

John the Explorer Venturesinto Mental States

Stones and pages
must be turned over:
John has a need to know.
The face of all worlds
must be questioned,
bland
electric wires
must be touched. Once.
The green-black ivy berry tasted.
Once.
The woman's smiling invitation
accepted. Once.
The man's challenge...
Once.
John has to know
what lays beyond
the blue shield of day,
behind the few words
that are spoken.
John has to be more than
bumped-about victim
of his circumstance:
John has to know
why he needs to know:
John has to explore.



Forehead
pressed into
the cold
soft flesh
of the dead
one's breast
John tries
to push
himself
inside
where the
booming
drum of
life had
declared
each second
past, each
second to
come. Nose

to nose John stares
into eyes that
will not look away
that will not blink
will not dilate. With
a finger, and thinking
to do it, John taps the

John the Explorer Venturesinto Bodily States

The sky is in his stomach
is a high high blue today
scraped clean by fast
scratched-thin clouds.
Arch-ribbed
this cave mouth
is populated by
flocks of bell-calling jackdaws
and tumble-gaming rooks.
White frost fits inside
his fingertips, but
grey rain is swamping his head
and his feet have become
their own brown puddles.
John, thus, has come quickly
to teeter over
the inner chasm of uncertainty.
One solution -
Opening his mouth double
double wide
he stretches back his neck
and swallows down
the obliterating sun,
blows out his cheeks in a burp,
and goes on.

....into Spiritual States

Having so read
John has decided that
his fate too is predetermined.
His compass points
to iceberg North.
Following,
covered only by
dogma, John
turns his back
to the sun.
The skin gets scorched,
blisters away in continents.
Frost bites
blackly into his fingers
and into his toes.
His heels pull
a white skin shadow
after him. But still,
through the hiss of snow pellets
and over the creak and crack of
packed ice, John goes on.
Because to change his mind now
is to deny himself. Only when
he arrives at North,
all magnetised needles
pointing to him,
only then can John decide
what's next.
He will cry out
that he is lost.

.....into Bodily States

Rising
the tiger reaches out inside his arms,
stretches sickle claws,
bends back neck and
widens mouth
in a spittle-string yawn.

Day, though, over-stimulates
over-demands, so
hidden in a stair-well corner
spider nerve-ends grow
from his fingertips,
twitch strands...
John, dry-eyed predator, lunges,
catches a husk of the past/future,
retreats to stair-well funnel web.
Contemplates.
Waits.

Makes escape
from building.
Horse gallops in his legs.
But
nudged about by
the moving crowd
back of John's face
a wolf cub yelps.

Horse
swaying impervious
on the bus.

Bear-walk home
through corridors

of night, an owl
hoots fear
out his mouth.

Alone at home the hyena
speedily clears his plate.
(In company the ape chatters
and grimaces, picks and pats)

Bedroom lair sees the angled tip
of a glistening red cock
protruding from soft belly fur:
John wears a pet dog's silly grin
and his thickened tongue slips
to the side of his mouth.



John the Explorer Venturesinto Bodily States

Inertia has made John passive
as the soil. Thighs and knees
are steppes receding to
an horizon of rounded toes.
Foreground
his penis erect can be
as spring-whippy as a sapling
or solid as an oaken stump. Limp
it is a silly smiling fungoid.
Out of his glub-gurgling abdomen
grows a bile-yellow speckling
of mustard flowers; from his navel
the spiked orange dahlia
of indigestion. While
over his chest
are daisies
bright as single ideas.
(For communication
butterfly visitors may alight
kiss with their black proboscis;
or slugs may leave trails.
All of which
can be ignored.)
A briar, however, takes root
over the whole of John's face,
becomes a complex contradictory idea
of thorns and overlapping petals.
(A rose, any rose, stimulates
more than one sense.)
His back cold and damp,
uncomfortable,
John moves.

.....into Bodily States

His mouth set in
numb acceptance,
a pillar of sponge,
John has stood so long
in the rain
that the drops beating in
through his scalp
are dribbling out through
his fingertips.

Bilious,
John's insides are liquid,
from the watery back of his tongue
to the open pipe of his rectum.

Cold as wet rock
John has lain so long
in the stream
that one crystal block
has moulded itself
to his shoulder,
another - tightening - has enwrapped
his waist and thighs.
(An inpouring
between his knees
ends in bubbled lace.)

Numb as a pond,
mouth set in
grim acceptance,
John stares into himself.

.... into Emotional States

The stout woman stands and looks down
on the smashed car. Windscreen
and roof have been squashed onto
the grey buckled seats. White metal
shows. Paint flakes circle the car
like sharp snow. Glass has become gravel.

The body of her son has been covered
in an orange blanket
and taken away.

The woman stands and looks.

A noise escapes John and his front dissolves.
He melts into the woman through her back.
Inside all is dark and a crying-out pain,
nothing to hold on to, no up, no down.

Bewildered, John flees
back to his own face;
looks out at
the woman standing
and looking down on
the flattened car.

.... into Bodily States

John knows that he must
investigate the mess,
but the closer he gets
his neck twists
his head away.
His body stays,
torso leant backwards.
The stink has his
nostrils
try to close - they though
have lost this ability.
Inside the voice of duty
commands him to
overcome his disgust.
A hand moves out from
the fortress of himself,
flinches back
the moment
before touch.
Engorged neck muscles
disfiguring his face
John forces himself to look.
And gags.
Stumbling away
he stooping
retches
recalls
last sight of it
and retches again.



**John the Explorer Ventures
.....into Emotional States**

She is gone.

In John grief burns
slow and bright as
gunpowder, its mass
lilac and uncritical.
Remembering that
she is gone
the black powder is
replenished,
burns metal-melt hot again.

She is gone.

In John grief wells
to just below
his swollen throat,
gets swallowed.
Wells again.

She is gone.

In John grief freezes
him awake. Every
long night he knows
he will never
sleep warm again.

She is gone.