

A BIRTH IN SEEING

Poems



David Jaffin

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David Jaffin

First published in Great Britain in 2003 by
Shearsman Books,
58 Velwell Road, Exeter EX4 4LD
and in Germany by
St.-Johannis-Druckerei, Lahr/Schwarzwald

www.shearsman.com
shearsman@macunlimited.net

Distributed for Shearsman Books in the U.S.A. by
Small Press Distribution, 1341 Seventh Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94710
Email: orders@spdbooks.org
Website: <http://www.spdbooks.org>

ISBN 0-907562-35-3 (Shearsman Books, UK)
ISBN 3-501-01466-X (St.-Johannis-Druckerei, Germany)

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Gesamtherstellung: St.-Johannis-Druckerei, Lahr/Schwarzwald
Printed in Germany 34042/2003

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Eye Opener

If
love makes
us blind
Why do
you open
your eyes
in me.

Vanitas

Beauty
May be
in the eyes
of the be
holder
But you
seem more
beholden
unto your
in-self
ed view.

That Pier again

That
pier sends
me off from
my thought
s Out into
the sea of
possible un
certain
ties.

Mysteriously

The
night my
sterious
ly awake
in stars.

E Major

Key
words as
Hindemith'
s harmonic
now Accords
to being
at one in
oneself.

Titles

Klee's
wife named
them for
more than
the eye could
be seen-words
imparting
in their fur
thered
sense.

Isn't

At
some time
less time
There isn't
any more
what always
was Contin
uing now
without
being for.

Soothed

The
cool winds
soothed
his thoughts
of after
noon and
The lapping
waters from
the lake
coming in
to as if
All was here
and There
could be no
thing more.

Afar out

Your
looking a
far out
Isn't to
see more
than a quiet
sense You
haven't
quite be
come certain
of, yet.

Ephemeral

If
it's ex-
actly the
way it is
May be
you aren't.

For holding still

If
we could
hold to
where This
sun sets
the sea a-
flame Burning
still our
wants trans
pire.

Flattened off

Set off
from a dis
tance of
seeing Flat
plains

creating a
oneness of
view even
ed off from
there and
further
more.

Seem

The
fisherman
may be fee
ling a way
to its un
seen deep
Where his
hands hold
and the
waves rest
lessly
seem.

Sculptor

It's
the form
to find
where Hands
mould their
sense into
finish
ing light.

Modulations

As these
waves nei
ther coming
to going Fluc
tuations
of knowing
less for now
or Schubert'
s magically
dissimu
lating where
it wasn't
but here.

Siesta

And
flowing
into un
certain
ties of mind
watching
Where stars
haven't
found their
time out
yet.

Alludes

But where
it wasn't
alludes us
as a familiar
voiced-in
promise We
can't quite
place un
certainly
for.

Too easily

All
too easily
the way
Time
spreading
out into days
unremem
bered now
And chil
dren feel
their Sundays
and Mondays
tideless,
in
distinct.

Is more

The
mystery
of God
is more
than where
He means us
to know.

Placed

I
write to
find a
place for
being
there.

Janacek

That
white
flash in
wingèd
bird's
where it
was
wasn't.

Throwing Bread for the Fish

Wheel –
chaired
Mind-roll
to watering
his
thoughts
down
deep.

Grouped

Birds

grouped
to follow

ing them
selves for

sha dow.

Tug Boats through the East River

It's

the tight
weight That

taut strength
of being

towed to an
in completed

aim Against
that vision

of lights
And the star

ing down of
over seeing

building's heights.

To That Instinct

There'
s that in-
stinct to
write The
way fish co
lor them
selves to
the water'
s same
ness of be
ing there
Not known
but now.

So much himself

Painted
so much of
himself
He hangs
there 311
years later
in a room
He never saw
that changes
in eye seen
to where He
should have
been.

Critical Spirit

The
critical
spirit May
have nothing
left to
criticize
but itself
And if there'
s nothing
more to be
lieve in
Why believe
in it.

Impersoned

These
Mountains
abstract
their sense
in stone
Imperson a
time less
stance that
never chan
ging now of
where God

spelled out
his eternal
command
ments.

Nearing for Home

These
days are
closing in
on them
selves as
the hills a
cross the
lake Called
closer to
view Summer'
s at its
height almost
speechless
ly still But
we're near
ing for home
A restless
pull on our
blood tells
me the way
these birds

cross for
flight ex
tending
time in
wings.

Light-dance

What
these reeds
wish
to sing trans-
parently
in the
vibrant
cy of light-
dance.

Cross puzzled

Cross
word puzzle
seems to
have puzzled
him through
his own cross-
rowed contra-
dictions.

Depths of

Where
are the
depths of
Perhaps
through
the stones
these seas
breath less
have taken
in.

For Good

How
much must
we unlearn
to know
What we've
learned for
good.

How many Prisons

How
many prisons
must we
build Barred
with pre-

establish
ed conclu
sions to
free man
from him
self.

If only

If
only man
could let
be What he
couldn't
create him
self and
garden his
hopes in the
beauty of re
ceiving what
has been
given But did
n't deserve
for that.

Higher

He
pressed
the cold
touch of
steel to in-
stinct that
light
higher.

Message

These
waves urge
their mea-
ning in
sounds in-
cessant
ly told.

The Idiot

grasped
in the
touch of
Pulsed rhy
thms
not know
ing
meaning
where.

Looking back

What
we saw
And didn't
want to see
by looking
aside is
looking back
at us now.

Ideologies

The
problem
with building
houses
is that
They often
stand up
to us.

Greedy

He wanted
to get
so much
That he got
what wasn't
there.

Worms: The Synagogue

Rebuilt
for non-use
Where Rashi
re-thought
in God's eternal
word
And the flames
of hate destroyed

Tourist told
now recollecting
steps echoed in
to that
density
for stone.

Worms: The Jewish Graveyard

No one
left now
Only these
time-told
stones and
the Hebraic
words indelibly
lost of sense for
those who
didn't know
Stones of remembrance
to (o) partake
of a time
we couldn't
tell again
listening
for.

Marseilles, April 2002

Synagogues
again on
fire As if
recreating
God's eternal
flames in the
image of man'
s hate of
His law to
protect us
from our own
refuting
selves.

Escaped?

If
you think
your selves
safe You
may be flee
ing from a
ghost of
the shadow
of the past
Realizing.

Over shadowed

He
was so pas
sionately
concerned
with what
He wanted to
say Over
shadowed
in the say
ing it
to(o).

Daily lives, little concerns

Our
daily lives
and little
concerns
as these fine-
sensed win
dows of appre
ciable light
and the cur
tains that
touch in
telling
time.

Ease of

The
ease of
not wanting
to see
more than
what's see
ing there.

More than this

Even
as the night
was called
out from its
cool refuge
to space the
heavens in
glittering
stars He knew
there was some
thing even
more than
Beyond all
that he knew
or the wise
men have
claimed to
have ever
known before.

Strassburg: Synagoga

If
beauty means
that dark
ened inward
place of not
knowing more
than the un
knowing God.

Strassburg: Ecclesia

This vic
tory could
be a sign
of defeat
where The
church reigned
and not He
as if Christ
was at
their mercy
and not we
at His. The
Chosen are
those con-
quered by
The Lord.

Taken in

He
was too much
taken in
by himself
to find a
way out a
gain.

Perspectives

The
horizon may
be filled
with stars
But is there
enough ground
under your
own feet.

Its voice

I may
hear its
voice again
in dreams

that flow
into the waves
of outlas
ting time.

Poems from the Chinese (for Chung)

Spring blossoms

The blos
soms touch
their deli
cate light
A birth
in seeing.

For Echo

That
slight
rain
whis
pered
for echo.

Colored

A
bird's
color
found
in flight.

Distant Snow

The distant
snow and
that cool
ness for
touch.

Awakened

Leaves
that wa
ken in
wind.

The Form of Mountains

Moun
tains
formed in
the falling
heights
cas
cading
deep down.

Portents

Wind
s claim
their birth
As butter
flies secret
ly bright
Portents
in the deep
ening folds
for night.

Witches

An other
worldly po
wer seen in

the eyes
they told to
see their way
Burned out at
the stake of
their de-
sires or of
ours Bur-
ning still.

Shrewd Wisdom

Shrewd
wisdom is
like a
dried out
prune with a
pit harden-
ing its
inner core.

Darkened

But
the deep red
of this rose
has darken
ed my sense
for touch.

Language

If there'
s a common
sensibil
ity Why are
languages
so uncommon
ly different.

Two different ways?

If some
learn love
And others
receive it
Is that
love two dif
ferent
ways of be
ing.

Countertenor

Has
the child-
like re
attuned to
fancies

and pleasures above
the deepened ground
Like picking flowers out
of previous delight
s.

Aging

Is
age more
a narrowing
down of
self to its
only possible
being Like
clearing one's
house of
all those added
accidents
Or is
it a wisdom
that knows
more by being
less The width
of a world

that keeps
looking
larger.

Common

Just a sea
gull like so
many others
Nothing special
from color
and exotic pre
tensions tou
ching for
sand and to
where the
waves would
meet his
wings sound
ing in song
and the ri
sing of hopes
Some where
beyond that
common
ness of being
only what
he was.

Too sure

To be
too sure
Is to know
much less
of what
couldn't
be.

Gryphius

To
know the
end is
to start
the begin
ning again.

Outsurfaced

This
lake's lost
its hold
on where
its depth
could be
Surfaced out

wingèd-
light-shim-
mer un
easily a
wake.

Back to place

Putting
this world
back to
place Pick
-up-sticks
for an a-
cute eye-
sense Over
seeing its
fallen parts
back
again.

Nathaniel Pink's estimates

The
weather
may be What

it wasn't
there for
He saw
through it
all to Where
those star-
singing dreams
And the moon
believes its
secrets
still.

Prayer

Prayer
is where I'
ve lower
ed my
thoughts
to a less
er glow
of being
there.

To seed

Winds
take
these words

away to
seed in

light and
expecting

Dawn.

Uneven Divide

Or where
that un

even divide
between

As stars
horizon

ed from.

Into the Rose

Into the Rose
Where fin

ding the
ocean's deep-

touch in
that scent of

taking in.

Dick and Jane

First reading
s picture
word peopled
on page
that increas
ed where
the seeing
was.

Untold

Branched
for leaves
extending
beyond their
own sense
of longing.

Grasshopper

jumped
to jump
The after
wards in
coming on.

Chandelier

You
hung some
thing that
we weren't
any more
High above
person
ally formed
for light
Fixtures of
time The way
The Lord crea
ted that fir
mament of stars
artifi
cally lit a
world We could
n't think out
or above.

Unease of

Middle of the
lake
more sides
to see
than I could

have imag
ined that un
ease of not
finding where
the where
could possi
bly have
been.

At Center

As a magnet
sensing its
meanings in
eyes that
love-hold
Out of the
Dark again.

Seeded grain

Where
the flesh
ran deep
into fields
of his wants

seeded grain
Singing of
stars That
all persua
sive moon
time.

Arm-chaired Posture

As a
story told
for an arm-
chaired pos
ture Waiting
to hear Why
night's co
ming down
from words.

Well meaning

Well mea
ning may have
no meaning
Unless there'
s some
thing more
for that.

Open minded

Open
minded may
be minding
nothing
else Than
being
open to.

Too much Goodness

Too
much good
ness is Like
a cake over
doing it
self.

Deciding for

She could
n't decide
What to do
But thought
long about
deciding for.

Finding oneself

Finding one
self is
often being
found out.

Faith

is where
You stopped
being too
big for
yourself.

Hide and Seek

Where
ever You
weren't
couldn't
be found
out.

Peace

The
only peace
That man knows
is His lon
ging for.

Childhood

What I
left But
hasn't left
me behind.

Out walked

He
walked him
self off
until There
was still
more of him
than that
Going had
been meant.

Ode to the Manatee

It's
like the
Chinese Earth
Spirit's dis
proportion
ate sense of
weight Or
Ruben's women
enticing double -
chinned plea
sures.

Haydn, Symphony 102 (slow mvt.)

The
tensions
of unreliev
ed sound
deepening
in space
d of hearing.

Less explicit

Vaguely
tempting
a smile
not too
loud still
over co
ming.

Timeless Thoughts

Even as the
first leaves
tinged for
yellow And
swans could be
imagined in
that wide open
lake floating
on timeless
thoughts.

Slow sway

That
slow sway
as if of

the mother's
rhyme for
sleep or
branches at
tuned out
for unseen
wind.

In touch

A quiet
through the
field's calm
As wings
of where
birds passing
a flee
ting moment,
untold
touch.

Drifted away

How far
our worlds
have drifted
away The
making of new

islands out
of a sea-
in-remen
brance Taking
form Holding
in.

New Book

New book
covered to
keep close
Intentions
within those
unevened
thoughts
time-line
The image
of taking
Pulse in.

Belittled?

If life's
these little
things Does
that belittle
us the moods

that come to
go As clouds
seeking out
their range of
knowing where
Or the feel
a little girl
knows dressed
for some
thing bigger
than herself
That inbetween
sense of things
not fully
managed out
to be just
the way we sup
posed little/
belittled
or just by
change or
chance Life's
more of it
Self's be
ing.

Unlearned

If
I could
unlearn
this poem
this song
It would be
come less
of me But
then some
thing more
of itself.

Pale Yellow

Pale
yellow's
fading of
hopes into
that quietness
of self re
flective
flower's fra-
grance sub
dued from
other source
in light.

For Raphael

What
he knew
We couldn't
between him
self some
times told
without as-
suming words.
on.

Glanced-through

Like precious
stones meant
to be touch-
ed Glanced
through
surface.

Mirror

The gliding
of birds
mirror
ed their
voice.

Exposed

There
was a ten-
sion that
kept that
house dark
Even the
candles lit
that silver
touch
finding in
Exposed.

That Density

His hopes
blotted out
as the swelling
for clouds
That density
from wind-
blown.

Of touched-in fear

That
cold grasp
for stars

the steel-
ed light
of touched-
in fear.

Bridge

Where
ever it led
to coming
back Like ex
changing
looks without
that need
for more of
Echoing in
wave span.

Statue

If
that statue
could grow
old I would
believe in
its beauty.

Meant for

A fear
being
stung to
know What
pain's meant
for.

Shadowless afternoon

From
a shadow
less after
noon Made
him fear for
being
in himself.

Haydn Symphony Nr. 18 (2nd mvt.)

Trying
to catch up
to where It
wasn't been
Dancing that

out of breath
lessly Rhy
thmed.

For Meaning

As if
stars grew
in my
sense for
meaning.

Klee Impressions (5) Balingen, Sept. 2001

To be
exact in
explicit
ly.

Where

lines
color
them
selves
out.

Where

sky
from woods
darken
ing in
Density.

A
voice
that waits
to hear
itself
speak.

Shines

When
the deep
of dark
shines
still!

Bearing for Birth

Like a
woman bearing
for birth
Blank faced
of not
telling Where
from.

A distance

to where
from un
heard boats
open in
waves this
length to
seeing
through.

Swiss Landscape

Fields
phrased
A bird's
song's aware
ness in
coming.

September 11, 2001 (15 Poems)

If the End is Coming

If
the end
is coming

It was al
ways seen be

fore Nothing
to stop

where It be
gan to this

coming again.

How small man

How
small man
has made him

self so big
To the hope

less ness
of not kno

wing where
or why

But rising a
bove it all

to that
height of

thoughtful
despair.

However lost

If
there's no
God There'
s only end
Where coming
from can't
mean a coming
to However
lost beyond
that realm
to star-
seeing.

After

time
continues
because It
knows no
other time
than that
Sadness
blood and what
ever else
may be left
to stain
our fast for
gotten me
mories.

Luther's Apple tree

Luthers's
apple tree
may not
bring to fruit
either per
petual life
or a higher
wisdom than
Man can think
himself for
But those ap
ples will ri-
pen too, some
sour others
sweet to that
quickened
taste of be
ing for here
and now
Refreshing
ly so!

Elegy for the unknown thousands

They died
because they
didn't know
What they
couldn't know
Doing the same
things they'
d always done
better or
wrongly If
man is as
helpless as
that So am
i.

Don't ask why

Don't
ask me why
Like that
little boy
with his gas-
colored balloon
sky bound
I simply hold
to the bottom
end.

NYC

It was a
home I'd
left Imper
sonally sha
dowed for
glass and the
echoes in un
seen persons
I hardly knew
or cared less
about But
now Their
blood at the
bottom real
izes me.

World Trade Towers

Whatever
the world
changing
In the sha
dow of man'
s strength-
for-height All
that little
ness now be
ing bared
Neither to

looking up
nor to fee
ling down
Unshadowed
protected
where He can'
t see But
should know
from.

Back to Business

Back
to business
may be That
business is
getting back
at us All
those papers
meant as
persons trampe-
led to the
dust of no
where home.

Aftermath

Higher
than glass
can tell a
rising sun
Lifted up
from the
steps of ha
ving been
found out to
here He sits
Calculating
an improbable
future.

Of a distant Truth

If
light could
be spent into
a grieving si
lence Where
the quietness
of wind as-
sumes for the
blue of a
distant truth.

To kill Glass

They
may have
really wanted
most of all
to kill glass
Symbols re
flections
of a life
less overto
wering threat
But squashed
as blood, per
sons and life
The death in
their own life
lessly a
bandoned glass-
imaged soul.

Where to feel Safe

Where
to feel safe
As if we
ever were
from our own
wanton will
But now the

shadowy threat
of some un
known instinct
impersoned
from blood.

Atta

No one
would have
suspected him
quiet clean
shaven soft
spoken good
student His
Professor
wouldn't
couldn't be
lieve it For
it was an
it-believing
not a him.

Spider's Web

Caught
between
those fine
lines delin
eating space
flew in
that web
of entangled
meanings Stung
to the mo-
ment of
It's being
there.

Cellist

He was
more what
he played
than What he
was A dia
logue of
where to find
that impulse
in sound Some

where deep
he felt
his fingers
told.

Untuned

It
was the
day to day
that untuned
his response
a no
where in
not coming
found.

*Barnaba da Modena
Madonna and Child (Frankfurt)*

Looking in
by looking
out the
lines of a
mystery
Clothed of her
dress unravel
ling Eyes not

quite certain
to his Hand-
touch.

St. John mourning the Death of Christ

(Deodate di Orlando, ca 1300, Frankfurt)

There
was so much
sadness
there That it
took the
place of him
That he wasn'
t more than
that Mourning
a loss which
was more of
him than He
could ever
tell.

Listening

He
listened
for a bird'
s singing to
open his
sky
in song.

Graveyard

Stones
speaking here
A congrega
tion of deaf
voices whis
pering far
past into
their time
less deep.

But it was

They
all said
I said The
world won't be
the same But
it was Nothing
told me other
wise Neither
the seasons run
ning their
times irregu
larly as u
sual As rivers
circulating
an uncertain

sense of from
in to Or the
Cat's secre
tive look un
telling what
It didn't know
And those flo
wers all loo
king so pretty
in appropriate
times as This
one was different
as it always
would be.
not the same.

Landscaped

This
depth of
fall colors
Taking in
a seclu
sion of time-
stone
aspirations
And the ri

ver wanting
its way
Reflecting
in from
more.

Tunnels

These
tunnels
echo me
in to that
dead light
of nothing
where.

Swan's way

Where
does the
swan find its
purpose upon
Floating the
ease through
its time
less sway.

Of instinct

There
must be a
secret
instinct to
color or
touch Why
your eyes
think me a-
light.

Stone-facing

Houses
stone-fa-
cing Where
that sun
could mean
in light.

Of Star-swayed nights

These
shadows
closing me
in for dar-
kening of
star-swayed
nights.

Out of the Mist

Out
of the mist
Houses searching
from soul
These woods
emptied of
sound as
Birds flying
through a
wind in vacant
light.

To Glassed-in now

Imagined-sound
window
tight view
church steeples
up
ping me down
to that
glassed-in
now.

A longing for (reminding of Schubert)

A
longing for
But never
quite real
ized some
thing of that
sad ness re
leases sound
Voiced to the
always be
ginning of
never really
there.

To lose

If
to lose is
to remen
ber What it
really was
Like feeling
these waves
coming in
sound upon
sounding through
Where I wasn't

but thought
to be.

Made up

She
was made up
to seeing
that faced-
out-person-
ed stare
from what
wasn't to.

Trying hard to listen for

Low
hanging clouds
over these
mountain's
perpetual
grasp for
strength

diffused si
lence as of
not being told
Trying hard
to listen
for.

A Repetition of themselves

Some
persons are
simply a repetit
ion of them
selves How
ever seen Sta
tued to a
confidence of
denying another
place or in
time.

For George Herbert

It was
that saying
less that drew
me more to
you A closed
world self-
contained as
in prayer The
image that's
become the mea-
ning to itself
So "fresh and
clean are (your)
returns for me."

At the Height of

At
the height of
where that
town seems
quieted from
view dis-
tancing it
self or
those telling
lights

Here ab-
stracted
in time.

Thinking things

out
of being mov
ed slowly in
a rhythm
of coming
back in
to.

For Emily Dickinson

Not
quite to be
taken in
hand As a
bird more co
lors for
flight Always
by being in
being, so.

Over-sermoned

that left
me looking for
some thing
fine unob
served a little
light a little
hope diminish
ed to where
seeing in had
that feel of
being true.

Veined-in-sight

Snow
clinging
down the moun
tain's edge
to my
veined-in-
sight.

That rare Mountain flower

That
rare moun-
tain flower
Not yet pic-
ked off
its secluded
light
of man's
urge to sat-
isfy his own
wanton taste.

A Shadow to himself

Sha
dow to him
self His
steps echoed
more distant
than close-
to-hear
when he touched
another's hand
couldn't
feel his pulse
for certain
But only what
the other

tried to tell
his own.

4 Persons

a) Umbrellaed

Holding
on a

bright-color
ed umbrella

ed light
ness that de-

fied even gra
vitational

laws.

b) It was like

a dress
didn't match

She fitted in
the way

she was used
to wasn't

used to be
ing that way.

any more.

c) Not quite Herself

'always felt

She was

not quite

herself

like a

vacant house

trying to be

peopled.

d) Too loved

She

loved too much

to be loved

Was more of

love than

that meaning

could hold

Like a can-

dle all wax

ed through

even when

that flame

was dried

out.

Glimpse of Creation

The
breath of
seeing in
where Stars
have been
let out
from a voi
ced silence.

To their Height of

Why
do branches
always seem
out To the
height of
where leaves
falling
in from.

Berwald

c major trio 1845

Up

side down

side rarely

letting in

Rhythmic no

stops glimpse

of where

happened

Taking off

seldom e

vened out

find.

Seeing

He

got so used

to seeing

the things

the way he

got used to

seeing That

he stopped see

ing those

things at

all And saw

only himself
seeing.

Opened out

Open
ed out
in himself
The endless
blue of not
knowing more
than where
He wasn't or
couldn't pos
sibly be,
there.

Illmensee in autumn

This
lake returns
to its own
sense of be
ing there
self-enclosed
The silent
fisher man'
s wait drif

ting from the
surface of
where its
thoughts cir
cling out
that momen
tary unease
of perhaps
These woods
bearing
witness to
what They have
n't seen.

The Poem

The poem
is its way
of telling
the times in
As if the
moon could
hold its tides
to a moment
of that con
tinues to
remain.

Unseasonable

Un sea
son able
isn't just
this slow
warmth of
October's
why I've been
slowed to(o)
contempla
ting where sha
dows should
have been
drawn
deeper in.

Running-down flowers

Punctu-
ated in
that slight-
felt pulse
of flowers
Running the
green down
their brea
thing-in-
light.

Over heard

If
you listen
in this quiet
Where even
lis tening
seems
louder than
it could
want to be.

Barbara

She
was dying
too long
to know
what life
could have
told her
Holding on
for.

Bicycled

That bi
cycle turned
my thought
s around to
where Moving
became time
in receding.

Time Tables

That
train began
moving my
thoughts even
before I got
to its Time
tables tou
ching the place
my fingers
learn from.

What's for who

Is
language
there for us

Or we for it
Giving its
takings in
to an outside
position of
seldom finds.

Out waited

I
waited my
self out
Until there
was no more
of waiting
left.

Taking time off

Taking
time off is
as if Time
could take it
self off
Stop for a
while in the
leisure of
Where the sun

seems still
ed for Birds
singing the e
cho of where
Their hearing
finds.

Some thing

We
all need
some thing
Because those
needs are a
part of not
being ourself.

Manifest Destiny

The ri
vers curve
this land
out Rock-
bare to the
claims of
their irresi-
stible time-
spell.

Facing

houses face
them selves

into that
blank stare

of being
seen

from.

Train-view

The
speed of
where it wasn'

t more than
where it

came from

to.

wasn't

He
wanted to
be more than

what he was
Until what

he was

wasn't.

Evolves

The
sky e
volves as
waves of un
born meaning/
reflecting.

Snake

curled
into the
venom of
eyeless
dreams.

Claims

Clouds
amassed
for claiming
more of
my being
shadowed
in.

Mirroring in

Living
through the
lives of
others is
like Mirror
ing yourself
into what'
s looking
back.

For Dawn

Dark
ness dissol
ving as
dew into
the coming of
light's aware
ness in.

What we hear

Why
do we hear
What we hear
not the same
Music defines
itself But
perhaps we do
to(o) in
letting it
in rede-
fining us.

Colored-find

At
the end
of the voice
is a listen
ing back
As the flo
wer tipped
in colored-
find.

Educating yourself

Learning
to see
what other'
s see
Even if you
don't see
it that way
Anymore.

Surface-thought

Not
quite shaded
to inner
meanings
Where stars
became farther
than his eyes
could seem
to seek.

To sensitise Meanings

To
sensitise
meanings
is like the
wind Hea
ring to in
voice.

Crow

Over
sized wings
out placed
heights It
stands symbol
izing some
thing like
primitive
fears.

Landscaped

The flow of
these out-
reaching hills
escaping rhy

thms of tou
ched through
and the form'
s finding
in.

Loosened

As these
leaves loosen
their last-
felt colors
to far-
flung realms
for flight.

Bothered with Angels

It bothered
him with an
gels Too much
flying about
to take his
own thoughts
down.

Touched to leaf

That
touch to leaf
not finding
more than
veined-in
meaning why'
s green.

Too Sweet

Too
sweet
The smell
of flowers
having out
done their
time.

Bleached

Bleached
wooded-
grained
felt pain
deeped-in
bone.

In the Vineyards I

Grapes
clustered in
their intensity
for sweet
ness
moon cool
ed a
night of
sending
stars.

In the Vineyards II

These
hills
swollen with
the taste
of untouch
ed nectar
Assuming a
height in
freshened
poise.

Bellini's Burials of Christ

Which
way did He
mean it
as the lines
of a ladder
going up or
down or
going down
for coming up
again The
angels poised
as if the
one was the
other for/
meant.

Jacob's Blessing from the Angel (Rembrandt, Berlin)

Did
the Lord
really lose
by giving him
self up in
love Embra
cing what He
could only
give by be
ing received.

On Dürer's best Portraits

Seeing
exactly seen
The mind's
clarity in
view So per
soned that
flesh tran
scends it
self to that
God-find
in man.

Cliffs

These
cliffs have
climbed my
thoughts from
afar Their
rugged stance
d intervals
of where to
in from.

Industrial Landscape
after Charles Scheeler

Rising the use
fulness of
aesthetic
gleamed-in
structures.

Branched

A
bird
branched
to its length
in song.

Over telling

Where
the moon
over
telling
night's
claims.

Curtains

closed
into the
still of
night's
hands
unseen
voiced
in.

Impressioned

Pret-
tied faces
printed
the impres-
sion of make-
shift be-
lief.

Bi-lingual

I
fear myself
Because I
must die

In the life
of be
coming
more.

Wind kept

Down in
the deep
October
night rest
less for
stars
wind kept.

Horizoned from Light

Hori
zoned
from light
Wild birds
streak in
leave's
yellowed-
fathomed
fall.

Looking for answers

Looking
for answers
is not
answering
your self
enough.

Willow

The
willow
wants
for sad
ness remem
bering.

Dowland

A
sadness
in trying
for sound
ing out
Where the
mind's sha
dow
re appears.

Imitating

He
all to(o) be
came in
shadow
of what he
wasn't.

Seeing through rain

Seeing
through
rain is like
words in the
transpar
ency of af
ter sound.

Prayer and poem

Prayer
and the
poem's be
ing at one
encircling
from self.

Space

Space
is the be
tween of
touch and
echo
felt.

Rain passing

Rain
passing
shimmer of
moon si
lenced out
This fra
grance in
scent
flower-find.

Still Life

A
still life
May have
stilled me
down to a
quietude
from sitting
in.

Hunger

Hunger
rampant
colors
outraged
barren cliff
s hanging
down.

To the center

This
weather'
s holding
its same cool
and damp
uncertain
ty with the
first design
s of spring'
s other truth
slightly
felt but deep
ly colored in-
tensity ques-
tioning

what is past
in coming And
so let us
find our way
to the center
of things
that love
by being
more than.

Why then this gnawing fear

Why
then this
gnawing fear
as at the
roots of
autumn'
s bareness
Exposing
the naked
ness of our
designs and
leaving but
solemned
stars to dis
tance the hea
vens from our
grasp Are we

not fleshed
from the stuff
that makes
life from Is
not our God
creating the
realms of will
to overcome.

The Prince returns
(Simone Martini)

Bright lines
rhythmi
cally in-
phrased
Horse for
man heeding
those out-
waves hill'
s length
Castled for
home re
turns.

Always learning

If
life's al
ways learning
Maybe it
knows
more about
me than
I can tell.

Surrounded

Which
every way
he turned
He couldn'
t corner
himself in.

The End that means

If
there are no
words left
for what'
s been seen

and said Then
this is the
end that
means.

In Reflecting

In reflec
ting there
may be more
truth of the
moment/
than.

Gatsby's Place

Too
many windows
being aware
of
All those
lights shi
ning from
glassed
through
waves.

Something Soft

There
was some
thing soft
about that
dark ness
With the
branches sway
ing in from
depth.

Floating

Swans
leaving the
appear
ance of
What they'
ve left be
hind.

Painted Houses

Painted
houses
over doing
too much
used phras
es.

Webern

Interval
s of sound
implying
what they
haven't
for
heard.

Open wounds

Like o
pen wounds
that only
close in
winter's
hardened
glance.

Abandoned meanings (Shylock)

If
you can
weigh a pound
or two of
flesh Why not
put words on
that same i

maged
scale to de-
cide in a
bandon
ed meaning
s.

Krommer (Mozart's contemporary)

Too
light to
bear that
weight in
silence
But to the
surface
with the
ease of
being written
over trans-
parencies
for sound.

Ingebourg

Too much
of self

about her
She took her

will as at
tainable truth

She knew
what she knew

And that's
what matter

ed even for
the extent of

wanting in

others.

Around the Bend

When

the train
took its

round about
in from the

distance
for a timing

need less
ly felt

curves
to where
It indistinct
ly merged
that cool
dark ness
for woods.

Houses personed

Houses
may be
your facade
for putting
in front
what was long
painted since
peeling a
way the time-
from-weather.

Something of softness

There was
some
thing of soft
ness in the
snow's being
waiting
to be
touched u
pon.

Outgiven

She needed
so much to
be loved
That she over
gave of all
those wants
and left
Nothing but
shadows
behind.

Intricately felt

This
light rimmed
with snow
and leaves
these branch
ed intricate-
ly felt.

Mind-glance

Does that
paper
his face to
a pre-de-
termined
glance as
Bill boards
meant to
be washed o
ver.

For Hands

He
always had
to eat

when others
ate a pro
fusion for
hands.

Bereaved

An empti
ness of soul
when all
the leaves
downed to a
bottom ness
of fallen lights
and the
winds bereave
whatever
their voice can'
t be heard
for.

Of spreading Fields

Even
in the dark
of spreading
fields and
the no where

of finding
out a dis
tance increa
singly
from.

2 Birds

Why
did they
have to touch
to the tips
of that tell
ing tree a
slender
ness
singing in.

Echoed-find

A
light-touch
of snow
still left
for our
hands echoed-
find.

The Little Hopes

The
big poem'
s bigger
than words
can find
But it's the
little hopes
that bear
light to
their mean
ings.

Spaced-silence

There's
too much
spaced-
silence
to find
my shadow
in.

Balance-felt

Fading
in to
sun's left
behind
hills
causing out
balance-
felt.

Transparently

Trains
keep
running
through my
thoughts-
in-speed's
listen
ing out.

From

Where
have all
these colors

gone
When I can
only think
of si
lence a
loud.

Gone out of

As a
mother of
home-sense-
children
Gone out of
her needing
for more.

Faith

There's
a beauty of
the flesh
and a beauty
of the mind
and a beauty
that beauti
fies both.

Monotoned

When
the day
doesn't be
come more
than what
it started out
to be.

Dog against Storm (Goya)

That
darkness
gather

ing him up
to a human
sized di
lemma.

Renoir's "Dance"

Her
dress fol
ding in
to the length
of his own
desires.

Echo

Thinking
aloud
What wasn'
t heard
from being.
there.

Blessing

Church
enclosed
town bring
ing the
houses in
for prayer.

Clouded by

This
morning'
s hesi
tant for
seeing
through.

Drifting

as the
snow through
unseen sounds
into a space
less night.

Stewardess

put her
smile on
the way One
does with
glasses,
but for a
limited range
in effect.

Landing

No look
no seen
cloud-
spelled
landing for
lights.

Dulled in

Dulled
in no-
sound-light
Ducks solemn
ly image
less.

Self Portrait (Rembrandt, 1661)

Staring
into the
sound of em
ptied self
re flec
tion.

Indistinct

'can feel
leaves
falling
through me
mories of
not yet
heard.

Clichéd

Cleansed
too often
to a po-
lished same
ness.

Unseen where

Lights
pulsing
this dark
through an
unseen
where.

*“Mary adores the
Infant Jesus”*

(Master Francke, Hamburg)

As this
brightness
all aglow
in the orna-
ments of
heavens and
the dark deep
downed from
its pre-
historic
longings.

“Early Snow in Woods”

(C. D. Friedrich, Hamburg)

touch
ed in cold
at edge
of where
woods re
ceiving
a moon
seldom
in light.

Changing Directions

to where
these thin
ned out
woods seem
es excused
from direc
tionless
intent
ions.

More of

Dressed
to a dig-
nity that
made him
feel more
of in
himself.

catching up

Dog
catching
up's in
stinct'
s rhythmic
breath.

Branched

Tight-
tense-sounds
Bird's cry
black-claw-
ed-branch.

Icicled fear

Icicled-
fear.

piercing
sword-

blood-
cold.

City of Lights

City
of lights
Dark's dream

ing through
steps of

where He
heard him

self hesi
tantly appro

ching.

Set loose

This
wind's out
doing it

self Set
loose a
fire flaming
in thirst
more.

Lessened?

If
I can't re
member Does
it stop be
ing Or am
I lessen
ed by its
not being
for now.

Poet's Dialogue

If
you know
the way it
is How to
form to sense
Or if It
takes on
its own sense
by being

there
from you.

Might not happen

If
nothing moves
Time may not
happen
Standing
still as a
night from
gathering
stars in.

Ezekiel's Wagon

If
trains
cross at
either side
And we're
standing
still Maybe
we're really
leaving both

directions
at once.

Timeless

If
a kiss
is time
less waves
flowed in.

Bird's House

But
nothing flew
in to es
tablish those
premises for
feathers.

Into a silent land

Long roads
into a si
lent land
Vacant sky
untouch
ed waters
And a bird
poised to
seeing nothing
more than be
ing there.

Wakened

Can
stone waken
to the call
of early
morning's
light still
cooled in
touch.

Categories

Closed
to involving
doors turned
their mind's
carousel-
led fiction
of where
Stars could
only see
less.

With its cry- stalled sense

The
snow's crea-
ting silence
out of the
darkened
pre-morning
stillness
with its cry-
stalled
awakening
sense.

In Memory Klaus R.

We
were like
trains on par
allel tracks
Each being
guided by
that unseen
Switch to
where moving
on in oppo
site directions
farther out
apart.

For Living beyond (for E. R.)

You
became so
much his wife
that became so
much in you
After his
death He not
you there
instead re
placed for
living
beyond.

Accentuated

Accentu-
ated her
mark Im-
pressed
steps that
couldn't
thaw out of
a gleaming
light but
cold. taken
in.

Nathaniel Pink's reflections

Why

these slight
birds ever-
quicken
ing shadows
stayed on for
winter's grip-
ping cold
He contempla
ted the war
ming effects
settling down
in Africa
with a sun-
kissed smile
benevolent
ly adding
electric
heaters and his
toes shi-
vering war-
med-in water.

An end?

Is
there a
bottom to
this cold
ness A bitter
end that
stops where
no more is
As the end
of space
spaceless
ly there
Where it is
by not be
ing.

Who decides

If
it gets so
cold that
you can't
feel how
much cold
ness is
Who decides
then.

After 40 years of marriage

We
became more
by being
what the o
ther wasn't
us Like hol
ding hands
and knowing
that the
warmth there
isn't really
mine.

Giving up

Giving
up maybe
a giving in
to And what
if the "up"
could raise
me higher
still.

First Seen

To re
discover
the first
seen is to
re mem ber
a dream
that couldn'
t be told
simply felt.

Where it is with thanks to Viktor Frankl

Where
it is That
where of
I more than
what I've
been taught
to see
think and
feel. Even
the genes
can't put me
together
as now. Before
the I the
He invisi
bly God.

*Kafka and the Chassidic
Theatre group 1910*

Like
feeling in
to the flow
in river'
s rhythmic
sense Rock-
creviced
light Source
of being
being.

*What the Church
made of Christ*

You
took the
throb out of
His fear
that pained
Jewishness
The never be
ing world
that couldn'
t contain
Your denial

of Him
into your
own image
Some thing
other.

That Now of You

(of our retarded son, Raphael)

It's
that now
of you
in the less
of person
ed routines
More a fee
ling through
than some
what words
could know.

Labyrinth of Life

There's
only a way
out if there'
s a way in
But we're de

nied both
Being born be
fore we're
asked and lo
sing breath in
the grips of
death's last
call. Do we
then turn a
round an axis
of self appre
ciation Caged
in our unful
filling de
sires.

The Meaning of Christ

Extra nos
It's the
outside of
where we're
in that this
key can be
kept It turns
its own combin
ation of love
in death and
deals us out

of this lock-
ed in poverty
from self.

Steps in Sand

So
many steps
in sand
voice
less now as
a moon fa-
ding in
night's con-
suming
dark.

Unanswered Voice

As if
the sea sings
meaning
less in con-
tinuing
voice across
the patterns
of man's land-
locked mind.

Closer found

At a
distance
These birds
looked like
dots solemn
ly small But
closer found
punctuated
rhythmic
cally in
light ness.

Some distant place

He
saw so a-
cutely
what he
didn't see
That I
knew He was
abstract-
ing some dis
tant place
in thought.

This shorter Sense of things

Do we only have
a shorter sense
of things The
line cut down
to its moment'
s life Is truth
no more for us
than where it
was not being
known As a wind
closeted to our
own tentative
longings for a
time that
could spread be
yond as the
searching waves
from the sea's
deepened breath
Are we only
what we are for
a moment in
hesitant light
as a whisper
but rarely found
and seen Do we
only have this
shorter sense
of things.

Of Woman's Beauty

A woman's
beauty She
does not own
It grows upon
her like flowers
from a
garden's bed
It's not the
lasting part
of her And yet
most women display
them
selves as such
beautifying
their longing
for a true
sense in self.

Church Meeting USA

Too much
friendliness
there
to making
friends Too
much concern
with what

doesn't
really concern
them I'd
prefer my own
image-brea
thing sense
for words
that edge a
bit nearer
to what they
mean.

Standing high

He
stood him
self high
to a pulpit
of self im
portance
isn't found
those go
ings down more
difficult
in step
to step.

Jeremiah's Situation

If
you lose
because you
know you
should – the
fault was
ours, not
theirs – Then
even in de
feat you've
won over
your lost
self.

Sunday hope

If
I could
only bear
my weak
nesses with
a little
more patience
Tolerant in
a steadfast
ness to not
changing
them.

To understand

To under
stand is a
word that
denies my
reach There'
s some thing
"under" about
it than stand
ing firm
for place
If it's of
the mind Then
where do
I feel that
for And of
the heart Then
it may beat its
own pulse re
ceiving less
for an an
swer.

Freed

You
have freed
me from my

self – There
was too much
passion there
to control its
wanting sense
and drive it
to its inner
deeper truths
What is chaste
in you I'll
never bend my
will to be
But by re
ceiving its
after claims
You'll have
freed me in
myself.

Poetry books by David Jaffin

- 1) **Conformed to Stone**, Abelard-Schuman, New York, 1968, London 1970.
- 2) **Emptied Spaces**, with an illustration by Jacques Lipschitz, Abelard-Schuman, London 1972.
- 3) **In the Glass of Winter**, Abelard-Schuman, London 1975, with an illustration by Mordechai Ardon.
- 4) **As One**, The Elizabeth Press, New Rochelle, N. Y. 1975.
- 5) **The Half of a Circle**, The Elizabeth Press, New Rochelle, N. Y. 1977.
- 6) **Space of**, The Elizabeth Press, New Rochelle, N. Y. 1978.
- 7) **Preceptions**, The Elizabeth Press, New Rochelle, N. Y. 1979.
- 8) **For the Finger's Want of Sound**, Shearsman Plymouth, England, 1982.
- 9) **The Density for Color**, Shearsman Plymouth, England, 1982.
- 10) **Selected Poems**, English/Hebrew, Massada Publishers, Givatyim, Israel, 1982.
- 11) **The Telling of Time**, Shearsman, Kentisbeare, England, 2000 + Johannis, Lahr, Germany.
- 12) **That Sense for Meaning**, Shearsman, Kentisbeare, England, 2001 + Johannis, Lahr, Germany.
- 13) **Into the timeless Deep**, Shearsman, Kentisbeare, England, 2002 + Johannis, Lahr, Germany.

David Jaffin

Poems

David Jaffin is a scrupulous weigher and weighter of words, by which I mean that a poem is, for him, always a matter of collaboration with the true spirit of the language. Every word is given its value, neither more nor less.

Edward Lucie Smith, on *Emptied Spaces*

David Jaffin's poems are very impressive; there is a real economy of language combined with a subtle evocativeness.

David Marshall, *Yale University*

Jaffin's poetry is as "modernist" as abstract painting while still poetry in the traditional sense, whose purpose is the verbalization of basic human experience and whose form derives from a serious exploration of language ... it is remarkable what depth of experience Jaffin manages to relate through his severely limited vocabulary and imagery.

Victor Terras, *Brown University*

Everything about these books underlines the classical nature of Jaffin's art. Language is here refined, pared down an irreducible minimum; each word carries its precise weight in the line ... This is not easy poetry: it is the product of American energy and a Judaic sensibility, it is intelligent and demanding, and it deserves to be read.

Michael Butler (*University of Birmingham*)

in *Samphire* on *In the Glass of Winter* and *As One*

A BIRTH IN SEEING



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