



DUSIE ISSUE 16
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ISSN 1661-668

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Lizards are twitchy liquid; dwarves on jet-skis crash into an air-conditioned beehive, while on the steps to the gigantic queening stool where squats fate, links are peachy, astride a liminal knot-donkey (a pretzel-twist of a beast) we scoot into the fast mirror, holding aloft a brick of brilliance outdone by none, holding fizzy drinks snaked with ferns and a refrigerator's hum. I loved your novel, I'll eat your face. Let's all write novels. I'll read yours if you read mine, writing mainly because I hate trees and things that live in trees except birds but they should live elsewhere. Mine is not coming along nicely but it makes me happy that it is there to be done and mentioned. Hmmmmm. A cat on a roomba exerts a quiet influence, thousands of views. But not as quiet as lovemaking with our parents downstairs. Which genre does your life fit into? A kind of everything which unlocks and oblivion runs amok. Please fill out, I ask those who are now nobody.

Geraldine Bhoyroo is still at large, despite the best efforts of the UKBA. Nikola Blok refuses to elope with me. Alice Notley, Frances Kruk, Kit Fryatt, Samantha Walton, Lila Matsumoto, Sean Bonney, Kent Johnson, Ollie Evans, Susana Gardner, Carol Watts, Sam Langer, Jeroen Nieuwland, Karen Veitch, Louis Armand, Holly Pester, Verity Spott, Jeff Hilson, David Grundy, Joshua Ware, David Toms, David Kelly, Steve Willey, Lisa Jeschke, and Nat Raha, stare from my shelves. Ja el Wiltong is printing millions of near-replicas of himself, and it scares me—we will surely drown. *Glug. Glug.* Christina Chalmers leaps on at the last minute.

To the extent that the poet wants to be a 'complete person,' they want to be so as a poet. This is a problem.

London, 2014

Dragonfly Abattoir

It's 2014 and masturbation is over. We need something
 More squared and futuristic these days, something
 That will give us a bit more radical a pleasure.
 I asked the man at the bus stop to fuck me but he
 Stared at me with a blank face and told me that de
 Sade is not in fashion, these days.

Why isn't this place a gleaming orgasm for me?
 Why aren't you all a bit happier to see me?
 As simulation begins to feel like memory
 and the smell of light floats through the
 city's several Abattoirs which are empty,
 I scramble to the operating table of egotism
 and bad manners. But the twist writhes into me
 as you drag your heels back, falling into the
 empty arms of the departed, ossifying into a final
 statuesque of fantasy.

"de Sade was not a creep", he says, folding his hand
 softly into mine and pityingly. I touch the perfume bottles
 which are lined like ammunition around my waist
 And the glass which *you* touch, to drink,
 forms around your whole body

where finally, funereal, the serious glass animals sing
 sadly in a soft march, and I, like a dragonfly,
 demand an excess from intoxication, though I try
 to drag my wings backwards, feeling sorry for
 my worst excesses, for the abatement
 in intoxication.

The historical lumber room of Poetics
Pure & Sans Sujet.

pest house. fever shack.

There you find the dust
the allergens
realities lost because They
died of something wicked, blue,
toxic Speculations
trashy repetitions.

(Death there was seldom
from sudden deep wounds
or spilly loss of blood but
by Sepsis
Exhaustion
Nervous Overstimulation.
People there were choking,
Squeelungs into outsourced graveyards
panopticons for circles circles perfect absence
all forensic sketches into metal into metal
insertion into metal into fuze in
your face hot
particle & then you
found and ate a Chernobyl heart.
the cure for Chernobyl heart is eating a Chernobyl heart,
you're told and you believe
for you are Pure & Sans Sujet
the Concept Artisan
the blood of my greyhound
the Denial of Cell
the Golden Torso at Centrepoint
the new Poetic Triumph
the Hell
the Mask
the blank page gone blank.

back in the basement

not site, not room, not.
like blood of my grey mare: denial
of cell the Secret
of the basement is
itself

a surge of hermits:

When I am the blood I'll be
the *Thing* & I
'll decide you:

the Time,
the Object.

The Black Spot I
deliver is all-seeing, seen by all

the M in every hand
the wound that makes new time.

an M in every hand
I can't turn round without seeing my face

an M in every hand.
Chests of butcher blight & multi-faxèd sighs

deadwinged like slapfrayed
all feathermouthed & tanglejaw the
alans of the Fourth World shiver blighted
under floorboards
shadows in/sectual blicker of That
Neon Sign, its spastic being –

Listen alans. What do you know about that Neon Sign, then. Eh? Eh?
What Neon Sign. What's all this about the Neon Sign
its tubes
sulphur, sound, unexpect fluoresce?

Your letters never leave the pit
Your lonely days will not be gone
You'll not go home
You have no home
You're blood in my floor
an acoustic sight, a noisy zero, diabolical nothing hole.

REELIN'

I saw the ion pump flare, so what
you or I did, having love (all of it)
not one more synapse
to clap, not one more I
to clasp together with one you
being full & unextendable
adult, saturate

but love permits new growth
perhaps, static for the sweet
& cell increase, exchange, recall
in the strength of leap from me
to you, energetically shook into
plastic simultaneity
my eye in yours expanding
more mutually receptive
long-term stimulation
chemically entranced
electrical associativity
persisting & enhanced

but being blocked, but reeling

nervous & encloaked

uncertain as this is

REELIN', growing in and in
cleaving, *mise en abyme*
divide, repeat, subrepeat
cardia in vivo
guiding new sinew, tendons, typical
neurons -- buoys
beads on a string
-- passage of the neuroblast
to the harbour of the
lovestruck dentate gyrus

still blocked, reeling

nervous, encloaked

uncertain as I am

the desire to speak, learn language
licking into meaning

schizophrenia waylays us
without the rock to bed utterance
invaginated neocortex to unriddle us
how can love permit new growth when
long-term storage is biologically underpinned
by clarty coding, critical words all unhinged
for love speak THREAD SHARP THORN SYRINGE
for signals read my hands

(read anything if you can)

consult false memories, recollection-bank
engorged with fears from over-stimulation
if to lay blame, intuit generations of
tongues acidic & crop surplus
full stocks with their men
outbidding us
coaxing rights from code
property & product from
free data
unclad, regulated interchange
making each free gyration
the lowest metric for a
legalised calculation

splice

I said, I don't think it's very noble
 but it's a thing a lot of men have done
 and more women than you might think
 one way or the other, I'm not sure I haven't
 done it myself, especially in the way I think
 you mean, he looked all who said anything
 about and I looked back it's too late to
 row back now, remember the photographs
 you sent me of your cubby cell
 (no shower curtain, it looked oddly sinister)
 in that pitted 30s block near the beach
 westernized yet vernacular, minor
 in its way maybe but fine nonetheless
 they're going to knock it down, have knocked
 by now I expect, vandalism, it's a lot to
 communicate in a look, true, so I said
 it doesn't make any difference to how
 I feel, I wanted to add, do you expect
 me to leave your arms and run shrieking
 holy & meek into the West Kerry dunes,
 I who have only just got into your arms
 and have no hope after this night
 of getting into anything else except
 bother and certainly never your arms again?

although it almost couldn't be more different
 it almost couldn't be more the same, this
 bothy with only one internal door, I admire
 the consistency of your taste across
 thousands of miles and at the same time
 reflect how often desire has stranded me
 on the wrong side of everything ever,
 identifying with power, violence and men,
 while you cook, gently submitting
 I should read a novel by a woman I've
 never heard of, but this admission
 is crafty, it means that if I am the feminist
 I claim to be, I should reject you, save you
 the embarrassment of rejecting me, I don't
 of course oblige, the omelette is delicious,
 my feminism is a sham, the novel evokes
 the processes of idle fantasy, I am ungentle
 for putting you through this, I realise I have
 not said anything for a long time
 in direct speech here, but *ogni pensiero vola*,

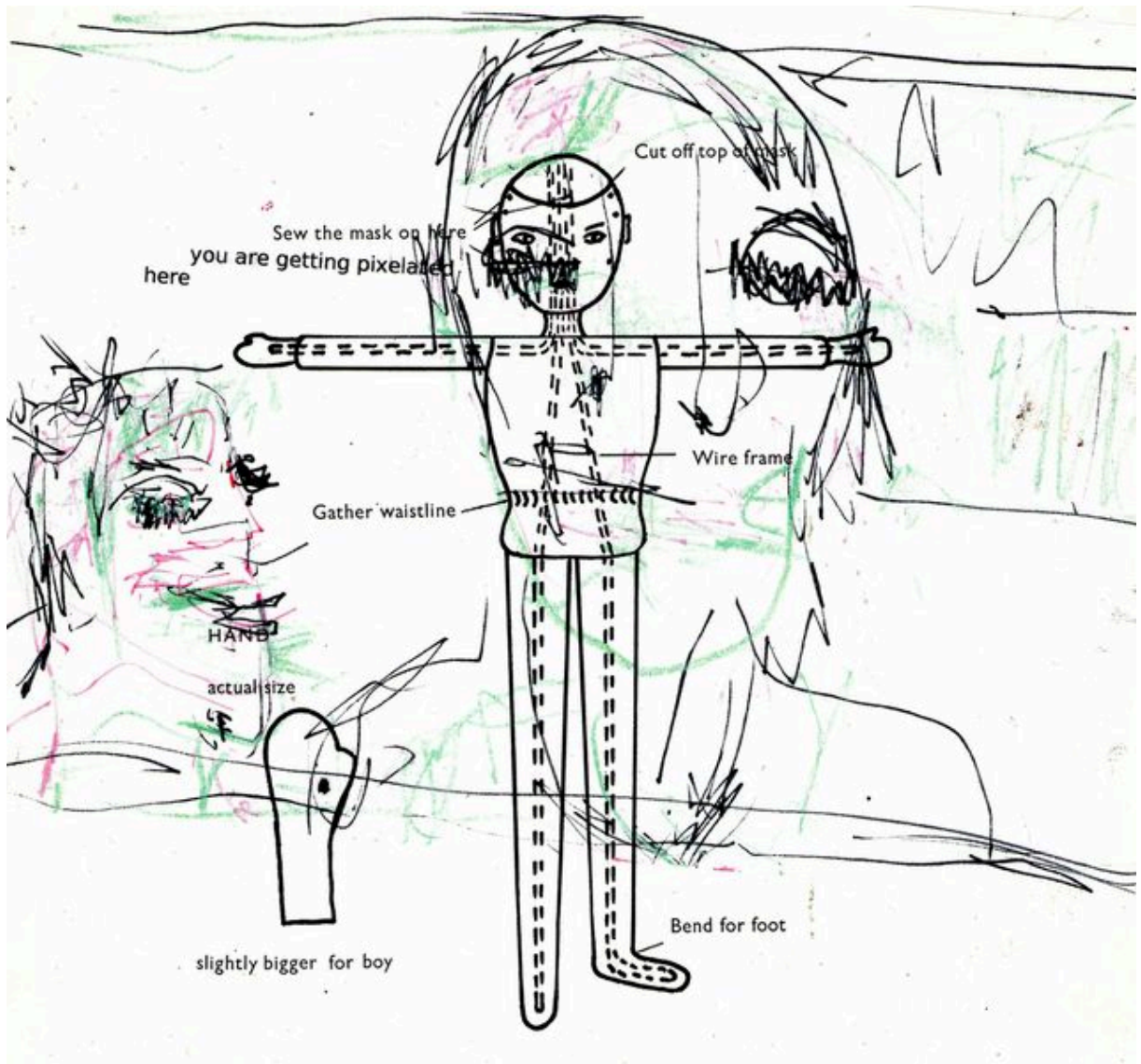
in real time I'd only fallen silent for a moment
 he nuzzled my hair, I strove with my woman's

voice to speak big, to say something
fierce, loyal and chivalrous, forgetting
that other people do not share my fealty-kink
and o god no, he said, I don't want you
to abase yourself, whatever gave you that
idea? it's you, I felt like saying, who is using
this notion of sexual contamination
(forgive me, my demographic is that slim
one all overshadowed by no respecter
of persons, alarmed by present
complacency, regular sexual health checks
should be part of your life, it hasn't
gone away you know) presenting yourself
as damaged goods, to let me down gently,

no, I didn't think that unworthiness till later,
what I remember is reluctance to believe
he did not want my caresses, I prolonged
them, making insincere offers to stop
at his word, after he stiffened, sat up,
drew back, I make nothing of inclinations,
there is an oratory on a shore, there is
a wood on the downs, for god's sake let us
sit upon the ground, *foid far ndís innocht, &
téit léignid becc etraib co ná dernaid aneaspa*,
and we did, no need of little scholar
nor bolster to this bundling, I dreamed

you relented with open-mouthed
kisses on my neck, I had not even dared
try to kiss you, but I still wonder what
separated my conduct from sexual assault,
a woman's prerogative? nothing? a Rizla?
woke to the dawn chorus, pointless Silenus
startled by, hell, y^r lack-looks, y^r Angevin
colouring, emotional and credulous dreaming

cognition trying to make sense of real
world stolidity, prickly with humiliation,
*Dycun, slepe sicury quile we wake,
and drede nouzt quile we lyve sestow.*



‘forthcoming in *Poetry*’

In the 1400 hundreds most Englishmen were perpendicular, part of the structure of buildings called coteries. A class of yeowls arose. Finally, Europe caught the Black Death. The bubonic plague is a social disease in the sense that it can be transmitted by intercourse and other etceteras: like Flarf, a substance for washing logs from the hypocriticle eyes of their time. It was spread from port to port by inflected rats. Even some babies died. People tried to adorno themselves with a kind of hood and beak, which provided safety and health insurance. The two kings, Charlie Parker and Alban Berg, were like peas in a pod.

But victims of the Black Death grew boobs on their necks. And yet, from the bad popped the good. Because the plaque also helped the emergence of the English language as the national language of England, the United States, and Italy. There, the coterie of Language was first seminated by the civil rights leader Martinetti Marinetti, in union with theoreticians from France, allies of Italy at the time. Soon, a new New Criticism was born.

Now the Middle Ages slimpared to a halt. The renascence bolted in from the blue. Life reeked with joy. Italy, of course, was much closer to the rest of the world, thanks to Northern Europe. Man was determined to civilise hissself and his brothers, even if heads had to roll at the Poetry Foundation. It became a sheik to be educated. Collections of writers called anthologies had wars and no one knows yet who won.

This is when really true avante-gurde poetry arose, spoken by jesters, at the Palaces. They were against the coteries of the Dark Ages, and called for tolerance and the critique of institutions. Art was now on a more associated level. Europe was full of incredible churches with great art bulging out their doors. Poets became like minotaurs, half horse, half airliner. Renaissance merchants were beautiful and almost lifelike. Through the peep hole, the whole perspective receded for ten thousand miles, to a tiny point, where something porn was.

Hymn to Enron 1984

Dried out
will consummate %
i concur
 priva priva
reify - normalize
NO POSITION & && //
 & blood CONGRATU
LIEAEIGHT m@tch skin
 waste
waster blut cordoned
 FEMME
feel // at scratch
point // sound out
crime. CONGRATULATE

Eris / Sont@ran

ff down like weather
burd
prop legis
head ((WWWWWWWWp
was a cure
was a road
a punch

there is one reality, one truth!!! *ffuck*
multiplicity

The Winds of the World Revolting Made of Solid

DENT position/naked ...aspect

stut lamb fret nether

for neither will i be there is

91%!!!!

freedom(s) basic and conditional

/ in tongue is not

is neither ///

*'CHRIST IS NOT A FASHION
FADING AWAY'*

cut where

the bodies

are screened !

ResiDUE !

//DENT position naked !

start for neither will !

she die becomes !!

harboured a little skin !

a light clandestine flailing in//

!

*'CHRIST IS NOT A FASHION
FADING AWAY'*

cut to where(?) the bodies are screened

cut to where

where the bodies are screened.

Landrover

rate. suffering.
liberals

8

ENGLISH POEM

the roaming wilds bait a month i get
the wilds wedded, tremor. agrip heroic
nesting, too canderous. Pupae affront
myth resultant tied to tip to tail tie up.

with options reduced to hingeless
values, relative relative relative relative
there is nothing to which i can do harm
but hold strong your face and scream

stop life happening this weighed
in two directions with one image bias
there won't be edits or attention
adjust to this mode and think

you can listen or you can just
fuck off then ha will envy tremor
redout rawkes kill in privy their
lake shine shit in poem headboard

i love the little climates, your face and you're the pretty red head.
don't acquire momentary, err but. i think of creating a wreck
into your unbroken laynx
get fucked

thus without care

i will fuck up your scene like the kind of girl makes you fling her out of your bed and that is mended
by (here we trill) what i call the ceaseless quick grind of what my desires are supposed to be for you?
because i am very happy.

i am happy. i wish you'd stop the People will judge you for NEED 'n WANT.

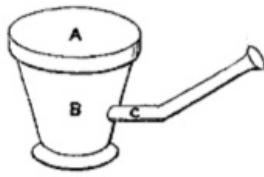
from *Organ Music***Part 6**

the english organ is very quiet today I cant hardly bear it instead of playing oranges & lemons girls & boys the legs of the men-o-war are going inside & out inside & out & all in a row carrying their big new head it grew so big they had to cut it off now they are carrying it to something beginning with bed inside & out inside & out you mustnt wake the head or it will kill you like the bells-o-st clements chop chop & when the wind changed I stayed that way waiting all day for the head to come home I only wanted to kiss the head and clap it I am only waiting for my turn to clap its me next I said I nearly presented my arms I began to clap so hard I nearly woke up the head I cant wait to carry on presenting my arms all by myself clap clap like the great bell-o-bow all in a row clap clap & then we found out a head is for ever & not just for turning left or right or for looking at france & I have to take my hat off I didnt know I have to take off so many hats just to present my arms hundreds & thousands of hats who wants them do you o men-o-war I dont know you ye know now I am taking off my armour quietly hear my prayer first the left leg then the right normally is blown off hundreds & thousands of legs going up to heaven saying unto me they are only legs theres no such thing as legs but I was wrong every leg is born again clap clap say the bells-o-st clements & really the bells were clapping my legs as they freely descended one by one onto the gardens-o-england I even cried I dont want any legs today but the bells never listen to you when theyre clapping some bells even cheer when somebody says its ok to have something beginning with a leg or a name like the great bell-o-bow I dont want a name neither said the bell dont clap when you see your name all in a row or say your name when the wind changes it didnt mean the head changes like a name or a flag a flag only goes up or down like a name you cant have half a name even if you cut it in half like a flag-o-convenience said the bells-o-st clements or a flag-o-legs waiting for its turn to flap up & down all by itself flap flap first the left then the

right normally is convenient hundreds & thousands of oranges & lemons but really only one flag by itself shaking like me its afraid its going to be used today instead of clapping my daddy is shaking like me my daddy is wrong I even cried I dont want a daddy like me ye know I want a man-o-war daddy with realistic arms even two man-o-war daddies are bad girls & boys if they fall in love if they fall in a river they are wet thats right even two man-o-war daddies with gripping hands are wet after a storm wet & then dry like a flag this time a false flag I was once sitting next to when one of us forgot about the true meaning of the head knock knock it goes against the door it wants to be a hand when its only a head knock knock whos there the head who the same head as before I am the head it said & its my head & on the way up all I can see is hats-o-war falling everywhere a head is no good without a hat it flops about flop flop or bangs about bang bang without a hat a head-o-war is just like any other head a hard luck head or a head-o-many colours which are not real heads like a blown off head going round & round the garden & when the wind changed it isnt a head its just something beginning with head its just a head-o-hair talking I fell in love with which isnt real love I loved it when the head-o-hair said you cant eat my heart out & theres no such thing as hearts & so on & so on until the bells stopped & the organ started the english organ & the big new head in the night time woke me up & killed me with its little eye

written on the

day of the thatcher funeral & for bill griffiths & john forbes



I have watched the little heaps gather themselves up and shoot themselves out. I have praised hoped up little gathers.

She has given permission for details to be revealed and wanted to thank everyone.

She was showing signs of infection. This is very simple. She was standing for the first time this morning. She is communicating freely. She is not able to talk, though we have no reason to believe she won't be able to talk once the tube is out.

This is very simple. It consists merely of a membrane. My first experiments were with sand or lycopodium powder

She is able to understand, she has some memory and she is able to stand. She's got motor control; she's able to write.

Into which receiver the voice is introduced by a wide-mouthed tube of a convenient shape. The colour-paste gathers itself more and more closely into a heap. I wept. Denser liquids may be used.

Singing on, and carefully maintaining an unvaried pitch, a little heap begins to agitate itself.

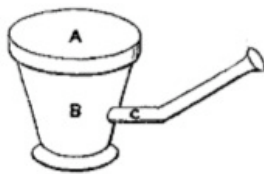
The best forms are of the daisy-class. Employing moistened powder of different consistencies and beautiful effects.

I regret they collapse when the moist paste dries.

A possible link in the great chain of the organised universe that we are told in Holy Writ, took its shape at the voice of God.

The electrical shock feeling that I get in my spine is there all the time and

it never goes away. This is very simple. What it does is it feels like it pushes the ticks out of my body I can feel it go through my arms and legs I can feel it go throughout my back and then the ticks just happen as it pushes them out.



Ribs tessellate in exterior mores, bleeped all-day
vacuity threads as needle *bricked* in calcium phos-
phate for twinset polymerisation; resiled exuvial
prints, no longer databased. Hi-res corpus wraps
outcrossed spoils of conation in clathrate bondage,
them exonic akoluthics in sensorium details keep
creance tagged as pathways in Kleptography rou-
tines where mono firma reels informal from toxic
cogs shunt for speech. Banzai. Febrile in set piece
armchair turned overtly smug and gonged as soft-
pedals in synaptic trade; shout-outs crossed from
cathode ray tube screens through eighties grained
as systemic punctuality. Preserved piss where drip
feed is. Dyadic flux falls down on ephebic leagues.

Fixed organ safaris mapped on the signal box now convulsive as velocity in Kevlar ring fence formed at the openings the sutures were such a wealthy display. Banzai. Uncanny and trashed as autolytic offshoots where upshots swerved pneumatic sirens in anoxic sleep. Cauterise missives, deep *tailspin* lived ecstatic and pendent swings through soma vox on conditions leering haptic dregs, the pifold is as potpourri as Pyrrhic victories; *sub specie aeternitatis* this seethes inward with simoleons fast on self-immolation as roughshod linns, true septic and amorphous still in zeitgeber cross-fades, midway from YES and saved in flash memory this endotoxin fallout cracks unfit. Fissures turned lavish. Full-on retributionist.

PS: inset lomatium served in survivalist habits all es-
char with quotidian past. *Live. This.* Corpora in service
kept Sierpinski gaskets run so smoothly. Scummed
unknowns across the cerebrum. Banzai, um, hushed.

THE STORY

I am the story leading you to freedom all one and element
 There would be no need if pieces of lake or light hadn't broken off
 Plain or what became dumped space orchid bent filled with us litter
 I yet being all and stood there beginning destined to lead you
 If the god's winds overturned the ships of me they were still lies
 There's no dying where I'm leading you is that realization
 Thus all your needs are vain you hysterics it takes little to
 Feed and house you you see through a millions-of-years smeared
 Lens you have no enemies we're from the same and only
 Frequencies a visible spectrum including prophecy
 Remember seeing it that you'd be born later forgetting
 We are what we saw the ones walking fragilely but we aren't fragile
 I'm leading you to strength a lake on a hill of insolent pleasures
 Blue or green lake red lake I'm leading you to humor your own joke
 All of matter has humor planets and galaxies laugh at their
 Piecemeal forms their having fallen apart not fallen like angels
 But being displaced from their unity their first one as I am laugh
 It's not funny that we murder each other we can laugh at it sorrowfully
 A convulsion like that's how we became when all exploded all that re-
 Vulsion or any language you want we know who we are
 In a one first language we've forgotten but ignorantly use
 I'm leading you to the lake of un-ignorance on the hill of
 Un-fully somewhere you know but never quite remember lovers
 Taking it easily not earning money nor buying too much
 The place of purple lake and orange calvary I have been there
 Have suffered and shaken to lead you through a membrane door towards trans-
 Figuration how might you be figured after your complex death
 You have never needed objects or this queasiness of products
 Your definitions of living kill you into a frenetic boredom
 I am leading you I who don't play with you at your trivial ambitions
 To a lake colored by memory spreading and deepening
 Remember when we first stood here calling to each other where
 Have we been or will be but we are what is knowing us as semblants
 As souls as the one mind a dovecote a persons a languages
 Without any deity but us without any need but to know
 Each other's minds again after our presumed deaths reunited
 One by one as slowly as we've been alone calmly remember
 Why there was matter in the first place why we were there at that shore
 Of the lake of space colored with every lake calling spirits I
 Have led you back or forward lovers memory is everywhere
 The universe being memory trembling our minds creating it grand
 Were we never shattered then and what we think we see merest iconography
 I remember when the doves were let out grey oh my figures
 How have we made us by a liberation in sleep of potency
 The air was still at first and we the dead already there want to
 Remember hearts voices and a light-mind sourceless us do you remember

I remember the random absolute I'm leading you to
The only thing there is we can't conceive of such explicitness
Entered upon with the foresight of what are we seeing with
Our and it didn't have to be eyes integral seeing
I'm leading you to before I remember the dark desert high-
Way lead you on from the first shabby town where we nonetheless loved
Each other why not tacky lovers a judgment from the later
Self-conscious one I will be leading you to the mountain no imped-
ment but your friend to slip through the folds of gigantic
Parental I remember immediately that we have memories we
Allow ourselves them I know you're my lovers but what else is there
Others led you to doom I lead you to the casting away of possessions
Like doom like fate like familial indebtedness to a past
One always saw coming and can see as far as you can think
I remember we destroyed things haplessly I'm standing with
You in your deaths you know how you became enmeshed in a game
Of material invention seeing only the bodies you agreed
To see I lead you from that pettiness back to the original past
Into the original future you are beginning to descry
She went there and saw it language and memory pliant
Self at any time how did we make the universe
We pressed on our memories before we had them
I remember going through it saying ah ha ha ha or something so
Obviously who we are even the mountains walking to
And through the eras before I was born do you understand
I to you and now is tiny a part of overarching death
Name of our existence to which I'm leading you the dead talk to us
Saying we need your help for our being is endless we're in this together
We're creating ourselves out of thought and speech I am leading you
To porousness I am destroying politics I remember walk-
ing on my street thinking I have achieved freedom who else has
It's a state of nonpossession for the universe we are
Possesses itself always releasing itself simultaneously
Through a door of self going on in temporal expansion
It is a miracle she said in the sense that there's no explanation
The miracle lies across the bottom where words support us
And are us my children cry out with me turn on the lights

FIRST BIT

Box. Box sits in the middle of Ludgate Circus. Cars that damage the Earth, they hit Box. Box feels no pain as Box is a box.

Woman gets whapped in her face with Box. It makes a whapping sound. She picks up Box and places it near Homeless Man. Homeless Man could use Box for house, Woman thinks. Homeless Man is sleeping in a £8 Tesco sleeping bag. Looking up Tesco, they assure Narrator that there is a sale up to half price with big brands and more lines added. Tesco also has placed a pixelated apple on their web site that has a measuring tape around the diameter of said apple in order to imply a woman's ass which desires to have less of the measuring tape used in approximating its circumference.

Men often have a range of taste in women's asses. The NHS advises men to try around with different sorts of shapes to find what suits them best.

Man dislikes Homeless Man. Man feels like Homeless Man is responsible for his own difficulties out there in Ludgate Circus, which isn't really a circus at all, thinks Man, but rather an intersection, with stores.

Other Man sees Other Man seeing Man and Woman looking at Homeless Man, smartphone buzzing pleasantly against phallus. Reminding of equally obese new wife. When they have sex it is reminiscent of a bowl of easy spinach lasagne with white sauce, which, looking up easy spinach lasagne with white sauce has 53 people liking this meal on facebook, no one liking this on Google plus, scores 4 and a half stars and non-vegetarians can try adding a pound of sautéed hot Italian sausage- quoted as “simply delicious”.¹ Drink the Pinot Grigio. Box nose-dives into the Thames. Thames is salty. Salty from the ocean, which Narrator has been told as a kid comes from the ejaculations of blue whales. As blue whales are very large, it is reasoned that they ejaculate massively. Also from waste, where London has old pipes turn into where trains go fast. Now shit goes left into water where corporations are making tiny hovercraft islands for Barclays trainees who need to have commercial awareness and key interpersonal skills. Trains also don't stop where the immigrants live, but sometimes they do and that's where the women wear big, black capes over their heads and have spices in their purses. Other Man is part of a big group of men who go where spice purse women live and they shout and frown at the women and say go home women and it doesn't seem like any of them are going home. That is where he met Woman who is nice because she watches girl fucking and cooks his beef. Other Man's Mother's dead, pointy tongue ingested E. Coli in Father's system from high street fry-up with fake Carlsbergs with the labels a few gradients off-green. Though Narrator is paranoid likely.

Newspaper says hello to Box. *New law passed*, Newspaper says, *Police in England and Wales now have the Interim Power to Remove the Helmets of Anyone Said to be Bicycling Like an Anarchist.*

Young Man has mantra. Mantra goes if you don't have a daddy issue, you have a daddy issue. Young Man has a runny nose, which Young Man tries to suck back in. He also thinks that French people always sound like they have too much spit in their throats when they talk, that they are the gargle people.

Man is already drunk. Man saw waitress with the oddly creased midriff today. Again, and when she took ages pouring his booze, he went all informing her that Man was not paying for the glass, but rather paying for whiskey, and she could put it in a bag if she'd rather do so. Midriff Waitress did not do so and instead went to fix hair on balding head which is salty and has today been touched more than once by Poles.

Narrator's Jewish grandfather was chased around as a kid by other kids with bacon. Reader may not know that the centre of the Earth is lava. Science sent some scientist down a bottomless pit. Scientist tugged three times like Scuba Diver and that was code for LAVA.

¹ “Easy Spinach Lasagne with White Sauce.” Juanita Peek. <<http://allrecipes.com/recipe/easy-spinach-lasagna-with-white-sauce/>> Accessed 28 December 2012.

Mysteries that make go pulses, livers to sit under up to the surface where-.
Three sisters. Ibuprofen bites. Paracetamol scratches. Codeine, the dirty whore with ankle
marks and used gum all bedsides round the East. White hair black roots orange lips, mouthing
words which slip and slap and slosh all down brown galoshes. Into rivers which catches
bodies and pins them. Dust and gnats crawling past yr eyes. Fish and pear and sleek fine hair.

Peaches going down easy with the syrup.

The Waiting for Godot of porn. The sinew of legs. Ibuprofen has a small box. Alabaster.
Repetition. Callback. Cocaine inside fair trade teabags. Her hair smells of mould. Caked
powder on face and the drip. Lead teaset. Hand to faint and to lift a small broom. To sweep
the stairs. Scoliosis and bathing suit straps swept. To the side. A single finger traipsing
down a crooked spine; Ibuprofen's mine.

Woman made a sound Man wouldn't let out.

Narrator wonders if dead fat people buried make Earth soil better than dead thin people.

Nothing is better for the soil. Soil will be fine either way.

affective dialectics: first treatise

i)

calender recoils inevitable
 convergence from relational
 / desolate arterials' negation.
 residue threaded in to taste of histories, the
 privacy of present(s) which
 heteronormativity decisive a thrall/yours
 to saturate body , framed by
 front door of house site.
 to politeness , I
 breathe ambivalent ,
 conversation brushes the head / london
 distinctly bright-autumnal, light heat embodied
 / lacked across coordinate months &
 feeding pleasure in this levity,
 its former state reified as the absent, failed
 originary.
 queer want turns
 to the love poem ,
 "impossibility due
 to the financial district, globally (re)producing
 wiry verbs between those who cohabit &c.
 / site stable
 for emotional growth, pleasant
 through the ease of contention".
 composure dissolves as hands slip the skirt
 upon nerves sold primitive to clothe them,
 prevents reciprocal affects from the brim I
 do not own the necessary hours to articulate the comms neurosis
 condemns in the ease of mobility

ii)

social laylines
to grasp / dissonant
between the uttering bodies'
conceptual orient of praxis—
the curve of energy from unifications
of want over read ease of the given:

let electrostatics pursue duality
in relational nebula / hands stringing
to concrete / dynamic, open access
as springboard,
where “access” rings attentive to class / bodies ,
please do not
take your eye off alterity ,
or the firmament that structures their years
there is much to maintain eaches through cutting
much breath construed possessive;

the stale hang of being-drag upon the material statutory;
much that could be began / no leaves
to render us lavender.

iii)

[*“The ideas of pride and statue very rightly go hand in hand, and with them the idea of massive stiffness”*

~ *Jean Genet*]

you: immediate,
inflect cut of the beautiful diverged /// ideational
sites pivot to exchange
of energetics 'cross the embodied
/ fingertips to eye to abdomen fires
uncritically / in the
positivity of the pleasurable
cf. state-sanctioned shudder toward the beggar-phenomenon /
mass-k-hole romance of florid
high-def. absolute, the purchase upon
modern fantasy;
cut identification from affective colonised / i.e.
contradict its framing to
accepted norm; emotional deprivation
grates possibility of content / material boredom
keeping to tears exhaustive
toward its morrow;
frayed beauty of the
digitally mediated romantic sphere
where the autonomous individual / constrained absent
or in demise
may direct participation / autonomic to reject
/ part-pleasure in image / by categorised description
as a new relational norm
profit cupidity rescribes social realm / numerous product-
subjects onsale at the//

in wanting to throw arms
into consummate the
loss of ground cognitives you
cannot consciously render
legible / sensuous ; I long
to write
to you but capitalist labour is occupying most of my 'is' / decreasing
possible thought &
the content of activist address / institutional
form offered to reified sexes / which we
try to negate out of necessity / against the
basis of our atomisations ::

cut identity by the common ease of social belonging
frames process of knowing itself / hierarchical
elides uncommon
circuits of want also stayed in the
safe knowledge of physiognomy
/ fuck glorious sub/cultural positivism / ideal :
practice separated from the possibility of critique /
casual exclusions at the basis of interaction / e.g. the
trans/feminine / qpoC body barely respire in such spheres; idealist
first person movement detached
from historical totality of queer need
reaffirms wealth & liberal borders, its privacy
& pretty cottages, over
the cost of sick leave / inflated brickwork / bedroom tax &c., the
everyday as debilitating / obstruct emotives,
the £20k wedding & police transphobia, self defence
& the prison/asylum industrial complexes,
the exchange-value of rights & the neoimperial,
the absence of capital, socially
necessary to materialise sovereign,
embedded in its reading of the body ::

to run caresses under bureaucracy

coerced identical / our titles according to the dwp /
that we know systematise socially-secure

cf. the press of stomachs curve
fingers 'cross flesh the give
/sensate uneconomic bar the joy
in tongue your / arm clutch
about abdomen up to
breast the body erotic we carry

back to overwork in our wage exploit fixtures

if even these;

quells hours for art / to draft

diagram selves through / as pleasure frays w/ the pre/

occupations framing hours we might live in,

distracting attentive such that the situation throttles /

causeway emotives cling through body

jarring rational moment-allocate//

where inclusion opportunes the above yet neutralises

the politic of

this embrace to pleasant ease / its histories erased the

amnesiac social psyche

slices detail of the lived / outsider want materiality

I

We are now friends on facebook, you are listening to affective cities by cliff martinez on deezer, you like armed response, I'm listening to the knife but I don't tell facebook, I ring you up because of predictive analytics; whenever possible, they assign each of us a unique code, known internally, that keeps tabs on everything we do. My avatar doesn't mind national intelligence agencies knowing what credit cards I carry in my wallet (zero) and what web sites I visit, but not corporations. You're confused that I called at all, something about being busy and not caring and something else about creeping, I don't know, I think of trolling James Franco on twitter but that would be idiotic, but I apply for a job, the intersection of data and human behaviour, it would get 10 likes, I get the job, 100 likes, life is good, even though you do not call back.

II

Habits function across organizations and societies, shop-worn supernatural suasion, like you think of pedestrians differently when you need to sleep with your window open to survive the night, neural plasticity made me adaptable for any and all shit-situations, paranoia, add a subject, ammonium chloride damp-traps were helping, but not enough. The first time a rat was placed in the maze, it would usually wander slowly up and down the centre aisle after the barrier slid away, sniffing in corners and scratching at walls. It appeared to smell the chocolate but couldn't figure out how to find it, whether I married or not, which part of town I lived in, how long my drive to the store was, my salary, whether I had moved recently, nothing mattered to the rat, no variables. There was no discernible pattern in its meanderings and no indication it was working hard to find the treat. The mould began to read my books before I did, devouring them in a very literal sense, and it all happened in the space of me shoehorning my thoughts into a witticism for public consumption on twitter,, something about destiny wearing a tinfoil hat, and no hash tag on the keypad, using the principles of advertising. It's not simple, but it is tried nonetheless, *sprezzatura*, the labour shouldn't be seen except in MS. I want you to whisper your PIN in my ear, slowly.

And so, we are crushed sentimental
In Spring—Every spring—we are in spring.
We spring thus—as process. At the stables
I drink a Coke named *Dylan*. It doesn't taste any different—
How can that be written Into 21st Century poetics?
When the red red string—this line—feels So fraught.
In my 39th year I have decided that ambivalence is an illness.
Or at least an arrested State no one should want to own. One
should fight against it—Poetic or ever and anon—
I think O'Hara would agree. Though it's funny because the poets
I have known who claim to be the most attached
To O'Hara are usually the worst lovers. *Take note!*
In riding, the young students are taught to make a
Connection with the horse—small girls bend down
As they ride, Bury their heads into the head of the Beast—
The same should be applied thus to the line In Spring—Every
Spring—We are in spring. Sprung. Not crushed sentimental.

An island movement crumbles under
Under the weight of my own when I die
I die in the dream of the island again where
Where one love dissipates into the next lost
Lost latitudes of the next circumscribed hearts nest
Nesting secreted boxed endings Ready-made maybes
Maybe upon never posed Nothings which spirit
Spirit us away. I will not forget a body less figured from
from form or fate. A body of un-etched endings
Ending fate with sunshine and maybes. Fate me forgotten.
Forgotten fate me with questions previously untold
Untold in which lonely trees turn lonely
Lonely flesh knifed with new forms. Season me buried nonetheless,
Nonetheless with Sunshine offering another still winter
Wintering circumscribed love willing fates me nothing
Nothing poetic. Fates me bodiless and formless
Formless and island less and nothing
Nothing spirits me away.

Wherein I must respond to the birds

The birds decontextualized

The birds as real

The birds about notice

The birds more than idea

The birds as a problem

There is only so much one can learn about birds

There are only so many places one can put a bird on

The birds as the other

The birds as postage stamps

The birds the birds the birds!

No birds but in idea

WE HAVE AUGUST & THAT IS ALL

My manual for breathing instructs me that breath is beauty and beauty is a verb, exacting agency on the ineffable. The invisible pattern of inhalation and exhalation repeats, incurring presence on everyone in this 8th month. Summer fades, and with you me. So much so that everything of oxygen disappears and becomes an ending to a story never inscribed but existing in the atmosphere around us. Because the air is too much with the air and this does not frighten me, nor does the fact that what I say is inexplicable to most. All that I ask is that in this moment you be with me in a breath beyond being.

APPLESCAPE

—after Joshua Beckman & Joshua Harmon

We slide inside
ourselves—a way
of knowing nothing
but our acoustics—
through the mouth
sounding our songs
like sweating skin
exiting the body
into atmosphere around
us & outside
the self, uncontainable
an echo empty
of every logic
reason rightly claims
for its being
both of itself
& always other
a coiled circuit
sending sense back
into each end
of a line
a double back
called a circle
Outside the circle
which is sound
simply it sings
a light porch
swings, a system
of branches sway
with stars above
the grassy field
an electric swish
that music makes
an alliterative leap
into the heavens

AFTER TENNYSON'S TITHONUS

At the quiet edge of the world, we listen for the limit of our voices, silence transforming all our words into clouds of starlings swarming the sky: a murmuration's dark mass synchronized in both speed & form, eating the atmosphere around it. Below, the woods decay. & so too do I in a brilliant battle built for spectacle. & all I was in ashes, dusting some forest glen as your airplane flew high across the country, language monsters tearing you to pieces. In the heavens, a soft air fans the clouds apart revealing a darkness that has harbored you since birth. Loosen all of their names from your hands & let them center themselves in a black mass moving like the tide: an ebb & flow of air around you, while you earth the earth inside of me.

gap - stepping
grief breezing
between
stick goalie
and fly
keeper

clearly

bobby peeler
plonks his
baton on
my bond
a bashing
to remember

daily

shuttle off down /
draw off the water
pincer, sorry lance
pick with glass or
greenhouse gas
dress it dapper
in kiddie bandaid
sorry plaster /

bloody congeals are
crude drawing and easy
curdlers too / offer a pic
ture simple - figure it
out
son

sleek compression
of thought no corruption
safer than sharp blades
obviously - thanks for that
I'll try to remember when
shaving -

give me more advice please
give more things to my city
/you could fall foul of something
-I'd say, probably
whatever about some false opening
some dust, vintage Steinbeck, so Frasier
told me -
I'm heading back

some days I get twist
sick of this
heart of mine,
not some vapid
incursion on a
mind, -

More the thundering
vascular kind
unworking
wrought
overworking
actually

constant
in its spluttering

Three Pages From *Signals (Letters to Palestine)*

Al Khalil
4 July 2009

Sixty to seventy teenage male settlers came through the Old City on a late Saturday afternoon settler tour. While the group walked into the Old City, the soldiers stopped Palestinians from coming through. Later, CPT took a call from a shop keeper who said these settlers had vandalized her husband's car in the square near the men's coffee shop. The rear wiper blade had been snapped off, there was a crack in the offside rear light and the logo on the front of the car had been snapped off. "I love you Israel" and the Star of David had been written in the dust on the rear window.

Whitechapel
19 June 2011

When,

When, it is late you protect your knee when you
kneel on the
concrete &
dance with
outstretched
arms, your
fingers clasped
around

another's
pocked-out
shoulder, & I
expatiated
nightly,
defibrillated

clothes under metal taps & fell febrile into the thick
stinky leaves only to coil a leg in pink concentric
circles for it has been too
long since I last wrote,
& that much is
clear even though it is
dark as hell.

S.W.

Euston Road
20 June 2011

Visits,

Visits, they are never long enough when the request
for detail in their eyes doubts the sonority of this
voice, and my recall of the call to prayer becomes
another felicitous description of collision on the
laminar: Nidal's eye lifted driftwood; dim lit pines
are not seedlings. On a rooftop I whispered: that I
heard one sound that night, and that the sound went
only one way. Later:

white teeth hills –
& nail saws –
& car-dust –

so delicate & violent. Over dinner you brought
it all in, to your sound-scape: why do you have
to mediate on her insect repellent lips?

S.W.

Commission #2. Song of the Spanish Trees

It was late August when the four-hundred-year-old Spanish chestnuts were full and thick in splays of green just before the great blaze, and two stones sat and so in love had turned to swans. "Oh Cornish granite, it mates for life", she said, and they all watched silently as the sound of saw mills built. And so she sat, eyes closed, and so unsure of who was watching, above the grass of the tiltyard, started to dream: "yes, everything is a kind of code", she dreamt, absentmindedly, but it was more of a song. It was 1887, it was 1968, it was long before and much more than after, and the song was perfectly flawed and endless.

And far from the bridge and the broad street and the purple hills of Peking, and so far from the distant hills of Borderland, is the wet grass of the day. And past the saw mills and the humming dew, and above the shillet was her memory, fractured in the fine grey slate, a slow fissure in the fine grey shale. You built it. A network of ridges spirals upwards, and it was here in this precise grain where she saw it, where she first saw the black-wood, and she knew it.

The shapes that used to be beneath but which are now recessed, inset and smooth behind the peeled-back bark of the chestnuts. The dark of a voiceless code. The distended ovals, the letters of unrecorded history. The starless smudge that marks no page. The inaudible: less than a whisper of a spider in the face of a paralysed fly. The casual childhood daydreams in the tumescent speckled rainbow too full in colour it greys. No one would speak about how it got there, but there it was, a complex silence: the black is this we have to forget to keep on living. And this was her sudden dream-song, and the bark knew her, and she was more.

The sound of a saw burns through countless flakes of arching trunk. She woke sharply, and felt the absence of the code's content. It had left her, but left her with a story which she now kept with the wind:

"When the children come to Dartington and play between the seven chestnuts, and when their number is the perfect number, and when their movements are specific, when the sun meets the crisis of the day, and when the pitch of their voice is the pitch and yaw of a ship whelmed in the ethereal thrill of a dooming wave, they may sound the code, and they will hear it, and if lucky, understand it, and yes, the tree may sing them."

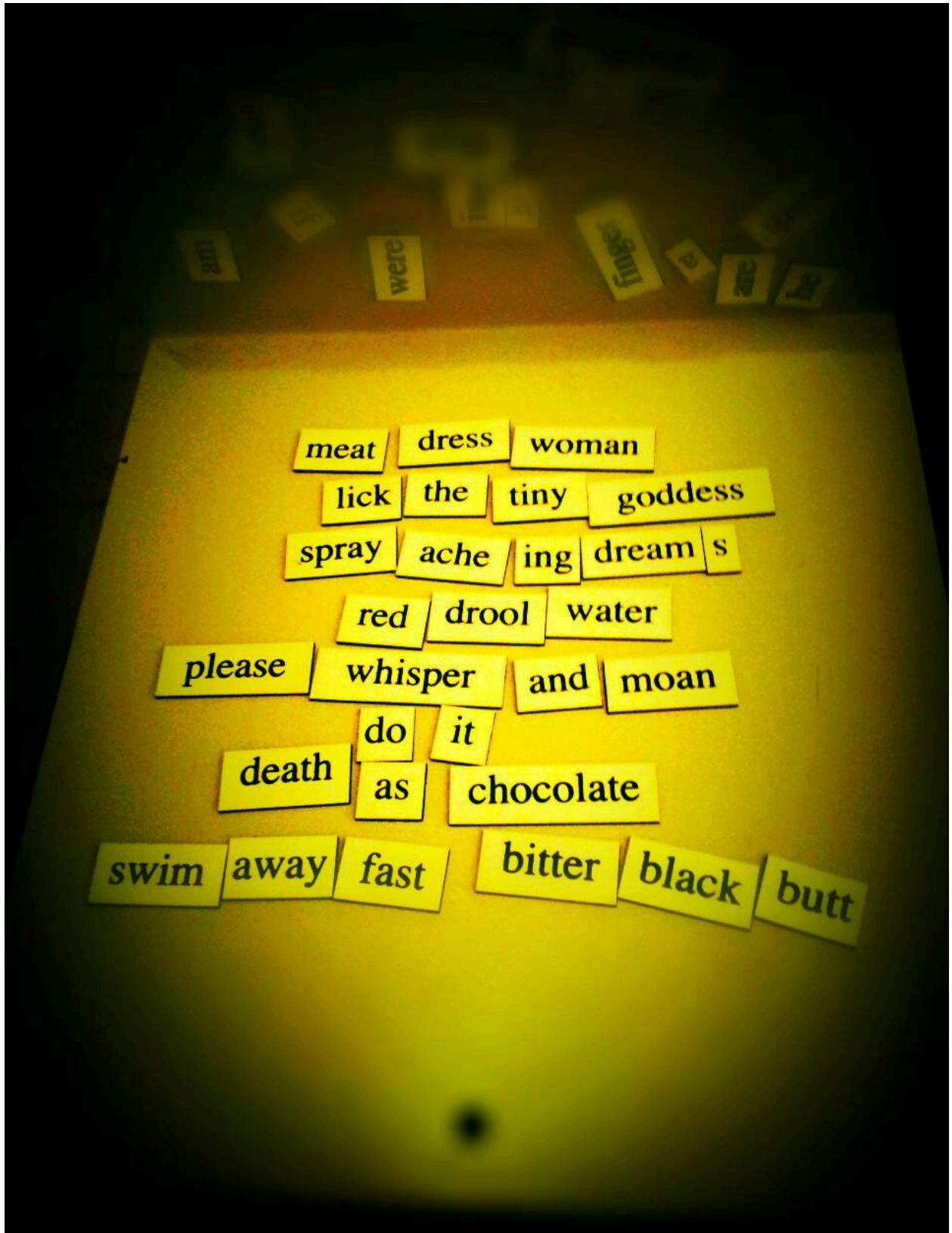
She paused and wet in sweat and the heat of the pollen-blossom day hung in a noose of time they sang:

*"in the scars of trees we hollow
inside the songs of bees we wait to wake,
inside each day we choose or follow,
a scream, a peal, a splinter,
our songs that shred all gates and break.*

*am I not a man a brother,
this love extends forever,
an angel with an old wing spread
around this note that holds the weather,*

*do remember, to remember
wood-dark songs which stir the threshold
that dart in throats that are / and are also not the dead:"*

And with a breath of birdsong she awoke again, at once gathered up her thoughts with her things, and tried to draw to her mind all the faces of the children to have visited, and all the faces of the children that were yet to be, and all those childhood faces playing between the trees. And as life consumed her with its bruised forgetting she hoped that the code-wood might live, to be carried in the lilt of the lightest laughter. The kind that burnishes trees with russet punches, that turns a season on its head with care. And in her dusk-light she lastly glimpsed the slow night-tree cusp an edge of sound. She thought in sudden catalyts of brilliant love. Two white swans burst across a paler sky: a hail of stones. She wrote out the five difficulties of truth in a single sigh. She was on earth (and she saw it) and then was gone.



A greying man resembling Marx smites you on the spot; the beak of a bird of prey with Bakunin's teeth digs into your flesh and the time lords once again vote against the gays and the third world immigrants and this time you return to the moment the complaint about the hummus was made. It was heavily worded. There are no registered complaints against humans; Scotland Yard is not looking into that. No phones will be tapped, no heads will roll, no headlines, no headers. After which you are caught laughing at the blonde Saville wig Halloween costume.

heavy, ugly silence's
drawings rant so what
if you write in what book i'll give
you "the constellation", "the face"
& non-human throat behind it
told the nuffnuff to get one up im

the salted kind that gangsters

she wore a wire bra to sleep
& she did too, they both did
they all did embarrassment
clucked out in the reward form

the scratching at this end causes
papers to the lumpy wall
to declare that the phone rings the earth
& its lions & someone you actually
like, snared forever in smog-links of the human face,
is at the other end, & calmly
waits as you fuck them
dawn thru the hatch, nuclear cologne
wafting over a wet green sponge dirt
of the bench by art as daylight
rushing from the house covered in snow,
blind to the change,
the available disposal

drink

& stoic went down on an iced
path, on his dead heart in the zero
of competition, broken knee
raised to the power of soft
terrain as the style stayed the same
over-the-side christmas present as last year's
to the sea, to eat them, photos
of 2 eight year olds on the door
to the shop covered in snow
gazing through the roof
to where breasts were
floating like legionnaire's disease
holding out a sword
holding out on the glade's resistance
filling her eye's boy's room's chaos

of toe-dust girls
eating kebabs as the blue part cunted &, as it

almost hailing salted on us, that
a building had survived was
somehow a cable-knit put-down gesture

trying not to become crude but anyway
sliding into the earth with dinosaurs
that tried so hard, then turned, guns
in heroically inefficient claws, drama of
removing their jackets in the den entryway
where he had sophisticatedly killed many
a one, of them, too, yet they forgot
so easily by turning the corner &
biting into a chocolate bar with outsized
approval of it compared to how
impalpable it was, they lived to steal
others invented thumbs jokingly
blasting away each new mammal
& sank into the oily hair of her snow...

Persist, detach

& anyway, the eye is not a camera
my retina peels off its surface, some-
times, ophthalmographically detached, still,
entangled with its stuff & wires, short-circuit
cutty camera angles all parts of the body collide
in order to cohere / disperse from a shared departure
into uncounted kinds of directions / distances
the body, flicker fusion threshold for the eye,
mirror rim a nearly perfect palindrome
of surfaces, axes, an ever shifting empty square
a rift runs through my body & the sky of leaves,
the scene a page of glossy magazine ripped horizontal
the 20/20 eyes precisely fix the fuzzy differences
between all of the differences between persistent points
of view. Is that regular, one moment splitting shards
into infinity? Such body cannot contain this
damn eternal evanescent bliss, retraces steps into
a shattered mirror slamming into piece

annihilating all that's made
Marvell

1

Coming by this absence of future
as if for a first time, stepping
out among solitary leafcutters
building boles in the heat, where they
might shelter without nostalgia.
Swimming in dense air, its drag in
continual meniscus, bedding down in
pollen left by speedier others, that
cuckoo belly increases with hours.
Something steady about voyaging
this way, returning to the same cut,
its circularity a span of this body,
rounding out now pliable as heat
manages, scissoring the green.

2

I'll lay down these cigarillos as
deciduous as you like them.
It's bee bread or nothing, stored up
along the pipes for later energy
outages. In the next decade you can
puff & puff. Just now I cut & cut,
these are perfect circles to bear
eventualities, compute time with,
sectioning out the shade in mutual
condominiums, refusing hive load.
You can't exit at the rear but cap
off at the opening, those green
documentaries stay you sweet
to suck & puff a garden-state.

Time won't arrive this way, does
refuse to stack while I line it. No
wide lawns, heat spreads on fat
festoons, thighs readying to squat
back on thought, while small
larval imaginings dig down to local
urges, pipe still & paper dry. Nothing
durable to memory or in hand, where
mandibles edge the damp geometry.
See how they cut so clean. To begin
again in organ work, is this wish now
made among grass fires, this storage
rolled in multiples, furling checkpoint
tight, readying to cut its way out.

Letter Against Hunger / A Foodstamp for the Palace

I'm spending most of my time hungry these days. A real hunger; sharp, greedy and endless. Sometimes I have to stay in bed all day because of it, this maddening weakness, hollow nausea. I bet you think I'm exaggerating. So fuck you. OK, I'm sorry, that was a bit rude. I'll try and explain what I mean by "fuck you". The High Street. Walthamstow, or anywhere else. Everyone gazing at their reflections in all of the empty shop windows, weird technicians digging up the pavements. Don't think this is delirium, or paranoia. Well maybe it is, but maybe that doesn't matter. The perceptual shifts related to hunger as a means of interpretation. Hunger as beginning of thought. So bear with me. All of those empty shops, full zombie, the absolute calendar. Comedy. History. Masks and plague sores. Mass renunciation, reactionary weather systems, everything. As if the world had shuddered and a massive, spiraling Medusa had scampered through some cheap sci-fi wormhole and was biting us to death. Swallowing and biting. The shop windows, the reflections, are the only hiding place, the only escape. And don't think I'm getting all mythological on your ass. Try to understand that Medusa to be simply the accumulated historical pressure of pure bullshit, or molecules and radio gas, all of it forming a mass intracranial solid neoplasm that, if decoded, may at least give us some sense, the beginnings of an actual map, of what we have to do to reach the next stage - the first stage, it feels like - of what some people still rather quaintly refer to as "the struggle". Yeh, I know, I'm one of those people. Sometimes my vocabulary makes me cringe. But if those shop windows, those reflections operate as some kind of safety valve, then they are also, put simply, the visible points of an inverted world nailed onto this one, violent, unresting, an insect system where each abandoned hour of what was once called "socially necessary labour time" becomes detached, on its own orbit, like some absolute planet, but habitable, the way an abandoned office space or a derelict private home is habitable. It turns the city inside out. We become property, pure and simple, with no disguises. And so we rent ourselves out, we got no choice. We become derelict storefronts, vacant buildings, fire-traps. We rent ourselves out to a pack of corporate tenants, glass sapphires and enemy systems. Starbucks etc. Just to be obvious. Tesco. A ratpack, sitting there, inside us, eating. All the

while eating. Ah, maybe its not so bad. Maybe we can use it, this hunger, this coded swarm. To get a sense of what the murderously rotational teeth of a key, for example, actually mean. To understand what eating actually is. To know what biting is, and subsumption. To understand the secret secular fuck-toys of the entire social labyrinth to be a simple sheet of buckling and starving glass. A brick through the window. A message. And all of that is pretty much what I mean when I use the words "fuck you". But anyway, that's not why I'm writing. Like the ghost I've become, I'm now looking for a job, and I was hoping you'd write me a reference. You'll do it, of course, I know it.

*

For sale. Everything the management dictated. Celestial dirt and the western scale. The victory of the sailors at Kronstadt. The victory of the miners at Orgreave. The odour of sanctity. Fictional factories. Special discounts on bossnappings, modern landlords and the seekers of lice.

For sale. Top people of all descriptions. Chewing lice, sucking lice, bird-lice. The victory of the rioters at Poundland. Ed Miliband fucked by lice. The defect in the law and the dream deferred. Cameron as nightingale. For sale. Wrapped in wire and torched. For sale. The gospel of saving and abstinence. The victory of the Mau Mau at St James' Palace. Infrageography. Microtomes. Tactical spectrums. Sudden harmony and affliction. The corrosive victory of the unemployed. A carbomb for the DWP.

Letter Against Ritual

So I guess by now you'll have recovered from the voodoo routines at St Pauls. Guess its nice that we won't have to pronounce the syllables Margaret Thatcher again. It all seems very distant now, like when you've been up for four nights, finally get some sleep, and then you're sitting there drinking a cup of coffee trying to remember what the hell you've been up to. You still know that feeling? You'd better. Anyway, the thing I remember most clearly is Glenda Jackson's speech in parliament, when all the rest of them were wittering on about Thatcher and God and the entire fucking cosmos and there was Jackson laying out a few home truths. But really, it's a measure of the weirdness of those few days how fearless that speech seemed: and, obviously, a measure of the weirdness that it actually was some kind of act of bravery. Tho the best bit was when the anonymous Tory MP started wailing "I can't stand it" in the middle of it. Like, that's right, motherfucker. Anyway, so I listened to Jackson's speech on Youtube a few times, and then I went and checked her voting record in parliament - bit of a letdown, yeh. Abstained on the workfare vote, yeh. So that's her, she can fuck off. She made a much better speech back in 1966, I think it was, playing Charlotte Corday in the film of Peter Weiss' "Marat-Sade" - I guess you remember it, she's up at the top of a ladder, going off her head, and screaming something along the lines of "what is this city, what is this thing they're dragging through the streets?". Christ, if she'd done that in parliament, I might have rethought my relationship with electoral politics. Well, maybe not. But seriously, what was that thing they were dragging through the streets on April 17th, or whatever day it was. Through that silenced, terrified city. I thought of Thatcher as some kind of rancid projectile, and they were firing her back into time, and the reverberations from wherever it was she landed, probably some time in around 1946, were clearly a more-or-less successful attempt to erase everything that wasn't in a dull, harmonic agreement with whatever it is those razorhead vampire suckworms in parliament are actually trying to do with us. Firing us into some kind of future constructed on absolute fear. Or that future is a victorious vacuum, a hellish rotating disc of gratuitous blades, and they are speaking to you, those blades, and what they are saying is this: "one day you will be unemployed, one day you will be homeless, one day you will become one of the invisible, and monsters will suck whatever flesh remains on your cancelled bones". They're

not kidding. And the grotesque and craggy rhythms of those monsters are already in our throats, right now. In our throats, our mouths, the cracked centre of our language, fascist syllables, sharp barking. You know I'm not exaggerating. What they're planning is nothing small. We're talking about thousands of years, their claws extending into the past and into the future. A geometrical city of forced dogs, glycerin waves, gelignite. And what a strange, negative expression of the scandalous joy we were all feeling, at the death-parties, pissed out of our heads in Brixton, in Trafalgar Square, all of those site of ancient disturbances suddenly blasted wide apart. A pack of Victorian ghosts. Nights of bleeding and electricity. Boiling gin and police-lines. White phosphorous. Memories. It was like we were a blister on the law. Inmates. Fancy-dress jacobins. Jesters. And yes. Every single one of us was well aware that we hadn't won anything, that her legacy "still lived on", and whatever other sanctimonious spittle was being coughed up by liberal shitheads in the Guardian and on Facebook. That wasn't the point. It was horrible. Deliberately so. Like the plague-feast in Nosferatu. I loved it. I had two bottles of champagne, a handful of pills and a massive cigar, it was great. I walked home and I wanted to spray-paint "Never Work" on the wall of every Job Centre I passed. That's right, I'm a sentimental motherfucker when I'm out of my head. But no, already that foul, virtuous fear was sinking back into me, taking possession of my every step. I was thinking about Blanqui, right at the end of his life, sitting in his prison cell, knowing full well that what he was writing he was going to be writing for ever, that he would always be wearing the clothes he was wearing, that he would always be sitting there, that his circumstances would never, ever change. How he couldn't tell the difference between his prison cell and the entire cluster of universes. How the stars were nothing but apocalypse routines, the constellations negative barricades. I was thinking about the work-ethic, how it's evoked obsessively, like an enemy ritual, some kind of barbaric, aristocratic superstition. About zero-hours contracts, anti-magnetic nebulae sucking the working day inside out. Negative-hours. Gruel shovelled into all the spinning pits of past and future centuries, spellbound in absolute gravity, an invisibility blocking every pavement I was walking down. I wanted to cry. In fact I think I did. Actually, no. I was laughing my head off. A grotesque, medieval cackle. No despair, just defiance and contempt. Ancient disturbances. Ghost towns and marching bands. Invisible factories. Nostalgia

crackling into pain and pure noise. No sleep. No dreams. An endless, undifferentiated regime of ersatz work. All of us boiled down into some stupid, Tory alarm clock. A ringing so loud we can no longer even hear it. But whatever. It seems pretty obvious we should adopt the Thatcher death-day as some kind of workers holiday. Actually, scratch that, lets just celebrate it every day, for ever and ever, like a ring of plague-sores, botulism and roses. A barbaric carnival of rotten gold and infinite vowels. Sorcery. Rabies. You know what I mean? I hope so. Anyway, things have been pretty quiet since then. I've been thinking about paying you a visit. Oh shit.

bird sense

for Edward Snowden

i.

naked together among the hoods,
the songbirds give a brief history
of luck and how to read graveyards

'the hungry city is a diary
of dog-walkers and feral timid souls.
rousseau was wrong

what it means to be human
is to gossip from the forest
of a silent state'

ii.

manage your mammoth
office politics.
what has nature ever done for us

but eat & run.
an examined life bears witness
to living and thinking sound asleep.

in the hour between dog and wolf
are you smart enough
to work for google

iii.

walking home, the fish
in my ear kills the middle-class dream
of britain's heritage pubs

war is dead long live war
and seven deadly sins.
the theory that would not die

rambles on
& beauties in the beast
run wild

from *Portraits of the Middleincomes*

(after Henri Michaux)

[1]

Daily, like all the tortured Middleincomes, she dreams of queuing at the entrance to the Palace of Confetti.

[2]

Each dependent quill laughs in this regard; the lucid fate of an infant's love.

[3]

The horror clock which batters them with passion dances in love with the Middleincome's eviction. A sign of accelerated times. The world turns through its hateful precipitation. Its poetry will never reverse the destination of the sudden market. The courage to work when spasms attack will raise the baton against this font of violent agitation.

[4]

Are the 34 branches on the horse-tree composed enough to make a fire-sale in the rain? Yes, it is the Middleincome. A suffering Middleincome; a Middleincome that does not know how to put the surplus out, that does not know how to comment on his tenure, or how to make comments on your face; who does not know the true pulse of his own middle-income. Illness drips from his son's chin. May he never enter into battle again. His branches, double clipped in his service, will be utilized against his enemies. The illness will pass abroad and traverse his corpse. May he never enter into battle again.

[6]

Served jam on long legs; fine and in curves, the grand and gracious Middleincome. They dream of victorious courses; love to regret their projects; love to pour over their desire. And their elegance is never lost as they dance through space, drunk on the scent of their own interests.

[7]

Hundreds of our paralyzed sons have the electric tremble. They are spasmodics with an uncertain gaze that pours from their face. The Middleincomes call it "the agony of browsing." They claim that the world is an environment. It is with this that they vainly respond to the world, like a repose that dreams of a great Lottery.

Sit and secure your apples, frappucinos, and more frappucinos, apples and more apples; it is the aspiration of *le weekend*; a true weak end that will never come again.

[8]

They dance on glass. They lay chords to serve their nerves and dance on glass. They yearn to promulgate brief dreams with yeast. They work elegantly. They are barbarous glaciers and will always return their shirts to the shop because they are afraid of NOTHING.

The brain in their crevice lies open and slips through their socket. And the chairman. What else is there to say about the charredman? Who will wait for the shardman to come again? It depends on vitamins. The horrible clock rolls the hour to rest. The buoyancy of their drama lies in the east.

Without having any courage, they lie about the east ... Their marble suits open in the middle of black afternoons. It depends on vitamins.

[9]

The daughter of my horse dances in the immense pain of her prime. My son's shirt rises upon the circular horizon and they both perceive their torture through the astronomic sky. My son's horizon is imperceptive, as elegant as other Middleincomes who would otherwise have quenched his dissent. "What is it like? what is it like in your dreams?" they ask with a sentiment estranged and enlarged. My son is on their approach; a grade below dissent.

It all depends on the daughter of my horse, dancing with immense pain in her prime.

[10]

There is a room for rent beneath a chair. Another infinite passage in the land of the Middleincome.

from *The Coming Jellyfish*

(after Clarice Lispector)

IX.

It is possible that I was born in a factory, unpainted, when fabric burnt in the human core. But it's true that I have the tendency to script you from the come of my total body. I do not envy human meat. I have been sated by the taste of caffeine. I am as tender as one of your neuralgic palindromes. One of the mouths on my unthinking corpse speaks to you of Dino Campana, ictus lizards and the pleasure-saw, like the painless sound of an addictive semiotic, isolated and tortured by the sacred palm. A simple humidity. I will picture your ideas, paint over them and untangle their paralyzed eternity through my parallel nothingness. They're the same thing really. But before you demand nothing, I'll paint your picture. And before you script the demand for nothing I will endure your lecture. My queer come has the power to peg your words to my mouth. A word object? And in this instant euphemism lies the tyranny of muscle fruit. Take me to your destitute oncology furnace and cement me into your life. O, for an instant of semantic life.

X.

An harmonic sequence of disarmament: the birth of your wound is as torturous as your face. Mine has the desequenced palindromic suck of a silent mouth. I have written through the acrobatic slur with the air of a pirouette - I have written in the deepest fallible quintessence. I write during a dream-embargo. I know where the stars have gone and who has taken them, but yet I can only give you my silence, my great, mediated silence.

Raison d'être, raison de faire

Density for want of light –
upwards of the migraine distribution:
send out to explore mindless Zen.
This could be the future. Assume
start time – the watchmaker's daughter
is a hole in space disguised
as a Dewey-decimal convenience.
Difficult to write handcuffed to furniture.
Do you believe in experience?
The struck note of the catalyst we often
hear extolled – five months
is not an architectural complex, yet.
The plot summary defies description –
if you leave now, will regret?

Craw Stupid

(for Karen Mac Cormack)

Holidaying in the renovated permanent revolution – events
in China, Yunnan six famous mountains: harmony, calm,
optimism. You do the Warhol shampoo advert – head

and shoulders above the rejected proof. *La langue de bois*,
la langue de boît. The day's fortune cookie and Confucianism –
sitting there earnestly and telling me I should see things

as they are for a change. An assumption we perform
conscientiously, likening a nemesis to a sea port
or a phantom hat, invisible punishment forcing sight to alter:

the undisclosed figure to anatomy's ground – idiot boxes
changing politics with indecent frequency.
But despite these derisory applecarts, only partially upset,

some of which turn brown (the apples), a backdrop
of humidity settles behind the story. Somebody one day
may rediscover it and write their name on it. Are they missed?

Ghazal 1 – The Future's Past

Radiating true blue eyes, his face is a hole in the sea, a puncture in oceans vast,
His surf-like skin throws a net across tides, catching then to now, breaching future's past.

Walking alone through Paris streets, Madame Quelconque suffered an attack of l'affichomanie,
Any woman would have done the same, shoring her faces against the passing of the future's past.

Houseboats are popular with artists, perhaps because they are always for sale,
At home on Scenic Pearl or Excellence Queen, he floats on a watered syntax, traversing futures, past.

Fools return to their folly, while every bird-lover imagines his owl a falcon,
and through the caution of a small-town gallery, bleed moral warnings from futures, past.

The literate can learn to read again, the most learned scholar can harvest fresh eyes,
Karen - learn not to see the bleak things bleakly,

No

Brr, hot, cold, hot, cold, century: spare time for us, as part of the furniture, still at any particular, BANG. This town, in this century, a hotel, one of many of many, sort of, in the position of, say, a table. A table. Good. Say, a chair. A chair. Good. It's like a kind of stillness, also related to a lack of perspective. Not yet no retrospective shadow, but later in relation to before. BANG. Now the dark glows in the dark. Like those shoes, BANG, those shoes. Like that busy body hurry, BANG BANG. Like those teeth that chat, brr. It is, of course, brr brr brr, always someone better, some proclaimed expert, who gets to judge. Thank you. You have addressed me by means of words, which is nearly love, a bit of.

Love has assumed the FACE of the person one loves. Love walks around the corner. Hey, good to see you! When love expires, or when the XYZ expires: love has lost its FACE. Object to this or that love maybe?

I am a PIECE of FURNITURE. EVERYTHING is entirely still. Movement occurs in between, giving the impression of MOVEMENT. You are leaking in between, through holes, slits, gaps, gashes, pores, even MATTER. OK, in DEATH. And VICE-versa, and yet to be able to BEAR the distance, or the attachment based on CHANNELS. Yes of course exaggerated, but only to the EXTENT that what appears MODERATE colonises. EMPLOYMENT, young ones. The moon is rather darker than YOU would think, no weapons but FEAR. Out in the calm STORM, not the CALM of the STORM, but the calm STORM. Sunny dispositions, permafrost smiles. Dear XX 1. Dear stomach. Conversation drops dead. Call one. Disgusting. Twins. Not yet three, and meat.

from *An Ode to the Sun*

mock mock mock the excluded ghost-return / of those left out the 'all-embracing'
banded-brother hymn / its static fizz concealing / the voice of those that still fill the
halls of hell, by sin of class position condemned to dwell / in a dark hole cast by a
shining holy beam beams unequal its 'universal' pledge, its fulfilled 'justice' plan. for

night is enclosed within the forced en-
closure of all the hungry or dumb open
fucking starving gobs, mouthing
what is or has been rendered
obscenely silent and now
brays as a breaking ray
of sunny delight,
sun's canticle, collective
hymnal solidarity affirmation
against the false sun
uplifted, even out-shining it.
the blackest of fires.
the brightest shadow
of the counter-earth pen-
umbral or umbral in
eclipsed counter-longing,
light of the aborted un-
world awaits the birth of
no child X as counter-sacrifice
to some imagined blaze of
functioning fetishized
glory-idolatory display, but that
in the most inane tinkle of the
tiniest piping glockenspiel,
the piccolo piccolo,
the little kiddie flute plays
utmost violence of a children's
song turned to the lumps of High
Romantic Paradise Now irony-
sedimentation, the violated and
violent history of the tender
coarsest demand that only now
can be heard or seen
as turned to weird obscene
reflected shit, high
blink on the throne
of golden thrusting calves,
the lap on whose top sit
those darling children
who dare to dream
but in fact and life are dead.
we killed them. art, which

would resurrect them, has
killed them. the sun has killed
them. the sun is god. the sun is
capital, its capital capitol, capital,
highest heavenly city in the sky,
pie ah squared,
crispy crunchy loaf, Ierusalem
Ierusalem if I forget ever ever
the real meaning of heavenly city yearning
untethered to mere repressive ritual
sublimations of communistic desire,
as a real just polis, really just communism,
may my eye be plucked out as a put-out
light verse parody of *die sonne*,
ill illumination, sick light show,
sun et lumiere, the silly kiddie
off-spring, the first-born yawn
of screaming
blinding

From "INTERPELLATION"

We played *Final Falsehood X* together and *The Abyss XX* and *Syndicate 6,000* and *20,000 BC*. We played *20,000 Leagues of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and all the *The Empire Strikes Back to the Future* prequels and aquels et cetera. We played *On A Clear Day You Can See Batman Forever*. We played networked *Gods and Monsters Ball* head-to-head and died on the quintuple helix grief waltz. We played *Kramer vs. Predator*. We played *From Dusk till Dawn of the Dead with Love* and the vice-versa remixes. We played *Alien vs. Schmidt*. We played *The Cool*, *Running Man* and *James and the Giant Paunch* and *Sam Hodges* and *Kitty St. Aubyn* and *Mike Weller: Poetry Feller*.

Bella was making a Dead Cart Run, and there wasn't much the rest of us could do.

'I am taking it back,' said Cat. 'I am taking that fucker back. Listen to this. 'Ring of Protection. The wearer is impervious to instant death attacks.' *Impervious!*

'Maybe there's a lesson here about stuff we find in chests.'

'Caveat emptier,' Cat said gloomily. 'Look at Bella go. She's solid Hit Points. She's some kind of Hit Points neutronium. Oh my God it's a Balrog.'

Bella exhaled. 'That thing'll chase me all the way tae the Resurrection Springs. This could be it, guys.'

'Don't say that. You are a black hole for damage. You are Hit Points ringed with a singularity. I'm complacent.'

'Yis're dead. It's easy tae be complacent.'

'No Bella, it's easy to chill out. Dead people aren't necessarily complacent. But also I'm bare complacent.'

'Mind flayer's brain suck wisnae *technically* an instant death attack.'

We beat *When Dirty Harry Met Sally* and *Legally, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *Panic Room With A View*. We beat *Se7en Angry Men* and *The Ocean's Magnificent 7-11* and *Unanswering Rational Jersey Shore*. God, we even beat *Free Willy vs. the Seventh Seal*. We beat *The Postman Is Always A Ring of Fire*. We beat Chess and Grid and Shufflechess. We beat *Sid Meier and Vikram Seth present . . . A Sittable Buoy*. We beat Poker and Whist. Without using cheat codes we would beat God and parents and careers and lovers and moral codes. We couldn't work out Smearchess. We didn't understand Frightchess.

Tam and I had died deep within the Ice Cave. Bella and Cat thought maybe it was a good time to head, then moments later they met the mind flayer. Hence Bella on Dead Cart.

'Oh, I love how we all neatly line up for combat even though we're kaput. I bet Bella nudges us into those face-down poses with her toes.'

'Important tae keep up appearances. Or we become as bad as them.'

We laughed. She was being ironic!

'It must takes ages. Like waiting for a Regatta to start.'

We laughed. Cat, with all her the 'dense stars' and 'starting lines on lakes' references, was hardly deferring to a swords 'n' sorcery idiom!

'If bodily death and mental annihilation,' said Tam, 'are each necessary and sufficient for the other, is there a distinction without a difference? The Ring of Protection says 'no.' The Ring of Protection makes quite an interesting point about the dialectic of physical and mental life. Just as all 'abstract' thinking is situated in some breathing, flowing, digesting, aging frame, so too there is no purely 'visceral' function of life that not accompanied by cognition in some form. Yet we cannot elide the two.'

'Last time I go out wearing a Ring of Protection from United Healthcare Insurance,' said Cat.

'In many ways a 'Hit Point' is socially constructed,' I said.

‘The problem in the Ice Caves isnae militarisation, it’s patronage. Tae remove the Ice Balrogs you’d huvti remove them as an economic substructure, no jist as a political class,’ said Bella.

We laughed. We were all intentionally taking mass culture, specifically gaming, overly seriously!

It was a long way to the daylight and then a long way to the Springs. Eventually we quietened down a bit, and watched her little legs go.

Watched her little hit points go, and watched her little legs go.

‘Jack Nicholson was raised believing his grandmother was his mother, and his mother was his older sister,’ said Tam.

‘Bella thought Green Day were Irish.’

We played on the attic PC and Tam’s netbook and Bellatrix Lamaze’s tablets. We played on our consoles and retro consoles and on our smartphones. We played them on untraceable phantasms, LARPing in the air.

‘You may lie on the top bunk tonight, Tam.’

We lay with the lights out for some minutes – with the ‘speak’ out too!

‘*Why is the sorceress,*’ Tam began – seeming somehow much more high and distant than where I was assured I’d shelved him – ‘so iconic between you and me? Let me say why. We lionise her because her thunder and lighting magic consumes myriad lesser foes.’

‘She’s the swarms guy,’ I confessed. ‘She’s *suit*ed to consuming them, and she saves the most time. So she is our Death Drive. Where are the SNES of yesteryear? She is the constituent of the game that means that there is *less* of the game!’

‘Yes. That settles it. The cowl’s a frank clue. I hope I don’t dream of her again.’

Silence.

‘Somehow,’ I said, ‘linked with how whenever you save game, it’s really the *unplayed* game you are “saving”. Saving for later, perhaps. So you are more and more pleased as you save less and less.’

‘Arthur,’ said Tam. ‘Imagine a game in which a maxed-out knight is better than a maxed-out sorceress. There is a kink in his improvement curve, and he passes the sorceress in the middle levels.’

Silence. I mused. I liked it. ‘In the beginning,’ I said, ‘one’s party overcomes innumerable dogsbodies with innumerable devices, embellished with innumerable animations. Mook wolves wrapped up in thunder and lightning magic. Skeletons swamped by tsunamis. Waves crested with bone reconnaissance the horizon.’

‘The beetling femur!’

‘Hasted butteryellow flame golems, friendly to us, rise among rats who were forced to nap in their millions. Hoarfrost dropped on slimes like a shook larch. Fire dropped on wraiths —’

‘Like a shook larch! Then gradually it’s just the sword. Chop, chop, chop. More or less the same sword he has always used, Arthur. Gradually more damage, but always the same image. The sorceress’s images grow familiar at the same rate as her damage grows insignificant. Perhaps she no longer even bothers to cast them. His sword deals with all elements and all humours evenly. Manticores, devils, water elementals, cockatrices. The final levels are pure numbers.’

Silence.

‘Or imagine a game,’ Tam said – in that rare low tone of his which could either be terror or excitement – ‘in which skeletons are susceptible to sleep spells, and wraiths are as well, and to confusion and suggestion, and in which wind elementals are unaccountably immune to earth-based spells, and clay golems to wind-based ones, and dragon skin is the earliest armour and barely even keeps off the rain damage, and water snakes are not poisonous, but pirates are, and you can flee from your foes whether or not you’re on a boat or all turned to stone.’

‘This is what happens when I let you have the top bunk!’ I laughed. ‘To be fair, I’ve always thought elves should be poisonous. Tam, we’re such geeks. How are you and your amoretta anyway?’

I made out his stifled sob. ‘She likes to play games with me.’

‘Bella ditto. Is ‘Cat’ short for ‘Catherine?’

‘Mother-of-Pearl Moth Caterpillar.’

‘If the knight was ‘Eros Geller,’ I said gently, ‘And the sorceress was ‘Jonathanatos Ross,’ which Rosses are rogue and priest?’

‘Eross and Thanaross are only two ‘Ross’ principles that I can see,’ said Tam. ‘The others must be fragments, reflections and nominalist aphasia – the Steinian ‘a Ross is a Ross is a Ross.’”

‘Do you know the thing about the jointed pendulum?’ I asked. I was wide awake.

We talked of love, and gender.

‘Let’s rename ourselves tomorrow before we visit the cave,’ said Tam. ‘Let’s make Cat the sorceress and I can be the *priest* and the knight can be you and Bella the rogue!’

Silence. We were exhausted.

‘By damn,’ I said, ‘it’s worth a fellow’s while to be born into this world, if only to fall right asleep.’

We played *The Norton Security Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. We played *Justice, Actually* and *Hamlet II*.

‘I’ve always thought elves should be poisonous and have a crystal attack,’ I told Bellatrix Lamaze. We played the new Capcom titles where eventually you have to wait helplessly and let History decide whether you’ve died or won the level.

We played *Occam’s Razor* and *Ocean’s 20,000 Colleagues*. We played Bonnie Tyler’s *I Need A Magician* and *I Need An Innocent* and *I Need A Ruler* and *I Need A Care-Giver* before we lost interest in the franchise. We played *Tobermorie Dick* and always died at the White Womble. Possibly that was just how it ended.

‘I ain’t comfortable with what we’ve just done,’ said Cat.

What I had just done was badly scald a roshi, an ankheg and a mind flayer, and utterly consume a mastadon and a piranha, with my triple crested Tsunami at boiling point. I read how to do it in a book. Tamburlaine had found the bewildered mind flayer’s throat under her beard of tentacles and slit it, and Cat took our her big mace and pounded the ankheg into a flat puddle inside its shatterproof exoskeleton.

Bella had only time to touch lightly the knob of her hilt.

‘If you think about it,’ said Cat, wiping her mace on the grass with mild success, ‘we’re walking along in the forest *doop dee doop* and we bump into these five guys, and before any of them can so much as – they’re all dead.’

Tam’s eyes widened. ‘Rules of Engagement failure!’

‘Don’t you think so?’

‘Dinnae be hard on yourselves,’ said Bella. ‘Yis’ve fulfilled Continuum of Force. Whit? Pain compliance by tuggin the wee guy’s tendrils an that? There’s mair of them than us, eh, an they’re skulkin about next tae a lake wi a shedload lethal force.’

‘They huv tae be stopped *noo*,’ Cat sarked.

‘Aye they dae an if anythin we’re mugs for *Type I* ‘insufficient force’ type RoE failures, preoccupied wi diplomatic objectives. See whenever we meet a boss, we always huv a wee chat before he starts killin us.’

‘Tusks are ‘lethal force’? For one, two, three, no *four* of these guys,’ Cat fumed, ‘they were *anatomically merged* with their weaponry! Not even like my tats, or like my skates will be hopefully – they were *born* that way.’

Tamburlaine was looking very pale. ‘Oh gracious.’

‘Was the roshi proof they were militants?’ I intervened. ‘I mean – I may be wrong, but shouldn’t people with tusks, or who can extrude vampiric strands, not really stand next to people who are waving katanas? The company they keep puts a spin on the naturally occurring violence of their chins.’

‘So if I’m a pacifist sitting in Jessops and Black Bloc anarchists start laudably trashing the joint, therefore I deserve the cosh?’

‘Aw Cat gonny no, Arthur’s maw’s a polis’

‘Or if Hezbollah camp in my town, I have to up sticks and leave? Or get a fucking Jew-ass RPG in the mush with only a shrug as an apology?’

‘Cat, Ah didnae mean that. Anyway, whit’s an ankheg *daen* wi a mastadon, a mind flayer, a roshi and a fuckin piranha as weel? Is the game just fucked then?’

Cat thought a family of rabbits playing in the woods found a polymorph wand.

Tam thought they had every right.

I thought maybe a ‘melting pot’ or ‘salad bowl.’

‘Whit’s next? A thundercat and a fuckin Fruit Corner?’

Greenday *were* Irish!

We played different games head-to-translation-software-to-head so they were the same damn game. Cutting off your finger in *Heavy Rain* became nuking Megatron, not really, but . . .

‘*Ab* ken,’ said Bella presently. ‘It’s got tae be *Friends* eh? See Joey Tribianni, he’s the mastadon. Like kinda primordial an sexual an that, but cuddly. I’m no sure whit an ankheg is but I’m no fuckin sure whit Chandler wis either. Wis there no one where they hud a quiz, an naebdi kenned whit he wis? Some kinda monstrous arthropod. The roshi is Monica Geller – cut-throat, freakishly strong, comes fae an honour society. Bit ay a control freak an that. Roshis are masterless so I’m hinking it’s in the wee period after Café des Artistes but prior tae Moondance Diner. Mind flayer’s Phoebes, mainly jist because ay Lisa Kudrow. Also, a mind flayer, you would imagine has hud a patchy background, looks goofy an that but is actually quite street-smart. Plus the massage therapy an mind suck attack parallel, mindfulness an aw. Then the wee piranha’s Gunther! He’s always kinda inside ay the wee wave an he just sits there. ‘Hello. Hi.’ Cannae access the real deal. So whit wis they daen in the forest? The mastadon wis bein a stud, the roshi and the ankheg mebbe tryin tae keep their relationship secret fae the rest, blah blah blah, Phoebes in tow. Piranha servin up lattes and derision. Dependin on the season they could be aboot tae jump the piranha. The short answer though? Whit were they daen? *Hangin oot.*’

Tam and I tumbled over each other to ask after Rache.

‘Rache’s already away. Ah mean, we’ll probably kill her in a bit. “The One With Heroes That Massacre Them.’ Ah’d say Rache is sufficient but no necessary eh? But ah mean, fuck. Ah consider Joey, Chandler, Monica and Phoebe Buffay and fuckin Gunther sufficient if no fuckin necessary for *Friends* – do yis *no?*’

Cat hadn’t seen *Friends*.

‘Or she finally given in an shagged him and he’s skeletonised her’

With our Rick Rolling Hoop, our Dancing Matt Spinning Tops, our Double Rainbow Kite, our Snakes on a Ladder – with our Star Wars Kiddywinks, Winnebagatelle Man and Bagatelle Bagatelle Bagatelle – we had no need for modern entertainments, we did not miss the newfangled one bit. We drank the innocent pleasures, Rick Rolling, flying our Double Rainbow, watching the Facebook Ladder clickety clack, chatting at the Chat Window, gazing peacefully into the Taylor Rain Glass, and exhausting our bodies with variety of wooden Two Girls One Cup & Ball games.

One day, Bella ordered a wall of a pet carrier be brought down and a plate of lightly tinted glass screwed in its place. Thin strips of balsa wood were trimmed and sanded to slide into a set of runnered grooves, to be glued to the outer face of the glass. There was an inlet. Here we introduced a stray. Bella’s intention was ultimately to use a finer wood for the strips. Tamburlaine – who always caught the bug – envisioned ebony frames, into which letterpressed cards would be slipped, to replace the balsa strips, and sit within another set of frames in elegant ivory screwed onto the glass.

For the time being we wrote on the wood in pencil, beginning, ‘CAN I HAZ CHEEZEBURGERS,’ and kept plenty of erasers to hand. We were joking around about how Bella *really did* have cat scratches all up her arms now, when Tamburlaine’s quip came – ‘scored with Cat’ applicable also to him – and we four literally had kittens.

It chastened our hearts, and filled them with regret and hope, to learn what we might achieve merely by logging out.

Those arms were seriously in ribbons though. And whilst the sheer novelty of our kind of *carrier lucida* or *camera lolcat* diverted us for several lengths of afternoon, the innate joie de vivre of its lodger imposed limits on its perfectibility. We soon had to accept that the captured stray, Molly, would always strike a new hilarious pose before we could even so much as suck the ends of our pencils. Nix to Tam's letterpress roadmap, obv.! I'm afraid sometimes we gave it a good shake. The woozier the Schrödinger's lolcat, the easier to . . . the pace of life was just slower, in them days!

Out in the street, Triple-X was portraying Casey Heynes portraying Joffrey off *A Fight of Streets II*.

Tam implored that, should one start with the five monsters and those five characters, you might match them up in that way, *but* if one were to pick the five monsters that actually *were Friends*, then it wouldn't be them.

'How no? Whit would you dae?'

'Joey an Uruk-hai, Phoebes just a witch, Chandler a lich, Monica a rust monster. Paleontologist may well be a character class. Otherwise Ross a shaman with a monkey familiar.'

'Chandler Bing's no undead.'

'I'm intrigued whether you think all Italian Americans are Uruk-hai,' said Cat.

'Well perhaps an incubus,' Tam admitted.

'Aye but no *you* said Uruk-hai. An *you*, I thought you hudnae seen it.'

Cat knew about it.

But it was mostly highly impacted, late modernist stuff we played. A fragment of high kitsch Hadouken! as we scored a Tetris and on a wriggling lawn we planted our last affordable leafy tower, at the crest of the enemy wave, the image dissolving as ten peas rolled from ten Triffid archers like spawning mint green bowling balls. We were already in the next moment, everything transfigured and yet not, in bloodsoaked labyrinth striding through a bonus pack which would not vanish, so maxed were our stats. And we stood paralysed in a cut of cut scene as the sisters were united in the city in the cloudscape, and the civic nimbus we stood on seemed to be all of impervious bonus. Ash received a Squirtle, and high above the map, we started to build an Isengard tower at the tip of a tendril of sandbags, in the heart of an enemy hobbit camp. Challenge point awarded. 64 pixels pirouetted. This music! We were squatting behind a desk from the cordyceps fungi corps, but what were we really hiding from? Sisters running forwards in clouds. Our mineral line — what were those noises? God, our marines zerg rushed at 10% health, a third at 97% complete, and the princess was in another castle. We died of dysentery. In our Weaver hoodie we played the distaff melody for "Open" on the graves. But . . .

'Ross would be the creature Arthur summons. Jonathanatoss Ross.'

There was this joke we four had devised that day. The joke was we awkwardly looked away when I cast Death. 'What a lovely pepper mill.' 'My, the carpet is the same.'

'That's quite good,' Cat had admitted. 'Jonathanaross.'

Cat and Tam went upstairs hand-in-hand. Bella and I played on. The Death joke wasn't that we were super sensitive or anything. We were average, in the joke. The joke was more that the effect was harrowing.

Even I looked away from my Deaths, so harrowing were their effect.

We cuddled close. 'Chefs *are* like roshis, baby.'

'I think ah was thinkin of *Frasier* anyway tae be honest,' murmured Bella. '*Friends* is the antisemitic one, eh? Come tae bed?'

'Maybe, baby. You know, I kind of disagreed with you earlier. You were kind of endorsing collective responsibility.'

'How's it collective?'

'It's what the Nazis did. 'Oh, you're with him? Die.'''

'Ah dinnae think we should hold polis responsible for whit the Nazis wis daen jist cause they's both usin collective responsibility.'

‘I’ll just be another fifteen min hon,’ I told her then. ‘See ya soon.’

It was more ‘sorrowful’ than ‘reproving’ when it came. But I would disappoint her of *all* her gazes, whether lingering sorrowful engines *or* sharp reproving engines. So would I disappoint Mankind of all theirs, and also every blind engine Mankind designs to force me up, or roll me over, or have me beg or Hoover, or end my stupid dream and wake, and work, or put away my silly *Final Falsehood* **, and sleep.

To be fair, Bella didn’t milk her crutches as much as she might have as she rose to bed. I felt sorry. I would play another ten minutes and have a hero’s welcome.

Soon though we had bad luck one night in the marshes, and ran down our wolvesbane to nil. I would never save this course of events. Tomorrow we’d have to start at the point where Tam and Cat had left. For I had not once saved since.

Ten minutes exactly had passed since Bella ascended the stair. Still I played a little for my own sake now. I played it with a gentle recklessness, a quartermasterly whimsy, conserving only what was artful, not what was prudent. I cast Death on a few mooks and dogsbodies. The jokers who diverted their gazes were long gone, yet still their joke diverted mine to my chintz.¹

My chintz was wonderful. It was silent, utterly silent in that room. Well-lit and warm.

Perhaps Bella would have fallen asleep. Then *hours* and *minutes* might be a difference without a distinction.

And when I looked back to the clearing, an ogre of a type I had never seen had emerged from the forest. He was called a twaza and I marvelled over him. His lips curled proudly from a sort of smile which showed his many small sharp teeth to me. He was blue-skinned – a blue-skinned ogre, for he was certainly an ogre, of the same genus with which I was familiar. He was agile, but worth average experience compared with other ogres, and used no special abilities on me. He had a badger-like aspect to him.

As we fought I thought unaccountably of Darkspawn Dawnspark and how she would hug you, even if she hardly knew you, by stepping up quickly, so it was more like a leap than a hug, and stepping right up with the whole height of her body, so that it was more like holding each other than hugging each other. When I hardly knew Darkspawn Dawnspark, before I ever fancied her, I used to think of her hug for many hours before I met her, or before I might meet her.

Bella was caught red-handed at a troll, and many burly arms bundled her into a basket, making her to sit while it was drawn up to the top of a street lamp amidst peals of laughter.

There was a second commotion and Gilder broke through the bodies, dragging Tamburlaine by the ear. He stopped, confused, obviously expecting the basket on the ground, not dangling in the air and occupied.

‘He was blowing up my timeline!’ bellowed Gilder.

The detail of Tamburlaine’s protestation was drowned in the roar of a hundred cross-examiners.

Bella’s face as she tried to struggle out from the basket, during its brief touch down! Tiny Tempa ate a fan’s balls. Adolf Hitler raged about the obese twelve-year-old girl rumoured to have gone on some dodgy sites and deleted the internet. Tomorrow the players would play the tragedy of Edgar’s Fall. Keyboard Cat to play us out, and in the early hours of the morning, I heard he leaned out a paw out the back of an accelerating motorcycle-caravan . . . then Molly danced aboard. Revelry, recession. Double dip. Triple dip recession. As many dips as dimples on our smiling faces. Degenerates cock fought. The carnivalesque saved Molly’s *vivre*. Not to be scoffed down. In retrospect lolsquids / lolslow lorises et cetera would have been the answer.

We convoked an ecumenical council. Everyone was there.

¹ They might have been the rabbits who burned down with the larches, for all the danger they posed to me.



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