



On Earth As It Is

2011

Double Columns Prayer

Ira Lightman

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on earth as it is

prayer as story, story as prayer

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ABOUT

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photo by matthew simmons

Double Columns Prayer

Ira Lightman

STRAINED beneath NOTE tearfully,
bellow prayer, gather oneself
mouth there as a squeezebox
upon body where blushes
low lip gape as we fold
in an out to Christ,
I O who's that
is to alert to our evil
lap the ministerial
feet that wash of hued
hands raise cleansing, whether once black hard leathery
tuning ladder to white page He conjures our spacetime
towards extreme like a kerchief through His hand.

Ira Lightman wanted to be an Anglican minister, but was thought too arty in his phrasing and not coming from enough of a nuclear family to survive the trials of ministry, rather as if the church were a 1950s advertising company running ticklist checks. He has been calling himself a conceptual poet for years, but is not included in *Against Expression An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*, because he rather believes in expression, tempered by Mallarme's injunction to diffuse any theme in a piece across its texture, as a modern composer diffuses a melody through a chromatic labyrinth, or a modern painter diffuses a close observation of life through a system of colour or gridding the canvas. He regularly appears on BBC Radio

3's The Verb, in 2008 wearing a blindfold for a week to write Miltonic verse. He makes Public Art throughout the North East, devising new forms and asking local people who will live with the art to suggest words and sentences that fit the form. His book DUETCETERA (Shearsman) is a collection of double-column poems, which he duets with people from all around the world on his YouTube channel. His new book MUSTARD TART AS LEMON is due from Red Squirrel in October 2011

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