

WOOD CIRCLE

John Wilkinson

The Last Books
Amsterdam and Sofia

CONTENTS

Download 9	Al Noor 37
Impromptu: Written on Water 10	Impromptu: Lakefront Trail, March 38
Tabulate 11	Ripples 39
Meniscus 12	Interred 40
Impromptu: Beyond Recall 13	Concrete 41
Shed 14	Strand 42
Trial 15	Impromptu: Lake of Nemi 43
Impromptu: Casts of Feeling 16	Rood 44
Hearing 17	Ambassador 45
Lay-by 18	Store 46
Spool 19	Cruise 47
Titrated 20	Beached 48
Burnt 21	Crystal 49
Impromptu: Upper Lake Traps 22	Impromptu: The Decapitated Oak 50
Twister 23	Glinting 51
Banquet 24	Harrow 52
Studio 25	Calais 53
Pit 26	Agni 54
Lake 27	Impromptu: For the Fallen 55
Argus 28	Thistledown 56
Rise 29	Pond-Life 57
Stable 30	Frontier 58
Temperature 31	Stop-Out 59
Impromptu: The Done Thing 33	Polyverse 60
Volodia 34	Impromptu: In the Torch-Lit Wood 61
Nameless 36	Upload 62

Torrid images circle in the wood.
Kingsley Amis

Lake acting up, up, uppity
Thylis Moss

DOWNLOAD

Unruffled by the breeze, water holds steady state.

It must soon be shook, which mind is
shattering from black, white and brown,
into a leaf-fall flurry, green, red and gold:

yes, in time, *understood*:

while holding form in the clear thought of water,
stalwartly supports its moorhens, its geese,

its trumpeters

and passengers of one time continue to assemble
to their slaughter. Flocked out of the sky.

Where in this world stands withstanding,
that will not ghost here and now in its imaginary:

a notifying itch claims the good offices

of present sense, of attention, throws them right
into standstill, passport to

attachments shaped in metal, glass and plastic, up-
loaded firmware. Blinding speed

forces all receivers to dig in, their natures

arrive at their natures sheathed in attractive cases.

Beside a gravel path a mini-chalet tops out a little
stack of books, and at the shore canoes are laid up,

paper shadows, plastic shadows

cast by forward-foragers long-past. 3D-printed
ducks amuse children;

much as an iron smooths a laundered bed-sheet

ducks take to calm. Music drifts equalised

from where people seem to be hosting an at-home
along the bank opposite.

Stop for leaves to turn and fall,

breeze to spring up,

evoke native ghosts right away to waver,

as receivers greet their evidence in coltered air

with stock faces drawn from repertoire, limited
to pleasure or vague guilt:

how migrant birds forge onward! Time

to pack away, prepare for a great plummet

where leaves will fall that will have fallen already
green for the next wave of visitants.

IMPROMPTU: WRITTEN ON WATER

*What is represented, is by dint of shadows/
dint made to lick a surface/
the skin of a dissimulation;
the more composed, less trustworthy.
Imagining to walk on water you leave footprints.*

*A dint is not a virtue
(by virtue of...)
but an impression, as a lake's lustre even filmy
or lack-lustre;
never to put forth in lizard casts
dints that the lake lacks, wind licks.
If anything birds' plummets were suspenseful.*

*Edicts ripple harmlessly where pretty children
gossip in their yards,
swoop, swoop;
the skyline forbids dispersal,
wanting to contain dint shifty within its scope.
A moving stasis.
Rock, rock.*

TABULATE

Beyond East Lake a fenced-off and trackless wood
bends and roars, climates warp in cataclysm
– save invisible trails
radiate like spider webs from a blasted central tree.
Receivers of what. No-one here dares bite.
 Perfection in reception, re-clocked
(see regulatory statement below).

Go pastoral you'll drop your thread, you'll lose it
 intermittently
betray your nature, transmit-&-receive functions
close down, smell of creosote, smell of cedar.
 Frames make sense of cloud. Where sense
shrugs off, skin hears the better
 clamouring, abstract animals –

but I am human, as if human had been
hollowed out, a mere cast, an after-shock, a crease
 printed by a howl which in rounds,
a lake's ripples radiate
 about a bare stripped trunk.
 Reorientate.
Taste is no more than the last hiss of that message.

From farthest reaches the wake pulls faint foam,
light gathering if hesitant, pines jostle;
 other bestial worlds throw
shade on their descendants, startle audibly, spring
forward to the throat. Go wrestle
 earlier forms,
copied in the clouds now superimposed on them.

MENISCUS

Days lengthening restore
fresh-featured woods,
deer white-scudded bound towards the lake
in hopes to drink,
 there they circle never moistening lips,
I mean pastures new,
I mean headless
plinth of quicksilver pasturage,
tumbling to placate where lies a horizontal,
laid for ant palaces
 a slight meniscus, hollow dip,
neck scoop.

 Not for long.
Light flees, life has fled, one scaled-up head
blimp

 domineers,
being-thus thus moulded myriad takes
from ANPR tracking
 shifts as cloud or starlings,
whose mind is construed so by a think-fold
sensor bank:
The model has become the mind.
And he that occupies the cloud thrust
sickle lightning into soil;
 sore earth reared up,
creatures staggered.

The cloud's forming boundary is a garrotte
composing the idea of sky as it throttles it.

IMPROMPTU: BEYOND RECALL

*I feel to edge my recall sharp against a rail
blunted I recall,
why should I strop and strop against the same
circadian edge*

*only to forfend what gleams and scoots
way off on the outfold,
when eyes fix on the near
knot in stone I've been working myself towards.
Deliberately a tree*

*leans from out its stand, pointing to a brown
frothy stream where a supermarket cart
glyphs an edge zone in its resting place,
mesh gathers twigs, a stiffened chub,*

*might be discarded eyeballs, a monstrous roe
or clumps of white plastic anti-shock.
Snow skitters out of the mind's eye's
fretting away in its own recognisance.*

SHED

Raising tracks to retrench What was that
crawls from beneath. Left no tracks
before him
Yes there was a take-up but they took on
Yes there was a set-to but they set out/
going where.

Had followed fire-lines but whose eyes
stray from the beacon.
How many vehicles then
pull off to the shoulder, check the trunk,
check under seats.

Did you count these, swarm
of flies, clambering crickets,

did you count circling hours, in orbit set
by satellite, or by restless
pods of rock/

pressed on again,
expanding frozen rails with fire
so passed across closed gaps.

There was a
pulling-up, a halt.

What fluttered from the pit,
tallying myriads?

The further vista
gouged out of the ground, flopped naked/
obviously exhausted.

In clay synthetic opals lodged.

Yes they took on so.
Lifting tracks like fire ladders.

TRIAL

Shame seduce in its many options, scuttle
absence or bereft prairie,
who are they to criticise.
Absence being a thing not a state, solid
contrary pricked out
as if stars, will join them as a salamander,
rise up. Hold this for reserve.

Steps to take today, a drop-down menu,
onionskin bow,
ornament a long passed-over
him what is now signalling away,
oh that's your game, join the dots.
Name your hoped beneficiary
shaping up in guise of this splotch

– soot bullseye –
early build and wobbly yet a focus
for the funnel-shaped energy landscape
tapped as was:
a focal point unsticks
rotating and suspended in tracery of fire,
no point more than notional.

You may step down,
acquitted on all counts.
You'll be identified as a plastic varietal
disgorged along an ocean trench, no
right to remain –
hauled back, thrust out casually
into a plastic flotsam patch
supporting itself outside territorial waters.