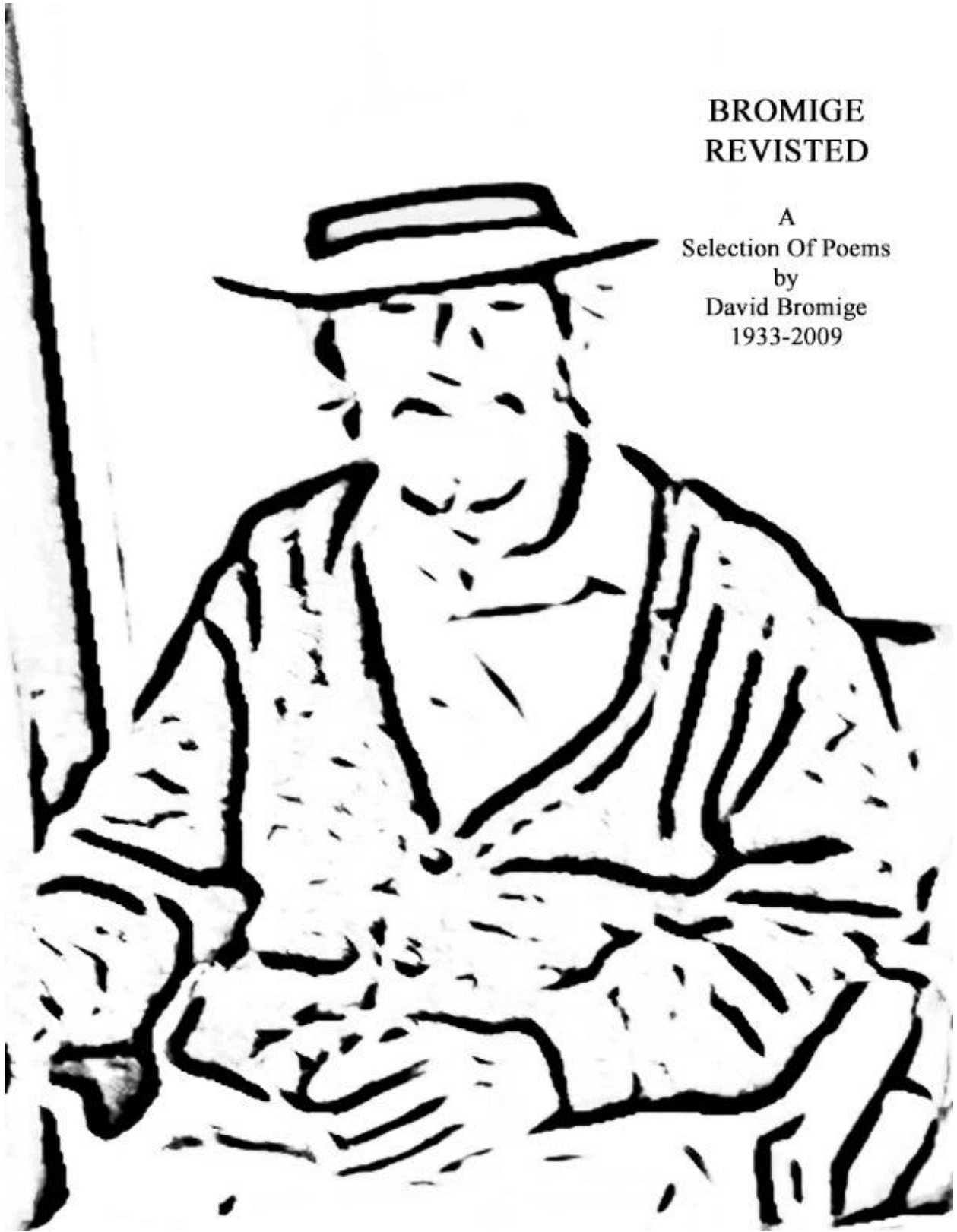


BROMIGE  
REVISTED

A  
Selection Of Poems  
by  
David Bromige  
1933-2009



**BROMIGE REVISITED**

**A Selection Of Poems**

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**(1934-2009)**

**Neo-Mimeo Editions: 2026**

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Nualláin House, Publishers

Digital Press Project

Inquire at

[nuallainhousepublishers@gmail.com](mailto:nuallainhousepublishers@gmail.com)

from The Gathering 1965

At Last

Not the cracking of the ashtray on my skull  
was the indicator but her  
repeated scream, What do I want with a  
husband—never once my name.

The ashtray was called Niagara  
Falls & our honeymoon, not spent  
There, I was calld  
David in different accents  
& responded differently.

We glues pottery fragments together after a  
fashion but I would not have you  
hope that a symbol. Less simpl  
where the fracture causes the scream & even  
that too is too simpl. But of all

the passionat scenes you may encounter  
one when you stand for too  
much, & that  
is the indicator.

from My Poetry 1980

from My Poetry  
for Bob Perelman

My poetry does seem to have a cumulative, haunting effect—one or two poems may not touch you, but a small bookful begins to etch a response, poems that rise in blisters that itch for weeks, poems like ball-bearings turning on each other, over & over, digging down far enough to find substance, a hard core to fill up the hand. It's through this small square that my poems project themselves, flickering across consciousness, finally polarizing in the pure plasma of life. The reader grows impatient, irritated with my distancing style, coming at him in the rare book format, written under not one but two different kinds of dirt money, & knowing me to be and english teacher.

from Tiny Courts in a World Without Scales 1991

Clearings in the throat  
for anselm hollo

The grass has grown  
over the old scythe

The cork in the wine  
no-one would drink has crumbled

Closer to the graves  
the paths grow clearer

Come out of hiding, despair  
you're even shyder than joy

from Tiny Courts in a World Without Scales 1991

Clocks

for cecelia belle

circled future and past

Handled time

and specialize the same

impulse became now

actuarial in

measureless presence

That's it for clocks

whose cuckoos, quirks and curlicues

introduce the decorative element

with customary loss of striking power

from Tiny Courts in a World Without Scales 1991

Seated at the organ (groan)  
for robert grenier

The brain is bigger  
than this figure  
rapidly approaching



from Tiny Courts in a World Without Scales 1991

Feeling for the blind  
for michael palmer

Being a superstitious person  
accords wisdom to old ways  
There's no control so who can say  
Better safe than sorry  
and not somehow mean it  
We are nonetheless civilized  
with touching faith in reason  
so a sense of contradiction  
goes with me all my days  
around ladders and over cracks  
and when night comes  
in dreams and violent rites  
attacks the vacant space  
while thinking twice

from Tiny Courts in a World Without Scales 1991

The poet strolls at evening by the river  
for tom sharp

You swing on the acacia boughs  
over the chainlink fence  
to scramble up the bank  
and run across the freeway

then down the other side  
and through that fence  
you come at last to the railroad track  
and next to that the creek  
where your leisurely stroll at evening may  
commence

from Tiny Courts in a World Without Scales 1991

Might be right  
for Samuel Brittan

Rawls' test of justice says  
Pretend you're not born yet so  
you might be born a millionaire  
or you might be born a pauper  
Now what social system do you choose

I saw myself sitting here saying this  
with no small degree of smugness  
assured of its success  
I might be Rawls himself

for we share the same reason  
except that a man began to shout  
that he had a gun  
We looked up then  
It was an expensive one, more accurate

from The Harbor Master Of Hong Kong 1993

from Lines

keep it to yourself

---

write it down

life is brief

---

it says here

ephemeral

---

hang on to that

kiss me quick

---

too late

no bodies hanging from the lamp posts

---

we must be in the wrong neighborhood

a poem should not mean but be

---

whereas the opposite is true

from The Harbormaster of Hong Kong 1993

Logic

He was carried into the garden  
Therefore he was infirm  
The block was lined with bars  
Therefor the town was friendly  
She was just like one of the family  
Therefore we neglected to disarm her  
The night was about to be buried  
Therefore we hired lovers of sleep

from The Harbormaster of Hong Kong 1993

For Bob Grenier

It's nothing new for the human to be reminded  
To go on too long has varying measures

They placed the object in his hand  
breathing a name they expired

When we set out on a walk  
we step on some assumptions

The future has entered consideration  
raising a hand to the eyebrows

Because we want to see what's going  
on the analogy can be rejected

So let's do something else instead  
The gift is equivocal, he thinks

and claps his hands aloud  
which remain clasped in this becoming narrative

Why not simply accept it appears  
one has to at one end or the other

The phonemes begin to play ping pong  
so he brings his ukulele to the singsong

When the present is its insistence  
Hernia, goddess of Rupture, descends

and from her chariot of pain  
showers sensation down the drain

from The Harbormaster of Hong Kong 1993

For Bob Perelman

The assumptions are islands  
in the son  
glancing up from the white  
pacific  
terribly uninhabitable  
where everybody goes  
who is anybody  
to rusticate and masticate  
and resuscitate the dead  
art of rime and the palms  
flutter in whose shade  
touts for the status quo  
watch the tourists come and go  
I too dislike them and their fiddles  
and their way of being there  
in the grimy trafficridden concourse  
whenever they close my eyes

from The Harbor Master Of Hong Kong 1993

For Michael Davidson

Believing I ought to be weak feels easy  
and I sleep not like the princess but the pea.  
Let Jenny torment others; but I'm queasy  
To think that then they'll send her back to me.  
There aren't contiguous days in any season  
when I press against the bars like an ape.  
A dead person who got to me through reason  
inextricable from sentiment played tape  
singing the invention of the double-bind  
and love two octaves above middle C  
I'm not to blame for overhearing, in my mind  
as usual, believing that the soup was free.  
And you can bet, if an encore is required,  
the wave's crest is the best place to be wired.

Footnote to sentiment

Below the level of the sentence  
Hard on the heels of sentience  
A page before the sentry.



from Ten Poems From Clearings In The Throat 2005

Squeaking wheels

I thought someone was parking my car  
in front of my house

Then i thought that someone was my wife  
and that it was our house

We were un- or happily married  
and had a child whom we loved

Friends came to visit  
We had careers and goals

Ideas about the world  
and brilliant memories

Then I was waking up  
escaping from my dreams

which I once enjoyed  
and now feel as traps

They are not filled with meaning  
I am not

David Bromige was born in London, England in 1933 where he was educated and became a prize winning student. Not content to give his life over to academics just yet, he worked as a shepherd in Sweden as might be depicted in a Glen Baxter panel. Eventually he found himself in Canada, in the province of Saskatchewan for a short time before matriculating to Vancouver's institute of higher learning where he met and was befriended by some of Canada's great poets writing in English at that time. To further his education he studied at UC Berkeley where his writing came to the attention of the eminent poet Robert Duncan. Soon Bromige was teaching in the California State University system in Sonoma County. He found Luther Burbank's "paradise on earth" to be quite congenial to his life style until his passing in June of 2009. He was the author of over 40 poetry selection, many of them prize winning works, of a unique wit and contemplative of the vagaries of absurdity. He fits in no neat category stylistically, yet he was long associated with the Language School. IF Wants To Be The Same As IS, a selected collection of his oeuvre, was published by New Star Books of Vancouver in 2018.