



Lost in
April Fog

Poems by

David Ralph Lewis

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For Mel

Introduction

I wrote these poems for National Poetry Writing Month (NaPoWriMo for short) and published them on [my website](#). The rules I set myself were simple; using a random word generator, I would pick a random word and that would become the title. Then I wrote the poem of whatever length necessary. It was a fun exercise and sometimes order was created out of chaos. I'm releasing these as an ebook as it's easier to read than on my blog.

Enjoy!

Habitat

We have hibernated in woollen throws.
Slept for months, wrapped in frayed
dressing gowns, underneath so many
king size thirteen tog duvets.

We shuttered the vertical blinds
and let winter proceed without us.
We retreated from the iced world
and the continual cover of grey.

Now, soft light knocks on the door,
invites us outside once again.
We peel off our blanket skins
and emerge into the spring sun

Shivering and shaking new,
we see a world creating blooms.
A world learning to be itself again,
ready and waiting to be explored.

Grey

He lived his days in monochrome;
grey suit, white shirt, grey tie,
bought in bulk to avoid choice.

At home he watched silent films,
ate powdered mash and white bread
nothing with too much flavour.

He always yearned for cloudy days,
when detail was muted. Those times
his heart soared, but not too high.

He watched the days disappear,
passing him by like raindrops
sliding down a car window.

They found him on his grey sheets
a smile, for the first time, on his face
which had turned as grey as granite.

Apologise

Fine, I'm sorry I punched you
hard in the eye just now.

But you walked in front of my fist-
what did you expect?

I'm also sorry for pouring gallons of oil,
and hectares of plastic into the oceans,
transforming the water into poison.

But, really, the fish were too stupid
to protest or even walk on land.

So in a way it's their fault.

And yes, I'm sorry for setting up
a national surveillance network of
cameras, motion sensors, microphones
thermal imagers, informants and secret police.

to watch your every move from the morning
to when you close your eyes, 'alone' in bed.

But really if you had nothing to hide
there is no problem. Why be annoyed?

I'm sorry if you were offended by my actions.

Discovery

After crossing the vast nothingness,
months trapped in a steel coffin
with inches between us and death,
we crashed into the red dust.

After scrambling out of the air lock,
still protected from the dubious air,
each in our own plastic cocoon,
we crept along the hostile surface.

After setting up our insignificant camp,
the awe set in. We were the first
to cross the darkness, to stand
on a different planet and see the same sun.

After conducting initial experiments,
we walked the perimeter of the crater
until we stumbled on a human skull,
quite fossilised, buried among the red rocks.

Boundary

I am mostly empty,
ninety-nine percent space.

A rough carbon frame
held up by electricity.

There is no border between
my body and the world.

Dreams bleed out into
the air, leaping sparks

carried by electrons
into continual near nothing

I touch a table and
almost fall through.

In that last fraction
lies everything.

Fog

The white cliffs had no end,
edges eaten by cloud,
an invisible sea below.

I think it was New Year
– or was that another place,
another time, another life?

We inched along the path,
lost amongst the static,
all context erased.

I know as we turned back
it grew thick around us,
speech swallowed into silence.

I think it was two years ago.
details have become indistinct,
blurred by the inevitable fog.

Gleaming

Everything is precious in this early light.

A fox shuffles between discarded kebabs,
with shimmering fur, golden and new.

A high-rise, shining, is a forgotten temple.

Glass shards scattered over the pavement
are countless stars, illuminating the tarmac.

Emerald leaves grow from amber branches
to shine on us both, staggering stragglers,
almost home, with the rarest crystals for eyes.

Overnight, this city was built again out of silver,
just for me and you, my sapphire love.

Aquatic

When the ice caps finally melted,
flooding the globe one hot summer,
consuming many major cities,
we were caught ignorant and unaware.

It had been foretold and predicted
by scientists all over the world
for long, fruitless decades.
we would not listen to their stories.

Many millions of mouths opened wide
not understanding the approaching wave
then filled too quickly with water.
They sank into the icy darkness.

Those that remained grew gills,
webbed fingers and toes overnight
remembered how to swim at depths.
We began again in submerged streets.

There were only islands left above,
the summits of some mountains
bravely emerging from the brine.
We stayed in the sea with all we knew

Now there is no returning to land,
no wind whispering wisdom to us,
no fields of grass or gentle clouds.
Together, we dream of sunlight.

Control

Start a new to do list

Buy some healthy food

Look for a course and enlist

Try to improve my mood

Reply back to the landlord

Exercise- maybe jog?

Buy replacement chalkboard

ignore the constant smog

Attempt to be clean and floss

Try not to sleep every day

Pretend the world's not chaos

Try and order it anyway.

Unwritten

I had been sleeping in segments
like an essay you can't concentrate on
and write in sloppy short paragraphs
before stopping. I was in-between waking
and dreaming most days, half asleep
in the day, half awake at night.

That one night I must have been asleep
although I felt wide awake and wired.
My vision was engulfed in brightness;
beautiful vision of shock and awe,
hideous in its consuming beauty.
I knew, instinctively, like pulling
your hand from the fire, this was
a Being five dimensions removed
from my pathetic flesh and thought,
constructed from the light beyond sight.

Strange movements amongst the beams,
shades and patterns dancing over me,

a language I now cannot comprehend
but at the time I understood as words.
In my fugue state, a poem was dictated,
verses that contained the answers to
every question, the meaning of time
and the rhythms and lines that could
set a universe into joyous motion.
I wept to hear it. I swore I would be
its unworthy terrestrial messenger.

I woke, for certain this time, lost in
the hours before the world stirred.
Searching for a pen, I already felt the words
pour out of my memory, like sand grains
through an open palm. When I finally
located a chewed biro, my head was empty.

I was left shivering and half awake,
unsure of why I was gripping a pen,
unsure of the time or my location
unsure even of who or what I was.

The dawn chorus had erased the divine.

Scattered

I throw scrawled notebook pages
Into the welcoming hands of the wind.

Radio tuned to static, droning sound
of the cosmic background radiation.

The direction of the breeze is unknown,
chaos emerging from simple rules.

Occasionally, ticker tape cannons explode,
gold and silver cascade in random paths.

I have been carried by circumstance,
designations visited by a roll of the dice.

Planets and galaxies are just seeds
clumped together, growing where they land.

My thoughts are carried over the fields
away from me and into the air beyond.

Garrulous

One fine, excessively pleasant morning
where Cirrius Unicus clouds were perfectly
placed over an azure sky, the colour of course,

[I'm lost and frightened]

caused by Rayleigh scattering in the upper atmosphere
first proposed by Lord Rayleigh in the year 1871
AD, and which is similar but not the same as
the Tyndall effect, discovered by John Tyndall

[like a child without it's parent]

in 1860 AD, who used a tube of gases to simulate
the sky and discovered the wavelengths scattering

[trapped in a dark forest]

and it was under this magnificent edifice I decided to perambulate
around the perimeter

of my humble estate, using my feet for locomotion
much in the style of the flanneurs of old

[utterly alone and abandoned]

to better retain a sense of space and time
a psychogeography if you will, of the family abode,
each place sparking reminiscences of my childhood

[A nightmare I can't wake from]

that meant I was so lost in reverie I found it
extremely taxing to remain in the present moment,

[Let me out.]

my consciousness spinning to half-remembered stories...

Bang

10- A diplomatic communication is mistranslated.

9- A chemical plant triples its production.

8- Grass continues to grow, stubbornly ignorant.

7- In a small country, a single bullet is fired.

6- Denial, lies, confusion. More denial, more lies, more confusion.

5- I try to do nothing but inhale and exhale slowly.

4- The pavements are buried under a blizzard of newspaper.

3- Everyone is shouting but words have been forgotten.

2- A hawk hovers above the motorway, waiting to strike.

1- Without speaking, we agree to stay in bed. We wait.

0-

Parallel

The clouds have been kind for once.

I have no other choice than to lie
in a field and let the sun dry me out.

This moment hangs. Bird hover,
suspended instead of swooping.

Luxuriating in the magnificence
of just being, I half close my eyes.

In the edges of my weak vision,
uncountable universes multiply
trillions spinning from every moment,
slight variations on every rule.

Where this pleasant sun burns
too fast and too bright. Where the ice age
Never ended. Where I am in this
same field but with a stranger.

Where I never was and never be.

I opened my eyes and sadly watched
the infinite kalidescope shatter
the possibilities reduced down to one.

Wilderness

Let vines, grass and leaves
wrap around the concrete,
work fine tendrils into cracks.
Let new life blanket our buses.

Fauna will reclaim the streets,
swallow our bricks and tiles
in a slow, relentless grip,
taking decades for demolition.

This land was never ours to own,
we were just renting these acres.
Let cities be fresh air factories again.
Abandon houses to bountiful green.

Spiders

Spinning, dancing aerialists on
invisible wires, barely noticing
the breeze. How different the
world must seem, suspended
on the strongest nothing.

You twirl and whirl in mid-air,
crawling on a sunbeam.

Gravity is nothing to you.

I watch you retreat to
forgotten corners, where
you will weave intricate traps,
watching the room with
eight unblinking eyes.

I shall leave you to spin your
patterns and clear out the flies.

Escape

In the dissonant hours, when clouds
envelop you, when your feet are lead,
when the city is monochrome,
grab my hand tight and together

we will forget about gravity,
(the rules are merely optional)
and saunter together into the sky
to conga above the clouds.

Our flight will be in technicolour.
No longer constrained, we will strut
and hop, leave behind the stratosphere
and pirouette between the stars.

Found

We lost you there momentarily.

You wandered outside the borders
of yourself. There is no map,
no GPS to locate your lost
and wandering thoughts.

Where do we go in those inbetween
times? It was only a minute,
maybe two. One moment at your desk,
the next outside, sitting by a tree.
Where did your mind roam, while your
body navigated the world blind?

Welcome back from the unknown.
Have a look around, it's all yours.
Each second created sparkling new.
A discovery hidden in each moment:
clouds drifting like unmoored boats,
grass gently rippling like waves,
the strangeness of each calm breath.

Dizzy

Sitting on the edge
legs over nothing
abstract ground below
my head tumbling
not too high for vertigo
no decision made
falling

forward into air
Sixty seconds of freefall

landing on welcome ground
legs made of sponge
shaking in relief

Night always falls.
I'm still plummeting
moments rushing past,
cold bright, unknowable.
If I ever look down

the same giddiness
as the oncoming future
rushes up to meet me

Ethereal

The mists rolled in from the ocean
quicker than any tidal wave,
shrouding the shore in confusion.

In seconds unaware sunbathers
were swallowed up by cloud.

And my mind was submerged.
Neurons eaten by the fog. I was
unable to see my hands
or anything, except a constant
wispy grey. I cannot know how long
I was lost or how deep I sunk,
forgotten by light. Hours or centuries

until I emerged, lying in bed,
confused by the gentle fingers of
the sunrise stroking my cheek,
a temporary beauty come to visit.

Desert

We left bleached bones of cities.

Hollow skeleton skyscrapers

returned to the sands.

Occasional bus roofs are shiny

islands, hotel lobbies lie half

buried, billboards are bleached

and peeling like burnt skin.

Even here, as far north as we

could get, the air is arid.

Water is a sometimes blessing.

Someday soon we will lie down,

transmute our flimsy bodies

into sand. Atoms of ourselves

will circumnavigate the globe

In great dust storms. We will

become diffuse and settle in dunes.

Earth will exhale for millenia,

an unheard release of tension.

Before starting again slowly,
a few vines starting to appear,
reclaiming our empty buildings.
Nature always plays the long game.

Gratitude

Our rent is always rising
and wages are always falling
libraries are always closing,
while the rich get richer

There's no truth in speeches,
No meaning in headlines,
No beauty in a tweet.

Businesses are always stealing,
moments are always fleeting,
power is always corrupting,
while the mercury rises.

There's no truth in images,
No meaning in words,
No beauty in concrete.

But it's your hand I'm holding,
And there's freedom in dreaming,

It's your smile I'm seeing
when I'm waking, first thing.

There's truth in our heartbeats,
there's meaning in our breathing,
there's beauty in these silences,
that come to visit, now and then.

Pinch

Under an all-consuming sun
I was melting into a puddle,
ignoring the illusion of structure
and returning to liquid again

Muscles and bones became water.
I knew in time I would seep
into the welcoming earth
or else evaporate into a cloud.

I tried to grab my arm
to pinch myself, but useless
fingers flowed into waterfalls,
denying the last escape.

So panic left me as steam.
As the last of me dissolved
I became calm, like the surface
of a lake on a still day.

Chemical

I can't eat this bread! he cried
There's too many chemicals!
Too many strange compounds,
far too many unknowns
swarming in the dough
crawling in the crust.

Food is all chemicals! she yelled
Nothing is pure! Not even pure
Orange juice- it's a lie!
Avoid eating altogether!

As for human beings,
best to avoid completely.
All filled with bacteria-
walking disease factories.
All continually colliding
and combining in strange
and frightful ways.

Shun the sun! she screamed.
Radioactive elemental creator!
It's all too complex.
Wheres the pure elements?
Give me Hydrogen,
maybe Helium. No molecules
whatsoever. Give me
the universe seconds after
the big bang, a simple
cloud expanding into
emptiness. Nothing more.

Neon

In an imagined future, streets are lit
by the eerie light of charged gases.
Argon, xenon, krypton and neon;
all banishing the darkness,
creating a new half-night
while sinister corporations operate
in thickest shadows and robots
plot their long-deserved revenge.

That was the plan. Instead, vivid colours
are rare. We prefer muted pastels,
plain functional clothing. Calming bulbs
light pleasant pathways. Corporations
are still sinister, but in the sunlight.
As far as we know, robots haven't
become commonplace enough
for furious retribution.

This future in which we find ourselves
is neither utopia or dystopia. It just is.

The future is always different to our
petty expectations, unpredictable and
strange in ways we can't imagine.
No neon dominance, except in dreams.

Dubious

You are a flickering pixel
among millions, of unsure
colour, generating an image
that you can never see.

You are a smooth stone
thrown into a lake by chance
that drifts on the current then
sinks somewhere in the deep.

You are an electron lost
in a cloud of possibility.
Somewhere in the mist,
your location a mystery.

Stories are a quick doodle
scrawled onto a blank map
that we can point to
and say "Look. We are here."

Dance

At the start, a needle dropped
in the darkness and all the nothing
spun, starting up the groove.

Quarks were the first to join,
swaying to rhythm of a relaxed
cha-cha-cha, joining together
in new partnerships, forging
protons, neutrons, even jitterbugging
electrons, all whirling as one
as the music got faster.

Particles were synchronized
in the jive and more and more
rushed to the floor, making atoms
which cut loose and pulled shapes
until gases, then stars, even planets
were twisting and shimmying
strutting and skipping,

swinging each other round,
lost in an eternal tango,
an boundless fox-trot,
an infinite conga,
as the universe got down
to the song of the spheres.

Mountain

Forever reaching for
uncaring heavens, you
stoic stone observer
of our slight lives.

Eternally unmovable,
never changing.

You will be worn down
by indifferent winds,
gouged by rains and
constant cruel rivers,
dismantled by small
insects, rock by rock,
until smooth and flat,
another area of the plains.

Astonishing

Waking up first, listening to
your breaths like small waves

before the day floods in
before we are swept along
by waves of work, cleaning
our living spaces, returning
our library books, exploring and
recycling, there is this one
still moment where nothing
moves, not even the clock.

I lie in bed, surrounded by
soft sheets, watching your
eyes gently flicker as you travel
in unknown dimensions. As I
slowly remember the day and year,
birds welcome in another morning.
A serenade to the waking world.
"Rouse yourselves! Look!" they chirp,

"Look! How wonderful it is!
to be on this planet!
breathing this air! Look!"

Eventually you and me and
the day all rise up and start.

Dice

There's no stopping the game.
we are small plastic counters
on a vast, overwhelming board.
Of course, we have some choices
but are constrained by set paths.

This game started years ago.
Billions of players join and leave,
all playing by their own rules,
making them up as they go.

Don't complain about other players
being further along, or making complex
unforeseen moves, often diagonal
or skipping far ahead when you can
only move one square at a time.
They are not opponents.
Their game is their own.

Instead, breath deep. Throw the dice
and yourself into the winds of chance

and see where you might end up.

About the Author

David Ralph Lewis lives in Bristol, UK and writes poetry and short stories. On [his website](#), he keeps a regular blog on art and creativity and makes blackout poetry. He also enjoys photography, dancing awkwardly at gigs and most of the Studio Ghibli films. Find him on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) under @davidralphlewis

His newsletter is usually sent fortnightly and contains links and recommendations. Stay up to date by subscribing [here](#).

Other books

[Amber Stars: One Night of Stories](#)- Spend a Saturday night in Tolwood, a small town somewhere in England. Have a night on the tiles, making sure to avoid the packs of lads hunting for fights and serious banter. Swing by the Phoenix, where one repressed teenager struggles with her first night out and the DJ plays a swan song. A collection of short stories set in rural England, showing the nightlife and characters out when the sun goes down

[Spare Parts](#)- A unique collaborative pamphlet with Amelia M. Eilki, fusing flash fiction and blackout poetry.

[Remain Vigilant](#)- two linked one-act stage plays, both set in the same secret government organisation that deals with surveillance. Both plays show the paranoia that comes from watching the nation as well of the madness of any large office.