

JANUARY



and so i opened  
the new year with a scarlat  
ti sonata: the  
spirit's champagne and  
heavy metal for  
every metaphysician  
all believers in the ho  
ly common life of  
everyday and in  
the great flintstones of  
reality that god has  
strewn for all to find

and so i opened  
the new year with the queen's pawn  
and intelligence  
replied to that by  
moving its black knight  
and i knew that the counter  
attack would come precisely  
where the emeralds  
flashed so wildly and  
that i would only  
have freedom (my faith) with which  
to defend myself

heartland 3/1  
the light is dark in the depths  
of january  
the wood looks like jew  
ellery by arje  
griest clumps of molehills in the  
lawn the daythree hangover  
tastes acrid up there  
at gravergården  
farm the new year is  
being ploughed in let us hope  
that is a good sign

4 january

5 january

heartland 6/1  
the hawthorn outside in its  
tattered livery  
and my soul inside  
in its ageing human bo  
dy and its sweatshirt  
from last year encased  
in seventy per cent po  
lyester the christ  
mas tree shrivelled on  
its way to rue land  
fill epiphany

death without doubt was  
paying a visit  
in the neighbourhood i thought  
i recognized it  
inside a white o  
pel ascona coming from  
stillebæk now it was time  
to keep a low pro  
file without ducking  
down too much like you did at  
school when you wanted  
to get off homework

hints tips and good ad  
vice to a young po  
et 'my new year's wish to you  
is that you may have  
to find yourself forced  
to work hard to write your po  
ems - for how many poets  
have not simply been  
smothered by their tal  
ent their all too precocious  
talent' i said with  
a small knowing smile

the sunflowers down there  
behind store væ  
deled have now become so  
charcoal cremated and so  
terrifying that  
i scarcely dare bike  
past them even on  
this day of epiph  
any - they are tonsured monks  
of the franciscan order  
it is also your  
fault tove meyer

and we passed over  
into the amethyst wood  
where language and re  
ality did not  
fit like pieces in  
that jigsaw puzzle referred  
to as 'the world' where they were  
not commensurab  
le and their rela  
tion thus could only  
be expressed in poetic  
irrational terms

i must confess that  
i throw out apples  
to the fieldmice in the ar  
senals of janu  
ary thinking this  
to be something rather fool  
ish until a friend upon  
hearing that remarked  
'that really is quite  
ingenious - in that way  
you're able to keep  
them out of the house'

hints tips and good ad  
vice to a young po  
et 'in my childhood there was  
this brand of substi  
tute chocolate - cre  
mona - which we boys all a  
dored more than we did the real  
thing so much so that  
when the war was o  
ver we looked out for choco  
late that had the taste  
of real cremona'

heartland 8/1  
a raw cold without the snow's  
duvet of glass wool  
the frost now lies in  
visible over  
the hills like tetrachloride  
holes in the writing bigger  
than those found in the  
number field things i  
can't express words i  
cannot put on paper with  
out help from the dead

we have now entered  
a month that is with  
out alcohol and rhine wine  
lent you might say before its  
time a time of car  
rots and grated ap  
ple for breakfast a  
certain abstinence  
mortification of the  
flesh and heart from the wood's edge:  
pheasant cock screech like  
a dry martini

9 january

im using this d the worlds edge d im using this  
corner as the o corner as the  
poems anchora bramble bramble poems anchora  
ge to reality n bramble bramble n ge to reality  
o o  
do not try t t t f yrt ton od  
his path here not ev e  
t rook t e t e t grakle t  
h r thorn n r b h colony h  
e eht ylno y thorn y l i grakle e  
e s thorn d e s colony  
w m r t n e t grakle w  
o a e h tt g a h h p colony o  
r z l sre h i hh i ier ytin t i o a r  
l e i p s oo e g r h s o t stone l  
d s g a h rr r ns e f h d  
s h p t p nn t r p p ngier s  
o t n a a s thorn e e a r h s  
e f g d p t s thorn i t i e t e e  
d rein h e s g h n r h f d  
g l a s daten y n t e ro i g  
e etters i here only poetr s h s n l e  
h s e n  
do not try t sdrow eht ylno er ot even  
g  
l r  
im using this o bramble bramble a im using this  
corner as the o bramble bramble i corner as the  
poems anchora m n poems anchora  
ge to reality the worlds edge ge to reality

the geese down at søn  
derlund have by now survived  
both christmas and new  
year and særslev chair  
factory and veflinge  
sawmill while the small  
fir copse is gone per  
haps for the same reason it  
once gleamed so brightly  
of carbuncles in  
the january woods and  
of carbon 14

when understanding  
is no longer the  
organizing principle  
for your existence  
but rather exist  
ence itself which grants you a  
degree of understanding  
when you have reversed  
descartes only then  
can you begin to join in  
talking of the truth  
of the setting sun

perhaps the very  
screen i've chosen is on the  
one hand too coarsely  
meshed to register  
the quiverings of  
the soul and on the other  
hand too finely meshed to al  
low the clouds from stil  
lebæk to squeak through  
it's just possible  
the magic square is simply  
not up to the job

a new pulping or  
der from the publish  
ers this time it is to be  
'winterreise' that  
will end up as milk  
cartons i'm beginning to  
wonder whether giant e  
ditions are not worse  
than pulping perhaps  
it is better to have the  
few hundred books that  
manage to survive

heartland 12/1  
it is as if the great dreamer  
had strewn castor  
sugar over the  
garden as if kate bush her  
self had danced on out  
of her video  
tape continuing right a  
cross the lawn clad in  
her gwenevere cos  
tume and had scattered  
stardust in her wake

dedicatio cor  
dis - the wood stood dark against  
the evening sky (as  
when black is printed  
on madder lake to  
make the colour gleam from the  
inside as if it was a  
question of some great  
innate force) the wood  
stood with black letter  
ing right across the heart of  
my brandnew sweatshirt

and i saw a fire  
storm from australi  
a and an oil disaster  
not far from puerto rico  
and i saw a dead  
doberman pincher  
in sarajevo  
and an old film se  
quence with cripples from vietnam  
there really was plenty of  
entertainment on  
that winter's evening

tombeau de morten  
sen - 'you can't draw at all' rich  
ard once remarked to  
my mother who was  
one of his schoolmates on a  
mager all that time  
ago neverthe  
less she naturally got  
better marks than he  
was given as he  
was always putting black fin  
gers on the paper

the days went by one  
after the other  
and even though i was keep  
ing very strict tabs  
on them i felt a  
bout time as i do about  
dates or the question of sum  
mer time i sudden  
ly became unsure  
whether i should be adding  
a day or perhaps  
be subtracting one

had time expanded  
to some larger u  
nit than that which hours and  
minutes were able  
to register or  
was it more a question of  
a flight from the seconds that  
dissect human ex  
istence into ti  
ny pieces? - the strength of my  
life had to try to  
decide that question

formerly i was  
the one who caused things  
to happen and to take place  
you might say whereas now i  
sometimes get the feel  
ing it is rather  
the opposite it  
is as if things are  
that which dictates my exist  
ence here in the midst of the  
innermost sanctu  
ary of winter

perhaps it's the year  
of the tree-sparrow at a  
ny rate they're hopping  
like fleas on a sheet  
out there in the years first slush  
or else it's only  
me who is sudden  
ly able to understand  
their language because  
i have drunk far too  
much sherry have consumed far  
too much dragon's blood

and i saw the so  
viet parachute  
troops descend on the flag of  
lithuania  
like doves with beaks that  
were full of fire and cogwheels  
and they fired into the crowds  
at random with their  
kalashikov ri  
fles - that was what i saw one  
day late in the twen  
tieth century

got up eight o' clock  
ate my müsli break  
fast as usual time to take  
the dog out fetch news  
papers and post your  
eyes and lips beloved are  
indispensable daily  
humdrum am sitting  
at my writing desk  
not thinking of anything  
'mind of mindlessness'  
am writing this poem

zeno's arguments  
are of course not in any  
way evidence a  
gainst reality  
rather against in  
telligence itself or per  
haps against the understand  
ing of all things' co  
hesion an understand  
ing of the world the  
eleatians were pio  
neer knights of the faith

the fields lay green with  
thallium under  
the spectroscopic ana  
lysis of winter like the  
fields of a magic  
square (or perhaps like  
certain pages in  
'kierkegaards papir  
er') all i had to do was  
to pace them out one early  
morning to solve the  
mystery of life

dear peter - in the  
depths of the winter twilight  
of your eyes greylefted  
with carbide i can  
see your daughter run  
ning around during all those  
years when i did not yet know  
her just as i am  
able to see you  
wearing your black ber  
et in the far reaches of  
her innermost look

and we gyrated  
in ever decreasing cir  
cles around midwin  
ter's acetylene  
flame around midwin  
ter's potash around midwin  
ter's soda around midwin  
ter's magnesium  
because we knew that  
it was precisely  
in that light that the poem  
would meet destruction

and it was a con  
stant source of solace to me  
not to have to un  
derstand everything  
hoar frost's decimal places  
or the cube root of  
the night it was such  
a relief not to have to  
remember any  
longer all the pass  
words of explanations be  
cause now i was free

and by freedom i  
meant as i always do ab  
solute freedom that  
which passes under  
standing call it freedom in  
relation to god  
(even though it is  
god who has equipped me with  
it) thus enabling  
me now to be a  
ble to choose to believe in  
god or choose not to

16 january

and i saw the eag  
le break the first seal  
and i heard a voice cry in  
the great loudspeaker:  
'allah u akbar'  
and the cruise missiles put an  
end to his words and i saw  
immense clouds of smoke  
ascend from the top  
pled chandeliers of baghdad  
- all this i saw on  
cablenews network

and when the eagle  
broke the second seal  
i heard the tv speakers  
all talking at the  
same time as the scud  
missiles began to rain on  
haifa and tel aviv and  
i could not believe  
that which my eyes saw  
on that day in the final  
decade of the sec  
ond millennium

and when the eagle  
broke the third seal i  
heard the idiots and those  
possessed say the word  
'peace' while they were froth  
ing at the mouth led astray  
by their own anxiety  
incapable of  
realizing it  
was precisely their compli  
ance that was the most  
frequent cause of war

and when the eagle  
broke the fourth seal i  
saw what looked like a sea of  
coruscating glass  
and i saw the first  
green pictures of the bombard  
ment of irak light up the  
screen like a swarm of  
angry fireflies all  
this i saw one janua  
ry late in the twen  
tieth century

and when the eagle  
broke the fifth seal i  
saw 'harriers' and 'eagles'  
'ravens' and 'hornets'  
fighter planes cover  
ing what was a third of the  
sky trailing behind them their  
dragon tails of ker  
osene and fire and  
i saw one of them hurtling  
earthwards now seeming  
ly a burning star

and when the eagle  
broke the sixth seal i  
saw jerusalem's golden  
thurible from which  
smoke ascended with  
prayers before god's countenance  
like mourning apparel and  
i saw this on my  
tv one after  
noon in nineteen hundred and  
ninety one on a  
zincgreys afternoon

but when the eagle  
broke the seventh seal  
there was silence for an hour  
because a news black  
out had been imposed  
and then the president said  
'a litre of blood for a  
dollar and three li  
tres of plasma for  
a pound - the oil must remain  
unscathed' - i heard this  
on st. agnes' day

i've been confined to  
my bed for three days now be  
tween sweaty sheets and  
hoar frost outside from  
the grass that is cast  
ing its faint reflection in  
across the ceiling and the  
poems from last year  
where i read that the  
desert war was rag  
ing then more fiercely than a  
ny influenza

heartland 22/1  
storm hurricane force - time to  
read perse's 'vents' or  
malinowski's 'fu  
ga' or even better to  
go out into the  
wind's iron fist and let  
yourself whirl round in ever  
decreasing circles  
round your own axis  
like leaves that swirl around a  
pyramid of tin

i go out into  
the wind that is like  
an eagle that smells of chalk  
and rusty iron - the sky is  
big tonight and i  
don't know any rea  
son for holding back  
no - i'll let my po  
em bay away at the moon  
just like my dog would have barked  
in competition  
with it last winter

crucis in corde  
plantatio - enor  
mous diagonals made criss  
cross patterns over  
my heart spans of years  
and time of birthdays and dates  
of death were all gathered in  
to one point as un  
der a glass i was  
in my wholeness my wholeness  
was in me time and  
the instant were one

hints tips and good ad  
vice to a young poet - 'things  
have to have happened  
or been created  
before you can talk about  
them but doing so  
is (like an echo)  
what gains the applause just like  
rings on the water  
only reach the shore  
a long time after the spir  
it's stone has been thrown'

the chaffinches print  
their strings of tiny hiero  
glyphs onto the hoar  
frost whilst they peck at  
seeds the signs do not  
form a sonnet and there's no  
inscription 'soli deo  
gloria' only  
a stupid poet  
would be able to  
find such meaning in those scrawls  
me for example

heartland 23/1  
according to the grima  
ni breviary  
it is the time for  
banquets now in the heart of  
winter poultry and  
pork on the table  
for the dog too and the ger  
falcon while in my  
personal alma  
nac there's just a new moon black  
as tarnished silver

in this poem it  
is not forbidden  
to strip patti la belle  
to the skin or as  
you would with a cut  
out doll to the paper - you  
can buy whatever woman  
you should chance to fan  
cy simply for words  
except my wife apart from  
that you've a free hand  
- or a free poem

heartland 24/1  
the warmest january  
in living memo  
ry i've no deepfelt  
grief (though grief's great stuff  
for poetry) and am not  
unhappy (even better  
material) all  
that i lack is the  
snow which ought to be  
falling at this time of year  
as silent as snow

the entrance to this  
poem is to be  
found in the memory three  
steps up inside the  
backroom here you are  
with dice being cast for each  
word and nobody stops you  
committing sui  
cide when you've lost your  
last poem for who knows may  
be salvation wins  
over perditiion?

25 january

what had become of  
'the good old days' when the grand  
father clock had a  
more resonant chime  
throughout my childhood and snow  
storms could be relied  
on with clockwork pre  
cision not like nowadays  
only in fairy  
tales of 'the good old  
days' when all the fairytales  
actually took place

it was not all that  
simple with all that  
freedom or rather with that  
sliver of freedom  
humans despite e  
verything possess and i am  
often tempted to lose my  
self in calculat  
ing totals and to  
talities to lose my way  
in ramanujan's  
splendid formulas

tombeau de robert  
jacobsen has now taken  
'the old days' with him  
behind the rust and  
red lead there where the secret  
hexagram has been  
welded into the  
inside of the iron leaving  
us still alive on  
ly the chance of read  
ing his last signature mir  
rored on the steel pane

memory is quite  
spiritless since all that is  
spirit relates to  
itself (otherwise  
only to god) while he who  
remembers has pre  
cisely to relate  
to a timespan outside the  
moment (point in time)  
which is thereby at  
a point outside him because  
all time is present

the first word ought to  
have stood in the last poem  
that much i could re  
member though not quite  
where - whether it was  
to take place on the far side  
of the fairytale or in  
the depths of winter's  
box of varnish and  
chinese ink i could  
no longer recall and the  
rest i'd forgotten

the texaco lorry  
was here again to refill  
the tank with fueloil  
if only it was  
possible to be  
topped up too with some sort of  
fuel that was more efficient  
than snaps and coffee  
another form of  
pure alcohol like  
the time before devalu  
ation got going

dear jørgen b you  
were my very first  
real friend and no doubt you  
will also be the  
last because that's how  
things are with everything that  
really means something it tends  
to bite its own tail  
as is the case with  
birth and death which close about  
the great laurel wreath  
of reality

it's snowing finer  
than coriander  
and purer than even 'die  
winterreise' where all my  
final youthful dreams  
lie buried under  
the ammonium  
carbonate of ro  
manticism such a ve  
ry long time after i have  
woken up to the  
great reality

i did not bury  
the blue titmouse in  
a lined cigar case but chose  
instead a sonata for  
toy piano by  
john cage and i thought  
about my own death  
partly because a  
bird had just flown into a  
window pane that was full of  
sunshine what way-out  
eschatology

hints tips and good advice  
to a young poet 'sometimes i tend to cheat  
when i am playing chess against the  
tasc-thirty machine not so  
much out of a desire to  
win but to make the game of chess as beau-  
tiful as possible just  
like when i'm writing  
poetry' i said

hints tips and good advice  
to a young poet 'but the most delightful  
games came about even so when i re-  
sisted the temptation to  
cheat when it was all on the  
line and my opponent was reali-  
ty in person and when truth  
and beauty were one  
in my poetry

and the birds flew towards me from all the four corners of the globe they  
flew at me directly from god forming a spontaneous flock just  
outside my very kitchen window and i felt  
great affection for those paltry mites as  
if they'd been the children i'd never had myself

and once more i was standing at the farthest poem where nothing more  
could be said because language had been worn  
out and exhausted of turquoises and didn't  
do any longer and one fine day even the  
innermost word would be entrusted to me and  
bring me to silence

the winter's barbed wire  
the winter's chemi  
cals the winter's smithy the  
winter's crusade the  
winter's naphthalene  
the winter's king's gambit the  
winter's broken on the wheel  
the winter's 'tupi  
lak' the winter's i  
liad the winter's rape and  
winter's diamond  
anniversary

on the gable of  
the house with small mintgreen let  
ters (that resemble  
tsao-shu) i have  
written heartland pro  
bably to proclaim the po  
etic nature of all as  
pects of my life ra  
ther than put it a  
side to certain hours  
and to the winter fairy  
tales of certain days

the day's name: vale  
rius - cold and clam  
my as an oyster mushroom  
the culmination of win  
ter the dead tug at  
the heart as do the  
weights in a clock that  
call for their taxes  
the wood is a delicate  
distant violet as if  
coloured with vine  
gar and blackberries

hwest slant downwards to the real sea northe  
 t h h h a  
 r o o firewo o nr nroh s  
 o r r odpile r o t ct roht  
 n n ra n firewo ntra h ra tn  
 t ct t odpile r ct no r  
 holz r r r a h g l a ivah  
 e w a a a c o a c n e  
 d e c c cth n th r t t g d  
 g ge t n t or orn n h e g  
 e hr i m f e  
 n o along this path youll s dewollo  
 f roh hr e f  
 o t n m b p nr ht o  
 r c de the mid e a o ca r  
 s a d of f i win il t rh r  
 i k ra e a s meop ter t h n t t i  
 d o t c w s sb n e ca n d  
 e o n t o t el i dleh yllar y r r e  
 n r bou l a o n cart o n  
 tho nd l lf ni deransne eb llu r t n ht  
 i ary thorn t o t r i  
 tho c f t irreg h ac ct h c oht  
 y rnt a r ular o r ra t a y  
 tr r g a anima r t racr  
 s n t n c l dro n li n t  
 o r h i t pings nn r firewo r nroht  
 u o o v et o odpile a s  
 t h r a h c a  
 hwest n here runs lifes arterial way t southe

or i could spend both  
days and nights ponder  
ing the particular var  
iants of the queen's  
indian gambit  
(where the rubies flash and e  
verything follows the rules) in  
order to escape  
this almost accursed  
freedom which made so many  
demands and gives so  
little in return

heartland 31/1  
nightfall has come early like  
silver paper at  
the wood's edge - what's the  
use of freedom now  
when we cannot have children  
when it has finally been  
confirmed after sev  
enteen artifi  
cial insemina  
tions at the clinic so what  
does freedom mean now?

thalamus cordis  
in a forest black as black  
in its deepest cowl  
ing from behind a  
hunter's shack winds of pain were  
howling deep within  
my very soul at  
its very flower i killed  
something beautiful  
at the very flow  
er of my heart's true bower  
thalamus cordis