

Peter Hammill, The Cut

Everything out of order
everything too well produced
from the conjuror's hat
let's turn on the juice
to grind the cutting plane, the blade that gives an edge,
to scale the mountain; to fail upon the mountain ledge.

Half-way up is half-way peaking,
the stroboscope locks the lathe;
I look around for a switch in phase...
the disco boom stands firm, the eight-track's in, the rage
licks the present, quickly flips the future page.

Check the deck: no marked cards,
no sequentialled straight or flush...
the dice won't still the blood-line rush.
Run the star-flood night, the cut-throat blade is stropped;
race your shadow... race in case your shadow stops.

Everything so out of order
no bias on the playback head;
papers for the border
all the tape is read,
the future burns my tongue, the noise-gates all are shut,
breathe the vacuum, believe there's reason in the cut.

Incipient white noise,
the stylus barely tracks,
the air controllers feed the stereo sonic smack.