

Long Paddock

SIMON PATTON

All the More Reason

Student homework: the Untied Nations.
Under a bench in the Queen Victoria Market
two sparrows fight over crumbs, cheered
by a mob of sparrows.
Atlas' burdens fall to those expelled from the life of the Party.
They were there on the counter when I walked in:
an enormous pair of scissors,
handles wrapped in rags.
Painting in a restaurant: her left breast stares from the wall.
Even out of a car
I can still see life
as if through a windscreen.
There's no business like *no* business . . .
We are melted to sudden joy
by a scruffy grey flock
of non-rubber ducklings.
The child with his red pencil draws blood.
Remember hail, Mary says:
as the rain froze on its way down
it took on killer instincts.
A cypress wears the density of winter in its vertical aromatic complex.
Stretched to breaking point
kite strings drag the skyline
level with the ground.
He feels the new moon long before he sees its light scar.
How do I turn the world around
lightning's old angles, alert
to every atom of the moment?
Resistance is fertile.
Even after a decade buried in earth
the bubble in the spirit level
manages to hold its breath.
Cicada shriek: summer's heat parade.
At Tai Po Market Station, the Buddhist nun
performs still-points with her gong
in the avalanche of peak hour.
Stay sharp-don't follow them out of focus.
After she'd walked by
the chains across the driveway
smelt of perfume.
Venus at 5am outshines the solitary street-lamp.
At the ferry stop, a man kneels -
knees in his shoes-with his head

in a woman's lap.
Why do we soften to a man carrying flowers?
This afternoon in Love Street
I watched a shadow glide the length of a white wall
towards me.
Late afternoon's marigolden air.
I sit naked among men in hot spring water,
the only woman a blue nude
tattooed on the arm of my neighbour.
He will find his virginity!
She taunts her boyfriend: "You owe me
ten tons of fireworks and the best
crystal bridge in the world."
Men in strip joints recover their bearings.
With touching delicacy, the young armed guard
cautiously adjusts his underwear
through the seat of his pants.
Vacant flowers in the abandoned junk-lot.
Down at the bare edge of town
Listen to the young woman kiss her trombone.
On a forced landing I pause, unable to climb the next flight of stairs.
The Indooroopilly ghost
combs the hair
of those it so tenderly haunts.
The gold mind's unsound effects . . .
Open fire:
sportsmen train guns on my campsite.

Suburbs uniformly under house arrest.
There at the lights
Batman holds hands with his anxious, plain-dressed father.
Barton Fink sits in the Hotel of Words with ear-plugs in his ears.
Beneath a Simpsons sky,
a month after Opening Day,
transplanted turf withers in squares.
They mass screaming at the gates: a kindergarten's infantry.
Blue butterflies no bigger than blowflies
blur gravities with their fragile flight
over graves.
Thunder barks back at the dogs!
No unnecessary wonder in our heads
over which piece in all this ordinary surprise
is - beyond all reasonable doubt - the final masterpiece.
On the line, a white washed shirt hordes music in its folds.
Stones: slow-motion marbles
that only want water
to teach them their roll.
Dreams court fire.
In the perfect park, yet another
green Queen Victoria looks down on everyone
with bronze-age envy.