

An excerpt of

ODES & *fragments*

Alan Davies

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FOR GOING AWAY IS TO STAY

**FOR GOING AWAY IS TO STAY
AS IF THERE WERE ANOTHER DAY
IN THIS HALCYON THIS MOST HALCYON
OF AWKWARD SPACES, CACKLING
AS SKWAWKING DOES IN THE THRALL
OF EASTERLY MORONIC SEPTEMBERISH
SPACES THAT GRAFT THE SEADRIFT
FROM THE LAND INTO SKY, THE FAST
DEATH WISH THAT DEATH WISHES FOR
AGAINST ALL THAT HASN'T AND ALL THAT HAS
BEEN SAID OVER THE SAD ABYSMAL
AUGUSTINE SLEEPOVER ISLANDS, WHERE
CASKS OF MEMORY LOSE THEMSELVES
IN THE SNOT OF HISTORY, AS IF HOSPITALITY
COULD EVOKE PENITENCE OR TURN BACK**

WHAT IS ALREADY BACK, WHAT IS ALREADY
TURNED, AND WHAT CAN'T BE HAD, NOT
IN A MILLION TEARS, MY DEAR, NOT AS
YOU SWEAT YOUR HANDS FOR THIRST
IN THE EAGLETTING HORROR THAT SMACKS
OF SMACK, OR THE THRIFT GALLED SMUT
GLUTTING HARVESTS WHERE FOOD IS
NEEDED FOR THE FOODLESS, MEDICINE
FOR THE MEDICINELESS, PEACE FOR THE
PEACELESS, AND SO ON, GET IT
AGAINST THE DEAD HEAD RECKONING
OF WHAT CAN'T BE RECKONED, WHAT
CAN'T BE HAD, TOLERATED SECONDED
OR VOTED OUT OF OFFICE, THE ORIFICE
IS TOO SMALL A TARGET FOR EVEN
THE MOST BLASTEDLY BLISSFUL OF
BULLETS, HURRY, THEN GHASTLY THINGS
START UP IN THE FURNACE, THE HEAT
RISES AND SETTLES TO ICE ALL ALONG
THE DANUBIAL LACKLUSTER SPECTRES
OF GRIPPING HAPPENSTANCE AND

GREED AS THE SWEATERED FEW
GREET THEMSELVES OVER HAND
SHAKES AND HANKIES AND THE ODD
GLASS OF WHAT OTHERS CAN'T AFFORD
TO DRINK, THE TROUGH BEING EMPTY
FOR ALL BUT THE TROOPS AND THEIR
HERALDED (THEIR SELF HERALDED)
MASTERS GATHERING ALONG THE BANKS
OF ALL OF EACH AND EVERY RIVER
AS THEY ADVANCE TOWARD THEMSELVES
ON HORSEBACK, THE UNCHOSEN FEW
SPITTING ONE LAST TIME BEFORE THEY
BOARD THE SHIPS FOR OTHER PLACES
PLACES THAT DON'T EXIST, GUTTER DEAD
SLOP FUCKED ASS CRAP MASTERS
LOOMING OUT OF THE SCHOOLS THEY
WENT TO AND CREAKING TOWARD THE
CASKETS THEY ATTEND (NOT THEIR OWN)
AS IF AN ANGELIC CHOIR COULD SAVE US
(PAST TENSE) BUT IT CAN'T, NOT AGAINST
THE CLAWED SPECTRISH APING THAT

EVEN ART NOW DOES ON THE WALLS
OF THE PENITENT CATHEDRALS OF SPACE
(ART), WHERE BUFFETING ONCE, ONLY
A FEW WEEKS AGO, SOMETHING LIKE
HOPE HOPED THERE WAS SOMETHING
LIKE HOPE, ALAS, ALAS, ALAS, AND THE
WEEKENDING FEW EAT THEIR PEANUTS
BESIDE THE RHINE OR CHESEPEAKE BAY
AND HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO SAY, NO
NOTHING ELSE TO SAY, NOT REALLY,
EXCEPT THAT AS THE LAST OF US WAVES
GOODBYEGOODBYE TO THE LAST OF US
WE KNOW ONLY ONE THING WHAT WAS IT
OH YEAH THAT WAS IT WHAT WAS IT WAS IT
WORTH REMEMBERING WHAT WAS IT WAS
THERE ONE THING DID WE EVER KNOW IT
DID WE EVER REMEMBER IT I'M DEDICATING
THIS TO YOU NANCY AS AGAINST ALL
THAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE, HAS ANYTHING
HAPPENED SINCE, I DON'T THINK SO, WHAT I
WHAT SO, WHAT THINK, THE ALL OF IT GOING

DOWN THE SLIDE INTO THE SLIDE, INTO
THE DOWN INTO, INTO THE DOWN, INTO THE
INTO, PURLOINED, PARBOILED, ROTTEN,
ROTTEN IN THE FLESH DRY ROT SETTING IN
INTO THE HARVEST OF A COUNTRY AT A LOSS
A COUNTRY AT A LOSS FOR PEOPLE, THE PEOPLE
STARVING FOR PEOPLE, NOW THAT'S A WAY
TO HAVE THAT, TO HAVE THAT BEING THAT
A WAY TO HAVE THAT BE ALL OVER THAT
WITHOUT THERE BEING A CHANCE OF A THING
HAPPENING, NOTHING, ZILCH, NOT A THING
GOING ON GOING AWAY GOING A WAY
TO GET IT GOING, SLENDER CHANCE
SLENDER PICKENS IN THE HERBARIAL
GARDEN, NOTHING TO EAT THIS YEAR ALL
GONE IN THE BUCKETS OF THE OTHERS
AS THE 800 HERE AND THE 8,000 THERE
AND THE 800,000 THERE JUST GO AWAY
JUST GO AWAY, JUST GO AWAY INTO
THE GUTLESS FEW, UNSPICED, EATEN WHOLE
GONE, GONE THE WAY OF A WHOLE PERSON

THE WHOLE WAY OF A WHOLE POPULATION
A WHOLE GENERATION, A WHOLE SEVERAL
GENERATIONS IN SOME CASES, GONE GONE
DARFUR RWANDA GUANTAMO BAY
THE BAY OF FUCKING PIGS FULL OF FUCKING
PIGS THIS TIME OF YEAR, THIS TIME NEXT
YEAR, ASSHOLES STUFFING THEIR ASSHOLES
FULL OF THE NOT-YET-DEAD, IE THE LIVING
GET IT THE LIVING EATING THE LIVING
EATING THE LIVING OFF THE LAND OF THE
NOT-YET-DEAD, SO MUCH NOT WORTH
BOTHERING ABOUT, OR SO MUCH JUST
IN THE WAY (INJUSTICE) JUST IN THE WAY
OF STUFF “WE” (“WE” “WE” “WE” “WE”
“WE”) WANTWANTWANTWANTWANTWANT,
THERE’S NO TOMORROW FOR THAT KIND
OF GREED, FOR THAT KIND OF UNKIND GREED
THERE’S NO TOMORROW, NOT TODAY, NO,
NO TODAY EVEN, NOT FOR THAT KIND OF
GREED, THAT KIND OF CARELESS LACK OF
CARING, THAT KIND OF NOTHINGNESS

IN THE FACE OF NEED AND THE CARE WORN
BLIP FACES THAT LOSE THEMSELVES
OFF THE SCREEN BEFORE ANYBODY (ANY
OF THOSE WITH A SCREEN) GIVES A FLYING
FUCK INTO THE SICKENING CRYING AIR

FOR GOING AWAY IS TO STAY

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Sloping Down the Long Slope Toward

Sloping down the long slope toward sloops
And finding uncanny reward in no reward
Nor in that either (neither), as we escape into
The timbrest of slud October airs, as a sweater
Becomes itself only when of no longer use
Or the bickering flux (flugs) matriculates us
Past what we weren't going to be anyway
Not out here, not past where we never got
And hadn't wanted to be, or to get anyway
We only know that the theater was invented
For tyrants and that we're in it and to have
Us in it, and that all kinds of slag fluds muck up
The hardship into calcitrant evecastors as a
Side way of doing what can't be done undone

Or even thought about again, not ever again
(No gain) so that the drag fwogs slup angle
lons and the daily paperless harbinger swags
Fluck pastors down the dequestering swept
Streets (or are they steps) that we fall from
As angling after all of the thrilling slick stuff
We get out selves (our selves silly) stuck
In the unstuckness of the death that camps
Like a boot (lick that booty) in the maw cask
Slung drags, [This is for Antony & the Johnsons
May he one day grow up to be a beautiful girl]
And there are places they throw us and usus
And the getting there gets us all of a trump
So there's no hard on of the nardening past
Old garments given down by slump kind of
Jammy types cutletting up the sides of the beef
Consciousness of a state gone rampant and mad
Rampant and made, as an eager frag diligence
Gets lost over its own hardening sliced up

Into the ditches of dirges, where only the sillies
Get past the rest of us, clumpetting on and along
Into the slick curtains that pass for pastures
Or other places we can't have been not lately
There were days, could it be could enough to say
That, as against the harboring slankfasterers
Crumpetting up along the slides of what lives us
And into the taken tolds of what's token
The slottering wretches crumpetting over (again)
In pain, as over against the pained recalcitrance
That him em and clept them up the grunt sides
Of harbored grief, briefly as lived as a flint, as
Useless as a dod (wasn't) and then on into the
Furnace (yet to be lit) blited with flies and the
Glint stuff of grack smuck, oh it's turn over the
Time, it's turn over the time, slack up the crick
And fish the warren out of the warden's clock
Find a time, anytime find anytime, let that be
That, or (for grug's slake) something like that

Hastening into the furrows where we used to put
Our flicker fingers, when time was wet with its
Own whistle and our own part of it none of ours
To have to do with it, just the smarmering happen
Stance growling out of furtive ground toward up
Dance crackle thimble thing happening, no not,
Or up that toward the sheltering sky of sly re
Monstrance, the overt quickening of slink flu gag
Trig fraggerers, the old school type, the ones that
Went to school with themselves in the after
Math of the fore / math, the ones slought slang dug
And then did that, diditdiditdidit, up, up, up to us
How why what wherefore and all that, meaning
Less now in the slew of stew slaughtering its way
Around us (in search of us), and the slug doggerel
Flungking slangward (glangward) into the west
The best west we've got (left), really masterful
In its curtailment of itself of what it was is of what
Is it of what it might be of what it might become of

What it will be (will it be that) of what it will become
If becoming becomes it (it won't / it don't) as against
Them fluggerer frag slung drag olden klip slankerers
(Them ones / and don't you fucking forget it)
The ones with a vested interest in nothing but vested
Interest (them ones) as the sky strips itself bare
Of its elements in these latter days, latter than the
Last ones and, probably, even latterer than that
As the sky curves away from itself, and the earth
Too, and form shapes itself into formlessness
As against being nothing at all, and the pink pigeon
Pluck of what's up there (what might have been
Up there) gets caught in the lyrical moment
Of orgasming dearth (oh sad sad moment sad
Sad thing) and the flock glitterers shoot (shoo)
Them all out of the sky, in advance of they themselves
Wanting to be there, taking it all leaving nothing
Such that nothing is left nothing nothing at all

As If It Were Not Always Otherwise Or So

There is a platinum surcease of blonde cloud rising over the bond
Of Februarial months, even though this is not the ground
Of that or any other month, but the festooning pluralization
Of creaking things come to moan in the pleasant happenstances
Generating faith as if it had a furlough and could spend it anywhere
Regardless of faith or faithlessness, and the proud grand tours
Of old dames listening to Monteverdi after hours in after hour joints
On the other side of the river where no river is, but then there is
Contagion as a kind of recompense, an unkind kind of recompense
Really as against all that stuttering falls there, and galls the air
Of its ringlets of spruced time, pining after altars of quizzical small
Talk between vestry and vestment, there being no quaking in the hills
Of town tonight, with literal luckless hardscapes keeping us awake
From totemless tea things as if wishing could turn them, all that, to
Something worth taking from life, an afterthought maybe or the sling
Things that we give to one another when giving is not enough, when
Things are not enough, are not things, and the lucent slip sups of stuff
Are handed about like bandied ices over the mantles of curling
Spice, where more could not be said of more, nor less of less, even
If it were more, and where countless clues count for cluelessness

As aquarian old farts stutter up the ramps toward home, eagerly
In this flourish to be abetting there, as against the casks, the water
Baskets full of air, and bully for them, miraculous minestrone
Standing in for minuets and ministers of the radical forest type
As it stands on the page, meaning something as nothing means some
Thing, but that is not all, not in this graspless entered fall, it's May
And there is nothing more to say of what's faltering here, what's
Not even here, or can't be here, can't be gotten here, not even the
Grapes that push their own harvest into edible drinkable mouths
Conquering fashion as over against trails leaving tide marks on the
Eyes where eyes would be ears for the hearing, but no, the old young
Ones are getting up to be dead, starting to be staring past the lines
Of truncated and truncating blasphemes, crutchless, aching for a kind
Of morpheme that would not be invented yet but that would have
Meaning, that kind of morpheme, but not that kind of meaning maybe
As that would be a curtain over where other curtains fed the streams
Of gleaming meaning, the silvering threads of a line snorted into the
Dread slick clackers, the place where we can't go from, a kind of
Slick palimpsest set over the harbors of waters watering harbors
Boatless of sterns and boatless afts and the quick diurnal circadian
Lackluster widdershins going forward into backwardness, as we
As we cut short what was never long to begin with, the life of a flea
Lived on a round emblem, shaking, and diceless, and a cup in a hat
Floating downstream from the river to the sea, from the sea to the
River, and back up into the air, or the spigot, back into the blameless
Slack harbor, where mitigation slips unheard between the slim boards
Of lording crumpets, old school, and then back again to where there
Is no back and to where there is no again, neither gain nor back

But the slim slick crimp taken in time by one who dies, by one who
Only dies, there being no time before that for what might have been
Before that, had there been a before, had there been a that, but no
We're emblemless little tokens ourselves adrift, and that be that
As, swimming over the harvests of the little houses the big people
Take what's there, oh oh, and what isn't there, slippage as a swarm
Fest of treacle taken and tokened, the warm harvesters left behind
In the slim crack of the ancient rhymer, the slow casking baskets
Holding words, the element of time troughing into old man humps
So that, so that willingness is not willing, cannot be taken for that
Never was that, and never, never will be that, willing as one may be
In this elementless slime grasping the handles of the airs, oars
Or the slim sweet people empeopling the globe with happiness
Those moments that creak out of the hard past like lanterns lighting
The lake the large lake already largely lit by moon light, hurtling
Over the falls toward the vale, streaming with redolent personages
In redolent boats, or boaters, depending on the time of year, of life
As eagerly we slump into toward as if that's a destination as if that's
Destination enough for a crowd of crowding hungry cats, the little
People that make the words wing, sing, across the casketless wires
In flood or neap tide, wearing shirts down to their people holes
And the time changes as we think it does, and the hills have change
In them, and the river lets the banks slide past, and the ocean sloughs
In its cups and the sky skirts all else, and the trumpets of air inveigle
Sense out of the uneven ground, and the ground begs for mercy
On our behalf, and it's too late, it's too late, it's too late for all that



Alan Davies was spawned on the Canadian prairies / and lived in various spots across that country through high school. Then / college in Massachusetts / a year in Boulder / and final removal to New York City. He is the author of a bunch of books / including Active 24 Hours / Name / Signage / Candor / Rave / Raw War. He writes essays and book reviews as well as philosophy and critical theory and the like.
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