

Stephen Robertson

Capricorn suite

In other news

12 January 2015

Five days after Charlie Hebdo, I learn
that something is growing at the tail end of my colon:
probably malignant.

‘Malignant’ seems too strong a word.
I’m sure it doesn’t really *want*
to kill me.

Like the asteroid
barrelling onwards, to wipe us out in
ten or a thousand or maybe a million years,
it seems to be acting
not in its own best interests.

Too bad.

Polarity

16 January 2015

First the bad news, then the good:
it’s cancer; but it hasn’t spread.

No balance here. The bad
is bad in absolute, while the good
is good only in relation to the bad.

The chances are said
to be good. That’s good
enough, I suppose.

Battle lines

20 January 2015

Below the thunders of the upper deep,
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth

— Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Somewhere deep down in my abysmal gut
(well, really, just around the final bend)
this craven kraken creeps, and slumbers not:
a stealth invasion's getting off the ground.
Up on the surface and for far around,
another creature wakes; great cogwheels grind.
They peer, they scan, they scrape, they test, they sound;
they write their notes, interpret what they find.

The possibility of peace is now long gone.
In just a few days' time, these two will meet
and clash — and I'm to be the battle ground.
The field is ready now, the lines are drawn.
Whichever wins, whichever meets defeat,
the relict of the fight will be my wound.

The goat

27 January 2015

I am transfixed as a horned goat
charges towards me
from beyond the pale, under my guard,
below the belt and over the line.

What's in a name?
It's been too far south all its life:
not cancer, but capricorn.

Catheter

7 February 2015

Objective

An exobladder.
Strapped to my thigh
with elastic and velcro.
Below, a nozzle and tap.
Above, a tube, a valve, a smaller tube.

Subjective

An invasion of my privacy.
An assault on my dignity.
An abrogation of my autonomy.

Objective

In my groin and in my mind's eye:
A tube inside a tube inside a tube
—only the last lives there.
An inflated bulb to hold
the other two in place.

Subjective

Discomfort. Bother.
Irritation. Nuisance.
Pain? no, not really.

Objective

Yellow liquid flows.

Subjective/objective

Tap left open.
Oh bugger!

The other side

10 February 2015

What was it, then, from which I just emerged?
Did I jump, or was I pulled or pushed?
Did I leap a chasm, ford a raging torrent,
get rolled over by an avalanche,
fall through a wormhole, or cross a mountain range?
Did I march towards my fate,
or did I merely hang on by my fingernails
while the tornado raged around me?
Or was it just a hedge, backwards?

Yesterday I was told: it looks clear.
So life should now appear
as it did a month gone,
BC (Before Capricorn).

But of course that is not so.
Seen from here, the future is changed
utterly. And I have the scars
to prove it.

The all-clear

20 March 2015

Blitz. The heavy bombers, lighter now,
are droning back towards their bases,
and fighters too. The siren call
is in reverse, a brief release—
until the following night at least.

Odysseus' sirens, of course
can offer no such message. Theirs
is a one-way invitation to the rocks.

But me, now, I'm just lucky.