

1. How it might have been before

The last of the elite is coming on like a children's TV presenter, wielding a tiny knife under his pink cloud. A Playschool mode of address, which would be stabbed straight into your kidneys, for just one more rung up the ladder. He'd bang it in for half a rung if he could, and they may invent one which will take a man's weight, although only half a man's is needed here.

2. Thames flood, 1928

It's already too late in the day to simply accept such situations. Millbank chants and beautiful orange fires in November, a late Autumn, the pearl choker and black socks with nothing between, although what lies between is always the most beautiful. Open situations which won't yield either what we want or we think they will. Like a cubist number, several urgent, messy days are folded complicatedly into one image. Pages from a very different hierarchy of newsagent shelves, turned into an origami lady.

3. Freckle Myopia

Without glasses, she is red cloud, a max Photoshop blur, yet a vagueness he feels able to pierce, like a javelin thrower, plaits fog, but without glasses can only tune, into radio-over-there. Constellations discovered, as the eyes adjust, to flesh as darkness, lay of the land, pixels of infinity, rendered in a range, labia pink to melanoma brown. Golden hair borders, sunset pool, with strings of abandon. A thrown puppet, with strong engine thrum. Her smell on his fingers at work, this is freedom. The things that he sees the tops of, the bottoms of, the straps of, or the bulge of, this is public polity: Enough of this, no more.

4. A pulse warning

The amber light bleep, of a reversing lorry now seeing red. 'Piss Ant.' Splitting hairs without grooming, her Coltrane tangle, of red dissonance. With no face to match, still she burns, the internal combustion of her tinder Dave. 'Up yewers' he said, filling the void left, by the absence of gods, with branded after-shave.

5. Insomnia

3am and he's up for the milk float again. It drives a tunnel through the soft grey of the mind, to a past now in colour. And she's left her hair grip on the carpet. He's glad it doesn't remind him of a bicycle clip, a beak, or a dodo. Another hour squeezes, but it isn't the final hour, even though the hourage is being calculated, right down to the last nanosecond.

6. Hut

Job gone, he attempts a coup, shimmies up the drainpipe of his own self. So long, held to ransom, hello, clutching at straws. Fallen from the sleeves of his last incarnation, Pertwee to Baker, Baker to Davison, a skin shed, at the roadside, in the last generation.

7. Default

The failure to fulfill an obligation, to appear, pay, or act in some way. Lack, absence, a pre-selected option fallen back upon. Our downsize ratio, what we've ended up with. A million unpaid for phone calls. A million noughts is still zero.

- (repressed)

Amnesiac wandering. Leaping into anything that might maintain. All unremembered until something adheres, until repetition makes 'culture', a habitual daily performance, like eating nettles, fried in discarded bacon fat with oats, or drinking canal water. Memory starts here, but identity begins with shopping.

9. Phobile moan

Make a nest out of drool face. Make a house with lobotomy face. Make a face with your face face. Houses, nests and cardboard boxes, go through the roof. Grey towelling pull cord, through the roof. Making grey house out of blood stain. Nesting in face face.

- She reaches the meeting place -

1. Passion

Position ossifies, you fear the damask hush and Victorian tat that lets you say all it takes is passion and being left alone. But cathexis has been woven into the office blinds, which throb murderously as you stab a shit biscuit into the hot coffee. And so new challenges beckon. Those challenges aren't our challenges. Glass boxes are a reflective shield, but sometimes their transparency really does expose vulnerability.

2. Walk out to winter

There'd been nothing for too long. On: Those spray-paint thrills and millennial pop peacenik surges, they'd gone on and on, filling up notebooks, bedsheets, 8MB memory cards, years. Off: Then the itchy fog descended, coiling dully into the new white spaces. Just like the glass boxes though, the screen that refracts rage also collates and directs it. On: We knew where to go, and the glass boxes shattered. Only a day, but long enough to see through to the slight flicker on the pork'n'pinstripe faces. Shaved heads, spunky smiles and soft young necks on the line, we came together and faced the cold.

3. 0729

In dream there were two, then three. First her raised nectarine behind waiting for the static charge of his as seen on screen torso (like an appendix, it's still inside me). Then three squaddies, stranded in the Falklands and not fancying the penguins, make a den, scarlet-lit, curtains with kids' cartoons, innocent really in steroid musk. Still doing it for the nation, which can take such transgressions. I courted a soldier though; he gave me his PIN number but it was exchange-value speaking for use-value, the quantitative for the qualitative. He wanted my quality, I wanted his quantity. Hope hides in the gap between our mismatched sixty-nine.

4. Learning curves, materialist and idealist

The half-light and the scent of pollen briefly disguise the familiar smell of madness as shirts are lifted. Still the punch comes as a shock. The bruise is sublimated, awakening memory of past which should have taught: first as tragedy, then as farce.

5. Earplugs

Gammy bullets of necessity block out keening heard halfway upstairs, in the shadows of night. Can't tell if it's an arse being whipped or the bottom dropping out. Rights, responsibilities and pathologies.

6. Rightmove

We evolve in relation to our surroundings. From dehumidifiers to frayed curtains and flying ants ONWARD with the Dada-blog to a dark pool bubbling up under the authentic wooden floorboards. What new shape for spine twisted by cheap mattress in modern studio apartment?

7. Archipelago

It's not though. Still connected, selfishness thudding up from below. Even if it weren't conjoined, it wouldn't be enough.

8. What you can't see

Others sometimes can. Invisible bonds dissolving, the cliff edge handrail of squabbling security tumbling down, down, down into the abyss of one last slammed car door in supermarket car-park. Tenderly, we peel back each other's google-eyed glasses at judicious moments.

9. I'll stay here if that's ok

Wrapped in towel, early morning chattering. Sit under shower, is like cave and little waterfall. Childhood idyll imported from shampoo advert. Wobbling portamento stasis. Found naked, suffocated by me-time.

- Scented-candle rictus rubbed back to life -

10. What it will be like in the future

Clears throat Coughs. In the future, nobody will own any property. Although we will still have all our own things. And there will still be markets, but just for those things. And maybe food, and ankle chains. Electric mattresses. The plier manicure, the new thrill, for the new thrill seeker.

11. Amnesia (reprise)

Yet no-one seems to be calculating the hourage of those who are calculating the hourage. Those tautologies were always irrelevant to nature, and now they have even less meaning, but the hourage calculators haven't quite caught up, engaged as they are, in the calculation of hourage.

12. Mobile phone

Is another universe. The book he started, is a whole other universe. He has universal jet lag, is tirelessly sleeping, and given infinite choice, does infinite nothing, as fuzzy mouths tend their delicate crop of mushrooms.

13. The galaxy

Is another galaxy. RealPlayer, another galaxy. Game Boy Advance, a further five. I have approved amnesia, I am ceaselessly vegetable, with 100% more, I have infinite less. Where to this year is another universe, next year, a constellation away. I have approved amnesia, identity entropy, and quantum physics, is a whole other matter.

14. The Dead Zone

A DVD decision. Rage Against the Machine are security protected, deep within HMV. With branded polo shirt, the ventriloquist's dummy pays for the privilege of working, as we pay for his rebellion, in a jewel case. His Master's Voice is calling, via the liver-spotted throat, of ol' blue eyes. Piped through the gramophone horn, to the dog direct, from his grave. Ear cocked with sarcasm, before its leg is.

- *"Only Sleaford Mods can save us now"* -

15. In a folder

Within a folder, within another folder, that isn't a folder at all. But acts like a folder, out of politeness, sympathy, for our outdated software: Click the triangle, drop the code > into the trashcan >> that isn't a trashcan >>> but *** save us >>>> acts like a trashcan.

16. This conversation has been moved to the bin, learn more, undo

Time to reject the username and password leading to row upon row of gleaming teeth, a ceramic portcullis which isn't trying to repel, but pull us in, although manages to repel by doing so. Those tautologies are also redundant, the leering inmates of a soul which doesn't really exist, lined up, two by ten.

17. This Ardwick Station

Of what used to be called a soul, next to the container shipping yard, producing this discontinuous landscape, and the chopped-up lives on it. Shipwrecked families shout from separate splinters, bleeding, 'this hurricane is the fault of my taste in furniture!' It wasn't the right person. My choice was flawed, the same romantic explanations are given. Like Blake just met/lost his Catherine (delete as applicable). I must go out and do some more choosing. In some ways this is right, the old ways still hold: the dowry must be matched, but now, potlatch.

18. Time to speak

Of 'false consciousness' again without fear of a relativism like the drowning ocean. Sumptuary laws for a republic which doesn't yet exist, policed by a bunch of firebombed sofas. New ways of being, subjectivities itching to escape the corpse they walk in, an itching that becomes a scratching, my flesh fare thee well.

19. Dark falls

Water drops over, in cahoots with sinister gravity. Night seeps in, an inevitable end, to a pointless beginning. Foam jaws unseen, down there, unfelt until impact. A black banana skin, left on the stairs, Darth Vader slapstick. Dark falls, but makes no sound. So we watch, in temporary umbrellas of light. Eyeless and unsteady, at the edge of the rapids, frightened, unready.

- *Steve Hanson, Manchester, 2014*

10. The new sensibility

It might mean cleaning the street or washing everyone's dirty pots once a month. But then you'd be free to do all those things you're currently too tired to even know you want to do. A home? Your tea? You could just have them.

11. The itchy fog

Pathologies which don't form inside, insulated by clammy flesh, but seep in through the pores, nesting in your guts and forehead. Leaden limbs need press-ups, bridges, planks to lay over boggy, treacherous terrain.

12. Settee

We're both sat on it but it isn't ours and we're not with each other. Tap tap tap. Williams, O'Hara, cabinet of fleeting curiosity. Attempted rituals that won't stick. Playing Catch Up.

13. Concrete igloo

Spotted from moving train. Cold and grimy but maybe habitable. Too late. More trains to come, more containers flash by, carrying bacteria from the other side of the world. I am butty-weary and there are millions like me, each hunched defensively around their personal constellations as they hurry through the concourse trying not to collide.

14. Sync

Yet something guides them, us, as we judder together on gym treadmills. The gyrating, sanctioned pederasty of pre-decided pop pix vids syncs with the drumming of our feet. You too can move; 1km; 2km; 3km; nowhere.

- *"Berk gets off at Grantham - free at last of his earphone leakage!"* -

15. Clogged vents

At the bottom of the wardrobe the old laptop lurks, its dusty lockjaw trapping undigested thoughts of yesteryear. These are the depopulated banks of the techno-rapids we are shoved into, capricious undercurrents sucking us into pygmy hippo dens of planned obsolescence.

16. Have your say

It's with you all the time, uncanny warmth in your pocket against your thigh, in the air, threads lengthening and multiplying but often only entangling to entrap. All those obvious things that never get said; get there first and say them instead.

17. You're free

Northampton station; Ultra Naté echoes round empty spaces, evoking vision twenty years past its sell-by-date and begging to be taken out with the bins. Train whisks passengers through vision fifty years past its sell-by-date. Timeless sunset over silver lined clouds as Tourette's eruptions tap our lonely insecurities and funnel them together. A stream of piss 'n' vinegar reflecting golden rays of guarded optimism. Not this time, but cowlick, cow eyes and Facebook header photo choices tell you: you're on the right line.

18. Right, move

Outwards, forwards, not forgetting, inboxes becoming handshakes becoming hugs, jolting awake, scribbled notions in script mangled by darkness at least comes in new shapes, shapes made by emergent embraces. People do things to each other because of other people who do things to each other because... So do different things, don't let yourself believe in the spiderweb without a spider.

19. Small windows

It's been like this for some time now and sometimes, given the circumstances, that feels like it counts for something. This is no temporary contract, or even a contract at all. A solid foundation of shared experience, not treasured but valued. Small windows and dark walls hold it in, the recycling overflowing. Impossible to know in advance what it will be turned into.

- *David Wilkinson, Manchester, a train in Essex, New York, 2014*