



Ahadada Books

# Chapbook

## Five Dances

*poems by Maurice Scully*

### Maurice Scully



*Photo by Hazel Scully*

Maurice Scully, born in Dublin in 1952, has been publishing mainly in the UK for many years through presses like Gallping Dog, Pig, Reality Street, etruscan books, Shearsman & Oystercatcher Press. *Things That Happen*, a large work in 8 books & 3 chapbooks & written over a 25-year period, is currently available as a 4-vol set: *5 Freedoms of Movement, Livelihood, Sonata & Tig*. A sampler of work, *Doing the Same in English*, was recently published by Dedalus Press, Dublin. A new book, *Humming*, is due from Shearsman in autumn/winter 2009.



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## Bluebells in a Wood: Waltz

The larger the chimneys the higher  
the family's status in the town –  
little humanity reaching up ...

Step by step as you go  
pressing grass down in patches in yr path,  
predictable in direction but not discrete location,  
making small boot-pools of a deeper green  
in dew here, here ...

*& then we ...*

Mist rising from the river in a wide fold  
stops. Making noise inside one's self  
beside one's self & fluidly making  
things up as you go

*moisture rising in tiny threads*

from one side the plate-glass window  
night street people float by –  
tourists, goodly citizens  
turning home – flash! flash! – thread by thread –  
while on this  
side  
we

*had the most*

a flower-shoot shifts a crumb that, disturbed,  
falls back

*the most wonderful ...*

& a green blade points to light –  
at yr age (versions of the verb *to be* crimped & rippled everywhere)  
at your age look to your home – the earth – the world –

*& then we*





to note a plant-stem curve & a flower follow  
round to light – three, four – through glass

watch it & know turning the dance touch hands

elbows lightly | –  
threading & stitching –

*wonder if*

that soft down on forearm  
little tickle of the soft down  
of yr forearm

if

*the most*

flash step by step as you go

*the most wonderful . . . having the most wonderful*

in time

*wonderful time.*



## Klee-Like

[for glockenspiel]

It is 6.40 am.  
It is Boxing Day.  
It is St Stephen's Day.  
It is Wednesday.  
Woden's Day.  
It is early morning December  
in a garden in Dublin. Dark.  
It is a point [A] in a life-space.  
It is, if it is ever read by another,  
a record of point [A] drawn to  
that point in "yr" reading "this"  
[oil & watercolour & pen on burlap on board]  
a floating ["mysterious"] point [B].  
It is 6.47 am. It is dark,  
silent, cold. From point [A]  
in a Landscape of the Suppressed Mystery  
to you in the Citadel of [B],  
a glinting silver triangle  
on a dark green ground. Don't move. Or  
do. Point [C]. It is not to be believed, the oddity of  
True Stories, The Wolf in the Fairytale,  
The Girl in the Wood, stopped &  
waiting, in potentia. The letter E,  
the word OH. Now – go give birth.



## Blackbird: Tap-Dance

Stop now & listen to the bough-top I mean  
the bus-stop where Patrick nods emphatically  
hi there yeah looking mysterious, what's up?  
Pop yr laptop in yr satchel, he said, let's go.  
What?

He'll give pleasant lectures at expensive  
universities paddling happily along not  
rocking any coracle or canoe between  
overhanging willows of Fiction & Non-  
Fiction: a quiet by-water by a prize-rich  
sluice. How about you?

Mellow me with alcohol on a chilly winter's  
night followed by a little loving – who could  
say no to that, right? – while dabbling in this  
pool between fiction & its opposite: what do  
you think? You might?

Cards slap tables through the day hey-ho  
Polyurathene, Dustbin, Dart & Grab. What's  
it all about? *History?* *Culture?* A good night's  
sleep? Clouds move. Stark bright bugle of a  
daffodil. Is it Friday? I need money. Scratch  
yr head, kill the itch, that glowing heart (with  
the hand on it) or that other in the dark stairwell  
fading from ... what? Maps?

Slip. Tug. Thread. The papery edifice stands up.  
Where am I now & are you with me?  
Hey. Nonny nonny.

This is a day.  
This is a moment  
in a day. This  
is the point of



intersection of  
a moment in a day.  
This is its noise.  
This is a series

of flashes. This  
is a further series  
bled into crevices  
& burnt back on

to each other – like  
that. Crackling  
densities: one view-  
point wedged into

another & stuck on  
a plinth. Hang on a sec:  
/// get it. Threads  
meshed & taut &

the fabric bound  
down tight &  
wet: today's date  
& place – tomorrow's.

The next. Click past.  
Listen to roots grow  
into crevices of  
what must be

let's see yr name & –  
ah yours & yours –  
a tin hat & a hard  
neck –

all those small vowels  
nestling among tough  
consonants



chipped & gnarled  
those pools of isolation  
among rock that swirl &  
dip along

the world-line  
then flow on  
to strange locations  
in no time at all.

This is an ikon.  
This is the way that  
it shimmers. This  
is its surface.

This is that sur-  
face split open where  
each split blisters  
& each blister figures

a little as it were  
canyon seen from above –  
far – human limitation  
(limitation limitation)

gimme the Huuuman  
Limit-ation Blues –  
delve down then into  
its jagged cracks –

shadows – spikes –  
splinters – delight –  
process. These are  
the bits that stick.

Shadow-leaves move more lightly behind yr  
head (than in it) in yr hut-in-hiding & seem  
to shiver through the delicate outlines of their  
life & after-mark. Take care. Has this ever  
happened to anyone before? What do you think?  
Ring a bell?



## Parallax: On Vellum

Moving in quick-time its thin  
body pulsing & searching  
a little fly lands on my open  
copybook moving towards  
the letter "e" & a full-stop  
then away quickly opening &  
closing its shiny slices in silence ...

Water moving by the bank  
& further out over the weir  
black-brown white-cream  
a fish breaks sky in it  
rings repeating outwards our  
words out towards another  
over light invisible breeze-parts  
slapping the sides of the corridor  
its glass listen listen its glass case  
sheet steel each minute a shiver  
in the grass three drops on a wide  
blade run together ...

I went to university for ten years  
& learnt nothing. Got a degree.  
That teaches you that nothing  
is something. I place a rock at  
a cave mouth. Who knows what  
it is, but it may get out. Trust me.  
Moving over the water & the  
water moving. One cherry petal  
on a snail's black back. Scratch  
& cross-hatch, dip, dart then flit  
through air-streams for take-off.  
Is that the sound of your hand  
on a page I wonder the very  
name whereof may peradventure  
drive into every head a sundry  
supposition/hey, where's my  
pen? Capture-strands, surface  
tension, rain pellets on taut silk  
reeled in. I bought a new one last  
week. Here I am writing with it now.  
It's ok. In fact, I like it. It flows along.



That's what a pen is for. Slap.  
Yr glowing bristles in the dark,  
yr temporary arrangements in the  
larger Temporary Arrangement  
of interlaced overall design, pits &  
peaks, a piglet upside-down blowing  
on a chanter in the margin, its  
tune mute, moving over moving  
water, ripple & twirl, working,  
walking, working, walking off.



## Dance: The Card Players

Five for Sorrow, Three to the Shriven Joker,  
who can forget, the female to the male when  
worlds collide & splash & nobody's the same  
again as roots change orientation & leaves  
laugh: Queen of Hurricane, Ace of Calm.  
The girl to the boy, kissing, the boy to the girl,  
giving, giving, Queen of Reception, Little Jack  
All-Heart, beginning of the shock of delight. Given.  
Never the same again, quite, never to be the same  
again, beech leaves tickled together in the air overhead,  
branches alive, poker-faced, hedging bets, Ace of  
Slaves, Ace of Dark, King, Queen, Jack. Never.

Dance: the card players.

All the career moves, all the tricks & works,  
all the interviews & CV-flarings of the Adult  
Adult World dropped through a chute (what's  
the point of the name of the namer sludge-think  
ink-pool?) & pouring out to sea. Not travelling  
back in time but pushing time back through time  
so that they telescope & elide like that. It's  
funny how/It's important that/It could be true  
if/On the other hand when. A crumpled scrap of  
paper on a street, crowded symbols containing  
crowded memories containing walls containing you.

Happy birthday!

*all the things  
all the things  
in the world  
& all the worlds*

*wrapped together  
in twisted space  
dappled, hoping,  
pushed through:*

dance: the card players

Meadowsweet, cornflower,  
inaudible roots going down deep  
through dark at light's behest.  
Today's the 24<sup>th</sup>, tomorrow  
– it can wait – the rest:

dance: the card players



List the things you were going to talk about  
anyway, this one, that one, then open yr eyes,  
shake yr enemy's hand, shudder. Mark the steps  
backwards, forwards, a lifetime of sideways moves,  
smiling: take everything but give him (me?) his  
(my?) life back plain. Here. And whole. Pass round  
the hat. Whose franchise the precious? Dance  
apart, dance together, dance to part, dance to  
link together several times over, & then over  
liquid horizons that melt into details dissolved  
& dissolving . . . Sing!

dance: the card players

Place Pain there  
Love beside it  
& here Pure Pleasure  
& here too Exploration

*the first mark*  
*[burst bark] leaf*  
*hit leaf remember to*  
*let go the clinging*  
*storyline of yr –*  
*from the other hand –*  
*yr grief*

From the other hand too Dark  
can't be far away & Shock & Stone  
& Acorn Cup its growth-surround its  
ghost of power its piece of beautiful  
future mapped

*the little grey*  
*sac of the cobweb*  
*dust gathering*  
*on a plastic pot*

Place One-Hard-Look on the table  
*take it in* then yr hands & yr hands' work  
*take it all in* a stone on a path  
is a stone on a path: step over it.  
Count yr steps. Remember them.



## ***Oulipoems 2 (Philip Terry)***

**978-0-9811704-5-9**

Philip Terry is Director of Creative Writing at the University of Essex, where he teaches a graduate course on Oulipian Practice. His work has been published in *Panurge*, *PN Review*, *Oasis*, *North American Review*, and *Onedit*, and his books include the lipogrammatic novel *The Book of Bachelors* (1999), the anthology of short stories *Ovid Metamorphosed* (2000), *Oulipoems* (2006), and *Fables of Aesop* (2006). His translation of Raymond Queneau's last book of poems, *Elementary Morality*, was selected by the Daily Telegraph as one of its poetry titles of the year in 2008.

## ***Poor Manners (Adam Halbur)***

**978-0-9811704-8-0**

Adam Halbur's work has previously appeared in the anthology *Never Before: Poems about First Experiences* (Four Way Books, 2005) and journals such as the *Fauquier Poetry Journal* and *The Fourth River From the Upper Midwest*. he currently lives in Tokyo with his wife, son, and daughter.

## ***Prisoner of the Swifts (Judith Skillman)***

**978-0-9811704-7-3**

Over the past three decades Judith Skillman has written and published numerous poems for books, journals, and anthologies. She has collaborative translations from Portuguese, Italian, and French. Skillman's publications include *FIELD*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Southern Review*, *Poetry*, *The Northwest Review*, and *Midwest Quarterly*. She has ten books of poems.

## ***Hunting and Pecking (Richard Murphy)***

**978-0-9811704-4-2**

Rich Murphy was born in Lynn, Massachusetts and has taught writing and literature for 23 years at Bradford College, Emman College and now at VCU. Credits include a book of poems *The Apple in the Monkey Tree* by Codhill Press; chapbooks *Great Grandfather* by Pudding House Publications, and *Family Secret* by Finishing Line Press; poems in hundreds of journals; and essays on poetics in journals, including *Reconfigurations: A Journal Poetics Poetry / Literature and Culture*.

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