

David Pollard  
bedbound



Perdika Press

# bedbound

David Pollard

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*To Espé*

# introduction

There are poets who are in what Roth calls 'professional competition with death'. Their desire to be read or, perhaps, their desire for immortality, is their attempt to deal with the mortal.

They want, to quote Roth again 'the worst, not the best, the worst, by which (they mean) the truth' [340] This requires not courage or some kind of heroics, not even the negative capability of creativity, but a pertinacious looking; a being there, or being with; the ability to make a record, above all a record of mortality, of what Heidegger sums up as the Freiheit-zum-Tode (freedom towards death).

It is not a question of religion, or sanctimoniousness or of judging but of atmosphere in the sense of the air that is breathed and the movement of the oceans which reflect it, the drawing down of the world to a point at which it can be said; intoned, made to sing, made to last, come to rest.

Death as muse replaces authority of one kind of existence with another as Baudelaire (in *La Mort des Artistes*) understood:

C'est la Mort, planant comme un soleil nouveau,

Fera s'épanouir les fleurs de leur cerveau

(It is death that, hovering as a new sun,

Will make the flowers of their minds blossom)

This is poetry at the threshold of its powers; stuttering, straining, fragmentary, delusional. It is poetry as failure. It is Kafka's 1914 diary entry: 'kein Tod, aber die ewigen Qualen des Sterbens' (not death but the eternal agonies of dying). Writing is mortal and can only remain mortal with all the limitations that implies – no eternal consummation, certainly nothing like mimesis, no answers, no metatextual awareness, not even any finality, certainly nothing like closure, but simply the matter at hand.

Also very much a poetics of loss. A poetics of love for one who became so much a part of life yet is reduced to a place: 'Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs . . . Where but to think is to be full of sorrow'.

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# 1

now they are gone  
    the thin weft of chatter  
    the hours and years  
leaving us here  
among the stuff life gathered  
along the parabolic passage  
of your story  
    lynched in the tattered rags  
    photos and saints  
the jumble of  
    routines  
that clutter the concave passages  
and ghostly branches of the veins last strength  
are coiled behind ear and eye

    hold out your hand  
    along the air  
    that was  
    uneasy in its fathoms  
    and the trial of limbs  
a flicker of that quick black dust  
of half fragmented  
and remembered ruins  
that almost  
    even now



deserves its little inmost call

## 2

already  
there are the roots dimensions  
delving a mind  
deciphering the tones  
of almost breathing seas  
washed up against a century of years  
that sends a nerve along  
your delicate finger  
twitching

(gripping)

mine  
its body of skins  
creating sunlight  
reflected in some other  
just as  
the threadbare welter  
of the sounds and smells  
at finis-terre  
rocked in old green  
and in another further slumber  
of its headlands

### 3

it was before  
    earlier better  
curled against  
    his thigh  
now on your forehead  
steeped in pillows  
and the lost finger  
of early sunshine  
so far outside  
and unobtainable  
but in those hidden angles  
memory allows  
of earlier  
    (was it so much earlier)  
    crisp  
    and  
  
upward into the air  
feet tapping to  
the music of expectations  
hope that is your name  
    knew where to run and hide  
    from unthought futures  
that are  
    now

just as a feather  
    eventually falls  
under the weight of air