

Collected Poems

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JOHN TEMPLE



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For Ghislaine

and for Allen, Stephanie and Colin

for good friends lost / along the way

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Author's Note

In this voluntary act of carrying forward, [i.e. thought], this passing from objective to subjective, it is impossible to say just where historical forces end and ours begin, and strictly speaking the question is meaningless, since there is history only for a subject who lives through it, and a subject only in so far as he is historically situated.

Whatever incidental solace this might offer an author confronted with a lyric 'I' swanning around long after the witching hour, it would clearly be pure casuistry to use Merleau-Ponty's words here, to deny or extenuate, say, the misogyny in *Call it Margaret*. I abandoned an airbrushed version of that text for the—more uncomfortable—original, only when I realised that effectively softening implication in and with the presumptive mind-set of Chabrol's butcher, was simply privileging 2002 over 1964, from motives somewhat less lofty in retrospect. I hope that's not in itself casuistical. *First Throw* was also on my mind.

Time brings in its revenges in any case. Half a lifetime away a word recurs, unbidden as they (used to) say, irony fiercely refocussed onto the implied speaker.

And with irony itself increasingly a luxury item, elsewhere I've erased a four-syllable word in a purblind bid 'to live long rather than live well'.

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Personne n'est sauvé et personne n'est perdu tout à fait.

