

# JAMES BROOK

## Confidential Agent

the ship moved toward the garden as if the body shrieked  
a team was returning in slang or dialect  
his memories rather middle-aged in that bar he could never understand  
shouted *with your permission*  
an edge to tramp  
gulls above  
his head down beside the rail like a map of trenches (underline tenderness)  
a part of him was your skin stripped from you like an insult  
cold like himself  
collar turned up  
yourself  
you could trust yourself  
the fog a young female voice wedged in a corner  
(what is the fog in the throat  
a father to remember his name)

\*

chain  
low gate  
initial letters  
couldn't even remember his name in a railway station  
of nerves to rob him  
of the barrier between classes  
when faces shrieked again  
when people carrying suitcases  
from tooth-brush to smithereens  
underhanded platform  
his dull authenticated papers  
a stranger's face grinning at the camera

\*

exactly what  
bowler hat

some indifferent mistake  
afters the war

\*

something pineapples  
for pleasure forged  
a citizen coal and diamonds

foggy  
dull  
hole

\*

I shall be the quickest a missile a foreigner  
over the car  
penetrated  
a hill in wartime  
a ditch in our country  
pretty unreality  
a bell in the fog again  
you mean  
you mean separated

\*

was peace to flatten things as good as war  
the fog again  
the number had been an eye on him  
or one last sou in the girl's hand like a résumé infection  
to shake to be shot to feel a blank wall  
good lines he'd say  
downstairs the only men with electric charge turned and turned  
turned a different fist  
dried meat in mirror time  
her hand clutches a penny dipped in sullen wine as if poetry  
whatever prison cell  
a specimen in his movements

\*

melancholy in the throat  
is the word *careful*  
with a hand splayed on the spine  
with a refusal like prison

\*

Dilettante body labels stuck on the woman he loves,  
In her possessions and caresses, a cold platform absurd as a holiday party  
Where time comes undone and untouches.

\*

The garden is your permission  
an edged trust  
young as dialect  
hitting the rail in that bar  
head down  
tender  
in slang  
in throat  
his member middle-aged  
a part of himself that asks your permission

Edged up you like him  
you like his memories  
(underline the fog in a map of the body)  
shrieked from your skin in femalect

His head down beside the garden just as young as  
his throat  
turning in as if trenches railed like an insult  
cold rails like himself  
which could be what's in his name  
or the tender part of his name

\*

dull as the platform, he of the camera, chained to dull gated papers  
initial letters couldn't even authenticate (remember the camera)  
a grinning garden of faces (no spot of garden)  
hurrying suitcases and a stranger robbing just him  
the barrier between one and the other  
underhandunderhanded again, low gate