

## **Regressive Poetics**

I became aware of the concept of reincarnation at a young age, being presented with the idea that our souls use the earth as a vast schoolroom, returning to it to learn new lessons over many lives, as a completely logical concept by my mother. I continue to view it as entirely likely.

When I was older I discovered that my grandmother had for many years been secretary and editor to A J Stewart, author of *Falcon: The Autobiography of His Grace James IV, King of Scots*. Ms Stewart's fascinating book was the account of her past life as James IV, and she was completely convinced of the veracity of her story.

The guiding ethos of this work is my interest in the correlations between artistic and spiritual practices, and the strong place of language within practices such as meditation, magic, divination etc. After producing a process-based poetic work on the tarot I wondered whether past life recall stories would be an interesting medium for a similar processual approach.

I am interested in the way that a past life “memory”, or story, is accessed via a hypnotic state, and relayed to the hypnotist or therapist in a state very much like a waking dream. We have all had the experience of language in dreams, where the words that seem so profound in the dream are nonsense when awake.

There is also an element of translation or decryption present in past life tales, in the sense that they are usually relayed back in a somewhat fragmentary way from the border of the unconscious. In mediumship this is a common problem, because communicating with the spirit world is described as talking with someone very far away, or operating on a very different frequency of sound. Discrepancies occur.

*I see now how we can wander and get lost in the memories of the automatist when we so-called dead try to communicate. This kind of mutual selection is bound to be what my friend Gerald calls a “mixed grill”*

– Received from Winifred Coombe Tennant by Geraldine Cummins in *Swan on a Black Sea: A Study in Automatic Writing* eds Signe Toksvig, 1971.

I wanted to push this derangement of language another step further, this “mixed grill” of language from one side, death, being translated through to the other side, life.

I worked with a digital dictation app into which I read published accounts of past lives from a variety of sources. This produced its own version of the text, complete with interesting inaccuracies and juxtapositions and a surprising amount of digital and online-speak, which can only reflect the programming of the app to be sensitive to current technological jargon. In the way that the app “made sense” of what I gave it, we too tend to interpret accounts such as past life “memories” through the veils of historical fact, bias, scientific rationale, physics theory or personal prejudice.

With past life regression hypnotic work there is also the possible issue of suggestion on the part of the hypnotist/therapist, again echoing the possible adjustment of the text. This mediation is also common in mediumship, as mentioned above. In *Swan on a Black Sea*, the spirit of the very politically liberal Mrs Coombe-Tennant sometimes “transmitted” far more conservative political opinions, which was deemed to be the bias of the medium Miss Cummins’ own beliefs on the original message.

Each poem in this collection is based on one particular past life story and is the result of translation and rewriting from the original text (the original experience) to a doubly mediated text – a version of the original mediated first by technology and second by the writer (me). Some pieces were recorded by the app direct from online videos rather than being read aloud by me. The poems are therefore subject to technological, programmed language bias and personal bias/artistic style on my part. This is an integral part of their being.

I found that this method gave me some linguistically interesting pieces which still managed to keep a sense of dreamlike mystery as well as highlighting the strange hyperreality of “remembering” a past life in such apparent detail. In these poems, the stories are trying to “get through”, but there is an imperfect medium (me) using a flawed machinery.

**– Anna McKerrow, April 2013**

# **REGRESSIVE POETICS**

## **Until the Dreams Began Picking the Recurrence of the Streams**

click here to request the inter body/performance is when the secret details are only electric/not limited to stain the body/intended from the body/follow those ranges across distance -

I wished they'd hear that you could only follow those of your life/you need a special connection/he should know before a short distance -

I've chosen to use a digital Celtic or Britain/first to read the pain going far/sex you could know when you know the hate to touch up/it came actually between/the started to remember –

I closed my eyes and killed tests.

I realised that this was the award/retraining understanding/against the old women in a room/it was dawn/smell of smoke filled my past rocks/somehow powerful taste of

pollution/lest I heard footsteps/and my preteen crew/stale footsteps came closer than ever passing right away/I swear a lot unkempt alone/another man of similar size on the floor was not really page-

bending me/I jumped into the moment/bending down anyone/quick new stuff/he threw me off, yelling in some strange directors/he felt the floor I crashed against/the wall for breast knocked out of me and/casting/I watched as the buyer looking them last act/like with a nice ethernet-

like portrait reading/suddenly his body working with death/I looked down at him/discussed content quickly/and the voice-

over woman calling on a farm/*what type of name is that* said like to open my eyes/close my eyes and labour and try to laugh myself/having a great imagination and steadily/I could not stop saying that I was going to bless a cleaner list of all/one who really got, been real, touched by another person/thank you for oil -

gas exploration/I wanted to be the procedure/I began working with a well-respected timekeeper/with her I was able to hear my insomnia/I can't understand how it

happened/like tiny island hopping/affecting my present life/I would stay awake all night/and deterrent is dead/inside this ritual/burning in a past life online/I slept for late homes for the first time and

I'm living in America in the middle of the night/accelerating dream theatre.

I was an ancient fortification made a word/I close from a very different feeling like fabric/the lighthouse faint country-pronged spots filled with oil/hung from ceiling beans on Strickland pedestals/I live through the same scene of myself using a tiger to kill a beautiful woman on the back -

I continued on a woman dressed contract coloured clothes/I continued on the phone myself/interacting with various people after I'm here.

It was just a coincidence bathroom/clinically I had heard of lifting the course/war and the women wore beautiful clothes and jewellery/I was trying very hard to begin a path medication piece/when I was in the parties I felt egotistical/angry and completely self-

absorbed after the question/I found it very distasteful to think I could have one tiny penis/she was so decided to forget about her and focus on my music limitation  
hygienist/wicked dreams of myself stuck in watching women being beheaded in front of me/until the dreams began picking the recurrence of the streams -

Then I found myself standing in the rain/again in an older fault/apparently excited to play with my hair/my clients/I looked nice in wonderfully creaming gold/a surge of love slept through me/possibly watched through my arms/again I was tormented/suddenly I was being I/helped into a cart strewn with wind-

flowers/ladies walking ahead of me and two men pulling like Art Armstrong pro people/and I was nervous and my carriage/like utterances behind man/he was very somewhat/he looked near such traffic almost before/I felt herself to try to hold my body typed to un-

limited/he was testing religious garb recognition/he called me when you fear/I'll chase nothing to offer Duke of the questions I can use/I find myself alike/my body wenching/the Gracie version of the part of me wanted to send/you felt weak/girl/

three more people coming to me for password progressions/he asked me  
if I'd been in my famous/I said -

*yes, I live here/he laughed and said Sharon I was Napoleon*

I decided to give it a try as I thought it would help to punch her/to all of his life from  
birth today I was a little reluctant/six months tenants called -

me again/I brought a tape recorder to my side and they don't know my coach/I'm  
going to late events exactly as I experienced the new aggressions/hereinafter as I did  
not want it to influence/I've been experiencing anyway/here is a default paid to  
talk/he'd written the rooms.

The descendants of society committed to defending their land against the onslaught  
in Vegas/land some tribes and lights are filled with music/article to patient life -

style of worshipping the cotton cutlasses of the spirit accounts/compassion with the  
last for pleasure and pride in a land/should feel another defender days/while

evenings are spent in feasting a music-making free Celtic language of symbols/the patient beliefs are slowly being slaughtered by self-

improvement Britain/and the armies drinking hungry Anglo picked invade his fight for this/they've some truth precision along the eastern shore/into their way/question what being phased accounts for.

In Northumbria heavy fog obscures the only morning for clues/I noticed timber fortification outside/walls writing to impressive ten feet/around this small building software to spew smoke out of the holes/a few people poker with spitting the morning work of carrying food/find a room filled with simple cult furnishings/password and stuff have been hand-

crafted by the credit women/there is little natural itinerary in a single window/a large hanging problems bowl full of Ireland/delighted weeks lights up/doing last of the glowing fire/rubbing his hand through his thick core speed/toward the e-

mail with the latest hair and pretty complexion spells/walks absentmindedly to a table in the middle of the room filled with/bowls of flat worried looks/take his face reluctance to feel as he is willing to scream/corridor to the glory of another room/stopped by tiny elderly woman closed in layers of long-

term/I find myself protein sites/in another corner sits gracefully under ten marine/she wears dark brown legs and unruly prone hair/she fixes intently on the astrological charts on the table because her mother/heavysset women are faulty scooters going to chart the stars/she emits an all round, all-

knowing station/I noticed the table has a small bronze pyramid on it which ruined tenderly/since I find myself hovering in the centre of the room/suddenly transfixed by the sea/on a small bed was a woman pain and lovely.

Her body feels weak accent/I don't feel loved by her background.

He prepares to give birth more painless/sees what's going on/is blocked by the old woman that all the self-

serving/as I find myself moving image for party/reluctant to connect fully with my own tiny potty/cultivating the exact placement of the planets union screams/trying to ease her discomfort/feel this entire pale pressure breeds heart site/I decide her strokes have faced with a class/weighted terminations determined to leave/her mind is heavy with consent.

I normally must prepare/return system is down impatiently/strategy doing sizing frustration/moving house all the time/or is that doorstep/sing back inside viewing entering the winning producer.

The midwife was the fire/she gets her hand into the bowl and places it on your ear and stomach/joking that you weren't in the end skin/and also contain a period and her names signing sulphate in his loyalty paper/together your young cries in pain would pick my flashes back to happen/places her hands between periods, flex-

Time/I'm certainly pulled fully inside this tiny part of him/his right hand mountaineering at the addictive shuffle ball/cooing a tiny mayhem I'm free and safe/tired/strange to see me she does the weak issue well.

She smiles/she is wealthy and hot/but there is her only like in sense/she is listening to the sake of my cough/only ankles hurt in spirit of wisdom/she carries me if it ruins mother who is diligently gathering all papers together/I feel strange/as if I'm not acknowledged in internet intra-

nets/excited/his looks tenderly canopy his face.

He leads to me as inbox/living its actual name/he says conducts tend to make me into power for regime/as I would rate some of the league to be strong/and no ceiling tone as I drift off