

**So, Rise**

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So, Rise  
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Cover image: 'Electric Blood Moon', John Goodby, 2022.



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# **So, Rise**

**John Goodby**

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**So, Rise**

These poems are not meant to be understood, you understand.  
They are only meant to terrify & comfort.

John Berryman, *Dream Song* #366

## **A View**

Historic sweet talk, soft  
feats funding small marvels  
in the firefly. Shrunk  
extravert of gold current

among the corporeal  
suits, my old emerald  
cells soar to clap the future  
brim with us.

## **The Seas**

Being is proximity, a hard think  
with plastic chip and chairs.

No windows call on me, the cell  
is a dance of image, mobile sunlight

on the muscular wind. The whole  
rainy phenomenon says work

with the other side to inhere  
one truth or two, describe

equations on the rail of the arm,  
metaphors that coincide as billions.

Day

Why here? I build an upside down  
Day, a machine to copper

silver. New articles, new beings,  
the beam-bits as many as shortlived  
sunlight, sweat to name a light

string of multiplicity, wake us  
to tell of its heavy resurrection.

**1910**

Crouch by the countryside, I know why  
you stoop. You maroon the cream

livery, you turn away traction in this ad  
for what was long since stopped. Oh, model

a woman of work and modernity, move  
through fact and fog-flesh! Dissolved

in steam, sauntering in air, you precipitate  
a stunned moment. My front-line nickname

was *Blimey*, perfect for discovering old toys,  
the lost detail none of us could have made.

## **Horn**

An Atlantic sheen curtains our ohms  
on one possible harvest horn,  
sends a fog balcony, and calms  
the throaty captain. Balances  
his palm, beneath, around. Oh,  
which solar future swells into that?

## Corridors

Our rent-spiced work-pens irk  
us, though half a grand  
is cooling off in the glitter  
and hubris. Am I not  
dead to write *Experiment* on  
the gold tons to keep warm?

## **Cut-Out**

Lies that I make out  
through my Brummie grey,  
meat on a murder dish  
Rhine-blanché.

And also a body of years,  
a table ample to grow  
for better crockery,  
cooked such a shape,

dished up like tabloid  
rhubarb. News sours me,  
bound over for better beats  
his heart will cover -

a photo dismembered  
in lunch books, a speck  
on her settee I cloaked  
heartlike on his hand.

## **Captain Jack**

One midnight we find the children  
lifted, saved. Touch knew the black word

and warned, listened to tea and fur  
and Captain Jack, who ignored

that subtle drowning. Wake up.  
Open his computer. Begin.

## **Introversion**

Ignore  
the floor  
of the small room  
crammed with shivering  
oxygen O poet  
your numbers  
don't add up don't  
disturb the depths  
siren voices dredge  
to get their wired  
harassed &  
underwater  
work

## **Workers**

We talk thoughts, we charge  
across skies in this swaying ship of time  
away from the carbon branch.

Whose thought rocks us home? We think  
we think, and talk of a saver  
water-earthed with hours, days, means, ends;

what skyscraper workers we are, leaves  
blowing this walnut yard! We think thought  
with a shell, arm power with energy,

but our work is no tree; travel is not  
what crosses with the two planes on a mast.

## **The Needles**

Fell cloud greys, sky-wool  
stitch-millions, they spool  
the unseen whole, control  
through nose and lanolin

purl. Scare like a yarn  
spun furled on the one  
dive I did, and did ground  
on colour, red and

## Critics

Predictable, we peak your oven  
near noon, don't get much shore,  
and the sun blows by unmade  
from fuel. The hour is solar piss.

## Débris

A man has a riff. Also he  
has grand bread to identify  
uranium absence, a deep  
woman deemed beautiful.  
When I confide in the metaphor  
I picture a drop, a clear simile  
of volatile, wet Tennyson  
breaking its irony, inspired  
under a squash in Chicago.

## **Dress Suits**

I watch the lace  
shake, urge the dire fist dress,  
or some such.

Pure doggerel  
drunk on your own roof,  
moonshine, yes -

sweet murmurs to get  
pat, my mind  
doesn't mean it really.

## **Waste**

I am sure I might not get over  
our future, whispering bluey in  
my middle head. Between one  
hair and sickening stability, shoe-  
footed though that is, the wrong floor's  
built right; but I am not would not.

## **Snoozing**

In that disused life, saints rave  
with boredom. The spheres  
nudge that moment asleep  
after a weird crystal decade  
shy of the righteous outcomes.

## One

A boy's undone adagio  
with its felt-tip verb  
lank in each day's cascade  
shakes as far as our feet.

Ring his one drop  
in the theatre, suspend  
the concert; physic  
so tiring it talks asleep.

## **Marriage**

Don't we beat as any body beats? Our atoms  
expect ease, to graph as we ourselves  
heart-resonate. Are we ice? Arctic  
sheets weak-singing under strain, the sun?

## Loose Threads

I am calm more than half, perhaps  
most, of my life. *Earth unto earth.*  
I try to land, along which equation  
I can't tell. The rising sea of my stanzas

would sink the lost, tap the pattern  
of my knee. All talks count, able  
through sentences old, or almost,  
to call out the numbering of our bones.

## **Dolphin**

Out of the seven mahogany seas  
our every colour in the shade

shines. Kiss, and synecdoche gives up  
in that salty syllable the world works for

and has lodged in morality and force.  
Anyone could show how love has me now.

## **Ring Finger**

Brim darkness toward  
his mind, gather  
its sleep from empyrean  
gold. Slide down  
a monument to that  
rhetoric, my proposal.

## Satins

This ark stretches saints, even the devil  
by the narrow definition, crack  
on a small round presence of heaven,  
till they flourish from my doorstep.

That's called a fabric outside the tribe  
we invented. I have a collection worked  
in humble motley, proud miracles I wanted  
to watch. My broad friends, you'll know

the proof is in the joy when I was five  
playing on this perfectly green island.

## Of Wood

The seven seals play at interregnum  
where lands are bare of virtue.

Feet finger and thumb it, soles  
blunder over each fall. Perfect

arcs stammer to smaller postures.  
Growing - a long track together -

lets no child flow giving rise  
to a serious bridge of tables glazed

with wet hills; an ease, an end  
releasing thinking from all higher ground.

## **Mission**

The weight of your orange  
entertainment is hard now, a struggle  
every time you fall asleep  
in their insights. Your life

is a head proud of a quick nap,  
dependent with a capital.  
Do you have a mother,  
a taller anxious loving

on this knitted earth? Sitting  
next to your time, do they lead you  
back to your previous usual? They  
are spirit, but you are strong,

and I can only say what I'm given.  
Perhaps your body has never  
left. Do you feel a mission?  
Say no, if it doesn't make sense.

## Hips

Mint library leather, fresh  
light kneeling in a profound  
energy. Making British tea  
near the arm chair, additional

matter to keep an eye on  
someone absent. Who, reading  
this, urges me not to remain  
messed-up, made different.

To harness decisions, laugh  
and get lost, claim a passenger  
secretly not there, who hasn't  
come; to order stature.

## **Traditional**

The last past insists, let's take  
the now; we whistle a morning  
to turn from fossil crossings over  
lovers' affairs. Poet, how strong  
have you sung an ocean?

## **Afterword**

*So, Rise* is my third Red Ceilings chapbook, its two predecessors being *The No Breath* (2017) and *The Ars* (2020). As I was writing *So, Rise* I noticed that, just as all three chapbooks had been made of existing poems repurposed, OuLiPo-style, each chapbook had also been written in the aftermath of a taxing event in my personal life - respectively, the death of my father, seeing off a managerial lynch-mob, and getting a fairly serious illness fixed. It occurred to me that they could therefore be considered a trilogy - if that isn't too crushingly grandiose a term for such small and evanescent offerings - and this is how I now choose to view them.





## **So, Rise**

“*So, Rise* is an ethical enquiry into a teeming world regained by a survivor. The vision won arrives without a word wasted, each ‘salty syllable the world works for’ is charged with a meaning that only poetry can reach.”

**Kelvin Corcoran**

“So, with these poems, we also rise - and Goodby does this as if language were his new invention. Juggling, balancing, nosing it all out in an all-embracing rush. Forget emotion, this is the triumph of system.”

**Peter Finch**



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