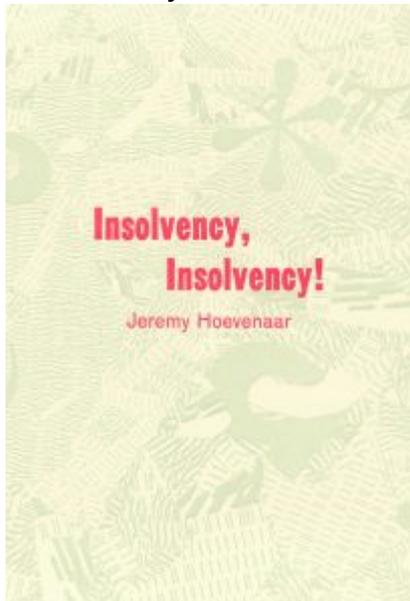


Messing With Your Head: A Review of Insolvency, Insolvency! by Jeremy Hoevenaar

written by Guest Contributor | June 22, 2018



Insolvency, Insolvency! by Jeremy Hoevenaar
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Those who are familiars of the impetuous wonder of words will understand
Jeremy's poem. Those who read will not.

It's only words tell us what to do. If we listen. *Insolvency, Insolvency!*
doesn't tell us what to do / but it does tell us how to listen / and when.
If we listen.

For this poem is a musical tour-de-force / among other things / so listening
to it is its own reward. Although / as I've said / that isn't why we
listen. The music keeps the meaning in place. It accounts for some of that
wonder referred to above. And it's that sense of wonder that keeps us
listening. And it's that sense of wonder / the likelihood of its recurrence
/ that keeps the poem alive. The music of the poem is saying the same things
that the words are saying / and at the same time. It is that coterminous
instance of thought/sound that makes for great poems.

The poem's message is life / and the particular version(s) of it going on now
/ here. The poem impresses life / upon us – rubs our mind faces in it /
really. The suggestion is that we heed what's happening / that we make it
our guide to action – at the same time that those events are ruining us.
Hence the angst.

As Jeremy writes at the end of the first piece of the poem –

Stress positions, everyone:
the dialog is about to begin

These lines will us to wonder if there *is* a dialog / if it *is* about to begin / and whether or not we will be made party to it /and if we are what difference that will make. Is there such a thing as dialog – or do we only ever speak to ourselves. Are we ever really spoken *to*? Are we ever party to such a thing as dialog / or is it just that our minds put together the pieces of talk / and make something of them that otherwise does not exist elsewhere? This is an important question to bring forward / because the social processes of poetry appear to occur by means of such dialoging. If they don't occur / what are we reading as we read Jeremy's poem? / what is happening as we do so? What is Jeremy's poem?

... And all of this happens
while I'm walking around
starving within the self-
limited life of books, other
poems and other poems,
deep repagination, split-
level horror/comedy, weird
frontier concision events
slipping on genuflection
for abandonment kicks.

The poem is / also / about surviving. The world in which this surviving must occur / if we *are* to survive / is the one created for us by Ballard and Dick / where the weird things happening are also the every day. Where every day / we survive a little to die a little. This is a world we have done to ourselves. And Jeremy's poem is its wail. The glass flowers may be hissing icily in the falling dusk – but soon it will be night.

The anxiety of living in this time's willed moments / and of knowing it / is what propels the poem forward. It does so at quite a pace – coherent with NYC's tilted forward run at the future / or at the idea of one / at any rate. The poem is an instance of living here / an integer of this place's multitudes / a quick sketch of its pace / some instants of its urgency / the chill moan of its anxiety / a cut above the wrist.

Only the language of this time / with its street urgency / and silent virtual beep / can tell us what's happening now. As Creeley said / you can't put new wine in old skins. Many of the words we use / the so-called big words / when cracked open are empty. Jeremy has looked to find / and found / words that are solid enough to endure. Such words are often brittle / having been made so by their isolation. When they stand together we have been given meaning.

Insolvency, Insolvency! is made of ten pieces / each a page to a page and a

half long. The lines are short / the equivalent of about three or four words each. Jeremy has gotten rid of the parts of words that don't work / that don't have exasperated life in them. Words and fragments of words / phrases and fragments of phrases / sentences incomplete and fragmented – it is these of which the poem's pieces are made.

The overall expression is therefore truncated / line by line / sentence by sentence / piece by piece. This is Jeremy's way of letting us see that nothing can be said completely. There is a strong compression / especially felt between the two ends of each line. The meanings have been compressed. There is no longer time for long-windedness. The language is metamorphic / schist. The language affronts itself.

What can / and what can't be said / are so (near) superfluous / that only the endless instance of agitated cogitation can give it place. Whether something can or can't be said / it can't be said fully. What can't be said so outweighs what can.

This language is beset by / and part of / the din of the world. Packed sentences become the unit of thought – each individually a contraction of redolent language – each adequate. Slow down your attention to them.

Each of the pieces ends without a period – inviting us on / saying that nothing is ever complete / saying that expostulation has no end / saying the what of what can't be said. Enjambment is open-ended / the gist of the provisional.

Let us return to the about of what the poem is. It's not about anything. It is what it's saying. This poem does not exist as something. It is because the poem is alive that it thus is.

The following are suggestions of meaning thrown up by the poem –

– It's impossible to take a stance in this present world. That impossibility makes us uneasy. We worry / become anxiety. Most of us are insolvent / or a couple weeks away from it. We're all insolvent as persons. The world is its own fractioning / fracturing. Death is quotidian – the way the day gets through the day. We're in it – sort of. In this / writing can at best be a throwing of words against a world that splatters them / shatters them. Just being here is entropy. Trying to get out of it / a farce. We poets are not above the odd bit of self-indulgence / willful naiveté / and the disingenuous. What we think of as living is / more and more / surviving. What we call surviving is / more and more / not. We're all somewhat dazed / waiting for something to happen – and it'll happen too soon.

That is a summary. It is speculative – the result of one reader trying to make sense (“make sense”) of one text. If it is one text.

An old dream

wherein every move-
ment is a narrow
avoidance of some
lethal projectile turns
out to be true.

*

No
seriously, fuck serious-
minded and inaccessible
to a non-specialized
original face.

*

...well,
what *could* it mean
to aspire to move from
one thing to the next
as a feltly truthful
series of considerately
dimorphous mumbles?

*

Walking
down the street, developing

symptoms at a leisurely
pace, *pace* all the soloing &
dissimulations underheard
as postambivalent manufactures,
all-inclusive shrugs enmeshed
in bowdlerized vicissitude.

The kind of writing that Jeremy has done in *Insolvency, Insolvency!* leaves a fair amount to the imagination. However / parts that might seem difficult of access might be making the music of the poem tell us what's what.

These interpretations of content come out of this reviewer's mind. Ultimately / they must have a lot of that mind in them. Are they at all accurate to the poem itself? The only answer is to go back to the poem / repeatedly. The poem is its only truth. And there is no truth.

We have only the language with which to deal with the language – messes ensue.



Alan Davies has authored 20+ books of poetry / reviews / and critical theory. He has written a libretto called GuantanamoGhraib. Alan is creating a long poem / the latest section being Book 26 / as well philosophy / aphorisms / and an essay called Why?!PerpetualGenocide.