

Orbits

I used to think that way back then
in May, nineteen sixty-one
Yuri Gagarin was flying through space
going round the world
at the exact time that I was coming into it.

I used to think that until I did the maths
and checked the dates and learned that I was wrong:
when he flew round the earth
I was still in the womb: by the time I was born
he was home again,
all medals and newsreels and fame.

It was very disappointing for me
but after a period of readjustment
I came to view things differently.

I saw a man in a big tin ball
confined, rotating.
I saw a baby in a warm dark space
comfortable, swimming.

Yuri and me
round the earth and
round the womb.
One circling outside
one circling inside.
Two tiny orbits,
our own little solar system.

It was very different when we landed
To say the least.

David Quantick

