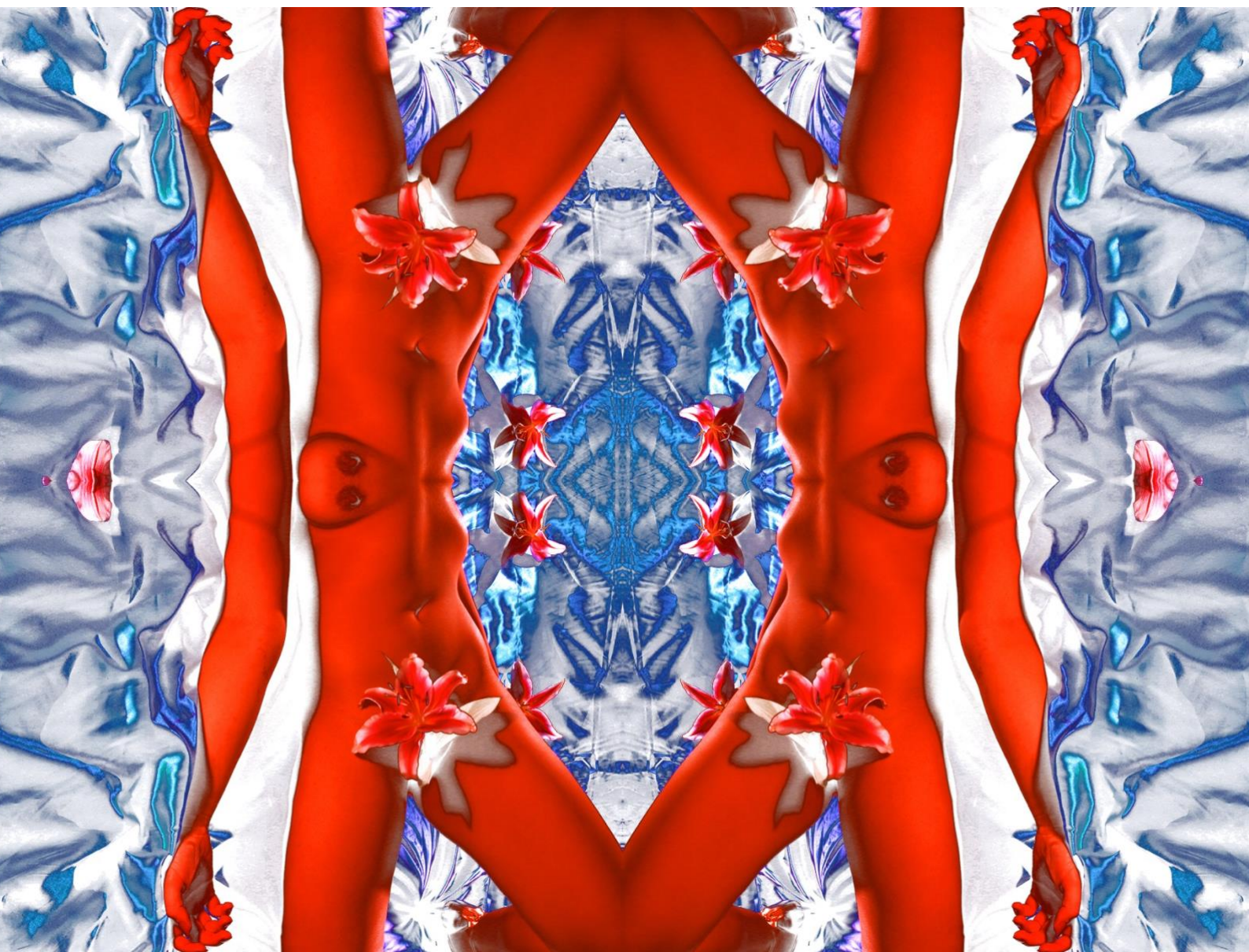




*Divers to Dive:  
A Pandemic  
Dream  
Journal*

*#1*

*David Keenan  
Eleni Avraam*



**Latitude 55.860916**

**Longitude -4.251433**

**Monday 16/3/20**

No dream recovered. Vague recollection of probing a hole. Freud said: dreams are pathogenic.

## **Tuesday 17/3/20**

At a fairground, an old girlfriend can be seen through a slightly ajar door, drinking the cum of two men, from a cup, on her knees before them. I walk through a primitive mobile, hung with dead black birds from a metal trellis that brush against me as I pass (vestigial remnant of my book *The Towers The Fields The Transmitters?*). My dead father is nearby.

## **Wednesday 18/3/20**

My father appears. Being isolated at home has made me think of one of the unhappiest times of my life, which was when I was about 23 or so. I was living in Arlington Street, just off Woodlands Road, in Glasgow, sharing a flat, briefly, with my sister and an old girlfriend. I had made the decision to leave the group I was playing guitar in, 18 Wheeler, even though we had just signed to Creation and toured with Oasis, I was just so unhappy, disillusioned, and I hated those people in that band and they treated me poorly because they were all a bunch of ugly twerps who never got any action, but I made the decision to leave with no clear idea of what I would do next, and no money, neither. I would sit at home, in my flat, in my room, and read science fiction paperbacks. But I was so depressed. I began to hallucinate that the rooms of the flat were different colours, that they were filled with different colours. Then I broke out with a rash that covered my entire body and that the doctor could find no explanation for. I was so down, and so broke, I made the decision to move back into the loft in my parents' house in Airdrie. I realised, deep-down, that I had one more chance to re-visit my own boyhood, and I thought maybe that would help me turn my life around, and find out what I really wanted to do with myself, and maybe cure my depression too. It

worked, to a certain degree, but there was definitely a regression as my symptoms started to clear up. Cause I was such a crazy Doctor Who fan, my mum had bought me a 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary Doctor Who baseball jacket, the kind of thing I would never be seen dead in, and it was stored in a special plastic covering in a cupboard in the loft. I began wearing it on the many night-time walks I would take on my own. I would walk to the garage and buy 20 Marlboro and then put a cassette in my Walkman and head up past Rawyards Park and Holehills and out towards Greengairs, and there was this slag heap, basically, this mound of dirt, in some piece of abandoned ground just off the road, and from there, over the tops of the Holehills flats, you could see the lights of Glasgow, and I would sit there, in this Doctor Who jacket, listening to music, in the dusk of my boyhood, and I felt so hopeful, I knew that my destiny was out there, somewhere, the love of my life, the excitement of the city, I knew I was brave enough, but also knew that this was time out, that there was no need to rush headlong into the future, that it was waiting for me, up ahead, and soon there would be no way back to boyhood, boyhood, the most beautiful word to me now. And here I am. I'd like to think what I could see, all that way away, in Glasgow, was where I am now, and what I became, with my books written.

### **Thursday 19/3/20**

No dream. My horoscope said I should pay particular attention to dreams that would begin on this date. The significance of no dream.

### **Friday 20/3/20**

Fractured images in an attempt at some kind of coherence, like we are at the formulation place of dreams, like the population is falling into place, the dream republic. The cosmogonic phase of dreaming has begun. Begin again.

### **Saturday 21/3/20**

No dream. Ha ha ha.

### **Sunday 22/3/20**

Get a message from a friend in Colombia, a once-upon-a-time fellow world traveller, who worked with me at the Bogotá Book Fair and at other events in the country last summer. She recommends me *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. I've never read it. Also, *The Master and Margarita*, which I have. She tells me she is back from Colombia's Sierra Nevada where she felt "the new moon with the ocean's roar ripping through me". I send her a photograph of myself and the poet Lavinia Greenlaw at the grave of Tolstoy, in Yasnaya Polyana, where I captained a quiz team made up entirely of women from Siberia called the Polyana Pirates, because I looked like a pirate, they said, and there were questions about classical music that they knew all of the answers to, and the only answers I contributed was one about Albert Camus and one about the traffic jam at Woodstock. Later on I DJ-ed in Tolstoy's garden and one of the Siberian women came up to me and asked me "David, can you play 'Work Bitch'?"

No clear dream last night, except for a memory of weeping after reading a beautiful line from a book that echoed aspects of Lawrence's "The Ship of Death", something about how as the light dies, just beyond it the green shoots are already rising. Cried so hard on waking.

### **Monday 23/3/20**

Dream where I encounter an older ordinary looking woman who is also making her way back home through the east end of Glasgow (I am travelling back to my childhood home in Shettleston). We agree to travel together. Her name is Depeche, which in French means 'dispatch' or 'to be rid of', like the exorcising of a demon, or a ghost.

### **Tuesday 24/3/20**

In the court of Zeus, who reveals himself as Atlas. He lifts the world, the globe, everything, onto his own shoulders. Why does Zeus disguise himself as Atlas? Like Christ, by example. Everyone carries the weight of the world on their shoulders, which is the myth of the headless one, which is what Douglas Harding talks about in his book, *On Having No Head*, the experience of the entire world, as you, as seeing yourself, out there, which is to carry the world, not your head, on your shoulders.

The practice: focus your attention on the corner of the room. Now from the corner of the room, where your attention lies, focus this attention back, on where it came from. Where's your head at? Zeus/Atlas.

“Disease *are*. We do not make or unmake them at will. We are not their masters. They make us, they form us. They may even have created us. They belong to this state of activity which we call life. They may be its main activity. They are one of the many manifestations of universal matter. They may be the principal manifestation of that matter which we will never be able to study except through the phenomenon of relationships and analogies. Diseases are a transitory, intermediary, future state of health. It may be that they are health itself.” – Blaise Cendrars.

### **Wednesday 25/3/20**

16:07 – 16:37

A helicopter passes overhead. Two blue tits burst from a bush. “Right, see you later”, a woman says, in a mad Glaswegian accent. The flash of a magpie. A gull, in the distance, circling the university library. Me, the sound of my typing on this cheap plastic keyboard. The smell of peat from the fire. The abandoned school, across the way. My irritating neighbour, eating soup by the window, the steam blotting out his stupid face. The word YES in a window. A green towel, a burgundy jumper, hung out to dry in another. *Geography* by Edward Dorn. *Love In A Burning Building* by Al Purdy. Low voices, indecipherable, in the street, below. A dog barking, somewhere. A white plastic bag caught in a tree. The tower of the university in the gloaming. The tall bare trees. A cactus. A pair of binoculars. Four paperback volumes of Freud. Diana Dors in 3-D. A postcard of Auberge de la Vanne Rouge. A postcard of *The Reefs of Space* by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson (Penguin). A little girl on a hammock, in a garden across the way. Another gull across the rooftops. Two pigeons – dart – in terrified flight. The sound of the central heating

coming on. The floorboards, creaking. The crackle of the peat and the logs on the fire. The cool air through a crack in the window, on my knees, and my face. An invisible blackbird singing somewhere, somewhere out of the past. In the distance, traffic, the motorway. Also, the river, I can feel but not see the river that runs past the foot of the street, the river I dream of at night, the river I fall asleep to, which is silent yet completely present, this river. In the distance, a siren. A brown UPS van, crossing the bridge, through the trees. A white van roars up the hill. An ugly untended plant in a bucket, across the way. Another white van, a delivery man with a blue baseball cap and a grey hooded top. He can't be arsed. The sound of the doors slamming. "The Death of the Virgin" by William Blake, the rainbow there. A child's voice in the distance, out of the past. It feels like autumn. Lemongrass, ginger, and honey. A patch that says "Convenanza" clipped to a wicker basket with a plant in it. Thomas Tallis "Spem In Alium Nunquam Habui". The sound of the doors opening, and slamming. The sound of an engine, staring up. The van, idling. Longtail tits! I love longtail tits. Little balls of fuzz. High-diving from the tree. And the blackbird appears. On a lower branch than you would expect. With that empty song of his, like Borges hearing the last bird. When the blackbird sings it feels as if it has been the same bird forever, singing. "Yeah, you" a kid says, the sound of small feet, stumbling. A motorcycle backfiring. As it gets later there are more motorbikes than cars, now, which reminds me of living in the Carbeth Huts, at night, by the stove in our handmade conservatory, with the feral cats sleeping underneath or staring in at us with eyes like lit-up storms, and in the distance, all through the night, the sound of motorcycles, speeding. Two gulls, in chase. Tits at the tops of trees. The sound of the bell. The blue of that school is my second favourite blue. The smoke from the chimney

is our own, coming back in the window. Every night I have been expectant of Venus. Scintillating, like a star. This stillness, I recognise this stillness.

“Everything is other,” I am writing to a friend, “which is the self we come to.” I have no idea what I am talking about. Other. “Do we take the form of our desires? Are we mirrors holding all of their reflections? Of everything we ever loved?” she is asking me. Is there something missing? What is the problem? This lack that we feel, how we fill it with others, even as this perfect moment is incapable of any more abundance. I love that word, abundance. Are we trapped in words, outside of the thing itself? We are the thing itself, wording. “I don’t know if Clarice (Lispector) is trying to render language null,” she writes (I had just written a piece about Clarice Lispector where I just about said so), I think she’s opening it up, she’s bringing it to its proper level, which is the cosmic, and there it can contain it all.” And it strikes me as so funny, my own blind spot, my own ‘battle’, with words, as something that must be overcome, as something that is in the way of Now, rather than is Now, as equally as anything else arising in Now is Now. And yet I have perfect faith in words, in words I trust, completely, so much so that I let them write themselves and then I sign my name to them, however they want to come out, and yet here I am arguing that Clarice, that myself, would abolish words, ultimately, even as they have been my central means of ingress into what is, and what’s happening, and what might be possible. Tonight I am thankful for words, and I no longer want to cure myself of them, thank you words. Words are not at their best ‘about’, words Is, and are at their best there, making Is, Is-ing. Last night I sat up late re-reading one of my favourite books, *The Secret Garden, An Anthology In The Kabbalah* edited by David

Meltzer. I re-read one of the oldest treasures of Jewish Gnosticism, the Shiur Qoma, The Measure of the Divine Body:

“...Immediately the OFANIM became silent, the angels become quiet, The’IRIN KADISIN make haste and rush into the River of Fire [NEHR DINUR], the Hayoth turn their faces down to the ground, METATRON brings the deafening fire and puts it in the ears of the Hayoth, that they hear not the voice of the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the explicit name [SEM HaMeFORAS] that METATRON is pronouncing at that time.

...Thus is He calling the Holy One, blessed be He, by His living pure, holy, powerful, majestic, strong, strengthful, beloved, mighty, glorified and awesome name:

**ADRYHV**

**AHRKY**

**HHYY**

**YHVH**

**AHYH**

**ASER**

**AHYH**

**HHY**

**YVA**

**HKH**

**HH**

**VH**

**HVH**

**VHV**

**HH**

**HYA**

**HVA**

**HHYHYHY**

**HY**

**YHYH**

**YHVH**

...He who lives for ever, this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations [Shemot 3:15]. Blessed be the name of the glory of His Kingdom for ever. Its interpretation in the language of purity {METATRON pronounces the SEM HaMeFORAS, Brilliant Name of Fire, in the language of purity}:

**YHV**

**HHYV**

**HYH**

**HY**

**YH**

**YH**

**HVHY**

**HYH**

**VYHYV**

**YHV**

**HHY**

**VYHH**

**YHY**

**HY**

**HHYV**

**HYY**

**HV**

**YHVH**

**YHV**

**HYHV**

**HY**

**YHVH**

Blessed be the name of the glory of His Kingdom for ever.”

Existence Is Existence. Words Is Words.

**Thursday 26/3/20**

Dream of trying to help give birth/deliver a baby, with the help of Peter Brötzmann, though he has gagged the mother with tape and is keeping her confined in some kind of black leather satchel.

## **Friday 27/3/20**

I am in charge of a boat I have hired, a sort of canal boat but on the open lakes and seas. I stand at the prow as it speeds across the water. Then a doubt comes into my head about whether the water is always deep enough for it. Back on shore I attempt to relaunch but the steep drop down the harbour walls prevents me. A sailor shows me how to wrap the boat in a harness at one end and lower it down. We set up a tent to camp out in, on a traffic island in Clarkston, Airdrie. I protest that I will be unable to sleep there for fear of a car hitting us in the night. While we are talking a tough nutcase comes past and urinates on the tent. When I protest he threatens me. I try to call the police but every 999 gets me a different wrong number.

I am thinking of early intimations of the 'sacred', places, words, feelings that evoke that combination of awe and terror and revulsion and ecstasy in us, what were those first places? Michel Leiris, the surrealist writer, talks about his parents' bedroom, specifically his parents' bed, as the domain of the night, while he and his brother locked themselves in the toilet in order to make up stories, in company with the Cthonic gods. The parents' bedroom, yes. I remember crawling all the way under the house in Shettleston when my father was building a kitchen extension, being able to crawl right under the foundations of the house itself, and staying there, hidden, newly dead, while my parents called and searched for me, also high windows, daredevil climbs in and out high windows, as a kid, and trees, also, spending hours in the tops of trees, abandoned quarries, the strange abandoned bomb shelter in a neighbours garden, the old mental hospital with its discarded photographs and Christmas cards, the bushes, in the

fields, where we would find stashes of porn mags, always the occult spaces of the houses I lived in and visited, the old lofts, the endless dark basements, the sloping walk-in cupboards, the cupboard I would crawl into in my own room, which I called The Office, the piling up of chairs and couches to create an improvised hideaway, the dream of digging a deep hole in the back garden and going down there to live. And my father, now Cthonic, locking me and my brother into the bathroom with us while he taught us how to wipe our ass, that smell of men, nauseating, overpowering, sacred.

### **Saturday 28/3/20**

My two most recurrent dreams:

I have checked out of a hotel and realise that I have left all of my baggage behind. I am engaged in a frantic scramble to locate it.

There is a scientific exam coming up for which I have not attended a single class over the year. I have a moment of epiphany when I realise I don't even need to bother graduating, I can just walk away.

Thinking of Leiris and his roots of the sacred, a word came to me today, in relation to a news story about how condom manufacturers could not keep up with the increased demand, the word 'sheath', I remember my father in a conversation with another man, or perhaps even my mother, using this word 'sheath'

and how it struck a terror and a shiver a delicious horror in me. It still does; 'sheath'.

George Bataille chucked a copy of Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* into his girlfriend Laure's coffin. Her last words were "it is ravishing".

The moon, and Venus, are beautiful in the night sky.

### **Sunday 29/3/20**

It's now fifteen days since I left the house. Read some Georg Trakl poems by mistake and feel even worse. Turned to reading back issues of John Foster's amazing music zine, *OP*, instead. Think I'm starting to 'get' The Feelies.

### **Monday 30/3/20**

Dreamt about squeezing a parrot so hard it bit me. Freud! The trees outside my kitchen window are budding. When my father was alive he called it 'the changing forest'. I get my inquisitiveness and sense of awe from my father, my self-contained, solitary character from my mother, or rather, from their families, though even then my father was a special case. Today I thought about my gran, on my mother's side, who I haven't thought of in years. How can there be whole stratas of your life, whole eras and populations, that disappear, and then only return according to their own bidding, the mysterious ways of memory across time? What lifetime am I in now, and how will I remember it? I can't believe I am keeping a diary, I never keep a diary, I

don't believe in them, it's too hard to disappear if you are able to re-orientate yourself so easily. I never know what year anything took place, or what age I was, the 1990s, to me, are still only a few years ago. Personal epochs stitch and fold and elongate and erase entire eras, we all make strange measure of our seasons. My gran with her bristling moustache who would be so rude during Top of the Pops, like if someone was singing a song about walking in their sleep she would yell, "watch you don't walk over a cliff". I was in London, when she died, at a new job, and unable to travel back for the funeral, this is in the late 1990s, just a few years ago. I sent flowers and on the note I wrote 'I will think of you every day and I will miss you'. But I thought about you today, and your life came right back to me.

## **Tuesday 31/3/20**

Now I'm remembering the time my uncle (on my mother's side) kidnapped this guy in broad daylight and gave him a doing in a quarry because the day before my cousin Fred (which wasn't his real name but everyone called him Fred, his name was David) had been wandering in said quarry with a mod parka with a target on the back and this kid had shot him right in the target with an air rifle. My uncle Jim was definitely someone you would have described as mild-mannered, so when I heard he had kidnapped this guy and submitted him to a punishment beating, I almost liked him as much as my uncles on my dad's side, but not quite.

Which makes me think of the time I gave this kid that had beaten up my brother a beating up in return and I had knocked him through a hedge so that I didn't see the guy's old dad jumping the

hedge and landing on me with all his weight while trying to pummel me, it was mental. I managed to get this old guy off me, and I warned him that now that he had attacked me, my father was going to be up at his door, but as soon as we escaped me and my brother Peter vowed not to tell Dad anything about the fight, cause we knew that if he found out he might go up there and kill the guy. There were definitely compromises made due to my dad being a maniac.

### **Wednesday 1/4/20**

Bruce Russell from The Dead C sends me a screenshot of a page from a book he is reading, thinking it will be right up my street; *Pilgermann* by Russell Hoban. “We don’t want to know about our moral castration. We throw ourselves into the work of each day, the beating of hammers, the baking of bread; we find ourselves a spouse, we gather children around us to keep out the dark, we keep the Sabbath, pray to God, hope that all will be well. Ah, but there is more! Not for this alone was there smoke and fire and a quaking on the mountain while the voice of the horn sounded louder and louder. No, there is a mystery that even God cannot fathom, nor can he give the law of it on two stone tablets. He cannot speak what there are no words for; he needs divers to dive into it, he needs wrestlers to wrestle with it, singers to sing it, lovers to love it. He cannot deal with it alone, he must find helpers, and for this does he blind and maim others. ‘Look,’ God has said to me, ‘what must I do to make you play the man? I have already castrated you with morality but you pay no attention to it. So now let it be done with a knife, then let’s see what happens. Let’s see if you’ll grow yourself some new balls and jump into the mystery with me.’”

## Thursday 2/4/20

I often dream that I have woken up Jewish in a tiny unknown Eastern European village. This is one of my favourite basic recipes, from one of my all-time favourite cookbooks, Claudia Roden's *The Book of Jewish Food*. As well as amazing recipes, it is a sit down and read it all the way through cookbook, a cultural and culinary history, and the cooking is so good, cause I like vinegar in most everything.

### *Hot and Spicy Tomato Sauce*

*Jewish families in India make this sumptuous sauce, which is always kept in the house. It lasts for months in the refrigerator.*

*1 ½ kg (3lbs) plum tomatoes*

*150ml (5fl oz) wine vinegar*

*50g (2oz) fresh ginger*

*6-8 garlic cloves, crushed in a press*

*½ teaspoon chilli pepper*

*1 ½ tablespoon tamarind paste*

*73g (3oz) sugar*

*2 teaspoons salt*

*Wash and dry the tomatoes but do not peel them. Cut them into quarters and turn them to a cream in the food processor. Pour into a saucepan. Add the rest of the ingredients, and simmer for about ¾ of an hour, until the sauce is thick. Cool before pouring it into a jar. It keeps for weeks in the refrigerator.*

It's that simple, and it's completely amazing, and you can use it for so much more than pasta sauce. I could drink it by the pint at this point.

### **Friday 3/4/20**

Tonight, the Pleiades, in conjunction with Venus, is one of the most beautiful sights in the night sky.

Wim Swann took some of the most amazing photographs of the great gothic cathedrals of Europe and he wrote a great book about them too, *The Gothic Cathedral*, as well as excellent books on the late-Middle Ages etc, which you can get used for about a pound online. I could look at his photographs for hours. If I wasn't a writer I would most like to be a sculptor in stone. I love its silence. I imagine Wim, touring Europe on his own, communing with this great silence, as circling his own death, I love his eye, and the loneliness of it, too, is exquisite, to me. One of my most favourite lonely books is *Monastic Architecture in France* by Joan Evans. Also, *I Left My Grandfather's House*, by Denton Welch.

### **Saturday 4/4/20**

I have never tasted a fish as beautiful as the fish my mum used to cook, in Airdrie, in the 1980s. An old deep fat fryer, haddock from the monger, and Ruskoline for the crumbs. It's my time travel/death bed meal. Chips. Peas. Brown sauce. Plenty of vinegar, of course. Rice pudding with milk and currants to follow. My mum installed a buzzer in my room, which was in the loft, so that she could alert me when dinner was ready, cause of course I would be

## Divers to Dive #1

playing music loud, or smoking a fag out the window, or wanking over a porn mag, inevitably, and also she couldn't be arsed walking up the stairs; this is the mid-1980s. My dad made the buzzer out of an incontinence alarm. Everyone in my family liked to stir milk into their Heinz Cream of Tomato soup. But I can't bring myself to do it anymore, like the past would be there, to catch me.

### **Sunday 5/4/20**

I have always hated joggers. Now I loathe them.



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Sunday 5 April 2020



*Caught by the River*



*Divers to Dive*

*A Pandemic Dream Journal* © 2020 David Keenan

*Visual Artwork & Design* © 2020 Eleni Avraam

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