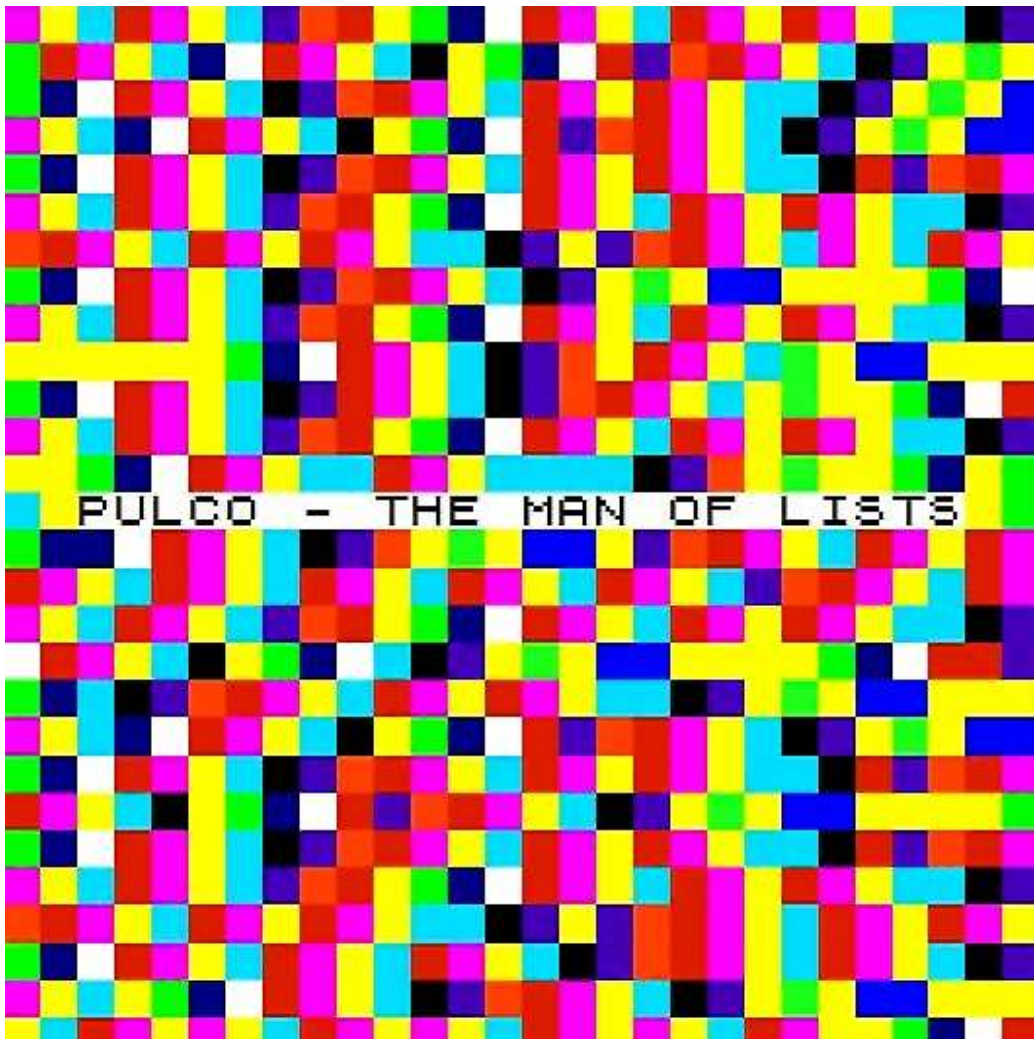


# ASH COOKE

## THE MAN OF LISTS

Recent Poems and Lyrics



THIS BOOK WAS KINDLY EDITED BY BARBARA,  
PRINTED BY IONA & PUBLISHED BY NICK THANKS  
TO YOU ALL

**NIGHT OWLS**

**IT'S MIDNIGHT IN THE  
CRIPPLED GARDEN**

**UP HIGH, SQUARKING BIRDS  
MOCK THE OWL  
LATE AT NIGHT**

**GNARLED OLD BARK BRANCHES  
HOUSE THE HOSTILE ANIMALS**

**AIMING TO BRING DOWN THE OWL  
WITH THEIR CRUEL WORDS**

**ORAL DESTRUCTION**

**ACROSS THE WORLD  
COLD SOUND ECHOS**

**MAPS, CONTINENTS,  
SENTINALS OF NATURAL HISTORY**

**VAST OPEN SPACES**

**THE OWL TURNS.  
THE EYES IN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD**

**OBSERVING**

**THE OLD BIRDS SWIVEL  
NECKED TELESCOPE TWITCHES**

**WATCHING THE WORLD  
UP ON HIGH**

**SEEING THE COLOURS  
OF CULTURED REGIONS**

**NEW AND OLD  
THE FIRST AND THE THIRD**

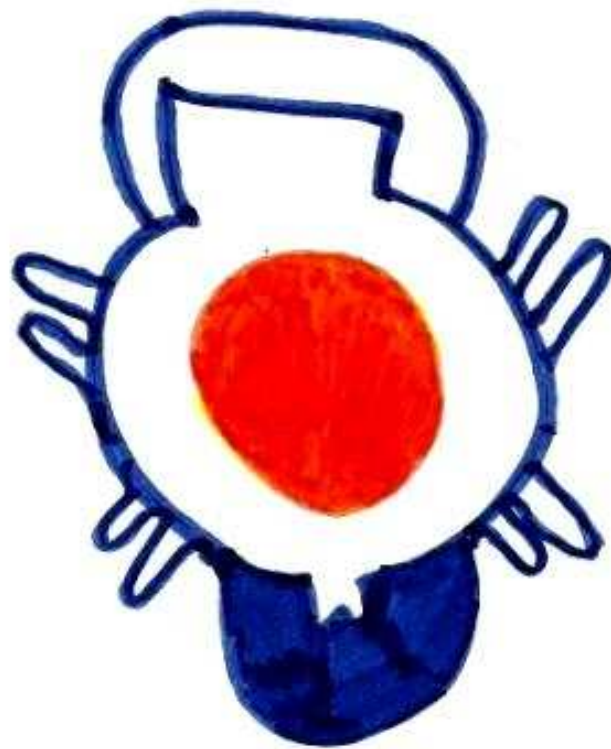
**THE ENDLESS STREAM OF ABUSE  
LEVELLED AT BIRDS**

**BY MAN**

**WRITTEN IN RESPONSE TO THE  
PAINTING**

**'THE MOCKERY OF THE OWL'**

**BY FLEMMISH PAINTER JAN VAN  
KESSEL**



**OXBOW LAKE**

**I'M 39 AND  
MY LIFE IS LIKE  
AN OXBOW LAKE**

**THIS RICH WATERWAY –  
MY CHANNEL**

**HAS BEEN CUT BACK  
BY THE PERSISTANT EROSION  
OF TIME**

**A ONCE HUNGRY RIVER NOW LEFT STUNTED**

**A HAUNTED BACKWATER  
DREAMING OF REACHING THE OCEAN**

**TO TOUCH THE SURF ONCE MORE  
AS DESTINY SAYS IT MUST.**

**I'LL OPEN UP THE INLET  
AGAIN ONE DAY**

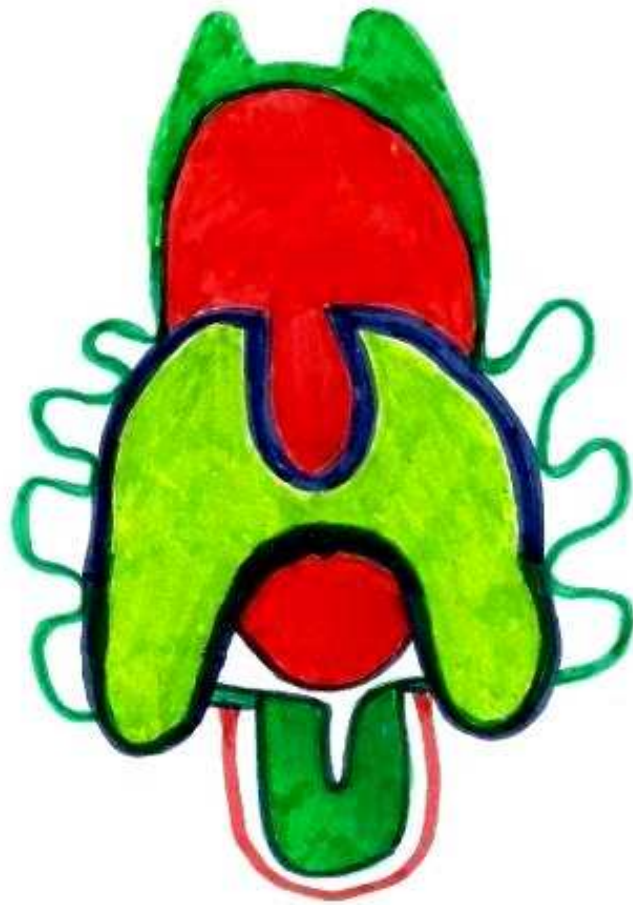
**UTILISE THE LAKE  
AND THE OX**

**HIRE A JCB TO  
SCOOP OUT A NEW**

**WATER COURSE FOR  
THIS SPARKLING**

**AMBITIOUS**

**MAN**



**HOLLOW HERE**

**RAGING ...**

**SCARED...**

**BRISTLED BY  
UNGRATEFUL CHILD**

**AND ANGRY SPOUSE**

**I'M HOLLOW**

**HERE**





**DEAD HEAD 1**

**WHERE IS THE MUSIC  
IN MY HEAD?**

**A SOUND THAT'S  
ALWAYS BEEN THERE  
LIKE AN ITCH THAT  
NEW TUNES SCRATCHED**

**DRIVING ME MAD  
CAUSE IT'S TOO LATE IN THE DAY TO  
GET UP AND RECORD!**

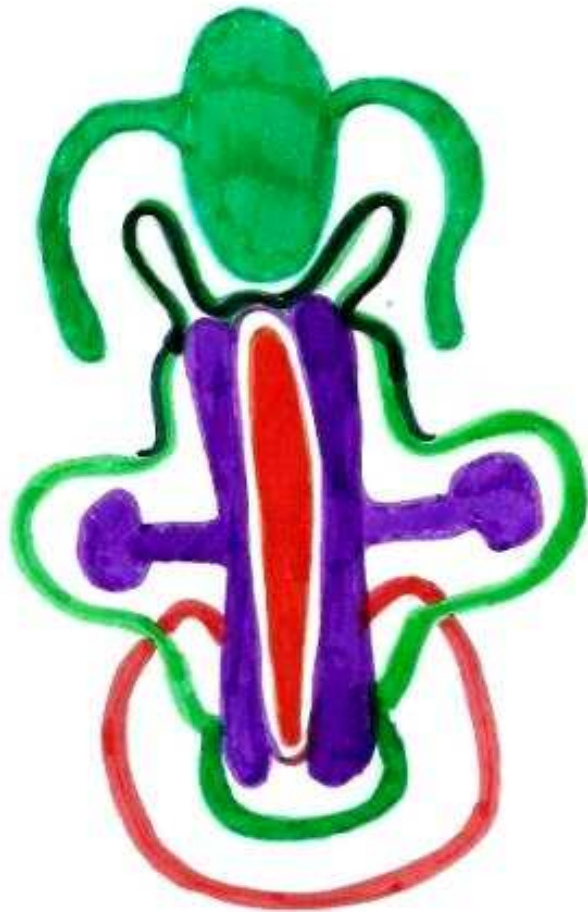
**WHERE ARE THE TUNES  
PULLED TERRIFIED FROM  
CRANIAL DEAPTHS**

**TO SATISFY THE HUNGER  
FOR CREATIVE OUTPUT  
NEW PRODUCT**

**LATELY I'M ALONE IN MY HEAD**

**THE MUSE HAS BUGGERED OFF**

**AND IT FEELS STRANGE**



ARCHIVE

I'M A LEVER  
ARCH FILE

FILLING UP WITH  
UNRELATED SCRAPS OF PAPER

BITS AND BOBS OF  
LIFE AND STUFF

WHICH DOCUMENT  
EACH SHIFTING HOUR

NOT ENOUGH OF IT THOUGH  
IS CONNECTED WITH  
ART OR MUSIC

BUMMER !

I'M FULL -  
BUSTED AT THE SEAM

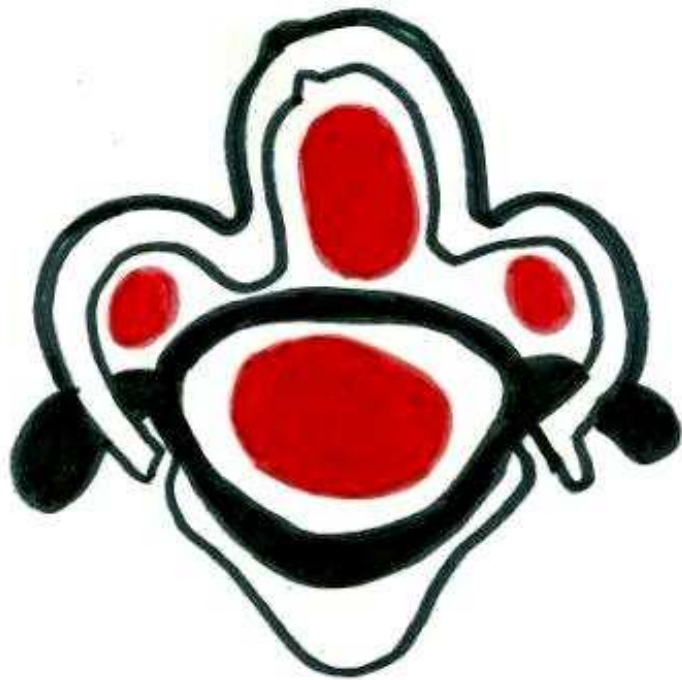
SOMETIME LAST YEAR  
I WAS HASTELY PACKED IN A BOX  
MARKED

ARCHIVE ' FREE SPIRIT 1972 – 2009'

THEN THE BOX WAS STACKED  
UNDER THE STAIRS

AND LEFT ALONE

WITH THE FLUFF



**THE DOWNSIDE OF THINGS**

**I AM AN ARTIST  
MUSICIAN  
POET**

**ULTIMATELY THIS  
WILL BE  
MY UNDOING!**



**BIRO BY THE SOFA**

**I WANTED TO WRITE A STORY FOR MY ALBUM  
BUT I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING INTERESTING TO WRITE**

**I JUST DALLIED WITH A BIRO BY THE SOFA  
WILLING IT TO HAPPEN.**

**AND THE STORY IS ! .....**

**IT'S LATER NOW, AND I'VE STARTED TO WRITE A LIST  
ENTITLED STORIES**

**EACH IDEA IS MARKED WITH A BULLET POINT  
AS IF TO LEGITAMISE IT'S EXISTANCE**

**I'M LOOKING AT IT NOW.**

**HERE IS THAT LIST OF POSSIBLE IDEAS – LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.**

- **A MAN IS WASHED AWAY BY A FLOOD AND FINDS HIMSELF CARRIED OUT TO SEA  
IN A WHEELIE BIN**
- **A MAN IS CARRIED OFF BY A LARGE BIRD AND LEFT IN A NEST WITH SEVERAL  
OTHER PEOPLE. THE CAPTIVES PLOT TO DEFEAT THE BIRD AND MAKE THEIR  
ESCAPE**
- **A HIGHLY TRAINED MONKEY USES LATEX AND THEATRICAL MAKE-UP TO APPEAR  
HUMAN. HE GETS A JOB ON TV AND HAS REGULARLY BEEN SEEN READING THE  
NEWS**

**THE LIST CONTINUES BUT I WON'T GO ON.**

**MMMMM .....**

**YOU SEE WHAT I'VE DONE HERE DON'T YOU !  
I'VE GONE ALL POSTMODERN.**

**BY DESCRIBING MY STRUGGLE TO WRITE  
I'VE TURNED THE PROCESS OF WRITING INTO THE ACTUAL STORY ITSELF**

**THEREBY MAKING ART LOOK BACK, EXPOSING THE LINES**

**SHOWING THE BRUSH STROKES BENEATH THE IMAGE.**





**OPPORTUNITIES WITH MUSIC**

**HOPEING FOR THE BEST  
WISHING FOR THINGS TO GO MY WAY  
JUST FOR ONCE TODAY**

**'COME ON, BE GOOD'  
I SAY INSIDE**

**'PLEASE LET ME WIN FOR ONCE'**

**BUT ULTIMATELY SHIT COMES MY WAY  
TIME AFTER TIME**

**INSTEAD OF GREAT  
GLORY AND TRIUMPH**

**MY FATE JUST  
FLOUNDERS IN GREY**

**A TAIL SPIN INTO THE MEDIOCRE**

**HURLING ME BACK TO  
BASICS IN TIME FOR**

**LIFE TO KICK ME IN  
THE NUTS AGAIN**

**BUGGER !**



**SMALL THOUGHTS**

**TODAY I HAD  
SOME TIME TO MYSELF**

**AND I HELD IT  
CLOSE TO ME**

**THAT TIME WAS LIKE**

**WATER IN A BUCKET  
OR  
EGGS IN A BASKET  
OR  
BIRDS IN MY HAND**

**I COULDN'T DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH TIME  
DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO FIRST**

**SO TIME WAS LOST**

**THE WATER SOAKED AWAY  
AND  
THE EGGS GOT BROKEN  
AND  
THE BIRDS FLEW AWAY LEAVING ONLY A COUPLE OF HANDSOME FEATHERS  
TO FLITTER HELPLESSLY TO THE GROUND**

**WATCHING THE DEMISE OF TIME WAS HARD TO BEAR**

**'CAUSE IN MY LIFE**

**THE EMPTY BUCKET LONGED FOR LIQUID  
AND  
THE CHICKENS ALWAYS LAID ELSEWHERE  
AND  
THE BIRDS GENERALLY FLEW SOUTH FOR THE WINTER**



**CABIN FEVER**

**I'M SPINNING !  
FREAKIN' OUT**

**CHRISTMAS HAS KNOCKED A  
FORTNIGHT OUT OF MY  
FIND A JOB SCHEDULE**

**AND NOW THE SNOW  
HAS KILLED A WEEK OFF  
FROM THE OUTSTANDING BALANCE**

**I'M SAT TWITCHING**

**FOR A SECOND YEAR RUNNING**

**AND THERE ARE SO MANY JOBS TO DO IN OUR HOUSE AS WELL !!**

**I SHOULD MAKE A LIST AND NOTE TO MYSELF**

- **HEY ASH – TAKE A YEAR OFF LIFE**

**THIS IS CABIN FEVER ALRIGHT**



**SUB Z'S**

**THE SUN IS  
SHINING ON THE  
SNOW LADENED FIELD  
BEHIND OUR HOUSE**

**AND IT LOOKS BEAUTIFUL**

**I MEAN REALY AMAZING!**

**THE TEMPERATURE IS SAT IN THE SUB Z'S**

**AND IT LOOKS LIKE  
IT'S SET IN FOR  
THE REST OF THE MONTH**





**VITAL SIGNS**

**I'M SHORT OF BREATH  
AND PALE SKINNED**

**GRAVITY HAS PULLED BACK THE BLOOD**

**KEEPING SAFE ONLY ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS  
DISPLAYING VITAL SIGNS**

**CHASING WORK IS  
LIKE CHASING RAINBOWS**

**I SEE SOMETHING  
NEAR THE BLIND SPOT**

**BUT BY THE TIME I'M THERE  
THE MOMENT MOVES**

**AND I KNOCK UP  
ANOTHER NEAR MISS**



**CHUNK OF BLUE**

**BLUE SLATE PIECES  
MAKE THEIR WAY  
ACROSS OUR DRIVE**

**THE FRESH WHEELS  
OF OUR CARS  
EASE THE SLATES PASSAGE**

**AND WINTER FORCES  
ALSO CHANGE  
ITS COURSE**

**ICE AND SLEDGES  
URGE IT TO  
MAKE A NEW HOME**

**IF I COULD ONLY MARK OR TAG  
A CHUNK OF BLUE**

**HOW FAR COULD IT GO  
IN A YEAR?**



DATANET

I'M PLUGGED IN  
AND ENCLOSED IN THE  
DATA NET

TOUCH A KEY  
AND THEY KNOW  
WHO YOU ARE!

LOOK AT ME  
ALL WORKED UP  
GROWING BLOATED  
AND TURKEY CHINNED

BEARING UP UNDER  
THE PRESSURE OF  
NEW DAILY HAZARDS

FEELING THE GROUND,  
TESTING THE SITUATION

I'M EYEING ALL CONCERNED  
WITH INTENSE  
SUSPICION

WHO IS OUT TO GET ME ?  
WHO KNOWS?

WHO LIVES AT THE END OF THOSE  
ROUGH PRYING CABLES?

THIS LIFE IS CHIPPING AWAY  
AT THE OLD ME

THE TRUE ME

THE ME THAT RALLIES OUT AGAINST  
THE PERSISTANT DEMANDS  
OF EVERYDAY LIFE

THE ARTIST ME IS  
FINDING ITSELF DRAWN  
LIKE ANEKIN TO THE DARK SIDE

SPIRALING TOWARDS DISTRACTION  
IN THIS DEEPER MESS  
OF FINANCE ADMIN

HOW DO I CONTINUE  
TO GET HERE?  
SHOE HORNED INTO  
THIS FINANCE THING

NOTE – DON'T FORGET  
I'LL ALWAYS BE AN ARTIST AND  
MUSICIAN

I'M STILL THAT MAN WHO DREAMED  
OF THE STARS

PISSED

OUTSIDE CLWB IFOR BACH



STATIC

SITTING HERE BY THE  
OFFICE WINDOW

SHADOWS LENGTHEN  
STRETCHING OUT TIME  
CHANGING DIMENSIONS  
WITH EVERY LENGTH  
AND SUN FELT TWITCH

DEEP BREATHING GETS ME  
THROUGH THE AFTERNOON  
AS I PUNISH MYSELF  
LOOKING FOR  
JOBS TO BE DONE

LISTENING TO PHONES RINGING  
IN OTHER ROOMS

THE PEN HERE  
PASSES A MOMENT OR TWO  
AND BOLSTERS MY REPERTIORE  
OF WORDS

WRITING NOTES  
NOTES TO ONES SELF

WHICH MEAN NOTHING RIGHT NOW  
BUT WILL ONE DAY  
ON JOYOUS REDISCOVERY  
LIFT ME HIGH IN MEMORY  
AND SIT ME RIGHT BACK DOWN

HERE IN MY CHAIR

WRITING BY THE WINDOW





**UP WITH THE BIRDS**

**I FEEL LIKE A TRAMP INSIDE  
THINK I'LL TAKE AN  
EARLY LUNCH  
AND GET A HAIR CUT**

**GET SOME SLEEP AND  
WAKE UP FRESH  
RE-SPIRITED - WITH ORIGINAL  
SOUNDS INSIDE ME**

**UP WITH THE BIRDS  
CLUTCHING A FIVER  
BOUND FOR GEORGE'S PLACE  
WITH INTENT TO BE SHAWN**

**CLOSE CUT – BACK ON TRACK**



**BOONY CAPERS**

GONE BACK WITH A BOTTLE  
WIDE EYES BLINKING  
THEN CLOSED AS SLEEP  
ENVELOPED LIKE AN EVENING  
MIST

FONDLY LOWERED AND HELD  
EACH BREATH COUNTED  
'TIL A SNEAKY DAD  
SLIPPED FROM THE BED  
AND WAITED

BREATH BAITED

ENSNARED WITH THE RISK  
OF RETURN

I KNOW SHE'S BACK  
WHEN THE MONITOR  
SIGNALS WITH SOUNDS  
OF PADDING FEET  
ON BOARDS ABOVE



**SOREPAW**

I'M WORKING ON A COVER  
FOR MY ALBUM  
-THE BACK CONTAINS A  
SUMMER PICTURE OF ME  
BY THE OLD PIG SHED DOOR  
AT OUR MOUNTAIN HIDEAWAY.

I'M AFTER SOMETHING AS  
PRETTY AND OLD WORLDLY  
AS THE COVER OF VASHTI BUNYAN'S  
'DIAMOND DAY'  
WHERE THE GYPSY GAL  
IS HANGIN' OVER THE DOOR  
OF AN ISLAND CROFTERS COTTAGE

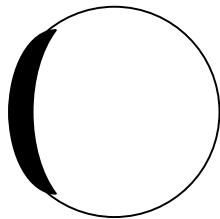
IN MY PICTURE I THINK I'VE  
PRETTY MUCH GOT IT TOO  
EXCEPT I'LL HAVE TO  
PHOTOSHOP MY GUT!!!  
TSSS – FAT BASTARD  
WHAT WOULD VASHTI SAY?

**THE WHOLE PICTURE**

**LOOKING FORWARD  
TO PASTURES NEW  
WAITING TO CHOMP  
ON GREENER GRASS  
AND FEAST ON RICH MEADOWS  
OF MATERIAL OWNINGS  
WITH SPIRIT –**

**TO WRITE HERE IS MY  
WAY OF TRYING TO CAPTURE  
THE MOMENT –  
TO LEAVE A WRITTEN MARK  
AS A TRIGGER FOR MY INTERNAL MEMORIES  
AS WELL AS TO BE SOMETHING  
EVOCATIVE FOR A COLD CALLING READER.**

**IF THIS IS THE WHOLE PICTURE  
THE SHADED AREA IS ABOUT ALL I CAN EXPLAIN**



**BUGGER THE CHICKENS**

LUSH COUNTRY VIEW  
THROUGH GREASY WINDOW  
LAYER UPON LIFE  
OF GRIME

BIN THE BREAD – AND  
BUGGER THE CHICKENS!  
THEY'RE SCAVENGERS ANYWAY  
DAMN ANIMALS

UP AGAIN TO CATCH  
THE WORM  
STEER THE KIDS AROUND  
THE HOUSE

BEER THE BELLY DURING  
MOST HAUNTED  
AND WRITE FOR A WHILE  
IN MI BIG BLACK BOOK

**POEM OVER HOVERING AMBIENCE**

AS BIRDS WINGS  
FLUTTER – SO  
MY THOUGHTS FALL  
LIKE LOFTY FEATHERS

IT'S SNOWING BLOSSOM AGAIN  
AND EACH DAY  
BREAKS MY HEART  
OVER SOMETHING NEW

EXHAUSTED BY THE CRAZY  
THOUGHTS INSIDE –  
EVER THINKING

I'M WORKING ON STUFF  
WHEN I SHOULD BE  
TAKING CARE OF  
BUSINESS

IT'S JUST ONE  
STEP AT A TIME  
FOR THIS MAN OF LISTS

TICK OFF EACH ITEM  
TILL THE JOB IS DONE

I GUESS I ONLY  
EVER REALY FEEL FREE  
WHEN THE

PEN CUTS A LINE  
OR  
THE PICK HITS GUT ONCE MORE

STONE UPON STONE  
A LEGACY GROWS

BUILT INTO A RICH OUTSIDER PACKAGE  
A LIFE'S WORK FOR NOTHING

I HOPE THEY PRESERVE MY BOX OF BITS & BOBS WHEN I'M GONE



**IN TWOS**

**SORTED WALLS**

**MOVING BOARDS**

**SANDY FLOORS**

**POINTING STONES**

**COVERING DOORS**

**STACKING THINGS**

**SUCKING DIRT**

**FIXING PLATES**

**BURNING STAINS**

**MAKING NOISE**

**BLENDING SOUND**

**CRISPS IN THE RAIN**

**DON'T YOU HATE EMAIL –**

**WHEN DIGITAL WORDS  
SAIL OUT OF YOUR HEAD  
NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN  
NEVER TO BE ANSWERED**

**AND NO REPLIES ARE SENT  
AND NO MESSAGES ARE WAITING  
TO BE READ**

**ECHOS IN AN EMPTY MAIL BOX**

**EMPTY LIFE –**

**PLAIN BOX EXISTENCE**

**I'M OUTSIDE EATING CRISPS IN THE RAIN**

