

GILLIAN HARDING-RUSSELL

## The Resources for Pain —for Moazzam Begg

Hogtied arms to legs shackled together  
he was accused since found in the vicinity  
escaped from the scene of action in Afghanistan  
on the border of a neighbouring country  
(his religion and sympathies marking him  
indubitably) he knew not night from day

time passing in slow motion sped up nightmare  
as the surreal mind in overdrive contends  
with the artful influence of visible  
and invisible

pain—kicks and bashes to the head and back  
that do not exceed some power of healing  
or camouflage before authorities  
who look sharply

the other way don't want trouble  
when not just the generals (hard enough  
to circumnavigate but those higher up  
urge the greater good remains  
at stake—simple tests

of endurance reach to human limits like go  
without food and sleep for five days in a row  
Noise and bright lights recorded rant insane about you  
with the Interrogator in the white room ready at your elbow  
with a prod and a needle filled with some secret serum  
orders you to drink 12 glasses of water in five minutes flat  
to discover a sea of panic nausea swell up

within you rocking obscenely lurid  
on the greenish bile of no man's land  
(You are the guilty one!) And  
must agree to everything

and be believed for nothing  
short of the worst  
repeated in the precise words of the Interrogator  
memorized in a sequence as for a strict teacher

imprisoned for three years more  
without proven charges you are moved  
to a prison of the mind inside a faraway island  
where you may hear the splash of waves  
as real enough will remember as a very hot place  
within your brains' broiling under

a searing white spot of tropical sun  
that wipes out over head thought  
under a searing white spot of tropical sun  
that wipes out over head thought  
about who you are that wipes out  
over head thought about what  
you might have done that wipes out  
over head thought three worlds ago  
to arrive on the desolate shores  
of this over-exposed shadow  
of existence.