

300. SOFIA

Warm sun
A park
And trouble
Haunted by an historic winter
Cold with only slivovitza
People all queues
Mandala lines from gold painted
Cobble centre
Meat, cheese, petrol
Hope?
That the wrung-out changes
The new democracy
The too sudden stalling
Of Zhidkov's tractor
Will cure all ills
Not incubate them
But for now
Under the delight
Of a warm autumnal night
Sofia smiles
And shivers with
Mouths tight
Against fear

23/9/1990

301. I SMILED

On my return to Piraeus
Abandoning B for safety
And snug solitude
I found my erstwhile home
Invaded
Two Jehovah Witnesses
One broody Cretan adolescent
And his well-hidden dad
Occupied my room
My details pushed aside
I realised the truth of possession
Being nine tenths the law
But smiling when I saw
Piled upon a paper mattress
Twenty-five letters
Sheets on sheets
The contents of which
No one else could ever possess

28/9/1990

302. WITNESSES

Two witnesses for Jehovah
Now sit in the next room
At first they occupied two
Ignoring my return
At least three times a day
He comes to me
This witness for Jehovah
Dressed in his bible smile
And proselytizing tie

In Greek or English I'm told the truth
That all the world's ills can be cured
Through knowing 'this book'
And a lurid pamphlet or three
Depicting lions and angels and greenery
He gives me the Isaiah look
Its prophecy

The Gulf crisis
The strikes in Greece
Kirner replacing Cain
Aids, (grinning to the end)
Armageddon is surely
Just around the bend
So why should they care
Their salvation is guaranteed
As my soul is damned

Two fundamentalist loonies
Live out their fantasy next door
And down the hall a boy
Fresh from the army
Barricades himself from
Holy war

He, it appears
Is beyond their reach
And besides there's business
To complete
A house to sell
A deal to settle
Before Armageddon

While the grace they say
Is far too long
For ones who talk of money
With obsessive tongue

And the funny thing is
That of three rooms all

Disparately occupied
Only those brave witnesses
Are fastidious at night
With bolting their door

29/9/1990

303. MANHOOD

My blood was hurtling
My anger rising
My nose was running
Heaving, sobbing
Crying

29/9/1990

304. SUBTEXT PARANOIA

B: 'I ended up crashing with D & E'

C: 'Great'

B: 'I really enjoyed their company...

(You missed out. You shouldn't have left early)

I'm going to go back there in the winter'

(I made two new friends, you none. They invited me back, not you)

C: 'Cool'

(I introduced them to you, don't you remember?)

B: 'I might pass by Passalimani tomorrow...

(You might get a visit if you're lucky)

To pick up any letters waiting for me'

C: 'Hey guess what? I got twenty-five when I got back'

B: (Interrupting, sounding annoyed) 'I know...

(So what, who cares)

I should have a bundle too'

(Anything you can do...)

30/9/1990

305. FALTERING

My friends were gifts
For you to open and enjoy
And to know as your own
Your friends were secrets
For me to unlock by stealth
Creeping like an intruder
A thief
Eavesdropping telephone plans
You talking in I's not we's
After all these years
Your life still seems
A conspiracy to me

30/9/1990

306. RAT DREAM

Sleeping through a tempest
Finding frantic distance
Loosing the reality I know
Fearing impending time
Confusion
A rat cleanly
Snuggles close
Fur and muscles
Soft and hard
Across my chest
In my bed

9/10/1990

307. MOVE ON

At times
As you smile
That seductive, familiar smile
I feel sucked dry
So move on
From this empty receptacle
Crumbling inward
Move on

9/10/1990

308. TRIAL

Tell me why
In this puzzle
We call a relationship
Do I increasingly feel
Less confident?
The little bedtime stories
Once a joy
Now intimidate me
Siestas make me anxious
Embraces fill me with dread
Why do I feel on trial?
And that the verdict
Is crushingly determined

20/10/1990

309. SOLIPSISM

Only in the most
Intimate joy
Do I discover
The darkest moment

20/10/1990

310. I LOVE YOU

Do I fear the false promise?
That if it disappears
I am again a liar
And as before
Therefore
The words stick
Lumpy
Already a lie
Or are those words
You desire to hear
So well worn
That can feel so comfortable
Just a split atom
Of my feeling

21/10/1990

311. MYTHOLOGY

Feed the myth
To begin with
It's quite easy
And feels nice
Stroked egos
Impress
But soon
Time to reveal
Fallible
Human
Cry

Deconstruct the myth
It's hard work
Patience
Care
Don't destroy self
Or the marriage
Takes time
A lot of time
And tears
For change

23/10/1990

312. ENDURE

The facts:
I shudder at your touch
Your presence
Criminalises me
Your 'I love you'
Taunts me
Your small talk
Depresses me
Your airy ways
Dud me
I feel lonely with you
Has it come to hate?
ΔΕΝ ΑΝΤΕΧΩ ΠΙΑ

28/11/1990

313. LIKE A SHIT

Please leave
When will you leave?
When will you give in?
To the inevitable
And accept the short pain
Of separation
Do I have to make you hate me?
How many days can you endure
'Feeling like a vulture'?

You control your tears
Sneak out for a cigarette instead
You control your sex drive
Mine has fucked up my head
The longer this goes on
The more I feel like a shit
So please just
Leave

28/11/1990

314. IF

If you go
I have failed
If you stay
Then what?

28/11/1990

315. CORE

So the truth is out!
You thought me good
And gentle
And caring
Ha!
Now you know
The core of me
Of men over
The dark impulse
To destroy
To dominate
To deceive
That I could have you believe
All that in me
Was purity
Only to expose
Where it's really at!
So now you know
My pretty flower
The melted core

28/11/1990

316. CELLS

Yes prepared for the final rites
As I always am
Imagined my life
Rehearsed the future
Bathed in the liberation
Of solitude

And when it comes
The slippery birth
The familiar numbness
Will cradle me close
Dry-eyed and philosophical
I will begin
To reclaim each molecular cell
Reintegrate the biology
And surge
With serene corpuscles
Harmonic, quivering
And out of reach

28/11/1990

317. MEAN SCREAM

How many new words?
How many new tunes?
How many new places?
How many new confidences?
How many new people?
How many new gigs?
How much money?
How much advice?
How much honesty?
How much support?
How many new contacts?
How many new ideas?
How many new insights?
How many new ways?
You've taken from me
Partaken of me
Forsaken me

28/11/1990

318. SPINNAKER

She joked about
Spinnaker
She called it
A nickname

Behind the butt
A veil of cheek
Vulnerable shame

I dreamed I saw it
Tricolored
Racing down at me
Sea spray blinding
My way
I gagged
Keep still
Deep sleep
Finally calm
Opened over me
Like a parachute
Breathe easy
It's only a dream

28/11/1990

319. SHE

Do you ever wonder
Why she ended up despising you?
After so many close years
The confidences you shared
You even sang to her
Then she rejected you completely
Why?

You say you knew her
Like you know me
And probably struggled
Like you do now
To be the perfect friend
Or lover
As if perfect tolerance
Perfect acceptance
Perfect anything
Isn't destructive
Consuming all it its
Perfect orbit
Including me
Have you ever really wondered?

28/11/1990

320. PARADOX

When I say I love you
I also mean
I hate you
So what pains you more?
Knowing every small truth
Contains a larger lie

The deception
Or the silence?

28/11/1990

321. END GAME

Like beginnings
Ends are passionate
The stomach churns
In anticipation
Of the sacred moment
The single event
That shatters

The thrill of the first touch
The first flirtatious game
The first hungry pang
Are all mirrored
Deliciously
In the end game

28/11/1990

322. RISK

Truly
I can't fathom what keeps you here
I push and push
Like I want to know your limit
The point of actual despair
That ultimately defeats you
So that in defeat
You would leave me
And without you
I no longer risk
Myself

29/11/1990

323. BAGHDAD

So it has come to this
Again
A just war
Baghdad flattened
And the terrible shadow
Of B52s
Turning day to night
And night to day

18/1/1991

324. CALCULUS

For me
Loneliness has always been
Calculable
A safe equation
For I know where I stand
On my own

The fear of us
Is the fear of the unknown
The infinity fear
Can I be someone for you?
Can I give a little of what you need?

Macabre then
That it is easier to just stop giving
The shut down
Is calculated risk minimisation

The logical effect though
Is rupture
Of untold damage
And daily misery
I know only too well
The math of hate

18/1/1991

325. TERRORIST

So he calls me an emotional terrorist
That perceptive friend of yours
And I suppose his perspicacious analysis
Met with your approval and mirth

I for one am not dissenting
But I do request my entitled defense
We began as good friends
Became lovers
So it seems reasonable
If not beyond all doubt
That we could regain friendship once again

You fought this with a belligerence
That startled me
But when I admitted defeat
You sought me out

So you want something of me
But the settlement terms are strict
I should not break the illusion
That we are lovers
When we are not
And I should not seek your confidence
Over matters of the heart
I'm not sure all this pretending
Is legally defensible
So perhaps we should aim
For another kind of dénouement

18/1/1991

326. FALLOUT

If I stop giving
I risk your hurt
And the fallout
Depression
If I give again
I risk failure
And that fallout
Terror

24/1/1991

327. KNITTED

How on earth
Do I start to unravel?
Those parts of me
Knotted so well
Like the protective woolen jumpers
Mum would knit for me

Now summer is here
I am choking
Suffocating
Wrestling daily
With my own ingratitude
(That once was so snug)
My own envy
(That provided shelter from many a cold blast)
My own jealousy
(That hid a blizzard of insecurity)

28/1/1991

328. FINGERTIP

When your caresses humiliate me
Is it time not to touch?
When each lovelorn glance
Confronts the impotence of my being
Is it time to look away?
When the game we play now has loaded dice
Is it time to get serious?
When the plans we make have razor wire perimeters
Is it time to destroy?

These are uncharted waters for me
The blind alleys
The maze we now enter
Without expectation
Or sighs
The only light
Breathlessly flickering
At the ends of our fingertips

12/3/1991

329. BROKEN TRUCE

Again the truce
Is broken wide
Our happy myth
(Was it real?)
Is thrust aside
Our cobweb dream
In angry shreds
The vulture soars
Spitting craven carrion
From butchered threads
The accusations
Demolish
Something too soft
Barely pulsing
Something unable
To sustain another
Liftoff

23/3/1991

330. AUDACITY

When you have had
The sheer audacity to act
I have felt the emptiness
Of that loss
But what to do?
You won't come back
And if you did
I think I lack the courage
To show you

23/3/1991

331. DEMANDS

What image of me would you choose?
How would you mold me?
If you could
Under pressure to accept your demands
Disguised cleverly as kind trifles
Given on credit
To be redeemed with interest
At a later date
I may never change and then what?
My fine banker
With the fabricated images
And the mirror of tears

23/3/1991

332. GIRLHOOD TOY

I am a long-lost girlhood toy
A raggedy doll
Rediscovered and joyfully
Refurbished with party clothes
And refreshed caresses
Cooing and curling over
Tired locks
For a while

But you are all grown now
And the smiles are pretend
Soon to be put aside again
I understand
With your other girly playthings
Discarded to gather dust
Become mould-ridden and damp

23/3/1991

333. CONSUMMATION

When all I have is not enough
I am nothing
I have nothing
Eddying around the endless whirlpool
Forever in circle
Forever in sacrifice
Battling to preserve myself
From being consumed

23/3/1991

334. COURAGE

Courage
It's over
Courage
You know it
I know it
Courage now

23/3/1991

335. DARE

You're as schizo as me
Pissed-off by my thoughts
My barbarisms
You hate me
So why not show it?
Cut the sympathy-shit façade
And dare to fight
No more the innocent
Dare to reveal what
You really feel

23/3/1991

336. AT PAINS TO EXPLAIN

You found your fantastic wings
And flew here against advice
Proffered but not sought
And in that rainbow bubble
Cocooned dream
You left behind a sweet promise
Only just savoured
So bitter with new love on the lips
And soured in altitude
I understand life's difficulties here
Because I am not what you imagined
As Greece is not just a marble ruin
But I am here
And I am I

24/3/1991

337. MATH AGAIN

$$\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$$

This is the armoured equation
Of our love
We both have our means
The acquired weapons
Left over and razored
From past forays
Or genetically modified
By thousands of generations
Of people angry, hurt, pained
And equipped to fight

So this tainted thing
Will not grow
Is dead on the trellis
Bound and tied to a tree
Predetermined
In a determinism
Fixed as only mathematical
Laws can be

24/3/1991

338. RESIGNATION

I am tired now
Of explaining myself
Of trying to let you
See clearly
Something I just only
Perceive vaguely
Relationships don't grow
That piece of biology
Is a soapy fantasy
Of Hollywood
Of Mills and Boon
Of our sad, sorry society
And maybe the first reason
So many end up in tatters
The moment illusion meets truth
(Do you think this is our predicament?)

Rather the bold truth is two people
Two life sentences
Two sets of neuroses
Two bundles of unresolved pain
Two fleshy vessels
Capable of pleasure, warmth, understanding, acceptance
All that we group together as love
Making a real-time dialectic
Not growth
But a swirling toing and froing
As these disunities (maybe more)
Pull, bubble, collide and percolate
Defining and redefining ourselves
In relationship to others

The choice is simply whether to stay together
In pleasure, pain and boredom
Better or worse
For us even that choice plays a role
In the dance of dialectic
As we both imagine at times
It could be richer elsewhere
In reality (for me at least)
I doubt it
But the fantasy is real enough
I grant you

In that way all promises harbour a deceit
And in truth I can't promise much
I cannot even say
There is only more of the same
I do not know, nor want to
I have no crystal ball

Nor want one
In the dark times of us
I limit the possibilities
Of being swamped
In the green pond of emotion
By retreating inward
To a part of my life I know
And love and hate
Where I find a costly calm

Perhaps here we differ
Where I retreat to a private cave
You reach out for solace
In those high mountains of drama
When two sets of insecurities are riding tall
Our individual responses collide
Explosively
For a moment all is mutually exclusive
Or worse
We act to aggravate the other's pain

Is it arrogance that asks that we accept this slant?
Perhaps it could become a touchstone
For our future
A building block that may crumble
Or hold firm
It seems to me that today it is the most
Important factor determining our fate
The crucial dialectic
As once the expression of our mutual
Love and admiration was
Or our sexual pleasure before that

If we have a tomorrow
Certainly other factors will emerge
To take precedence
To taunt and tease
To bring laughter and tears
If this is growth it is different in kind
To any notion of a steady progress
Towards nirvana

Learning itself plays a part
As does peace of mind, serenity
There just can be no constants
Like the tide, things rise and fall
Driftwood swept along by thousands
Of rippling currents and eddies
Each feebly examined
Rejected or accepted
As if fixed in time
When in fact contradictions outnumber

Facts in the waters of the human psyche

So the maelstrom of our relationship
Me to you
You to me
Us
Cannot fail
Or succeed
What remains is just choice
Or our slight inkling of it
And the human need to order
To assess and to value

When you ask me if our relationship
Is a success?
I can only say
Not yet
And for me the smile of success
Would be when I retreat
Into us
As comfortably
And for the same reasons
That today I retreat into myself
When what we call
Our relationship
Becomes the haven I now have
And jealously guard within
The place I know

24/3/1991

339. NEUROTIC

Like a child
Who is constantly thwarted
And frustrated
A boundless energy of nerves
Searching
For something long forgotten
Left now with obsession
And a tick and twitch
Where others listen
Mind on the search
Frantic and chaotic
Dizzying all those spinning in orbit
Around the family romance

25/4/1991

340. HALF-DAY

The birthday celebration is done
And we sink back to a place
Dark but familiar
Manipulative
Fugitives running
Cascading over the angry truth
That squats malevolently
Behind each pained and painted grin

The half-day truce is over
Hostilities resume
From our respective depressed bunkers
Squeezing shots through each other's
Logical positions
You shed tears
I tear my hair
And we wait for the secret weapon
To be flung

25/4/1991

341. FORGOTTEN

Suddenly it is calmer
Scorching winds no longer
Sweep us along a sand-barren track
Battering our battle hardened brows
Unexpected calm
As if something uttered
Took the breath away
And made perfect sense
At last
Relieving calm
So easy and comfortable
A mild Greek breeze
And all else is forgotten

7/5/1991

342. SIMPLICITY

We fought as usual
Like cornered dogs
Savaging all within jaws reach
Salvaging from our wounds
A little false pride
That peculiar satisfaction
Granted to the ostracised

Then after months of trench skirmishes
Something was spoken
Without malice
Something was explained clearly
By accident
We can love
And remain whole
We can support
Without dragging down
We can be together
Without being enmeshed
Its simplicity
Saved us

7/5/1991

343. PUZZLE

An old, long life is a puzzle
Surrounded by people
Enveloped by loneliness
And spectral visions
Distant memories and nightly dreams
Mingle
To confirm a world order
Or a betrayal

The thread of life quickly
Stretched to vibration
By an eye operation
And a freak dog bite
Infection arrives
Legs swell and look worse
The back aches
The heart thuds on
Stronger medications
Demolish nutrition
As daily the leg swells

Sick too with worry
And stricken

Abandoned it feels by God
Death
The last puzzling piece
Crouches behind any commonplace possession
Behind the painstakingly woven tablecloth
Behind the thrice-daily kissed icon
Behind the diploma and much fingered
Black and white photo of the first-born son
Behind his last youthful letter
Sent before the drowning
Behind the old copper briki
Or a church-worn hat
Behind the simple objects
Where you would least expect it

A caring but careful daughter
Is Judas called
Because she is there for you
But also has her own to worry
Abandoned it seems to the dogs
And modern medical miracles
The thread pings piercingly
Waiting to snap
The old life waits also
Patiently, defiantly, angrily
Betrayed, loved, hated
For the arrival of simplicity

7/5/1991

344. CONFIRMATION

I cannot confirm you
Or live with the expectation
That I can provide such confirmation
I am not a church
Nor a believer
So I cannot absolve you
The spark between us
Might return
When I no longer carry that weight
When I can love freely again
But until then
I wait
A monastic
A celibate
Thwarting frustration
With contemplation

7/5/1991

345. SISTERS

As you are so generous
So kind
Your lacking sister
Despises
And wants to replace your good heart
With sullen lies
Money, success
Or other material ties
She can't succeed
But since your birth
Young, slender, delicious
She has taken on the crusade
To bring you misery
She overburdened with flesh
And jealousy
Burns slow but with ferocious heat
Between her grinning mouth
And epee eyes

20/5/1991

346. POWER

There is nothing romantic
About a candlelit dinner
When there is no power
Behind the switch

May 1991

347. TRANSFORMED

You have wrapped
Your dreaming spirit
I once admired
In a suit and tie
Aiming to be something
From another world
Poverty in the past
Was no impediment
Now impoverished souls
Snap fingers in your face
Demand obedience
Where once pride
Brought easy defiance

May 1991

348. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF KAVALS

The first time I bought
One of your hand-hewn kavals
Priceless really
Out of politeness
I offered to pay you
In Leva, Dollars or Marks
'Leva' you answered proudly
'Is my country's currency'

The second time
Out of respect
I asked you the price
After all three years had passed
And inflation had reached
Even socialist utopias
Then you quoted me in Dollars
But not having any
I paid in Marks

The third time
Out of intuition
Of the effects of change
We spoke together
In our private language
Of a few improvised German words
Of the harsh economic times
The price of petrol and bread
Of failing public transport
And you told me
How the changes were punishing you
Along with the rest
(Excepting the crafty few)
How anarchy had crept in
Disguised as democracy
And seeing you would most likely
Not adapt well to the new
Democratic, capitalist Bulgaria
I slipped you double the price
You quoted
(No question now about the currency)
I appeased my conscience all right
And also hammered yet another nail
Into your fragile dignity

June 1991

349. VAGINA DENTINA

Those creepy Picasso nudes
We sat together
And laughed
(Too loud?)
With mouth-like genitals
Hammer breasts
Long strangling arms
All entanglement and possession
A pinhead
Or an enormous jaw
With only two terrible teeth
Poised and poisonous
To devour
Ferocious
We laughed
And quietly shuddered
At the tangle of fear
Love and domination
In these genius oils
In us
In the psychology
Of our world

7/7/1991