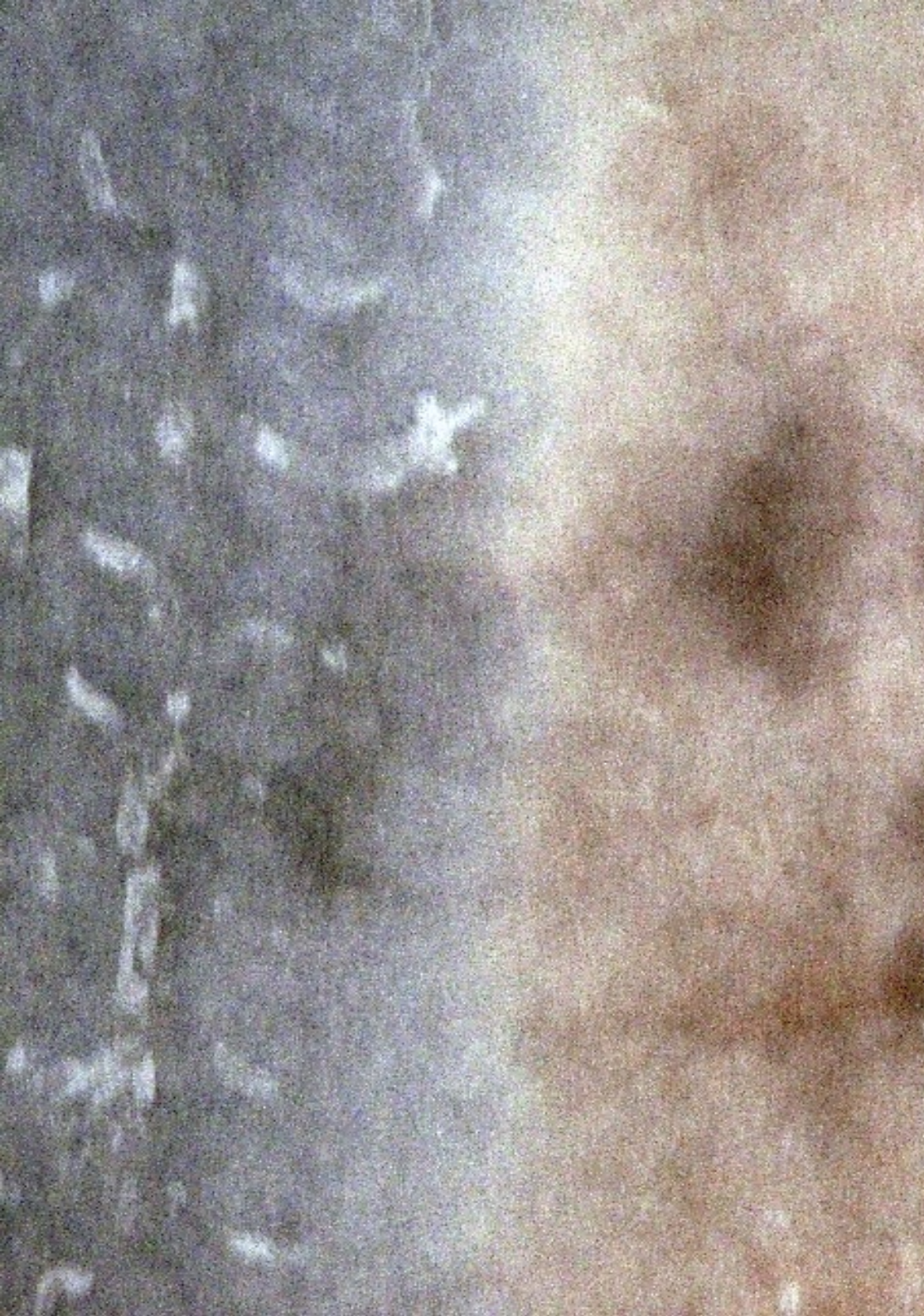


# Papakura Post Office

a spazmodical



Leun' Deun: (notre brick)





LEUN'DEUN:  
(notre brick)

POETRY AS URBAN SHAMANISM



1. Urban shamanism is a poetics, originating in London, that seeks to reconnect poetry with its aboriginal light. (Leun'Deun is the antidote to 'la Londonisation')



2. Taking its cue from Ivan Chthlegov's lament 'We are bored in the city. There is no longer any temple of the sun', urban shamanism has arisen out of the psycho-geographical movement. (Psychogeography now brands itself as 'a brand'.)



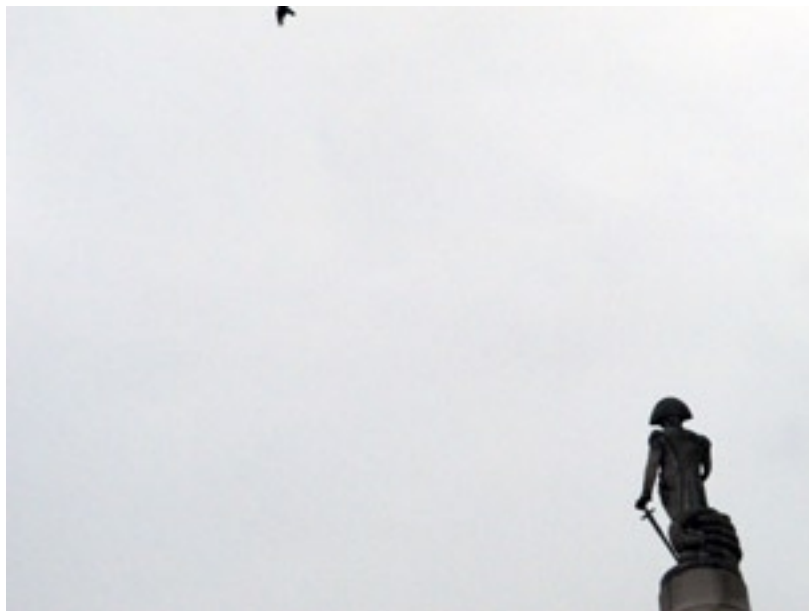
3. Urban shamanism rejects the materialism that was psycho-geography's Marxist/Situationist coping-stone. We do not wish to fight materialism with materialism. Of the political isms, eco-anarchism is the least backward, the most restorative.



4. Prose sells; the poetry is culverted, forming a system of underground rivers.



5. Urban shamanism calls for artistry over academia, mysticism/magic/mythology over Marxism, and imagination over conceptualism.



6. The work is bohemian. It is aware of the incarnations and reincarnations of bohemia: Dionysians/Orphists/Pythagoreans, Sufis/Haiku masters/Troubadours, Amaurians/Free Spirit/Ranters etc. ‘What is going on is a war between those who believe in poetry and those who don’t’ (Neil Oram).





7. The poetry is multi-stylistic rather than mono-stylistic. English is empathy. It is less about finding your voice than finding your voices.



8. 'The poet, a magician with insecurity' (Rene Char). Magical knowledge is needed to decipher the environs — Centrepoint, Bank, Canary Wharf, Temple — as well as such London-based poets as Shakespeare, Blake, Rimbaud, Yeats. What is sought is not hocus-pocus but accidental magic.



9. The builders of the superstructure need to be at least as serious as the builders of the infrastructure.



10. Urban shamanism is a tradition as ancient as the city itself. The first poems of antiquity to come down to us are 'city laments' e.g. 'The Lament for Unug'. City poetry — on cuneiform tablets — was the first to conserve itself.







11. Though a London occurrence, the formula is applicable in any city. Charles Olson: 'Polis is this'.



12. Poets go 'beyond the gentility principle' by mixing spirituality with scurrility. The bourgeois is wary of either, terrified of both. Misunderstanding mummifies the work for the later Egyptologists.



13. Urban shamanism — like Surrealism — is an artists' ism rather than an academics' ism. It cannot be done in universities; it can only be done on the streets.



14. Poetry needs to rediscover its real/wild/raw/mad emotions, the spirit of the Dark Lady sonnets. The poem should be a crime of passion. 'Radical heart-search' (Jonathan Griffin).



15. Urban shamanism is avant-garde/mainstream/performance in one e.g. Allen Ginsberg, Amiri Baraka, Anne Sexton. Poetry is not a genre, nor divisible into genres.



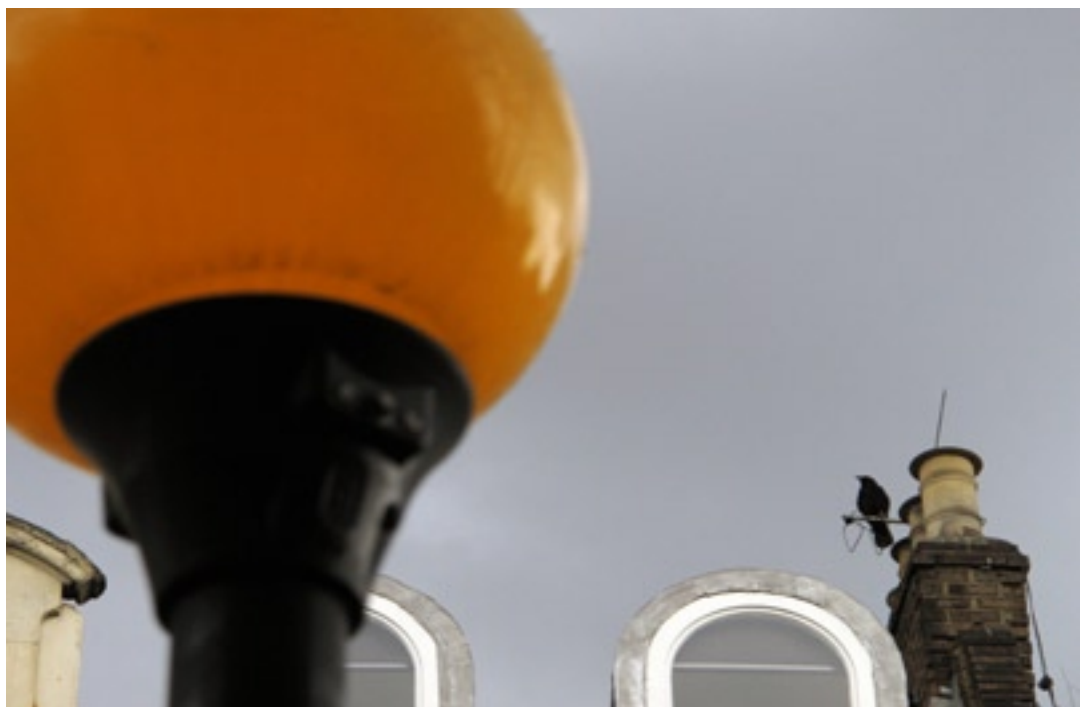
16. Poetry is an audiovisual art, not a competitive sport or an academic discipline.



17. Post-Larkin social realism is dull as CCTV. The city is suspended between New Jerusalem and Dis. One of theology's debates is between 'approfondimento' (the metaphysical) and 'aggiornamento' (the quotidian). City poetry needs both.



18. As in the city our oxygen is polluted, so too the poetry is polluted. It contains negativity, poison, darkness, lead. 'Air can hurt you too' (David Byrne).



19. Story/poem/song: the trinity is indivisible. Poets are also storytellers and songwriters. The lyric is a microcosm of the epic. Concept poetry lacks Zoas.



20. Glossolalia, echolalia, coprolalia... There is no such thing as bad language, only bad usage.



21. Urban shamanism seeks out sacred sites and spaces, turning them into ad hoc shrines. Crossbones Graveyard/William Blake House/Cleopatra's Needle/The Isis-Urania Temple are outdoor theatres par excellence.



22. No uniform politics or political uniforms. Non-conformism doesn't conform even to itself. Poetry in the first decades of the third millennium — as in the 1930s/40s — needs to be political.



23. Poetry should be numerological as well as numerical.





24. Radical pedestrianism is in. The writer is untied from the writing-desk and forced back onto the streets. 'Pedestrian' is no longer used as a critical term. (Poetic driving-licenses are obtainable from The Poetry Society.)



25. Psychogeography/psychohistory/psychoarchitecture/psychoarcheology are less about heritage than illumination. Rimbaud's London prose-poems: Illuminations. 'Juger la profondeur de la ville', to gauge the depth of the city (or literally, to judge the profundity of the city...) The city is a dig.



26. Free verse and formal verse are techniques. One improves the other. Inspiration comes in both. If the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E and New Formalist poets swapped, it would instantly raise the general standard of poetry.



27. The London of the 21st century, shrouded in twin shadows of Jihad and bankruptcy, should be reflected in the London poetry. 'The City of Assassinations' (Blake).





28. It is not about calling yourself a shaman; it is about recognising that poetry is shamanistic, a DIY magic.



29. A poem should aspire to be a Gesamtkunstwerk (total work of art) i.e. not a Wagnerian opera but an artwork that evokes all the artforms.



30. Lyric/satiric, the Celtic tradition allows for tenderness of lyric and ferocity of satire. The bards were capable of regime-change.



31. Urban shamanism is Judeo-Apache. It speaks for the oppressed against the oppressors. Bible studies and 19th century French poetry are a staple diet. John Fire Lane Deer: 'Artists are the Indians of the white world'.



32. Urban shamanism welcomes the Transition Town movement to the urban centres, and looks to the greening of the city. Ecopoetry, a fusion of nature poetry and political poetry, can also be urban. (Further reading: 'Living in Falmouth' by Peter Redgrove).

In sure and certain hope to rise  
and claim her mansion in the skies,  
a Christian here her flesh laid down,  
the Cross exchanging for a Crown.

33. Christ and the Christian Mysteries are essential to poetry. Christendom is our dragon, longer in the tooth than capitalism. David Gascoyne: 'Christ of Revolution and of Poetry'.



34. Poetry is charismatic language.



35. Art is outrageous because life is outrageous. Shock for shock's sake is disposable. Overstatement, statement, understatement are tools – but it requires the poet to have something to say. Why has poetry ceased to be controversial?



36. The city is also polluted by thoughts, non-stop emissions from the ten million cerebellums of Greater London. Jung called it 'urban neurosis'. The psychosphere is a collective consciousness, a mass-mediated group mind. The poet handles such toxic materials.



37. The committee of urban shamanism is comprised of Shakespeare's falcon, Blake's tiger, Rimbaud's toad, Yeats' swan.





38. In Celtic/Latin/Slavic cultures the heavyweight poets are appreciated. In England, the flyweights/bantamweights/featherweights are more prominent.



39. Urban shamanism is a method for re-reading and re-writing poetry. Past/present/future are mined for aheadness.

40. London is, etymologically, Lud Dun i.e. the Stronghold of Lud, a pan-European solar deity celebrated in Lyons, Leyden, Lugano, Luneburg etc. Rimbaud's name for London— Leun'deun — unveils the camouflage.  
The Great Mind/Great Memory/Symbol of Symbols, Leun'deun is notre brick.





ANNOTATIONS TO NIALL McDEVITT'S  
LEUN DEUN (notre brick) – POETRY AS URBAN SHAMANISM

[notes from an Iconophobic quarter of the same Antinomian City.  
Sections from McDevitt are followed by annotations in italics.]

3. Urban shamanism rejects the materialism that was psychogeography's coping-stone. We do not wish to fight materialism with more materialism.

*- No, not with more of the same spurious 'materialism' fought against, but with another kind altogether. Dawkinites & technocrats are not materialists but idolators, shamelessly superstitious worshippers of their own Spirit, the scientific Subject with divine power to see Objects as such. What could be less material – more sacral – than the abstract persons projected (whether as rational actors or behavioural cases) by economic modelling? What could be more superstitious than belief in these projections? Technical priesthood blesses material punishment, blaming suffering on the weak, sick or sinful Spirit of sufferers who fail to live up to the projections. The priestly policy that follows is still, today, called SACRIFICE.*

*- Elective spiritualists may be sincere partisans of the sufferer, but words that set up sacred Objects and Figures risk accepting Law and Sacrifice, however inadvertently. Thus A.A. Dun: "we are all 100% responsible for our own reality".*

4. Prose sells; the poetry is culverted, forming a system of underground rivers.

*- Unsaleable prose is undersold here. Its system of underground rivers is poetry. Bad poetry is worse prose.*

5. Urban shamanism calls for artistry over academia, mysticism/magic/mythology over Marxism, and imagination over conceptualism.

*- Academia is mysticism/magic/mythology of the worst kind. Imagination must take sides in bloody war between particular concepts (one example among others: Marx). Imagination set up against concepts in general is idolatry: mere images, endorsing Newton's dualism by retreating to the 'irrational' side of it.*

7. The poetry is multi-stylistic rather than mono-stylistic. English is empathy.

*- Empathy is ventriloquism with police powers.*

*It is less about finding your voice than finding your voices.*

*- Or being found by them, including but not only in the pathologized sense. Multi-voiced, multi-styled poetry laughs at the presumption of empathy and shows why it never captures its intended victims.*

9. The builders of the superstructure need to be at least as serious as the builders of

the infrastructure.

- *For this and other reasons, poetic materialism and 'politico-religious poetry' are not opposed but interdependent. Their dialectic is played out at extremes (sometimes both at once): Milton, Blake, Heine, Pasolini, O'Hara, Howe.*

17. Post-Larkin social realism is dull as CCTV.

- *Yes, but contemporary CCTV poetry (and prose/video/social networking etc.) rarely bothers with anything so impersonal as social realism. More deeply invasive/confessional auto/surveillance is the approved style.*

20. Glossolalia, echolalia, corprolalia... There is no such thing as bad language, only bad usage.

- *Yes! Or: there is no language outside usage. Unarticulated words, priced morally as good or bad, are data particles and shrines of superstition.*

21. Urban shamanism seeks out sacred sites and spaces, turning them into ad hoc shrines. Crossbones Graveyard/William Blake House/Cleopatra's Needle/The Isis-Urania Temple are outdoor theatres par excellence.

- *Flee shrines, theatres and units of information. Every separate ceremony, every disarticulated thing, is a potential data-feed, prosecution evidence in waiting.*

27. The London of the 21st century, shrouded in twin shadows of Jihad and bankruptcy, should be reflected in the London poetry. 'The City of Assassinations' (Blake).

- *Those two shadows – Jihad (understood strictly as repudiation of self) and bankruptcy (consequent repudiation of Schuld-debt-guilt) – are double-sided.*

Matthew Hyland



Yes, the city is antinomian, the most important recognition.

Yes, many materialists are idolators and superstition-mongers. I mean the Marxist academics, the Dawkinsian flocks, the Socialist Workers, the fundamentalist atheists who preach on every street corner, lefty immigrants fresh from the Ukraine who are delighted to see the English silverback – Darwin – on the £10 note, and anyone who has allowed themselves to be beheaded of their mystical intellect. All belief-systems are religious anyway, especially if they are secular. If I cannot have a mystical idea without being savaged by pitbulls, I know I am in a mythological situation, probably Greek or Egyptian.

I am grateful to the commentator for reprimanding my neglect of Dun's comment 'we are all 100% responsible for our own reality.' This is surely the blindest of his



statements. Dun is a proponent of a type of urban shamanism which I do not like. But remember: 'No uniform politics or political uniforms.' Urban shamanism can go right or left. Blake took it left, Eliot took it right. Dun's 'Kings Cross' mantra has turned him into a Christian Monarchist.

The two philosophies – the Perennial and the Millenarian – don't always go together. I think they should. As they do in Blake and Rimbaud, if not in Shakespeare and Yeats.

Yes, plenty of prose writers would turn out their own empty pockets. I am saying, among other things, that the poetry of psychogeography has been completely neglected. Public discussions of psychogeographical writing are all to do with Sinclair, Home, Ackroyd, Self etc Prose prose prose.

Imagination is not the Golden Calf, it is the testament itself. Norman Cohn's Revolutionary Millenarianism and Mystical Anarchism helps us to understand how the

mystical was jettisoned by Marx and co.

Marx offers a 'human abstract' as Malthus did, as a corrective to Malthus. Left-wing philosophy is humane, but left-wing poetry is human. Ginsberg's poems are jam-packed with real human beings. In Marx you get a bourgeois who is sleeping with another bourgeois's wife.

I don't swear by polyphonic poetry or think it's obligatory. I believe in empathy.

For an Irishman to say 'English is empathy' is perhaps saying something. Julian Jaynes: the bicameral mind and its voices. Clairaudience. The ear is empathy too.

Let the golden builders build but not if it's for St George or St Edward. Larkin is



England's Tory jester. England doesn't know itself poetically because it is only so slowly assimilating the work of David Gascoyne, England's greatest 20th century poet.

Blake's birthplace is sacred, but Westminster Council – like the commentator – didn't think so and so bulldozed it.

War on Terror vs Jihad is a politico-religious war, and the poetry of the this era needs to attain to that level also....

Niall McDevitt









# LEUN 'DEUN

1  
jobless  
I inhale the sun  
    (honey guillotines)

in the Sumerian city I walk upside down  
by a noiseless river  
    trees  
    with noises of rivers

bluebottles

dove o'clock

two testaments  
    Ark and Cross  
    on the  
    intellectual skyline

people on their own wings fly

public buildings sold off  
public houses closed down  
    buy-curious  
    bored to debt

ears  
take us to the core of the city's layers  
    the tombs  
    the feet of joggers

as the bells call  
we look to Jerusalem south of the river  
in a grapefruit panorama

honey cascades in it  
o the ochre  
skin-shedding  
gash

2  
la Londonisation:

a non-conformism  
of coffee-shops  
a baptism  
of  
ads

but in towers  
doors slam  
(echo)  
of a mystery people

and in the airplanes I hear Charles Ives'  
'unanswered question'  
slide

security van  
LOOMIS

pigeons lapping  
vomit

streets carpeted in newspaper

3

Leun'deun:

office blocks in sun

in the city's  
microwave oven  
a slowness  
(microwave minutes)  
parked car  
contains an African family

a vessel for Tum

these are the sands

these are the silences  
of druids

doves in spikes

23 celsius

the sufferings

evaporate

4

aggiornamento / approfondimento

rays

eyes  
look into a thousand windows

sacred space  
'TO LET'

unhappy hour

the giant 'insane' rastafarians  
loungue on flags  
as ambulance crews  
come to inject them

this altitude  
is best for peregrines  
black-yellow-grey

tyres rub the tar  
to fat  
comfortable as token animals

under a  
VEDETT parasol  
the city's inert honeycomb  
foxes jump fox corpses  
to a tenement drum

jobless  
I inhale the sun  
limbs lit  
(rivered)

this peace astounds

this haunted  
leisure

*Niall McDevitt*





**LEUN'DEUN: (notre brick)  
Poetry as Urban Shamanism  
a manifesto by Niall McDevitt  
with  
Photographs by Max Reeves**

**Notre Brick Thrower  
Annotations (after Blake) by Matthew Hyland**

**Response by Niall McDevitt**

**LEUN'DEUN by Niall McDevitt**

**Other Photos by Max Reeves**

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**Think Small!!!**

