

Classic Poetry Series

**Arthur Seymour John
Tessimond
- poems -**

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Arthur Seymour John Tessimond(19 July 1902 - 13 May 1962)

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond (Birkenhead, July 19, 1902 - Chelsea, London May 13, 1962) was an English poet.

He went to Charterhouse School, but ran away at age 16. After studying at Liverpool University, he moved to London where he worked in bookshops, and also as a copywriter.

After avoiding military service in World War II, he later discovered he was unfit for service.

An eccentric and an Imagist, Tessimond wrote astute, elegant, urban poetry. He suffered from bipolar disorder, and received electro-convulsive therapy.

He first began to publish in the 1920s in literary magazines. He was to see three volumes of poetry were published during his life: *Walls of Glass* in 1934, *Voices in a Giant City* in 1947 and *Selections* in 1958. He contributed several poems to a 1952 edition of *Bewick's Birds*.

He died in 1962 from a brain haemorrhage.

In the mid-1970s he was the subject of a radio programme entitled *Portrait of a Romantic*. This, together with the publication of the posthumous selection *Not Love Perhaps* in 1972, increased interest in his work; and his poetry subsequently appeared in school books and anthologies.

A 1985 anthology of his work *The Collected Poems of A. S. J. Tessimond*, edited by Hubert Nicholson, contains previously unpublished works.

In 2010 a new collected poems, based closely on Nicholson's edition, was published by Bloodaxe Books.

In April 2010 an edition of Brian Patten's series *Lost Voices* on BBC Radio Four was committed solely to Tessimond.

Any Man Speaks

I, after difficult entry through my mother's blood
And stumbling childhood (hitting my head against the world);
I, intricate, easily unshipped, untracked, unaligned;
Cut off in my communications; stammering; speaking
A dialect shared by you, but not you and you;
I, strangely undeft, bereft; I searching always
For my lost rib (clothed in laughter yet understanding)
To come round the corner of Wardour Street into the Square
Or to signal across the Park and share my bed;
I, focus in night for star-sent beams of light,
I, fulcrum of levers whose end I cannot see ...
Have this one deftness - that I admit undeftness:
Know that the stars are far, the levers long:
Can understand my unstrength.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Attack On The Ad-Man

This trumpeter of nothingness, employed
To keep our reason dull and null and void.
This man of wind and froth and flux will sell
The wares of any who reward him well.
Praising whatever he is paid to praise,
He hunts for ever-newer, smarter ways
To make the gilt seen gold; the shoddy, silk;
To cheat us legally; to bluff and bilk
By methods which no jury can prevent
Because the law's not broken, only bent.

This mind for hire, this mental prostitute
Can tell the half-lie hardest to refute;
Knows how to hide an inconvenient fact
And when to leave a doubtful claim unbacked;
Manipulates the truth but not too much,
And if his patter needs the Human Touch,
Skillfully artless, artlessly naive,
Wears his convenient heart upon his sleeve.

He uses words that once were strong and fine,
Primal as sun and moon and bread and wine,
True, honourable, honoured, clear and keen,
And leaves them shabby, worn, diminished, mean.
He takes ideas and trains them to engage
In the long little wars big combines wage...
He keeps his logic loose, his feelings flimsy;
Turns eloquence to cant and wit to whimsy;
Trims language till it fits his clients, pattern
And style's a glossy tart or limping slattern.

He studies our defences, finds the cracks
And where the wall is weak or worn, attacks.
He finds the fear that's deep, the wound that's tender,
And mastered, outmanoeuvred, we surrender.
We who have tried to choose accept his choice
And tired succumb to his untiring voice.
The dripping tap makes even granite soften
We trust the brand-name we have heard so often

And join the queue of sheep that flock to buy;
We fools who know our folly, you and I.

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Bells, Pool And Sleep

Bells overbrim with sound
And spread from cupolas
Out through the shaking air
Endless unbreaking circles
Cool and clear as water.

A stone dropped in the water
Opens the lips of the pool
And starts the unovertaking
Rings, till the pool is full
Of waves as the air of bells.

The deep-sea bell of sleep
Under the pool of the mind
Flowers in concentric circles
Of annihilation till
Both sight and sound die out,
Both pool and bells are quelled.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Betrayal

If a man says half himself in the light, adroit
Way a tune shakes into equilibrium,
Or approximates to a note that never comes:

Says half himself in the way two pencil-lines
Flow to each other and softly separate,
In the resolute way plane lifts and leaps from plane:

Who knows what intimacies our eyes may shout,
What evident secrets daily foreheads flaunt,
What panes of glass conceal our beating hearts?

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Birch Tree

The birch tree in winter
Leaning over the secret pool
Is Narcissus in love
With the slight white branches,
The slim trunk,
In the dark glass;
But,
Spring coming on,
Is afraid,
And scarfs the white limbs
In green.

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Black Morning Lovesong

In love's dances, in love's dances
One retreats and one advances,
One grows warmer and one colder,
One more hesitant, one bolder.
One gives what the other needed
Once, or will need, now unheeded.
One is clenched, compact, ingrowing
While the other's melting, flowing.
One is smiling and concealing
While the other's asking kneeling.
One is arguing or sleeping
While the other's weeping, weeping.

And the question finds no answer
And the tune misleads the dancer
And the lost look finds no other
And the lost hand finds no brother
And the word is left unspoken
Till the theme and thread are broken.

When shall these divisions alter?
Echo's answer seems to falter:
'Oh the unperplexed, unvexed time
Next time...one day...one day...next time!'

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Black On Black

Serrations of chimneys
Stone-black perforate
Velvet-black dark.
A tree coils in core of darkness.
My swinging
Hands
Incise the night.
A man slips into a doorway,
Black hole in blackness, and drowns there.
A second man passing traces
The diagram of his steps
On invisible pavement. Rain
Draws black parallel threads
Through the hollow of air.

Submitted by Steohen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Cats

Cats no less liquid than their shadows
Offer no angles to the wind.
They slip, diminished, neat through loopholes
Less than themselves; will not be pinned

To rules or routes for journeys; counter
Attack with non-resistance; twist
Enticing through the curving fingers
And leave an angered empty fist.

They wait obsequious as darkness
Quick to retire, quick to return;
Admit no aim or ethics; flatter
With reservations; will not learn

To answer to their names; are seldom
Truly owned till shot or skinned.
Cats no less liquid than their shadows
Offer no angles to the wind.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Cats 1

To walk as you walk, green eye, smiler, not
Even ostentatiously alone but simply
Alone ... arching the back in courteous discourtesy,
Gathering the body as a dancer before an unworthy
Audience, treading earth scantily - a task to be done
And done with, girt (curt introvert) for private
Precise avoidance of the undesired,
Pride-attired, generalissimo
Knife-eyed, bisector of moonshine with indigo
Shadow, scorner of earth-floor, flaunter of
Steel-hard sickle curve against the sky ... !

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Chaplin

The sun, a heavy spider, spins in the thirsty sky.
The wind hides under cactus leaves, in doorway corners. Only the wry

Small shadow accompanies Hamlet-Petrouchka's march - the slight
Wry sniggering shadow in front of the morning, turning at noon, behind towards
night.

The plumed cavalcade has passed to tomorrow, is lost again;
But the wisecrack-mask, the quick-flick-fanfare of the cane remain.

Diminuendo of footsteps even is done:
Only remain, Don Quixote, hat, cane, smile and sun.

Goliaths fall to our sling, but craftier fates than these
Lie ambushed - malice of open manholes, strings in the dark and falling trees.

God kicks our backsides, scatters peel on the smoothest stair;
And towering centaurs steal the tulip lips, the aureoled hair,

While we, craned from the gallery, throw our cardboard flowers
And our feet jerk to tunes not played for ours.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Cinema Screen

Light's patterns freeze:
Frost on our faces.
Light's pollen sifts
Through the lids of our eyes ...

Light sinks and rusts
In water; is broken
By glass ... rests
On deserted dust.

Light lies like torn
Paper in corners:
A rock-pool's pledge
Of the sea's return.

Light, wrenched at the edges
By wind, looks down
At itself in wrinkled
Mirrors from bridges.

Light thinly unweaves
Itself through darkness
Like foam's unknotting
Strings in waves ...

Now light is again
Accumulated
Swords against us ...
Now it is gone.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Cocoon For A Skeleton

Clothes: to compose
The furtive, lone
Pillar of bone
To some repose.

To let hands shirk
Utterance behind
A pocket's blind
Deceptive smirk.

To mask, belie
The undue haste
Of breast for breast
Or thigh for thigh.

To screen, conserve
The pose, when death
Half strips the sheath
And leaves the nerve.

To edit, glose
Lyric desire
And slake its fire
In polished prose.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Day Dream

One day people will touch and talk perhaps
easily,
And loving be natural as breathing and warm as
sunlight,
And people will untie themselves, as string is unknotted,
Unfold and yawn and stretch and spread their fingers,
Unfurl, uncurl like seaweed returned to the sea,
And work will be simple and swift
as a seagull flying,
And play will be casual and quiet
as a seagull settling,
And the clocks will stop, and no one will wonder
or care or notice,
And people will smile without reason,
Even in winter, even in the rain.

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Discovery

When you are slightly drunk
Things are so close, so friendly.
The road asks to be walked upon,
The road rewards you for walking
With firm upward contact answering your downward contact
Like the pressure of a hand in yours.
You think - this studious balancing
Of right leg while left leg advances, of left while right,
How splendid
Like somebody-or-other-on-a-peak-in-Darien!
How cleverly that seat shapes the body of the girl who sits there.
How well, how skilfully that man there walks towards you,
Arms hanging, swinging, waiting.
You move the muscles of your cheeks,
How cunningly a smile responds.
And now you are actually speaking
Round sounding words
Magnificent
As that lady's hat!

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Don Juan

Under the lips and limbs, the embraces, faces,
Under the sharp circumference, the brightness,
Under the fence of shadows,
Is something I am seeking;
Under the faces a face,
Under the new an old or a not-yet-come-to;
Under the voices a peace.

Am I a darkness all your flames must light?
A mirror all your eyes must look into -
That dares not yet reflect the neutral sky,
The empty eye of the sky?

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Earthfast

Architects plant their imagination, weld their poems on rock,
Clamp them to the skidding rim of the world and anchor them down to its core;
Leave more than the painter's or poet's snail-bright trail on a friable leaf;
Can build their chrysalis round them - stand in their sculpture's belly.

They see through stone, they cage and partition air, they cross-rig space
With footholds, planks for a dance; yet their maze, their flying trapeze
Is pinned to the centre. They write their euclidean music standing
With a hand on a cornice of cloud, themselves set fast, earth-square.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Empty Room

The clock disserts on punctuation, syntax.
The clock's voice, thin and dry, asserts, repeats.
The clock insists: a lecturer demonstrating,
Loudly, with finger raised, when the class has gone.

But time flows through the room, light flows through the room
Like someone picking flowers, like someone whistling
Without a tune, like talk in front of a fire,
Like a woman knitting or a child snipping at paper.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Epilogue

"Why can't you say what you mean straight out in prose?"
Well, say it yourself: then say "It's that, but more,
Or less perhaps, or not that way, or not
That after all." The meaning of a song
Might be an undernote; this tree might mean
That leaf as much as trunk, branch, other leaves.
And does one know till one begins? And let's
Look over hedges far as eyesight lets us,
Since road's not, surely, road, but road and hedge
And feet and sky and smell of hawthorn, horse-dung.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Epitaph For Our Children

Blame us for these who were cradled and rocked in our chaos;
Watching our sidelong watching, fearing our fear;
Playing their blind-man's-bluff in our gutted mansions,
Their follow-my-leader on a stair that ended in air.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Epitaph On A Disturber Of His Times

We expected the violin's finger on the upturned nerve;
Its importunate cry, too laxly curved:
And you drew us an oboe-outline, clean and acute;
Unadorned statement, accurately carved.

We expected the screen, the background for reverie
Which cloudforms usefully weave:
And you built the immaculate, adamant, blue-green steel
Arch of a balanced wave.

We expected a pool with flowers to diffuse and break
The child-round face of the mirrored moon:
And you blazed a rock-path, begun near the sun, to be finished
By the trained and intrepid feet of men.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Flight Of Stairs

Stairs fly as straight as hawks;
Or else in spirals, curve out of curve, pausing
At a ledge to poise their wings before relaunching.
Stairs sway at the height of their flight
Like a melody in Tristan;
Or swoop to the ground with glad spread of their feathers
Before they close them.

They curiously investigate
The shells of buildings,
A hollow core,
Shell in a shell.

Useless to produce their path to infinity
Or turn it to a moral symbol,
For their flight is ambiguous, upwards or downwards as you please;
Their fountain is frozen,
Their concertina is silent.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Houses

People who are afraid of themselves
Multiply themselves into families
And so divide themselves
And so become less afraid.

People who might have to go out
Into clanging strangers' laughter,
Crowd under roofs, make compacts
To no more than smile at each other.

People who might meet their own faces
Or surprise their own voices in doorways
Build themselves rooms without mirrors
And live between walls without echoes.

People who might meet other faces
And unknown voices round corners
Build themselves rooms all mirrors
And live between walls all echoes.

People who are afraid to go naked
Clothe themselves in families, houses,
But are still afraid of death
Because death one day will undress them.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

June Sick Room

The birds' shrill fluting
Beats on the pink blind,
Pierces the pink blind
At whose edge fumble the sun's
Fingers till one obtrudes
And stirs the thick motes.
The room is a close box of pink warmth.
The minutes click.
A man picks across the street
With a metal-pointed stick.
Three clocks drop each twelve pennies
On the drom of noon.
The birds end.
A child's cry pricks the hush.
The wind plucks at a leaf.
The birds rebegin.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Last Word To Childhood

Ice-cold fear has slowly decreased
As my bones have grown, my height increased.
Though I shiver in snow of dreams, I shall never
Freeze again in a noonday terror.

I shall never break, my sinews crumble
As God-the-headmaster's fingers fumble
At the other side of unopening doors
Which I watch for a hundred thousand years.

I shall never feel my thin blood leak
While darkness stretches a paw to strike
Or Nothing beats an approaching drum
Behind my back in a silent room.

I shall never, alone, meet the end of my world
At the bend of a path, the turn of a wall:
Never, or once more only, and
That will be once and an end of end.

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Meeting

Dogs take new friends abruptly and by smell,
Cats' meetings are neat, tactual, caressive.
Monkeys exchange their fleas before they speak.
Snakes, no doubt, coil by coil reach mutual knowledge.

We then, at first encounter, should be silent;
Not court the cortex but the epidermis;
Not work from inside out but outside in;
Discover each other's flesh, its scent and texture;
Familiarize the sinews and the nerve-ends,
The hands, the hair - before the inept lips open.

Instead of which we are resonant, explicit.
Our words like windows intercept our meaning.
Our four eyes fence and flinch and awkwardly
Wince into shadow, slide oblique to ambush.
Hands stir, retract. The pulse is insulated.
Blood is turned inwards, lonely; skin unhappy ...
While always under all, but interrupted,
Antennae stretch ... waver ... and almost ... touch.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Music

This shape without space,
This pattern without stuff,
This stream without dimension
Surrounds us, flows through us,
But leaves no mark.

This message without meaning,
These tears without eyes
This laughter without lips
Speaks to us but does not
Disclose its clue.

These waves without sea
Surge over us, smooth us.
These hands without fingers
Close-hold us, caress us.
These wings without birds
Strong-lift us, would carry us
If only the one thread broke.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Never

Suddenly, desperately
I thought, "No, never
In millions of minutes
Can I for one second
Calm-leaving my own self
Like clothes on a chair-back
And quietly opening
The door of one house
(No, not one of all millions)
Of blood, flesh and brain,
Climb the nerve-stair and look
From the tower, from the windows
Of eyes not my own: ...
No, never, no, never!"

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Night Piece

Climb, claim your shelf-room, far
Packed from inquisitive moon
And cold contagious stars.

Lean out, but look no longer,
No further, than to stir
Night with extended finger.

Now fill the box with light,
Flood full the shining block,
Masonry against night.

Let window, curtain, blind
Soft-sieve and sift and shred
The impertinence of sound.

Now draw the silence up,
A blanket round your ears;
Lay darkness close and sure,
Inverted cup to cup
On your acquiescent eyes:
Dismissing body's last outposted spies.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Not Love Perhaps

This is not Love, perhaps,
Love that lays down its life,
that many waters cannot quench,
nor the floods drown,
But something written in lighter ink,
said in a lower tone, something, perhaps, especially our own.

A need, at times, to be together and talk,
And then the finding we can walk
More firmly through dark narrow places,
And meet more easily nightmare faces;
A need to reach out, sometimes, hand to hand,
And then find Earth less like an alien land;
A need for alliance to defeat
The whisperers at the corner of the street.

A need for inns on roads, islands in seas,
Halts for discoveries to be shared,
Maps checked, notes compared;
A need, at times, of each for each,
Direct as the need of throat and tongue for speech.

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Nursery Rhyme For A Twenty-First Birthday

You cannot see the walls that divide your hand
From his or hers or mine when you think you touch it.

You cannot see the walls because they are glass,
And glass is nothing until you try to pass it.

Beat on it if you like, but not too hard,
For glass will break you even while you break it.

Shout, and the sound will be broken and driven backwards,
For glass, though clear as water, is deaf as granite.

This fraudulent inhibition is cunning: wise men
Content themselves with breathing patterns on it.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

O

Old women look intently at Nothing when the doctor
announces a cancer, dark fruit, under the
shrunken left breast.

Girls' hands hold Nothing when the train sucks their
men from the platform and scoops them down the
slipway of rail.

Nothing beats in deafened ears on the empty and
godless altars of mountain tops.

Nothing is the final strength of the strong: the
last poison on the crumpling lips of the weak.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

One Almost Might

Wouldn't you say,
Wouldn't you say: one day,
With a little more time or a little more patience, one might
Disentangle for separate, deliberate, slow delight
One of the moment's hundred strands, unfray
Beginnings from endings, this from that, survey
Say a square inch of the ground one stands on, touch
Part of oneself or a leaf or a sound (not clutch
Or cuff or bruise but touch with finger-tip, ear-
Tip, eyetip, creeping near yet not too near);
Might take up life and lay it on one's palm
And, encircling it in closeness, warmth and calm,
Let it lie still, then stir smooth-softly, and
Tendrils by tendrils unfold, there on one's hand ...

One might examine eternity's cross-section
For a second, with slightly more patience, more time for reflection?

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

One Day

People will touch and talk perhaps easily,
And loving be natural as breathing,
And warm as sunlight;

And people will untie themselves,
As string is unknotted,

Unfold and yawn and stretch and spread
Their fingers;

Unfurl, uncurl, like seaweed returned
To the sea.

And work will be simple and swift
Like a seagull flying;

And play will be casual and quiet
Like a seagull sitting.

And the clocks will stop, and no - one
Will wonder or care or notice.

And people will smile without reason,
Even in the winter
Even in the rain.

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Polyphony In A Cathedral

Music curls
In the stone shells
Of the arches, and rings
Their stone bells.

Music lips
Each cold groove
Of parabolas' laced
Warp and woof,
And lingers round nodes
Of the ribbed roof

Chords open
Their flowers among
The stone flowers; blossom;
Stalkless hang.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Quickstep

Acknowledge the drum's whisper.
Yield to its velvet
Nudge. Cut a slow air-
Curve. Then dip (hip to hip):
Sway, swing, pedantically
Poise. Now recover,
Converting the coda
To prelude of sway-swing-
Recover.

Acknowledge

The drum-crack's alacrity -
Acrid exactitude -
Catch it, then slacken,
Then catch as cat catches
Rat. Trace your graph:
Loop, ellipse. Skirt an air-wall
To bend it and break it -
Thus - so -
As the drum speaks!

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Sea

1

(Windless Summer)

Between the glass panes of the sea are pressed
Patterns of fronds, and the bronze tracks of fishes.

2

(Winter)

Foam-ropes lasso the seal-black shiny rocks,
Noosing, slipping and noosing again for ever.

3

(Windy Summer)

Over-sea going, under returning, meet
And make a wheel, a shell, to hold the sun.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Seaport

Green sea-tarnished copper
And sea-tarnished gold
Of cupolas.

Sea-runnelled streets
Channelled by salt air
That wears the white stone.

The sunlight-filled cistern
Of a dry-dock. Square shadows.
Sun-slatted smoke above meticulous stooping of cranes.

Water pressed up by ships' prows
Going, coming.

City dust turned
Back by the sea-wind's
Wall.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Symphony In Red

Within the church
The solemn priests advance,
And the sunlight, stained by the heavy windows,
Dyes a yet richer red the scarlet banners
And the scarlet robes of the young boys that bear them,
And the thoughts of one of these are far away,
With carmined lips pouting an invitation,
Are with his love - his love, like a crimson poppy
Flaunting amid prim lupins;
And his ears hear nought of the words sung from the rubricated book,
And his heart is hot as the red sun.

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

The British

We are a people living in shells and moving
Crablike; reticent, awkward, deeply suspicious;
Watching the world from a corner of half-closed eyelids,
Afraid lest someone show that he hates or loves us,
Afraid lest someone weep in the railway train.

We are coiled and clenched like a foetus clad in armour.
We hold our hearts for fear they fly like eagles.
We grasp our tongues for fear they cry like trumpets.
We listen to our own footsteps. We look both ways
Before we cross the silent empty road.

We are a people easily made uneasy,
Especially wary of praise, of passion, of scarlet
Cloaks, of gesturing hands, of the smiling stranger
In the alien hat who talks to all or the other
In the unfamiliar coat who talks to none.

We are afraid of too-cold thought or too-hot
Blood, of the opening of long-shut shafts or cupboards,
Of light in caves, of X-rays, probes, unclothing
Of emotion, intolerable revelation
Of lust in the light, of love in the palm of the hand.

We are afraid of, one day on a sunny morning,
Meeting ourselves or another without the usual
Outer sheath, the comfortable conversation,
And saying all, all, all we did not mean to,
All, all, all we did not know we meant.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

The Children Look At The Parents

We being so hidden from those who
Have quietly borne and fed us,
How can we answer civilly
Their innocent invitations?

How can we say "we see you
As but-for-God's-grace-ourselves, as
Our caricatures (we yours), with
Time's telescope between us"?

How can we say "you presumed on
The accident of kinship,
Assumed our friendship coatlike,
Not as a badge one fights for"?

How say "and you remembered
The sins of our outlived selves and
Your own forgiveness, buried
The hatchet to slow music;

Shared money but not your secrets;
Will leave as your final legacy
A box double-locked by the spider
Packed with your unsolved problems"?

How say all this without capitals,
Italics, anger or pathos,
To those who have seen from the womb come
Enemies? How not say it?

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

The Man In The Bowler Hat

I am the unnoticed, the unnoticable man:
The man who sat on your right in the morning train:
The man who looked through like a windowpane:
The man who was the colour of the carriage, the colour of the mounting
Morning pipe smoke.
I am the man too busy with a living to live,
Too hurried and worried to see and smell and touch:
The man who is patient too long and obeys too much
And wishes too softly and seldom.

I am the man they call the nation's backbone,
Who am boneless - playable catgut, pliable clay:
The Man they label Little lest one day
I dare to grow.

I am the rails on which the moment passes,
The megaphone for many words and voices:
I am the graph diagram,
Composite face.

I am the led, the easily-fed,
The tool, the not-quite-fool,
The would-be-safe-and-sound,
The uncomplaining, bound,
The dust fine-ground,
Stone-for-a-statue waveworn pebble-round

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

To Be Blind

Is it sounds

converging,

Sounds

nearing,

Infringement,

impingement,

Impact,

contact

With surfaces of the sounds

Or surfaces without the sounds:

Diagrams,

skeletal,

strange?

Is it winds

curling round invisible corners?

Polyphony of perfumes?

Antennae discovering an axis,

erecting the architecture of a world?

Is it

orchestration of the finger-tips,

graph of a fugue:

Scaffold for colours:

colour itself being god?

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Tube Station

The tube lift mounts,
 sap in a stem,
And blossoms its load,
 a black, untidy rose.

The fountain of the escalator
 curls at the crest,
 breaks and scatters
A winnow of men,
 a sickle of dark spray.

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Unlyric Love Song

It is time to give that-of-myself which I could not at first:
To offer you now at last my least and my worst:
Minor, absurd preserves,
The shell's end-curves,
A document kept at the back of a drawer,
A tin hidden under the floor,
Recalcitrant prides and hesitations:
To pile them carefully in a desparate oblation
And say to you "quickly! turn them
Once over and burn them".

Now I (no communist, heaven knows!
Who have kept as my dearest right to close
My tenth door after I've opened nine to the world,
To unfold nine sepals holding one hard-furled)
Shall - or shall try to - offer to you
A communism of two ...

See, entry's yours;
Here, the last door!

Submitted by Stephen Fryer

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

Wet City Night

Light drunkenly reels into shadow;
Blurs, slurs uneasily;
Slides off the eyeballs:
The segments shatter.

Tree-branches cut arc-light in ragged
Fluttering wet strips.
The cup of the sky-sign is filled too full;
It slushes wine over.

The street-lamps dance a tarentella
And zigzag down the street:
They lift and fly away
In a wind of lights.

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond