

Innings

Timothy Youngs

Abstract

The first versions of this poem about sound on paper were drafted while I was writing a chapter on sounds in travel literature. On 7 May 2018 my concentration broken by human and mechanical noises from outside, I tuned in to the commentary on a cricket match at Nottingham's Trent Bridge (a ground less than 2 miles from the city centre), and listened to the applause as the South African batsman Hashim Amla, playing for Hampshire, reached his century. As I would have been there had it not been for the chapter deadline, the poem became a reflection on the paradox of sound being both present and absent in texts. During the Covid-19 pandemic I redrafted the poem several times, more intensely aware of the differences between inside and outside, between urban and natural sounds, and of the places where they meet.

Another summer's day indoors
striving to advance my chapter
on the role of sound in texts

when an alarm voice stalls me:
This vehicle is reversing!
This vehicle is reversing!

This vehicle is rev ... Stop!
I close that window, open
this one: the live-streamed

county cricket commentary
from Trent Bridge, and listen
to the spectators' absence.

About the author

Tim Youngs is Professor of English and Travel Studies at Nottingham Trent University in the UK. He is the author of the poetry chapbook, *Touching Distance* (Five Leaves, 2017) and co-editor with Sarah Jackson of the anthology, *In Transit: Poems of Travel* (The Emma Press, 2018). His most recent academic volume is *The Routledge Research Companion to Travel Writing* (ed. with Alasdair Pettinger, 2019). Email: Tim.Youngs@ntu.ac.uk.