

Elegy for Chris Torrance

the heart of every observation
fragmentary yet also persisting
close attention each onrushing day
to find the core, bird flower or word
minutely molecular yet reaching
to galaxies

solar music
dreams lotus light
loosestrife
yellow shine in shade
dreaming the lines, the
habitation
rooted to the place of ever belonging

meticulous weather recordings
daily measurements
fronts funnelled into and up the valley
frost deepened in dark
line-squalls curtaining every hill and
squirting their onward passage

there is no ending even in death
river still racing the rapids, the falls
where the next generation of dippers define
climatic changes, a landscape living on

Roads to Glynmercher (for Chris Torrance)

late at night from down
down-town Cardiff
docks or Riverside, Rajahs
Four-Bars, Westgate
north up the main drag
through those northern
Cardiff suburbs Pontcanna
Whitchurch, Radyr, turning
off the dual carriageway
winding up & up through
small valleys towns the night
one jump beyond us one
black hole too far, our words
lingering on those dark
times of the soul
only spoken when past when

shooting down the night
windless night, still as it ever is
in these places of south-westerlies
with the music found
in words

approached from the west
from the coast, Gower or Pembroke
up the long low depression
made by the river Neath
as it presses on towards Swansea
or over that tight lip of hill
from the smaller vale of the Senni
usually in fading light in
late summer light usually after
one day or more than one
of walking shorelines of drinking
salt on the air and mirrors
of sun on the sea
and here is the place where
the soul will draw down its
mantle, words settle lightly
around us like night cooling
the burnt ledges of our being

occasionally from the north, down
through all of the mid-Wales uplands
the long haul of the A470 mostly
in the dark, headlights swooping
the thousand bends and caught
a barn-owl now and again a
fox or deer, returning from Rhayader
Snowdonia, Anglesey, Denbigh
a reading shared in Wrexham
or more gently from the little
town of Llanwrtyd in last
light over the Mynydds and through
Upper Chapel - these the rare
journeys arriving late with
a clasp of all Wales in the strain of eyes
low sounds around and within
thick unlit walls half heard
words floated across weighted
nights with clouds once or
twice parting to the light
of one sudden star

but mostly nearly always the
road came from the
east from England over
the border the marches round
the mountains from the
valley of the Wye or crossing
the Usk and the truck route up
the heads of the valleys and
down again the air hot sometimes
and hazy but more often clinging
with drizzly mist or blowing
blasts of rain on south-westerlies
up that long depression to rest
at the point of destined arrival
sometimes alone but often not
joy or sadness hanging
on a residue of storm
feelings diffused through
warmth of burning wood in
the fire the pores of the face
the soul of the place, Glynmercher

but there are other roads
more
ancient inward or unseen
hidden lines
connecting the
great stones higher
up the valleys
trackways through the forests
and the hills
stony streambed tracks the dipper's
territory raven's roads
or buzzard's
on corridors of air
roads of the spirit roads
worked into poetry
where the spores
linger and the wind finds
a millisecond of quiet eye of
the storm
shadows of the
past and future
intersections of the soul