

THE MINISTRY OF HOURS

The institution measures names, bodies and futures until its clocks revolt. Rigid common time gives way to unmeasured human movement.

OPENING FOR BUSINESS

SPOKEN ANNOUNCEMENT

Citizens are reminded:
Morning begins at the appointed hour.
Unscheduled thoughts must be declared.
Personal time remains the property
of the Ministry.

VERSE 1

I came beneath a painted sign
At nine precisely, dressed in grey.
A woman took my name and age
And filed the rest of me away.

She measured out my future years,
She marked my hands in numbered ink.
She said, "You need not choose a life.
We save our citizens from choice."

CHORUS

At the Ministry of Hours,
Every second has a name.
Every minute turns a wheel,
Every heartbeat feeds the frame.

At the Ministry of Hours,
Keep your eyes upon the wall.
When the little red hand reaches twelve,
You will answer when we call.

VERSE 2

They gave me seven doors to pass,
A form for every door behind.
One asked the colour of my blood,
One asked the contents of my mind.

A smiling man in polished shoes
Said, "Freedom makes a worker slow."
He wound the clock beneath my ribs
And showed me where my feet should go.

CHORUS

At the Ministry of Hours,
Every purpose has a place.
Every citizen is useful
When the number fits the face.

At the Ministry of Hours,
There is nothing left to fear.
We have written your tomorrow.
You have only to appear.

THE PROCESSING FLOOR

FRAGMENTED VOICES

complete lyric

Name?
Age?
Occupation?
Religion?
Dependants?
Previous convictions?
Future intentions?
Are you willing?
Are you able?
Are you suitable?
Are you still there?

SPOKEN CLERK

Sign at the bottom.
Do not read the reverse.

VERSE 3

I saw a boy from Section Three
Come running through the paper rain.
He cried, "The clocks are all asleep!
The sun has stopped above the lane!"

They held him gently by the arms.
They told him daylight could not stall.
Then somewhere in the building's heart
A thousand clocks began to fall.

CHORUS

At the Ministry of Hours,
Someone broke the central spring.
Every minute lost its number.
Every bell forgot to ring.

At the Ministry of Hours,
All the hands began to spin.
And the doors they built to keep us here
Would neither close nor let us in.

THE REVOLT OF THE CLOCKS

SHOUTED VOICES

Your hour is finished!
Your hour is finished!

Your hour is -
Finished.
Finished.
Finish.
Finn -

FINAL VERSE

I climbed the stairs above the clocks
And found no minister inside.
A jacket hung behind a desk.
A little fan revolved and sighed.

Upon the wall, beneath the dust,
One sentence waited, small and plain:

"We built the Ministry of Hours
Because we feared unmeasured days."

FINAL CHORUS

No more Ministry of Hours.
Let the seconds lose their names.
Let the minutes leave the wheels.
Let the heart escape the frame.

No more Ministry of Hours.
Take your eyes away from the wall.
When the little red hand reaches twelve,
There may be no call at all.

CLOSING INDEFINITELY

PUBLIC-ADDRESS VOICE, DAMAGED AND SLOWING

Citizens are reminded:
Tomorrow has been...
temporarily...
postponed.

THE HOUSE WHERE YESTERDAY LIVES

Memory becomes architecture: every un-lived life still occupies a room. The warm key binds the boy, the adult and a house that remembers both.

THE DOOR IN THE RAIN

WHISPERED VOICE

I know this street.
I know that gate.
But the number on the door
was never eight.

VERSE 1

I found the house behind the rain,
The garden leaning through the wall.
The windows watched me from the dark
As though they knew I'd come at all.

The key was cold inside my hand.
The lock remembered how to turn.
A hallway breathed my childhood name.
Upstairs, a yellow lamp still burned.

CHORUS

In the house where yesterday lives,
Nothing leaves and nothing gives.
Every room retains a face.
Every footprint keeps its place.

In the house where yesterday stays,
Dust lies softly on the days.
Call my name from years ago.
I will answer. I don't know.

VERSE 2

My mother stood beside the stove,
Still twenty-nine and dressed in blue.
She turned and said, "You're home too soon.
Your father hasn't heard from you."

A wireless played the evening news,
But every word arrived reversed.
The announcer named tomorrow's dead
And then described the morning first.

CHORUS

In the house where yesterday lives,
Every wound forgets, forgives.
Every promise waits upstairs.
Every silence sits in chairs.

In the house where yesterday stays,
Clocks grow flowers on their faces.
Call my name from years ago.
I will answer. I don't know.

THE ROOMS BEGIN TO TURN

CHILD'S VOICE

This is my room.

complete lyric

OLDER VOICE

No. This is mine.

CHILD'S VOICE

Why are you wearing my face?

OLDER VOICE

Why are you waiting in my bed?

VERSE 3

I found myself at twelve years old
Still drawing rockets on the floor.
He looked at me without surprise
And pointed toward the bedroom door.

Behind it stood a field at noon,
Its grass unmoving in the light.
A distant figure crossed the sun
And cast no shadow left or right.

BRIDGE: "THE PHOTOGRAPH"

I held the family photograph.
The faces changed beneath my thumb.
My father vanished, then returned.
My mother aged. The boy became -

A stranger standing in the rain,
A soldier waiting for a train,
A voice that travelled through the stars,
A child who never left the yard.

FINAL CHORUS

In the house where yesterday lives,
Every life we might have lived
Walks the passages at night,
Turning handles out of sight.

In the house where yesterday stays,
We are guests of former days.
Call my name from years ago.
I will answer. Let me go.

THE HOUSE REMEMBERS

LAYERED VOICES

You're home too soon.

This is my room.

Someone is coming.

Your father hasn't heard.

Why are you wearing my face?

Call my name.

Call my name.

Call -

FINAL VERSE

I ran outside before the dawn.
The garden closed behind my feet.
The rain had stopped. The house was gone.
No doorway opened to the street.

But in my coat I found the key,
Still warm as though held by a child.
And from a window years away,
I saw my younger self - and smiled.

TOMORROW AT THE WINDOW

CHILD'S VOICE

Will you come back tomorrow?

ADULT VOICE

I think I already did.

THE VISITOR

An intelligence follows human music across space and asks what made it. The answer remains contradiction: weapon and song, fear and connection.

complete lyric

SIGNAL APPROACHING

Blue world... blue world...
Your signal has crossed the dark.
I have followed the music.
I am entering your sky.

VERSE 1

I travelled where the clocks grow still,
Past frozen stones and fields of night.
I followed one electric voice
That vanished underneath your light.
Your oceans turned beneath my feet,
Your clouds unfolded, white and slow.
I came to ask one simple thing:
What are you, and do you know?

CHORUS

Blue world turning under one small star,
Tell me what you think you are.
You sing of love, you speak of fear,
You call across the dark - and I am here.
Blue world burning blue and white,
Do you know yourselves tonight?
I crossed the silence, cold and far,
To ask you what you are.

DESCENT / RADIO FRAGMENTS

Weather at ten...
Hold the line...
This is your station...
Are you receiving?
Come home soon...

VERSE 2

I saw a child release a kite,
A woman punch a factory clock.
Two lovers argued by a train,
While young men waited on the dock.
I saw green uniforms at dawn,
A dance floor shaking after rain.
One hand was building something new,
Another tore it down again.

CHORUS

Blue world turning under one small star,
Now I see how strange you are.
You make a weapon, make a song,
Then spend the night deciding which was wrong.
Blue world burning blue and white,
Every window holds a light.
I crossed the silence, cold and far,
But still don't know what you are.

THE INTERVIEW

I asked the soldier what you were.
He said, "Ask me when I'm home."
I asked the singer what you were.
She said, "Listen when I'm gone."
I asked the child what you were.
The child looked upward...
And asked me the same question.

FINAL VERSE

So I returned beyond your clouds
With no report that I could prove.
I could not call you wise or lost,
I only knew that you could move.
And in my ship, beyond your moon,
One broken broadcast followed me:
A little song, a human voice,
Still reaching where it could not see.

FINAL CHORUS

Blue world turning under one small star,
Perhaps you do not know what you are.
You sing of love, you speak of fear,
You call into the dark - and we can hear.
Blue world fading blue and white,
Keep your windows on tonight.
Somewhere beyond your nearest star,
We're asking what we are.

FINAL TRANSMISSION

Blue world...
Keep singing.

THE BOY AT THE EDGE OF NOON

At maximum daylight, a fallen pilot meets a child outside ordinary time. Noon becomes the boundary between command, memory and awakening.

complete lyric

SPOKEN INTRO

Mayday...
Compass gone.
Engine burning.
Only sand.
Then silence.

VERSE 1

I woke beneath a copper sun,
My silver engine split in two.
The sand had climbed across one wing;
The smoke went straight into the blue.
No road, no cloud, no moving thing,
No shade to tell the hour by.
Then from the white horizon came
A barefoot boy against the sky.

CHORUS

Boy at the edge of noon,
With the daylight in your eyes,
I had fallen out of thunder;
You had come to ask me why.

Boy at the edge of noon,
Where the earth and heaven meet,
You spoke as though the burning world
Were cool beneath your feet.

INSTRUMENTAL BREAK

SPOKEN INTERLUDE

Hold your course...
Your signal is breaking...
Can you hear me?
Come back...

VERSE 2

He pointed to the twisted guns
And asked me what the metal meant.
I said, "A pilot has his orders."
He asked me where the orders went.

I said, "I flew because they called.
I stayed because my friends were there."
He watched the heat above the dunes
And asked, "Who gives orders to the air?"

CHORUS

Boy at the edge of noon,
With the desert in your eyes,
I could name the roads and rivers,

I could read the changing skies.

Boy at the edge of noon,
I had charts for near and far,
But nothing in my pilot's book
Could tell me what we are.

SPOKEN BRIDGE

Are you lost?
No.

Then why did you come?

You were falling.

I was flying.

Not anymore.

The earth remembers water.

Listen beneath the stone.

FINAL VERSE

He led me where the stones were black
And made me listen to the ground.
Beneath a rusted wheel and chain
A hidden cup of rain was found.

At dawn the distant engines came.
They asked who led me to the well.
No village stood for fifty miles;
No footprints marked the place he fell.

They carried me into the sky;
Below, the wreck became a mark.
And through my dead receiver breathed
A small voice rising from the dark.

FINAL CHORUS

Boy at the edge of noon,
Now the clouds are under me.
I can chart the roads and rivers,
Not the thing you made me see.

Boy at the edge of noon,
If your voice comes drifting through,
I will leave one channel open
So the earth can answer you.

WHISPERED OUTRO

The sky must not forget the ground.

THE LAST BROADCAST FROM EARTH

Humanity's final message cannot be reduced to proof or rank. Beneath the inventories, the visitor hears one voice reaching for another.

complete lyric

THE STATION OPENS

TECHNICIAN

Transmission tower standing by.
Carrier wave is stable.

All nations have surrendered
their remaining frequencies.

When the red lamp appears,
speak clearly.

There may be no second attempt.

VERSE 1

They built the tower on the hill
Where seven roads had met before.
They carried wires across the fields
And sealed the windows, locked the door.

The cities sent their chosen words,
The oceans sent recorded rain.
A thousand voices filled the reels,
Then someone wiped them clean again.

CHORUS

This is the last broadcast from Earth.
We cannot tell you what we're worth.
We learned to measure sea and sky,
But never learned the reason why.

This is the last broadcast tonight.
A little sound against the night.
We do not know how far you are.
We only know we found your star.

VERSE 2

The general brought a list of wars.
The preacher brought a book of names.
The merchant counted what remained.
The scientist described the flames.

A mother carried one small shoe.
A prisoner brought a rusted key.
A singer stood before the glass
And said, "Perhaps the song is me."

CHORUS

This is the last broadcast from Earth.
No single voice can speak our worth.
We make a cradle, make a gun,
Then teach our children which is one.

This is the last broadcast tonight.
Keep one receiver turned toward light.
We do not know what answers are.
We only know we found your star.

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD

SOLDIER

Tell them I was frightened.
MECHANICAL VOICE

Recorded.

WORKER

Tell them I built the thing
that took my work away.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Recorded.

SCIENTIST

Tell them knowledge did not make us wise.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Recorded.

MOTHER

Tell them he was only nineteen.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Recorded.

CHILD

Tell them we looked up.

MECHANICAL VOICE, DISTORTED

Recorded.

VERSE 3

The boy who stood at noon arrived
With rain still shining on his coat.
He placed a warm and tarnished key
Beside the words the others wrote.

He said, "I found the house again.
The rooms were full of lives untold.
If something hears us after this,
Do not believe we all grew old."

THE VISITOR REPLIES

VISITOR

Blue world...

I received your fear.

I received your numbers.

I received the names
you gave your dead.

But the signal beneath them
was not fear.

It was the sound
of one voice reaching
for another.

CHORUS

This is the last broadcast from Earth.
Now someone knows that we had worth.

Not for the towers or the flame,
But for the voice that called a name.

This is the last broadcast tonight.
One human sound against the night.
We do not know what futures are.
But something heard us from a star.

THE HUMAN FREQUENCY

Morning begins at the appointed hour...

This is my room...

Someone is coming...

Blue world...

Call my name...

Your hour is finished...

Keep singing...

FINAL VERSE

We sent no flag into the dark.
We claimed no kingdom in the sky.
We sent the sound of ordinary hearts
That lived a little while, then died.

And if the signal fades before
It reaches any distant shore,
The act of calling through the night
Has made us less alone than before.

FINAL CHORUS

This was the last broadcast from Earth.
Remember neither rank nor birth.
Remember windows burning bright
Across one small and turning night.

This was the last broadcast we knew.
A human song was passing through.
And somewhere past the nearest star,
A voice was asking what we are.

THE UNMEASURED HOURS

Seven people, four tracks, one room, and a red lamp that would not go out.



GIDEON MARCH

lead voice; acoustic guitar; spoken transmissions

RUTH BELLAMY

combo organ; harmonium; upright piano; harmony voice

MARTIN QUILL

electric guitar; tremolo; feedback; tape echo

CELIA NORTH

rhythm and twelve-string guitar; hand percussion; voice

PETER FALLOW

electric bass; bowed bass; cello

LEON BAPTISTE

drums; timpani; chains and found-metal percussion

ANYA VOSS

flute; shortwave receiver; oscillators; tape loops

RECORDING

Recorded 14 November 1966 - 3 February 1967.

Main sessions: Orpheus Sound Rooms, Wardour Mews, Soho, London.

Additional chamber recordings: the stairwell and assembly room at Bellfoundry House, Highgate.

Final night mixes: Lantern Room Studio, Barnes.

Orpheus occupied a former newsreel scoring room beneath a Soho cinema. Sessions began after the final screening, when the street and projector room fell quiet.

Rain, doors and room footsteps for *The House Where Yesterday Lives* were captured at Bellfoundry House shortly after two in the morning.

Produced by Harriet Cope and The Unmeasured Hours. Engineered by Alfred Penrose. Second engineer: Dora Kemp.

METHOD

Recorded to four-track one-inch valve tape at 15 inches per second.

Live rhythm performances shared tracks one and two; voices, organ and guitar treatments occupied the remaining tracks.

Echo came from a plate, a tiled stairwell, spring units and two hand-threaded tape machines.

Oscillator tones came from repaired test equipment. Every loop was cut, measured and joined by hand.

The final group voice was sung around one ribbon microphone while the childhood melody played from a clockwork music box in the live room.

A mono reference lacquer was cut at Larkspur Disc Service, Holborn, on 7 February 1967.

NOTE: All performers, studios and production personnel are fictional. A PATH original production.