

Ciaran Carson

**UNTIL
BEFORE
AFTER**



Gallery Books

Until Before After
is first published
simultaneously in paperback
and in a clothbound edition
on 18 March 2010.

The Gallery Press
Loughcrew
Oldcastle
County Meath
Ireland

www.gallerypress.com

*All rights reserved. For permission
to reprint or broadcast these poems,
write to The Gallery Press.*

© Ciaran Carson 2010

ISBN 978 1 85235 490 9 *paperback*
978 1 85235 491 6 *clothbound*

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library.

Contents

UNTIL

It's the same	page 14
So it is	14
His last words	15
According to	16
The gospel	16
Cast a spell	17
Not in	18
That frame	18
Of discord	19
Leaning into	20
Whatever	20
We see	21
What comes	22
Next	22
The calculus	23
A question	24
Of the consequences	24
Repeatedly	25
As gunfire	26
Reconfigured	26
Cast	27
Overhead	28
A line	28
A hook the barb	29
For all that	30
Until and	30
The hinge	31
The hinge as hinges	32
Creaks in the wind	32
The gyre	33
I mean an anemometer	34
By the barometer	34
At death's door	35
Not until	36

When afterwards 36
A bell tolls 37
At the comma 38
Not the hyphen 38
But the stop 39
Gone into 40
The more 40
I did not know 41
I wrote 42
As he was 42
Away in 43
About time 44
As in a wall 44
The painter 45
In your absence 46
Homecoming 46
If ever 47

BEFORE

Here lies 50
The day before 50
An airman 51
From below 52
Wandering 52
When you forget 53
Singled by 54
Which cloud 54
The lightning 55
When it struck 56
Like a rainbow 56
In the parlour 57
As a contrail 58
It is 58
Whatever it is 59
In freefall 60
As if 60
If ever 61

In an enclave 62
A nameless bird 62
Before the storm 63
Or a penthouse 64
After the first 64
As I wander 65
Five flights up 66
And 66
Backtracking on 67
But after what 68
What does it say 68
But open 69
As in a dream 70
What then 70
But neither 71
How it is done 72
Whereas before 72
They said 73
As blade 74
As sharp 74
Centimetres 75
If I stole 76
What becomes 76
All the women 77
Some 78
As I crossed o'er I looked 78
I looked 79
As the swirl 80
What becomes 80
If presently 81
A babble 82
In the Book of Nod 82
So is 83

AFTER

What bodes 86
For all 86

Asleep 87
In the lift 88
In the corridor 88
In the rest home 89
I am not 90
I do not 90
When you come to it 91
On a scale 92
Five bars 92
What is it 93
Through swing 94
Things 94
One cannot 95
Time and 96
From a window ledge 96
The eye 97
Figure 98
All day long 98
I looked through 99
Is abacus 100
The tag 100
What is 101
Suture not 102
Going under 102
Coming to 103
I wondered 104
As elsewhere is 104
It's one of those 105
From whom 106
To enter 106
This the hour 107
Of assignations 108
East of Eden 108
The next tune 109
From beyond 110
How many 110
That I might know 111

From what 112
This is the day 112
So far 113
What is it 114
It happened 114
The turn 115
The tune 116
I never 116
Teaching me it 117
Year after year 118
You only 118
I open the door 119

Acknowledgements 121

UNTIL

It's the same

old story
but not

as we know
it we thought

it was
a box

until we found
the key on

the verge of
these words

So it is

as when
death draws

nigh death
draws a hush

upon the house
until the one

who is about
to die

cries open
the door

His last words

were the story is not
over

yet whereof
we cannot

speak until
we hear

the words from
one who has

died
before

whereupon
we begin to

tell what once
was told

BEFORE

Here lies

the road before
that is to all

who went before
the road behind

foreshadowing
our travelling

from twilight
into twilight

mile after mile
time out of mind

The day before

yesterday if not
the day before

my crossing
over I had all

my wits about
me as for now

where time is not
nor words I cannot say

what might be
foremost in my mind

An airman

sees through gaps
in the cloud-

cover the movements
of armies

yet without radio
cannot communicate

as someone who
has passed over

to the unseen world
if such there be

sees what lies before
his loved ones yet

cannot speak
of what he sees

AFTER

What bodes

the world to come
is that where

we abide where
everlastingly

the past is not
for all that

has befallen us
we struggle on

embracing this
our afterworld

For all

my looking
forward after

is not yet nor
then how far

from next it is
I do not know if

next is as in
nearest in time

if not you are
my nearest timeless

Asleep

I find you
next to me

for all you
are not here

as yesterday
tomorrow

and today
I walk through

ward after ward
to see you as you

always were
steadfast in

your own space
you allow me into