

Poetry Series

Stephen Brian Brady
- poems -

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Stephen Brian Brady()

A Conversation

a conversation
with Muzac.

and words came
tumbling from lips
poster-size
that filled the room

then soon
as though for a shadow-play
a magic-lantern show
trailing threads of meaning
performed in perfect disarray

and at the final curtain-call
as the players drift away
they listened to the music
and what they'd tried to say

Stephen Brian Brady

A bit-part at the audition

the asp
lay at the breast of
another Cleopatra look-alike

disconcerted
by the lack of poison
at the back of his throat

he wondered
what had befallen the Ass

since
the biting
came after te bathing

Stephen Brian Brady

A Blast from the Past

St. Tropez.

Apollo stepping-out
from the radiator-grille
of a Maserati sports saloon
wiped away the flies
in the dazzle-dazzle of that afternoon

perceived the dullness of the gold
and less than white reflections
in the boutique window

he paused
regrets
maybe a few

and distant thunder

edging forward
in the ice-cream queue

Stephen Brian Brady

A Child's-View Paris

at the children's boating-lake Luxembourg Gardens
to her father

I stood at the rails
then you pushed me away
and the breeze filled the sail
that first day of May

and when I returned
I saw in your face
uncertainty there
in that small crowded place

Stephen Brian Brady

A Doll

on the terrace
words
that each breath
has sent spinning
on silver threads

catch the light

maybe this time

the Doll blinks
she cups her hands
spreading-out her fingers

others
cast their nets
blow kisses
from their wicker cages
strung along the wall

yet this time
there might fall
even one or two

where her lips are slightly open
and her eyes expectant-blue

Stephen Brian Brady

A God on a Quay

fresh from arresting the sun's mad plunge into the sea
Apollo from his plastic barstool on the quay
surveys the scorchmarks on his Vauxhall Astra car

and clink goes the ice in his drink
and a wink for the girl at the bar

Stephen Brian Brady

A Little God

encased inside his chrysalis
ate beanshoots prunes and cod
hung on for millenia
that embryonic god

he found outside somanya
miracles were required
he stocked-up with lasagnia
and chose to stay inside

Stephen Brian Brady

A square in Rome

in Piazza Majore
we wait in a doorway
slightly bemused on a hypotenuse

for our friends who are there
from much lesser squares

as one of them scholarly
leads in a corollary

Stephen Brian Brady

A Talent-Competition

Hotel des Lices St. Tropez

poolside on the evening of a languid day
hot and sweet and cloying St. Tropez

the girl from Ecuador
one of the final four

realized she'd lost her way

a seagull
the hotel-dog
and a chromium-plated bar-stool
comprised the other three

and we
reclining on brown and pink cushions
flushed with vin rose

were disinclined to pander to the obvious

gave first prize to the bar-stool
for the way he stood
elegante
and detache

Stephen Brian Brady

A Wilderness of white

Venturing into the wilderness
where marble-white and spirit-dead
on the terrace of Olympus
we open-up some Ancient's head

though more than a hint of sure extinction
shadows of the gods that's in us
are persuasive that it all aint said

from beneath the dust-sheets
cry delusion
not even a poster-peeling wall
all you got is an intermission
a flickering screen from in the stalls

Stephen Brian Brady

A.M. From Suburbia

as pigeons scuff the milky sky
and magpies mock the crows' scrawl
there at their allotted spots
knees raised high
backs against the wall
they wait to be transported
to the scree-slopes of it all

and from the decks of coasters
over the hills
and with elbows astride
the window-sills of silvery jets

the singing of songs
they would never wish to hear
even if the screaming stops
and the siren sounds
the 'all-clear'

Stephen Brian Brady

And Morning Came

not with
but
and when
if only
yet
don't they call it memory
yours and mine
so recent
touch
so far away

Stephen Brian Brady

Angel Footprints

Angel footprints in the snow
burned deep-spaced
as though

and reluctant drag-marks of his trailing wings

yet it was the take-off point
just a disturbance on the blanket white
that was somehow
just not apposite

Stephen Brian Brady

Angelique

parachuted down by flower-head
through jet-planes vapour trails
though he'd fallen several times before
as his ruffled wings
brushed against the curtain at the door
of the village cafe bar

spruce and bright and shining
from behind some distant star

she didn't express surprise
as he dived deep into her eyes

and as he trembled at her lip
and wound her with a strip of space

she teased him with a wisp of hair
that curved across her face

oh quel tragique
his bold technique was in a word passe

and howling to the chromium-plate
he succumbed to creme cafe

Stephen Brian Brady

Angels in Paris

Angels came in low
haversacks for their wings
at each corner of the square

admired their plate-glass reflections
and only by the way they flew
pigeons from the tower of Saint Germain
seemingly aware

Stephen Brian Brady

another last waltz

hanging on by gravity
we turn to face the sun

a long-legged arthropod
is lightly stepping down
across eternity

the cereals packet has been blindfold
since it's declaration
'18: 36 L1 WX.' et al.

the kitchen wall is Ballroom Blue.

this is Captain Kirk to Bridge,
'lower defence-shields
let the spider through.'

Stephen Brian Brady

Antiquaire's Paris

at a sort of deconstruction site of the Golden Age
full-frontal for the passing-trade
a marble copy of a Greek
exposing all his majestique
on being sold to a dealer from Japan
crashed the glass and away he ran

finally booked for loitering
they overlooked his none last fling
he'd spoiled a nymph with rampant foreplay
in bas relief at the Musee D'Orsay

Stephen Brian Brady

armless in camera

a speck of shadow
blazes across her marble breast
from East to West
as Venus crosses the sun

and profoundly deep inside the digital pixelways
even the delete button can't erase
what's there to stay

mirrors the essential obscurity
of her flaunting that which she can't display

Stephen Brian Brady

As Coffee Loses It's Swirl

an unopened envelope
thought I knew what it contained
held it up to the light again
a repeated invitation never taken up

and so I placed my cup
on the transfer-printed plastic tray
a geisha and a circus-dog
in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower

there was no requirement to explain
and so the crook of my finger
took the strain

the coffee'd lost it's swirl
as the dog and I
and the dark-eyed girl
in the morning haze of eggshell-grey
kept the aroma and the taste at bay

Stephen Brian Brady

as time unfurls

along the pavement's edge
tracking the sun
holding on to preconceptions
of bathing in the pool of light
there between the chemist's and the charity-shop

and exotiques come down to drink
display their true colours
make music for the dancing-girls

and as time unfurls
wonder what has changed

not the slate grey rooves
or the red brick walls

and when the rain came
only those sheltering beneath sodden umbrellas
outside the street cafe
paused and glanced back
as they slowly moved away

Stephen Brian Brady

At the Garden-Centre

the snake whiles-away his summer afternoons
tempting girls with apples at his stall

he'll take them home by sports-car
if they fall

and wistful
through the window

they're there on quiet days

just the lees of cold-black coffee
and the clattering of trays

Stephen Brian Brady

At The Internet Cafe

It's how on an ordinary day
words came suddenly
to the Internet Cafe

in butterflying drifts
proposing
they'd be kissed away

and for a moment
blew away
the dried-up husks
which finger-tips
were tapping out

to the far corners of the screens
and caused
an almost revelation
of what there might have been

Stephen Brian Brady

At Twickenham

into today's grey sky
the jet-planes fly

come stepping down to Heathrow
and sitting on the wings
do any of them know
just why we're waving
as they glide past us below

they raise their glasses
and some parachute
splash-down

we send out ducks and geese
but these are just for show

they'll guide them down to Richmond
mostly without luggage
bobbing in the murky river's flow

Stephen Brian Brady

Autumn

white flowers
shadows 'gainst a white wall
all colour spent

here we hesitate
haven't the nerve
to bring to mind
that which we might find
behind a curtain in another room

traces of an old perfume

they turn away

we deflect thoughts
of what it is too late to say

Stephen Brian Brady

Autumn Fayre

at the Arts and Crafts Fayre
one stall stripped bare
had nothing on at all

across the hall from the refreshments room
it could be seen
inbetween the hanging- quilts and raffia mats

and there he sat
tea-cup rattling on plate
an octodegenerate
eyes fixed on those long smooth legs
he lingered at the dregs

then from his pursed lips
the semblance of a sigh
there was that taste now bitter-sweet
and he can't remember why

Stephen Brian Brady

Autumn geese

the small birds
have gone
nervous and twitching together

they sat on wires
now underlining
the spaces left for words
which won't come

in the dark
across gaps in the sky
geesefly homing- in
they cry this is our South

and I've been waiting
holding the moon high
over mud-flats
at the estuary's mouth

Stephen Brian Brady

Autumn in the superstore cafe

When Autumn came
to the superstore cafe
suddenly the afternooners knew
that everything had changed

and from deep inside
their pale-blue patterned cups
there came a sigh

and Summer'd faded
from the writing in the sky

Stephen Brian Brady

Backstage

The Pantomime Horse
in the theatre corral
is proving unbroken
a wayward cheval

he's trapped them inside
at the rear and the front
they're no longer amused
by this equinine stunt

he's called for some wild-oats
and now for a mare
Oh who wrote the script
for this torrid affair

so a Rodeo-Vet was hired for the day
and thank God for the curtain
and pretend bales of hay.

Stephen Brian Brady

Barking

we don't believe this dog-talk
it's howl and barking time
there are no bones hidden here under the pines

no-one cast-up by the tide
crawled this far
to hide their soul's ragged sacks
and they're not hanging
coarse and cursing black

with the crows just out of reach
dancing with Mephisto
as he rides in from the beach

and the dogs pretend not to understand

Stephen Brian Brady

Bar-Maid Sent

she spins the glass
knows that guns blazing
he'll come soon

at the ante-room
to the crematorium and bar

the pale rider
for no-one special
just another regular

who'll exit
lit-up by the fruit-machine

to the hitching-rail outside
where
hooves ascrate in the parking-lot
awaits his final ride

Stephen Brian Brady

beam me up Scotty

beam me up Scotty
I can't get in reverse
we're heading for Nirvana
or maybe somewhere worse

just get me off this planet
we're orbiting too fast
whizzing round in circles
running out of gas

the Angel of co-ordinates
alone behind the bar
broke it to him gently
the Starship's gone awa

now a lonesome voice comes driftin
from the tumbleweed salon
'can't you hear me Scotty
it's me just hanging on'

Stephen Brian Brady

Bird-Feed

even on the harshest winter morn
the Blackbird comes

and within this Universe
are innumerable nights and days

we share
forever

Stephen Brian Brady

Birdfeed in Winter

who will ask when the whistler comes
with his bag of crusts and crumbs
and his acolytes the crows
what he knows 'bout tunefulness

whether his atonal pipings
are note for note
intended as background music
for whatever is the plot

while in the wings the prompter calls
and if we've got our timings right
edge through the scaffolding
pass across the stage

as though
we might be unaware
that an audience was there

Stephen Brian Brady

Blast-off

remember when the echoing hurrahs
signalled a few feet closer
to the big screen beyond the stars
when three banks of oarsmen
would take the strain

now there's just another token blast of smoke and flame
behind some scaffolding in a corner of forgottensville
to break the morning's still
and a side-swipe at belonging holding-on and fear
from the juke-box in the corner
at the eatery and pizzeria

Stephen Brian Brady

Bloodlust

I turn the page
they're patient
they've nothing else to do
but die again
those many thousand men at Salamis

I turn the page
his appetite's not satisfied
and still he craves

ten thousand times
and nought outweighs his lust

though we are only dust
between the sky and waves
again I turn the page

Stephen Brian Brady

blurrsville

such a journey
looking out from our carriage
on this train

it's blurrsville
'cos we're going too fast
they're just reflections in your eyes

and you reach out
attach stickers to the window

titles of old songs
for me
fragmented verses half-remembered tunes

Stephen Brian Brady

Bonsoir tristesse

He saw his face reflected
in the convex of a spoon
and all the rim was indigo
and a curve of silver moon

the little god got maudlin
at the harbour-side bistro
when someone played Susannah
from a corner radio

and deeper into vin rose
verging on tristesse
he reached immortal limits
with American Express

Stephen Brian Brady

Brief Encounter With A Seal

at the furthest reaches of our flights
our feint orbits
might have got us closer

closer
yet

but a momentary pause
and we did only stare
then
lost our balance

and we sent spinning

as the sea
with it's monotonous keep
lapped and trod each wave of sand
along the beach
smoothed it out

but memory
he could not reach

Stephen Brian Brady

Canadel Cote d'Azur

the Cyclops and the piano

on the terrace
in the afternoon
talk of war
from the shadows

imagined they could hear
not the beat of waves
along the beach
but the sounds of stumbling feet

was it only because of their graves
those summer-visitors who'd
stayed

and now his focused gaze
as an Arabesque was played
to where
the palm-trees splayed crazed patterns
and sunlight bursts staccato
in the chill of lemonade

Stephen Brian Brady

catwalk

she's perfected the placement of each paw
out from the alleyways of backyard walls
balances on chalk-marks
where the strobe-light falls

pussycats her shoulders
at the back-cloth of applause
wide-eyed and breathless
at the sheathing of her claws

Stephen Brian Brady

C'est Fini Paris

words would only lie
in the folds of table-cloth and die
their eyes measured and withdrew touch
across the wilderness of inner space
they listened for the sounds of breaking through a wall
clung hold to cups pale tasteless empty of it all
and then they rose and flew
slow wing beats trailing feathers
from Cafe Temps Perdus

Stephen Brian Brady

Chess in the Luxembourg Gardens Paris

the volunteering kings and queens
enrobe behind a chequered screen

a bishop's caught in traffic
just outside the gate
and knights whose pennons snag the branches of the trees
where hunched-backs on fold-up chairs
crouching ill at ease

pawns not up for yet another fight
dispersed to benches
in the fading winter light

Stephen Brian Brady

Chess Musee Cluny Paris

the White Queen
close to where the Black Knight lay
on the cobbles somewhere faraway
deep inside the confines of the courtyard
on that Summers day

knows that they're not all the same
those look-alike pieces replacing the slain
so the Unicorn sings from his tapestry frame

and we sit in the shade
lean 'gainst the wall
tapping our feet
to nothing at all

Stephen Brian Brady

Cinema

a face hangs at a parted curtain
across a landing
rain drips from the knife-slits of red lips

he smears the pock-marked door
with the juice of bitter fruit
in the street outside

would any of it seep sliverlike
even if somehow
it could bypass the tumblers in the lock

from his mouth a cry

and how ankle-deep
it ran along
the gutters of his grief

Stephen Brian Brady

Cinema-Cafe Talk

seated in the front-stalls
too close to the screen
they lean across the table

out of focus
try to lipread
in the flickering white and blackness

and all the cinematic reel will show
is that everything was scripted
even the time to go

Stephen Brian Brady

Clockfishcat

enticed by the perfidious cat
it's much more fun outside

the fish prepared is grande echappe
his leap to paradise

alerted by the kitchen-clock
I persuaded him to stay

just swimming round and round and round
in his own especial way

there is nothing orbital about the cat
maybe the way his tail curves away
to nowhere much at all
or his eyes which have burned holes
in that chalk-white lunar face
reluctant time has fixed in place
above the clawmarks on the wall

Stephen Brian Brady

Coat - Hanger Spring

in Spring
on the rail
it's that love thing
the white plastics pale
a little
as they contemplate
the newcomer
smooth-shouldered
nicely curved at the throat
pedigree a blazer
not an anorak
or coat

at the far side of the room
the contents of the dressing-table drawers
long-term residents
know
that hanging around
with nothing on
can only lead to one thing
they've heard it all before
that sound
of wood and wire and plastic
entangling
behind the wardrobe door

Stephen Brian Brady

Cote de Take-care

in the gardens of 'Preluscent Spor'
the Eucalypsa lies
and drolls each alternatory claw
with pleasurable sighs

honey-sweet his lantern jaws
those dentures flash and flay

it is a cuminside y'self
and bring a frentoplay

then a Bourgeoisie of Cannes-on sea
on this fallen afternoon
did cast a dogline poodle loose
and went to look too soon

from the hundred greens
where light in stealth
seeped in from the wine-dark sea
the flicking tongue of the kreel sped out
had Madame and pooch for tea

and the lead oh the lead
that the hand had held
wrenched free and snaked away in the grass
has wound it's way round a sea-rail stay
and flaps in alarm as we pass

Stephen Brian Brady

COUS COUS COUS

one perfumed night he'd cracked
and halfway through her act
the belly-dancer's drummer
flipped and did a runner

from the Palace Crescent Restaurant Bistro and Grill

then a slightly over-the-hill
alpha-minor diner
thought he saw his chance
a bit of Eastern promise
a possible romance
misinterpreted her glance

and so far as he was able
he rattled at his table
with knife and fork and spoon
but a shadow crossed the moon

and someone sang Delilah
in a far-off inner room

Stephen Brian Brady

Cribscene

huddled together in the dark
this was the night
angels shepherds animals and kings
just there wondering

in lantern-light
and under neon signs
still the baby sleeps
and wakes
two thousand times

and when he wakes
what will he find
the texture of straw
faint sparklings
from the starship of our minds

Stephen Brian Brady

crowtalk

crowtalk
on the beach

not about

wave-patterns in the sand
or sky-pools ankle-deep
riding a ten-metre tide
above the west wind

it was not about anything

with a shuffle of feet
a turn of the head

just things which can only be said
across billions of light-years
by intergalactic megaphones in space
in feathers and trainers
said beak to face

Stephen Brian Brady

Dancing In A Small Room

alone
dancing in a small room
watching shadows on the wall

outside
the world

pretend we have volume-control
and full H.D.

it's only when
we throw the window open wide
listen
as we gasp for air

and know familiarity is there

that those shadows one by one
will hang around
not quite long enough
before they're are gone

Stephen Brian Brady

Daybreak

with trumpets sounding
banners unfurled
we approach the bridge

give way to the night-coach

the river is the divide

we cross to the other side

make our mark on the stone

a nod, a gesture
to the gatehouse
in the poster-peeling wall

and from somewhere

fragments of suspicion
and resistance to it all

Stephen Brian Brady

Death of the Puppeteer

the day the puppeteer died
with gloved hands
he thrust the shutters open wide
while out at sea
yachts edge balanced on the roof's red tiles
straggling in single file
and light explodes as he sings
and drags his strings
from the crooked white fingers on the bed
a new world unravelling deep inside his wooden head
somehow down the stairs
across the hall
the hotel dog draws back against the wall
he finds the shade
a slatted chair on the promenade

discovered near the carousel
they hung him up to dry
and there he dances in the wind
with wild and staring eyes

Stephen Brian Brady

Deep in vogue

pretend you've never strut along the backyard walls
as from a crysalis
just seem
how it takes time
to weave a tapestry of dreams

takes patience
to persuade a Unicorn to sing

and no-one will ever be aware
of the fine-detail that you'd bring

be fruit for all seasons
the weft and warp's own reasons

for the way you glow and fade
moth caught
in the bubbleburst of this
your flashlight escapade

Stephen Brian Brady

Departure Lounge

whilst waiting
on inauspicious days
for flights

the Angel of extreme unease
whispers to the departees
things they wouldn't wish to hear

like 'pilot error'
and ' faulty landing-gear'

and they see his shadow cross the wall
in the terminal
at the final call

Stephen Brian Brady

Design For A Salt-Glazed Jar

it had sailed horizon's rim
the ship without beauty of form
holding it's course
black against grey

it's stay now tilts it
over and against the round
as though it's paused
to listen to no sound

as the west-wind whips the waves
and sea-foam gutters
in starfish shallow graves

don't wonder at the seagulls cries
turning on one wing
spiralling across the sky

Stephen Brian Brady

Dog days

at the railroad-crossing
music from the saloon
with only a stray dog for company
waiting to see
faces pressed against windows
as the train passes

a huddle of dark figures
on a pathway through the trees
from the crazed varnish of a winter-landscape
and dogs yapping at their knees
and even if they would
nowhere to hide
waiting for the conversation to subside

Stephen Brian Brady

Doll

let's pretend
you're good at that
it's what you do

if you were really real
I said if

would I say your eyes
your lips

are they not there to kiss

Doll
don't turn away

even if you could

understand
that these aren't words

Stephen Brian Brady

Dream liner

overnight dream liner
they're imaging the walls
you on a high
recliner in the stalls

the usherettes fast-feed you
from mobile multi-bars
but speed is an illusion
halfway to the stars

listen to them holler
out there in the wings
no-one seems to foller
whatever it is they sing

though you say you can't remember
your ticket says you ride
and frame by frame you're flickering
from somewhere deep inside

Stephen Brian Brady

Dreaming

the way to get out of a dream
is to jump

so he opened the carriage-door
and to scream

he listened to the engine roar
and the rush of smoke and steam

then they saw him
flashing by
arms waving
learning to fly

Stephen Brian Brady

Dreams

in winter
dreams survive until mid-day

look up

see them as you pass
suffocating
pressed against the window-glass

Stephen Brian Brady

Early morning-Florence

the angel raised his head
sucked in rain
and framed in an archway unfurled his wings
shattered morning with his cries
and light from his eyes
burned deep into stone souls
wakened the dead
on walls
in tombs and wombs in catacombs
and the rooms of smart hotels

then hanging from an umbrella
came billowing down the street
a lady from Nebraska
laid Euros at his feet

Stephen Brian Brady

Elephants

those elephants
I've never seen
thick
as incoherent dreams

born of clouds
they fill the sky

dim the sun

deflate

then lie

sprawl their skinprints
grey as tar

'tis shadowings

that's all they are

Stephen Brian Brady

Even On A Grey Day

the contents of the day's delivered in unopened tins
by Angels
and we scratch around the canvas
rolled-out by their shadows

as the darkness slinks away
into the closet yesterday

and as it all explodes

there's only the hanging-on
to knives and forks and spoons
and how the milk is tasteless
in the quiet of the breakfast-rooms

we pray to the jet-planes
heading to the stars
and tap-out marmalado
'til the fire ignites the jars

Stephen Brian Brady

Evening

the Ford Mondeo
sings
softly treads across the garage floor
listen
as the robin hesitates
and stars hang in the sycamores

Stephen Brian Brady

Eyewitness

Adapted from Chretien de Troyes
'Le Conte du Graal le Roman de Percival

and the birds fell strangely silent before the Angels came
approached him through the forest
and he at a boyish game

then five Knights fully-armed came on at a walking pace
and the noise of wood on iron resounded in that place
how the branches of oak and hornbeam crashed against their shields
and lances striking armour as the horses twist and wheel

and he heard their hauberks jingling as still they weren't to be seen
then they came into the clearing and he saw it as a dream
their bright and shining helmets scarlet and purest white
and the gold and blue and silver and the sun was dazzling bright
and he cried 'God have mercy' and a sign of the Cross he made
and one of the Knights came forward, said 'Do not be afraid '.

Stephen Brian Brady

From-To

sun sets
night falls

the Angel ran a few steps as he touched down
next to the diesel-pumps
on the service-station forecourt

shook his
they would call them wings

just checking-in
he made a celestial call
please behave
we can't afford another fall

then zipped inside his quilted anorak
he hitched a lift

and unsurprisingly
set some deluded girl adrift

Stephen Brian Brady

Hallowe'en

high-up in the organ-loft
Saint Anonymous
where pillars of darkness
hide his smooth white face
weeps
for the unarrivals

the pilgrims
just off the beaten-track
in the chromium-plated
neon
of the wayside diners

who almost hear his call
from the juke-box in the corner
and shadows on the wall

Stephen Brian Brady

Hardrock in Venice

Left outside the Hardrock Cafe
the seventh Japanese
only six to a gondola
is bound for the square
and the Municipal paleface soaking up the sun
will septemize him there

they say he's lost his soul
the accordian-player
cast-off from his Barcarolle
brazen from his window-seat
is rockin to a different beat

and though it's happy-hour at the Cafe Bar
there's no singalongs in the gondolas

Stephen Brian Brady

Hotel Olympic Plage

the moon across his shoulders
listening to the silence of cicadas
in the darkness of Aleppo Pines
and the murmurings of shadows
ascending the steps from the beach

there stands Apollo
at the entrance to the cocktail-bar

how could it have come to this
even the you know what
has lost it's fizz

yet there's magic on this terrace
civilisation's furthest reach

at the tips of Barbie's fingers
it's rouge laque
coral
fuchsia
apricot
and peach

Stephen Brian Brady

How could you

graduate of a provincial Belly Dancing School
Belinda barefoot on the tiles
adjacent to her swimming-pool

evoked Salome
for the 'coffee-morning set'
and to polite applause
removed the seventh veil

how the polystyrene dromedaries paled
and the moon dipped low
behind the cardboard minarets

yet Turkish-delight was spoiled it seems
by what she did with the tambourine

Stephen Brian Brady

Hypnotized by fruit

hypnotized by fruit
staring into the bowl

certain kinds of truths out there

light-years away
are perfect orbits
round stars
which won't decay

at my shoulder
the plastique from cyberspace

he turns is smooth grey face

doesn't mention ripeness
calls it 'sell-by-date'

Stephen Brian Brady

If only

which divinity has revealed
our known universe
so well concealed

now depicted as spiralling galaxies
two newspaper columns wide

while just outside the double-glazing
the spider
tugs at a thread of his web
disengaging a leaf
which spins away into eternity

if only
I could formulate a question
if only
my reflection in the glass
wasn't just another preconception

waiting for the last train
which is coming-up too fast

Stephen Brian Brady

In Memoriam

the bypass at Gallows Lane

they briefly pause when the lights turn red
where 'in memoriam' for the long-time dead
in the shadow of the pub's white wall
there swings a dead geranium

caught and hooked on the gibbet's beam
and fraught and spooked 'til the lights go green
speed restricted they pull-away
just hanging-on for another day

Stephen Brian Brady

In November

November morning
and two doves
stained yellow
by a horizontal shaft of sunlight
aimed from ninety million miles away
in pigeon-speak might say

that it wasn't chance

and for proof
rise from the apex of the roof

but the light had changed

they held their breath
but diving deep
they soon became aware
that not a trace of yellowness was there

Stephen Brian Brady

In Razmadoo

Angelina with tattoo
alone by holijet she flew

with an almost open mind
too seek and with a bit of luck to find
her place in the human-zoo

and joined a disparate desperate crew
subscribers to a magazine
specific for the inbetween
of isms and the whole Yahoo

and eggings-on and how to do
with others here in Razmadoo
and they did it all in a week or two

now Angelina's changed her name
to Phillip Henry Arthur Shane
and life will never be the same
for Him and the cat and the cockatoo

Stephen Brian Brady

In the long-grass

Strung along the platform
at some isolated station
on a one-way track to somewhereville
an unknown destination

they'll listen for it's hootin
some will say it wails
a leapin and a roarin
as it thunders 'long the rails

and fingers grasp the handles
of the luggage worth the takin
and there's about their choosin
and what they have forsaken

who'll shuffle down the incline
allow it all to pass
and hopin no-one's seen us
hiding in the grass

Stephen Brian Brady

in time

waiting for

in hope not expectation
and outside
that window in a wall
things rush by
to another set
another script

soon
you'll put down your cup
think nothing of it

you to

Stephen Brian Brady

Inalienable In Supermarket Coffee Bar

waiting for the coffee to be served
we lean forward and back
slow rock on our chairs
in earth-time
to piped muzak

we possess the table
we've mapped-out our space
and so far as we are able
have expressified our face

then it started to unravel
or so we extrasensed

we'd snagged a string of words
and though with good intent
returned them to the lips
that gave them utterance

and as our heads were swivelling
three hundred and sixty degrees
the contents of the trolleys
trembled with unease

yet no-one seemed to notice
no questioning no fuss
if they drink cappuccinos
they must be one of us

Stephen Brian Brady

Instead

Instead of saying
what it's like being dead

the ghost of my dead cat
detectable in the infra-red
forestalled my questioning

'I never understood lemons'

if only I'd had the chance to explain
but I was caught off-guard
and life isn't easy
maybe an awkward silence would have sufficed
a nervous cough
time to think twice

I see the lemons in the bowl
yellow
and I'll pretend
not to notice the semblance of nipples
at one end

Stephen Brian Brady

Into Liverpool

from Formby beach

the ship on the horizon
sails onto the palm of my hand

on the bridge
they feel it tilt slightly
as I reach out
so far as the marker-buoys
and into the river-channel
at the Mersey-Bar.

in this greyist season
acting without reason is....
just ask Gormley's Iron Men

Stephen Brian Brady

Is that all it is?

which divinity has revealed
our known universe
so well concealed

now depicted as spiralling galaxies
two newspaper columns wide

while just outside the double-glazing
the spider
tugs at a thread of his web
disengaging a leaf
which spins away into eternity

if only
I could formulate a question
if only
my reflection in the glass
wasn't just another preconception

waiting for the last train
which is coming-up too fast

Stephen Brian Brady

It's Asteroids

some dogs
walk past as though
they just knows
these things pose
no danger sniff

'As if.'

others
are a mixed bunch
canine extremes
to almost-human inbetweens

from those who seem they might have been
to 'maybe'
and even 'bring it on'

most worryingly
one or two rush by
won't look you in the eye

It's imminent

instinctively we search the sky

Stephen Brian Brady

It's Called Spring

can't stop this invasion
can't call it fear
can't say it's delusion
can't recall last-year

can't say there's a script
can't join in the play
can't remember the moves
can't think what to say

can't fake an illusion
can't be without blame
can't cause this confusion
can't fire without pain

can't say with no voice
can't touch what is there
can't hear for the noise
can't see for the glare

Stephen Brian Brady

Just a guy with wings

old-town at the cafe-bar
he plays guitar and sings

maybe he's an Angel
or just a guy with wings

it's how the way his words
hesitate in flight

settle on his feather-tips
then drift into the night

when they see a rainbow
of colours in his eyes

is it an illusion
an electrical device

behind the bar they've seen it all
no-one seems to care

but in unobtrusive setting
eglise across the square

there's a roll of plastic netting
and scuff-marks on the wall

and a few collecting feathers
convinced they broke his fall

Stephen Brian Brady

Just Do it

how the doctrals of persubiance play
on our tenuous grasp of meanderae

where haunted wishes tease and sway
to the cymbalesque of hoomuspay

so cram your zest
in a sinuous jar
and feather your wings with aspidar

smear your skin with effelin
and begoferate round a pedal-bin

today

Stephen Brian Brady

Keeping Pace

keeping pace with

but as
the freewheeling takes

not a chance

and even if
adjustments could be made

searching for words to

only by
and listening

thought you knew

there had to be an evening-out
the bottom of the brew

and this
in a repetitive kind of way
maybe
that's all there is to say

Stephen Brian Brady

Kyoto

staring out of the sun
a yellow disc
in a window above a hairdressers' salon

their mouths form words
whose erratic flight
stains the spaces in between
in pastel shades

faces all anxious
at what the changing light has made

Stephen Brian Brady

Kyoto old-town

lunch in the Old-Town
flown in six thousand miles

to see through a half-open door

him sullen
peeling potatoes
crouched on the red-tiled floor

he sees the bulge of my wings
beneath my coat
and sighs

Kyoto Spring is chilling
as the egg-yolk breaks and fries

Stephen Brian Brady

La Japonaise Paris

Restaurant Musee D'Orsay

silver spoon of creme de choufleur soupe
poised
beneath the chandeliers
even a spear of white asparagus
might pierce
the fluttering wood-moth
as with upturned face
it disappears
once more
somehow in woodfern lace

Stephen Brian Brady

Leave Naples and die

Taxi to hotel Saraceni Positano

spiralling down to Positano
oh Saint Ferrari guide him well
locked inside our black Mercedes
white teeth shining
mouth of Hell

clinging hold of bougainvillaeas
bold centurian wine-dark sea
Saracens of Saraceni
cast your nets and rescue me

diving deep with flattened pinions
clawing fingers eagles thrust

veni vino
grip Pirelli
arriva sideways in the dust

Stephen Brian Brady

Life on the edge

like clockwork comes the night-train
from a million miles away

the same repetitious chatter
how can they say
they're only pot or maybe plastic figurines
somewhere in a corner of a window-ledge
and yet clinging to the edge of being
we shelter from the day

and there impermanent
remaining faithful to the characters we play

Stephen Brian Brady

ListenANGels

Angels in fairyland
cry out from a flat screen
yet we hear not their voice

goats have no place here Erotica
nor have merchants with their measuring implements
we are labels children
to us the moon weighs light
starlit we balance with ease on the earth's rim
from supermarket trolley
to the folly of the pedal-bin

yet they persist

still you can sniff the air
see how the sky slants in between the trees
but of it all be well aware and ill at ease
gouge out the mortar
find cracks in the dark
and from cock-crow to twilight
pay heed when dogs bark

Stephen Brian Brady

Love

what is that thing called
that music is the food of

just a mirage, a fantasy, a dream
a candyfloss of thistledown
a melt-too-quick ice-cream

they caught it in a net
a butterfly still fluttering
so delicate
and yet
that was not love

it's what people are in
fall out of
can't find

it's completely contradictory to how we've been designed

so whoever's pulling strings
somewhere up above

give us something easy
what we want's not love

Stephen Brian Brady

Luxembourg Gardens Paris

on quiet days they come
from a stones-throw away

kicking-over leaves
not expecting to find anything they'd recognise
worn smooth

but pretend
attaching imaginary threads
not thinking where it leads

then holding on
backaway from the park-gates
and the vacant benches under the trees

Stephen Brian Brady

Lying water

in winter
the path to the beach
not many know going there
it just don't reach

we, on cloudless days
when the sun's low in the sky
dazzled, walk in air

if anyone asks

say no-one
as an isolated cloud passed by
not a walker and her dog
with bark and cry

fell upwards from a pool of sky

Stephen Brian Brady

Many are cold but few are frozen

fish-fingered
somehow
flinging back the lid
of the chest-freezer
there had emerged
the contents

meltdown
had commenced
immediately

it had scrawled
in blood
or raspberry-ripple ice-cream
on a wall

a tragic misquotation
from the New Testament

'The meat shall inherit the earth'

it was decided
that in the future
Bible Study evenings
would be held
in another room

Stephen Brian Brady

Marilyn

flyposted on walls allover Hollywood
for the pink Cadillac parade
of Marilyn Monroe's graven image

Biblical in platinum and gold

Come and get it
your portion of the victim
before the sacrifice is made

Stephen Brian Brady

Mass pour les plastiques-Paris

wide eyed
Buzz Lightyear
and the little yellow fish
edged closer in the pew

he knew
what it was to be alive

through his half-open visor
head askew
batteries running down
he contrived possibly a prayer

Huston we have a problem
is anybody there

Stephen Brian Brady

Missive from last year's toy

don't fix me if I'm broken
don't find me when I've gone
if I may be outspoken
did I ever turn you on

was I really a bit of a let-down
not live up to the hype

so now I'm back in Toytown
get on with the rest of your life

I'm sure you'll find another
whatever it is I am
yours truly under cover
from somewhere in Taiwan

Stephen Brian Brady

Morning

above the pines
clouds heap-up against the sky
and the blue Peugeot and red Hyundai

before they join the traffic flow
tread lightly to the junction slow

and soon the faint impressions
that they've made
in the tarmacadam fade

Stephen Brian Brady

Morning mirror

came squeezed out of the toothpaste tube
and the shower-head unblinking
said
as though this was the norm
suppose
with an accent
of a much more superior hose
you'll expect
everything to be like any other day
and tears came
a solitary drip
then two
and a coagulation of old shampoo
leaned across in vain
and in the mirror
hints that life was
maybe just a game

Stephen Brian Brady

Musee des Beaux-Arts Nice

Notice on a worm-ridden Clavichord
'You are formally requested not to touch'

it was a bright October day
at the house of Princess Kotschoubey
that I was filled with mal-intent
a desire to touch her instrument
did I detect within her gaze
encouragement a spark before a blaze
and then tip-toed across the sunlit room
her guardian and t'was though that fading bloom
had wilted that Autumn rose was dead
so with little joy but peevishly
I touched other things instead

Stephen Brian Brady

Night Air

Florence

the stilt-walkers
dipped with the moon
under the arch of Constantoun
out of step
and out of time
from a woodcut
charcoal-black cartoon

stamping stumps
around a square
rooked and prawned
for a restaurateur
advertised
got board with fare

and in stilted lingo
from high in the air
extolled the pizzeria there

Stephen Brian Brady

No Way Back

as the Moon bares her shoulder
and turns away

another day
semi-conscious
in the 'salle de bain'
what can we tell the snake
we call the shower-hose
exposed

it's head poised
about us locked inside our body-shapes
when it knows everything

that there's no way back
for soap, for water,
for excess toothpaste on the brush

and why the hush along the towel-rail
as deep in the mirror on the wall
once again
we fail to grasp the meaning of it all

Stephen Brian Brady

Not a journey by train

it's allez, allez minion
smooth and blue and streamy-lined
a chrysalis of outer-skin
hermetically confined

searching for the options
travelling first-class
complimentary oxygen
life is such a gas

why not try the extras
outside if you dare
with alcohol concoctions
and windy-ruffled hair

reflecting in a window-seat
seeing through it all
backcloth habitations
drawn along a wall

stretching-out to touch
have a feely feel
of cows and sheep and horses
positioned in the fields

tilt at platform extras
arranged along the track
with cafe-latte mochas
and railway bric-a-brac

succumb again to voices
with boredom setting in
proposed deceleration
prior to drawing-in

to your destination
thanks for being with us
we've enjoyed not having you
travel here by bus

Stephen Brian Brady

Not rocket-shaped.

This poem
although not rocket-shaped
will soon rise gently into space

the Butterfly
that didn't make it into Spring
gave one last flap of a glorious wing
centre-stage on the window-sill
with the potted cacti
and the smuggler figurines
rests perfectly still

what have we missed
is there something inbetween
our reflection in the window-pane
and the world outside
as it pauses and looks in
there's an edging-up
for another place to ride

Stephen Brian Brady

Nowhere To Hide

in the optician's chair
before the wallchart-game
unexpectedly there came the ask
for him to remove his mask

then to complete a questionnaire
phobias proclivities after-dark activities
instances of flying wearing tights
Cripes!
Batman realised his cover was blown

Stephen Brian Brady

Oasis in Rome

behind a hedge
on pavement edge
circling our tent
a waiter raises up a flap
on the brink of protest
'bout the stink
our camels make
but takes our order nonetheless
lemons figs and apricots
perfumed teas in china pots

and for the herders
'cross the street on the church steps
un carafe d'eau and plain baguettes

we tap out rythmns with our spoons
bubble-pipe mid exhaust-fumes
perfumed in bluish swirls
with music from a hidden source
anticipate the dancing-girls

Stephen Brian Brady

Oberon

there was a bank
where the wild-thyme blew
not a hole in a wall
and a cash-point queue

and there was a breeze
and the murmur of bees
not the blast of exhausts
and the throb of c.cs.

and he'd likened his queen
to a fragrance of air
not a fella in drag
with rouge in his hair

so magique his lifestyle
it shimmers excess
he's got limitless credit
American Express

Stephen Brian Brady

Old Town Cannes

seven garden-gnomes just resting
six priests at lunch digesting
five minutes past mid-day
four verres de vin rose
three table-umbrellas
two motor-cycle fellas
one bell and how it tolls
of wariness to errant souls

and there in the wall 's
a vacant niche
where pigeon-saints just out of reach
preen and gaze with ill-intent
would top my lunch with excrement

Stephen Brian Brady

On not being Captain Kirk

maybe he was human
couldn't reveal his dreams

downloaded as a podcast
a quirk of natures schemes

as portions of breakfast goodness
are spooned from bowl to lip
sends folic-acid and riboflavin
flooding to his finger-tips

sees the moon jog-in through the double-glazing
as the teapot says a prayer
for feverish with ball-point blazing
who fills-in another square

as a shadow crosses the sudoku
which can't be printers-ink
a reminder perhaps from you-know-who
we're closer than we think

to blast-off from our comfort
in our space-ship Planet Earth
and though maybe not quite human
he'll have residual worth

Stephen Brian Brady

One of Three Swans

running into a northerly breeze
along the crook of the shoreline

maybe they'd been sent with precise instructions
re. space and time

so possibly it was chance
that one of them dared a sideways glance

now somewhere in his swansdown dreams
can he feel
the grip of toe and heel in the soft sand
and
bending into a slate-grey sky
looking up
wondering at the flyers-by

Stephen Brian Brady

Out-There

morning
camel-herders
money-changers
things from outer-space

hullabaloo and shindig
jostling at the gates

sense I've raised one eyelid
snapped shut
but it's too late

somehow reach the bathroom
reflect on my disguise

I'm shower-head and toothpaste
and soap gets in their eyes

Stephen Brian Brady

paperback

' dust at the side of the road '

the story writes itself
in however how many pages it may take

it can feel your pulse-rate rise
and enters through your skin

it is a very fine dust
slides easy off the page

then grain by grain by grain
it burrows deeper in

Stephen Brian Brady

Paradiso

in Paradiso by the sea
disturbing guests at afternoon tea
was a talking-bird
who'd broken free
from a perch in a bar of a hostelry
way down town from the 'Bel Ami'

and they choked on their scones and patisseries
as he plumbed the depths of vocabulary

but apart from Madame's feigned apoplexy
with Spritzers and Gin came decadency
and they swore all was bon
that apres-midi

Stephen Brian Brady

Place des L[ces St. Tropez

I pray for the chickens on the spit
whip cicadas into a frenzy over it
then watch them sweat as they turn
for chicken sins
they couldn't have commit

Stephen Brian Brady

Redemption

behind the refrigerator door
they don't have much to say
huddle don't resist
as fumbling fingers grip
whisk one of them away

oh when will the messiah come
in the form of eggs or ham or cheese
or possibly some leftover
they murmur with unease

Stephen Brian Brady

Refreshments-tent, Sports-day

at the other side
of another tent
and just a flap away
from trestle-tables
strawberries and teas

as civilized heroics
play out
albeit in a strictly minor key

the sacrificial goat
gets wind of
the greenest grass he'd never see

distant cheers
and the scampering of feet
last gasps
chomping at the bits
of every pastry treat
with extra cream

now down on his knees
in goat-heaven soon maybe
he'll see how it might have been
the hundred metres final
for the under seventeens

Stephen Brian Brady

Richmond upon Thames

I read my poem
about the maroon fairy
to a goose with orange legs
maybe it was the clash of colours
or the aroma of a varnish- flavoured sorbet
that caused him to stand stock-still
in front of the boat-house milk-bar

who's Oberon?
king of the fairies
I like the bit about
a cowslip-bell of dew he said

and
with a backward glance
his head turned one hundred and eighty degrees

does he have orange legs?

Stephen Brian Brady

Rodin Exhibition Paris

We are the exhibition
Evolution
Just behind the hedge
Holding onto innocuous white cuppa-cappuccinos
Keeping our nerve
As a pigeon swerves into a laurel

We're just passing through
Rejoice
We view these aliens in bronze and stone
Held-fast by a dead hand
Prepared to launch into the unknown
With.....

Stephen Brian Brady

Shadow of the Angel's wing

on certain cloudless nights
when the moon
through the sky-light
in the shower-room

shines as the spider
spins his useless web
in a place
not frequented by flies

defies all reasoning
and yet
how tread we softly
round the shadow
of the Angel's wing

Stephen Brian Brady

Sheeptalk

there came out from the open Bible
in a corner of a field
all of the sheep

gave one triumphant bleat
their exodus complete

without them
the book had very much less to say
as a sheep without an udder
gone permanently astray

Stephen Brian Brady

Shootout

after Sydney Nolan's Ned Kelly paintings
home-made suits of armour
protection against assault in the outback

now unseen through the window
grey dog
the sea laps

so with eyes closed
ear pressed to wall
the other senses laid out on the table

it's as bleak as you want to make it

then from the radio
barbs reach out
bullets fly
some will get through
burning holes
fierce sun
clear blue sky

Stephen Brian Brady

Song of the Green Knight

Song of the Green Knight
to his Lady

remember how
on those golden afternoons
we hung pretty garlands
at the gateway
to the garden of your girlish dreams

remember
how I bore no shadow
and couldn't allay your fears

may I pretend
I was instrumental
in the fashioning of your tears

Stephen Brian Brady

Soul

soul of opalescent glass
who's outside stares in
sing another sarabasse
for this starry spin

soul of some forgotten taste
tiger in the grass
unfurl your wings in this cluttered place
and the puppeteer rides past

soul who's somewhere over the hill
W dot ice-cream
Barbie's made it in the queue
and Polly lies styrene

cobbler cobbler there's a shoe
knows just how he feels
he sings Hallelujah
'cos his soul's been heeled

Stephen Brian Brady

St. Tropez Evening

on calm nights
where the quayside lights don't quite reach

the water's bosom swells
lifts and falls

it's only the sounds of boatsleep
there against the harbour wall

Stephen Brian Brady

Star Treck

approaching dawn
Captain Kirk
seated at the kitchen-table
spaced-out
faced the double-glazing
steering planet earth
feeling it's mass
slowly turn to face the sun
somewhere people hanging on
and the noise they made
and there with buttered toast
a knife a spoon
and marmalade
the small room
flooded now with light
he held tight
leaned into it's flight
master of it all
to boldly go
thrillingly fast
ponderously slow

Stephen Brian Brady

Steam-train to the stars

there would be no count-down
or blast-off
no excessive speed
just a gradual acceleration

no need for cumbersome attire
a blazer or a sweater would suffice

they're off
roof-top height
then the clouds

or is it steam
or smoke
or fire

no it's the setting sun

and then the parachutes
we counted three

the engine-driver
the fireman
and the guard

someone observed
jokingly

Stephen Brian Brady

Supermarket Spring

brazen hussy at the check-out desk
cast aside her thermal vest
and without anymore ado
treated the Tesco's weekend queue
to a Vernal Equinox Review

and with cheesecake, melons and Danish-Blue
showed what one or two could do

of the chicken-breast for one man's tea
she revealed it's true inadequacy

oh how Spring was sprung in every aisle
as she took off for more air-miles

Stephen Brian Brady

tennis

consenting adults
stand face to face

is it so pointless

so with utmost good-taste
oh how soon it occurred
'twas served from above
along came that word
and love's heaped on love

to give and receive
it causes less pain
and nought has no place
when it's only a game

Stephen Brian Brady

The asparagus field

someone must have known about
connecting lines drawn
creating space

about the weave in tapestries
with multi-coloured threads
backdrop to this place

an asparagus field in winter
where pheasants, crows and pigeons
are wont to g'zinter

where the undramas of the day
play-out in the furrows of your mind

for the turning of things over
and pecking at what you find

Stephen Brian Brady

The bee in winter

Nectar screams the poster on the wall
and as the petals fill the screen
does he think what might have been

the bee in winter
lonesome in the stalls
drawn-in at the fly-by moviedrome

and then another Spring
and the mysteries of the honeycomb

Stephen Brian Brady

The Careless Light Of Day

In November
the careless light of day
sometimes
seems to be led astray

nevertheless

when unexpectedly
it brushes against

we're arrested by

there are no words to say
except that
we wouldn't have it any other way

Stephen Brian Brady

The Carousel

even if there's no-one there
deep in the darkest dreams
at the end of each kaleidoscope
the drowned-out horses' screams

coated in a sugar-glaze
bolted and insane
who's fingers spin the spinning-top
spitting fire and flame

who's crazy at the Wurlitzer
who still calls it a ride
the spinning faces circle
there's nowhere left to hide

Stephen Brian Brady

The Cormorant

I could have drawn a line in the sand
projected it into the sky
and the cormorant bisects the south-westerly gale
twenty yards offshore
precisely on time

later at The Mudflats Bar
they consider it bizarre
his twelve mile round trip

merely to provide material for a verse
almost impossible to rhyme

Stephen Brian Brady

The dragonfly

The dragonfly
just don't try
he came
but that's just a word
inadequate absurd

A space had been reserved
in clear air just above the pool

Maybe time was reluctant
as he took it by the hand
to understand

Nearby
where lay thousands of jellyfish
partially covered by sand
under the same starsign

And there were hoofprints
and items of litter
at the western edge of this our England

Stephen Brian Brady

The Fish

light slants in through the trees
from our nearest star

the solitary fish just hanging on
he's treading water
singing

what is life
that is so fleeting
leaves no trace

to the kitchen-clock
who hands folded 'cross his chalk-white face
in battery-talk
explains it all
though unconvincingly
from high-up on the wall

Stephen Brian Brady

The Flame And The Moth

the flame drawn to the moth

if it's all pretence
and her flush reflects his glow
and if there came awareness
and her eyes and lips as though

would she treat his nearness
as if it was a dare
impossible to take it in
to be suddenly aware

whatever the attraction
it was far too late to turn
she was spinning in his orbit
all he could do was burn

Stephen Brian Brady

The Great Escape

with cardboard paper wire and string
he fashioned a pair of Angels wings
and strapped them on with cellotape

then poised to make his great escape
but wobbled at the very brink
and crashed to the floor
by the kitchen-sink

the ethereal spirit
was clearly gin
and they found his soul
in the pedal-bin

Stephen Brian Brady

The Hybrid

spiraling down to earth once more
failed to break the speed of sound
a cloud of dust
as he hits the ground

aspirant angel second-class
reflects in smoky mirror-glass

checks his streamline
furls his wings
with tarnished harp
and broken strings

on the terrace of the 'Bel Epoque' he
raised the tone at the karaoke

Stephen Brian Brady

The last dragon

Georgie I'm alive dot com.

George I wasn't dead

I sort of threshed around a bit

I may have even bled

but here I am still smokin George

and I'm questioning your cred

life aint stained-glass windows

wherever you may be

I'm talkin reputation

I'm talkin chivalry

outside the local hostelry at Crickledon-on-Wye

there's a little knot of people just starin at the sky

they said it came with the Morris-Men

there was fire and smoke and steam

and no-one knows where the Vicar went

as he crossed the village-green

Stephen Brian Brady

The Last Train

the last train to the stars
would leave on time

now a straggling wind
that blows along the line
banks shadows up against a wall
and there they terminally rise and fall

they tangle with the echoings of footsteps
breaking out of ground
and the station clockwhite face
astounded at it all

soon we'll hear the pistons race
somewhere the engine sigh
in corridors uncertain
just watching space drift by

Stephen Brian Brady

The marmalade cat

it was a sticky situation
'Orange or Lemon? '

the marmalade cat at hotel-reception
paused and flexed his claws

'It depends on my mood'

'It's what you are now'

'Lemon'

the young lady smiled

'Is that with or without peel? '

Stephen Brian Brady

The moment when

looking through the window
flower head
past the zenith of it's bloom

sees silent as it hovers
where a spaceship's lost it's zoom
so shortly after blast-off
with little or no sound
it's odyssey's suspended
just three feet off the ground

faces at the portals
pressed against the glass
and the colours in her petals
were not meant to last

when they knew that it was over
were they suddenly aware
it's all about not knowing
what is really there

Stephen Brian Brady

The Moth

he laid aside the monthly Moth Gazette
he knew he'd rolled his final cigarette

too set in his ways
to deny his only vice
he stretched his wings
slightly frayed and singed

for one last flight
to an old flame
'twould be just a spurt of fire in the night
as she sucked him in

he'd feel no pain
a correspondent had surmised
another from a butterfly
took a different slant on things

but the god of moths
there where a single light-bulb hangs in space
had called him in

so he shrugged
and spiralled out
kicked his heels
and then inhaled
a final puff of sin

Stephen Brian Brady

the Octopus

a tentacle of fear
reaches out
and senses
where the sun never rises or sets

in the dark in the gap
of the glass-mirrored doors

it's the silence
that blurs the reflection of transience

only the shallow-breathing
of clothes hanging in space
can face it

Stephen Brian Brady

The Other Side of The Track

out from the depths of a mirror
past lemons sliced for fish
a sign says 'take the knife-edge'

across the railroad-track
to where a wooden church tower
displays it's manuscript of uneven teeth

and from the arid hills is cast
a net of criss-cross wires

and badly sketched from memory
a horse drawn seaward
has strayed with it's cart

listens to the engine's roar
at a blind bend in the track
all pickedoutofthedust on a twelve-string guitar

it's mirror-smoke and steam
get it from a tapestry
tattered edge of dream

Stephen Brian Brady

The Pantomime Horse

The Pantomime Horse
in the theatre corral
is proving unbroken
a wayward cheval

he's trapped them inside
at the rear and the front
they're no longer amused
by this equinine stunt

he's called for some wild-oats
and now for a mare
Oh who wrote the script
for this torrid affair

so a Rodeo-Vet was hired for the day
and thank God for the curtain
and pretend bales of hay.

Stephen Brian Brady

The Persians at Salamis

I turn the page
they're patient
they've nothing else to do
but die again
those many thousand men at Salamis

I turn the page
his appetite's not satisfied
and still he craves

ten thousand times
and nought outweighs his lust

though we are only dust
between the sky and waves
again I turn the page

Stephen Brian Brady

The Puppeteer Dies

the puppeteer dies
and black sunrise
a single tear falls to her breast
white on white
bonjour tristesse

her fallen hero
twisted strings

their staring eyes
and no bird sings

that day he died
released the world from all it's strings

and under papier-mache skies
with crimsoned cheeks
and wild wide eyes
they did their burn-out promenade

yet only slightly
they delayed the brunches at the smart cafes

Stephen Brian Brady

the sand lizard

out of a parallel universe he came
and from low -down in the wall
as though he was always there
and I was the intruder
fixed me with unblinking stare

would we both hypnotized
have sloughed off our allotted disguise
and with banners of insignificance unfurled
cried revolution
and glory to uncertainty in our worlds

Stephen Brian Brady

The Snake-God St. Tropez

early morning Place des Lices

at breakfast my coiled croissant tells me
beware the Snake-God
he had not been placated
the vagrant's forward roll had skewed to the left

at lunch
out from the shade cicadas screech
as they identify
one of their own kind
protruding from the cheese-topping on my pizza

at dinner
I consume slivers of raw flesh
possibly the wine-waiters arm

it is July in St.Tropez
in the year of
the serpent
or the insect
or the amputee

Stephen Brian Brady

the sock

in Spring
curled-up
in the gutter of no-one's love

how could it have come to this

but by satellite
it's shape
transmitted faraway

almost beyond our understanding
was perfection of a kind
somehow predesigned

the other day
was spirited away

Stephen Brian Brady

The Superman syndrome

they say it's called
flying without wings

those involuntary feathered quiverings

which the Starlet Angels can't deny
on their marble terrace in the sky
whenever Superman swoops-by

how many specks of magic-dust
would open-up their eyes to lust
and in the turmoil which that brings

would they try at
flying without wings

Stephen Brian Brady

The Tiger

the Tiger paused outside the therapist's tent
not quite sure what had been meant
by attitude and change

had thought about it just before his last kill

but where's the skill
acquiring something vegetarian
a pizza or a burgher
were y' gonna get your thrill
no chase no ripping it apart

so did he have the heart to...

he lay back on the couch
and deep within his inner space
confronted that receptionist
entirely to his taste

Stephen Brian Brady

the universe is flat

a pint of real ale

the Angel who'd been holding aloft a screen
beyond the furthest galaxies
or just about as far as man could dream
in the pub car-park

had rolled it up
and stood it against the wall

is that all it is
pinpricks of light

half a pint still in his glass
the Angel let pass
more tiresome questions about unfathomable things

just sat
framed by an arched window
making slight quivery movements with his wings

Stephen Brian Brady

the unremembered

somewhere in the white noise
at the blurred edges of sight

the unremembered

they almost
might have made a difference
to it all

swung it
filled a space

now
should we

as the others slope away

with the last coin for the juke-box
make another play

Stephen Brian Brady

The Whale

in the night-rain
driven from the river
'cross the railway-tracks
at traffic-lights

came face to face
with the ghost of a whale
searching for his jaw-bone
one-time strapped to the ceiling of a pub

and in the time it takes
the lights from red to green
in his eyes
thought I'd seen much more

as down the hill to the sea
at the dock-wall
saw his tail-light dip and fade
as he dived
tarmac deep
into the dark streets

and the gutters overflowed
with the wake and wash he made

Stephen Brian Brady

The Word

it had leaked out of the pen
stood naked
attempting to cover-up it's shape

'it's your meaning I'm after
for a poem'
'but I'm not that sort of word'

having heard this
the unfinished one
rather disconsolate
just drifted away

'see what a difference you would have made '

we sat together
at the edge of creation
no fizz or sparkle in our lemonade

Stephen Brian Brady

The Piano

at the Music Festival
he'd arrived late
weary after a long flight
and at Reception the piano-tuner waits
with his instruments of torture

the check-in lady smiles

then what she did
she must have known
'Ah oui Monsieur Trombone'

and he responded
by slightly raising his lid.

Stephen Brian Brady

Twilight of the Gods

At the end of the line
there's a swinging door
where short-wave radio won't reach

there's a waiting-room
and a rancid spoon
in a bowl of furred-up peach

there's a verandah
and a sleeping -car
and sand's blown-up from the beach

there's curtains
and the soft-pad paws
of a mutt and a steel guitar

and the little god from tumbleweed
plays chords
as loose as straw

Stephen Brian Brady

Unreflections

no reflection in the plate-glass window of the Charity Shop

no clinking of spurs
creaking of chain-mail
as he flexes his sword-arm
no alarm when he raises his vizored face
towards a galaxy faraway
beyond the placement of the trees
fanning-out above the slate-grey rooves
and the red-brickness of it all

with lack of purpose
he counts the bricks in a section of the wall

if only her mobile-phone had photographed through glass
but now the light had changed
her coffee unexpectedly cold
and somehow the cup-handle slightly disarranged

the shadow that crossed the street to touch her cheek remained
and she wonders 'bout the opportunity that passed

Stephen Brian Brady

Venice San Marco Evening

From somewhere out of the stonework in the sky
the great bell peals it's soiree
and to violin and clarinet
with water lapping at our heels
we all sing 'Volare'

a boy from Bangladesh skits by
would I buy a rose
and I am contemplate
where and why this whole thing goes
and we all sing 'Volare'

culture is an iceberg
the Grand Canal's last barre
we see a cruise-ships lights slip by
and we all sing 'Volare'

Stephen Brian Brady

Venice Digital Outside The Frame

remember how they'd spilled out
down the church steps
shielding their eyes against the sun

so out of focus now
and the million pixels are unable
at a slo-mo re-run
even without the smell and the sound
can't recapture even one frame
of the kaleidoscope
not yet slowing down
inside your head

let alone the taste
and horrors of the infra-red

Stephen Brian Brady

Venice-Abridged

Hoist the 'Jolly Roger' boys
accordianate a tune
treasure-ships with plunder
are crowding the lagoon

was it only yesterday
or maybe the day before
someone turning off the lights
hesitated as they closed the door

and gondoliers go gondoleering
under the 'Bridge of Sighs'
they're churning-up the waters
on their fairground rides

did reluctant footsteps
to their caravanserai
set the great bells tolling
'farewell' across the sky

after the pyrotechnics
there's never much to say
in the dark with muted voices
as you slowly move away
we ignite uncertain fuses
to what's left along the walls
and but for occasional splutterings
there's nothing there at all

it's cruise-control
for those weary souls
with a tour-guide blase
in single-file they've ditched their smiles
but they did the town in a day.

Stephen Brian Brady

Village perspectives

Came out of
went into

the Travel Agents
the Betting-shop
the Hardware store

morning coffee
window seats
as he crossed the street
within that flash of sunlight
came
Apollo an Angel One from outer-space

then time stood deliciously still
for as long as
and then until
they gently made their re-entries

beyond reason
no explanations
no questions to be raised

for each one
more or less the same
just a momentary pause in conversation
a loose thread
in the pattern that their words had made

Stephen Brian Brady

Waiting for the Starlight Express

the tea-urn gaping out the window
of the waiting-room cafe
where drifters crumb-around their saucers
dipping into shadows
at the tea-dregs of the day

while butterflies in weed-flowers
and sleepers on the line
were there to fill in spaces
and take the edge off time

then faces pressed 'gainst windows
pale and shining bright
who would from the platform
free-fall into light

in the branch-line cutting
the grasses grow waist high
and though the rails are broken
they point towards the sky

Stephen Brian Brady

walking the dog

a butterfly didn't flap a wing
but maybe if it had
and the grebe had held it's breath
below the surface
as the the river stopped it's flow
when the dog-leads intertwined

would they have paused to find
that dog-walking
was the last thing on their minds

but it all passed by as unthink
a moment out of sync

and there as a still-born aftermath
it lay unnoticed
curled-up on the path.

Stephen Brian Brady

WANTED words for a poem

sometimes

words are shuffled into place

from

an outback town
in a bar for strangers
passing through

where a few may see your poster
and with nothing more to do
may tag along

and when you view
this rag-bag crew
stand them up in line
against a wall

and then, and then, and then,

somehow surprise them all

Stephen Brian Brady

We Never Saw The Script

a breeze flicks through a glossy magazine

and drifted into focus
for patisseries et cafe noir
they acted-out delusion
at the Coffee Bar

even smoking was an art-form
and life a show parade
as frame by frame were flickering
dazzle onto shade

was it someone in the music
who was screwing-up the page
'cos suddenly it was over
the reel was disengaged

and maybe we were extras
they took and cast adrift
and maybe there's a reason
we never saw the script

Stephen Brian Brady

Where logic dies

there's a shadow across the Sudoku
in the square where logic dies
and reason's skidaddled to Avanaclloo
and the ballpoint pen's gone dry

there's a shadow across the Sudoku
darkness in the Piazza
a seductress sings of deja vu
as white as alabaster

the shadow across the Sudoku
now settles in a hollow
just another inconnu
waiting for the morrow

Stephen Brian Brady

Wide-eyed

The little furry figure on her purse
decided that it could be worse
he didn't have as much to dread
as all the congregants
who stood and knelt and sat
instead
his wide-eyed honest face
if they had chanced
was not confused

the certainty of no eternity
doing something he couldn't comprehend

and he dangled and jiggled
in a sort of dance
exultation as another homily
staggered to it's close
it never stood a chance

Stephen Brian Brady

Winter arrives heavy

already dark
on that rain-sodden winter's afternoon

came from the slate quarries in the western sky
why were they too big to be seen
too improbable to comprehend

only the mud-trail
along the village street remained

who was unable to breathe-in
the smell of sweat and wet sacking
and no-one feels
the pain of trace-straps cutting
as bent double
the horses
put one last effort in
to turn the wheels

to the pegged-out ground
in the shrubbery and trees
which surround
the supermarket car-park

Stephen Brian Brady

Winter fruit

in Winter

projecting the illusion of low-hanging fruit
smoothing tree-bark
for the rain to stain
with indelible light

Come You

You Revelation
You sans appellation
set this thing on fire

though even in our dreams

place on our tongues
the sweet and glowing embers of desire

Stephen Brian Brady