

# Sounds in the Grass

## **Sounds in the Grass**

**Matt Nunn**

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Matt Nunn



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**Matt Nunn** was born in West Bromwich in 1971 and works as a freelance poetry workshop leader and freelance writer. His work has taken him into many obscure places. Amongst other things he is the co-founder of *Start of an Era* (an arts-in-football organisation) and the Co-editor of *Under The Radar* and Nine Arches Press. *Sounds in the Grass* is his third collection of poetry, following on from *Happy Cos I'm Blue* (Heaventree Press, 2007) and *Apocalyptic Bubblegum* (MAP, 2002). He lives with his wife and son in some kind of bliss in Solihull.

**For Harry**

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‘At an art workshop on the River Sherbourne with Colin Dick’ was previously published in *Sherb: New Urban Writing from Coventry* (Heaventree Press, 2007). ‘November December’, ‘To Louisa Ryland’ and ‘Running along with Old Man Rea’ were published as part of the series *Poems from All Over The Place*. ‘Coventry Calling’ was originally commissioned by Leofric Films for their film of the same name. It has also subsequently been published in *The Libertine* and *Oi Taxman*.

‘The Vegetarian’s fear of the buffet spread’ and ‘From a moment of peace in a suburban garden close to the apocalyptic din of the rest of the city’ were commissioned as part of the Moseley Poetry Trail for the 2007 ‘Arts All Over The Place’ festival in 2007 and subsequently published in the book of the same name.

‘M50 Poem’, ‘Away on the ocean waves and seeing some whales and being unable to write a poem conveying their très magnifique’, ‘New Year’s Day, Long Mynd’ and ‘Rockin’ the BC’ featured in *Under The Radar*. ‘Sydney Harbour Bridge Sunset’ was published in *Triond* and ‘Mogwai Music’, ‘With Myrtle walking through a headfuck as she twangs’ and ‘Classical music is well like for spazzy retards’ published online at *Gists and Piths*.

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## Prologue

Come you tender violinist lovers  
and rude thumping drummers  
and you too, you strangely alluring  
but precipice-stiff  
Miss-wearing-naught-but-a-smirk,  
and I'll teach you in a boom frazzled  
in daydreams of thunderstorms.

Come you who turn yourselves audaciously  
inside out until you are nothing  
but a bloody shredded kiss  
hanging off a borrowed skull's humming lips.

If you want,  
I can be all crazy flesh,  
the epitome of polite romance  
or  
as sweet and delicate as you would wish:

not a proper man but the Sounds in the Grass...

## What's it about?

During the fuzzy ordination of crack of dawning,  
seated amongst the only living saints,  
I was contentedly drawing my own slow ripples quietly

until chinned by coincidence on the wishbone pathway,  
because I looked poncy enough to know about stuff,  
by a tongue-flicking mind-mugger

who wanted to go to the violent trouble  
of getting the answer without letting on,  
so he enquired out of me  
in a relentless 'up yours' drone touched-up crude by vermin  
and knuckle,

*What's it all about big 'ead?*

So I, swarming with the visceral truth of sunrise  
and extreme eggheadness,

told him I'd come to the park to float amongst strange  
congregations,  
to measure the faith in the lush abundance of chirping Dickies  
and the toning-up of morning

before later getting hooched-up on the taste of warring factions  
then banging a dog dead to feel  
the glorious buffoon buzz of a pointless thrill,

just to work out if I prefer it more  
to this crap lark of gawping at cor blimey spectral vistas of beauty.

## Big beautiful bastard

Splashing rolls of moody bruising  
plastercasting across the Undemocratic Thieftom  
of peculiar charm and obnoxious sausage.

The aroused sky, suspended in a pile-up  
moments before bish-bosh,  
booms cold-sweat lashes of seething ogre  
smashing his wardrobe looking,  
until to the floor tossing his remaining  
blobby gore rain of black dead dogs,

like a viper's bloody love bite  
sent on the back of a punch  
as a gift of loving war

to the satanic-suited have-a-pop hero  
unzipping sinister in his speeding cloud cloister,  
limbering up to pow apocalypse, gobbing operatically  
from between the crowbarred cracks in the grief-smudged window  
full of the uproarious condemned bugger glee of his stormy enrage,

panzering with prancing gumboot pansy abandon  
banging bomb collapse into the binding structure of clocks,  
soaking chaotic tremble upon wobbly mamas  
sprinting splutteringly on teetering heels,  
running like unmarried widows to the altar  
to spawn rearranged landscapes crying with children.

**From a moment of peace in a suburban garden  
close to the apocalyptic din of the rest of the city**

Framed up in its own sky  
like pictures of hidden dreaming,

on Church Avenue where civilizations intersect,  
the war is torn by a hard-worn peace  
oozing echoes of blossoming choruses  
trapped in obscure corners  
of yummy cake slices of English gardens,  
overflowing with blonde flowers blushing  
with rattling busks of kissing bees scoring,  
scattering sweet lullabies from the hymn books  
of Edwardian pastoralists to prove  
nature's hum of sanctuary is louder than  
the furious speedway through our space,  
grunting with rutting cars growling impotently  
homeward-bound, banging with headaches,  
stuck in a bubble they can't escape  
and cooler than the lukewarm shrieking trolls  
as they swill blurrily like their tipples down  
the one leg of the road until just  
the cacophony of their debris remain.

In our little bit of lovely we don't get do-lally  
searching for the blessing of silence.  
It is all around us. It is in us.

## I love you my darling Abstract Emotion

Out of the disreputable cowardly conceits  
and colliding cannibalistic conspiracies  
of the pale summer echoes carrying  
the billion-dollar kiddie daubs of elastic-winged flappers  
dead-sea floating in arrowed flight formation,  
fired by nature's natural attraction  
through caves in the sky, becoming blistered and boiled  
beneath the ravaging rays of a hundred billion dying toasters,

the howling blue bum-notes jangling  
the budding bells of peeled trees  
in the melodious paw-tapping key of Frank Ifield,

the mystifyingly sobbed raspberries and tiny eruptibles  
that rearrange sad geographies  
and screaming landscapes of carefully chosen random faces,

ripens on the withered sense of feeling maybe  
something very definite.

It is their combined age of beauties constructing  
a distance so near we can touch it,  
so vibey and loud with ecstatic plumes  
of tough tender colours, it will make us.

## Of sex and gardens

In sex and blossoming green,  
we catch the most we can  
of the ringing light as it spells  
'Forever' out upon the golden fathoms  
of romantic youth,  
and yes, goddammit, even poetry,  
and having nothing to say no to.

Before the grief of September distance  
and the inevitable arriving of rearranging rain  
smelting a stinging sadness  
onto an unknown bleary sun  
that'll cover us in blubbing,  
we should rewrite our magic faces  
in its bulbs of borrowed eternity.

## **Rainbows and the incurable ecstasy of sadness**

Bulging skies swell with uncomfortable contrasts  
of stuttering sun lash and whispered rain plop  
as they rotate across siphoned-off receding green  
and melancholy gaffs sculptured into the landscape's transparency.

In the smudge of mood these prattling atmospheric coincidences  
construct arching aches of chimes of favourite colours  
aggregating into soothing happy/sad bruise glisten,  
whose ooze of slight despair becomes the tingle  
for 'my joy' in the unspoken language of knowing black cloud.

**A rare essence of golden sunlight on a typically  
autumnal summer's day in dear old bedraggled  
Blighty**

Hopping off the rain-raked wonky road,  
sludging through slushy crop fields  
riddled with a nostalgia for déjà vu  
on its tarmacadam protrusion out of  
Mount Big Forehead where streams  
of prissy cagouled tourists cluster  
to feel slightly underwhelmed  
and grumbly for their dosh back  
because the promised seeing of  
the distance written in constellations of poetry  
went missing.

To stop at a morbidly welcoming inn,  
heaving with derelict wayfarers and grubby slobs,  
and get greeted at by the refurbished shithouse gaffer  
and his Mrs. Comely-maiden  
lactating naughty wobble-pop for those  
who can provide pubic ID  
and a clip round the ear for asking  
for them who can't.

And, who upon our request for nourishing nosebag,  
in reflex self-defence pointed out the local disagreement  
stroke bar-room brawl complete with fatal stabbings,  
with the notions of contemporary tastebuds  
and got their kitchen-imprisoned best culinary hag-face  
to cluck up a scum-encrusted slum pie,  
but one generously flattered by its love-struck mismatch  
of surprisingly attractive and noble chips.

Chips that are an act of patriotism,  
like standing up to ten-gun salute  
her royal misery guts  
with your trousers wrapped round your ankles,

that are almost worth getting your block knocked off  
in selfless sacrifice standing up for their sunlit radiation  
over this soaking beloved isle of sodden crapness.

## Without words she is wonderful colour

I am embarrassed in clumsy skin,  
like the raspberry-cheeked klutz  
who pumped one out whilst marvelling  
at Mother Nature's chapel-painted solemn landscape,  
to be even raising it,

but being borrowed for the day by  
the temperate spring still of the rural kingdom  
of Iconic Element,  
from the gonzoid creeping metropolitan seethe  
where even the official silence  
gets cuffed until inducing screaming  
by skuzzy blows of va-va-vooms  
and other lamentable blows to the suites of sanctuary,

it's the emptiness being breezily filled  
by downcast skies of hymnal birds chirpy-cheeping  
sunshine songs of hope from the drizzle and grey  
that engraves my urban organ with lights of revelation.

But I feel so stripped to my dumb ass  
to have flowed so far from being a cap-dothing grazer  
on pastorals cultivating fab myths and dreamings  
of the cathedral mindset of her who must be obeyed,  
to be even mentioning it;

to feel the need to construct these clumps of words into a purr.

## Good morning Australia

With swastikas of rain lashing mardily  
against the yellowbelly of the smelly cattle barrel  
carrying our mortal remains as we tumbled,  
groping for the welcome mat of the landing eyeballs,  
through the screaming Pollocky sky of angels  
singing our mispronounced names over our tombstones.  
Us passengers, on feeling our chicken giblets  
bomb southwards, knocked up a scrawl of god  
upon our sick-bags as a goofy guide  
for our satanic descent into saintliness.

And because the weather was more  
Bovril burp than a cool-off swig at a Bondi barbie,

I said ever-so-sorry to them all  
for having smuggled, into their vivacious country of always sunny,  
smudges of Birmingham smog deep within my heart.

Later, the skipper having bounced us safely into Sydney  
like a one-legged 'roo in a flip-flop,  
I snitched on myself to the customs croc  
that all this faulty weather we was getting was only the sound  
of all the lepers in my head crooning

and that it had to be me to blame  
'cos I come from the land of the eternal ever-so-sorry.

**Away on the ocean waves and seeing some whales  
and being unable to write a poem conveying their  
très magnifique**

The splendid glory of nature renders me a dumb Brummie  
buffoon,  
because there are no words in the ocean that encapture the  
rapture  
of being a god's witness to this perfect flotilla of hunky spunks  
casually basking blissfully indifferent to their own majesty.

Just inconsequential gurglings and a few have-a-go heroes  
tritely warbling such banal verbiage as "Hey!" "Wow!"  
"Amazing!"

All in all, we are all just dumb Brummie buffoons.

Insignificant grunts unheard in the brilliant expanse.

## Sydney Harbour Bridge sunset

Whatever it is  
is written on the sky  
and in the joints of the metallic magnificence.

And if it is god with the spray can, then surely  
it is his impulse blowing in the delicious orangey  
tasting of the tough love of flaming melancholy  
nuggeted with hints of gloriously tired and weary blue.

And now normally, where at such a shimmery glimmer  
of thy mighty kingdom, man would be whopping out  
his tabernacle hallelujahs, kneeling enthralled to his muse,

here, when framed in collusion with dusk  
spreading its sexy sound of sad angels singing,  
engineers sit, like besuited death-squads of  
dung beetles, on the poet's throne to be rightly  
plaudited and garlanded for having constructed  
the soaring bridge touching the bare cheek of heaven  
with a soft unobtrusive kiss.

Even nature, as she purrs wordlessly, effortlessly,  
across the big sky like the perfect wave,  
must tip her thorny crown and hoity-toitly bray,

“That’s bloody beaut mate”.

## Running along with Old Man Rea

Where it rises, rousing its flat calm,  
the river masquerading as rotten chameleon  
gets dipped into a dripping slurp of Motherly Pear,

before beginning its memorial waddle,  
flanked by banks flecked with violent signs of shrugging,  
through hamlets erased by the fiery flow of amnesia  
and hark-backs to our beloved empire of Brum-Brum cars,  
then past streets broken like veins on a hidden face  
and secretive widowers entombed within their seething,

until fringed by cringing Bohemia it becomes muddied into  
Bovril shades by a stomp of crossing LummoX paws,

(the collective noun for Hefties sizzled to lobster by days in  
the cricket),

it becomes a hush-bear bundled as if a shameful reminder  
into the swaddling straightjacket of the concrete overcoat,  
wherein secreted in frustration beneath  
the feuding bloods and fatal blows  
its unobtrusive tinkle becomes the only living light  
scuttling through like contemplation, the ratted veins  
of the bricked-up underbelly of seething blight  
collated within Birmingham's fractured metal-plated skull.

Before, like a jibbering wreck, it unspools  
upon the razor teeth in the bloodied mouth of town  
to be spat out, carrying the braised accent of its journey  
into the Tame half-insane.

## **The eternal photograph of waterside silence**

The moment you take  
catches you unawares  
stays where it was forever.  
It redraws you in particles and ripples,  
breeds echoes for you to feel.

## **At an art workshop on the River Sherbourne with Colin Dick**

Blow the dawning ghosts from your eyes  
and onto the canvas where the rusty river trips,  
like a roaring dribble, past ports of the virtually dead  
and the scrag-ends of imagination whilst trying  
to gather the vibrant hymnal hum of the free  
as it floats half-submerged through the slum  
of your mind until enough gets learnt  
to kiss-of-life with colour and humanity  
the dormant sweethearts lying in the sepia streams of stagnation.

So sketch your mind and float down river.

Let the water be your energy.

## **Boom! Boom! Here comes autumn**

after Rilke

Lord: It is time summer's lottery ceased.  
Let winter's skin form upon the sundials  
and on the cricket fields unleash the wind's battalions.

Rake your parental glove through the boughs  
of shabby fruits, unripened like tomorrow.  
Spare them two more days from summer's trade,  
urge them onto perfection, then nail down  
their virginity into heavenly cider.

## November December

Inside the republic black and blued  
by the cutting of your ghosts,  
the weather is ever so sore throat  
as we, bumping into our own breath  
as it freezes on the air's strings,  
shuffle between Cannon Hill's colliding time-zones,  
through the crackling flesh the trees shed  
as they stretch like artistic nudes tickling the bending horizon.

On ground sacred with knotted bones  
of frost it is too cold to talk.  
By sharing the dictionary of our diseases we become warm.

## To Louisa Ryland

Blessed to be born as one of  
your zillion grot-face nippers  
splattered in ashes of the Cole  
who have grazed in an obscure corner  
of your Municipal Republic of green sprawling dreams,

I thank thee for giving us voluminous blooms flourishing,

leaving us the lungs in which to breathe in pure.

For planting us a tight spot  
in a land of dense industrial mass  
to grow the blessed-out lyricism  
of two centuries of space.

## Mid-December morning sky

They do not shovel nor snaffle scenes for xmas cards,

these crumbling monochrome chilly clouds,  
in clinically mumbling rule,  
mix like living motions of elemental  
thrill-seeking, axe-tongued love-jugglers  
chasing the circles they run around themselves,  
with inches creeping of a blast-lipped honker  
tromboning blotchy blue-faced wheezes  
of slight duffings of fractured sunlight only just heard.

In this temperate oozing featherlight flux,  
nothing much moves except rumours of bitter days arriving.

## Long Mynd, New Year's Day

No, there ain't no god to fix us,

so we drift, chewed up and flobbered out  
from between the jaw-line of battering weather  
and flaming expletives swirling abusively  
down from the angry Black Mountains,  
pausing only to pull moonies into the void  
and for you to sprinkle erratically,

until we trip over ourselves, kiss  
the high sky of sheep and fall  
onto our muck-splattered throne  
to feel our bonces, gone rotten with booze,  
blast off over the valley

and watch cloud moods clear smoothly, daubing  
oozes of sun onto people awakening  
to the fabulous shades of hope gathering.

This could be a fucking brilliant year.