Final Beachcombings from the Halling Valley River 1

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Final selections from "Where the Halling Valley River Lies".

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Final Beachcombings from the Halling Valley River 1

1. Bouzingo â The Gathering of the Poets
*
The boy was aged about eighteen,
Pale and pensive,
Weary and frail in appearance.
He could have been
Goetheâ s Werther,
Senancour's Obermann
Or Chateaubriand's melancholy hero,
Embraced by a generation
And about whom Sainte Beuve said:
" RenÃ©, c'est moi.â
Tortured by a new mal du siÃ¨cle,
He sought refuge
In the Club Bouzingo.
Two young poets,
One dark, the other fair,
Drifted past. The first,
Whose black hair
Hung in ringlets over his shoulders,
Wore a small pointed beard,
Black velvet tails,
A white linen shirt
Loosely fastened at the neck
By a thin pink taffeta tie;
The second wore a tight coat
That opened onto a silk crimson waistcoat
And a lace jabot, white trousers
With blue seams,
And a wide-brimmed black hat, and
In one of his hands
He carried a long thin pink-coloured pipe.
They were soon joined
By some of their dandified companions.
The music had stopped playing, and
The poet-leader in cape and gloves,
Dark and pomaded
With a ThÃ©ophile Gautier moustache,
Took to the stage,
Where he proceeded to declaim
Selections from his subversive verses
To delirious cheers,
As if sedition was imminent;
Only the boy-poet remained silent,
His pale cheeks
Soakâ d by the freshest tears.
â AprÃ¨s nous le dÃ©luge,â

He said under his breath,
â Our leader preaches revolution
But provides no solution
As to the fate of coming generations,
Should the infant be cast out
With the bath water that is so filthy
In his sight
That, intent on doing right,
Gives no thought to the future,
Nor to what might supplant
The society he claims to despise.â
The boy was aged about eighteen
Pale and pensive
Weary and frail in appearance.
He could have been
Goetheâ s Werther,
Senancour's Obermann
Or Chateaubriand's melancholy hero,
Embraced by a generation,
And about whom Sainte Beuve said:
"RenÃ©, c'est moi.â
Tortured by a new mal du siÃ¨cle,
He sought refuge
From the Club Bouzingo.
*
2. Oh My My My (Call the FBI)
*
Couldnâ t bâ lieve my peepers
When I first saw you
Couldnâ t bâ lieve the beauty
Of your baby blues
I knew I had to ask you if youâ d
Like to dance
I knew I had to take heart and to
Take that chance
*
First you resisted me you said
You couldnâ t leave
Your friends alone
But after our first dance you said
You thought they would be
Ok to find their own way home
*
Oh my my my
Call the FBI
I think I lost my pride
I think I found my bride
*
Couldnâ t bâ lieve Iâ d ever
Find a girl like you
Couldnâ t bâ lieve weâ d bond

As if by superglue
I knew I had such tender feelings
In my heart
I knew that I could fix it so weâ d
Never part
*
First you resisted me you said
You werenâ t ready
To fall in love
But after our first dance you said
You thought youâ d give
This crazy swain another chance
*
Oh my my my
Call the FBI
I think I lost my pride
I think I found my bride
*
3. Some Romantic Afternoon
*
Some Romantic Afternoon
I will hear that haunting tune
The one that I would softly croon
By a lagoon
*
Weâ d go sailing to Cadiz
For a while it seemed like bliss
Now it alls seems just a myth
Like Brigadoon
*
Took a boat to southern Spain
Just to see her face again
She had gone forever
Not to return there
I could not control the tears
How they burned my eyes
As I lookâ d back at those lost years
*
Some Romantic Afternoon
I will hear that haunting tune
The one that I would softly croon
By a lagoon
*
4. For More than a Million Dreams
*
Keep on chipping
Right away at my heart
Because you touched it
Right from the start
If you were to leave me
And then

We were to part
It would really tear me apart
*
Donâ t stop now,
Darling youâ re getting to me
Donâ t quit now
That youâ re ahead
Donâ t stop now
Youâ ve made an impression on me
Now thereâ s no getting you out of my head.
*
Keep on tearing
All my defences down
Because I feel that
Theyâ re all going to fall
Keep on keeping up with
All of your charms
Because I feel
Iâ m going to give you my all
*
Donâ t stop now,
You lit such a fire in me
Donâ t quit now
Because that would be cruel
Donâ t stop now
Darling, donâ t tire of me
Iâ d feel such a fool and so confused
*
Youâ re the one
I have longed for you
For more than a million dreams
Youâ re the one
I have been strong for you
You donâ t know how hard itâ s been
*
Donâ t stop now,
Darling youâ re getting to me
Donâ t quit now
That youâ re ahead
Donâ t stop now
*
5. Melancholy Girl
*
Melancholy Girl,
With your pre-Raphaelite curls
You don't seem quite of this world
Such a strange and a sad-eyed girl
*
What happened to your smile
How came you to be so full of guile
Your eyes seem to stare for miles

For such a sweet and a tender child
*
There's someone you've got to meet
The truth can set you free
Eternally
Enigmatic babe
The way you live is a shame
Life is more than a game
Freedom's found in just one name
*
I'd like to show you another way
Where the dark can't harm you
Night or day
*
Melancholy Girl,
With your pre-Raphaelite curls
You don't seem quite of this world
Such a strange and a sad-eyed girl
*
6. My Travels
*
My travels start
Right here
Deep in my mind
My travels take me just where
I please I donâ t have
To leave my warm room
*
My travels start
Sixteen sun
Beating down
Sinatraâ s crooning Jobim
And Iâ m just dreaming of my
Great romance to come
*
I donâ t need a little ticket
Tells me I can take the train
I donâ t even to risk it
Thereâ s no blistering sun
Or driving rain
And itâ s here that I remain
*
My travels end
With a sweet
And peaceful time
Iâ ve found such sense deep within
No more will I feel
The need to go travelling again.
*
7. Some Sun Drunk Day He Said
*

Emotions war against sense
And his mind remains
A pot pourri
And thoughts in his head
When he lies in his bed
Would make Dorian Gray
Appear pristine
He wishes to moralize
On a corrupt example
Yet from the wicked cup
He hath supped a sample.
*
He appears to think in extremes
He is beau-laid and realist
Whose inspiration stems from his dreams.
â Life is a beautiful strain for meâ ,
One sun-drunk day he said
But I pray I say what my soul needs to
Before the heavens decide me dead.
But his mind is a disorderly drawer
Full of confused categorizations
He has that Scott Fitzgerald illness
For dates, times, rhymes and quotations.
â I have a clear flowing mind
but I cannot foretell
When the clogging black clouds will arrive
For they will arrive
Live with the love, then bear the pain
Recurrent like the monsoon rain.
*
He is afraid of happiness
For the inevitable despair that must follow it
Afraid of happiness
For its cruel impermanence
Like Zola, the seasons in life, for him
Are inevitable.
â All artists,â he says, â are at once alike and unique
One day, itâ s clear,
The next, hazy, like a beery vision
The fulfilment that they seek.
Misty dreams of sweet-smelling roses
And swaying streams
Bring him chills and pains in his soul and being.
He lives his life through a melancholy tragedy
And has an ever-yearning mind.
*
8. Gallant Festivities
*
It was my evening, thatâ s
For sure
â Itâ s your auraâ ¦â

For sure -
At last Iâ m good
At something
â Spot the Equity cardâ ¦â
â When are you going
To be a superstar?â
Said Sara
That seemed to be
The question
On everyoneâ s lips.
At last, at last, at last
Iâ m good at somethingâ ¦
*
And so the partyâ ¦Zoe
called me...I listenedâ ¦
â ¦To her problemsâ ¦
References
To my â innocent faceâ â ¦
Linda said:
â Sally seems Elusive
But is in fact,
Accessible;
Youâ re the opposite -
You give to everyone
But are incapable
Of giving in particular.â
*
Madeleine was comparing me
To June Millerâ ¦
Descriptions by Nin:
â She does not dare
To be herselfâ ¦â
Everything Iâ d always
Wanted to be, I now amâ ¦
â â ¦She lives
On the reflections
Of herself in the eyes
Of others...
There is no June
To grasp and knowâ ¦â
*
I kept getting up to danceâ ¦
Sally said: â Iâ m afraidâ ¦
Youâ re inscrutable
Youâ re not just
BlasÃ©,
Are you?â
I spoke
Of the spells of calm
And the hysterical
Reactions

Psychic Exhaustion
Then anxious elationâ ¦
*
9. The Wanderer of Golders Green
*
I awake each morning
With fresh hope
And tranquility
I might go for a saunter
Down quiet London backstreets
Soon my aimlessness
Depresses me,
And I realise
I'd been deceiving myself
As to my ability
To relax as others do.
*
I decided on a Special B
Before the eve.
I bought a lager
At the Bar
And chatted to Gaye.
Then Ray
Bought me another.
I appreciated the fact
That he remembered
The time he,
His gal Chris,
And Rory Downed
An entire Bottle
Of Jack Daniels
In a Paris-bound train.
*
A tanned cat
Bought me a (large) half,
Then another half.
My fatal eyes
Are my downfall.
I drank yet another half...
*
My head was spinning
When it hit the pillow
I awoke
With a terrible headache
Around one o'clock.
I prayed it would depart.
*
I slowly got dressed.
I was as chatty as ever
Before the exam...
French/English translation.

Periodically I put my face
In my hands or groaned
Or sighed -
My stomach
was burning me inside.
*
I finished my paper
In 1 hour and a half.
As I walked out
I caught various eyes
Amandaâ s, Trudyâ s (quizzical) etcâ ¦
I went to bedâ ¦
Slept â till fiveâ ¦
Read Oâ Neill until 7ish...
Got dressed
And strolled down
To Golders Green,
In order to relive
A few memories.
I sang to myself -
A few memories
Flashed into my mind,
But not as many
as I'd have liked -
It wasn't the same.
It wasn't the same.
*
Singing songs brought
Voluptuous tears.
I snuck into McDonalds
Where I felt At home,
Anonymous, alone.
I bought a few things,
Toothpaste and pick,
Chocolate, yoghurts,
Sweets, cigarettes
And fruit juice.
Took a sentimental journey
Back to Powis Gardens,
Richness
And intensity,
Romantic
And attractiveâ ¦
Sad, suspicious and strange.
I sat up until 3am,
Reading Oâ Neill
Or writing (inept) poetry.
Awoke at 10,
But didnâ t leave
My room till 12,
Lost my way

To Swiss Cottage,
Lost my happiness.
Oh so conscious
Of my failure
And after a fashion,
Enjoying this knowledge.
*

9. So That it Remain Perpetually Inchoate
*

Introduction
*

The following explanation of how â Where the Halling Valley River Liesâ came to be written is going to be a lengthy and labyrinthine descent, and for one reason or another, you may be loath to undertake it. For example, you may seek to keep its mystique intact. On the other hand, you may not be remotely interested in how it came to be written, or anything else about it for that matter. In which case, I strongly urge you stop reading now.
*

So That it Remain Perpetually Inchoate
*

We begin with the leading text from Book One, â Leitmotifs from an English Pastoraleâ .
For its nucleus came about some years ago when I attempted to write a piece about the pastoral tradition within English music, before realising Iâ d set myself a monumental task. But I rambled on regardless, only to lose what Iâ d written so far when my computer crashed beyond all hope of repair.
Having failed to make any kind of back-up copy, I think I then attempted a re-write featuring the singer-songwriter Nick Drake, with a few references to English pastoral pieces such as the much-loved â A Lark Ascendingâ by Vaughan Williams.
Ultimately it was given the title â From an English Pastorale â For Nick Drakeâ , but it was only intended as a makeweight. That is, until I decided to expand on it, and what you have just read â or not as the case may be â was the result.
It effectively wrote itself, and I canâ t even recall why I decided to include the leitmotifs which are one of its features. Leitmotifs or recurring themes being of course originally used in music rather than in writing, although ultimately co-opted by literature. Itâ s a fairly â lawlessâ affair, which is what the French writer AndrÃ© Gide proposed a novel should be, although of course itâ s not a novel, and Gideâ s shorter works were far from lawless.
Itâ s based on fact, and predictably so for anyone whoâ s in any way familiar with what I optimistically like to call my writings. And as such, itâ s partly original, and partly based on an increasingly complex network of autobiographical works Iâ ve been concocting since 2006, when I started writing seriously for the first time. Which is to say, with the intention of preserving them.
But itâ s not a memoir as such, at least, not as I see it, but then in the end, itâ s not up to me to say what it is. In fact when allâ s said and done, I havenâ t the first idea what it is other than something I wrote. But by naming the central figure Runacles, Iâ m able to distance myself a little from him, so that Runacles is a version of me as opposed to the completed article.
And so we move on to the quartet of essays that complete Book One, â A Quartet of Essays and a Stray Pastoraleâ .
The first of these, â The Coming of the Absalomsâ was fashioned from an early section of â The Gambolling Baby Boomerâ , first chapter of my memoir â Rescue of a Rock and Roll Childâ . Or rather memoirs, for it exists in two versions, one a direct memoir, the other, similarly direct, but with many names changed.
And while itâ s since been considerably enhanced, the similarities yet very much remain. While the second was derived from another chapter from â Rescueâ , â The Triumph of Decadenceâ .
As to the third, it was based on a chapter from the original version of â Travails of a Contemporary

Creatorâ called â The Riddle of the British Englishâ , which while still available online has to all intents and purposes been shelved.
While the source of the fifth, â From Avant Garde to Global Villageâ , was â A Final Distant Clarion Cryâ , final chapter of the aforesaid â Rescue of a Rock and Roll Childâ , more of which later.
Which brings us to Book Two, â Your Lethal Life and Other Versified Leftoversâ which as the name suggests consists exclusively of versified writings. And these begin with â It Wasnâ t So Long Agoâ , a lyric written in 2003 for a song I roughly recorded onto cassette, before being transferred onto CD. And thence onto You Tube, together with â Toilers of the Seaâ , â A Song of Summerâ , â Stevie B and Meâ , â The Ones We Loveâ , â Like All the Moonstruck Doâ , â I Let You Goâ and â Time Was I Wasâ . While â Time Travelâ was written and recorded in â 99; with â All Through the Agesâ emerging perhaps a year later, while never making it onto CD.
As to â Your Beautiful Lethal Lifeâ , it was written only a matter of weeks ago from an earlier lyric Iâ d based on a collaboration with my close friend Mark, dating from about twenty years ago.
â Wicked Cahootsâ and â The Woodville Hall Soul Boysâ are both based on stories written in the late 1970s, and first saw the light of day in versified form in 2006, before going on to form part of the memoir which came ultimately to be titled â Rescue of a Rock and Roll Childâ .
While â Thoughts of a Forlorn FlÃ¢neurâ is based partly on a story written in about 1987, and subsequently destroyed, and partly on material written specifically for what became â Rescueâ . And in its present form, is relatively new.
â Spark of Youth Long Goneâ , â Some Perverse Willâ and â London as the Lieuâ all also date from the â 80s. Indeed â Londonâ first existed in prose form as part of the same story that inspired parts of â FlÃ¢neurâ ; while â Sparkâ pertained to a different tale entirely, and â Some Perverse Willâ existed in versified form from the outset. Although itâ s since undergone some modification, like so much of what has ended up being included in â Where the Halling Valley River Liesâ . In fact, itâ s hard to keep track of the constant mutations.
But letâ s now move on from â Your Lethal Lifeâ to Book Three, â Seven Chapters from a Sad Sack Loserâ s Lifeâ in all its convoluted complexity. So where do its origins lie?
Well, originally in the memoir, â Rescue of a Rock and Roll Childâ which still exists as its kernel, with endless layers having been subsequently added to it. For out of â Rescueâ came two kindred pieces, â The Tormenting of David Cristiansenâ , which was â Rescueâ told in the third person with all names changed, verse removed, and dialogue added. And â The Testimony of David Cristiansenâ , which was like â Tormentingâ , only even more bowlderised, if that were at all possible. For â Rescueâ was itself a highly sweetened version of actual events.
And â Sad Sackâ is effectively â The Tormentingâ , with elements of â The Testimonyâ added to it. Such as several autobiographical narratives which, as a result of being deemed ineffectual as short stories, were shelved along with both longer works. While â Rescueâ was relegated to what might be called a second team of writings.
Which is where Book Four, â Travails of a Contemporary Creatorâ once existed, that is, until it was recently upgraded and completed. But its evolution was even more labyrinthine than that of â Sad Sackâ . What is certain is that it first emerged in the wake of â Rescueâ as a second volume of memoirs, only to vanish from the writing site Iâ d initially used to store it, without the safety net of a back-up copy.
With the result that I was forced to re-write it, so that it came into being in embryonic form in the shape of a diversity of writings bearing titles such as â Tales from the Halling Valleyâ , â The Tragedy of Phyllis Pinnockâ , â The Ascent of Miss Ann Wattâ , â Patrick Hallingâ s Musical Voyageâ , â The Riddle of the British Englishâ , â The Leviathan of Glamâ and so on. And some or all of these are still available to read online.
Although â Travailsâ was ultimately fine-tuned in order that it centre on my father, Patrick Halling, as well as the successive musical and cultural climates in which his career took place. While many, perhaps most of the elements pertaining to myself would be destined to end up in â Sad Sackâ .
Which brings us to the â Final Beachcombings from the Halling Valley Riverâ , of which this finale is an integral part, together with versified pieces not considered of sufficiently high quality to be included in

â Lethal Lifeâ .

And which begin with â Bouzingo â The Gathering of the Poetsâ , whose origins lie in an unfinished story possibly written in about 1979. While â Call the FBIâ , â Some Romantic Afternoonâ , â For More than a Million Dreamsâ , â Melancholy Girlsâ and â My Travelsâ were all originally song lyrics dating from 2003.

With the present piece finishing things off in June 2011. Although thatâ s not to say that â Where the Halling Valley Riverâ has attained its definitive state, because by its very nature, it can be added to ad infinitum. So that it remain perpetually inchoate.

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