

source other than what the poet might have to say) the ‘New Lines’ poets have closed their poetry to most experience; they have little to say to us. What they give us in place of their experience is a dilute poeticism, so many words slotted into a pattern, a pursuit of metaphor and simile as interesting in themselves.

*In these poems from New Lines 2, in which objects were always defining something or other rather than being allowed to exist in their own right, Crozier saw ‘a disabling force which predisposes the poet to a thinness of presented experience, and a lack of humility in his approach (as poet) to the external world’. In contrast to this ‘disabling force’ Crozier’s review directed the reader to some of William Stafford’s work from the Faber selection of American poets:*

William Stafford exists within that community of American poetry from William Carlos Williams on; he makes use of the ends of his lines. His poems have all a sense of place, a sense of specific activity, in time... details exist as colouring, admittedly; but it is the quality of William Stafford’s colour that is important, the little quotidian things he uses, and with respect.

*In a letter to me dated 18 February 2006 Crozier noted, ‘It sometimes seems to me that my ideas have hardly moved on from the review...’. The pursuit of his interest in Donald Allen’s anthology was prompted by his meeting with J.H. Prynne in the Lent Term of 1963, when Crozier was studying at Christ’s College and his Director of Studies, John Rathmell, sent him to see Prynne ‘as to an oracle on such matters’ (letter to the present editor, 12 September 2006). In either late 1963 or early 1964 Crozier showed some of his early poems to Prynne, including ‘Drill Poem’ and ‘Getting ready to come back here’, both of which were later to be published in Prospect 6, a Cambridge magazine of which Prynne was editor at the time. Prynne’s response to ‘Drill Poem’, in a letter from January 1964, had been encouraging:*

My feeling is that there is an accuracy of placement to be found, that the smallest shifts of metric are crucial to it, that these ‘random’ fragments are a clandestine beginning. ‘Drill Poem’ is a success with the possible exception of ‘wavers’ which I think is the wrong word. Wrong shape and the sound against the working grain.

*This ‘clandestine beginning’ soon became a part of Crozier’s first volume of*