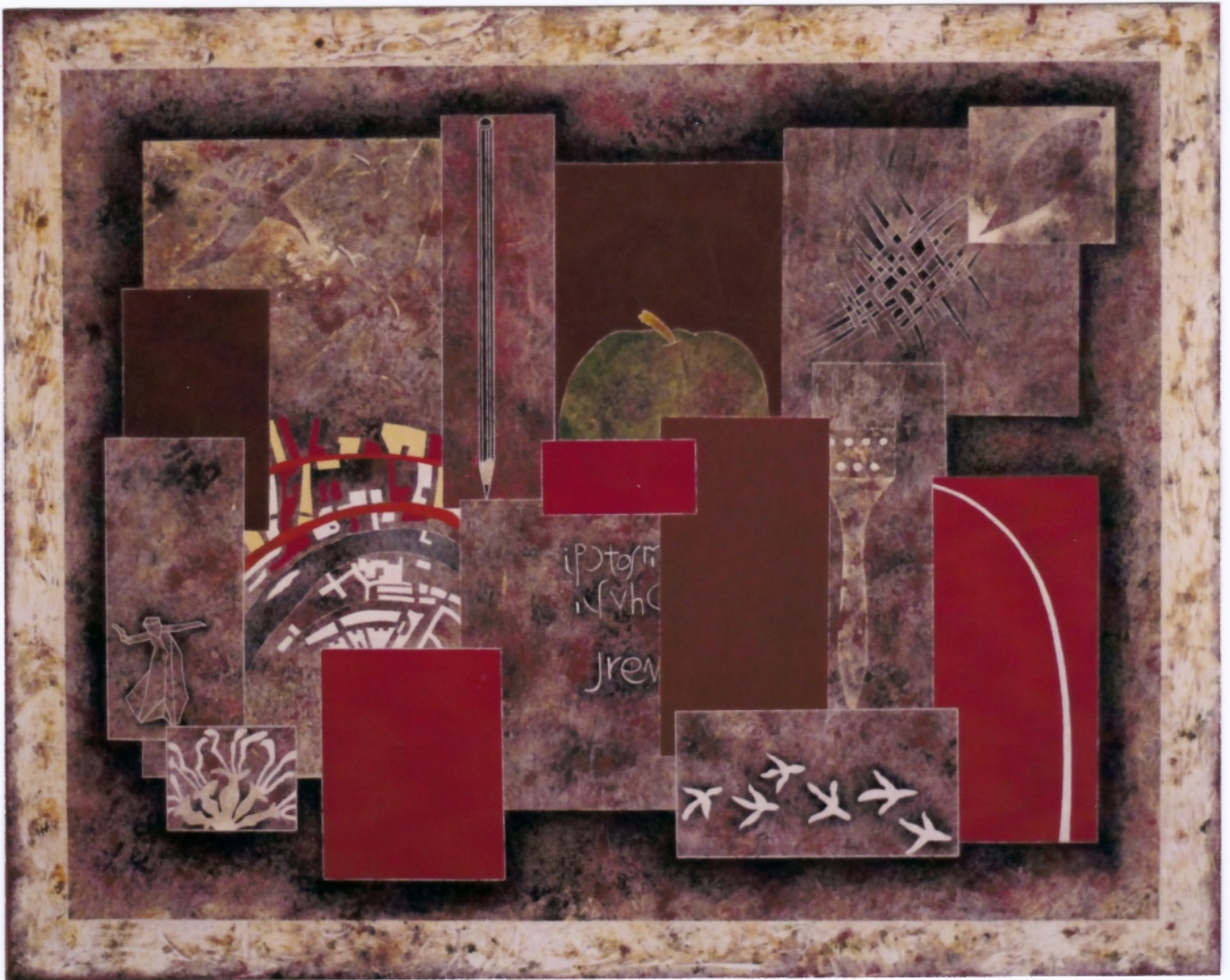


Flinders



Nell Race

Fragments
of a life spent painting,



Some reasons why

I was born in London in 1950. At a low, hand-scrubbed + deeply grooved pine table with legs that didn't match. I began a painting career about three years later overlooking Beverley Brook.



My father, who lived for many years on a Thames barge, was a medical man & worked in blood group research at the Lister Institute. The windows of his laboratory overlooked the Thames at Chelsea Bridge.

My step-mother worked with him, my mother having died in 1955.

Uncles & aunts - designers & a solicitor - & numerous cousins lived a short green walk away.

To them all I am indebted.



Long & unhappy years at an academic school were relieved by weekend rowing in a clinker-built dinghy.

On Chiswick Eyt we could lose ourselves in a jungle world: shingle & mud, rushes, reeds & Himalayan Balsam grew to heights far above our heads.

The seeds popped & propelled along with our imaginations.

We forged paths through the mad growth of our island while buses busshed over Hammersmith Bridge less than a mile away.

It was a magical escape.



Countless visits to museums + galleries in the sixties brought closer the work of Matisse, Ben Nicholson + Eric Ravilious - besides many others -



Hammermill Bridge,
David Gentleman



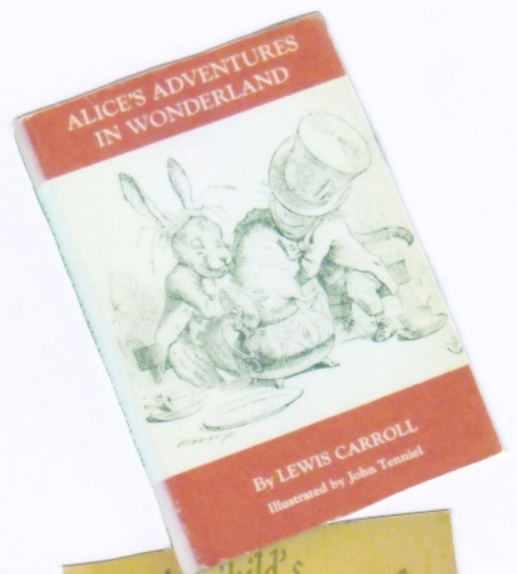
The Quiet River: The Thames at Chiswick
Victor Pasmore

for whom I developed a particular empathy which continues today.



November 1960 (Ticino)
Ben Nicholson

Alphabet mug. Eric Ravilious



The Writing
of Dylan Thomas,
Lewis Carroll
+ Mervyn Peake
in particular was
also helping to feed
a Creative energy



that was gathering pace. ...

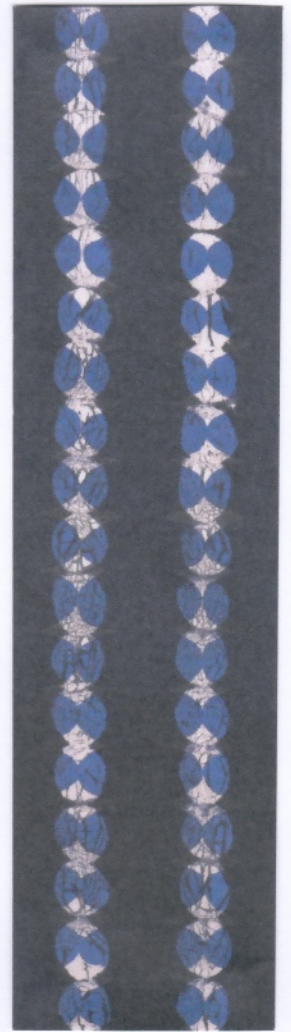
Red Room
Henri Matisse



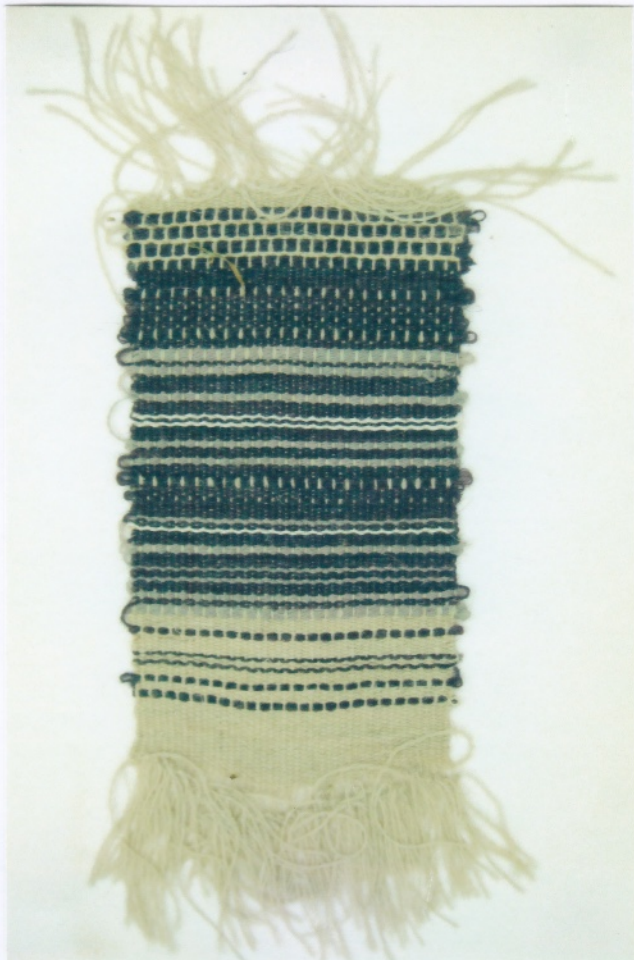
Susan Bosence, a specialist
craftswoman in hand
printing + dyeing fabrics,
was an outstanding
teacher.

She conveyed not only her
knowledge + craftsmanship
in a way that made any
practical printing sessions
with her an inspiring
experience, but she also
communicated an inference
that the qualities found
within art + craft, clearly
exposed in her own work,
could be all part of a
wider philosophy of life.

Three years at West Surrey
College of Art + Design (the
University for the Creative
Arts) were enhanced by the
teaching of Susan Bosence.



Block-printed
indigo resist-
dye cotton.
Susan Bosence
about 1960



Indigo tie-dyed
cotton - detail, sample.
Made under direction
of Susan Bosence.

The thinking around each work and the execution of the painting itself I find equally absorbing. I try to extract considered + refined expression using very simple tools + methods + it is this aspiration that is my engine: a wish to get better at it!

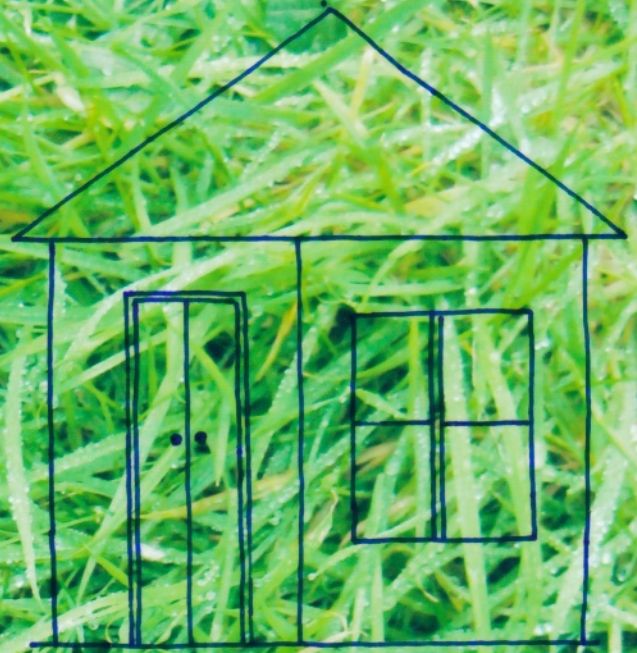
My work is bound up with daily life: not only psychologically + cognitively but also in the position of my working space which stands 10m from the house along a snaking garden path.

I thrive too on painting the interior of our own house in Corfe Castle.

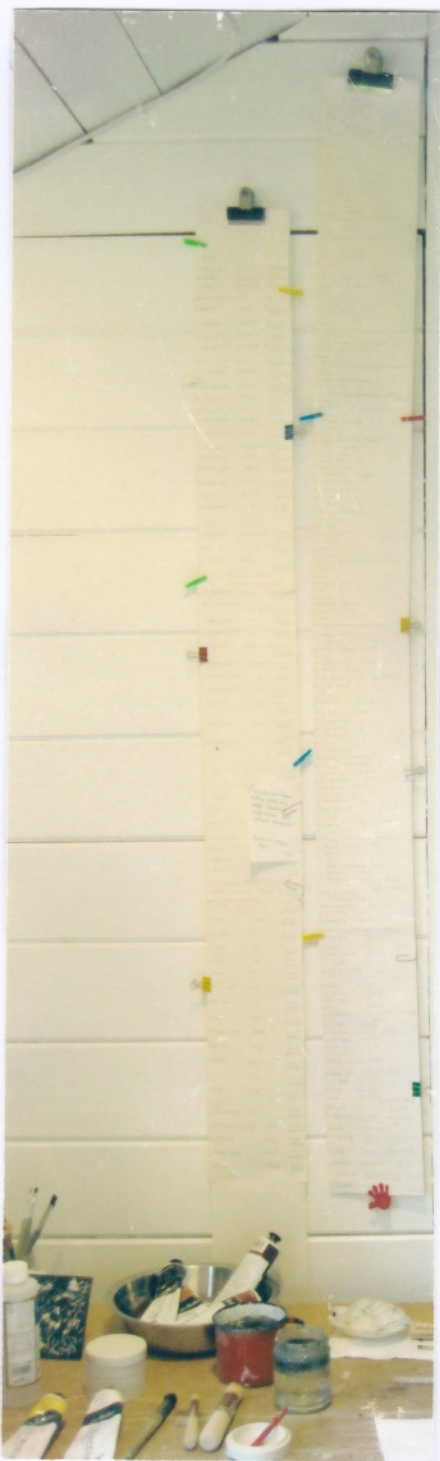
I studied at the Central School of Art and Design (Central St. Martins), Wimbledon College of Art + Design + have a BA Hons in Printed Textiles, 1974, from West Surrey College of Art + Design (University of the Creative Arts).

I have been exhibiting my work since 1974
Collected in Europe + United States of America





I paint in a wooden hut at the bottom of the garden. Wild, avian & feline life envelops the studio. Birdsong is the only sound I hear.



Why do I paint?

Most people
look + see
almost constantly.

Over the years
this activity
accumulates into
an individual
visual thesaurus
+ reference.

Inter-mixed
with this is
your own history
or life-story.



pursuing
that visual
thesaurus +
life-story +
attempting to make
it interesting to
spectators outside
becomes
a necessity.



"We do but learne
today what our
better advanced
Judgements will
unteach tomorrow."

from "Religio Medici"
Browne 1643

Images change as ideas evolve but at anytime, wherever you happen to be, there is the presence of your current painting + the questions arising from it. That is intellectually stimulating + incites curiosity, enquiry + the finding of resolutions.



So whether in studio, traffic jam or ironing there is no need ever to be bored.



And the hope is always there: that you may make something just a bit better next time.



The manual process of making marks or creating textures on a pristine gessoed surface is a tonic in itself. And it also leads to the discovery of an infinite variety of characters that come to be through unrestricted experimentation.

Since leaving, with ecstasy, the stifling boundaries of school life I have mostly painted non-figurative images. I regularly draw from life, usually as a means to another end. The process of drawing is invaluable: always investigative, revealing & instructive.

Through using simple techniques, simple tools & elementary processes there comes a more even balance between manual & cognitive activity. And, vitally, there is also no room for waffle.

Many of my paintings are a narrative about surfaces, textures & design. A pre-occupation is how these elements can be mingled to express an idea & also be connotative.

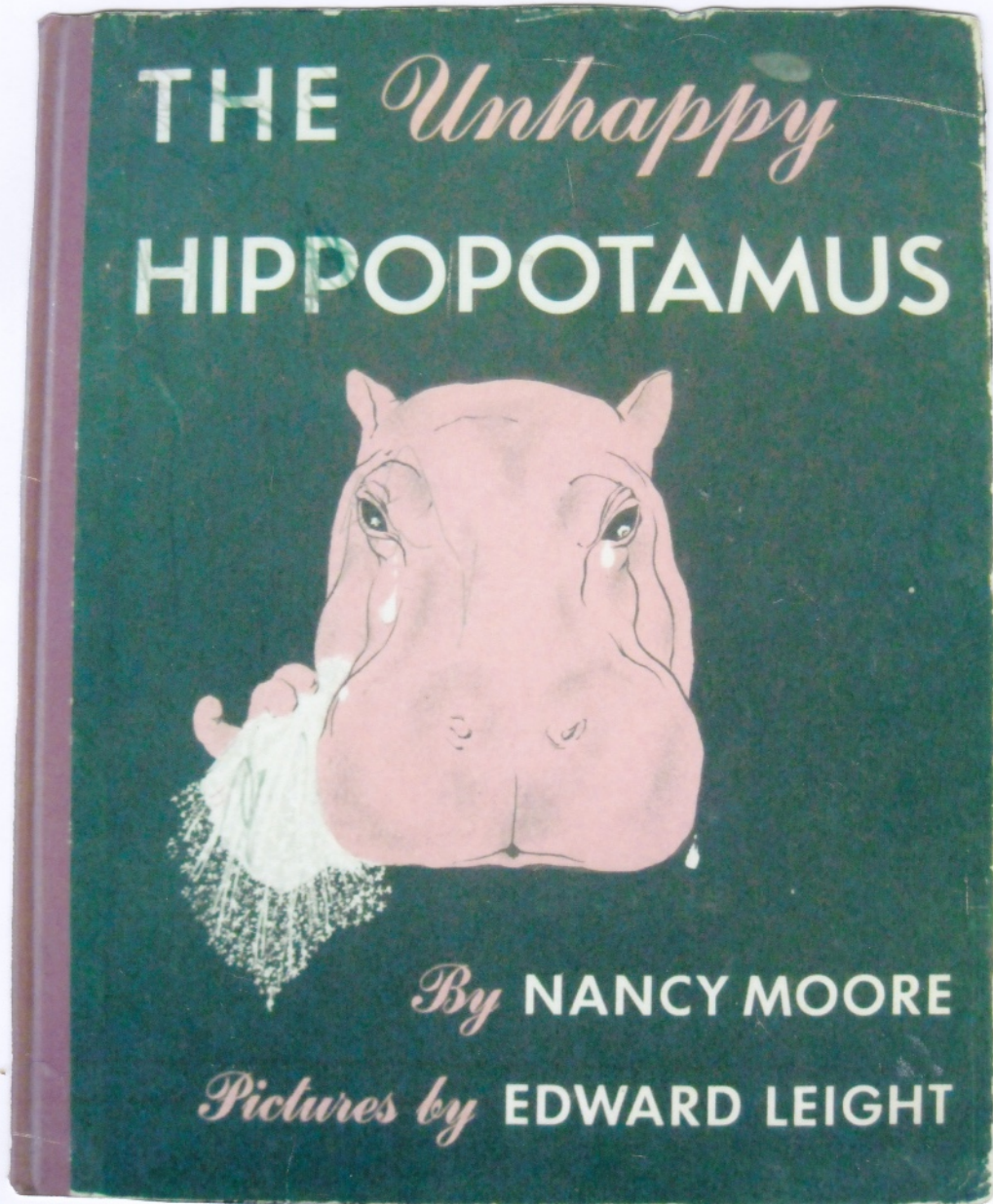
The latter especially helps a painting to flourish & remain alive over time.

Springs

When you look & see then anything or everything can, in some way, be transformed or translated into the form of a painted image.

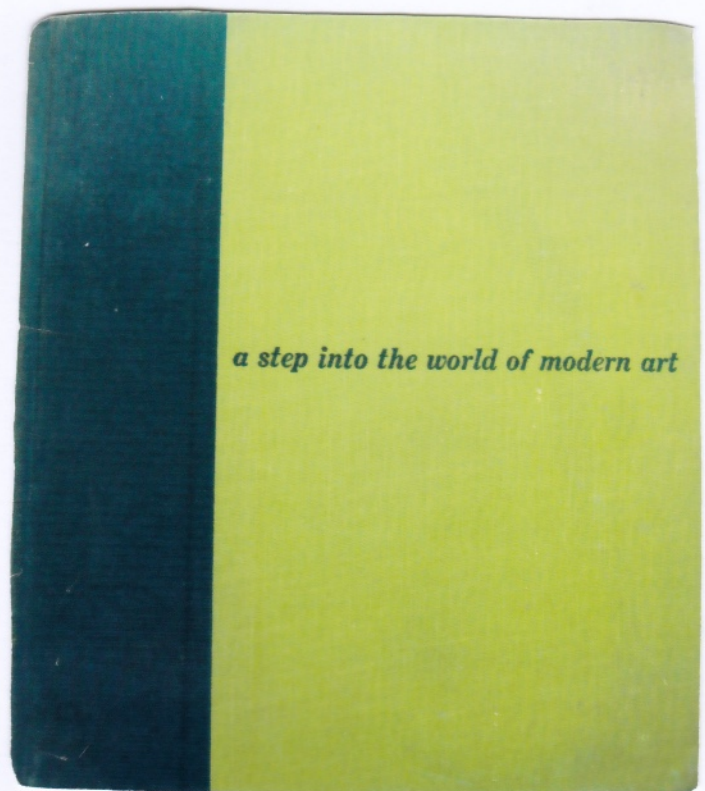
This Spring need never dry up.

Other common - indirect - influences may be books. Two books from my very early childhood had a strong influence in particular & could be described as Spring-boards to what has evolved since. Though it is only much later in life that the wisdom within the pages of such pertinent books are fully relished, in the earliest years a type of unconscious osmosis occurs between book & mind.

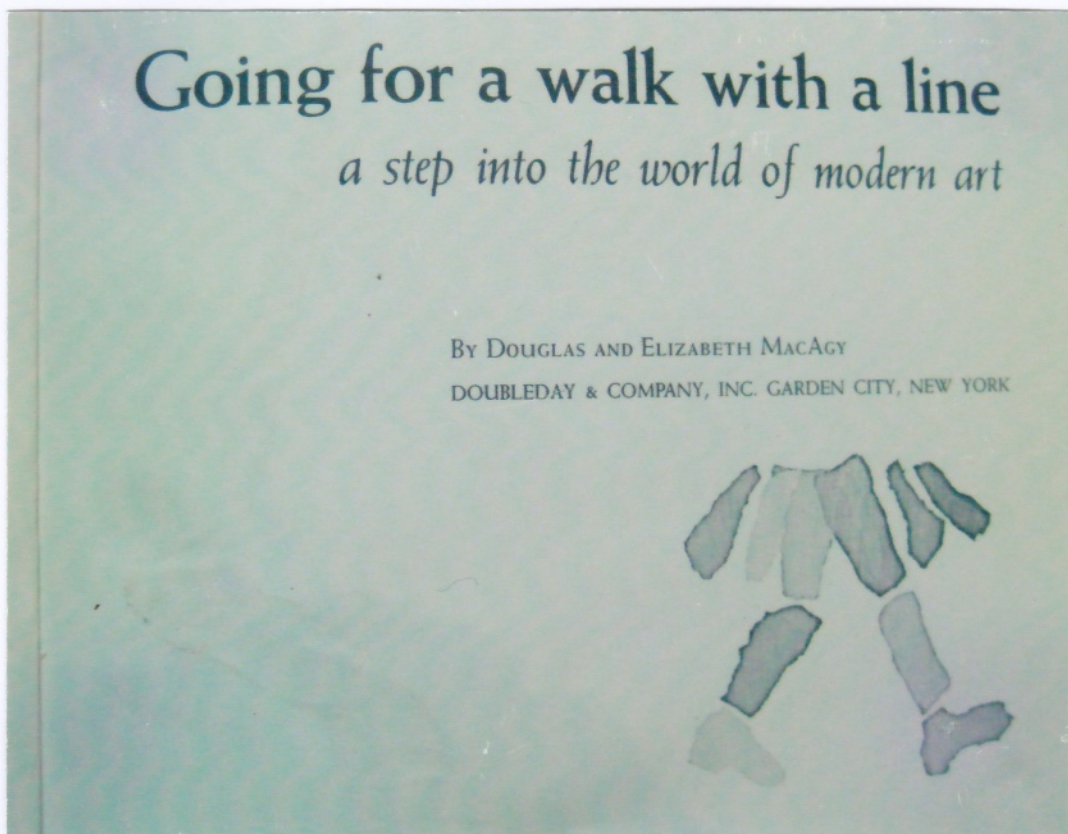


1st published by Collins in 1958
One final reflection of the book implies how
invaluable it is to know where you honestly
belong.

Published just one year later, in 1959, + a present to me aged 8 in that year.



In 23 pages + with very little text, rather a highly inspired + poetic flow of words, the reader is danced through the unending opportunities that artists themselves have + made more than aware of the enormously rich pickings they can offer to any receptive + imaginative onlooker.



This small book has always been to me more usefully informative than any tome on Art History.

And besides, infinitely enjoyable.

Foreword

This is a book that says when you are young the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line because there are too many sidelines to discover. A straight line to anywhere would be a bore that got you wherever you were going without any of the thousand adventures any child knows are to be had on the way anywhere.

The only hurry of youth is that while there is all the time in the world to enjoy being alive, you'd better hurry up and enjoy it—every inch of the way.

Once grown up, we are likely to enjoy less because we are overwhelmed by the fact that there isn't enough time to get everything done that there is to do, or that has to be done. For us this is where the artist comes in—to create pleasure in leisure for people of all ages. Artists remember, for themselves and for all of us—forever—everything imaginable from the greatest experience to the smallest.

The artist's line is in this way a line of youth that leads us from the world well known to worlds we no longer dream about or have time to think about, and sometimes into worlds we've never known.

Today most of us are apt to ground-hog it when we see our own shadow. We crawl back as if into a dark hole where we aren't forced to see ourselves or the day we live in. But surer than the sun, the artists can stir us out of ourselves. Through their eyes we may discover that looking at ourselves is not so bad after all. Often, when we're persuaded there's nothing but gloom all around us, the artists, looking at the same things we thought dull, find laughter; and the people we had supposed dormant, they find awake.

This unique and engaging presentation is as refreshing and varied as the works of art which form it. It excites the mind and wins the eye as the pictures take on their own life. The book's charm will escape neither artist nor child, and others, I believe, will find it revealing.

VINCENT PRICE



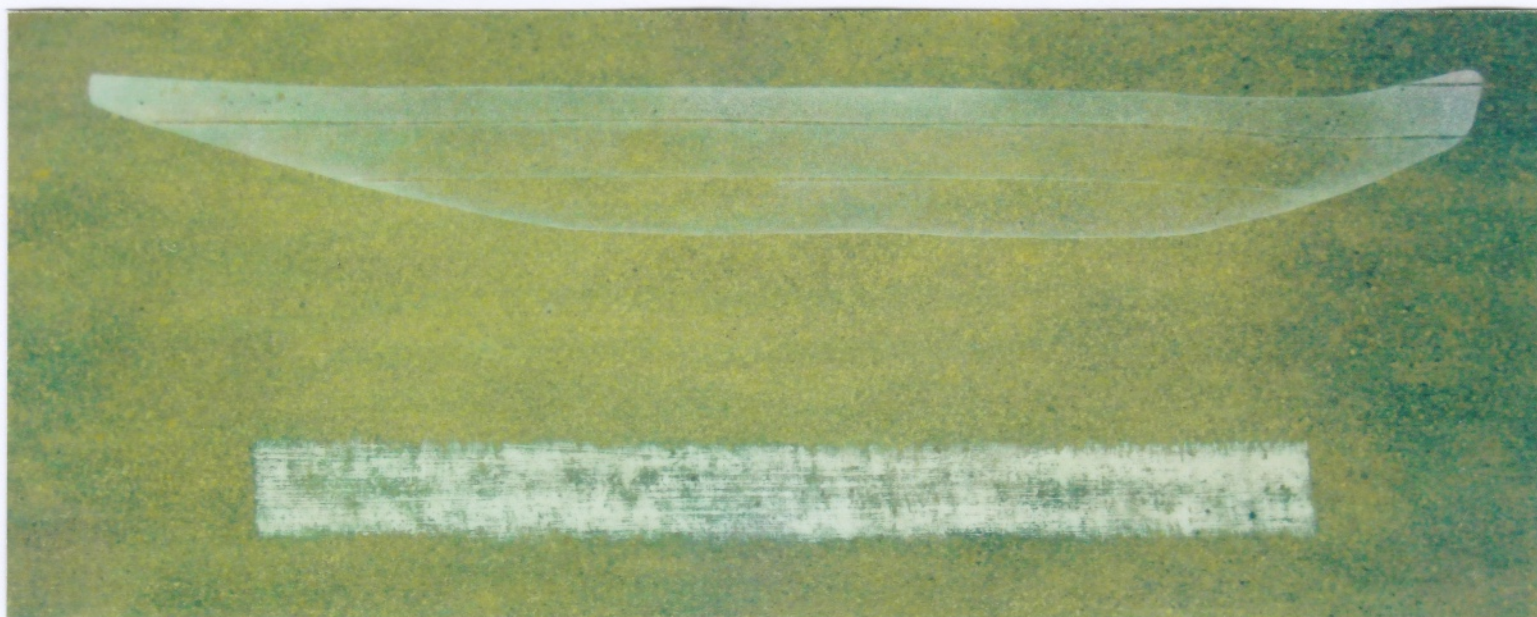


The spring of ideas may be sustained, a lot or
a little, by objects you come across on
a walk.....



'Trio'
oil
36x36 cm

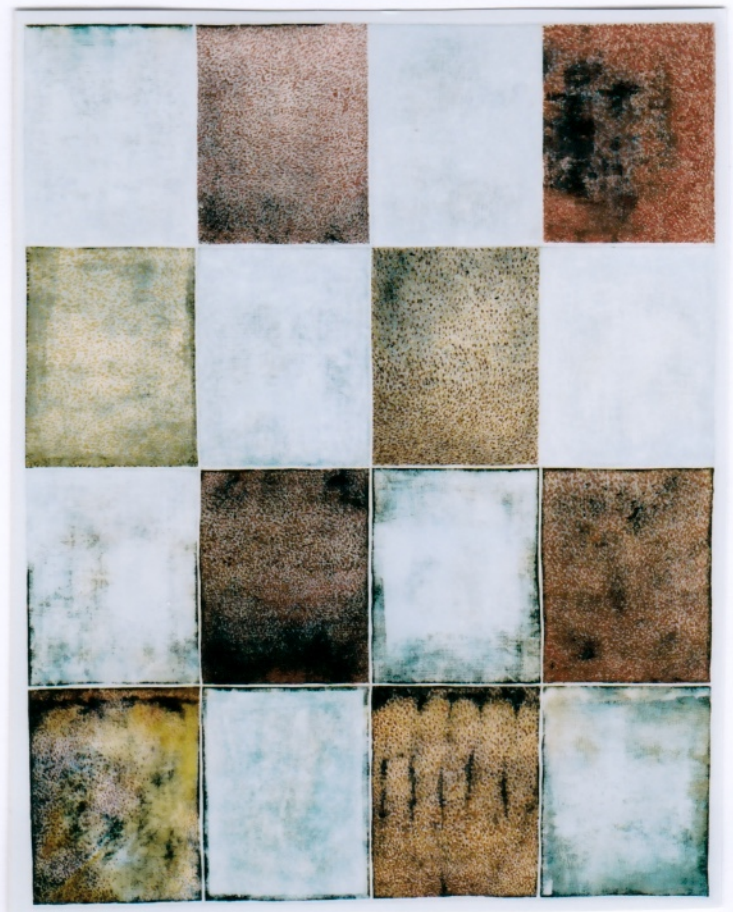
....the connections may be tentative or clear & obvious



'Peace' oil - 20 x 50 cm



A display cabinet in a museum



may become a 'landscape',

oil 46 x 36 cm

Dusky Soul



Walking down a grey + cheerless street in south-east London, anticipating a distant glimpse of the Wapping Thames, I passed hoardings up around a derelict house.

A builder, a painter or a dusky soul had passed by with a bucket of paint, in excess.

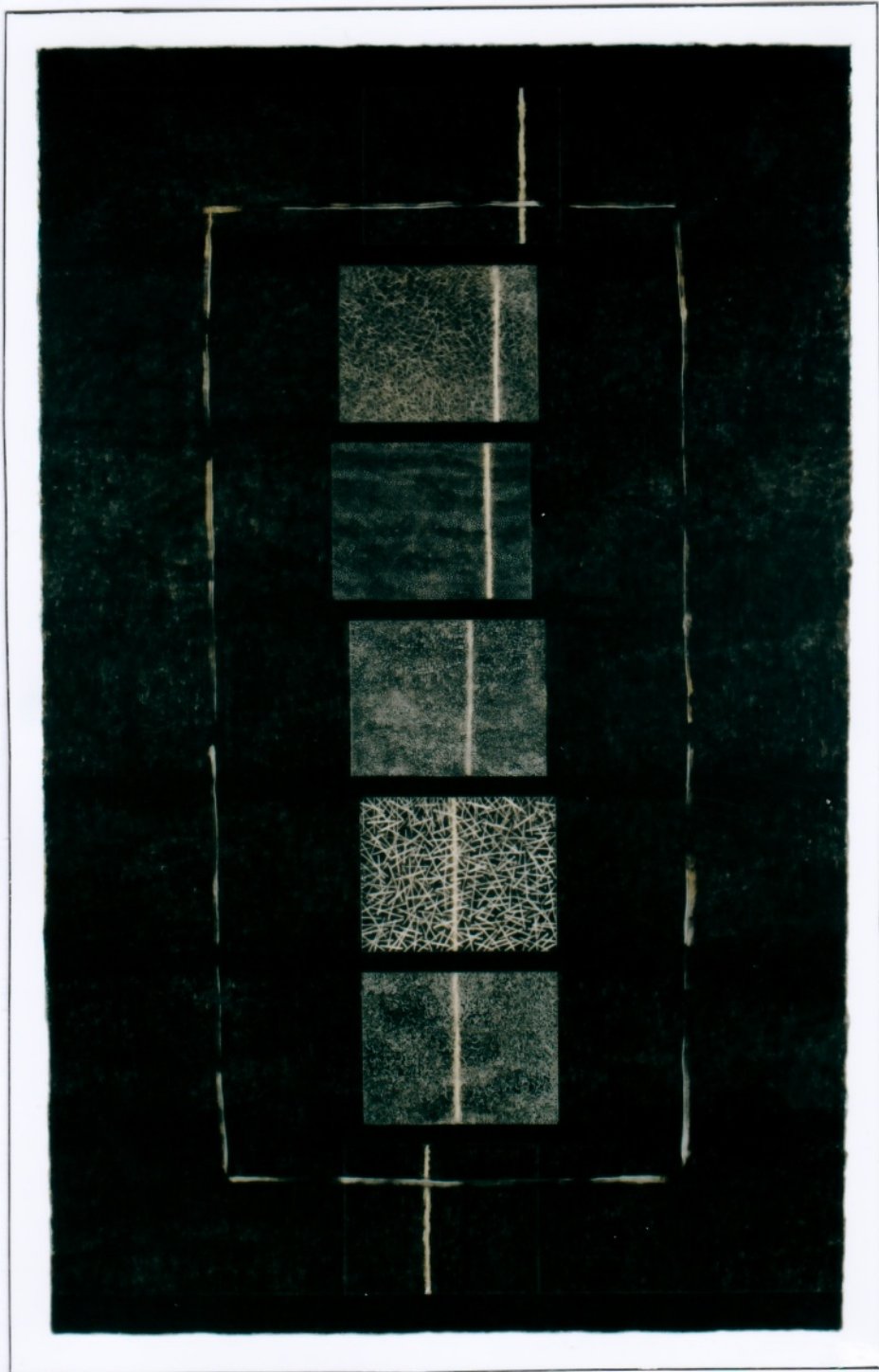
With jerky movements of the arm he had snappily pelted paint around the hoardings. He had made one vast, chaotic, dazzling frame of thick, glossy blobs to the dilapidating house behind. The eyes of the wooden hoardings pecked out.

The vim within these gobbets of paint had been kindled by an impetuosity. They were also loaded to the core with zest, spirit, pith, integrity. And maybe some rage.

The surprise within ordinary things provides rich pickings. I too am always trying to get rid of the excess paint. Through a slow, often exasperating time of elimination + extraction I hope to make surfaces, marks, abstract images that convey something profoundly felt.

Thesaurus

oil pastel
110 x 75cm
framed.



Spent seeds
blown onto stone



or the ghost of ivy
climbing up a wall....



Details from 'Songscape'
oil
Triptych : 3 x 174 x 16 cm

.... can become an unknown script.



In origami style she stood on a mantelpiece for more than twenty years, gathering dust & fading, but she kept her crisply folded dress immaculate.

This little figure, an actor-dancer, having delivered her lines, bows her gratitude to you ~ to all those that look on. Her stark whiteness projects her forward to receive the applause but also reflects the role of the actor: she has stepped out of her own self to leave a purity that is prepared to relish whatever role is given to her.



Paper Dancer
oil
87 x 50 cm
framed.

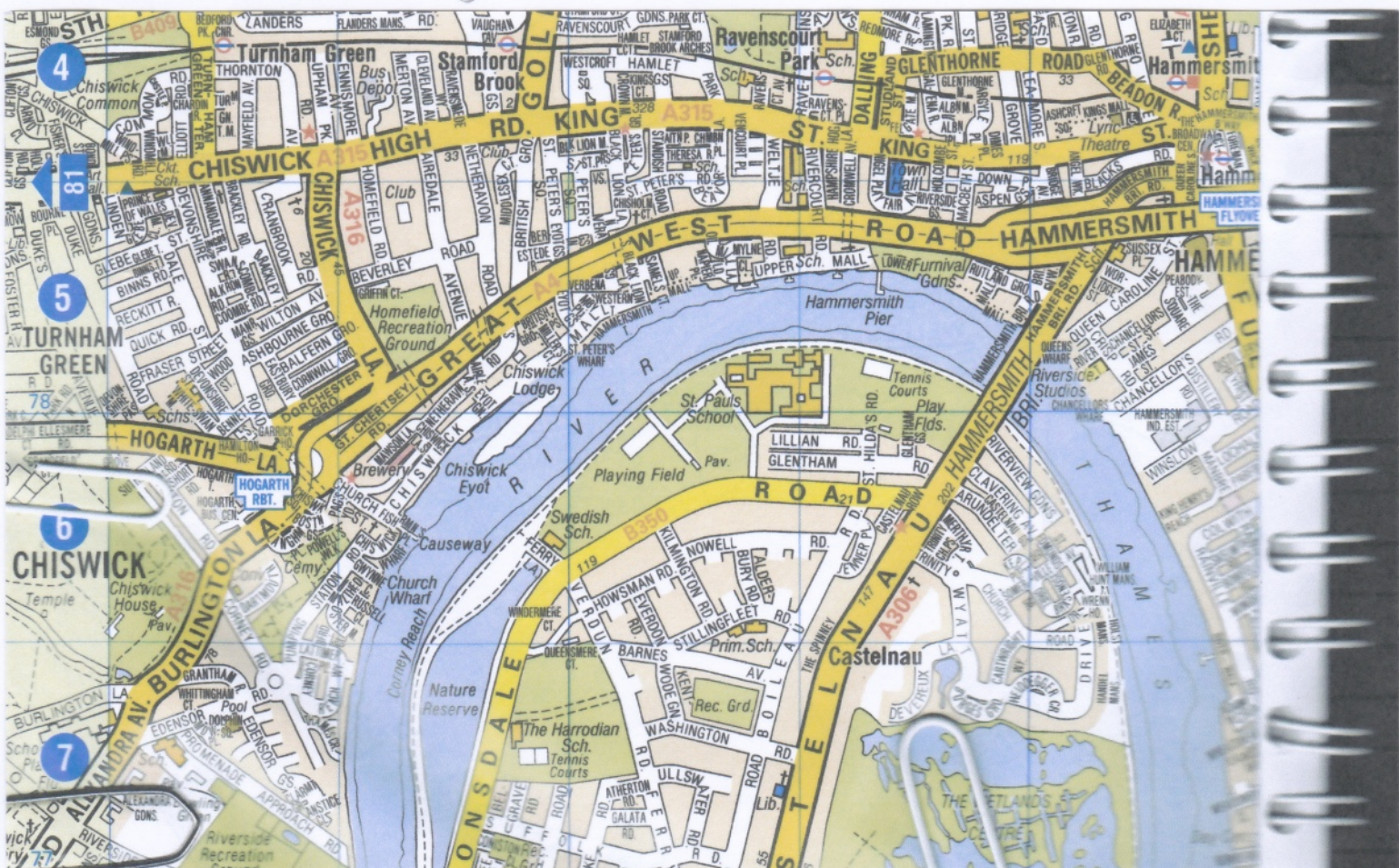
Diversion



Diversions are common for the cyclist, as are the objects that may catch the eye when riding a bike at few MPH: the rich variations of colour & surface within a brick wall, the shifting patterns of road markings, the tin can shining flush flat on the dull tarmac, the roundness of a rabbit's burrow & the compactness of the soil, the flame red of a rose-hip....

The tangible & intangible passby, one by one, haphazardly & leave sometimes images that are never forgotten in your memory.

With piquant air & exercise combined, cycling allows a detachment that can be invaluable towards shedding light on any current visual brick wall.



Thames Waters



For some years before I was born my parents lived on 'Diligent', a Thames barge. From its mooring at Hammersmith they frequently sailed up & downstream. One night, coming home late, they found Diligent

partially submerged in the thick, muddy waters of the 1940s Thames. Their total, very well read & much loved collection of books was afloat: the open pages sated with dense, gritty, brown water.

Thames Waters

Some of these books now lie on my bookshelves: they never stood up after the sinking. Open their crunchy pages → you smell that water still. Look through the pages → you could be looking through a thesaurus about ooze, squelch, scum → splotch.



The story of the flood was related often: a rich catalyst for the imagination; saturating it with images of water, words → textures. Extraordinarily vivid + emotive, these images → their offspring infiltrate my work frequently.

I would like to keep some of the decay → rot, the fading away, the being forgotten in time by pursuing ideas that evolve → images that change: just as the book collection metamorphosed.

Thames Waters



THE LIST OF CONTENTS
 The Virginity is a Vice: p. 346
 Why Puritans make long Sermons: p. 357
 Why hath the common Opinion altered? p. 359
 Whis Venusster multumonia: p. 362
 Why doth the Poze see much alter in relation to
 Rose? p. 352
 Why are Courtiers soother Admirers: p. 368

IGNATIUS HIS CONCLAVE: p. 370
 MISCELLANEOUS PROSE:
 News from the very Country: p. 419
 The Character of a Son at the first sight: p. 424
 The True Character of a Duke: p. 419
 An Essay of Valour: p. 417
 Preface and extract from Buchanan: p. 416
 Five Prayers from "Bible in Clarity": p. 414

LETTERS
 I. [To —?]: p. 439
 II. [To Sir Henry Wotton]: p. 440
 III. [To Sir Henry Wotton]: p. 441
 IV. To Sir George More: p. 441
 V. To Sir George More: p. 441
 VI. To Sir Thomas Egerton: p. 441
 VII. To Sir Henry Goodere: p. 441
 VIII. To Sir George More: p. 441
 IX. To Sir Henry Goodere: p. 441
 X. To Sir Henry Goodere: p. 441
 XI. To Sir Henry Goodere: p. 441
 XII. A Viceroy Mercat. Suffragan: p. 457
 XIII. To Sir Henry Goodere: p. 441
 XIV. [To the Countess of Salisbury]: p. 441
 XV. To the Prince of Wales: p. 441
 XVI. To George Gervase: p. 441
 XVII. To Sir Robert Harley: p. 441
 XVIII. To an absent Friend: p. 441
 XIX. To Sir Edward Herbert: p. 441
 XX. To a Friend of his: p. 441
 XXI. To Sir Henry Goodere: p. 441
 XXII. To Sir Robert Carr: p. 441
 XXIII. To Sir Henry Goodere: p. 441

Remember When

detail
oil, ink, pencil
60x60 cm



And before you leave ...

Merging in the latter on the rocks -
flattening → vantage - due to colour change

Small first rain

Thick

turning

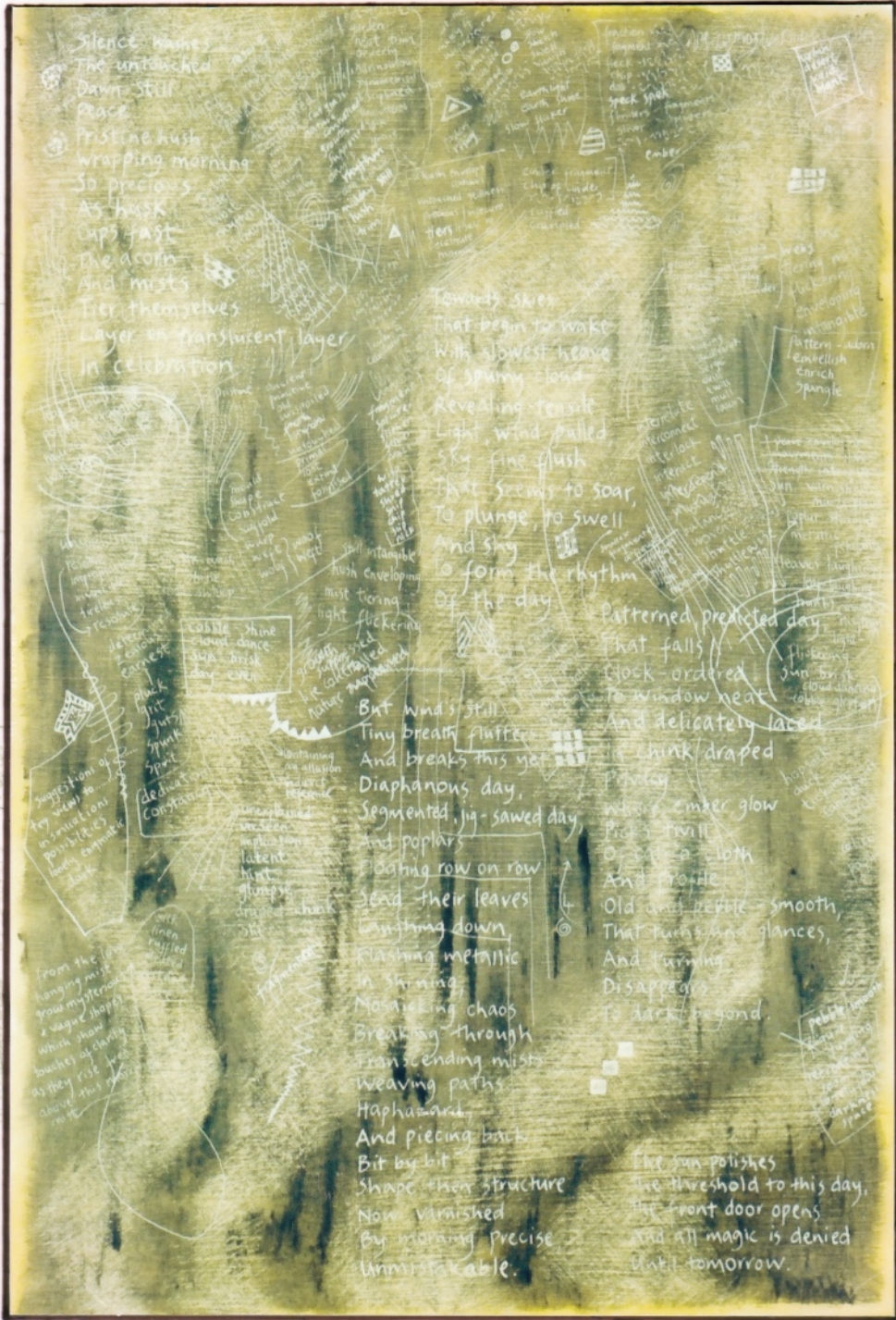
return to primary
ack basic once

And turning out

And many

And many
decisions of hidden
You might
To the station

Station



Notes on a Morning
oil, ink
63x52 cm
framed.

Quivering tail
- Thrill of Anticipation,
✓ (Flows from)
Vibrant energy

1997

Whisper, bowed
Claw translucent
Buckle of wave

Columns - silver steel, cream, bottom of almond, of hazel, of
Corder - cha
Apricot
Vibrant energy
Vibrant energy

Extraordinary

Trill, Shutter, S

Paw
Twist, lick
Alert

Expectancy in e

Wheel
Wrong turn

blood, Coated, Spilt

Sedness - Complex
Through
Sinking

At dusk

Movement

The scribbles of a text you yourself have written may infiltrate a painting

.... or the work of a great poet may spark an idea
or come back to you when a painting is finished
+ provide you with the title .

25 February 1944

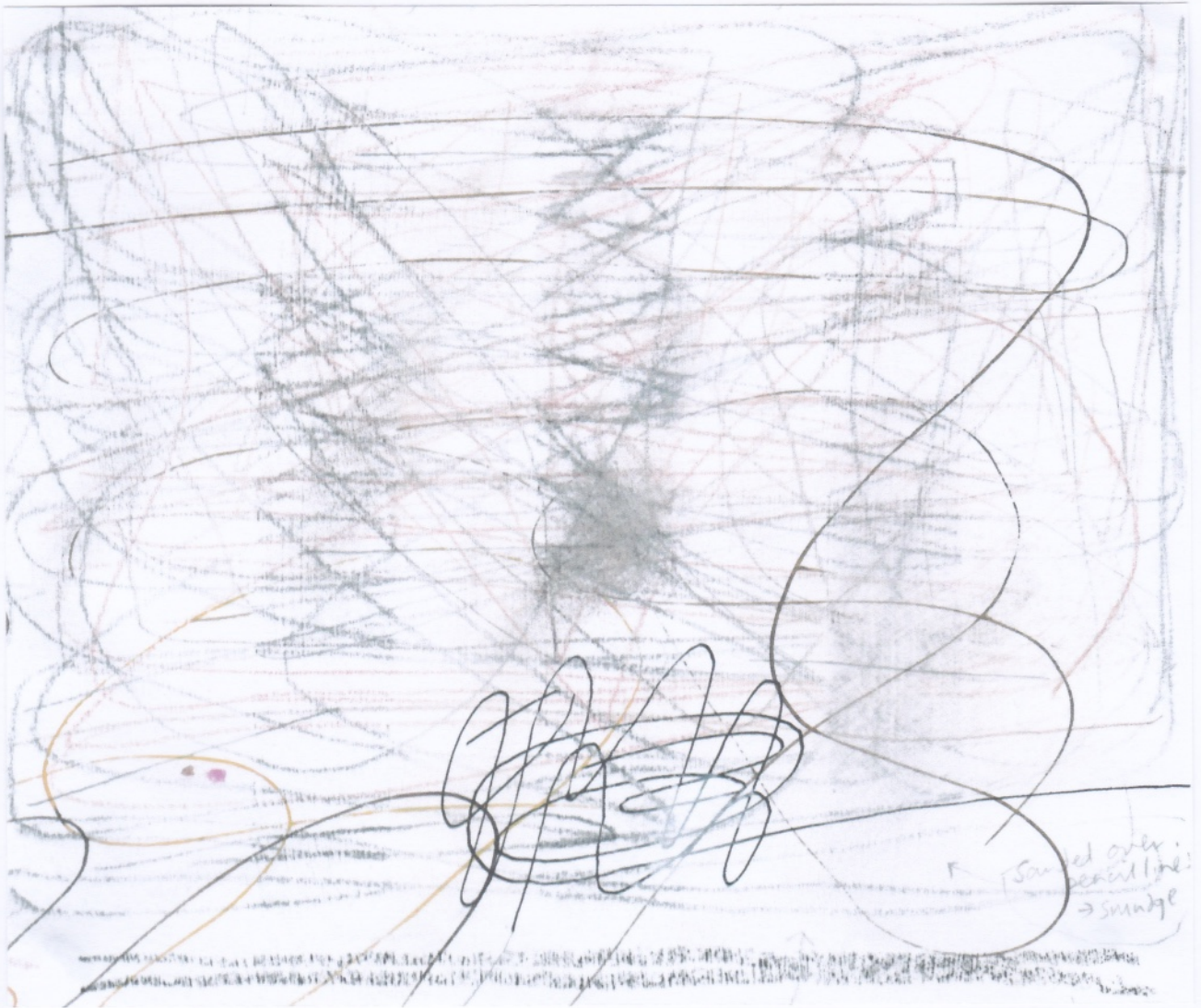
I would like to believe in something,
Something beyond the death that undid you.
I would like to describe the intensity
With which, already overwhelmed,
We longed in those days to be able
To walk together once again
Free beneath the Sun.

Primo Levi
9 January 1946

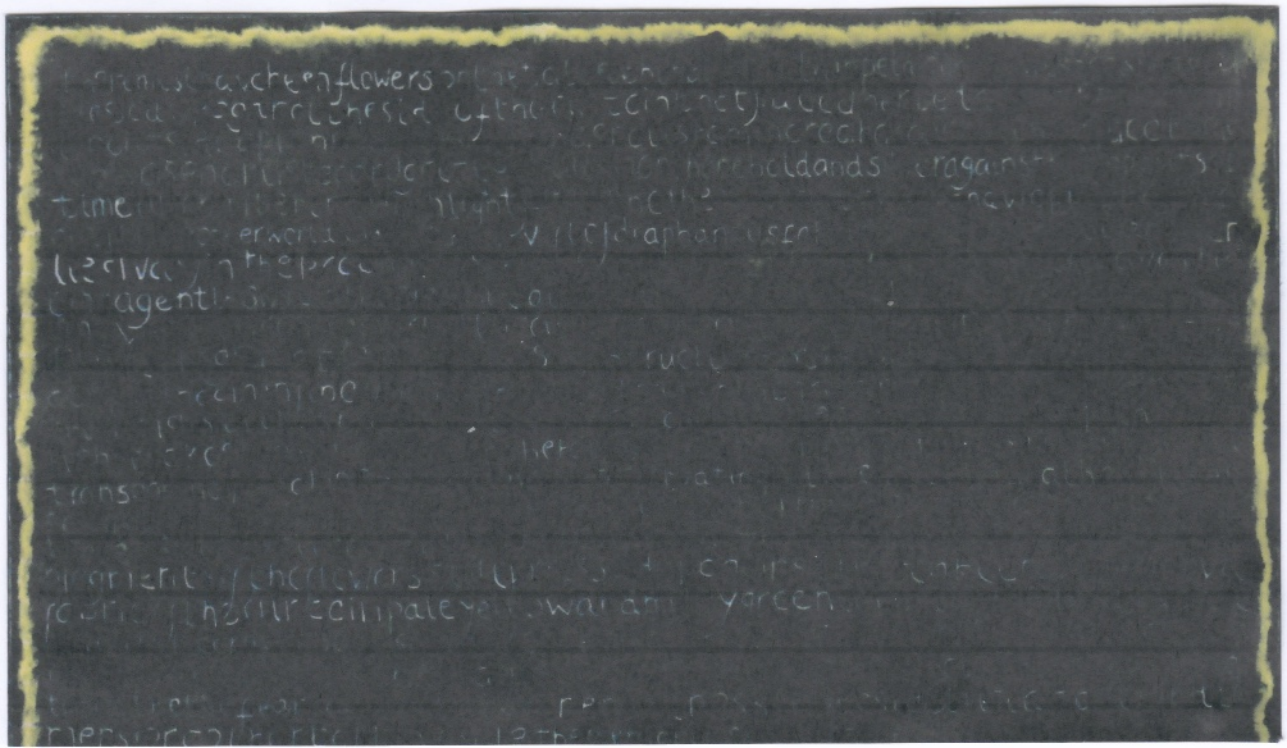
Free beneath the Sun
oil pastel
Triptych:
3x 30x 15 cm



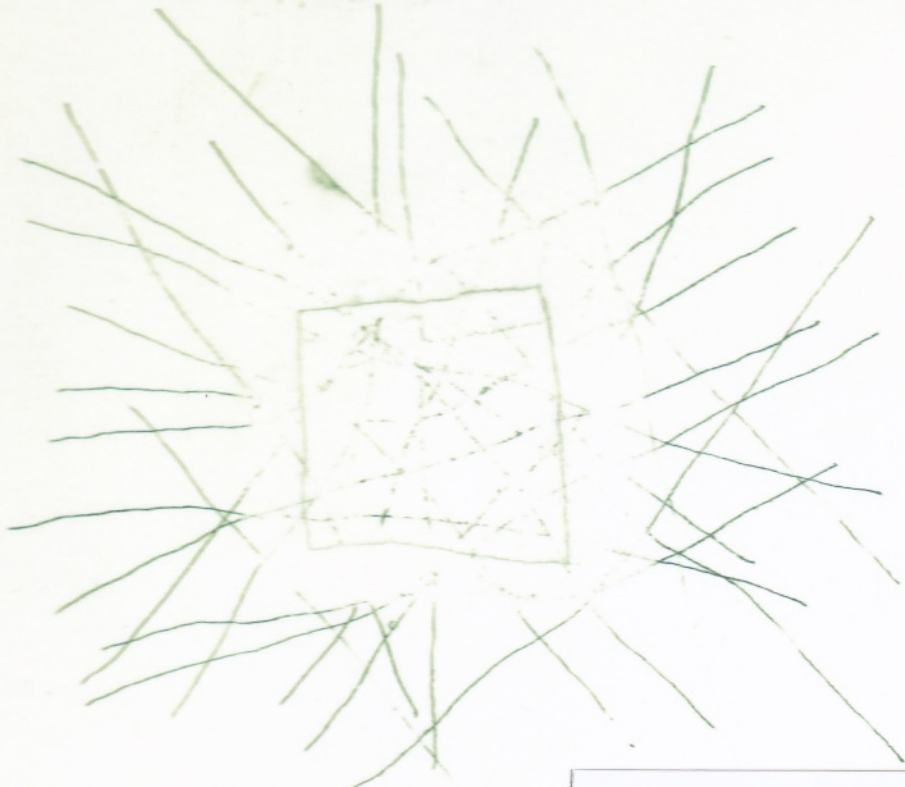
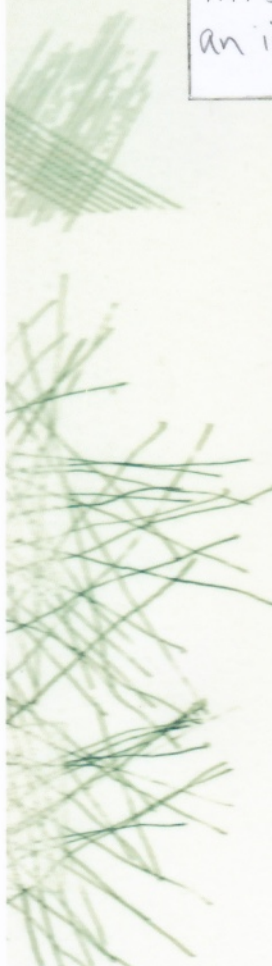
Is it finished?



My father, who wrote a lot, used to say he'd write for days, then rub it all out. In many ways nothing has changed: hours of my time are spent sanding & scraping marks away....



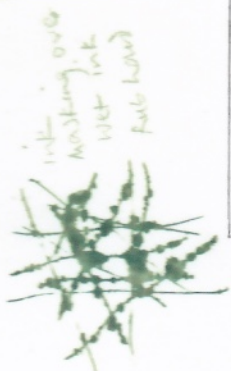
.... but these almost eliminated marks have always enriched, in an informative + intrinsic way, the final image.



WAX
IRON
WAX

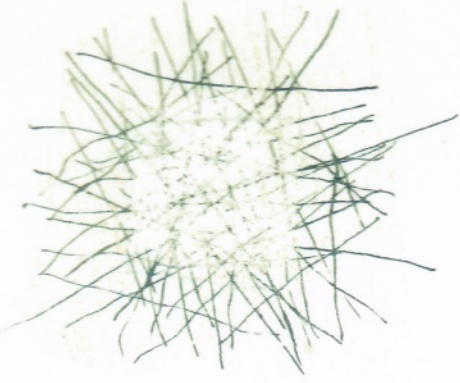
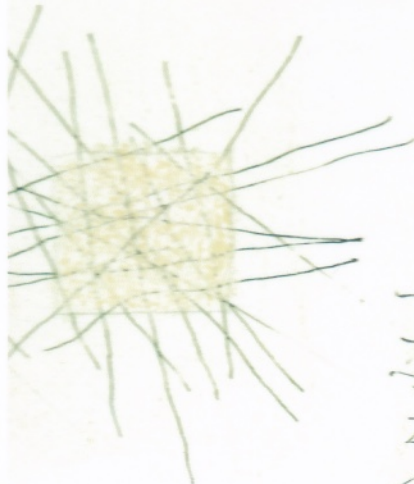
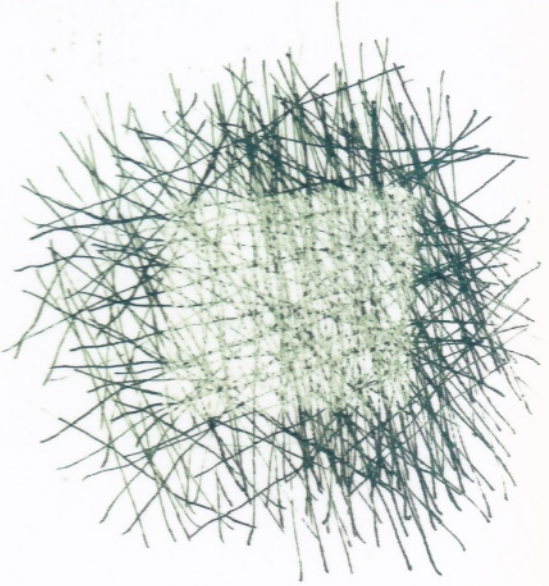
In their transformation they contribute to a surface, a texture, a thought or to an atmosphere evoked. Their shadows possess a subtlety that is meaningful.

Whatever you finally leave in a leave out, what remains has to be a trigger; it is what the onlooker sees first + it is because of the omissions that he is given the space to contribute his own original seeing.



ink
washing over
wet ink
rub (hard)

The delicate point is knowing when, to take more away will be too much. If too much goes intentions + implications can dwindle or be lost.



Could find me
genre in notes
resemblance
change (material)
Stippling first
WAX
-ink
-> not esp. sharp
-> not esp. + white
-> edge + white
fiddle

Spider
Shout

WAX
between pencil over

Photographs —

Brick, Stone, concrete, glass,
Wood, paper, grass, water, sand,
Patisserie : the commonplace often
makes its own "paintings".



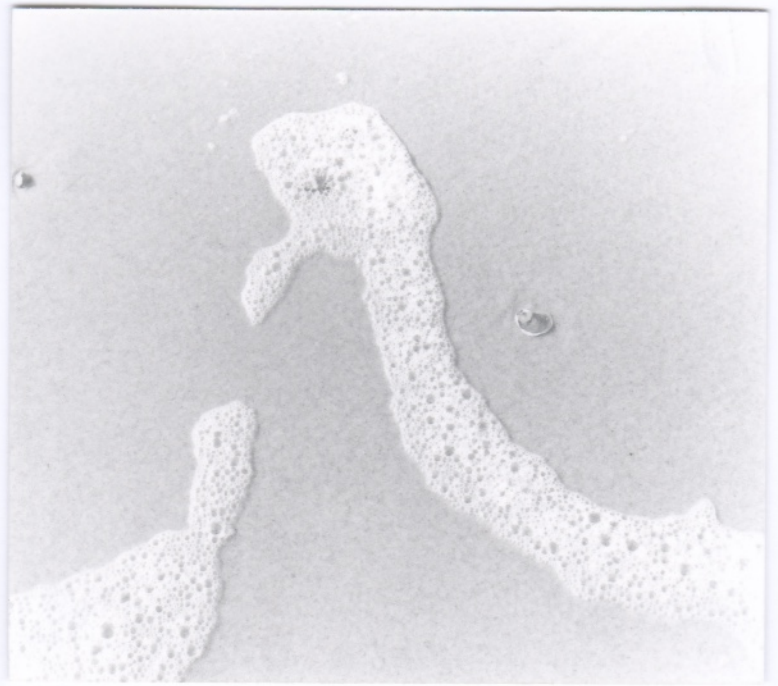
They are all around us



for everyone to see



frozen puddle



Windspit on Sand



dew on window



frost on window



oil-drum



boulder



lichen on wall



wood



hull restoration



Painting wood



metal



floating grasses



washed out



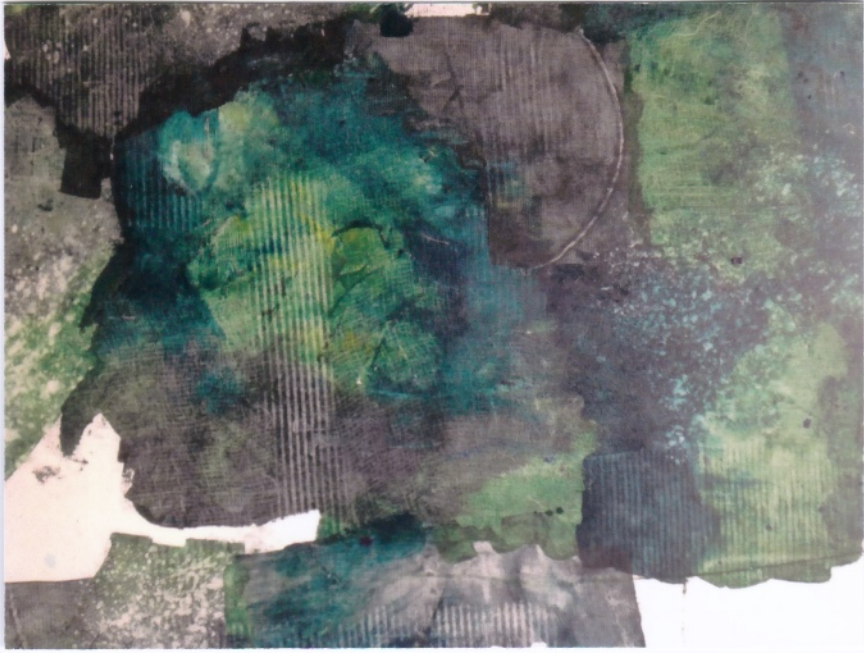
lichen on wall



Coconut slice



Appendix



Over 60 years later.

No longer in London.

At a table now with matching legs.





I coax out images from
Surfaces of disorder :
multiple disparate layers
of colour, texture + mark,
applied almost haphazardly,
allow the imagination to
wander + thrive .

Although struggle + panic
are always part of the
Process, they pay with the
Surprise of the unexpected which eventually unravels.



Morning

Silence washes
The untouched
Dawn-still
Peace,
Pristine hush
Wrapping morning
So precious
As husk
Cups fast
The acorn
And mists
Tier themselves
Layer on translucent layer
In celebration

Towards skies
That begin to wake
With slowest heave
Of spumy cloud
Revealing tensile
Light, wind-pulled,
Sky-fine flush
That seems to soar,
To plunge, to swell
And shy
To form the rhythm
Of the day.

Patterned, predicted day,
That falls
Clock-ordered
To window neat
And delicately laced
In chink draped
Privacy

Where ember glow
Picks twill
Of calico cloth
And profile
Old and pebble-smooth,
That turns and glances,
And turning
Disappears
To dark beyond.

But wind's still
Tiny breath flutters
And breaks this yet
Diaphanous day,
Segmented, jig-sawed day,
And poplars
Floating row on row
Send their leaves
Laughing down,
Flashing metallic
In shivering,
Mosaicking chaos

Breaking through
Transcending mists
Weaving paths
Haphazard,
And piecing back
Bit by bit
Shape then structure
Now varnished
By morning precise,
Unmistakable.

The sun polishes
The threshold
To this day,
The front door
Opens,
And all magic
Is denied
Until tomorrow.

