

It's all right in the mornings

It's all right in the mornings
It's all right when the day is still to make
When everyone's asleep except the birds
It's all right in the kitchen –
There's food to cook and water to boil
And radio
It's all right in the garden –
Needs watering and planting
It's all right by the open window
Or closed
It's all right on the floor –
I can stretch and bend,
Tip myself upside down.

Night sweats and screams and shakes and buries heads.

Fires flame full fear frackling welts appear itches fiercely scrape fierce skin
from within and without.

Burning blood headward rushes –

swells, retreats, rages through again – drowning the floating thing, off guard.

Blasts it – brain thing – to bits.

Then out goes the tide leaving some embers and smouldering.

Fingers tentatively tentacly sweep at the ashes to gently hold the little grey scraps
and the rest of it – in place, and still.

Ashes won't settle. They rise in gusts of breath scattering dust.

Chase the bigger ones, like bubbles,

this time, grasp the good feeling (good for many reasons I can't explain).

The good feeling came just before

the memory of a thing from his life lived burst in and exploded, silently,

Instant combustion made boiling blood head.

The living I had lived was nearly given back to me,

and I blew it.

Or it blew me, blew through my blood, to head,

swelling rush of hot tears instead of cool fond remembering.

I'm left with scattered ashes forgetting whatever it was that had remembered itself to me

in that instant. Ashes. My fault –

I blew it, that instant as it was meant to be, as I meant it to be.

All that remains are the ashes scattering my scattering, skittering mind.

My limbs and jaw hold tight and stiff, locked down,

forgetting to soften and sleep.

Held alert stiffly still while burning white blood

sloshes through lung to heart to throat to brain to heart again and lung.

The rest forgets as the steady loving muscle tries to find equilibrium again.

What are the eyes doing? And ears? They didn't see the rushing blood
or sparks, or ashes blown by the explosion.
The ears missed the white noise blood torrent.
Soon they'll pick up breathing again, another's.
They'll fixate on in and out,
rustle of sheet and nose hairs and whistling.
And next the grey sounds of the night,
of the abandoned street. And then the birds.
And then prone body aches and shifts woodenly.
Ears and brain start up spinning
settling on elsewhere inside, listing
things and forgetting things, blinking blinkering, out.
Side roll bend at the waist, push and sit up.
Reach out feet
stretch hands, gather the scraps that make waking getting up.

It's all right in the mornings.

Ruth Maclennan, April 2020