

also by Stephen Knight

POETRY

*Flowering Limbs*  
*The Sandfields Baudelaire*  
*Dream City Cinema*  
*Sardines and other poems*  
*The Prince of Wails*  
*A Swansea Love Song*

FICTION

*Mr Schnitzel*

DRIZZLE MIZZLE  
DOWNPOUR DELUGE

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Stephen Knight

**B**editions

Mae hi'n bwrw hen wragedd a ffyn

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## Are We There Yet?

We are travelling for ages  
Though the wind and rain are frontal  
Hence the windscreen wipers ticking  
And my heartbeat (contrapuntal)

And the parents half in shadow  
In no mood for conversation  
Who have stared towards our future  
Or the nearest filling station

Since we left my worn-out childhood  
On the verge with neither sorrow  
Nor a *Thank The Lord it's over*  
Then headed for tomorrow

In this silence they are nursing  
Which is blacker than it's hollow  
We are many miles from somewhere  
Without a map to follow

We are somewhere that is no place  
In the night which makes me shiver  
And the sky is made of thunder  
And the road is made of river

## In Which We Are Cast As Ourselves

It doesn't smell of us,  
This three-walled room  
Calm, black-clothed figures  
Alter in the gloom

With Lego bricks, books,  
An unread magazine  
And shoes no one wears.  
What does this mean?

The bedrooms don't exist!  
The staircase only stops.  
Beyond the cyclorama?  
God knows – not shops

Nor terraced houses  
Spectral as they near  
The vanishing point  
(Where nothing's clear).

Everyone else knows  
Where to stand and when  
To look – I muddle  
Now and Then.

Dim the lights,  
A decade passes  
And then I return  
Fatter, in glasses.

Leaving in their wake  
Columns of dusty air  
– In which we linger, bright  
Beyond compare –

The children leave like  
Something dreamt

...  
...

What happens now?  
Do I make a long,  
Slow exit stage right?  
Or burst into song?

Not knowing is scary!  
Not knowing is fun!  
My wife agrees with me.  
She might be anyone.

## Long Before THE END

we left our livid tip-up seats  
Another boy and me I don't know who or when  
The light on our shoulders of things still happening  
Of gilded Shirley Eaton still on her hotel sheets  
And nothing whatsoever nothing to be done  
And nothing but my fear of that world  
No consolation in my bag of hard-boiled sweets  
No comfort in the aisles  
Release me from this dark I might have thought  
Deliver me from Technicolor death-defying feats  
The whispering the crimson curtains folded back  
Then headed home talking to no one  
Uphill through brilliant ordinary streets  
On which the day still shone  
Or rained (I couldn't say)

## The Golden State

*for Colleen*

If not the giant redwoods  
taking centuries to reach  
the light, nor the lights-  
camera-action typhoons  
regular as clockwork  
in the murky Tonga Bar,  
nor, perched above LA,  
the penitential Getty,  
nor even the *Chronicle's*  
news that the universe  
is flat, and expanding  
*faster and faster forever*  
– *Wow! Wow! Wow!*  
to quote one scientist –  
then how about the way  
you drove your car  
wrists out, double-jointed,  
or, sealed in silver paper,  
those skinny joints  
I could never light,  
or the line in a Visitors' Book  
in the Valley of the Moon  
left a decade earlier  
*(This is a beautiful setting  
to put the ghosts to rest)*  
or else that 'bohemian'  
legacy of Venice Beach,  
a henna tendril  
fading from your ankle  
slowly, over days.