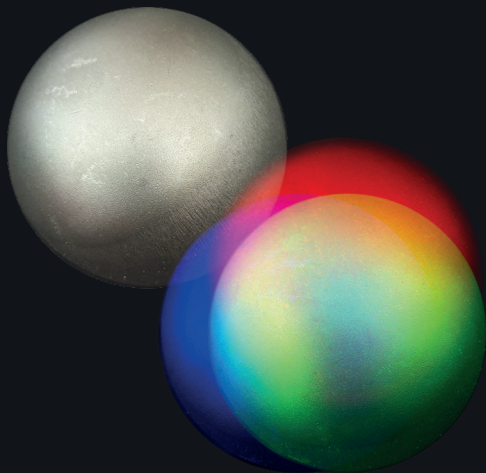


SLEEP IN THE SHADOW OF THE ALTERNATOR  
**LEO CHADBURN**



**WORDS**

- |    |  |        |
|----|--|--------|
| 1. | The Body Becomes a Viewfinder            | 9'53"  |
| 2. | Magic Flora of the East Midlands         | 11'30" |
| 3. | Move Like a Freight Train                | 9'58"  |
| 4. | It is a Beautiful Day (1000 Years Later) | 10'15" |

*The mines were still operational when I was a child.*

*Coal gave the town its name.*

*The whole area was defined by heavy industry:  
quarries and monumental factories.*

*Yet, we were also surrounded by beautiful woodland,  
windswept grassland and outcrops of ancient rock.*

*Eventually, the industrial economy was extinguished.*

*The warehouses were demolished.*

*The pits reverted to nature.*

*40 years later, I recall my memories of the place as if they were a dream.*

*These four pieces describe the following locations and times:*

- (1) the sites of the former Snibston, Whitwick and South Leicester collieries, Autumn 2024;*
- (2) Charnwood Forest, Summer 1993;*
- (3) the Falcon Works (Loughborough) and Coalville Farm open cast mine, Winter 1986;*
- (4) Sence Valley Forest Park, Spring 3025.*

# 1. THE BODY BECOMES A VIEWFINDER

Held in the open hand of the crease of the valley

This town has been abandoned twice

But now we have been driven

Back through night

Through network, through memory

To stand on this clutter of ancient rubble

This ledge of moss, grass, lichen, stone

The caldera of an expired volcano

Now our vantage point

To relive some transient moments

And overlook its geometry and meaning

As the morning inhales the mist

The hill at sunrise

*Tell me what you can see from here*

The signature of smoke

The gradient edges of the settlement

Settled here

Becoming familiar

Neuron traceries of streets and wires

Perpendiculars

Sectors meet in feet and inches

Junctions and intersections

Receiving and receding

Into clusters of anonymous structures

Patched in discoloured steel

Solemn shades arranged in rows

*Zoom in, slowly*

The clocktower and disused railway

The vacant cutting, the tumbling embankment

The ruin of the platform clinging to the barrier

The crossing signal box

The bones of the quarry

White dust ascends in a faint helix

Damp red brick and shuttered concrete

Corrugated rooves and saw-tooth spires

Houses, factories, municipal buildings

A monument

Isolated in rough, cleared ground

You have been here before

*Zoom in again*

And all of this

Within sight of the pit top and headstocks

The countenance of the mineshaft

It gazes out across the ward

Two orbits, suspended

The sheave wheels and frame

Blackened and motionless

For forty years or more

Crumpled exuviae

Sloughed off by industry

Or slumbering

As streetlights expire and home light stirs

*Where are you?*

*Where are you now?*

Well, we are the sentinels  
Observing  
Awaiting new growth  
There is a blankness to the scene  
A transparency  
Jamais vu  
It is beyond familiar  
The moist air of this place fills the lungs  
And hangs in the nose  
Deep brown Autumn smell  
An astringent sensation  
If you hold your breath  
*Zoom in once more*  
There's a figure in the distance  
An image of an image of myself  
Moving to the edge of the scarp face  
To stand like a beacon  
Ready to receive the transmission  
The thumb and index finger improvise a frame  
It is wide open  
The body becomes a viewfinder  
Geospatial perception  
Latitude and longitude  
You are the conduit  
Let the terrain surge into you  
*Zoom out*  
*Retriangulate*

What's this, under our feet?  
Agglomerate and tuff  
Boulder-sized clasts  
Cemented into breccia  
Marking this spot since forever  
Ejected from the fissure  
Born in liquid fire  
Then solidified  
Into the cold sinuous sweep of the topography  
In syncline and anticline  
Visible grids  
Covert lines  
*Hold steady*  
Azurite  
Hematite  
Malachite  
Markfieldite  
Hard granite  
Marked with pathways of faults  
Each crevice dark and soft  
Blanketed with saturated matter  
Wet mud  
Knotted wood  
Rhizomes on Precambrian rock  
Whose shoots unfurl into Moorland scrub  
*Zoom out once more*

Chest deep bracken  
With the motion of water  
Heaving in wake and wash  
Forming eddies  
Over sheltering invertebrates  
Vibrations disturbing slowworms  
Tasting the air  
Anticipating the sun's zenith  
A dappled canopy over what was once the  
ocean floor  
600 million years in cycles and layers  
Deep under the soil  
This is reptile knowledge  
This town has been abandoned twice  
But now we have been driven  
Back through rain, through muscle memory  
It is defined by your absence  
It is without continuity  
Faded  
But these rocks are magnetic  
You are subject to the wrench of its tide  
You are its passenger  
From point B to point A  
With thoughts in circles  
In vehicles of the past  
*Where are you now?*

You discover the shape of the wheel  
The resistance of the pedals  
You recall the dimensions of this machine  
It is an extension of you  
Tracing routes through distance mechanisms  
Following the trajectory of the carriageway  
Bridge, bypass and junction  
Passage, sign and system  
You are disconnected  
From bitumen, aggregate and anthracite  
And drawn instead to a flame on the dash  
And the map torn to pieces  
*Tell me what you can see from here*  
Navigate by the sound of my voice  
Leading you astray  
With the characteristic trip of the tongue  
Or resonance in the mouth  
You will be wrong  
When you guess where I'm from  
I am no longer betrayed by it  
The larynx and lips  
That name this place  
52 degrees 43 minutes 36.5 seconds North  
1 degree 22 minutes 51.7 seconds West  
The mirrors reflect your origin  
The mirrors reflect your destination

## 2. MAGIC FLORA OF THE EAST MIDLANDS

Hawthorn, *Crataegus monogyna*

Fern, *Pteridium aquilinum*

Henbane, *Hyoscyamus niger*

Stinging Nettle, *Urtica dioica*

Liberty Cap, *Psilocybe semilanceata*

Devil's-Bit Scabious, *Succisa pratensis*

Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*

Mistletoe, *Viscum album*

Yew, *Taxus baccata*

Fly Agaric, *Amanita muscaria*

Sage, *Salvia officinalis*

Vervain, *Verbena officinalis*

Elder, *Sambucus nigra*

Daisy, *Bellis perennis*

Rosemary, *Salvia rosmarinus*

Mugwort, *Artemisia vulgaris*

St. John's Wort, *Hypericum perforatum*

Moonwort, *Botrychium lunaria*

Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*

Blackthorn, *Prunus spinosa*

Rowan, *Sorbus aucuparia*

Lady's Mantle, *Alchemilla mollis*

Hemlock, *Conium maculatum*

Holly, *Ilex aquifolium*

...it is Beltane, the return of Summer

...invisibility, mysterious reproduction

...and visions, the sensation of flight

...immaculate, prosperous

...to induce delirium

...and virtue, a balm for the skin

...divination, healing of wounds

...to summon airborne spirits

...and the image of the Goddess

...altered perception, lucidity

...immortality, resurrection

...and protection, prediction

...to summon waterborne spirits

...heliotropic, declarations of love

...to remember the departed

...and prophecy, the travellers' shield

...to repel malevolent forces

...and open locks and guard silver

...second sight, transformation

...a threshold, or boundary

...perhaps good fortune

...to turn base metals into gold

...before certain death

...and the blood of Christ

Rushing water. In the distance, hyperboloid towers pour columns of vapour into the air. The alternator casts its spell and the brothers observe from here, silently, in hooded robes the colour of the forest. These men have learned the science of malt, hops, yeast and water.

Now they brew a strong, dark drink, the only one of its kind. Encircling the mash tun, they find their faith refreshed, intoxicated by the clarity of their purpose, a ring of electricity. They chant the litany of occupations, the people of the network, the major arcana:

Collier	Incline Winder	Painter
Farrier	Ironmonger	Packer
Rollerman	Cobbler	Plumber
Waterman	Gummer	Tracker
Steeplejack	Clipper	Ripper
Publican	Cooper	Sinker
Bell founder	Baker	Borer
Falconer	Hawker	Burster
Ostler	Thatcher	Wheelman
Hosier	Burglar	Shaftsman
Farmer	Bailiff	Brakesman
Joiner	Blacksmith	Switchman
Shackler	Sexton	Spiritualist
Wheelwright	Mayor	Geologist
Spragger	Park Keeper	Occultist
Plough wright	Timberer	Projectionist
Charcoal Burner	Salvage Man	
Costermonger	Minister	...roll the film



### 3. MOVE LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN

The edges of everything, softened by Winter  
Seen from the window, in parallax

Archive holdings: photographic material  
relating to the open day at the Falcon Works,  
1986

Box 1: transparencies, plans of the site,  
construction work, aerial views

Box 2: negatives, interior view of the turbine  
hall, machine shop, canteen, craneage, weigh  
bridge, assembly line, demonstration of  
testing in progress

The edges of everything, softened by Winter  
Seen from the window, in parallax

*Ex terra opes*

Move like a freight train  
That motion you make  
Covers hundreds of miles  
Cover hundreds of miles  
There's a simple gesture  
And you make it all the time

It inhabits you  
It inhabits every single part of you  
And you're thinking all the time  
Think about where you've been  
And where you've gone  
Think about distance and depth  
And effort and ease  
About flight and inertia  
And torque and release  
Think about those women in the 1950s  
Think about them calling to the dead  
Hands touching  
They spasm back and forth  
There's a complicated gesture  
And you make it all the time  
Always moving forward  
Move across invisible lines  
It oscillates  
Turn yourself around  
Through technique and training  
Now climb the incline  
And you're thinking all the time  
About abandon and sobriety  
Spontaneity and insularity  
Anthropology, building a community  
And moving like a freight train

Box 3: publications and microfiche,  
control and instrumentation for synchronous  
induction motors, harmonic excitation  
system for high tension generators,  
installation of the dynamo and turbo  
machinery

Box 4: machine parts, control gear, panels,  
vertical motors and casings, salient pole  
rotor, bearings, pedestals, stators and  
frames, cooling system, terminal box, flame-  
proof inverter, compressor, alternator

The edges of everything, softened by Winter  
Seen from the window, in parallax

Spiralling into the excavation  
Down into the pit that's so vast  
To see for ourselves in all directions  
The site of the open cast  
And now we're lifted inside the drag line  
Men head-height to its suspension  
And they drive a truck straight into its bucket  
To demonstrate the dimensions  
Imagine its embrace, now imagine  
The motion of its maw, now imagine  
The cold steel kiss

The machine on the ground  
And its force on the earth  
And the terrible sound  
And we're digging down  
And there's two different gestures  
And you make them all the time  
Always moving downwards  
Moving through eluviated lines  
Through the blown-out concrete  
And iron pyrite  
Of prefabricated buildings  
Swarming with wasps  
Assembled by consortium  
In sight of the seam  
And the coal is exposed  
These are all things you've seen  
And you're thinking all the time  
About flickering lights  
Like sodium lamps  
Like the television  
Like those home movies  
Moving slightly too fast  
In those saturated colours  
The persistence of vision  
It scintillates  
Turn yourself around  
And move like a freight train

## 4. IT IS A BEAUTIFUL DAY (1000 YEARS LATER)

It is a beautiful day  
This is a beautiful place  
Pink aeroplanes drift overhead  
Without pilots  
Without passengers  
And the sky is a gauze between this world and  
infinity

It is a beautiful day

*Particle by particle*

Otherwise

The machinery left behind footprints

The footprints became rivulets

Rivulets formed a delta

The delta drained into the crater

The crater has become a lake

*It is inevitable*

Obsolescence

Everything has reverted to nature

The forest is now gestural

Vegetation waves a perpetual farewell

Pale and dark blossoms are once again in  
equilibrium

*It is cyclical*

Sycamore keys

Loosened by the breeze

Descend through the air

Bronze light through translucent wings

Turning, falling onto the surface of the water

*Mirrors in mirrors*

Beneath which

Vehicles have long been submerged

And liquified

In the turbid depths

The drowned carcass of the dragline

Lies on its side

Among fish and weed

Prone skeletons of railway track

Dispersing as rust

*Particle by particle*

This change of state

Witnessed by zygopteran naiads

And diving beetles

Clinging to buoyant, silver cushions

Ancient eyes observing

This is insect knowledge

*It is cyclical*

There is only one way out

Your body dissolves

There is a realignment

You feel yourself become increasingly diffuse

Your personality billows away

Yeast falls through the air and lands on you

And when you next emerge

Metamorphosed

Somehow, your memory is intact  
It is too vivid  
Do everything you can to stay calm  
Your life depends on it  
*It is inevitable*  
Who would have thought it possible?  
The pink aeroplane descends  
And lands  
They arrive in a haze of nitrogen, argon, carbon  
dioxide  
Archivists of some kind, perhaps  
They cut through the undergrowth  
Emerge into the clearing in pairs  
To survey the area  
They knew of a time when this was two planets  
Then two planets touched  
Then there was dust  
Then one planet  
They understand the nature of deep time  
From stone tools  
To the end of technology  
We will no longer speak of this detritus  
This is android knowledge  
*Mirrors in mirrors*  
The hum of their device indicates...  
Nothing

They have come too late  
To solve the puzzle  
The paradox of our solitude  
The discrepancy  
They should introduce themselves  
But we are gone  
We have dissolved completely  
Instead, they encounter...  
Labyrinth spiders  
Requiem sharks  
*Ancient eyes*

\* \* \*

You know  
Reality is a membrane  
New growth poking through  
The clouds like crumpled sheets  
The map imprinted on skin as you wake  
There is only one way out  
Do it blissfully  
It is a beautiful day

The words and music are written, performed and produced by **Leo Chadburn**.

Leo plays bass drum, bass recorder, bowed vibraphone, cymbals, glockenspiel, harmonica, harmonium, prepared piano (fishing line, neodymium magnets and neoprene), shortwave radio, tam-tam, thundersheet, wine glasses, and synthesisers by Casio, Roland and Vermona.

**George Barton** plays glass chimes on "Magic Flora of the East Midlands".

Mixed by **Jamie Hamilton** and **Leo Chadburn**.

Mastered by **Sean McCann**.

The images of anthracite and steel spheres are also by Leo.

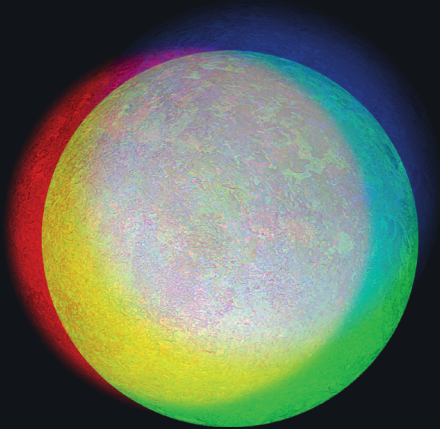
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