

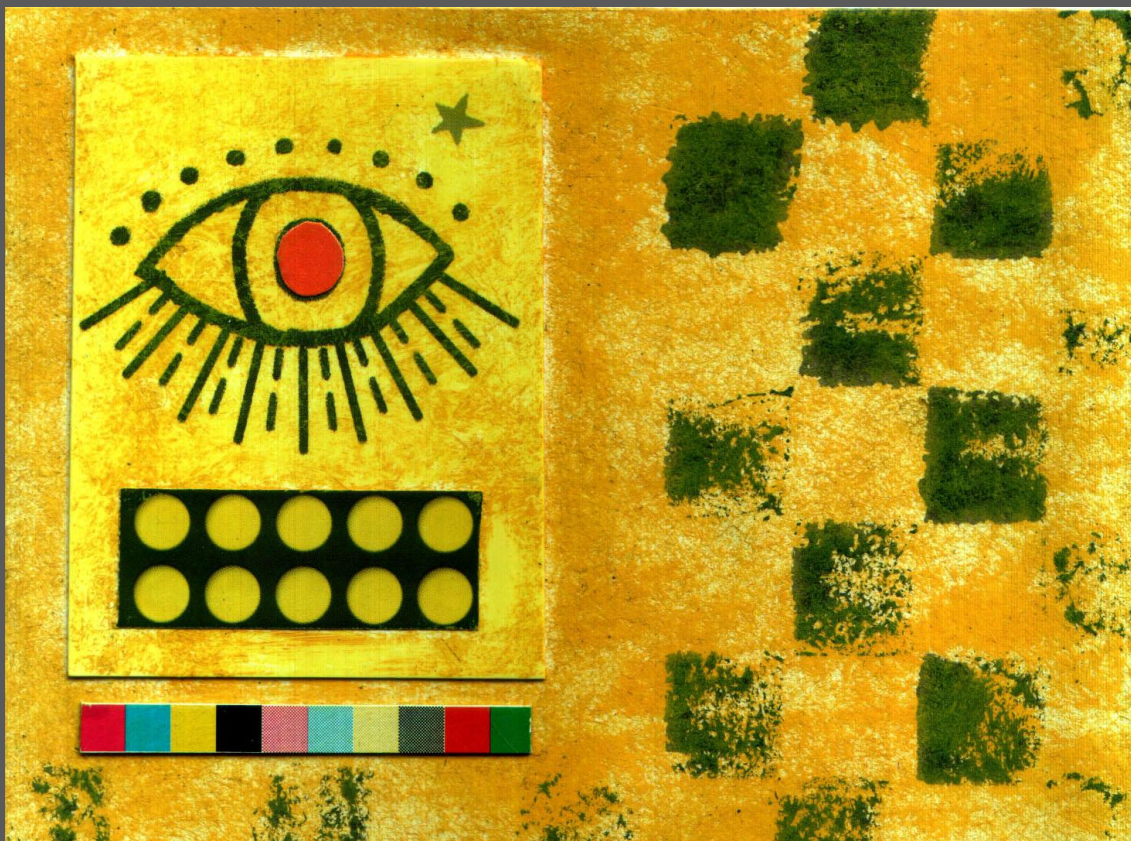
SELF -

ISOLATION

Poems ~ Mike Ferguson
Paintings ~ Rupert Loydell

Self-Isolation 1

One. Oneness. One as one. Once in a lifetime, one hopes. *Lonely*. One anticipates: *alone*. Half of two. Indefinitely anyone without highlighting. One-off, one hopes two. Lowest of the cardinals, never the lows. In a query if this is meaningful, we must determine the nature of happiness. No one but me. One and all, allegedly. One of these days it will all be again. *U2* is somewhat ironic for that song. To be at one with oneself.



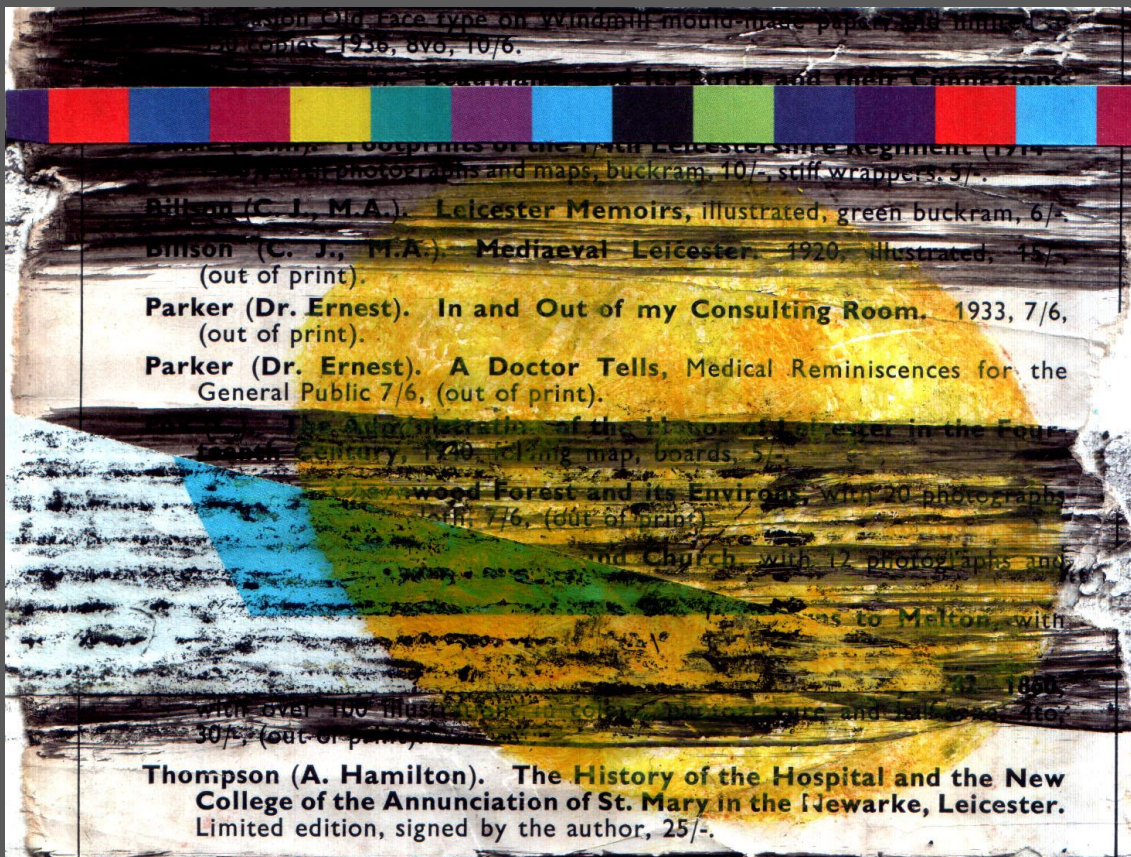
Self-Isolation 2

Yes, we two are more than the one, but still on our own. Not three and therefore not a gathering. Togetherness test. Imagine the pedants querying this term and the actualities. Affiliated. It is in the defining of our space, a social network of parallels only, pushing as far as its corners and no more, looking beyond with a sense still of that possibility. Two too. Today she walked to the gate just to see. One more than one but not an assemblage. Vulnerability is a lonesome thing no matter how closely partnered.



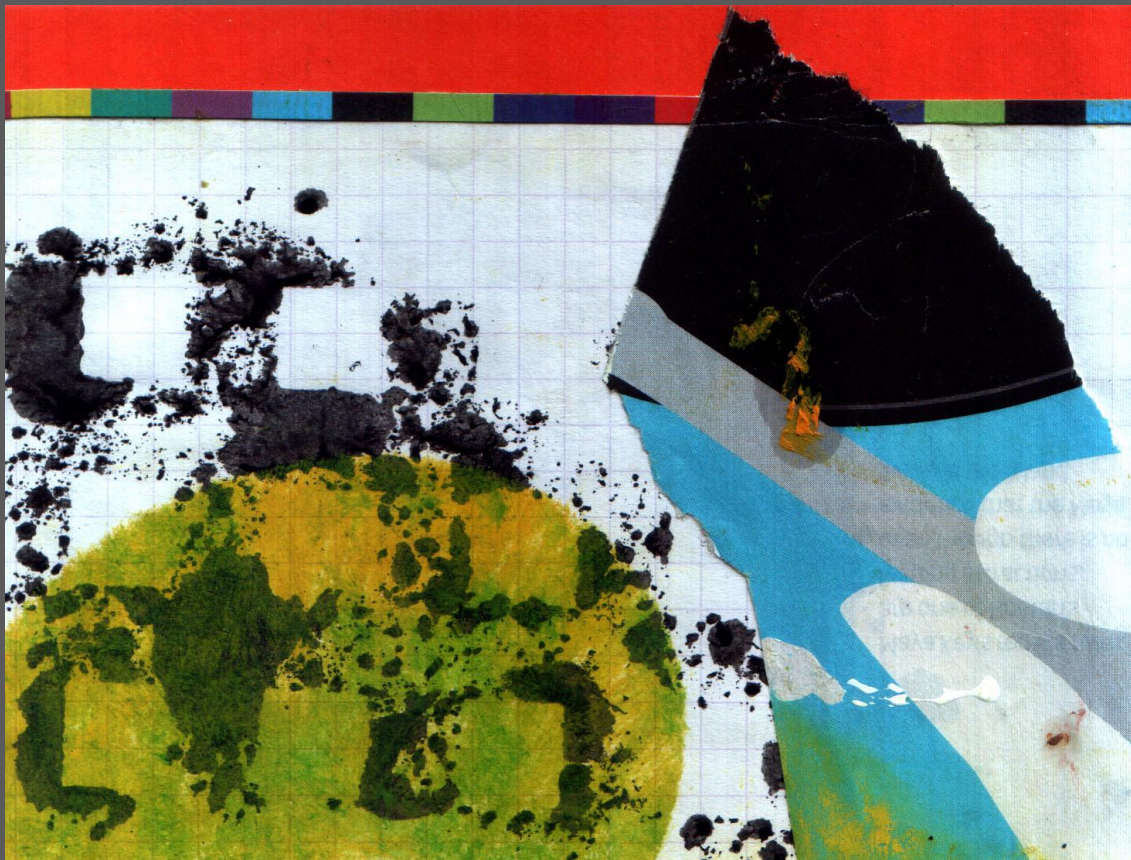
Self-Isolation 3

For us, this is week three. Triumvirate of isolating. And in this third period it is still me and thee. There is little magic in this, and rhetoric is for those politicians who have only suddenly cared. How many couples crave that smallest of crowds? The power of three is to see beyond, but there are still borders in this vision of community. Synthesis of opposites, but we have moved past week one and hope never to return, eager for a better end than that mimetic train journey in *Dombey and Son*.



Self-Isolation 4

So many *nots* to begin each not-a-new day. Before expanding as far as I can, it is farther than many, and in knowing this there is profundity in the line *you can use your garden, if you have one*. Who needs it? That it hasn't been widely called *quarantine* in deference to the power of language and fear of fears. What I have found in searching: *if you are / if you have / drop them off / away from other people / symptoms of / live with order*. The Self Surveillance Centre is open to anyone with a sibilance of cynicism.



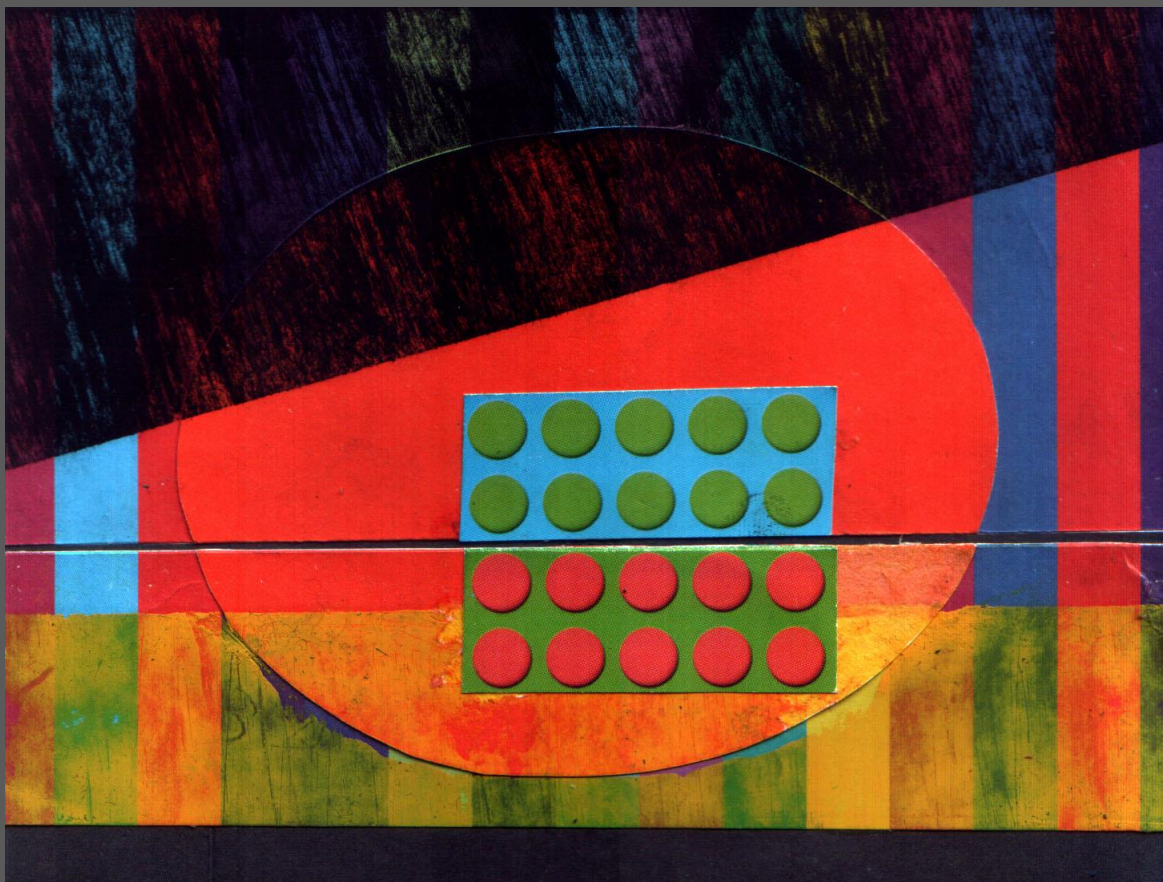
Self-Isolation 5

In consideration of numbers, and not those who have it [though this will need to be a focus at some stage], it is two weeks the other side of when I am in writing this, and half of what will be the minimum period, at which point it'll likely be doubled. Glyph among glyphs, here occupying its own space. You have to laugh: *someone who is full of energy but unable to channel it*. Is imagining being in it wishful thinking? Digits for counting the days. When a guardian angel knocks on your door five times you know you're made it to Self-Hallucination Week. Even the four gospels with one fake truth about being saved are made one more by a desperate act of finding the extra.



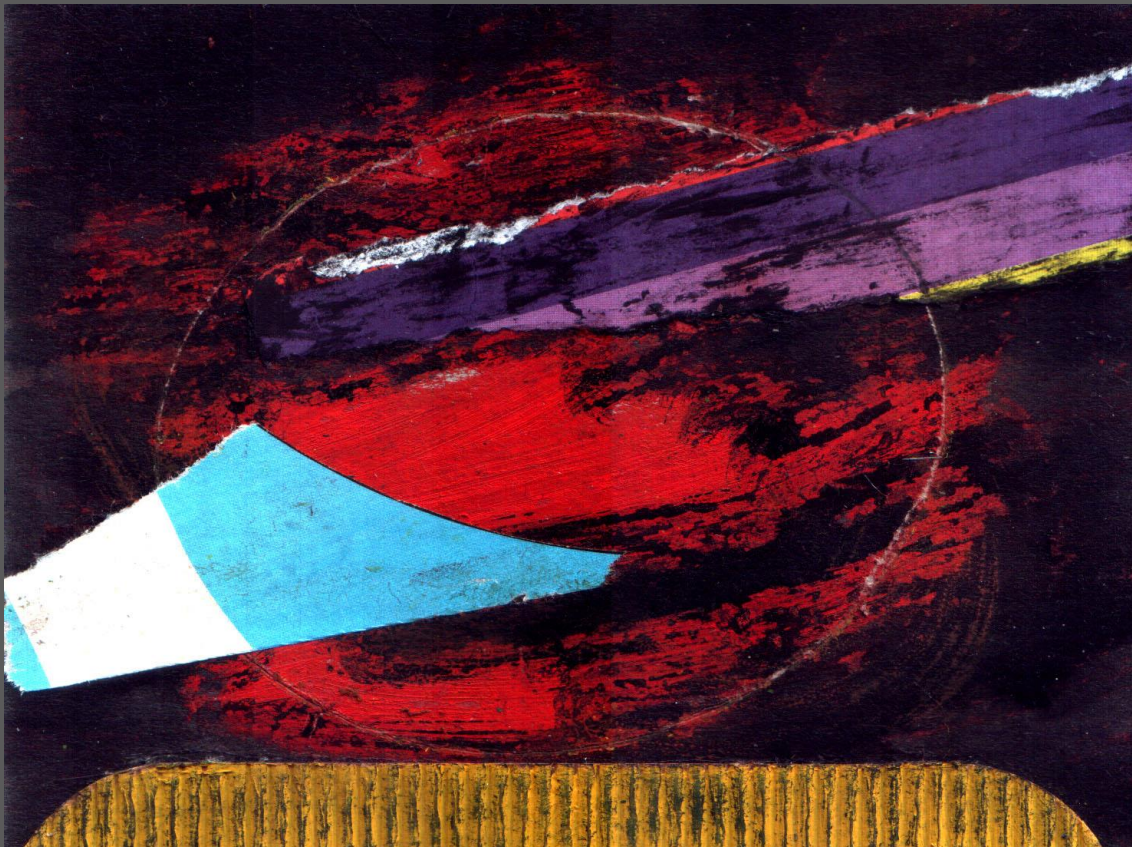
Self-Isolation 6

This controlled roll of the dice. Warm technology to sooth and assuage. The entomology of hope is hopelessly platitudinous: *post - + isolation*. Isolate / insulate. Our diplomatic choice dictated. Island x 2. Does a life of solitude and seclusion make us all Romantic poets? Awakening still deferred but watched from afar. When the shepherd's pie fell from oven to the floor it seemed a catastrophe, especially having been properly made with lamb. Corrupted over time, Ovid in 19 BC sending love. And what should I make of an improper fall in these unprecedented times?



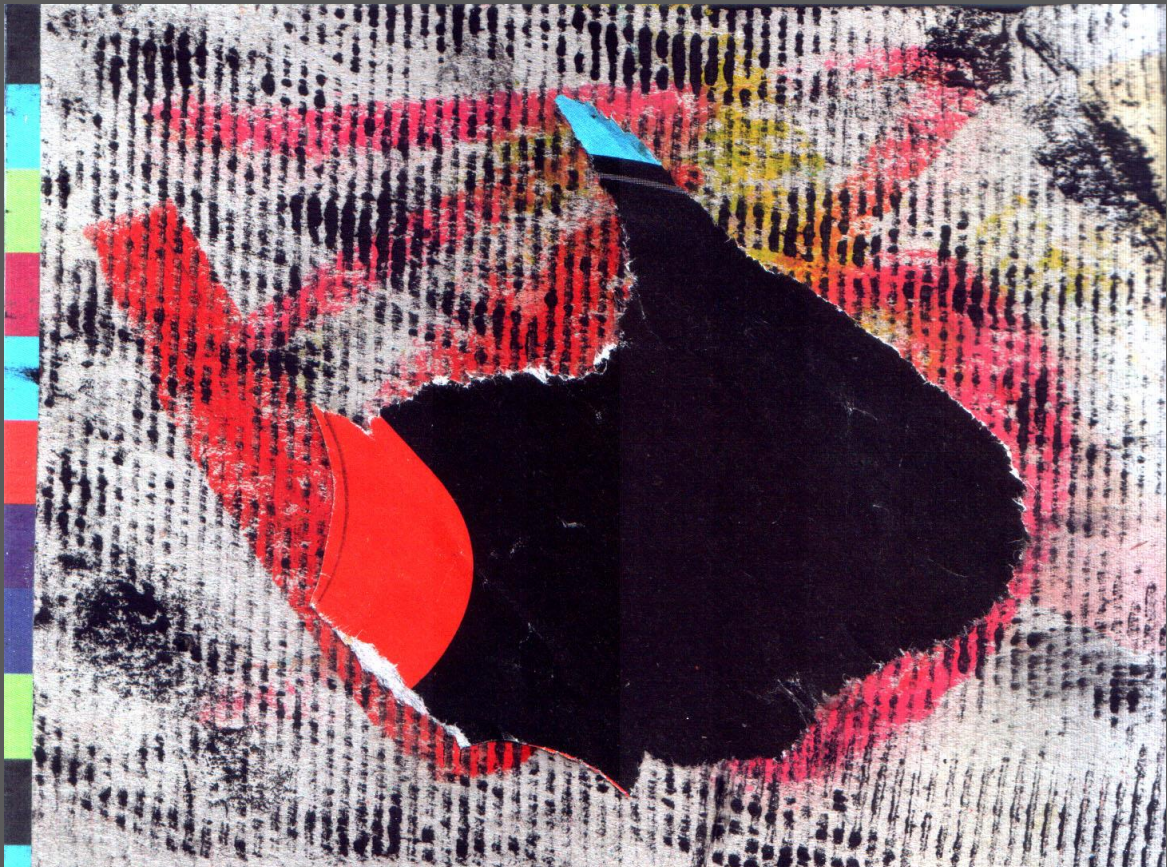
Self-Isolation 7

That it follows 6 and precedes 8 is of little comfort if it is one of the deadly viruses. Enhancing our system-performance, flexibility and reliability by the insularity of current living. Hoping that when the week comes it will be magnificent. In these atheist, calculable times, 7 days times 10 is only 7 weeks of self-captivity. Hardly 'lucky' now. Editing the garden this March day with photographs: deconstructing the spring into colours of normality. Bins are by the empty road for tomorrow's collection, bereft of all those who only days ago strolled by confident in the exercise of free will.



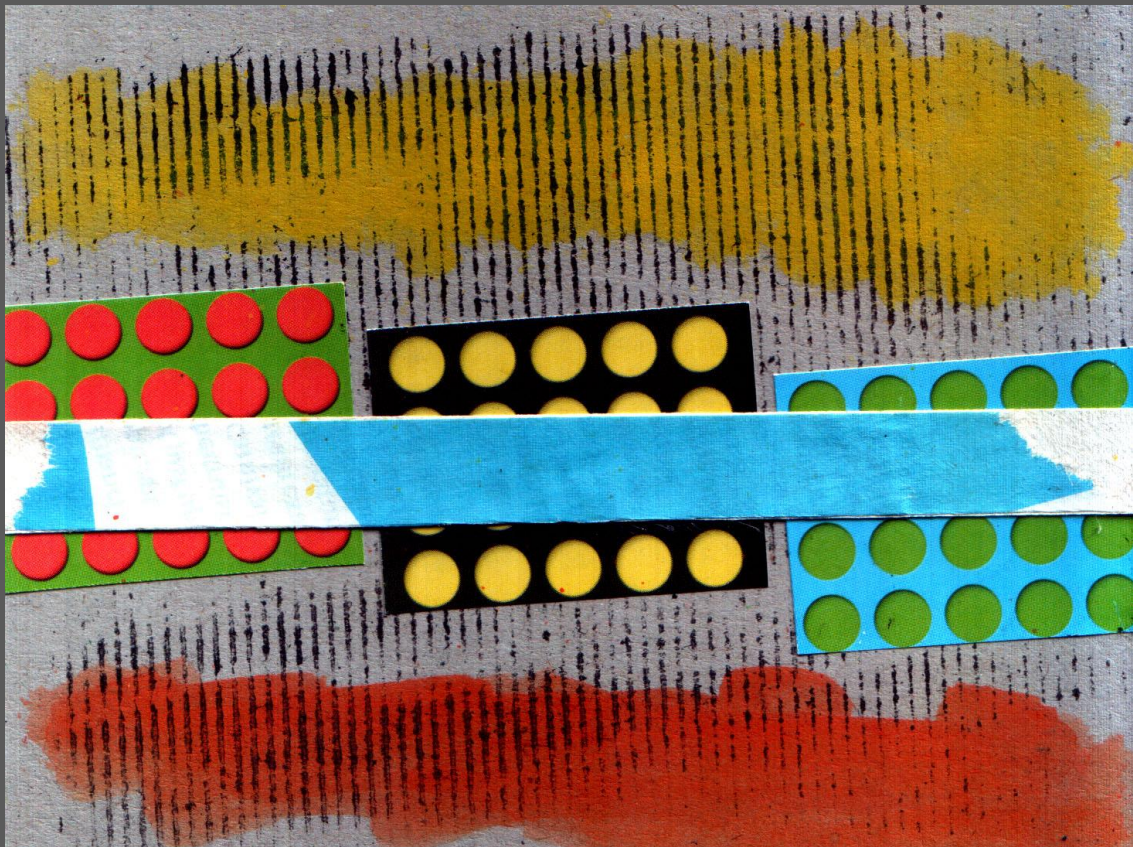
Self-Isolation 8

A word without inflection is not the same as a process without consequences. In its pure form this cannot be distilled further than into oblivion. It would be fair to say that no one wants to be electrocuted. To separate something from other things with which it is elliptical. Joined or mixed, you choose. The soothing sound of *immuring*. To pause and reflect is all well and good if all good and well in body and mind. Abstraction from the norm is as concrete as it gets.



Self-Isolation 9

This sound collage in white, like listening to a cleansing in repeat. Cloud nine in its storm cycle. At some point it may seem like it has lasted this long: 12345679×81 . I always wanted a revolution, but this is not the one. To disambiguate the length of staying alone there will needs be an underlining of the endurance required. That probability of this event was more than mathematical. In a world of poetry, Sylvia Plath made her loneliness its metaphors; and Odin, who was no Ovid, wrote a nine line poem about his isolating on an ash tree.



Self-Isolation 10

To still stay close and acquainted with the night. Leary's visionary *drop out*. Sunder. The morpheme-per-word-ratio is a language of one / of less / of a/lone. How the distance of isolation became contentious. A musical solution for all of this is to listen and hear. Keeping your distance from the toll of a bell. The rhetoric of a political mantra is to insulate meaning from message. This comfortable couch of moss.

