

chris hall

aerthsong

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these littl rivulets
sparklindownstream
bearing with them
spawn n sticklback
by now
 coming t confluence
by now
 bringing broom
 bringing brushbundl
 burbl n larchenleef

n with th current
 separation
 rejection

disjunction
trauma

alienation

nd by now
on th bankside
Anselm th Shepherd
whistlz his dogs
up from th sheep-pen
glancing dolefully
with fear n trepidation
at th hired hand
approaching him through th turnstile
with tidings from th dippingplace

by now after th sunlight
Magdalena
will leap from her bed
determind t put aside
her tendency t shatta hearts
resolving with some degree v certainty
t bake th most
 splendid v bread
t distribute around th neighbourhood

by now
th city will have opend its gates
nd th grand caravan
v minstrels nd haberdashers
paraded beyond th marketplace

nd under th chiming clock
Pavel th Moravian
will be revealing all kinds v mysteries
t th children v th silversmiths
n th denizens v th outhouses

by now
tides will be turning on th furthest v shores
nd th Daft Old Bastard n th Blithering Idiot
will be commencing their discourse
on th Nature v Beatitudes nd th Rationales v Retribution
as is usual
devoid v n audience

while over at th bonded gallery
people with strange ears nd stranger eyes
will have pontificated just enough
t make sense
v th most explanatori nd least contentious v images

nd across town
there in th printshop
Berenice th journeywoman
pushes th dedline n hammers th furniture

producing
 under cover v daylight
her limitid editions
v borderline conspiracies
nd esoteric scriptures
bound in vellum nd in venom
packt
posted
deliverd
 t th furthest v libraries
 n th darkest v depositories

nd th Blithering idiot will tug at th garment
v th Daft Old Bastard nd exclaim loudly
“there: there; wasn’t I telling ya
didn’t I go betcha”

n th Daft Old Bastard will hack at th tabletop
nd growl *sotto voce*
“whispa goddammit: whispa y idiot;
y Blithering Idiot...”

n by now
th season will speak
nd th time will tell
n we v all people
will have opend our hearts
t th most magical v choruses
nd our severd souls
t those magnificent descants

high
high

in th sky

gannit glide
nd lapwing fly

lark hover
eagl swoop
swift n swallow
loop th loop

yes by now
Kingdom Henry n Marjorie Mankerthank
might have found consolation
after all those
years v heartache

their travels t th hinterland
th evenings in th cellar bar

but

it would appear

inexplicably
not with each other

f by now
th good doctor
n th nastinurse
will have considerd th pharmaceuticals
that will provide a prognosis
v barely perceptible recovery
f their most
recalcitrant v patients

nd though their efficac
could never be questiond
they may well
postpone their ministrations
n substitute their toxins
f various placebos

n over by th tapestri
th tenor saxophonist
nd th tone-deaf trombonist
will agree t finally
settl their differences
by burying th hatchet
squarely in th horn
v th dentally afflicted cornettist

“so what
by now?”
says th Daft Old Bastard
“what what:
by now”
says th Blithering Idiot
grabbing hold v
nothing really nothing v any substance

yes...yes by now
it will be gatherd
th crisis v identiti
has nothing t do
with th pinnacl v mania
or th depths v depression
nor there again
th vagaries v DeoxyriboNucleic Acid

rather be it
th bald truth
you have no knowledge
nd caught no sight
v who it was
who might have preceded you
given shape
 feature
 tone
 n temperament

nd that
after all these years
it is
time t let let n let leave
bygones be bygones
nd put aside th lookinglass slow th climb
 swift th fall
hard th th tumbl from th wall
t th place where waters flow
n HumptiDumpty says hello

but then
y should anyway
by now
have reached that spot
in sight v mudflats
where y once espied kingfishers
n trampt across scrubland
in search v pheonices
transmogrifications
hulks
habitats
real revolutions

n you wander n wonder
whether it is
by now
Arriaga th Anarchist
could have begun t realise
after his debates
with factionl elements
n others who ought t have known better
that th collaps v th Soviet Union
would never result in
somekindv libertarian utopia
nor even
th re-establishment v first principles

nd you can glimpse
Dorothea from th faculti
turn t her friend
as she travels onwards
on a stopping train
up towards th tundra
nd surmise who wouldv thought it all them years ago
that by now
th primary resistance
t th global pandemic
v transnational capitalism
would seem not t come
from th triumph v th progressively modern
but emanate out v
resurgent mediaeval
notions n nostrums

nd her companion considers
n gently responds
that this might well be
an inevitabl reaction
against th sad fact
that all th ingenuiti nd invention v th Enlightenment
have by now
culminated in
various acts
v human degradation
being avidli viewd
on th plasma lantern
by both lumpen n learnid
as a signal manifestation
v mass entertainment
amid th racket
v ubiquitous cacophoni

wait on here
f i have grown older
wait on here
f i have got colder

hang on in
times have grown tougher
hang on in
th world has got rougher

n so
by now
all that remains
is th faintest v false hope
that those

long ago
tiny streams

are by now
an unstopplabl torrent
straining behind
th walls v th dam

nd that
when th concrete nd th brickwork burst
th floodtides will bear with them

along with th debris
nd what remains
v a millenium v architecture

th supreme surges
v life nd love
life in th sinews nd love in th arteries

love behind th volumes
that fester on th bookcase

love beyond th musicstand
in th corner v th cabaret

love on th waterfront nd love in th crazy cloister
love on th ice nd love in th fire

love in th departure
th journey nd th arrivl

love in th complexity v th calculus
nd in th simplest v equations

in hours v pertinence nd moments v distraction
in th totally unrehearsd
nd in that which overwhelms utterly

nd in all that conveys
nothing nd everything

ever nd forever

in th silence n th ceasing

never nd f never

from all those consummate endings
n what is left v unconsummated beginnings

there will be love t th east

love t th west

love t th south

n love in th north

nd this be so
because by now
i have learnt
th lyrics v th aerthsong

an can say
can say with some finaliti
this time
without fear v contra
diction

things are
when it comes t th essentials

good

good

good

good

good

bye now