

Stephen Collis / A MAP OF OUR FAILURES

1.

What is the form of
verbalizing existence?

you Language, people did
misuse the myth of emptiness

for money food tears
the the O to overcome digression

we lie after loneliness sucking
and relieved as we are relived

the clot of words stolen
in a naked entering of hand

through calm deliverance
what have we still

sexual out-flung and beaten
dry after this useless

house country temple
knowing years enter us

everything happens in the
sink of our slim failures

people, the French America
of terse arousal, flames of

you, Language house
holding fracture and a loom

2.

Time nor abstract solid
a hand touching frame

of house book dignity
the price of spice

sent turgid not armada
but a master was a ship's

captain and I have
waited a long time master

for the form wind would
take clay-red behind

green sward of tree
breach of sense and

continuity found speaking
alone of ancestors founding

why gravity meditation
would anyone leave the cool

of coast to set up somewhere
nowhere 1734 the words

fail at the hustings
shroud of mackerel colored

sky lift of belly hand
to hold house piano forte

miasma of flower fir fern
outstretch land dormitory

brickwork this legend of
books written but never read

why anyone does anything
alienating and marginal

stealing land and history
words right out of mouths

poem as Pontus or
you burn you Language

seethe us seeding into
verdure of myth just starting

to rain Medea and cold
betrayal of pavement beneath

the beach go back to
back to sound Altnaveigh

3.

Everything rolls in sunder
a word is appropriate

appropriated she sits a
book at her elbow

perhaps flowers in her
hands relaxed motion house

means much burns another
way perhaps poems or

a white dress small and
defiant don't sunfish tell her

what not to read in thin
maculate leaves of skin

wrestling another
at sea hands entering

the water to turn the
pages of clam shells

the decision made great
shaking among old plans

and thawing of fancy's
reasoned frost-works

4.

What is verbalized
danger's awkward reward?

Uncultivated fresh modernity
throws speech scintilla

sound fans flames hand
to wheel lifting lines

threads needle head angels
thrust apologetic notes

under navigate door house
a shuddering ship lions

keep at bay useless
in a tempest but

using a good oar
in smoother waters

I have handsome books
bound in calf

a meadow a measure needle
to carve clay skin

sensuous turns of pleasure's
beak igniting silence

aporia what was not
said known or set sail

you Language you failure
sea shepherds of the chorus

watching fish flocks
flecking the blue

go purple go ubiquity open
to republics and

reminiscences as trees become
breezy shift out of oak

tress groves the light a
lever your family lives there

they are words lightnings
failures to connect a

blanket of snow a stream
of light white in one

direction and red in
the other O whippoorwill

of family I drive time's
arrow root road to

return to shared aches
we've not soothed

origin's nutrient voice
calcula of speech

I read in driveway light
awkward to enter my hand

so blue the house
the chamber can we

mend mind's leanings out
of discourse windows pain

who is excluded debauched
run out mad from

Calcutta's black hole of words
muttering colonies and forgetting

this light river leading Herodotus
to figure it out for himself

again the ladies wait and are
not glad of writing

ships at the lighthouse
and Harper's Ferry

you said go found a lighthouse
in the middle of the desert

regular only in
being irregular

5.

That and history's vocative
enameling what was not said

in acts that damaged sense
meaning knowledge, verse

that paltry we carried our
coast and others were cold

without soot on their faces
and nothing but counting ribs

that commodity and charlatans
gave gingerly stone buildings grief

small pocks for you and for
you some glass beads

that war writes itself mantras
glory and recompense twice value

that states state their purpose
in lies of purple prose

sheer momentum cantilever and
exhortation the house houses keeps

that industry and that poison's nick
felt in the door's frame

that we did not say it loud
enough fire for the ocean

and rain for the wastes
temple flesh love but

books burn haste centuries
of it fantastic and we

didn't use it well or even
at all notaries and futures

spent on ambiguous projects
of defense go hungry

go desire tell Mercury
rise and spins too close

that Eden that Dachau
that sword was not a

ploughshare master at sea
and nothing published to tell