

Peter Hammill, A Headlong Stretch

Passage assured
on the good ship Goodbye...
dare I raise up my eyes
to stare into the rigging?

(Preparing to go/come home...)

All we could have done
we're at pains to explain
but all our might in the main
is only empty promise
unfulfilled at last
still no-one can be blamed
for breaking daily bread,
thinking ahead.

Blessed with strange grace
and reluctant to face
ineluctable fate,
I say I saw the future
I said forget the past
but I'll not hear the last
of lives I've never led,
thinking ahead.
</lyrics>

==Continental Drift==

</lyrics>

We make the beds in which we'll stretch
in unconscious pre-planning;
tending and hedging our bets
thinking we're thinking ahead.

Out of the blue comes the given life,
out of the window volition.
In small miracles, in constant reinvention
we make sense of each current position.

Every choice that we make, every trick that we turn up
appears in its principle sound.
Yeah, we're self-made men, masters of our destiny,
free and unbound...

In to the heart comes the brave new world
where we're slaves to the strength of conviction...
I believe decisions come like continents to conquer
like I believe we're no strangers to fiction.

Every road that we take
means a journey rejected
we pretend we can still have it all;
every future we dream a virtual reality,
only vanity still holds us enthralled
when the best laid plans of mice and men
all unravel in the judgement call.

Pride still make us ride for a fall.

Surely we look ripe for a fall,
surely we look ripe for a fall;
maybe we just ride for the fall.
</lyrics>

==The Twelve==

</lyrics>
The jury's out upon the matter
and they can barely bear to admit
that all the time that we spend planning
in the end will matter not one whit.

Though I've certainly considered
every vital pro and con
I get no scent of an acquittal
I lose the drift... the signs are wrong.
What's going on?

(Twelve signs of the zodiac,
twelve hours to face,
the twelve disciples all aquiver,
twelve arrows strike a twelve-tone case.)

Round and round in repetition
of the flight from boredom into thrill
and all the time we're waiting on the punchline,
the hollow laugh within "we will'.

What won't we give to take up
the turning over of a new leaf?
No-one ever reaching future perfect;
before we know it, beyond belief
we come to grief,
we hit the reef.
</lyrics>

==Long Light==
</lyrics>
Signs serial
adrift in the air
immaterial
face up to the phosphor flare.

Ghost essence
fuels fire in the rig;
incandescence
let's dance out the mystery jig.

Jig,
dance the dance of mystery light,
dance the dance, jig,
dance the dance infernally bright.

Dark water
dark fire down below...
storm quarter
time to dance out the mystery no!

The twelve will swing us to completeness
right from the cradle to the grave
and all our future projection's
only second guessing seventh waves...
A break in the connections
we thought were built to last
here's a change in the weather,
Tsunami time
the wave's already rolling in towards us from the past.
</lyrics>

==Backwards Man==
</lyrics>

It's only looking backwards
that you retrace your hand,
it's only in a moment of reversal
that you can see where you stand...
ease out, come through the film and through the mirror
welcome the backwards man.

Oh yes, the beach still stirs the ocean,
and soon the tide will turn the moon round
all is forgiven and all was foreseen
all's as it ever could be.

Ends forced motive out of meaning
means all even out in the end;
retracing steps,
in the process you learn to stand,
learn to walk again
so much gets forgotten, so much is forsworn
in retrospect.

Did I really do that?
Was I ever so young?

It's here, looking backwards
that you confront your own face
it's only in such moments of reversal
that you're secure in place.
Through the fire backwards
again and again
return to base.
</lyrics>

==As You Were==
</lyrics>
It's some relief
to find the possible in store;
beyond belief,
in overtime, I'm overboard...
uncharted waters, full fathom five,
the future's rising, it's just arrived.

It's not the same
as I imagined it would be
but there's no blame
if every life's imaginary.

And if I get quite what I deserve
that'll end the sentence, the time I've served
a full stop to the sentence...

When it's all done you willed the person you've become
in serious fun it's as you were that you become
and so it's done.
</lyrics>

==Or So I Said==
</lyrics>
I saw the future
or so I said...
How strange they seem,
the lives I've never led,
thinking ahead.

(I'm ready to come home...)

So head on,
headlong,
headstrong.

(I'm ready to go...)