

1. old man of gugh (air)

the goatherd draws his charge:
entrails slump
and sigh in the grass;
flies drone in the offing.

he reams and drills each
painstaking bone;
slakes and flays at the now-
empty skin bag.

all is quiet on the carns.

sinew is wound, drawing holes tight.
elastic potential energy
(sprung of beast)
closes the airbag.

standing, feet apart -
vitruvian man
with crooked arms -
he elbows his way into the cosmos

and after island silence
that first sonorous breath; sound
of the early pastoralist drawing
from death a continuous chant:

breathe. and again. breathe. and
again...

2. awana's well (fire)

bells: the outrage of alarm;
cradled menace of the telephone
i don't dare answer.
with good reason.

paggers scream;
sirens twist sound waves taut;
the doppler effect
is felt in the gut

as the bottom falls
out of the lurching world.
the lift cables
have burned through

and cast me adrift
to be wrecked
on the holy rock of the anchoress.
Can all be well?

i hear the pin drop,
and i wish for

the fiery rebranding:
the dark night of the soul;

the dark night of the soul
that is on the airwaves right now;
lost and seeking
the final fit.

Let me out of here...
All shall be well.
All shall be well.
All shall be well.

3. ennor landfall (earth)

the scene is set for your seduction now:
the landfall made, the lapse inevitable.
you cannot set your will against this flow -
the moon is lit; the sea incorrigible.

with each cold sweep of his eroding hand
a hush of falling silk; the drapery
of wave. each swell shrugs off your skin-smooth
sand
and rummages the starry lingerie.

this ocean's foamy tongue can lick all clean;
perfect the beach for each fresh conqueror
but all, who eye your shrinking hourglass, lean
toward his future as a bachelor.

with every tide the incremental rise is felt:
the fall of land beneath orion's belt.

4. church on the beach (water)

church on the beach, graves in the grasses;
plaques on the wall, centuries of losses -
the names of men who put to sea
in wind and storm, now in the lee

of the church on the beach
where the sea reaches everyone we love;
of the church on the beach
where the sea breaches everything we have.

sailors and sons, heroes and lovers;
houses of grief; islands of mothers
whose pain is etched in brass and stone -
a place, a date - so much is shown

in the church on the beach
where the sea reaches everyone we love;
in the church on the beach

where the sea breaches everything we have.

clear light glass, seabirds calling;
waves on the sand, rising and falling -
it costs the same when tithes are paid;
it costs the same when men are laid

by the church on the beach
where the sea reaches everyone we love;
by the church on the beach
where the sea breaches everything we have.

5. aeolian scillonian (aether)

aether is all we have:
the wind plays us for fools
and moves on;

seas rise and fall,
sucking in whole strands before
spitting them out again;

in the face of elemental scour
vast plates of land crumple to
unsteady mountains, declining grain by grain

as each human fire fades.
time consumes, at horrific temperatures,
every last spermatozoa -

until I am a stray speck of ash
on my own widow's black dress
blown back by the skirling wind

that scatters on kittern hill...