

# *Perfectly Careless, Final Separation.*

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# Introduction

*This collection of poems is very much a companion piece - neither prequel nor sequel - to the play Flowering Desolation that I wrote using a similar approach in 2018.*

Each poem has been carved out of a single novel which has been read, sliced up, and reorganised into the linear poem that is presented here. These fragments of sentences have been removed of their original context and used as the raw material with which to craft new meaning. The content of each poem has arisen naturally, always being led by the source text itself, and was naturally obscured to me until the full poem had come into being.

The process was simple: I read books and took from them interesting arrangements of words, never altering them but allowing myself to take only fragments of sentences and to edit punctuation as I saw fit. These groups of words were then ordered so as to create something that appeared both coherent and distinct from its original source. Some of the poems here conform loosely to the original feel of their respective source-novels, and some contrast sharply from them. They exist here both as individual works, and as the collection in which they are presented. The writing style naturally changes poem to poem, and the vernacular of each writer is apparent in the text.

No word besides this short introduction has been written by myself, rather they are hijackings: unofficial collaborations for which I did not seek approval nor ask forgiveness.

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# In Calculated Disorder



*Toni Morrison - The Bluest Eye*

Dreams of affluence and vengeance  
into the anonymous misery of their  
Terror and obscure longing.

Her eyes are full of sorrow:  
“Please, make me disappear.”

We acquiesce.

The others are braced in darkness,  
Slid into the silence,  
Surrounded by black.

How strange was their outrage,  
And much less melancholy.  
How repulsive this disinterested violence  
Thrived in insecurity.

The distinction was subtle but final,  
Flagged in calculated disorder,  
Blunted by a permanent awareness of loss.

Every possibility of excess was curtailed with it.

# Of Hopeless Agony



*Jane Austen - Persuasion*

In a convenient silence:  
The natural sequel of an unnatural beginning.

The solitariness and the melancholy of  
Love has an earlier death.

Consciousness sought to conceal  
The exquisite relief  
Of former intimacy.

With fond regret  
Now so deserted,  
And sentimental reflection  
Too late to retract.

A melancholy air  
Of hopeless agony  
Was a remainder of former sentiment -  
Changed naturally into pity and contempt,  
Without beauty and without dignity.

A dreadful extension  
Of past kindness and present suffering,  
Brought too painfully:  
A sort of desolate tranquility.

The misery of a parting - a final parting -  
Deprecated the connexion in every light.  
Poetical despondence  
Was reduced to form a  
Perfectly careless  
Final separation.

In private rapture,  
With unalterable coldness,  
Something between delight and misery.  
The elegant stupidity of  
All the sacrifices that enoble us most.

Pity and horror,  
Weakness and timidity.  
The ecstasy of such a reprieve  
Could never be remembered with indifference,  
And without violence.

# Almost Despair



*Fyodor Dostoevsky - The Brothers Karamazov*

The jealous will never understand  
The shameful depths to which they have voluntarily sunk.

With a melancholy and exhausted air,  
In despair, he hid his face in his hands.

In silence, alone with his conscience,  
he asks himself something supercilious and scornful,  
An expression of peculiar solemnity.

At that moment he had no desire to live.  
Such heavy burdens are not for all men.  
All things come to an end; all things are made equal.

In bitter despondency, almost despair,  
His first horror had been succeeded by pity.  
He was fearfully exhausted,  
For suffering is life.

He was exerting himself to the utmost not to believe in the  
Delusion  
And not to sink into complete insanity.  
Despair and penitence are two very different things.

He exclaimed suddenly, with tears:  
“In thousands of agonies - I exist.”

# Sleep, Remain



*Alice Walker - The Colour Purple*

I look into her eyes.  
First she smile a little.  
I lay there thinking  
But sleep remain a stranger.  
I don't know nothing.  
I don't say nothing.

I pray for strength.  
She say nothing but death can keep me from it,  
And don't nothing seem to be troubling her mind:  
But I know better.  
I knew what she thought.  
Eyes clear and innocent.  
She say slow:  
Every day I think about you.

This life soon be over I say.

Only the sky above us do we hold in common.  
Two old fools left over from love,  
Into quiet hysteria.

# Distant Lightening, Still



*Vladimir Nabokov - Pale Fire*

Oblivion thrives:  
Awake and breathless,  
Tugged at by playful death.

Mangled, and unnecessarily alive.

The riddle of her behaviour was  
A general impression of indecency  
In an ecstasy of frivolous haste.

Implicit in self-destruction.

With timeless intensity  
Death's fearful shadow  
Now sinking into raucous undertones  
Of rapture and reverence.

Distant lightening  
Still trying to assuage the swelling torment  
By sinking back  
Into oblivion's shallow diaphanous filth.

The thick venom of envy  
Into an inviting abyss  
Of accepted regret.

# Incipient Dawn



*Chinua Achebe - No Longer at Ease*

In semi-darkness and in silence,  
Except when the silence suddenly became too heavy to bear.  
It very soon vanished altogether  
To the incipient dawn.

The sudden impact  
Trembled violently as  
Flashes of lightening showed through  
The miseries of winter.

It had become an endless waste of restless  
Darkness and ignorance,  
Neither deep nor sincere.

A decayed one  
Waiting sadly and silently  
To escape the burden.  
A thing of shame  
Completely transformed,  
Descending softly with the wind.  
Almost in silence.

# In What Darkness



*Charlotte Brontë - Jane Eyre*

The quite solitary churchyard:  
A ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly  
In the raw twilight.

In what darkness  
The black frost reigned.  
In the unknown world of the departed.

A profound stillness pervaded.

Though dusk was now fast deepening into total obscurity,  
I approached the verge of despair.

Sense would resist delirium:  
Judgement would warn passion.

The solitude of a lonesome wild  
Anniliated in a moment.  
I was presently undeceived,  
All was obscurity.  
No longer a void.

I grew calm, and fell asleep.

# From Fear or Weakness



*Alan Moore - Watchmen*

Born from oblivion  
Love crawls on all fours  
Or in modified visions of a half-imagined past.

A life of conflict:  
Careless with anger,  
Free from fear or weakness or lust.

All those old doubts and worries  
Without all their darkness and ambiguity,  
Sparing me further horrors.

It meant that I had reached my destination  
With disconcerting stillness.

Life had no worse news to offer me.

For better or for worse,  
Never surrender.

Into the shadow now without complaint.

# My Sudden Frailty



*Sylvia Plath - The Bell Jar*

I felt in terrible danger.

In the middle of the dark  
Elaborate decadence that  
Should numb and cover  
My sudden frailty.

The familiar labyrinth of  
Of my own bones.

I saw a flicker of strangeness.  
The faintest glow;  
The black shadow of something that wasn't there  
Melting into the shadows  
Beyond the darkness.

The sky turned black  
Into the overhang of silence.

Quiet as death.

# Darker than Death



*Kafū Nagai - Behind the Prison*

Waiting an eternity for the  
Escape forever from this fateful shadow.  
Darker than death,  
More radiant than ever.

A taste of the sadness to come after parting  
Fills me with an inexpressible sorrow  
In quiet solitude.

All one is left with is the unbearable agony of conscience.

# Thunderstorm Howling



*Mark Z. Danielewski - House of Leaves*

Regions of sorrow  
On the fringe of night,  
Somehow violent.

Pitching towards a profound darkness,  
Long past midnight.

There is nothing but regret here,  
An almost indiscreet sense of familiarity.  
Devoted beyond death.

Thunderstorm howling  
Upon the melodrama of shadows.

Carrion dawn for vultures.

# Meaningless Carnage



*Margaret Atwood - The Blind Assassin*

Immolation is what she wants.

It was the fury  
Of departed grace  
Which promises to be  
A strange inertia  
In the outer darkness.

Deeper into the shadows now:  
The whisper of  
A miasma of old spite  
Solemn, and radiant.

Beneath the surfaces of things  
Meaningless carnage  
Will shortly follow.

Falling silent finally  
Her throat fills with smoke

I tortured myself with visions of her.

# Hovering



*Leo Tolstoy - Father Sergius*

With trembling jaws, pale as death  
He was seized by the same rapture  
And the lusts of the flesh.

Fits of fury to which he was subject and during which  
He lost control of himself.

But intense and complex striving went on within him  
And she seemed the personification of innocence and love -  
The very thing he had found so repulsive.

That temptation arose with terrible strength.  
And in this obedience he found a special tranquility.  
But subsequently, that feeling  
Became more and more deadened.

He had heard how the silk rustled  
When she took off her dress  
And felt that danger and destruction were there,  
Hovering above and around him.

She grew irritable  
And she could not continue, but became silent.

The memory of that conversation now disquieted him,  
Oppressed him,  
It also pleased him.

He was touched with pity for himself,  
With aversion and a sense of guilt.

She interested him in that she presented a distraction.

# From the Unanswering Sleep



*George Eliot - Adam Bede*

The quiet depth of conviction with which she spoke  
Seemed like a great terror was upon her.

There was a touch of melancholy kindness in her face.  
With a sad beseeching tenderness that  
Might become unpleasantly severe.

Giving up this inquiry in despair she  
Shrouded a secret indulgence of unbecoming wishes  
And was already in retreat

In such pleasant delirium of hers -  
Which belongs to the first hours of a sudden sorrow -  
She was obliged to turn away from him and go on.  
Into violent distress.

In some way quite unlike  
That mystery of human sorrow which had  
Her heart swelling with discontent.

Fallen, from pure decay;  
From the unanswering sleep of death;  
From a temporary sorrow into a lifelong misery.

That sense of helpless dependence  
Took on a solemn splendour under the dark,  
With an air of quiet obedience  
For obscure and monotonous suffering.

But now tribulation has opened her heart.  
That is the longing which has been growing  
And for a long moment time has vanished  
Without having produced the threatened consequences.

She lost sight of him and turned back slowly  
In heart-stricken silence.

# Barely Concealed Distress



*Yasunari Kawabata - Dandelions*

A hint of madness  
Came out of her terror.  
Faded imperceptibly into  
Barely concealed distress.

Something more than just the broken destiny of  
Her own individual loneliness  
And all the sorrow.

So tranquil, so peaceful.

# Without Decay



*Flann O'Brien - At Swim-Two-Birds*

Dulled somewhat by indulgence in  
The sharp agonies of  
The nearness of disgrace,  
Or the sorrow of death.  
Against the hum of desire,  
Dependent on the conflict,  
Wild ecstasy  
Without decay  
Would lead to chaos.

# Evident, Only



*Väinö Linna - Unknown Soldiers*

Even in this hopeless state of affairs  
The darkness seemed saturated with danger.

Exhaustion began to recede into the shadows of their  
Burgeoning anxiety,  
But then its ominous silence grew downright terrifying.

Trying to block out their misery, which gradually came to be  
Drowned out by the knowledge that they would soon find  
Themselves - yet again - experiencing that greatest of human  
Anxieties: fear for their lives.

A force mightier than all of these whipped them onwards  
To be forgotten there forever.

Lucky for them, they were ignorant of the general situation.

In the middle of the mayhem  
He was smiling - that curious, private smile of his, evident  
Only in and around his eyes,  
Laughing proudly in the face of death.

But even so, a tough resilience within him fought death  
Long and tenaciously.

God doesn't want them  
And the devil knows he'll get them in the end.

# Post Crisis Stillness



*Steven Hall - The Raw Shark Texts*

The post crisis stillness:  
A deserted place between resignation and regret.

Totally adrift,  
Responding to the stillness  
Of undisturbed waters.

Caught in that second of realisation,  
Heavy and oppressive and powerful.

Everything is changing.

I had to get out.

# Brittle Envy



*Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie - That Thing  
Around Your Neck*

Finally there was silence  
Lined with both disgust and disappointment  
And tortured loyalties.

The abundance of unreasonable hope,  
Brittle envy -  
A disquieting finality.

She watched him with a kind of desperate sadness  
In the still darkness,  
Suspended between disbelief and hope.

A strange deserted feeling:  
The remnants of accidents,  
Guts, or insecurity.

The air hung heavy with  
A gentle sorrow.

Madness in her eyes,  
Those secrets she shared with herself  
Had started to disappear.

She was relieved:  
A lifetime of silence collapsing.

For a long time with great sadness  
The glowing malevolence  
Hung heavy in the air.

There was something about it that was exceedingly fragile.

# The Absence of all Hope



*Marcel Proust - Jean Santeuil*

Joy and wretchedness  
In the silence of the night  
Cast a sharp, black shadow  
And concealed her fury.

Having become saturated with his weariness  
He watched with a sense of desperation  
Once the tempest had subsided.  
An immaterial presence seemed to be hovering  
With a pretence of intimacy.

A sad warning of love's fragility  
Awakens only by slow degrees,  
Only in solitude,  
While all outside is cold and hostile  
And seems to rage without a cause.

A glance of deep affection  
Had drawn from the darkness of  
That nagging sense of life's mediocrity,  
Produced by the absence of all hope.  
The sharp return of disinterested memory  
For the profound silence.  
Secure at such timed in its solitude  
Like the stirrings of a sweet and gentle dream.

A sweet madness  
Which conceals a complete vacancy of mind,  
Pronouncing a sentence of absolute condemnation  
With an enervating softness.

Infinite pleasure,  
Gleaming in the darkness,  
To be suddenly precipitated into the measureless black  
Depths of nothingness.

The cruelty of absence  
Taken refuge in the silence and oblivion,  
Until such time as darkness should assume its sway over its  
dark and tender melancholy.

