

## Gravity

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He has exhibited paintings in many shows including a one-man show in London in 2003, retrospective shows at York in 1993 and at the Hereford City Art Gallery and Museum in 1994. Examples of his work are in the Tate collection, London, the King's College Archive, London and the Living Museum, Iceland, as well as private collections in Australia, Britain and the USA.

Also by Allen Fisher

*Place* (various books 1974-81)

*The Apocalyptic Sonnets* (1978)

*Blood Bone Brain* (installation and performance  
documentation 1982)

*Unpolished Mirrors* (1985)

*Brixton Fractals* (1985)

*Stepping out* (1989)

*Dispossession & Cure* (1994)

*Civic Crime* (1994)

*Breadboard* (1994)

*Fish Jet* (1997)

*Ring Shout* (2000)

*Sojourns* (2000)

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ALLEN FISHER



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All of the work in this book owes considerable thanks to Paige Mitchell, my co-worker in the garden and streets.

## The Preface to *Brixton Fractals*, 1985

Fractals have been known since before the turn of the century. The noun was invented by Benoit Mandelbröt in 1975 and has come to mean an extremely irregular action, broken design, or fragmented object. Brixton is that part of southwest London extending south/north geohistographically from its prison and windmill down through the high road to the police station on one axis, and from the employment exchange in Coldharbour through the market to the Sunlight Laundry factory east/west on another.

*Brixton Fractals* provides a technique of memory and perception analysis. It can be used to sharpen out-of-focus photographs; to make maps of the radio sky; to generate images from human energy; to calculate spectra; to reconstruct densities; to provide probability factors from local depression climates. It becomes applicable to reading; to estimate a vector of survival from seriously incomplete or hidden data, and select the different structures needed. It can provide a participatory invention different from that which most persists.

These poems represent some of the most difficult yet rewarding bungalows in the entire exhibition. I am most wonderful to be able to say that their cultivation of plurivocity again brings back to the language all its capacity of meaningfulness. Never mind what others think, I think you're beautiful. The work is strongly influenced by itself, rather than by what arrives and is outside of it, by its need of poetry, its indeterminacy, its distrust of the effectiveness of education. The first thing to be said is that it preserves the width, because the rotten danger in present-day living is a kind of reduction of language to communication to manipulate things, or can become merely instrumental to prevent going in many directions.

Imagination and action. My knowledge of the world exists validly only in the moment when I am transforming it. In this moment, in action, the imagination functions, unblocks passivity, refuses an overview. Discontinuities, wave breaks, cell divisions, collapsed structures, boundaries between tissue kinds: where inner workings are unknown, the only reliable participations are imaginative. The complex of state and control variables. The number of configurations depends on the latter: properties typical of cusp catastrophes: sudden jumps, hysteresis, divergence, inaccessibility. Boiling waters phase change where the potential is the same as condensing steam. Random motion of particles in phase space allows a process to find a minimum potential. What is this all about? It's a matter of rage and fear, where the moving grass or built suburbia frontier is a wave prison; where depth perception reverses; caged flight. With ambiguous vases it's as if part of the brain is unable to reach a firm conclusion and passes alternatives along for a decision on other grounds. The goblet-and-face contour moves as it forms in your seeing.

A bibliography has been added as a resource in the back of the book, and has been kept as simple as possible to emphasise some of the indirect perception involved in making *Brixton Fractals*. This is not intended as an itinerary for suggested further reading, or a listing to give authority to the text. It is to thank those who have taken part in the perception and memory that have made the text, and to keep open the opportunity to hear them. I have cross-referenced the poems with the bibliography, but because the poems in *Brixton Fractals* take part in interference and transformation patterns with each other, separating the Resources into twelve poem-groups appeared to be unrewarding.

The chronology of the poems is generally alphabetically indicated. I wrote 'African Boog' first, and 'Boogie Woogie' was already drafted for the Second Set of *Gravity as a consequence of shape* before publication of the First Set, *Brixton Fractals*. In between times the ordering shuffles a little. The titles derive directly from the itineraries of dances in my *Ideas on the culture dreamed of*.

# 1. Brixton Fractals



## Banda

Took chances in London traffic  
where the culture breaks  
tone colours burn from exhaustion  
emphasised by wind,  
looking ahead for sudden tail lights  
a vehicle changes  
lanes into your path and birds,  
over the rail bridge, seem purple.  
A mathematician at the turn of the century  
works out invariant notions in a garden  
every so often climbs a bike,  
makes a figure eight around  
rose beds to help concentration,  
then returns to the blackboard.  
The schemers dreamed a finite language  
where innocence became post experiential  
believing the measurable, ultra-violet from a lamp,  
isolated sunlight curvature  
made false language what can be done  
to separate  
from perception.  
In a dream apparently without volition  
a car burning and  
watch myself there  
sealed-in beneath a smog dome  
uncertain what to try for next.

Midnight: a solo of the Nightingale. Great silence.  
Open a gate  
against hinged pressure of rust,  
white pigment to denote reflected light.  
Singularity burgled up the drainpipe,  
a busy rush pursued tenderness at its slats  
padlocked into pastoral quicksilver.  
“If one of my students should one day rear children

in a better way  
Surround myself in music, that is physically  
forget the dream as a move towards preventing  
objectification of vision.  
Legal power, completion, smothering,  
on the shelf flashpowder and a can.  
Practice to assist improvisation  
holds onto the pattern of railings  
a super-structure of sound-curve symmetry  
recognised, and examined, by autodidacts.  
A bunch of type in my palm  
populates fixed compartments.

Exasperation from a lack of clarity  
sighs towards singular objectives  
trapped into them  
without realising  
the peripheral fleets  
glanced at knowingly  
as an indefinite refusal  
of euphony,  
or until the variety gets coded  
into an analytic container  
dropped from a winch onto the quay  
When the road shifted  
one part lowered  
then pushed out a halting arm  
over the ridge  
carrying a reflex camera  
to record the wonderful.  
A recollection of a hill so far from London  
I burnt lying  
in a dream for thirty minutes  
and woke in a grove of oranges  
smelling of eucalyptus.

The up and down different to anyone  
gravity  
or opposes anthropologists of science.  
It took six minutes for the exercise  
and the lot was cordoned off,  
Water Lane  
to Brixton Oval,  
our future in the air  
over the walkway busted polystyrene  
scattered,  
a sonata for piano and jetplane,  
cooperatively struct,  
now a mount of cars piled behind a subsiding dyke.

4 a.m. the Hedge Sparrow, shriek of the Hoopoe,  
the Song Thrush on trumpet,  
a large ball rolls by  
hits the sentry box  
and the road opens.  
On one side a ley line buckles  
into the wall of 'The George',  
in the machine a solenoid blows  
a rush of green vans and police weapons  
send the needles into peak  
and damage the Dolby.  
Your freckles expand and you blush,  
a black clock and two batteries,  
my fingers tingle to let the blood back  
we roll over  
temporal inversions or points of view  
burn the air,  
and memory, slatted into alternations,  
begins to rely on the instrument panel  
as well as the force  
felt in the chest

as speaker loudness increases.  
The explanation of the universe gets  
considered as shared awareness and truth  
a bucket with a hole in it slops suds over  
the top of a tiled floor  
until we switch it off.

Two electricity lines,  
three gas mains,  
carry enough energy across the walkway  
for two sets of loudspeakers  
face each other across the  
dancing  
visitors at an island of science  
see the primitives at work  
describe the utility of pilot lights.  
The furniture in the room appears to be stationary.  
I am half sick of shadows  
under pressure of personal feelings  
a poet crushes a carton marked 'Shredded Wheat'  
in a corn field,  
calls it a poem.  
Laid out on the lawn  
exhausted  
the burden of personality lost  
in untimed contemplation  
independent of unified law  
uses signs for other  
than what they signify  
by filling navel with powder  
and exhaling a cough.  
I suppose it is in me and coming out.  
The quantum leap  
between some lines

so wide  
it hurts.

The shelf falls from the balcony  
shatters,  
erupted aluminium silicon  
scratches airliner windows.  
Two water mains, three petrol pipelines,  
a large sewer  
in the walkway,  
where a tree has broken paving,  
build a fire  
and get the kettle started.  
“The fact is,  
when ole bill came along,  
we brassed him up.”  
You know, all I wanted was to recover  
without retrenching.  
The pipes don’t appear to be busted  
Just keep it open  
I’ll go down and see if it comes through.  
Telephone wires, and a mile of new road  
cross purchased fields  
Listen to the echo  
of wings’ fizz  
before we get to them  
and resistance  
in the reduction to utility  
and functions.  
Fraught, but underneath it  
resistance without armour  
as if that were possible,  
following a wire stretched across the page  
until pen drops off the right edge,

and face  
the red background  
in the morning  
noting where it came forward  
in front of a glass bottle  
to restate the four-colour problem  
broke it there by facing it  
The yellow and black road bar  
lifts to an angle congruent  
to the prison roof.  
Bird carpets in the hay  
wood. Noon :  
great silence  
haywire.

Began to decide how to perceive  
Dreamed once of where we were going  
too precise about direction  
said, That's the way to the city, but  
I wouldn't start from here, if  
I were you  
knowing what could be meant in the clang shack  
bolted upright  
just before the bell came  
steel wheels on steel rails  
run through the lounge.  
It's the city alright  
felt in the tropai of directions  
the joy and worry in a traveller's back  
back from market with vegetables  
incapable of doing harm  
Leaning the bar into a distribution curve  
at the chicken jerk chally  
across from the betting shop  
or as if based on notions of we have