

Arl the beginner, rockhead his birthfossil,  
delta his handmaiden, sea shoulder, seed drip.  
Arl's thing is ever, is quartered, the hacked  
limb. His arms fold in mountains. The torn  
body. Leg over continent.  
Eyebend his rainbow, west red his deathrattle,  
moon, silver seedsack, bot-strike, first cry.  
Pile cloud is Arl brain, its flashbolt his  
nerve shot, his pain trigger, his joy burst,  
his tickle, his rub.  
Sea wombs his seedbed, his swimashore, his  
tide leg. His stumble, his walk around, his  
utter, his snarl.  
Arl's pieces are eaten, are flung, are windborne,  
are buried.  
Arl is shit. Arl is hooked finger beckoning.  
Arl is death the untouching.

Arl, a tree, bough bent over water knotted his  
brow. River wrinkled back. It was the first  
day.

Fearful next day he was ashen. Fire shapes died  
in his white face.

Third time he stared the sun out. Fourth he  
hammered rocks. Fifth he plucked a star. Sixth  
he spilt her milk, crying over sky floor.

Seventh, he came again to the riverwater. He bent  
over. He saw woman. They swam together.

Dripping from breasts and testicles. From fingers  
and noses. Knees ears and buttocks. They stood  
on rock edge. Two pools. Trickle joining.

Arl saw woman whole. Arl touched her. His first  
erection pointing.

Scrotum tight now she touched him back.

In late spring, leaving bruised grass to stand  
again after them, Arl and woman gazed down  
into water. Arl saw woman. Woman saw Arl.  
They swam. They dripped on the rock.

They touched.

Arl  
Whispered to fishes  
His first song

She is kiss in clay moulded

So bonny bairn and maiden

She is also wrinkled ganny

Hag arm flowing to delta hand

She is floodswollen belly

She is Inna

The water plurabella

Arl looked deep into time bending. He saw only  
his neck back. His bright eye darkened.  
He looked for warmth and chill stiffened him.  
Hill was hollow. Tears dried. A soft feel  
hardened in his long hand.  
Arl spoke X-rays. Invisible tongues babbled.  
Unable to localise, he spun himself to sickness.  
Arl touched a moving star. It reddened in its  
hurry from him.  
He cut his skin and continents drifted. He spat  
blood. A million Arlra drowned in the river.  
Arl dreamed cosmic. A particle wakened him.  
He thirsted for ocean. Swallowed a galaxy.  
Spoke straight words. They twisted at eve-drop.  
No stone unturned, he ~~is~~ died foodless in desert,  
but sprung up again in prairies of barley.

Arl dipped his hands in bran. Something for  
everybody the notice said.

He hopped to the road centre, shouldercharging  
the guardian there. To be footdown meant  
losing, reaching the other side was Cockerooso  
when all hop across.

Arl crapped on his hunkers. A worm wriggled to  
an earth-hole from it.

Arl kicked dust. Pissed off to another place. The  
worm bored deep.

Arl searched for causation. He clashed armies.  
Flashed arrow to nuclear. Blasted Jericho.  
Stormed Bastille and barricades. He spoke  
Polaris words under ice. Cursing tongues  
retaliated.

The worm outgrew its turdsize, split ground,  
overturning tree. It terrorised Arlra camped  
around hunkerplace. Slept coiled around rock  
where the Arlra dripped and touched.

Word went out. Smoke telegraph signals. Horse  
and foot relays. Morse flags. SOS. ESP.

Arl. Come home. Arlra.

He swam seven oceans. Screwed into galaxy. Motorwayed  
in from outer planets. Taxied from his local  
station.

He consulted a hooded stone. Taxi-meter ticking away.  
Poor pebble-sucker, the lady nourished him.

Breastblades would slay the beast. He should chop  
it up and hoy the bits away. But, wait for it taxi,  
afterwards kill the first thing his eyes set on.

Worm and Arl met there, locked on the Arlra rock.

Worm ringed the blades deep. Bloodwashed, Arl bent over.

Cursing he saw.

Arl thought loim-hard. A sapling grew out of him.  
It soon became tree stiff. Great roots tapping  
his strength. Clinging in windrush. Claspig him  
breathless. It was bloodmonth seen dying, but  
fleshed after winter.

Arl's tree cooed dove-house. Its leaves took handfulls  
of sun. Arl-sap rising, ring around ring.

Arl dreamed cities in the tree.  
Horse-chestnut flower cities. Spikey walled cities.  
Nest cities. Kestrel, crow, finch. Woodpecker cities.  
But windshake dropped conker mines. Touch and explode.  
Anti-personel. Arl's fingers we find.

Now lovers carve ruth. Lop branches. Pruned nipples  
suckle.

Children come with spiked boots.  
A cock crowed three times as Jack climbed.  
Arl-Jack of lovers.  
His cares growing in sweet shadow.

Arl went down into Calvary. Down into emptied breath,  
into hung skins, into spears truth, into sponge's  
hypocrite, into locusts' kingdom, into Lazarus  
still dying, into skullplace since Adam, into  
bleached empire, into the neck of Judas.

Arl could smell the committee coffee, hear the snap  
of biscuits, see the bold signatures, feel the  
rubber stamp of the final solution.

Arl's arm stretched Appenine agony. An M1 of slaves  
signing his hard shoulder. Carrion in picnic  
places. Black birds at the intersection of eyes.

Arl was with blood-drenched fields after sacrifice.  
With the offended earth.

Arl was without memory. He was without it. Without  
and without.

He searched an erratic stone's wormside, scraped  
tree moss's green history, helped a mole with  
his time-tip, chatted flatties in estuary silt.

From the mountains they said. From the mountains.  
You will remember the mountains.

Arl thanked them, his rivermouth, swam west up with  
tide help, struggled force-white through cataract  
to the mountain his mind has.

Arl saw all the kingdoms.

Peaks of recall under him.

Cloud covered and uncovered.

Vallies Arl shaped.

U shaped.

Arl sped north with Maruts seven winds.

They howled him into Ragnarok.

He was speed and force and destroyer.

He was circle and flame.

He was seed.

He was wind seen across sun-disc.

He was flashing.

He was stormeye.

He was wind in Gjallarhorn.

Arl wept as creation wept.

Wolfloose Arl was devoured.

Launched a ship clinkered with dead nails.

Hounded the moon.

Fell in this last battle.

Was left there with ravens.

Arl was in giantfire and overwhelming sea.

But Arl sheltered in shaking Ash.

Came out Arl begin again.

9.

Ice ages his northern landface  
Sun on flow blushes U after melt  
Hanging vallies  
Gouged to ghyllwater fellside  
Hide farms stoked around eaves of dale  
Shy ice still clinging in corrie  
Arete for striders  
Sharp in keen air

He wandered lonely  
Yellow by the lakeside

Flowers bundle to glory from railway sidings  
Cindery soil hosts willowherb yarrow ragwort  
Stray stock  
These for Inna in July when all her eyes see  
And knapweed and sorrel and timothy grass and elder