged

please yourself

I don’t think so

that’s probably just as well

don’t bother about me

you’re amusing me

don’t bother

I can’t help it
I’m laughing
I can’t help it

show some respect

respect is another thing
another style

you have everything your own way

and it’s brilliant

it’s uncanny

and without meaning

and incommprehensible

of course

that follows

and you may call me all the names you wish
and you can do nothing
closed door

a hubbub of pattern down the years

every view offered being arranged

bicker and clatter

going far away

but no one comes in

is life

she says

is heat

breaking

¿are you seeing me change?

that neutralises memories

my poses are being rearranged

kiss me!

you are always squabbling

the road outside is empty

grabbing another’s attention

she begins giggling

jostling each other

posing

grinning

looking away

the closed door opens

your thinness glistens

you’re already dying

bathed no doubt in glowing light

permission refused

someone closes the door
we are disintegrating

you are manipulative

¿how so?

I’ll have to watch you

but first I’ll close my eyes

that’s better

it won’t be long

I’ll have to pack my bags

his mouth cackles

your meanness glistens

don’t jostle me

I really will go

you’re beautiful

and filled with possible yearnings

probable perhaps

in flickering light

never mind

and even if you’re telling the truth

soon you will be lying

I make a gesture of apology

¿in advance?

in advance

I have a sense that clutter will take us over

I was hoping that you’d smile

I shall when I have cleaned up here

your mouth begins to open

look at you

I could transform you

I know
steady breathing

artfully wild

a few words

tiny words

untidy words

a blurred photograph

irritating

a bubble of phlegm

everything I see –

inflating on the side of the face

a bad one

missing people

speaking half to oneself

to keep in touch

opening the mouth

and uttering

I get lonely

saying inside

I cannot move

staying inside

too much matters

a scattering

big and lonely

a smattering

a mouthful of screams

and staring about

a crooked story

an anxious look

scared of losing it
losing what?

everything

I get facts blurred

all the wrecking hopes

everything is scratchy

I’m a stranger from long ago

thank you

irritating

before looking away

and dread in the face

it’s self-possessed and defensive

you could go mad

my pleasure
Memory Fiction 11

infectious

it echoes

it echoes down

through the tugging

tugged corpse

look upwards to the light

slowly
I settled back in my chair an incomplete dummy

there was a pause amusing myself

himself

the horror of what could happen hard breathing

breathing hard cold-hearted unnecessary

an old man like you

he nestled inside his chair and abruptly stopped

how she must look but helpless also

¿speaking so casually? still is

no one could hold back we all nod

that’s a lot to choose from we all shake our heads

we panic our chests tighten

we need more air than we can breath

¿what’s happening? we are terrified
that’s the next slide
next slide
the voice at the other end
I like hearing the void
no matter who is speaking
I shrink and I collapse
our hands and our face grab together
cross town restless energy
bubbling the pressure
in the head
give me the location
aesthetics wear off
it takes one by surprise
she holds herself unnaturally
next slide
looking fortyish
a wistful smile
a connection to hardware
coordination
of blank faces
she never hesitates
compare her in her pictures
too emotional
she never deceives
she just misleads
unjustly
for a few minutes’ apparent affluence
¿what do you mean?
you have some questions
foaming in my head
making me cross
momentarily
momentarily
in anticipation
of good sense
she returned to the computer

frowned

then remembered

with a boyish smile

in the process

she had to do something

apparently

something about her posture

incognito

until that moment

some sort of mistake

the act of simply demanding

altered now

to produce information

fuck this shit

she shifted his glance

the risks diminishing

and made a curious call

something that one learned

a little song

something about passion

off key

too late

without thinking

she was not going to argue with herself

she squeezed her hands together gently

astonished
she couldn’t escape

her face a little melancholy

it was a melody of sorts

she wasn’t successful

she had once cared

she wasn’t successful

she cared again

she had once cared

now

once again

groundless embarrassment

she couldn’t have forgotten

it might be nothing

honestly

she went for a truth that all of her knew

an expance of exhaustion

vanishing amongst her feelings

an intensifying silence

she was tight-headed

she felt pitiful eagerness

she experienced anonymity

she wanted safety

she desired safety

though she was safe

she couldn’t imagine

she would be unaffected

gratitude interceding

an imagined chain of action holding her
she had been a believer
that was ominous enough
some sort of action
her passion song
in a melancholy posture
and a smile
an intensifying silence
flattering to her
wondering

it was nice to think of something
that was ominous enough
some sort of action
her passion song
in a melancholy posture
and a smile
an intensifying silence
flattering to her

unused or unknown

had altered her song

she knew whom she was now

¿did she seem pleased?

threatening death

she stood up

she stood up at the window

rearranging herself
the truth of the matter –
we pass the time
the music will continue

¿is that horribly wrong of me?
this keeps happening
and it’s all so easy
¿what?
¿what do you want to know?
I don’t know
¿do I?

the truth of the matter –
don’t say anything for a moment
not anything more just now

everyone is chattering
you’ve made it nice
well
it is the only explanation
you don’t listen
I’m afraid of being caught…
and thrown into darkness
I really want to know
¿what?
¿why is that?
but you have it too
you’ve helped make it here
the certainty
¿why?  
that’s more  
you’re not answering  
you’re responding

¿what are you thinking?  
please  
no  
no more

let’s both turn round and face each other

one laughs  
the other laughs

goodbye  
goodbye

both laugh  
both laugh
she stopped walking
and paused to look about her  
she felt the ground was spinning

she tried to make her face look gentle
she was breathless

she felt strange and light
there was a gap between her and the world

it was a little early in the day
she could see clearly

I’ll have a little rest
she thought

she felt too weak to climb a stairs
and there was a big hill ahead

she wanted an armchair
she wanted a good income

by a little window

let me talk
and let me cry for hours she said

she cleared her throat

I don’t know what to think
she said

she remembered making promises

she remembered posing for good opinions
that was wonderful

that was wonderful
it was then that she saw a line of tees
she turned to face them
she stopped thinking
I should be saying something
she thought
it was all familiar
it was increasingly vague
it was
she said
a good moment
it was time to make decisions
I nod in agreement
imagine continuing for ever
she said
she tried not to giggle
I’m enjoying myself
that’s wonderful
I’m unwinding my opinions
I’m sorry
as if they were bandages
I feel anxious
you are glorious
I hope I can talk to you
yes
you really can
me too
she said
I’m beginning to sound
I get myself into awful situations
I am full of laughter
you’re speaking astonishingly loudly
I am full of laughter
it's illicit

and I am gullible

I am more than a little suicidal

I am shrill-voiced

she couldn't help herself
Memory Fiction 16

he had his hand on my breathing

reality inside one room

motor accidence

large rips in a canvas

image torn between content and context

fare well content

one sees pictures in everything

yearning vanishes

to mourn the dead

he took himself outside

leaving me

leave me alone

but he wasn’t there

I said

security is non-existence

reality is only a gesture

it will be our pleasure

¿do you have any idea?
in the sudden quiet

a mind remains open until it’s closed

in the blood-sodden quiet

we exchange meaning

meaning has a price

don’t mind me
I won’t

I’m already smashed up

I’m an emergency

I’m not arguing

tell me it’s the truth

I’m just a number cruncher

chaos in ruins

everyone went wrong ¿in the first place?

you’re very good

I have vast potential to destroy

in random spaces

I’m running around

a glance only

¿and then someone hits you?

that’s it

then someone hits me

ripping at my reality

smashing my content in everything

I’m mourning

leave me alone

leave me

leave
she refuses to give up

she is smooth and she flows

she stands slightly apart

she was listening to them

she is transparent

apparently serene

a meaningful stare

in varying expressions

which include looking annoyed

perhaps dreaming

at some moments

she is not superficial

she is more than a balloon

inside her

there is more than air

she says so

I am watching the camera

we do not acknowledge him

he says

trying to look smooth

trying to flow aware

and he looks annoyed

yes

I suppose so

but also nodding

he wants to give himself emphasis

¿what does that mean?

¿who knows?

but he’d agree
I think he's dreaming
we all see through him
he could be transparent
leave him alone
he'll float away
today
she says
I am of many colours
I suspect something
don't interfere with the arrangements
I am large and demanding
I am turning slightly
I'm feeling bubbly
I'll open the front door
turning in space
in the same manner
mechanical movement
too much emphasis
squashed
shadows and gloom
before he could speak
in the same manner
a moment of mechanism
well stopper it
and determination
taking a deep breath
and now she is conscious again
whoever she is

yes

whoever she is.

I’m worried

so our picture’s wrong

¿someone perfectly nice?

we could reconstruct someone

¿without recalling them?

¿how?

I want to believe that

¿how?

once a week

¿what?

we’d do it once a week

¿what?

like maintenance

¿what?

keeping her stable

¿and what do you expect me to do?

it’s not that demanding

he is poised awkwardly

leave him like it

maybe he’ll get stuck

leave him

maybe he likes it

we couldn’t reconstruct him

use a more technical term

he’s fucked

dear me

dear you indeed

yes

she didn’t seem impressed
she went downstairs some time

she likes a few conversations

sitting down

as if to be interviewed

thinking immediately

maybe

we misunderstand her

she disappeared!

she is transparent

I’d like to squash her

she’s thinking

she’s incongruously violent

there are other pieces of her

¿floating away?

yes

¿what do you have?

you’d be mystified

I am already
what was being asked seemed to flow in his mind
a distance between himself ¿and ebbed?
a wide stretch he might as well...
what is being asked I've been caught
the words are out of the mouth so matter-of-factly
she stays silent anything but the truth
gathering pages we might as well
go with a flow I could say
you're a wide one

¿what the hell had she been thinking? ¿had she been thinking?
there was a phone call earlier

uncanny

¿sprinkled with fairy dust? yes

intimate detail
if necessary

yes
if necessary

in order to be transformed
intrigued by sad looks

I’m just being stupid

it’s a different person

you can feel the breath

having forgotten everything

everything but truth

gathering her smiles

going with its flow

matter-of-factly

it’s hardly being unfaithful

blamed but complex

¿blamed?

believed

the seriousness of the abyss

but it hasn’t happened

there is an atmosphere

there is no atmosphere

maybe that’s why I am finding it difficult to breathe

a squeaking noise

a lie

conceited and arrogant

in order to be transformed

unable to believe

clustered around flickerings

powering suggestion

things in my life

a like sounding

a lie sounding

so it is

sounding the depths

that’s how it is
stepping inside
the personal system turned down

mournful
layered
ultra gentle

searching a dull existence

¿consultation or knowledge?

consultation and knowledge
empowering of suggestiveness
I'm not getting through

over-reacting

taking all night

shabby and childish

the scent of a body

stepping inside

things in my life

out of sight

I wish
Memory Fiction 19

the suicide
against her forehead

no doubt in the mind
she didn't have to live

it's not perfect
say it out loud

slipped his mind
his mind slipped

an idea struck her
felt anything

and all at once

he didn’t turn round
he thought

¿which one am I?

he didn’t love them
overbalancing

a moment ago
¿what do you expect?

overgrown with people
staring past him

it had amused her
she nodded

her life seemed to be a windowless room

he starts to reply
respect you so much

a man in the air
a couple of seconds
falling it had nothing to do with

¿what the hell are you doing here? other people’s words

¿what were you saying?
in front of her

smiled noticing

smiled out through a look in her imagination thinking

¿which one am I?

and then it slipped from her mind

said itself out loud as if it were an optimistic note

she hurried forward in a small voice

to tell the original shaking his head

pulled open the door he didn’t feel anything

it was no longer possible he trembled

his laughter burst he said
don’t worry

suspended starting a sense of longing

it was hardly surprising he didn’t know what to say

dreams and their promises locked into memory
disappearing

nous tightening

a moment ago

and then he remembered

lacking

talking to people

staring past them
I am shipwrecked

I am shipwrecked and alive

there is nowhere to get ashore

those who survive at sea may swim

swim

not sing

where the combined navies of the world

make the whole thing ship-shape

somewhat

out here

and in the air

others

who bomb and poison

unbalancing everything

who wants to topple everything

you misunderstand

It is for the benefit of someone else

who wants to topple everything

I don’t know

poor metaphor

there is no safe shore
and life must be lost

but
as a metaphor
I suppose

it'll do for a state of mind

a non-swimmer's hyperbole
rejecting the political

passing over the surface of the grey ocean
the unreliability

¿unreliability of water?
when it's compared with

rock and soil

be assured of good safety

rock and soil

all places are overwhelming

no place to rest

our feelings

¿our feelings?
¿as quick as bodies?

a non-swimmer's hyperbole

anywhere within treachery

be assured of good safety

our feelings

¿our feelings?
¿as quick as bodies?

as bodies upon flash floods

all places are overwhelming

our feelings flow fast

like sunshine

it is a calm day

we have boats

and the mind is shallow

stone and mud

all that remains of extensive land

millennia

edging into big ocean
still in the motion

seem to my animal
Memory Fiction 21

it’s predictable

it’s horrible

if it’s to be enjoyed

it should be private

that’s increasingly unlikely

¿how can it be predictable and unlikely?

that’s not what I said

yes

it is

listen

those ducks are talking!

Yes quack quack quack

it isn’t quack quack quack to them

they know what it means

I doubt that

I don’t want to be –

no autobiography

you’ve no comprehension ¿have you?

none at all

¿what?

doesn’t matter

I wouldn’t call it autobiographical

look into your natural body

maintain an extra grip
it’s horrible
it’s predictable
keep your sense of humour

¿what?

lots of us grew up together

and I

well...

¿are you ever pushed into uncomfortable memories?

you’ve never said any of this to me

it’s increasingly unlikely

that’s not what I said

all I can say –

I remain committed

¿is the glue not occasionally weakened?

¿what does that mean?

¿do you not fear falling apart?

don’t laugh at me

I did not laugh

you looked at me and laughed

I didn’t mean to laugh

You laughed

you laughed

You laughed

you didn’t have to take on this responsibility you know

I know
she was lying my eyes showing astonishment
she always seemed affectionate not another word
I didn’t know you thought of us like that
no autobiography ¿you’ve no comprehension have you?
it's predictable ¿what?
constantly lamenting she leaned forward
holding many papers between her hands
squeezing with her thumb
and little finger
I remember
I am thinking of the sea
that’s in the past echoing into sunshine
muttering at me
above my head
seeing experiences replicate
I feel quite at home swaggerer
it is possible
just to liven things up feverish
I won’t contradict you! I made a face at him
the sound of his voice
I make a face at him now

I make a face at her
in my imagination

wind-blown anticipation
I remain committed
don’t ever say that again!
I’m tired of you saying it
and always denying

that’s not what I said
¿what?

¿am I stubborn?
¿am I willful?
you think me a child

¿in this dreary room?
we never stop talking
you live in another world from me

I obtained consent
you are here willingly

I wanted to ask –

¿hallo?
c’est moi.
¿what?
¿what?
you’re breaking up
right
¿what?
right

Eddie was downstairs

¿was he?
right
a child is laughing

he would be

anyway
I wanted to ask

I don’t know if you’d be interested

he lifts his head a moment

to know that I have never trusted Eddie

well

keep him out of my sight ¿ok?

¿are these rhetorical questions?

most definitely not
they are most real

they seem like a glitter on the sea

it doesn't have to be true

I have no wish to be here
good
I find you disgusting

well give me a faint smile

we are near to quarreling

¿am I so savage and ugly?

you are disgusting

I feel so awkward about –

please don’t say any more

¿make what impossible?

you make it impossible

all of it
we have much to endure
and I demand recognition...
troublesome embarrassment
¿to make inquiries?

¿fantasies slurring?
you have a deceptively mild voice
bodily
underlined
in the books
¿death?
continuing to rage
powdery
like old bones
violent again

jumping in
slurring
perversion and staring

I twinge in pity
a limited revelation
I have something to add
perversions
¿is that a serious error?
¿the subject of sin and retribution?
echoing
staring
ever inquisitive
excitedly

your features are grotesque
as naked as a moment
¿what can I do about that?

¿and start work again?

stalking the city
the story’s most impressive
thanfully without participants

with increasing confidence

the shape of a man

his sense whispered
senseless sighing

and the normal false heartiness
running away in expectation

apparent calm

it is useless appealing
for greater things
chains hurled from his head

the exact position

ashes and raving

be furtive

stalking in the city

that will tell you nothing

squatting alongside

she whispered

embarrassing and troublesome

sick in his mind

most of them confident

your usual affability

the shape of a man
apparently calm
his normal forced heartiness

ever excited and inquisitive
acquisitive
in an austere room

trouble to his family
to say
determined to tell
entertainment

behind the idea
of powers of darkness

and I shall face them
staring open mouthed

but with desire

others crowd me
I remember nothing

empowering darkness

yes
a bubble of voices

we have to endure that
its echoes
and the sounds of running
it tells you nothing
we who witness
prejudiced
discontented

for greater things
tired
irritated and hungry
which distracts them with their own crimes

the suggestion an invitation

some influence
¿looking for help?

a cluster of traders

this is getting nowhere

powers are crowding me
through the unclosed door
echoes
the powers are solicitous
then I shall stay silent
¿asking for help?

but I have nothing to tell you

such a city

undoubtedly better

better
with an admixture of addiction
without knowing
alone
worries with a sigh
a sign of cunning

¿where does your money come from?
¿have you a more realistic idea?
¿to accommodate them?
waiting to introduce himself

uneasily
as with most honest judgments

we have to endorse that

his voice cackled
scattered
squealing on several occasions

brutalised and brief

it's no problem
as it turns out

but the head shakes
not far away
in a barren land

raging prominent
books might help
I shouldn’t think –

you would know

¿what?

you’ll learn nothing from me –

I knew

I knew that

¿did you say earn or learn?

you don’t let me finish

it would be all right

it wouldn’t be the same

but there would be a point

do you think it would be a good idea –

dear lord

I just said

I loved you once

you’ll learn nothing from me

nor earn

I know

tell me what you want to know

and then let’s have it done with

let’s have done with it

let’s –

¿if I did want to know anything would you tell me?

of course not
someone is booing
I can hear them
we are being boring
we are being boring
we are
we are being boring
an honest woman
none of them has a notion of what it might have been
¿what?
¿of what?
this
whatever it is
this show
this act
this predetermined dialogue
I can feel no support
¿for what?
for my feet
you’re standing on the floor
like me
I’m not
I can’t feel it
I’m falling
we’re moving
you’re going back to sleep
I’m not
I shouldn’t think –
you’ll learn nothing –
oh
let me finish
I am not old
what is the point
I thought I knew all the tricks

darkness
allow the darkness into yourself
allow the darkness to take you for itself

that’s enough for one day
I cannot stay

is to outthink our enemies
but equal partners in all things
with caveats
may all your wishes be granted

that is noise enough
if only it were

you are teasing now
¿weren’t you?

all this chatter
he looks up now
at which he excels
anything more is beyond me

I thought I was the only one left
it won’t work
await further instructions

the main thing is to forget your childhood

ok

good

I am completely reorganized

I accept your surrender

lies do not become you

you are funny

¿it is my lack of insight?

you make me gasp

I will be dead by morning

nonsense

then start making sense

I'm rather excited and proud

is your girlfriend better

I want to know something

I thought I was the only one left

I am being driven mad by stories

it is much worse than someone screaming

the pain will subside
and I urged him out
with a stream

thinking of others whom you dislike
thinking of others

but that is far from being multiple

or lips moving in silent conversation

that is far from being multiple

¿we have decided to abandon thought?
although it’s showing underneath

gabbling hastily

let us meet that problem when it comes

but what you say is interesting

let us meet that problem when it comes

voices echoing harshly

rapidly

¿to act like this?

and turns slowly

sourly

¿is happening?

you have moved a little nearer

I have become almost anything

you seem uncertain

I feel at ease with my world
you look menacing

I’ve had enough

¿even of memory?

ever of memory

prancing in front of us
dancing behind us

memories disguise themselves

you must accept my assurance

oh I’ve had enough

¿even of memory?

I must get away

that may be apt

¿being present?

she opens the door and disagrees

do read it again!

try to read it again that is

she opens the door and disappears

she disappears

her voice continues to be heard

distinctions are blurring

I am mortified

into madness

best not to inflame yourself

it is difficult

to hold my attention

it is difficult to hold my attention

I’ve had enough of memory
These are poems to be read aloud.

The proposed physical voices, the sources of vocal sound, are differentiated by left and right alignment of the text. Where two such speeches, one of each alignment, occur on the same horizontal line, the voices speak together.

Observe line breaks and treat vertical spacing as an indication of pause except where a line ends with the symbol – which indicates that the next speech should follow on immediately, sometimes as if cutting off the other at that point, or, in one case, cutting off itself.

Punctuation and its lack are important. I use the symbols !, ¿ and ? and that is all. ! is used as conventionally; and ¿ ? mark the extent of an interrogative tone.

Do not insert imagined punctuation. That is, read as if punctuated as you do in stretches of text where there are no marks. Follow it and the words should come out right, if the poet has done his job.

Do read for sense but not so strongly as generally; allow difficult-to-grasp or even non-sense if that is what you find. Do not smooth what you find into what you might have expected. Full stops are omitted because a line break performs the appropriate function.

Capital letters are only used for the personal pronoun I and personal names in the belief that their omission might slow the reader.

Underlining clarifies where stress falls.

Three dots suggest that the performer might wish her voice to trail off.

There is great scope for analytical and variant reading but within limits. These poems are not intended as starting points for improvisation beyond the notation.

Lawrence Upton
April 2012
Author's Note to Memory Fictions

Initially the series ran to twenty-five poems, of which twenty-four are included here, some of them somewhat altered from the earliest version.

All were read through with my colleague, Tina Bass, over a period of months; and most were performed with her at Writers Forum Workshop, some more than once. (I started the series in order to have something worth performing with her after I abandoned my Speech project.¹ She is too good a resource to waste.)

The twenty-fourth was relatively light in itself: amusing but not much more. Tina pointed out that it is stylistically different to the rest for all their difference from each other. These may be two aspects of the same difficulty. I dropped it from the book.

I began a new related sequence, One, which varies the approach considerably, based on some of what I have learned from this writing. One is still under weigh.

Also, I have written new “memory fictions”. They have not been tried on editors or workshopped with Tina so I have held them back for now, the possible start of a new collection which may or may not continue this one.

I have sent all the poems included here to editors and all have responded positively. Marc Weber of Sugar Mule was just putting an issue of the magazine to bed when he took ## 9 – 16 and I was published within hours.

Another editor I have never heard from again after an initial “This is wonderful”. Another showed similar enthusiasm and then wrote increasingly enigmatic responses when I followed up and has now fallen silent; nothing came of that.

And so on. So it goes. I am grateful to all the editors for their encouragement; and especially to Marc Weber.

The most negative comment has come from me, abandoning one poem. So I remain content, recalling the initial euphoria. I am grateful to Argotist E-books for publishing the book; and I move on to new work.

¹[See The troubles with “Speech” in Experimental Poetics and Aesthetics: A Scholarly Journal # 1]
About the Author


He makes text-sound composition solo and in collaboration with John Drever, Benedict Taylor (viola) and Tina Krekels (saxophone). He makes collaborative book works with Guy Begbie.

He is engaged on a number of projects investigating photography / video and vocal sound, including with Jim Rosenberg and Wilton Azevedo. He is Visiting Fellow, Goldsmiths, University of London.

*Memory Fictions* arises from and is also a departure from his long-running multi-voice project, “Speech”, of which *Water Lines* remains “in print” – available for free download.