

## Poetry Series

**STEPHEN BRIAN Brady**

**- 124 poems -**

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## **A Conversation**

a conversation  
with Muzac.

and words came  
tumbling from lips  
poster-size  
that filled the room

then soon  
as though for a shadow-play  
a magic-lantern show  
trailing threads of meaning  
performed in perfect disarray

and at the final curtain-call  
as the players drift away  
they listened to the music  
and what they'd tried to say

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **A bit-part at the audition**

the asp  
lay at the breast of  
another Cleopatra look-alike

disconcerted  
by the lack of poison  
at the back of his throat

he wondered  
what had befallen the Ass

since  
the biting  
came after te bathing

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **A Blast from the Past**

St. Tropez.

Apollo stepping-out  
from the radiator-grille  
of a Maserati sports saloon  
wiped away the flies  
in the dazzle-dazzle of that afternoon

perceived the dullness of the gold  
and less than white reflections  
in the boutique window

he paused  
regrets  
maybe a few

and distant thunder

edging forward  
in the ice-cream queue

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **A Child's-View Paris**

at the children's boating-lake Luxembourg Gardens  
to her father

I stood at the rails  
then you pushed me away  
and the breeze filled the sail  
that first day of May

and when I returned  
I saw in your face  
uncertainty there  
in that small crowded place

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **A God on a Quay**

fresh from arresting the sun's mad plunge into the sea  
Apollo from his plastic barstool on the quay  
surveys the scorchmarks on his Vauxhall Astra car

and clink goes the ice in his drink  
and a wink for the girl at the bar

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **A Little God**

encased inside his chrysalis  
ate beanshoots prunes and cod  
hung on for millenia  
that embryonic god

he found outside somanya  
miracles were required  
he stocked-up with lasagnia  
and chose to stay inside

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **A square in Rome**

in Piazza Majore  
we wait in a doorway  
slightly bemused on a hypotenuse

for our friends who are there  
from much lesser squares

as one of them scholarly  
leads in a corollary

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **A Talent-Competition**

Hotel des Lices St. Tropez

poolside on the evening of a languid day  
hot and sweet and cloying St. Tropez

the girl from Ecuador  
one of the final four

realized she'd lost her way

a seagull  
the hotel-dog  
and a chromium-plated bar-stool  
comprised the other three

and we  
reclining on brown and pink cushions  
flushed with vin rose

were disinclined to pander to the obvious

gave first prize to the bar-stool  
for the way he stood  
elegante  
and detache

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **A Wilderness of white**

venturing into the wilderness  
where marble-white and spirit-dead  
on the terrace of Olympus  
we open-up some Ancient's head

though more than a hint of sure extinction  
shadows of the gods that's in us  
are persuasive that it all aint said

from beneath the dust-sheets  
cry delusion  
not even a poster-peeling wall  
all you got is an intermission  
a flickering screen from in the stalls

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Abutterfly In Gion-Kyoto**

with small steps  
in the narrow lane  
so tight her wings  
another Spring

looks up  
with chalk-white face  
she's never meant to fly  
and cherry-blossoms hesitate  
in Gion there's a slate-grey sky

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Angel Footprints**

Angel footprints in the snow  
burned deep-spaced  
as though

and reluctant drag-marks of his trailing wings

yet it was the take-off point  
just a disturbance on the blanket white  
that was somehow  
just not apposite

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Angels in Paris**

Angels came in low  
haversacks for their wings  
at each corner of the square

admired their plate-glass reflections  
and only by the way they flew  
pigeons from the tower of Saint Germain  
seemingly aware

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **another last waltz**

hanging on by gravity  
we turn to face the sun

a long-legged arthropod  
is lightly stepping down  
across eternity

the cereals packet has been blindfold  
since it's declaration  
'18: 36 L1 WX.' et al.

the kitchen wall is Ballroom Blue.

this is Captain Kirk to Bridge,  
'lower defence-shields  
let the spider through.'

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Antiquaire's Paris**

at a sort of deconstruction site of the Golden Age  
full-frontal for the passing-trade  
a marble copy of a Greek  
exposing all his majestique  
on being sold to a dealer from Japan  
crashed the glass and away he ran

finally booked for loitering  
they overlooked his none last fling  
he'd spoiled a nymph with rampant foreplay  
in bas relief at the Musee D'Orsay

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## **armless in camera**

a speck of shadow  
blazes across her marble breast  
from East to West  
as Venus crosses the sun

and profoundly deep inside the digital pixelways  
even the delet button can't erase  
what's there to stay

mirrors the essential obscurity  
of her flaunting that which she can't display

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **as time unfurls**

along the pavement's edge  
tracking the sun  
holding on to preconceptions  
of bathing in the pool of light  
there between the chemist's and the charity-shop

and exotiques come down to drink  
display their true colours  
make music for the dancing-girls

and as time unfurls  
wonder what has changed

not the slate grey rooves  
or the red brick walls

and when the rain came  
only those sheltering beneath sodden umbrellas  
outside the street cafe  
paused and glanced back  
as they slowly moved away

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **At the Garden-Centre**

the snake whiles-away his summer afternoons  
tempting girls with apples at his stall

he'll take them home by sports-car  
if they fall

and wistful  
through the window

they're there on quiet days

just the lees of cold-black coffee  
and the clattering of trays

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Autumn**

white flowers  
shadows 'gainst a white wall  
all colour spent

here we hesitate  
haven't the nerve  
to bring to mind  
that which we might find  
behind a curtain in another room

traces of an old perfume

they turn away

we deflect thoughts  
of what it is too late to say

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Autumn Fayre**

at the Arts and Crafts Fayre  
one stall stripped bare  
had nothing on at all

across the hall from the refreshments room  
it could be seen  
inbetween the hanging- quilts and raffia mats

and there he sat  
tea-cup rattling on plate  
an octodegenerate  
eyes fixed on those long smooth legs  
he lingered at the dregs

then from his pursed lips  
the semblance of a sigh  
there was that taste now bitter-sweet  
and he can't remember why

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Autumn geese**

the small birds  
have gone  
nervous and twitching together

they sat on wires  
now underlining  
the spaces left for words  
which won't come

in the dark  
across gaps in the sky  
geesefly homing- in  
they cry this is our South

and I've been waiting  
holding the moon high  
over mud-flats  
at the estuary's mouth

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Backstage**

The Pantomime Horse  
in the theatre corral  
is proving unbroken  
a wayward cheval

he's trapped them inside  
at the rear and the front  
they're no longer amused  
by this equinine stunt

he's called for some wild-oats  
and now for a mare  
Oh who wrote the script  
for this torrid affair

so a Rodeo-Vet was hired for the day  
and thank God for the curtain  
and pretend bales of hay.

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Barking**

we don't believe this dog-talk  
it's howl and barking time  
there are no bones hidden here under the pines

no-one cast-up by the tide  
crawled this far  
to hide their soul's ragged sacks  
and they're not hanging  
coarse and cursing black

with the crows just out of reach  
dancing with Mephisto  
as he rides in from the beach

and the dogs pretend not to understand

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Bar-Maid Sent**

she spins the glass  
knows that guns blazing  
he'll come soon

at the ante-room  
to the crematorium and bar

the pale rider  
for no-one special  
just another regular

who'll exit  
lit-up by the fruit-machine

to the hitching-rail outside  
where  
hooves ascraps in the parking-lot  
awaits his final ride

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **beam me up Scotty**

beam me up Scotty  
I can't get in reverse  
we're heading for Nirvana  
or maybe somewhere worse

just get me off this planet  
we're orbiting too fast  
whizzing round in circles  
running out of gas

the Angel of co-ordinates  
alone behind the bar  
broke it to him gently  
the Starship's gone awa

now a lonesome voice comes driftin  
from the tumbleweed salon  
'can't you hear me Scotty  
it's me just hanging on'

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Blast-off**

remember when the echoing hurrahs  
signalled a few feet closer  
to the big screen beyond the stars  
when three banks of oarsmen  
would take the strain

now there's just another token blast of smoke and flame  
behind some scaffolding in a corner of forgottensville  
to break the morning's still  
and a side-swipe at belonging holding-on and fear  
from the juke-box in the corner  
at the eatery and pizzeria

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **blurrsville**

such a journey  
looking out from our carriage  
on this train

it's blurrsville  
'cos we're going too fast  
they're just reflections in your eyes

and you reach out  
attach stickers to the window

titles of old songs  
for me  
fragmented verses half-remembered tunes

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Canadel Cote d'Azur**

the Cyclops and the piano

on the terrace  
in the afternoon  
talk of war  
from the shadows

imagined they could hear  
not the beat of waves  
along the beach  
but the sounds of stumbling feet

was it only because of their graves  
those summer-visitors who'd  
stayed

and now his focused gaze  
as an Arabesque was played  
to where  
the palm-trees splayed crazed patterns  
and sunlight bursts staccato  
in the chill of lemonade

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **catwalk**

she's perfected the placement of each paw  
out from the alleyways of backyard walls  
balances on chalk-marks  
where the strobe-light falls

pussycats her shoulders  
at the back-cloth of applause  
wide-eyed and breathless  
at the sheathing of her claws

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **C'est Fini Paris**

words would only lie  
in the folds of table-cloth and die  
their eyes measured and withdrew touch  
across the wilderness of inner space  
they listened for the sounds of breaking through a wall  
clung hold to cups pale tasteless empty of it all  
and then they rose and flew  
slow wing beats trailing feathers  
from Cafe Temps Perdus

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Chess in the Luxembourg Gardens Paris**

the volunteering kings and queens  
enrobe behind a chequered screen

a bishop's caught in traffic  
just outside the gate  
and knights whose pennons snag the branches of the trees  
where hunched-backs on fold-up chairs  
crouching ill at ease

pawns not up for yet another fight  
dispersed to benches  
in the fading winter light

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Chess Musee Cluny Paris**

the White Queen  
close to where the Black Knight lay  
on the cobbles somewhere faraway  
deep inside the confines of the courtyard  
on that Summers day

knows that they're not all the same  
those look-alike pieces replacing the slain  
so the Unicorn sings from his tapestry frame

and we sit in the shade  
lean 'gainst the wall  
tapping our feet  
to nothing at all

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## Cinema

a face hangs at a parted curtain  
across a landing  
rain drips from the knife-slits of red lips

he smears the pock-marked door  
with the juice of bitter fruit  
in the street outside

would any of it seep sliverlike  
even if somehow  
it could bypass the tumblers in the lock

from his mouth a cry

and how ankle-deep  
it ran along  
the gutters of his grief

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Cinema-Cafe Talk**

seated in the front-stalls  
too close to the screen  
they lean across the table

out of focus  
try to lipread  
in the flickering white and blackness

and all the cinematic reel will show  
is that everything was scripted  
even the time to go

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Coat - Hanger Spring**

in Spring  
on the rail  
it's that love thing  
the white plastics pale  
a little  
as they contemplate  
the newcomer  
smooth-shouldered  
nicely curved at the throat  
pedigree a blazer  
not an anorak  
or coat

at the far side of the room  
the contents of the dressing-table drawers  
long-term residents  
know  
that hanging around  
with nothing on  
can only lead to one thing  
they've heard it all before  
that sound  
of wood and wire and plastic  
entangling  
behind the wardrobe door

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Cote de Take-care**

in the gardens of 'Preluscent Spor'  
the Eucalypsa lies  
and drolls each alternatory claw  
with pleasurable sighs

honey-sweet his lantern jaws  
those dentures flash and flay

it is a cuminside y'self  
and bring a frentoplay

then a Bourgeoisie of Cannes-on sea  
on this fallen afternoon  
did cast a dogline poodle loose  
and went to look too soon

from the hundred greens  
where light in stealth  
seeped in from the wine-dark sea  
the flicking tongue of the k reel sped out  
had Madame and pooch for tea

and the lead oh the lead  
that the hand had held  
wrenched free and snaked away in the grass  
has wound it's way round a sea-rail stay  
and flaps in alarm as we pass

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

### **COUS COUS COUS**

one perfumed night he'd cracked  
and halfway through her act  
the belly-dancer's drummer  
flipped and did a runner

from the Palace Crescent Restaurant Bistro and Grill

then a slightly over-the-hill  
alpha-minor diner  
thought he saw his chance  
a bit of Eastern promise  
a possible romance  
misinterpreted her glance

and so far as he was able  
he rattled at his table  
with knife and fork and spoon  
but a shadow crossed the moon

and someone sang Delilah  
in a far-off inner room

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Cribscene**

huddled together in the dark  
this was the night  
angels shepherds animals and kings  
just there wondering

in lantern-light  
and under neon signs  
still the baby sleeps  
and wakes  
two thousand times

and when he wakes  
what will he find  
the texture of straw  
faint sparklings  
from the starship of our minds

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **crowtalk**

crowtalk  
on the beach

not about

wave-patterns in the sand  
or sky-pools ankle-deep  
riding a ten-metre tide  
above the west wind

it was not about anything

with a shuffle of feet  
a turn of the head

just things which can only be said  
across billions of light-years  
by intergalactic megaphones in space  
in feathers and trainers  
said beak to face

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Daybreak**

with trumpets sounding  
banners unfurled  
we approach the bridge

give way to the night-coach

the river is the divide

we cross to the other side

make our mark on the stone

a nod, a gesture  
to the gatehouse  
in the poster-peeling wall

and from somewhere

fragments of suspicion  
and resistance to it all

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **Death of the Puppeteer**

the day the puppeteer died  
with gloved hands  
he thrust the shutters open wide  
while out at sea  
yachts edge balanced on the roof's red tiles  
straggling in single file  
and light explodes as he sings  
and drags his strings  
from the crooked white fingers on the bed  
a new world unravelling deep inside his wooden head  
somehow down the stairs  
across the hall  
the hotel dog draws back against the wall  
he finds the shade  
a slatted chair on the promenade

discovered near the carousel  
they hung him up to dry  
and there he dances in the wind  
with wild and staring eyes

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Departure Lounge**

whilst waiting  
on inauspicious days  
for flights

the Angel of extreme unease  
whispers to the departees  
things they wouldn't wish to hear

like 'pilot error'  
and 'faulty landing-gear'

and they see his shadow cross the wall  
in the terminal  
at the final call

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## **Dog days**

at the railroad-crossing  
music from the saloon  
with only a stray dog for company  
waiting to see  
faces pressed against windows  
as the train passes

a huddle of dark figures  
on a pathway through the trees  
from the crazed varnish of a winter-landscape  
and dogs yapping at their knees  
and even if they would  
nowhere to hide  
waiting for the conversation to subside

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Dreaming**

the way to get out of a dream  
is to jump

so he opened the carriage-door  
and to scream

he listened to the engine roar  
and the rush of smoke and steam

then they saw him  
flashing by  
arms waving  
learning to fly

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Dreams**

in winter  
dreams survive until mid-day

look up

see them as you pass  
suffocating  
pressed against the window-glass

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Early morning-Florence**

the angel raised his head  
sucked in rain  
and framed in an archway unfurled his wings  
shattered morning with his cries  
and light from his eyes  
burned deep into stone souls  
wakened the dead  
on walls  
in tombs and wombs in catacombs  
and the rooms of smart hotels

then hanging from an umbrella  
came billowing down the street  
a lady from Nebraska  
laid Euros at his feet

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Elephants**

those elephants  
I've never seen  
thick  
as incoherent dreams

born of clouds  
they fill the sky

dim the sun

deflate

then lie

sprawl their skinprints  
grey as tar

'tis shadowings

that's all they are

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Evening**

the Ford Mondeo  
sings  
softly treads across the garage floor  
listen  
as the robin hesitates  
and stars hang in the sycamores

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **Eyewitness**

Adapted from Chretien de Troyes  
'Le Conte du Graal le Roman de Percival

and the birds fell strangely silent before the Angels came  
approached him through the forest  
and he at a boyish game

then five Knights fully-armed came on at a walking pace  
and the noise of wood on iron resounded in that place  
how the branches of oak and hornbeam crashed against their shields  
and lances striking armour as the horses twist and wheel

and he heard their hauberks jingling as still they weren't to be seen  
then they came into the clearing and he saw it as a dream  
their bright and shining helmets scarlet and purest white  
and the gold and blue and silver and the sun was dazzling bright  
and he cried 'God have mercy' and a sign of the Cross he made  
and one of the Knights came forward, said 'Do not be afraid '.

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **From-To**

sun sets  
night falls

the Angel ran a few steps as he touched down  
next to the diesel-pumps  
on the service-station forecourt

shook his  
they would call them wings

just checking-in  
he made a celestial call  
please behave  
we can't afford another fall

then zipped inside his quilted anorak  
he hitched a lift

and unsurprisingly  
set some deluded girl adrift

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Hallowe'en**

high-up in the organ-loft  
Saint Anonymous  
where pillars of darkness  
hide his smooth white face  
weeps  
for the unarrivals

the pilgrims  
just off the beaten-track  
in the chromium-plated  
neon  
of the wayside diners

who almost hear his call  
from the juke-box in the corner  
and shadows on the wall

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## Hotel Olympic Plage

the moon across his shoulders  
listening to the silence of cicadas  
in the darkness of Aleppo Pines  
and the murmurings of shadows  
ascending the steps from the beach

there stands Apollo  
at the entrance to the cocktail-bar

how could it have come to this  
even the you know what  
has lost it's fizz

yet there's magic on this terrace  
civilisation's furthest reach

at the tips of Barbie's fingers  
it's rouge laque  
coral  
fuchsia  
apricot  
and peach

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **How could you**

graduate of a provincial Belly Dancing School  
Belinda barefoot on the tiles  
adjacent to her swimming-pool

evoked Salome  
for the 'coffee-morning set'  
and to polite applause  
removed the seventh veil

how the polystyrene dromedaries paled  
and the moon dipped low  
behind the cardboard minarets

yet Turkish-delight was spoiled it seems  
by what she did with the tambourine

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Hypnotized by fruit**

hypnotized by fruit  
staring into the bowl

certain kinds of truths out there

light-years away  
are perfect orbits  
round stars  
which won't decay

at my shoulder  
the plastique from cyberspace

he turns is smooth grey face

doesn't mention ripeness  
calls it 'sell-by-date'

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

**in time**

waiting for

in hope not expectation  
and outside  
that window in a wall  
things rush by  
to another set  
another script

soon  
you'll put down your cup  
think nothing of it

you to

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## **Into Liverpool**

from Formby beach

the ship on the horizon  
sails onto the palm of my hand

on the bridge  
they feel it tilt slightly  
as I reach out  
so far as the marker-buoys  
and into the river-channel  
at the Mersey-Bar.

in this greyist season  
acting without reason is....  
just ask Gormley's Iron Men

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **Just Do it**

how the doctrals of persubiance play  
on our tenuous grasp of meanderae

where haunted wishes tease and sway  
to the cymbalesque of hoomuspay

so cram your zest  
in a sinuous jar  
and feather your wings with aspidar

smear your skin with effelin  
and begoferate round a pedal-bin

today

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## **Kyoto**

staring out of the sun  
a yellow disc  
in a window above a hairdressers' salon

their mouths form words  
whose erratic flight  
stains the spaces in between  
in pastel shades

faces all anxious  
at what the changing light has made

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Kyoto old-town**

lunch in the Old-Town  
flown in six thousand miles

to see through a half-open door

him sullen  
peeling potatoes  
crouched on the red-tiled floor

he sees the bulge of my wings  
beneath my coat  
and sighs

Kyoto Spring is chilling  
as the egg-yolk breaks and fries

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **La Japonaise Paris**

Restaurant Musee D'Orsay

silver spoon of creme de choufleur soupe  
poised  
beneath the chandeliers  
even a spear of white asparagus  
might pierce  
the fluttering wood-moth  
as with upturned face  
it disappears  
once more  
somehow in woodfern lace

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Leave Naples and die**

Taxi to hotel Saraceni Positano

spiralling down to Positano  
oh Saint Ferrari guide him well  
locked inside our black Mercedes  
white teeth shining  
mouth of Hell

clinging hold of bougainvillaeas  
bold centurian wine-dark sea  
Saracens of Saraceni  
cast your nets and rescue me

diving deep with flattened pinions  
clawing fingers eagles thrust

veni vino  
grip Pirelli  
arriva sideways in the dust

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **ListenANGels**

Angels in fairyland  
cry out from a flat screen  
yet we hear not their voice

goats have no place here Erotica  
nor have merchants with their measuring implements  
we are labels children  
to us the moon weighs light  
starlit we balance with ease on the earth's rim  
from supermarket trolley  
to the folly of the pedal-bin

yet they persist

still you can sniff the air  
see how the sky slants in between the trees  
but of it all be well aware and ill at ease  
gouge out the mortar  
find cracks in the dark  
and from cock-crow to twilight  
pay heed when dogs bark

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## Love

what is that thing called  
that music is the food of

just a mirage, a fantasy, a dream  
a candyfloss of thistledown  
a melt-too-quick ice-cream

they caught it in a net  
a butterfly still fluttering  
so delicate  
and yet  
that was not love

it's what people are in  
fall out of  
can't find

it's completely contradictory to how we've been designed

so whoever's pulling strings  
somewhere up above

give us something easy  
what we want's not love

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Luxembourg Gardens Paris**

on quiet days they come  
from a stones-throw away

kicking-over leaves  
not expecting to find anything they'd recognise  
worn smooth

but pretend  
attaching imaginary threads  
not thinking where it leads

then holding on  
backaway from the park-gates  
and the vacant benches under the trees

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **Lying water**

in winter  
the path to the beach  
not many know going there  
it just don't reach

we, on cloudless days  
when the sun's low in the sky  
dazzled, walk in air

if anyone asks

say no-one  
as an isolated cloud passed by  
not a walker and her dog  
with bark and cry

fell upwards from a pool of sky

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Many are cold but few are frozen**

fish-fingered  
somehow  
flinging back the lid  
of the chest-freezer  
there had emerged  
the contents

meltdown  
had commenced  
immediately

it had scrawled  
in blood  
or raspberry-ripple ice-cream  
on a wall

a tragic misquotation  
from the New Testament

'The meat shall inherit the earth'

it was decided  
that in the future  
Bible Study evenings  
would be held  
in another room

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Marilyn**

flyposted on walls allover Hollywood  
for the pink Cadillac parade  
of Marilyn Monroe's graven image

Biblical in platinum and gold

Come and get it  
your portion of the victim  
before the sacrifice is made

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Mass pour les plastiques-Paris**

wide eyed  
Buzz Lightyear  
and the little yellow fish  
edged closer in the pew

he knew  
what it was to be alive

through his half-open visor  
head askew  
batteries running down  
he contrived possibly a prayer

Huston we have a problem  
is anybody there

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Morning**

above the pines  
clouds heap-up against the sky  
and the blue Peugeot and red Hyundai

before they join the traffic flow  
tread lightly to the junction slow

and soon the feint impressions  
that they've made  
in the tarmacadam fade

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Morning mirror**

came squeezed out of the toothpaste tube  
and the shower-head unblinking  
said  
as though this was the norm  
suppose  
with an accent  
of a much more superior hose  
you'll expect  
everything to be like any other day  
and tears came  
a solitary drip  
then two  
and a coagulation of old shampoo  
leaned across in vain  
and in the mirror  
hints that life was  
maybe just a game

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Musee des Beaux-Arts Nice**

Notice on a worm-ridden Clavichord  
'You are formally requested not to touch'

it was a bright October day  
at the house of Princess Kotschoubey  
that I was filled with mal-intent  
a desire to touch her instrument  
did I detect within her gaze  
encouragement a spark before a blaze  
and then tip-toed across the sunlit room  
her guardian and t'was though that fading bloom  
had wilted that Autumn rose was dead  
so with little joy but peevishly  
I touched other things instead

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## Night Air

Florence

the stilt-walkers  
dipped with the moon  
under the arch of Constantoun  
out of step  
and out of time  
from a woodcut  
charcoal-black cartoon

stamping stumps  
around a square  
rooked and prawned  
for a restaurateur  
advertised  
got board with fare

and in stilted lingo  
from high in the air  
extolled the pizzeria there

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **No Way Back**

as the Moon bares her shoulder  
and turns away

another day  
semi-conscious  
in the 'salle de bain'  
what can we tell the snake  
we call the shower-hose  
exposed

it's head poised  
about us locked inside our body-shapes  
when it knows everything

that there's no way back  
for soap, for water,  
for excess toothpaste on the brush

and why the hush along the towel-rail  
as deep in the mirror on the wall  
once again  
we fail to grasp the meaning of it all

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

**Not rocket-shaped.**

this poem  
although not rocket-shaped  
will soon rise gently into space

the Butterfly  
that didn't make it into Spring  
gave one last flap of a glorious wing  
centre-stage on the window-sill  
with the potted cacti  
and the smuggler figurines  
rests perfectly still

what have we missed  
is there something inbetween  
our reflection in the window-pane  
and the world outside  
as it pauses and looks in  
there's an edging-up  
for another place to ride

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Nowhere To Hide**

in the optician's chair  
before the wallchart-game  
unexpectedly there came the ask  
for him to remove his mask

then to complete a questionnaire  
phobias proclivities after-dark activities  
instances of flying wearing tights  
Cripes!  
Batman realised his cover was blown

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Oasis in Rome**

behind a hedge  
on pavement edge  
circling our tent  
a waiter raises up a flap  
on the brink of protest  
'bout the stink  
our camels make  
but takes our order nonetheless  
lemons figs and apricots  
perfumed teas in china pots

and for the herders  
'cross the street on the church steps  
un carafe d'eau and plain baguettes

we tap out rythmns with our spoons  
bubble-pipe mid exhaust-fumes  
perfumed in bluish swirls  
with music from a hidden source  
anticipate the dancing-girls

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Oberon**

there was a bank  
where the wild-thyme blew  
not a hole in a wall  
and a cash-point queue

and there was a breeze  
and the murmur of bees  
not the blast of exhausts  
and the throb of c.cs.

and he'd likened his queen  
to a fragrance of air  
not a fella in drag  
with rouge in his hair

so magique his lifestyle  
it shimmers excess  
he's got limitless credit  
American Express

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Old Town Cannes**

seven garden-gnomes just resting  
six priests at lunch digesting  
five minutes past mid-day  
four verres de vin rose  
three table-umbrellas  
two motor-cycle fellas  
one bell and how it tolls  
of wariness to errant souls

and there in the wall 's  
a vacant niche  
where pigeon-saints just out of reach  
preen and gaze with ill-intent  
would top my lunch with excrement

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Out-There**

morning  
camel-herders  
money-changers  
things from outer-space

hullabaloo and shindig  
jostling at the gates

sense I've raised one eyelid  
snapped shut  
but it's too late

somehow reach the bathroom  
reflect on my disguise

I'm shower-head and toothpaste  
and soap gets in their eyes

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **paperback**

' dust at the side of the road '

the story writes itself  
in however how many pages it may take

it can feel your pulse-rate rise  
and enters through your skin

it is a very fine dust  
slides easy off the page

then grain by grain by grain  
it burrows deeper in

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **Place des L[ces St. Tropez**

I pray for the chickens on the spit  
whip cicadas into a frenzy over it  
then watch them sweat as they turn  
for chicken sins  
they couldn't have commit

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Redemption**

behind the refrigerator door  
they don't have much to say  
huddle don't resist  
as fumbling fingers grip  
whisk one of them away

oh when will the messiah come  
in the form of eggs or ham or cheese  
or possibly some leftover  
they murmur with unease

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Richmond upon Thames**

I read my poem  
about the maroon fairy  
to a goose with orange legs  
maybe it was the clash of colours  
or the aroma of a varnish- flavoured sorbet  
that caused him to stand stock-still  
in front of the boat-house milk-bar

who's Oberon?  
king of the fairies  
I like the bit about  
a cowslip-bell of dew he said

and  
with a backward glance  
his head turned one hundred and eighty degrees

does he have orange legs?

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Rodin exhibition Paris**

we are the exhibition  
evolution  
just behind the hedge  
holding onto innocuous white cuppa-cappuccinos  
keeping our nerve  
as a pigeon swerves into a laurel

we're just passing through  
rejoice  
we view these aliens in bronze and stone  
held-fast by a dead hand  
prepared to launch into the unknown  
with.....

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Sheeptalk**

there came out from the open Bible  
in a corner of a field  
all of the sheep

gave one triumphant bleat  
their exodus complete

without them  
the book had very much less to say  
as a sheep without an udder  
gone permanently astray

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## Shootout

after Sydney Nolan's Ned Kelly paintings  
home-made suits of armour  
protection against assault in the outback

now unseen through the window  
grey dog  
the sea laps

so with eyes closed  
ear pressed to wall  
the other senses laid out on the table

it's as bleak as you want to make it

then from the radio  
barbs reach out  
bullets fly  
some will get through  
burning holes  
fierce sun  
clear blue sky

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Song of the Green Knight**

Song of the Green Knight  
to his Lady

remember how  
on those golden afternoons  
we hung pretty garlands  
at the gateway  
to the garden of your girlish dreams

remember  
how I bore no shadow  
and couldn't allay your fears

may I pretend  
I was instrumental  
in the fashioning of your tears

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## Soul

soul of opalescent glass  
who's outside stares in  
sing another sarabasse  
for this starry spin

soul of some forgotten taste  
tiger in the grass  
unfurl your wings in this cluttered place  
and the puppeteer rides past

soul who's somewhere over the hill  
W dot ice-cream  
Barbie's made it in the queue  
and Polly lies styrene

cobbler cobbler there's a shoe  
knows just how he feels  
he sings Hallelujah  
'cos his soul's been heeled

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **St. Tropez Evening**

on calm nights  
where the quayside lights don't quite reach

the water's bosom swells  
lifts and falls

it's only the sounds of boatsleep  
there against the harbour wall

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Star Treck**

approaching dawn  
Captain Kirk  
seated at the kitchen-table  
spaced-out  
faced the double-glazing  
steering planet earth  
feeling it's mass  
slowly turn to face the sun  
somewhere people hanging on  
and the noise they made  
and there with buttered toast  
a knife a spoon  
and marmalade  
the small room  
flooded now with light  
he held tight  
leaned into it's flight  
master of it all  
to boldly go  
thrillingly fast  
ponderously slow

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Steam-train to the stars**

there would be no count-down  
or blast-off  
no excessive speed  
just a gradual acceleration

no need for cumbersome attire  
a blazer or a sweater would suffice

they're off  
roof-top height  
then the clouds

or is it steam  
or smoke  
or fire

no it's the setting sun

and then the parachutes  
we counted three

the engine-driver  
the fireman  
and the guard

someone observed  
jokingly

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Supermarket Spring**

brazen hussy at the check-out desk  
cast aside her thermal vest  
and without anymore ado  
treated the Tesco's weekend queue  
to a Vernal Equinox Review

and with cheesecake, melons and Danish-Blue  
showed what one or two could do

of the chicken-breast for one man's tea  
she revealed it's true inadequacy

oh how Spring was sprung in every aisle  
as she took off for more air-miles

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **tennis**

consenting adults  
stand face to face

is it so pointless

so with utmost good-taste  
oh how soon it occurred  
'twas served from above  
along came that word  
and love's heaped on love

to give and receive  
it causes less pain  
and nought has no place  
when it's only a game

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The asparagus field**

someone must have known about  
connecting lines drawn  
creating space

about the weave in tapestries  
with multi-coloured threads  
backdrop to this place

an asparagus field in winter  
where pheasants, crows and pigeons  
are wont to g'zinter

where the undramas of the day  
play-out in the furrows of your mind

for the turning of things over  
and pecking at what you find

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Careless Light Of Day**

In November  
the careless light of day  
sometimes  
seems to be led astray

nevertheless

when unexpectedly  
it brushes against

we're arrested by

there are no words to say  
except that  
we wouldn't have it any other way

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Carousel**

even if there's no-one there  
deep in the darkest dreams  
at the end of each kaleidoscope  
the drowned-out horses' screams

coated in a sugar-glaze  
bolted and insane  
who's fingers spin the spinning-top  
spitting fire and flame

who's crazy at the Wurlitzer  
who still calls it a ride  
the spinning faces circle  
there's nowhere left to hide

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **The Cormorant**

I could have drawn a line in the sand  
projected it into the sky  
and the cormorant bisects the south-westerly gale  
twenty yards offshore  
precisely on time

later at The Mudflats Bar  
they consider it bizarre  
his twelve mile round trip

merely to provide material for a verse  
almost impossible to rhyme

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The dragonfly**

the dragonfly  
just don't try  
he came  
but that's just a word  
inadequate absurd

a space had been reserved  
in clear air just above the pool

maybe time was reluctant  
as he took it by the hand  
to understand

nearby  
where lay thousands of jellyfish  
partially covered by sand  
under the same starsign

and there were hoofprints  
and items of litter  
at the western edge of this our England

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Fish**

light slants in through the trees  
from our nearest star

the solitary fish just hanging on  
he's treading water  
singing

what is life  
that is so fleeting  
leaves no trace

to the kitchen-clock  
who hands folded 'cross his chalk-white face  
in battery-talk  
explains it all  
though unconvincingly  
from high-up on the wall

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Great Escape**

with cardboard paper wire and string  
he fashioned a pair of Angels wings  
and strapped them on with cellotape

then poised to make his great escape  
but wobbled at the very brink  
and crashed to the floor  
by the kitchen-sink

the ethereal spirit  
was clearly gin  
and they found his soul  
in the pedal-bin

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Hybrid**

spiraling down to earth once more  
failed to break the speed of sound  
a cloud of dust  
as he hits the ground

aspirant angel second-class  
reflects in smoky mirror-glass

checks his streamline  
furls his wings  
with tarnished harp  
and broken strings

on the terrace of the 'Bel Epoque' he  
raised the tone at the karaoke

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Last Train**

the last train to the stars  
would leave on time

now a straggling wind  
that blows along the line  
banks shadows up against a wall  
and there they terminally rise and fall

they tangle with the echoings of footsteps  
breaking out of ground  
and the station clockwhite face  
astounded at it all

soon we'll hear the pistons race  
somewhere the engine sigh  
in corridors uncertain  
just watching space drift by

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The marmalade cat**

it was a sticky situation  
'Orange or Lemon? '

the marmalade cat at hotel-reception  
paused and flexed his claws

'It depends on my mood'

'It's what you are now'

'Lemon'

the young lady smiled

'Is that with or without peel? '

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Moth**

he laid aside the monthly Moth Gazette  
he knew he'd rolled his final cigarette

too set in his ways  
to deny his only vice  
he stretched his wings  
slightly frayed and singed

for one last flight  
to an old flame  
'twould be just a spurt of fire in the night  
as she sucked him in

he'd feel no pain  
a correspondent had surmised  
another from a butterfly  
took a different slant on things

but the god of moths  
there where a single light-bulb hangs in space  
had called him in

so he shrugged  
and spiralled out  
kicked his heels  
and then inhaled  
a final puff of sin

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **the Octopus**

a tentacle of fear  
reaches out  
and senses  
where the sun never rises or sets

in the dark in the gap  
of the glass-mirrored doors

it's the silence  
that blurs the reflection of transience

only the shallow-breathing  
of clothes hanging in space  
can face it

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Other Side of The Track**

out from the depths of a mirror  
past lemons sliced for fish  
a sign says 'take the knife-edge'

across the railroad-track  
to where a wooden church tower  
displays it's manuscript of uneven teeth

and from the arid hills is cast  
a net of criss-cross wires

and badly sketched from memory  
a horse drawn seaward  
has strayed with it's cart

listens to the engine's roar  
at a blind bend in the track  
all pickedoutofthedust on a twelve-string guitar

it's mirror-smoke and steam  
get it from a tapestry  
tattered edge of dream

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Pantomime Horse**

The Pantomime Horse  
in the theatre corral  
is proving unbroken  
a wayward cheval

he's trapped them inside  
at the rear and the front  
they're no longer amused  
by this equinine stunt

he's called for some wild-oats  
and now for a mare  
Oh who wrote the script  
for this torrid affair

so a Rodeo-Vet was hired for the day  
and thank God for the curtain  
and pretend bales of hay.

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Puppeteer Dies**

the puppeteer dies  
and black sunrise  
a single tear falls to her breast  
white on white  
bonjour tristesse

her fallen hero  
twisted strings

their staring eyes  
and no bird sings

that day he died  
released the world from all it's strings

and under papier-mache skies  
with crimsoned cheeks  
and wild wide eyes  
they did their burn-out promenade

yet only slightly  
they delayed the brunches at the smart cafes

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **the sand lizard**

out of a parallel universe he came  
and from low -down in the wall  
as though he was always there  
and I was the intruder  
fixed me with unblinking stare

would we both hypnotized  
have sloughed off our allotted disguise  
and with banners of insignificance unfurled  
cried revolution  
and glory to uncertainty in our worlds

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Snake-God St. Tropez**

early morning Place des Lices

at breakfast my coiled croissant tells me  
beware the Snake-God  
he had not been placated  
the vagrant's forward roll had skewed to the left

at lunch  
out from the shade cicadas screech  
as they identify  
one of their own kind  
protruding from the cheese-topping on my pizza

at dinner  
I consume slivers of raw flesh  
possibly the wine-waiters arm

it is July in St.Tropez  
in the year of  
the serpent  
or the insect  
or the amputee

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

**the sock**

in Spring  
curled-up  
in the gutter of no-one's love

how could it have come to this

but by satellite  
it's shape  
transmitted faraway

almost beyond our understanding  
was perfection of a kind  
somehow predesigned

the other day  
was spirited away

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Tiger**

the Tiger paused outside the therapist's tent  
not quite sure what had been meant  
by attitude and change

had thought about it just before his last kill

but where's the skill  
acquiring something vegetarian  
a pizza or a burgher  
were y' gonna get your thrill  
no chase no ripping it apart

so did he have the heart to...

he lay back on the couch  
and deep within his inner space  
confronted that receptionist  
entirely to his taste

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## **the universe is flat**

a pint of real ale

the Angel who'd been holding aloft a screen  
beyond the furthest galaxies  
or just about as far as man could dream  
in the pub car-park

had rolled it up  
and stood it against the wall

is that all it is  
pinpricks of light

half a pint still in his glass  
the Angel let pass  
more tiresome questions about unfathomable things

just sat  
framed by an arched window  
making slight quivery movements with his wings

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **the unremembered**

somewhere in the white noise  
at the blurred edges of sight

the unremembered

they almost  
might have made a difference  
to it all

swung it  
filled a space

now  
should we

as the others slope away

with the last coin for the juke-box  
make another play

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Whale**

in the night-rain  
driven from the river  
'cross the railway-tracks  
at traffic-lights

came face to face  
with the ghost of a whale  
searching for his jaw-bone  
one-time strapped to the ceiling of a pub

and in the time it takes  
the lights from red to green  
in his eyes  
thought I'd seen much more

as down the hill to the sea  
at the dock-wall  
saw his tail-light dip and fade  
as he dived  
tarmac deep  
into the dark streets

and the gutters overflowed  
with the wake and wash he made

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Word**

it had leaked out of the pen  
stood naked  
attempting to cover-up it's shape

'it's your meaning I'm after  
for a poem'  
'but I'm not that sort of word'

having heard this  
the unfinished one  
rather disconsolate  
just drifted away

'see what a difference you would have made '

we sat together  
at the edge of creation  
no fizz or sparkle in our lemonade

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **The Piano**

at the Music Festival  
he'd arrived late  
weary after a long flight  
and at Reception the piano-tuner waits  
with his instruments of torture

the check-in lady smiles

then what she did  
she must have known  
'Ah oui Monsieur Trombone'

and he responded  
by slightly raising his lid.

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Twilight of the Gods**

at the end of the line  
there's a swinging door  
where short-wave radio won't reach

there's a waiting-room  
and a rancid spoon  
in a bowl of furred-up peach

there's a verandah  
and a sleeping -car  
and sand's blown-up from the beach

there's curtains  
and the soft-pad paws  
of a mutt and a steel guitar

and the little god from tumbleweed  
plays chords  
as loose as straw

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## Unreflections

no reflection in the plate-glass window of the Charity Shop

no clinking of spurs  
creaking of chain-mail  
as he flexes his sword-arm  
no alarm when he raises his vizored face  
towards a galaxy faraway  
beyond the placement of the trees  
fanning-out above the slate-grey rooves  
and the red-brickness of it all

with lack of purpose  
he counts the bricks in a section of the wall

if only her mobile-phone had photographed through glass  
but now the light had changed  
her coffee unexpectedly cold  
and somehow the cup-handle slightly disarranged

the shadow that crossed the street to touch her cheek remained  
and she wonders 'bout the opportunity that passed

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Village perspectives**

came out of  
went into

the Travel Agents  
the Betting-shop  
the Hardware store

morning coffee  
window seats  
as he crossed the street  
within that flash of sunlight  
came  
Apollo an Angel One from outer-space

then time stood deliciously still  
for as long as  
and then until  
they gently made their re-entries

beyond reason  
no explanations  
no questions to be raised

for each one  
more or less the same  
just a momentary pause in conversation  
a loose thread  
in the pattern that their words had made

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady



## walking the dog

a butterfly didn't flap a wing  
but maybe if it had  
and the grebe had held it's breath  
below the surface  
as the the river stopped it's flow  
when the dog-leads intertwined

would they have paused to find  
that dog-walking  
was the last thing on their minds

but it all passed by as unthink  
a moment out of sync

and there as a still-born aftermath  
it lay unnoticed  
curled-up on the path.

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **WANTED words for a poem**

sometimes

words are shuffled into place

from

an outback town  
in a bar for strangers  
passing through

where a few may see your poster  
and with nothing more to do  
may tag along

and when you view  
this rag-bag crew  
stand them up in line  
against a wall

and then, and then, and then,

somehow surprise them all

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Winter arrives heavy**

already dark  
on that rain-sodden winter's afternoon

came from the slate quarries in the western sky  
why were they too big to be seen  
too improbable to comprehend

only the mud-trail  
along the village street remained

who was unable to breathe-in  
the smell of sweat and wet sacking  
and no-one feels  
the pain of trace-straps cutting  
as bent double  
the horses  
put one last effort in  
to turn the wheels

to the pegged-out ground  
in the shrubbery and trees  
which surround  
the supermarket car-park

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady

## **Winter fruit**

in Winter

projecting the illusion of low-hanging fruit  
smoothing tree-bark  
for the rain to stain  
with indelible light

Come You

You Revelation  
You sans appellation  
set this thing on fire

though even in our dreams

place on our tongues  
the sweet and glowing embers of desire

STEPHEN BRIAN Brady