



CP Reader's Union at Housmans Bookshop
Developing and Contact – *Wednesday Afternoon* by Vit Hopley



'... the truly philosophical element in every work, be it called literature, art or science (or whatever) is its capacity to be developed. This capacity in a work arises precisely when a reader steps in and, as it were, picks something up to take it further.'

Copy Press invites you to join
Katy Carr
NaoKo TakaHashi
and Edith Pasquier
developing *Wednesday Afternoon*

Friday, 6 March
6.30 – 8.00pm
Housmans Bookshop
5 Caladonian Rd, London N1 9DX

RSVP@copypress.co.uk essential as numbers are limited.

Wednesday Afternoon by Vit Hopley: isbn 978-0-9553792-3-9
Housmans Bookshop: radical booksellers since 1945. www.housmans.com

CP Reader's Union seeks common spaces for readers and writers to delve into the possibilities and limitations of 'coming together' in our contemporary society. www.copypress.co.uk

The Internal Conversation

Edith Marie Pasquier

6-3-2015

Wednesday Afternoon has always been happiness and melancholia. Split between looking and recovering, forward and back, a splicing of time. Towards the weekend and away from the start of the week. A reminder of a monotony, I had forgotten when repetitively pressing word processor keys, and wistful configurations of dramas to enliven something, but feeling part of the crime, that is boredom. Stretching Wednesday afternoon.

Who am I to say....? the breaks and pauses, halter, sting, sit, tustle, rise, tumble. I am left watching images dissolve.

Distractions.

Who am I to say, but something caught my eye. Or shall I suggest being drawn to a place, a situation that you can never quite come at, somewhere beyond the borders of mind?

I am reminded of Edward Thomas's *The Unknown Bird*.

Three lovely notes he whistled, too soft to be heard,
If other sang; but others never sang
In the great beech-wood all that May and June.
No one saw him: I alone could hear him:
Though many listened. Was it but four years
Ago? Or five? He never came again.

Oftenest when I heard him I was alone,
Nor could I ever make another hear.
La-la-la! he called, seeming far-off -
As if a cock crowed past the edge of the world,

As if the bird or I were in a dream.
Yet that he travelled through the trees and sometimes
Neared me, was plain, though somehow distant still
He sounded. /

In the *Summoning*, the wren, the white roses, the open door, but without meaning to and without hesitation, I start to re-write the scene, I add glass to the door, pink to the roses and snow in the distance. Why the need to add on/rewrite/ rethink ... am I moving too fast? Or am I drifting to a familiar gathering?

If so, I seem to wish to skip the detail; as in a hurry to enter, because of the need to go straight to what is happening ... though the writing becomes empty, these written scenes are empty. Left exposed only to the clarity of a complete description: the images are constructed little by little, by a subtle imposition of details, colours, tones. Through this I am allowed to see everything and another register enters the frame. What could be more fascinating, more singular?

The wren intrigues. I resist (perhaps it is too easy for me, but why not, focus in on details that you enjoy, I say) the wren.

Emboldened perhaps by the ice-bound conditions, a wren popped up suddenly and, with a bee-like whirr of tiny wings, flew to the bush by the side of the track. With an attitude that seemed pure defiance – and, yet, also deeply comical in one so small – the bird craned its neck skywards as if pulling itself up to its most imposing height. It then performed a curious series of bobbing actions, bill and tail cocked for action, and with each curtsy rotating the body through about 45 degrees accompanied by a dry irritated churr.

The threat gestures seemed to reassure it that the opposition was thoroughly cowed and back it dropped to earth, tunneling with mouse-like quickness into a great tent of dried vegetation. Five minutes later and it was sheer curiosity that drove me to see what unseen micro-world could have delayed the bird's reappearance. Thrusting a hand in at its point of entry, I watched the wren tunnel out barely

30cms from its last position and buzz away amid more irritated churring. Yet it was remarkable to discover how much warmer and drier its subterranean cavity was compared with the outdoor conditions. No wonder wrens are able to thrive in the most unlikely wind-battered, snow-driven landscapes. They survive not so much by enduring the elements, as avoiding them by living indoors or underground.

I am reminded of an internal state, one not so dissimilar to now.

Distracted again, I return to the reading, particularly stepping into the spaces and the gaps in the writing. I repeat the sentences again, again, again. Two whispering women. The alliteration is so pleasurable, the sound is lifted from the page and begins to suspect the minute descriptions with their veneer of objectivity. Hello, hello, hello, I forget their names – don't we all. Is it possible that everything detailed is expressed and revealed?

I too am standing in this gathering. Images, memories press upon the surface and a nearly imperceptible shift of patterns or schemes around which everything is organised is animated. The unknown, a dead time has slipped in. Not the lover, or the love object, or the whispering women, I have walked into 'an unmoving gap attributed to certain birds and photographs of long ago'. Time is scattered by a secret inner catastrophe within the detail and segments of the future come to light or enter into communication with the past. Time dreamed, time recalled, time that could have been and will be. A shallowless space.

I was distracted, beside myself.

Bird. You touch me through the moments spoken by an image or through the sounds broadcast with varying degrees of exactitude: all of which interrupts. The harmony between the eyes and the ears that assures our corporeal encounter comes about in a confused way. Sometimes, I hear you, but where are you? Sometimes I see you but completely changed: luminous but without volume, without weight or materiality. I see you, but

who or what have you become? And how do I touch you, how am I touched by you through such metamorphoses: in presence, in representation? How do I protect the memory of you, of us, despite so many changes in distance, in coordination between sound and image, despite so many scissions between the time to see you and listen to you, to see you, to listen to you and maybe place my hand near you?

Who am I to say?

It was a very hot day sealed within low hanging cloud; still seaming airless. A storm has to happen.

Apparently, it was a storm that did it. Yes, I had to return to it, to this object. To the crime. I am sure you understand, Wednesday afternoon is full of crimes that is what makes it so enigmatic, open-ended. You see you never know exactly who did it. A bird flew into a window and was trapped between two panes of glass, I photographed it. I feel somehow implicated, into this gathering. But that's not all for I had just seen the wren, observing the whirling and buzzing she flies into a glass window and dies.

I quite forgot about it, until I read the tough phrase 'we had bled ourselves dry'. There is no return, no space, no room for negotiation.

The dead wren. I painted the bird in a black hot wax, delicately, concentrating in particular on the beak and the legs. I mixed the plaster and covered the bird. Once cast, I poured molten bronze into the negative space. An ash bird. A particular accent, which is the power to look. There is no gaze that does not expect a response and the image of the bird strikes us as it were all by itself.

The moment of focus. Shifting this way, titling that. Always divided between one who is subject and one who is object, one who is active, one who is passive and one who has intention and one who remains nature and experiences it.

*There was nothing to say farewell to.
There is no space for a door to be left open.
I have nothing to say.*

There was something of a mystery around them, a mystery resolved in the song of the wren hidden amongst the green foliage of the white rose. Clearly there was a significance in the words being shared between them, a significance that brought them close, closer than the words whispered, yet somewhere between me and the pane of glass, my words were driving me further from my self. Did this affect my compulsion to speak? Who am I to say?



Edith Marie Pasquier, *Experiments: The Figures*, 2013

Glimpse of a Night

NaoKo TahaHashi

6-3-2015

<https://vimeo.com/128157301>