

# 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.  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;

==Continental Drift==

&lt;/lyrics&gt;

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.  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;

==The Twelve==

&lt;/lyrics&gt;  
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 &quot;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.  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;

==Long Light==  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;  
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.  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;

==Backwards Man==  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;

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.  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;

==As You Were==  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;  
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.  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;

==Or So I Said==  
&lt;/lyrics&gt;  
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...)