

Terrain Seed Scarcity

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Terrain Seed Scarcity

POEMS FROM A DECADE

PETER LARKIN



PUBLISHED BY SALT PUBLISHING
PO Box 202, Applecross, Western Australia 6153
PO Box 937, Great Wilbraham, Cambridge PDO CB1 5JX United Kingdom

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First published 2001

Printed and bound in the United States of America by Lightning Source

Typeset in Swift 9.5 / 13

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ISBN 1 876857 08 0 paperback

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Introduction to this Edition

We know about scarce things, they are all around us, not scattered so very much but simply persistent enough not to be primary or dominant. They assist us towards a landscape of non-insistence. This is not a place out of the way of the oppressive so much as the difficulty of the places we know which, while not being merely residual, lack any tenor of perfect or dispersive abandonment. Scarcities like this fix on a poetry until it comes to be haunted by the idea of what scarcity might be on behalf of, as a way of spending 10 years in the world: this has been most of my writing of the 90's. Scarcity as an unconditional re-emerged for many of us after ecology rescued it from being only an economic effect, but scarcity in the West remains inseparable from a notion of damage. The sense of the scarce also continues a motif in late modernism, which itself had eked out the more ancient thread of a spirituality of reversals, which in this case are slight enough to become the encounters and re-attachments subversions are not. But for me pronouncing a scarcity in what is needed to sustain life both physically and spiritually has been firstly a poetic argument, a way of getting something to appear and ramify in poetry. Such a scarcity is exploratory and speculative simply by being the lesser result or diminished arrival of what is, nonetheless, expected and recognised by us, but it is not a fixed term of mourning. If a thing is scarce it's there, rare for contemplation and happening for praise. Perhaps it might be the natural or spiritual world answering human desire with some offer of its own, one which feels slight because it *must* be taken up. And if that offer of belonging (within a manner of scarcity) to a world desired can't be written out as an absence, then it must be opened up to by means of an array of lesser differences. To be insufficiently with what is given to us is not to be detached from it: it may be a token by which to experience the unbrokenness of roots (along a specifically historic

etiolation) through and towards a common landscape. Scarcity is then free to emerge within poetry as the finitely hospitable horizon of rarity and mystery; as the condition through which desiring a world magic can be made fruitful, or be its preliminary seed of contemplative devolvement. It is a turn through the initiatory blindness of root towards a scarcely representable gesture of dedication (never to be fully embedded in any material text as such, and so another lesser presencing). Because that dedication exists on behalf of a plenitude made availably slight to the gifts of nature and origin, it is unbrokenly tenuous, or tenacious where broken at the horizon's sacral wedge: yes, *that* fragment.

May, 2000

Author's Note

This collection brings together the complete texts of six chapbooks published between 1992 and 1998, together with two new texts never published in their entirety before (*Whitefield in Wild Wheel* and *Spirit of the Trees*) which date from the very end of the decade. I begin this collection with eight poems from *Scarce Norm, Scarcer Mean* (1992), the volume in which the preoccupation with scarcity first surfaced. Also included are the original introductions or accompanying essays (shortened in some cases) which may or may not be useful to a reader, but which are offered as a way of sharing some of the self-interrogations I found consoling at the time. My way out could be a reader's way in.

For their stimulating feedback and support over the past ten years or more I would like to thank Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein, Paul Buck, Tom and Laurie Clark, Simon Lewty, David Marriott, Anthony Mellors, Drew Milne, Tom West and John Wilkinson, and I also thank Anthony Barnett and Paul Green for typesetting or publishing involvements with some of the original texts.

For the present collection my grateful thanks go to John Kinsella for suggesting it and to Chris Hamilton-Emery for help with collocating and editing the texts.

From Scarce Norm Scarcer Mean

(1992)

Call for mere entropy induced
bargate off intensity of access
solar wave more floe than stock

the choke at the environmental sink

renewable is no non-scarcity

If friction isn't recyclable
its complexity 'within' supplants
a greater win to fall, atomic
change of attachment evenly scarcer
from full

Engineer nature in non-
mutual control, the scarcity phases
of spoil, more new loan types?

Where will one park to waste?

Performances of nature alike, the amount to get it to do

To set a grange wholly onward beside rarestander
solitude like an arrear of number upon scarcity

Facticity already the period street of . . . interior
or neaping whether given us despite green of less

in a giantism there we have our waver
upon pure-spot not to incur common-otherwise
than aspect of scarcer material

unrare as the child liking out these weeds
in choicest concrete, scarce our nature
a species-followant signs in file

Of which these are relatives of the so poor reachable

Scarce of means ubiquitous, what
sweet thrown noise to the frangent offgoers of place

Allotments seed a smaller by quantity
from mean product to allotment of scarce

Stationary a state given way toward insult of thirst
fondly warded with strict angling for the necessity of it

long unglad homogeneous, not to good of refuge
but its admittance, immobile tie
at the rake unvitiated

a disutility of incomparable dwelling
intervene abode into nature

at the meek of a fitness detriment

Aggressed at resource, no prize in variables of scarcity
intercomomic purity depends from a cultic dens-
ity expugned by reward, the shavings subcast

The pure is stemmed with valve, clean infoliate
to quell equivalent of entire world weight

For disabundant pure, limited tread in risk support

From unshorn opportunity leave the site scarce-adorned