

Poetry Series

**Matthew Coombe**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**  
2008

**Publisher:**  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# Matthew Coombe()

## "we Got A Runner! "

When the hammer strikes the head of the chisel  
I imagine the muffled shot ringing out down the

cellblock. I picture myself squatting, waiting, listening  
for the guards' heavy horizontal footfalls on the steel

gangway just the other side of these vertical bars. And  
only when I am certain that the sound has not pierced

the uncertainty of their poker hands do I deliver the  
second blow and wonder how to breach the steel laced

deep within this concrete. But the purpose of today is  
not to evade the probing searchlights of the towers, or to

defeat the perimeter fence, not to make it to the border  
before the dogs taste my scent. Today is simply the day

to remove these tiles, to force this blade, to watch the fractured  
shards fall into the tub. Such a day could even be my season

in hell, where each created space is instantly filled by  
another, appearing exactly in its place.

Matthew Coombe

# A Bad Workman

This evening, surrounded by the darkness of the empty house,  
the black nib of my pen points expectantly  
at an empty space on the page.

A menacing spearhead of ink and insistency.

Just a phrase or even a well modified noun  
and I'll back off, it seems to say.

But it rests there as still as the judge's gavel.

It brings to mind an image of a gundog  
on dewy heath, standing straight and motionless,  
pointing towards it's far off quarry.

You may have realised that, these are not the lines  
that I hoped to write for you tonight.

Right now I am a shelf without a book,  
a harbour without lights,

four connected walls that refuse to make a room.

Yet here they are,

pinned between each tick of the clock.

Wedged inside the flaming chorus  
of these endlessly whistling candles.

Matthew Coombe

# A Tribute To Richard Madeley

This Morning's general and captain  
A consummate pro, smooth as satin  
He just knew it all  
From gynaecology to balls  
You'd watch and you'd just want to slap him!

Matthew Coombe

## At The Third Stroke...

Today I am wearing a new watch.  
And to quote the song – I am feeling good!

Others get their kicks from new shoes  
fresh from the box, zero miles on the clock.

Or a wallet of cracked leather  
riding low in a back pocket.

But me? It is always a watch.  
This one sports a black rubber strap,

orange face and a rotating steel bezel.  
It has just two hands and a window on the date.

And I wonder if the twenty seven pages of instruction  
(that overlook how to actually tell the time)

are really necessary.  
But tonight I will rest easy.

For if I ever find myself two hundred metres  
beneath the ocean - its immense weight

bearing down upon me-  
I will know the precise date and time of my death.

And there I will remain forever.  
A child's action figure, anchored by the arm

to the sea bed by my new, and now seemingly enormous,  
orange faced wrist-watch.

Matthew Coombe

# Bat

The air was cooler tonight.  
A sign of autumn approaching.  
It felt like she was a girl on a bus,  
just a few stops from here,  
gathering up her things.

A bag of long shadows,  
a purse bursting with her reluctant sunrise.

I was filling a glass with water in the kitchen  
when it flickered across the window  
like a frantically blinking eyelid.

Then on the other side of that glass,  
I stood on the grass  
as it circled again and again.

A neat bow tie  
turning knots of it's own  
in the air above my head.

It could even have been a single bow  
from the tail of a shadowy kite.  
Or even the kite itself,  
flown by an ant – standing at my feet  
on the path – tethered to it's tiny grip  
by a silvery strand of spider's silk.

Matthew Coombe

# Billy Collins

My pen has hovered over the page like a metal detector  
so many times because of you.

All our walks through your woods, around your lake.  
Me, the blind beggar and you leading me gently  
by the hand over the twisted roots of meaning.  
And I cannot count the number of nights we have sat  
facing one another across the table in the kitchen,  
revelling in the rusty sting of whiskey, while the  
candle flame flits endlessly over the wallpaper.

But this is my time to address you and for you  
to quit shuffling the deck, leave the dog to twitching in her sleep.

It feels like I have been living in the same house for years  
and then you arrive one day on my doorstep to ask directions -  
as ordinary as a pigeon settling on the garden fence -  
to point out a door in a hallway I had never seen before,  
behind which lay a room I never knew existed.

So just so you know...  
the room now has its own bed, a bright spray of flowers  
that we change daily and on the wall hangs a small picture  
of a horse grazing in a sunny meadow.  
A horse fenced in by the blinding heights  
of a black, square frame of wood.

Matthew Coombe



# Clearing The Garden

This is the season of lawns and leaves  
The gravitational pull of early autumn

So here we are, just me and this skeleton rake  
Scraping our way over the turf

Two dancers, simply stepping back  
Through the fallen, just pulling and piling.

A conspiracy, revealing a bright green 'X'  
and four damp triangles in yellow and gold.

Matthew Coombe

# Clovis

Recent archaeological finds suggest Stone Age men from  
Europe somehow crossed the Atlantic and discovered  
America in 14000BC.

I imagine him standing on loose rocks  
on a damp shore at dawn in a grey mist.  
Caribou pelt shielding him from the cold,

the dark fur of his hood hiding his eyes.  
An open canoe rising and falling.  
Seal hides straining, stretched tight like a drum-skin

over a framework of bone and birch bark.  
No doubt his friends that had gathered that day  
huddled together out of the spray

and raised their arms to salute those first strokes  
that took him out further beyond the surf.  
Or maybe it was a small flotilla

with flint clovis spears and arrowheads stowed –  
simple tools that carved them into time for evermore  
with the corpses of giant bear and sloth.

But I would like to think that the ice fields  
spread further south than ever that season.  
And whilst hunting on the passing `bergs

he decided to continue onwards  
striding freely from one to the other  
to see just quite how far he could take things.

Then, some months later, weak and close to death  
he fell ashore, sick of ice and seal flesh.  
After wringing out his salt sodden boots

he sat silent, alone by a small fire  
staring up at the moon's silvery beams.

And beyond that, stars.

Matthew Coombe

# Composition

Perhaps later this evening  
I will go down to the water's edge  
and step down into the slatted curve  
of a small wooden boat.

Then pushing off, I will shakily  
slip over the gravel bottom  
towards the intrigue of deeper and darker waters.  
The very centre of it all.

Matthew Coombe

# Conscious Of Time

Even in the lingering light of this early spring evening  
the phrase seems to be everywhere.

It is ticking around the feeder with the clockwork sparrows,

it flicks between the couple across the street  
as they read their evening `papers.

It is like that woman that you always seem to see

no matter where you go.

Is anyone not conscious of time? Nod, raise a hand,  
just catch my eye if you have not long realised

that there are only so many cards in your deck,  
your chip stack no taller than your fist.

Or that with every dawn another golden fish

is quietly scooped from your `pond.

Here on this bed, hot from the shower, I would like to become  
- if only for a second – unconscious of time,

resistant to the pull and release of the moon, to be the tiny  
puncture point of the compass at the centre of the circle.

One of many circles circumnavigating the globe

or maybe ringing an unknown planet trapped in the telescope,  
perhaps a hoop looping above the head of an angel  
silently steering a cloud over this house.

Matthew Coombe

# Dead Arm

The uninvited guests and intruders  
that call in the night and rudely pluck us  
from the body of sleep are legion.

The neighbours making-up inside,  
their cats making war outside,  
are but a few of the guest stars and plot lines  
in the nocturnal soap opera  
which we, the audience, are obliged to endure.

But to be woken in the night  
besides a disembodied arm,  
some dismembered upper limb  
is an alarm call which never fails to amuse.

A corpse remains, but its essence, its armness,  
its ethereal mojo, has made off into the night.  
Without leaving so much as note  
to say where it has gone  
or what time to expect it back.

It is deaf to my commands to rise  
and shed its shroud of death,  
and as I lift it from its steel slab,  
and feel its limp cold flesh  
I begin to speculate.

What was it that came in the night  
and disconnected the cables and wires  
from the sockets of the senses?

Or maybe, taking female form,  
it slipped silently from the bed  
and is standing outside under the streetlamp,  
its orange half-glow sweetly illuminating the fit of her jeans.  
The dizzying altitude of her high-heeled boots.

Like a bird of prey, its return will be slow and silent.  
But as assured as the healing onset of spring,

after winter's bite.

It begins with a gentle scratching at the door.  
Then the teeth of a key, lifting the pins  
in the hasp of a lock.

Then just as a final piece of a jigsaw  
drops satisfyingly into place to complete the picture,  
the spectrum of colour and sensation is restored.  
He hangs up his coat under the stairs  
and casts his shoes into a corner.

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Matthew Coombe

# Dust And Bullets

Bite the dust  
Bite the bullet  
Bullet through the windscreen  
Bullet to the brain  
Brain storming  
Brain displayed in a jar  
Jar in the neck  
Jar full of marbles  
Marbles in a ring  
Marbles tripping under feet  
Feet sweating in trainers  
Feet bare in the ocean  
Ocean of hope  
Ocean of infinity  
Infinity between you and I  
Infinite combinations of words  
Words are like insects  
Words run in herds  
Herds of buffalo  
Herds of people rioting  
Rioting as one seething body  
Rioting in anger  
Anger – like darkness - devours everything  
Anger is a bright red cape  
Cape fluttering in flight  
Cape of Good Hope  
Hope springs eternal  
Hope is all they've got  
Got it in one!  
Got it in the eye  
Eye of a needle  
Eye of the storm  
Storm clouds grey and gathering  
Storm out of the door  
Door to another dimension  
Door through time and space  
Space... the final frontier  
Space and all of the distance in between  
Between the sheets



Between you and me  
Me catching a glimpse of you  
Me looking the other way  
Way too risky  
Way too hot  
Hot under the collar  
Hot feverish and terrified  
Terrified before the rope  
Terrified of the drop  
Drop  
Rope.

Matthew Coombe

## Early Bird.

I love that small silver thimble full of time  
before the start of the day.  
A little quiet time to get the job done  
before all the work starts getting in the way.

It is just me, backed by a little music  
played on a vacuum cleaner - full drone -  
by another someone, somewhere  
as the snakes hiss in the boiler by the door.

The empty halls hang on to last night's forgotten things.  
A letter home rests on the bookcase,  
a list of spellings lie unlearned on the carpet  
and the chewed stub of a pencil clings desperately  
to a cold window sill.

And in this classroom stands a steaming cup of dark coffee,  
it's scent climbing into an air  
that is as silent and still as an abandoned drum,  
and loaded with the tension of a starting pistol.

Matthew Coombe

# Fridayville

No matter where you are  
such a place always seems too far away.  
A small black dot on the far edge of the map

cut off by thick forests and rivers black.  
But in this place the coffee is always fresh  
the air coloured with the salty scent of bacon.

The children sit in their brightly coloured  
classrooms listening to stories.  
And in the afternoons they paint pictures of dragons

insects and far away lands.  
The old ones walk in leafy parks.  
They eat their neatly cut sandwiches

in the shade of the bandstand.  
Then at dusk some gather around  
tables of green felt to play some bridge and drink tea.

And by late evening the children curl into their beds  
the parks are empty  
and the cards neatly stacked in the bottom of the drawer.

Matthew Coombe

# Geography Lesson Circa 1991

Like penguins on an ice floe we would stand  
in line then swallow it down like sharp sand.  
There was something about irrigation,  
farming, but mostly the irritation

of colouring the coasts blue and green for  
the land, my crayons on another tour  
of the globe. They scrubbed around the shore line  
of Europe, then the whole world by lunchtime.

All neatly reduced down onto A4.  
Those pencils racked up air miles by the score.  
But such a mindless task unleashed huge floods  
on seaside towns where painted houses stood.

With each wild swipe of our brutal hands we  
could bring life to deserts, unplug the seas.

Matthew Coombe

## He's The Town Crier.

Battleship crowds cruised overhead today  
but were later sunk by a desert of  
solid blue, pierced only by a  
white jet plane that cut a chalky margin  
into the sky above our heads.

So many of us gathered together  
to see the soldiers parade through our town.  
A silver flash of fixed bayonets,  
camouflaged uniforms creased razor sharp,  
each rank and file in perfect alignment.

A child ate a huge ice-cream and wobbled  
on her dad's shoulders like an egg on a  
greasy spoon and wondered "Who is that man  
shouting? The one in the funny felt hat?"

Matthew Coombe

# Hibernaculum

I do not remember where I came across it.  
The word just tripped me like a discarded slipper,  
lying on a bedroom carpet in the darkness of 3am.

And now it will not go away.  
Like the dog that follows me home each evening,  
always just a few paces behind and then lies down on my lawn.

Hibernaculum, hibernaculum, hibernaculum.  
I even say it in different accents; I change its tones and rhythms.  
(it seems to sit well in American for some reason.)

I know what it means,  
but I would prefer to think it was Roman.  
A military outpost maybe, 50 miles north of Hadrian's Wall.

Now a crumbling ruin on a hillside  
that shelters a few grey sheep from the snowy gales.  
In the middle of these long winter days,

I could easily be an animal  
curled up in a dry hole somewhere  
with my tail over my eyes.

How nice it would be to put on a few pounds for warmth,  
climb in, and sleep out the cold until spring  
as the tendrils of pale roots creep nearer.

But from there I would have missed you tonight.  
I would not have been struck by the way the air around you shimmered.  
How it sparkled every time you smiled.

Matthew Coombe

# Ice Breaker

The simple garden at the back of the house  
with it's playhouse standing in the corner  
and the empty bird feeder swinging from the fence  
faces dead north.

Which means, if I am correct, that the road  
beneath this misted window travels east.  
And if the morning weather report is to be believed,  
then somewhere miles beyond the end of this street,

out over the rolling slate waves of an icy sea,  
is gathering a sandstorm of snow.  
A vast swarm of bees,  
spiralling in on itself again and again.

A biblical plague of white flies which,  
whilst you and I have been playing out the introductions,  
has swept silently through this place,  
like a deserted spectral train

that screams through an empty platform,  
its tattered drapes flapping wildly  
through a thousand glassless windows.

Matthew Coombe

## If The Wind Changes...

You can shuffle around on your knees all you like,  
your legs are not going to fall off.  
The worse that will happen is that you will wear a whole  
in your jeans or your gran's new carpet.

The wind could blow from all four directions at once.  
Your face will always spring back into perfect shape.

Eating carrots will not make a blind bit of difference  
to your eyesight.  
They will however have you gipping, wrenching and  
balking your way through the final five minutes of Sunday dinner.

Crusts will not make your hair curl. Throw them to the birds.  
Your teeth will fall out in time  
but it has nothing to do with kissing girls.  
What they should warn you about are cold sores  
and the risk of glandular fever. But go for it. It's worth the risk.

And finally, your parents did not appear on Bullseye  
in the early 1980's. And despite what your dad says,  
he does not have a bendy Bully stashed  
somewhere at the back of the loft as proof.

Matthew Coombe



## Inset (In-Service Training)

Let me begin by saying that yes, we will be finishing early. I am also conscious of time and I

know how busy you all are, I haven't forgotten what it's like to be in the classroom so I'll make

a start. If at any point you would like to chip in, please do. This will work much better as

a two-way dialogue, rather than just me talking at you. And if I repeat myself stop me, turn the

page, grab me from behind and hook a palm over my mouth. Drag me into a dark alley and

tell me to shut up. I really won't be offended. Now if you would like to go off into your

groups to discuss that, I'll be taking feedback in... shall we say... five minutes?

Matthew Coombe

# Keep Out Of The Reach Of Children

She sat on my knee. The shiny red bag slung  
over a shoulder means you're shopping for the day,  
sunglasses riding high like a boat on the waterfall's edge.

She sat on my knee as I explained to her our trip  
to the doctor. "Will he use this? " She asked  
lifting her tweezers from her nurse's bag.

She sat on my knee as I pointed to the toy syringe.  
I told her how it would squirt medicine into her skin  
and it was nothing to worry about.

Even at three, she could clearly see  
the colour of every card in my hand.  
She had read between my lines and felt  
the breeze of my unease on her face.

She sat on my knee as the nurse took a more direct route.  
"You're having an injection today so you don't get poorly  
at big school. It might make you go Ouch! "

She sat on my knee, me hugging her tightly.  
A second nurse entered and together both arms  
took a singled silver barrelled hit.

She sat on my knee, the orchestra suddenly silenced  
the needle snatched from the record,  
tears soaking in to my shirt.

She sat on my knee when chunks of chocolate  
were pushed in to her clammy palm,  
thirty pieces of silver was all I could think of.

She sat on my knee in the coffee shop  
and drank her milkshake – mine too.  
Two frothy yellow rockets for one wide smile.

But it did not cool the stinging burn in my arms.

Matthew Coombe

# Now Put Down Your Pens And Pencils

Towards the centre of the page, I drew a small "V".  
Just two rapid pencil flicks.  
A "V" with slightly curving arms.

And in that instant, into that empty space  
came an up an a down, four points of the compass  
and a magnetic north.  
All shackled together by the frayed tethers of gravity.

There was altitude, depth and direction.  
It had speed and velocity, perspective and purpose.  
There was also a sense of apprehension.  
The foreboding shadow of imminent danger.

The scene now had an atmosphere and a climate.  
A cloud splitting breeze and thermals that rose and fell  
like the tide below.

Yes that simple act had created oceans, land and air.  
It had divided them by an unseen horizon,  
out there but invisible to the naked eye.

Mountains, rivers and continents so easily crumpled into a ball.  
So easily hooked into a waste basket,  
the one loitering quietly over there by the door.

Matthew Coombe

## Off Piste

Our RE teacher never somehow looked  
exactly the way he was supposed to.  
Bushy Mexican bandit black moustache.  
His winter school ski trips to Austria

Always a sell-out, all-ticket event.  
One Christmas – a few years back now – they said  
deep in the first snowfall of retirement

he caught an edge at the peak of his stairs  
and avalanched down, piled up in the hall.

Black ice can wipe you out at any time.

Matthew Coombe

# Origin

These carefully arranged letters were not spewed  
from a bland machine of beige.  
Nor stamped by the spindly hammers  
of a much cherished typewriter.

I would like to think their existence began in bright red wax,  
at the curled fist of an infant as he wrote his name  
for the first time, on the back of a used brown envelope  
his mother gave him.

Later, his gangly, noodle glyphs took off into the world.  
To see if they could stand on their own, make ends meet  
and reach full cursive maturity.

Some took to the trees, hanging upside down  
by their looped descenders.  
Swinging in the breeze like bats.

A few began community service,  
attached themselves to road signs  
and spent their days shouting their warnings.

Others paired up or grouped down.  
Finding that together they could make strange and beautiful sounds,  
they resided in the flared bells of brass instruments,  
propellers and high voltage wires.  
Buzzing, humming and whirring away the hours.

The more adventurous adhered themselves  
to the tail fins of airplanes heading for Egypt,  
They paid their respects to their ancient ancestral roots  
that are forever fossilised on the walls and chambers  
of the Pharaohs' tombs.

Some of like-mind sensed a higher destiny.  
Finding strength and powerf in unity.  
With limitless creativity and possibility  
they organised themselves into phrases, sentences.

Today, these marks of meaning fulfilled their life's purpose.  
The rest remain stacked and squashed into the cartridges  
and refills of our pens,  
waiting to throw themselves at the mercy of the great silver ball  
that will press them onto our pages,  
with a permanence we will never know.

Matthew Coombe

# Patriarch

Today I was in the kitchen  
sitting at the table  
watching the steam rise  
from the boiling pan of potatoes  
rattling on the stove.

And for no reason I can think of,  
I began to recall something he used to say  
whenever the we felt the serpents of life  
pushing under the doors,  
slowly filling every room.

Today is the tomorrow  
that you worried about yesterday  
and all is well, he would say.

The boiler fired, the grill warmed  
and the steam continued to rise  
as I remembered how he wore his watch.  
Always to the inside.

Not because it was the style of the time,  
but because, he said,  
the steady pulsing rhythm  
under his skin  
somehow ensured that it kept perfect time,  
never missed a single beat.

Matthew Coombe



# Primary School Fire Practice

Man the lifeboats! Call 911!  
Save yourself while there's still time!  
The fire bell goes off in the middle of maths  
and everyone falls into line.

"Is it a practice or is there really a blaze Miss? "  
"I'm sure that I can smell smoke."  
"Josh said he was going to set the alarm off! "  
"And I saw him give it a poke! "

So onto the playground the whole school descends  
and each child is brought to attention.  
They stamp their feet in the freezing rain  
anything for some heat retention.

Then in with a cheer and to a round of applause  
come the firemen, all bravado and flair.  
With smiles wide and flashing and a glint in their eyes  
the lady teachers start smoothing their hair.

"Is everyone out? Is everyone here? "  
Asks a fireman in full flameproof gear.  
"And who's that fella' heading back into the flames?  
Oi you man! Get over `ere! "

With a wet blanket shielding his body and face  
the hero turned, gave a grin  
"My Hull City tie never shall burn!  
Forget me! I'm going back in! "

A few minutes later he returned, black as soot  
coughing up dust and burnt plaster.  
"This my school! " He said clutching the tie to his chest.  
Who am I? Why I'm the Headmaster! "

Matthew Coombe

## Sparrows (Haiku)

Brown bomber jackets  
In your high garden hanger  
A cheerful squadron.

Matthew Coombe

# Tear-Arseing

If you were the first onto the playground  
and the sweeping wind had cornered the leaves,  
sent empty crisp bags circling like greyhounds  
then there was only one game there could be.

We would untoggle our parkas and grab  
the bottom corners in each fist then lift  
them up our backs, over our heads, a slab  
of a sail to catch a westerly drift.

Then tear-arse into the gale's heart. Head-on!  
Even the fastest kids across the yard  
lost all force and felt their speed's erosion.  
Then blown down flat decked like a house of cards.

For those who conquered that grey concrete hill  
lay the kite ride down. A tail winded thrill.

Matthew Coombe

# The Copado Cactus

This morning I walked a winding trail  
from this cabin through the woods.  
The air was warm,  
thick from last night's rain.

Fallen pine needles softened  
on the wet roof tops.  
It was so still  
not even the crowns of the trees swayed.

The only sounds, the drops of damp  
falling through the highest parts  
of the spiny canopy.  
Though none of them ever seemed

to reach the ground.  
It brought to mind  
one of those rainmaker musical instruments.  
How all those tiny pieces

tumble down through the many levels  
one at a time.  
And how they also never finish their fall.  
There was a surprising absence of life.

No grouse to peck it's way through the third stanza.  
No rabbit to chase an adverb  
through the final phrase.

I felt like Noah.  
Making his final checks  
before casting off,  
making sure all were accounted for.

Then turning off all the lights,  
locking all the doors,  
damping down every fire.



# The Ears

You know the picture.  
A pair of friends.  
A group shot maybe.

Usually by a famous landmark,  
an immense landscape  
or on the steps of museum eating lunch.

But when the shutter froze the moment,  
like an insect in ice,  
the boy smiling - centre frame -  
became a stooge, the punch-line of the joke.

The two flexed fingers raised behind his head  
present an ass, a jack-rabbit - a jack-ass.

A photograph of friendship  
intended to be cherished, now tinted  
with the yellow haze of mockery.

And in the back of the scene, in a tree shaded café  
rests an empty coffee cup, a stained steel spoon.

Matthew Coombe

# The Flip-Side Of The Coin

Sundays evenings at home  
can be like the dentists  
waiting room,

listening to the shrill shrieking  
of the drill  
upstairs.

It is on these nights  
that eight hours sleep  
passes too quickly.

The turning of a page.  
A vase falling,  
striking the floor.

Dark mornings  
moan in my veins  
like smoke.

But not right now.  
Now is the time to let  
the beads of silver  
slip down the beer bottle.

A time to recline deeper  
in this chair  
and doze

through a movie  
where I really haven't a clue  
what's going on.

Matthew Coombe

# The Invisible Circumference

It feels that so much time lies ahead of me that the only image that comes to mind is a fishbowl filled to the brim with brightly coloured marbles. It's last owners

flick their tails and glide silently into open water. For too long I have been the marble buried in the centre of the bunch, the one gasping for air but not

able to kick to the surface. I have also been the fish patrolling the wide, invisible circumference, watching the multicoloured gravel scroll beneath

my belly on a never ending loop. And tonight the house is quiet, save for the sound of the clock ticking beneath the mirror - a sound I did not know it made -

now a tut of distain that can only be meant for me. No tonight is not the night I had planned. The ink is loaded in the barrel of the pen like a bullet

but you just cannot shoot pool with a jump rope. I intended these words to circle the skies, to rise on warm thermal drifts and then vanish like the silver bubbles in

a champagne flute. So I will sit here like the fisherman's float, and wait for the time when I am twitched once and then dragged beneath the surface.

Matthew Coombe



# The List Makers

What if I were on your list?  
The next slippery rung on your ladder  
another silver bead on your chain.

I could be a black bottle of wine  
lying on the stone cellar floor beneath your house  
wearing a raincoat of dust  
laid out like a legion of body bags in a cavernous warehouse.

Or perhaps I am your next bullet point.  
You in the heavy boots, jeans and black T-shirt.  
Those dark green - watching from behind the shutters  
of an elevated window - eyes fixing me in the crosshairs.

But here...let me save you some time.  
A well placed mine on the twelfth fairway  
or a man-trap in the sand-trap by the ninth green  
would seem a far simpler modus operandi.

And there is the roll call of all those who just vanished  
like the frost on a sunlit field.  
Those who allowed the tide to take them  
or left in the normality of the moment and never returned.

Leaving not even a chalk silhouette  
in the hallway, face down  
just a few feet from the door.

Matthew Coombe

# Wile E. Coyote

The long battered muzzle  
sickly yellow eyes  
and that unintended toothless sneer  
are surely the result  
of a lifetime of struggle and defeat.

If it is true that God loves a trier  
then what better example than he?  
Canine cannons litter the canyon  
but on he goes undeterred.

Even as he plummets to the ground  
he is thinking of his next big idea  
which we all know will end

in a long descending whistle  
a dull and distant thud

and of course

a tiny plume

of smoke.

Matthew Coombe