

FULL MOON



GOBS COLLECTIVE



FOREWORD

The moon's rhythm has guided humans for thousands of years. Following lockdown, and two years of building poetry through Zoom, that same rhythm guided GOBS Collective in coming together - in the flesh - to create this body of work.

From October 2021, GOBS gathered at Nonsuch Studios every full moon to share and develop poetry as we moved towards a performance showcase as part of Nottingham Poetry Festival in May 2022. The poetry you have in your hands is the work performed at that showcase - Full Moon - on Saturday 7 May 2022.

Together with Loney Smallhorne, I founded GOBS Collective in February 2020 as a way to bring Nottingham's hidden poets onto the city's stages and pages. Through workshops, masterclasses, and performance opportunities, we wanted to create a space for writers and performers to feel nurtured, inspired to push themselves, and able to build work they're proud of.

I'm sure you'll agree, after reading this zine, that we've certainly achieved the latter. We wouldn't have been able to get to this point without the initial financial boosts from Nottingham Trent University's cultural arm, Curated & Created, back in 2020; the mentorship, guidance and ongoing financial support from Apples and Snakes' John Berkavitch and Lisa Mead; the generosity of Alex Traska in building our brand and website for free; and Nonsuch Studios for offering us a home when we found ourselves at a crossroads.

A special thanks goes out to Arts Council England who made this entire project possible and who, along with Dizzy Ink's Ed Phipps, allowed us to put this zine in your hands. For our showcase, ACE also gave us the opportunity to work with industry experts like our Lighting Designer Sam Osbourne, and the brilliant composer Randolph Matthews, who has dressed our individual and overall live performances with the most luxurious of soundscapes.

Like the moon, this work has the power to eclipse. It brings an ebb and a flow into your being. It reflects light in the darkest of spaces.

We hope you enjoy it, to the fullest.
Bridie Squires
GOBS Founder

With thanks to

Arts Council England, Apples and Snakes, Nonsuch Studios, Dizzy Ink, Randolph Matthews, John Berkavitch, Alex Traska, Sam Osbourne, and Ed Phipps.

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Coal Moon

You tear me out of this Earth,
shiny pebble smoothed to silk,
veined surfaces camouflaged

in colours of dirt, coal, green ferns,
Rowan trees rooted in blood.
I glow with pick- me-up sheen.

A shadow farmer on the hill
watches me emerge from wet soil
wiping his oily hands clean,

pulling at heartstrings. Black gold
lies on the mountain path;
fresh air twists with wisps

of smoke, charcoal, forest pine.
Sheep pass this way, scattering skulls,
cracking open secret stories.

Boxing hares brace themselves
using me as a foothold;
the Moon, as a timeless frame.

In the smouldering town below
a monster roars, opens its mouth;
grinding gear groans into action.

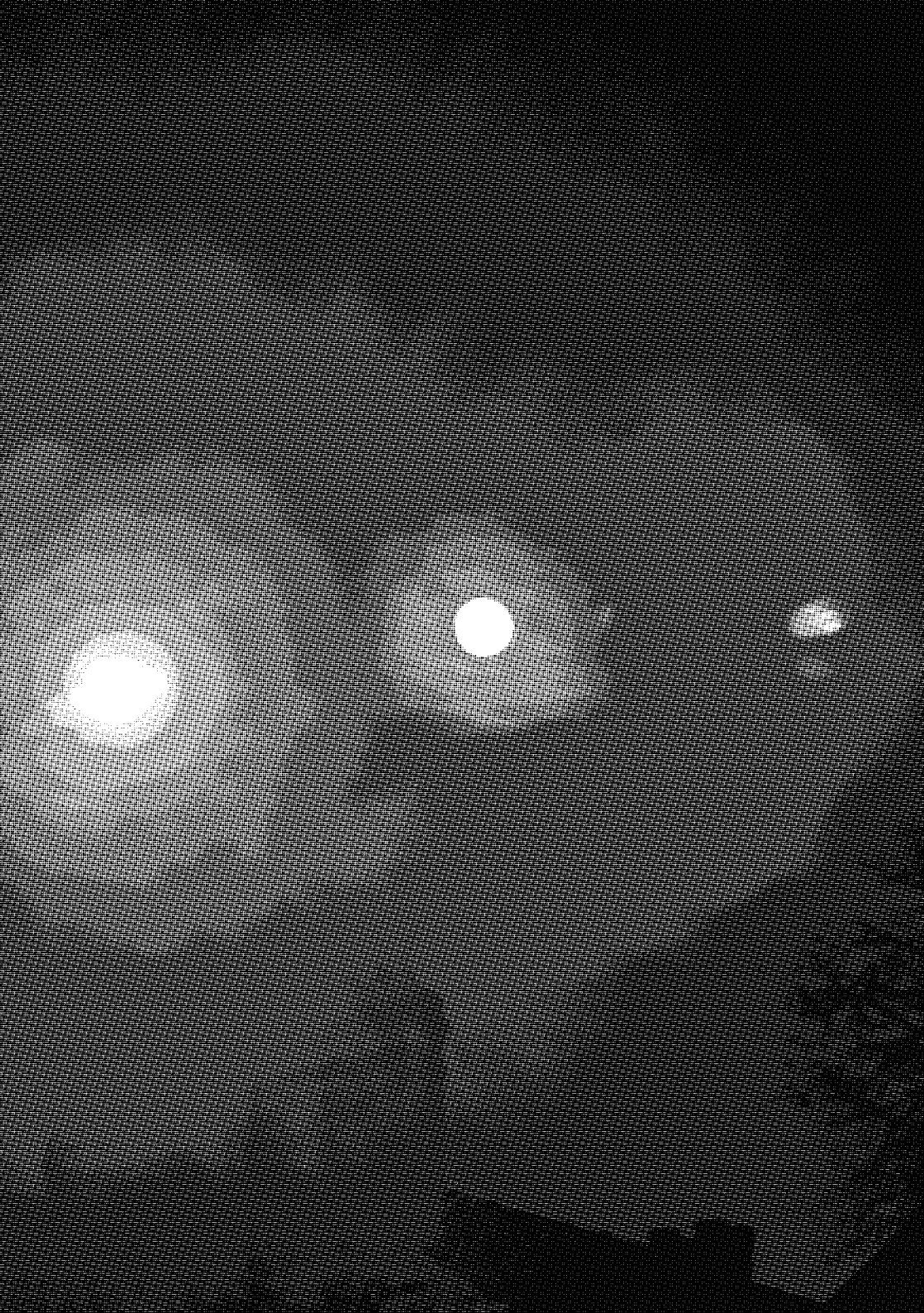
Slag heaps stagnant on fragments
of ancient fields; trees call out,
felled, by Man's burning greed.

The egg moon looms,
brittle face fused to sky,
placed on a pedestal, falling

into Celtic rituals of worship.
I am born, stone cold.
Ravens pick vernix wax from birth.

A valley slows, is struck quiet,
ashes remain. Sessile Oak sees
I am rock, I wish to return to Earth.

Gail Webb



What do you do?

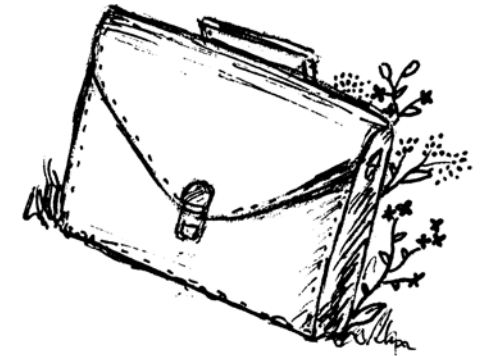
Things change
From one day to the next
A bit like the weather
Uncertainty
Blue to grey to blue

If life were consistent
How would we grow?
How would we evolve?
How do you define worth?
Blue to grey to blue

Accept the things we cannot change
Make changes to the things we can
Your audacity. My vulnerability
Forgiveness
Blue to grey to blue

Life's not a competition
It's not about comparison
My worth is NOT a title
Things change.

Beth Parker



An Interview with my Mother

On bonfire night, a firework got out of control.
Launching towards us - I pressed my belly to the wall
in hopes my bones would shield you.

Cold hands, cold feet,
I'd leave the oven door open after cooking
trying to get some heat in the place -
and you were such an unhappy child.

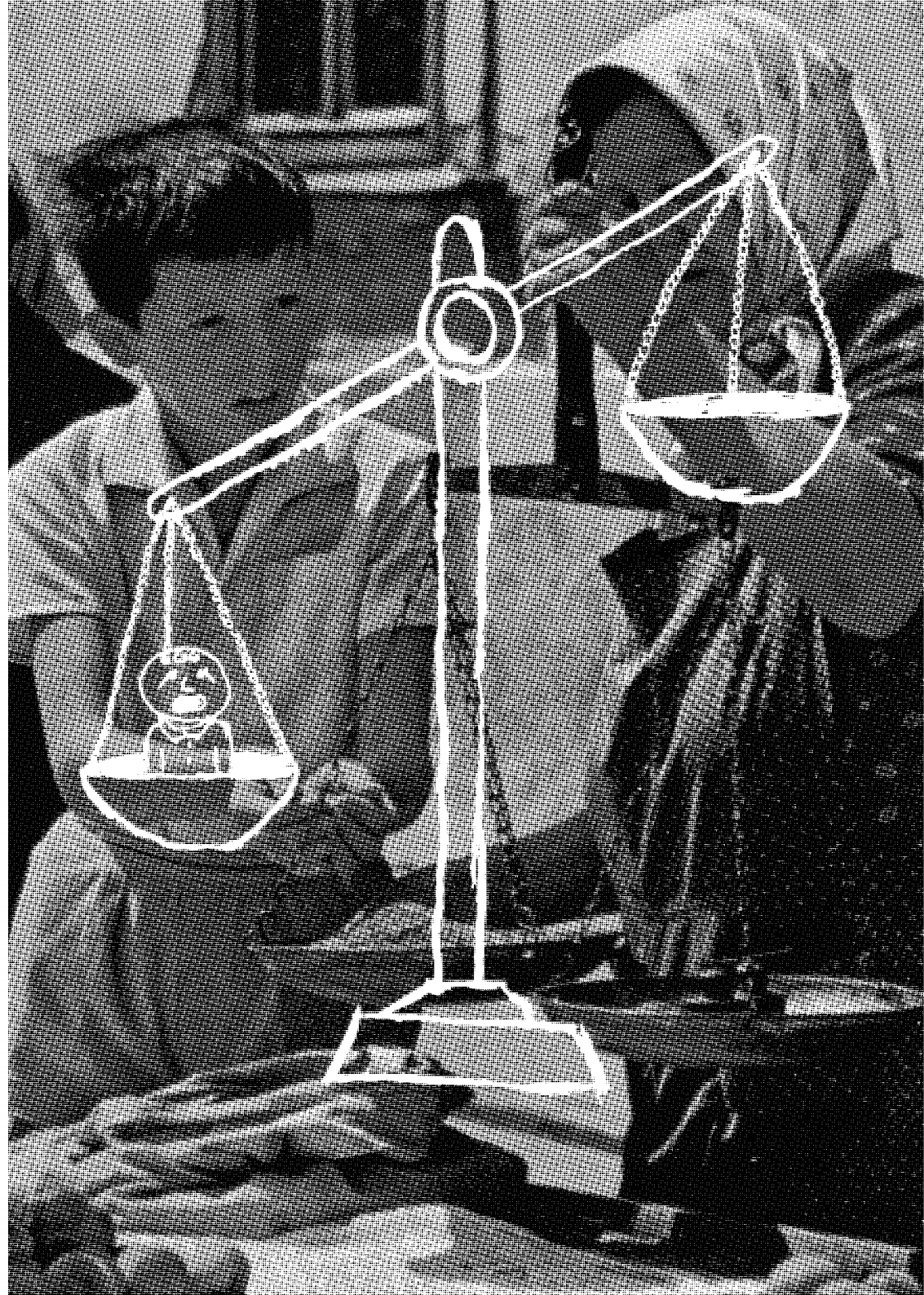
Didn't sleep through for 6 months.
Always on with something. Demanding,
born angry like you knew what was to come,
and me, trying to find shoe money
for feet that never stopped shocking growing -

and I have to say it, have to confess - I can't help but feel I never found
my thing. Spat out four taxpayers, not a whole lot else -
and I would do anything for you. And your siblings.
If you were all falling off a cliff, I wouldn't save any of you.
I couldn't. You'd all have to go toppling over because I couldn't choose.
- and the loans. All the fucking debt, everything from a catalogue,
your poor mama and grandad, and you eating their pensions,

and despite it all, you will never love me the way I love you.
You can't. Can't hold all of this in you. In little you.
I once held your head all night whilst you screamed through a fever.
Sweating and sick, and me, bent over you in prayer -
a mother on her knees begging to alter this, alter you,
your crying jostling the joints of our home, ringing through the steeple of our attic -
I was ready to go with you, both into sickness, and to death - this is our body.

You are the ultimate sacrifice.
Act like it.

Rebecca Summerscales



Crying in the (Poetry) Club

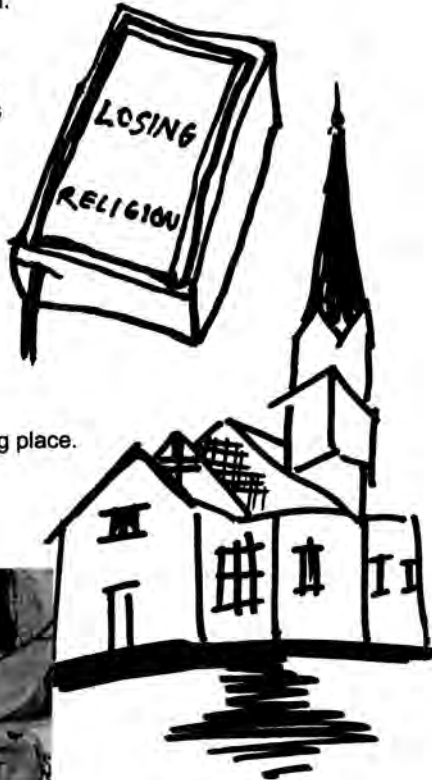
July 2021



A skull full of your character drawn
up on reams, sheets, ever changing figure.
A life grouted into seams of those
profile images I've plastered into thine eyes.
Systematic theology, lacking logical.
Your loyal disciples surround and look to you,
a shining Idol, a family man, oh wonderous face.
A smile I'll get to know; follow into darkest dawns.

We meet, hushed, soaked in precipitation,
approaching you, weary with anticipation.
Striding towards the holy ground.
A pew lighted in soft candle, and then... you.

But you pull out your earphones, the
warmth escapes past your stone lobes.
I tried to join in with your messiah speeches
but my words spluttered and fell
into the red wine like plump leeches.
Memories flood; finding
out the tooth fairy wasn't real,
my parents aren't soulmates,
the sky is blue for a reason.
As you kept spewing
the cold winds began to breeze in.
This was a confession.
Me a priest in fishnets, glittering face.
After consoling him about his mistakes
I stumbled home falling into a sacred resting place.
Cloud in the humdrum religion, on my own.
The next day I lost my religion
and promised to find a faith
in myself, all alone.



December 2021

You bought me a toothbrush.
Blue, shiny, new.
Awaiting my next visit, propped up
next to yours, intimidated. Surrounded by
razors, radox and hazy mirrors.

I found it on the bathroom floor.
Trying to escape. An omen,
cursed object, once a sign of hope.
Did you throw it away?
Is a new girl using it..... anyway.

They take 500 years to decompose,
The relic of a failed courtship
lives on for 500. Toothbrushes in the landfills
remind us that harsh and cold belongs in the trash

let us concentrate on the minty fresh paste,
it foams, refreshes my tongue, ready for a new taste

Present day

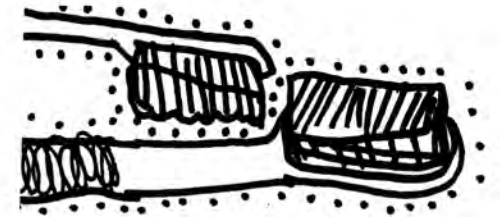
I'm not a structural marvel
or an intricate coded system.
It's simple, I'm a reliable pillow.

I miss most of my exes.
11 years on and I still miss my nan
like we were sat watching Sabrina
on the sofa, just yesterday.

But there's a strength in how
my sentiments are linked,
intertwined gently.
Tapestry of delicate threads.

If the time arrives
I'll love you and myself
densely.
Bolted.
Pillows just can't bruise

Demi Lloyd



Same Moon

We've all been gazing at the same moon

Me, on those tomb-quiet streets, longing for him
On the banks of November rivers, waiting for 'it'
On those walks to work, murmuring tunes to myself

You, on that slick black deck on a foreign sea
On after-dark drives through the Turkish zones
On unholy attempts to commune with the dead

Him, on the wooded slopes to the threshing floor
On feast days, looking for signs of God
On the stoop of a coffee house, woozy with wine

Them, on their wooden boats to another war
On a shore, ears pricked for a siren's call
On an altar, letting blood for angry gods

*

Moon, Selene they call it
Bright old coin
Sometimes gold, sometimes silver
One side Buddha, the other Alexander
Dropped in the seas of time, it bobs
from his to mine
One year to the next, eyes straight ahead and back to the past
Like January, straddling the years
Not just one face – two
and each containing more

*

We've all been burned by the same sun

Me on the playground, kicked in the face
You in the Red Parts, cocking your gun
Him in the vineyards, wary of snakes
Them in their temples, stacking the bones



And in the East it rises
The horizon where our line, our vine, our kind began
The pyramids of us
In dusty streets where vendors swat the flies away
In the ribbon-light of parted drapes
Where one man kisses another's nape
In the shadows of a hidden room
Because sunlight finds disgrace
And throws it open for debate

Polis Loizou





Dropping stitches

They called her Needle.
Descended from a long line of seamstresses on her mother's side,
Needle was a medical miracle.
Where most babies can't bear the weight of their heads,
Needle leapt out of the womb, ready with thread to apologise
for tearing her mother in two.

With a spank, a snip, Needle was cast out into the world.
Crocheting before she could crawl,
Her childhood was a pin prick. Brief, and sharp.
Everyone said she was as cute as a button.

As a teen, Needle went overseas to master her craft.
There she learned how to gather, how to mend
how to spin thread from the stems of flowers given to her as apologies.
Needle graduated with honours. Everyone said that she was "born to backstitch".

Needle returned. Opened an at home boutique.
Soon, throngs of people lined up on her front porch,
waiting to be sewn back together.
Needle smiled to herself. She'd found her purpose.
And when smiling felt tiring, she tacked the corners of her mouth in place,
paid no mind to the piles of fabric mounting in her basement

And before she knows it,
Needle is sinking in the patchwork sands of her own creation.
So steely, so thin - no one can find Needle in this haystack of silk and satin -
the neighbours watch in horror as yards of leather and velour
erupt from the shop front
And there is Needle. Mummified.
Devoured by her own designs.

She strains to pick the tacks from her lips.
Gasps, gurgles, a threaded new-born creature.
Her fingers clawing at the seam of her spine,
She contorts, a kamikaze of cashmere and cotton,
excavating herself from the bondage of her skin.

And with that last stitch, she climbs out of her body bag.
She leaves it for her mother to find, knowing she will forgive her.
The end of a long and silver line.

Cara Thompson



She Watches Over...

'A room of one's own and £500 a year'
That's what women need. No more poverty and no more obedience.
Education, Art, Politics, Economics - End the exclusions.
Virginia Woolf - she knew a thing or two.

But the moon, it watches over, shining down her moon light

The World goes to War, women are needed
Plough the fields, work in the factories
Still no votes, no combat roles and many exclusions.
The women obey with enthusiasm,
Accepting their lot, like a biblical foretelling.

Then yet another War, bigger and uglier.
All hands-on deck.
Bletchley Park code breakers, tapping away in secrecy, in the dark dingy rooms
No one shall know the role she played, No one shall know the role she played,
The munitions factory - enrolling women,
Working long shifts - exhausted,
Women must assist, the country insists.

The Moon above continues with her phases, she understands all
This game that is played, she watches it all

Man, lands on the moon, women demand bigger and better
They will not be chained to their kitchen sinks
Miniskirts and rock music - they have it all
The bank man smiles, refusing yet another mortgage and another account
'You need a male guarantor'

She works long hours, for very little pay
An outdoor worker - lock stitching and overlocking
Home and children, yes still here too
You gotta do - what you gotta do

Manufacturing moves to China - the factories close,
Living in poverty she continues -
Her pension - linked to her husbands
It's what the tax man decided.

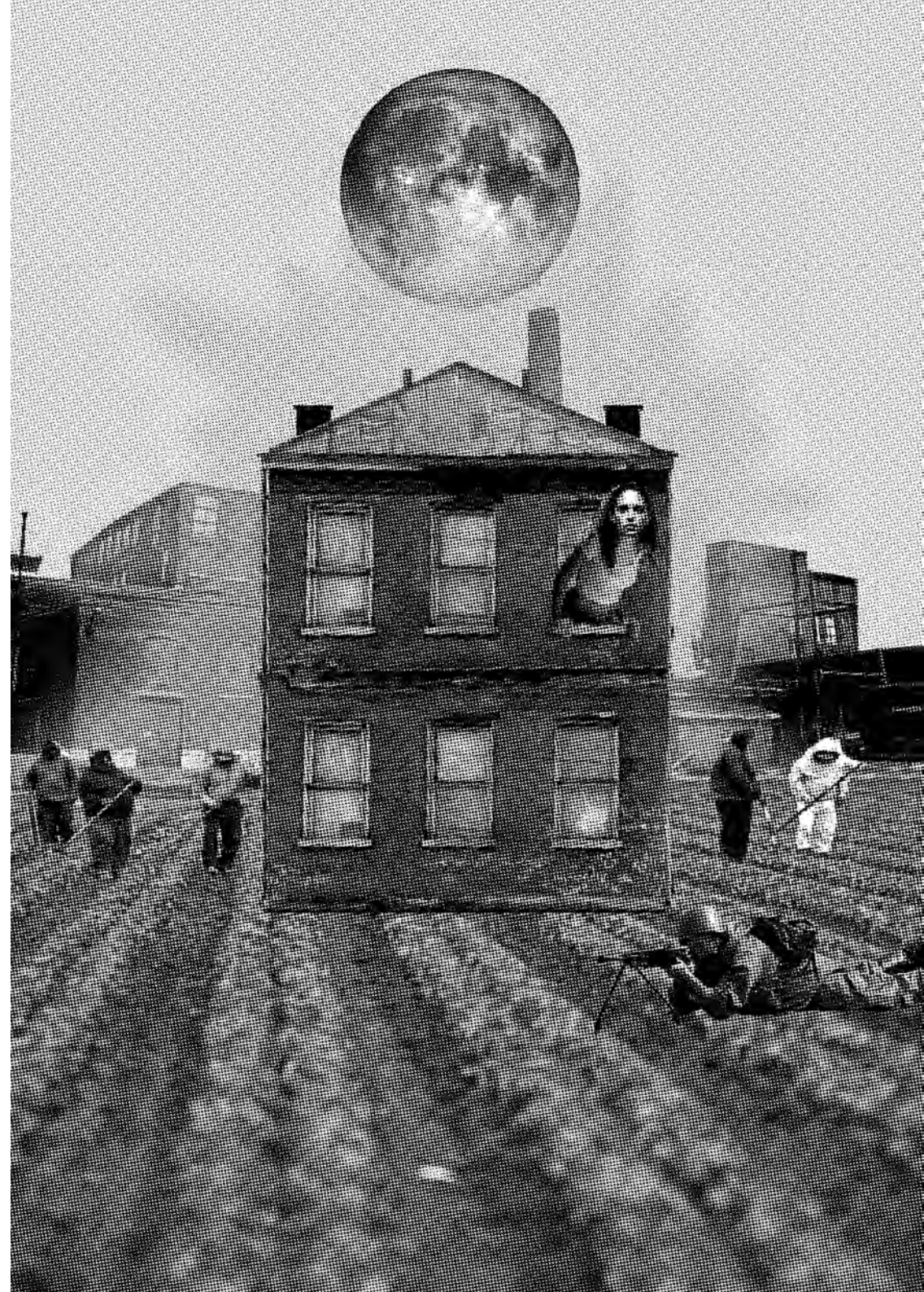
The moon sends down her magical Moon light energy - touching those in need
They connect to the universe - to manifest their desires.

'Hey, Nan. I've got a job working from home, so I can look after the kids,
Run the house and have a work life balance'

Nan nods, 'Outdoor workers are in fashion again'.

'A room of one's own and £500 a year'
What else could a woman need?!

Ferzana Shan



Gelato

I traded in therapy sessions
for an ice cream parlour where
each flavour's a chunk of brain
apple-cored directly from my skull.
I've worked there since I was 17
serving the ghosts of myself
taster spoons of trauma.

Scoop
after
scoop
after
scoop.
One lick to
spiral
me
down
a monochrome
loop.

For three-year-old me
the taste of Cornish is
Vanilla but way better.
Unproblematic, no surprises,
luxurious clotted cream
a cashmere dream that
slips down my tongue.
Vera's hands have playdough
finger pads that stay indented
when I press mine onto hers.
Those same hands mix
ice cream into soft whips
of sand on Portreath shore.
Those same hands hold me
while I poke a foot on the beach
scream seagulls out my mouth
when I feel the grains
in between my toes.

Those same hands write sunshine.



18-year-old me goes straight
to the Italian selection.
Neapolitan shows
half my bloodline sat in two rows
one last supper between us.
Luciano's at the head of the table
sipping red wine, cracking jokes.
We laugh, scoff cannelloni,
and casually choke on
Pino Silvestre aftershave
and wafts of Marlboro smoke.
"Francesca, say basta when
you 'av enough pasta"
Later wrestling the last of
Nestle's Neapolitan out the tub.
Nonna's sauce is the Mesce marinara
flowing through these veins.
My bones constructed with rigatoni
and sheltered in a limoncello membrane.
No toxicity on the spoon this time.
Let's bask in the fragola e vaniglia delight.

Chocolate.
8-year-old me LOVES chocolate.
She comes in once a month,
expensive gold knots hang from her ears,
A gift brought back from BACCARA -
the family jewellers in
Atripalda, Campania.
Her hand reaches
over the counter:
she's greedy, wants to self-serve.
But this chocolate is rich
with a hint of bitterness
there are chunks of Cadbury's
flake hidden in it.
And she's scoffing
scoop
after
scoop
after
scoop,
sliding
down
the
monochrome
loop.



I'm holding her hair.

Golden knots shake
as she wretches
trying to forget
the sick sketches
etched in the cocoa sludge
at the back of her eyelids.

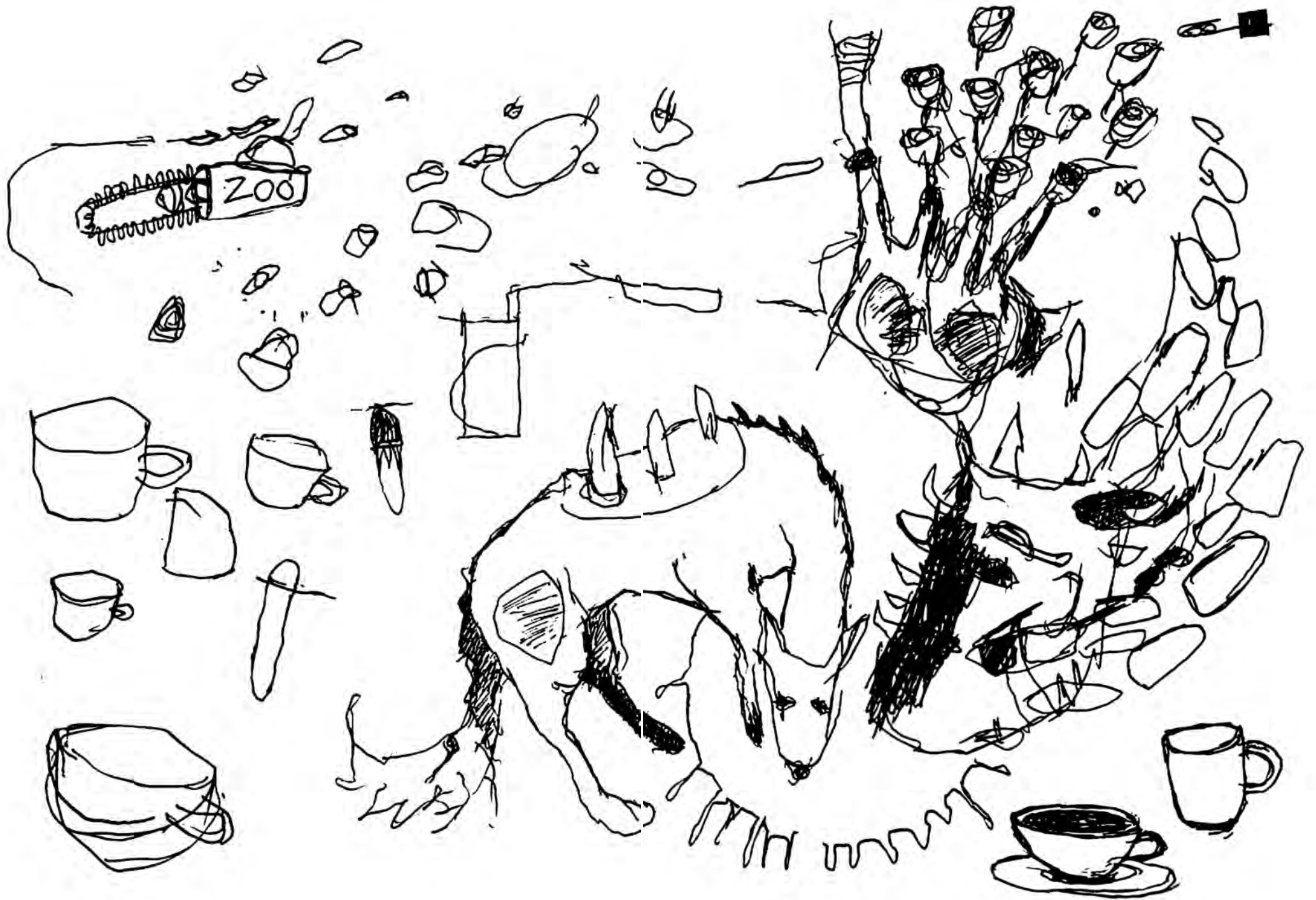
In solidarity,
I pick up a scoop of chunky
chocolate ice cream
shove it in my mouth
flake pieces choke
my insides until I scream
and wretch beside her.

I shut up the shop
mop the brown sick pooling
round the scuffs on the lino floor.
A loud rap on the glass
snaps me out the choc trauma.
My ghost back from the future
smiling wide and mouthing

"Is there any Cornish left?"

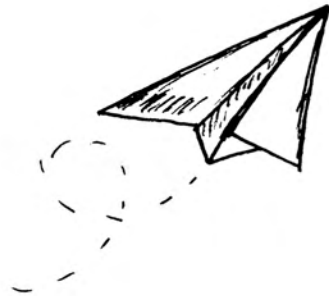
Francesca Mesce





BRENDA'S BABY

I'M TRASH, I'M RUBBISH! WORTH NOTHING
Who am I? I've already been given 3 names before I was 5
Am I really just a number in the system
14 by age still struggle to spell my name
This Mum's passed out again so I can get to the wine cabinet
At least she's got no energy to beat me like the 3rd mum
All night throwing up, down the cistern
Dragged myself to the bed head-spinning way past wavy
My pink hoodie stained, I pull it off now I'm cold
It's silent as dad's engine as it pulls in close
I recognise the tire screech, now I smile daddy home
He found mum passed out, sprawled on the sofa
He saw me the same when he looked over his shoulder
At that point, he left her, daddy attended to me
...
Woke up...
I'M TRASH, I'M RUBBISH! WORTH NOTHING
I tell the social worker this every day
But they don't hear me, I've learnt nobody listens
My "experiences" don't lead to a traditional job
Positivity and love doesn't run in my blood



EULOGY READER

Here lies our dearly beloved
Please rise and bow your heads as we pray for another...
Mmm, Young soul on the to path redemption
One who came to pay penance but I have to mention

This untimely demise should come as a lesson
A Child's pain's in the eyes, pay attention
Neglect the neglected they're double effected
It's unfortunate to see the parent's empty seat section

Addiction wasn't the affliction it was, lack of affection
Moment of silence, time for reflection

You're not trash, NO! you're a blessing
Despite what you said at confessions
So, I say to everybody in attendance
This poor child could be any one of us

If you only away take away one sentence...
Positivity and love should be in your blood

Jay Sandhu



Morning Break

The small child begins to quake
With creeping fear of morning break
As she draws towards her ghastly fate
Festering in that clinking crate.

Bottles squat, which every day
Encroached upon her happy play.
On teacher's word, the happy throng
Would nudge and shove and push along,

Until up front she is presented
The clammy vessel so resented,
Full of something so insipid
She wretches thinking of the lurking liquid.

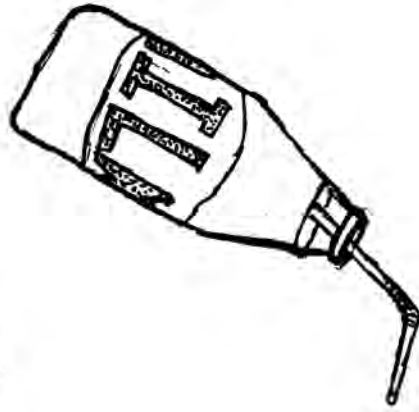
Clasping sweaty glass to chest
Working well shy of her best,
Her features all a scrunch and twist
With tiny straw in tiny fist-

She pokes the foil with zero zeal
'Til finally she breaches the seal.
It frees a stench that makes her gag,
The corners of her mouth do sag

To think of having now to drink
The source of this malodourous stink!
At first, she eye balls thirsty friends
Within the huddle, who she could lend

Her drink to sup 'til it is dry
Which all goes well, 'til by and by,
Growing bolder, she chances the thrill
Of surreptitious little spills

Upon the floor of the heinous stuff,
Which many shoes then do scuff,
So she mingles, spills and leaves no trace,
Just fleeting guilt across her face.



But one day, a stealthy pour
Altogether misses the floor...
A high stakes target she has hit
She unloads into... the class sandpit!

A deed too outrageous to ignore
Causing considerable uproar.
Well after that how can she hide?
She is separated to one side,

Now her methodology has been spotted
Her own teacher she is allotted.
All opportunities henceforth denied
A guard installed squarely beside her.

With full bottle firmly in her hand
Alone, Shamed! She's made to stand,
Lips pursed in pain round thin blue straw
As past taste buds she tries to draw

The bilious bovine effluvia down,
Tears soon compliment her frown
The cream most foul cloying inside,
Effluent yellow and sickly it slides

Down her throat, as if clogged with pus,
Must she forever suffer this gruesomeness?
How could anyone possibly think
It fair to force a child to drink

Something so putrid that she can say
It makes her sick to this day?
So I beg of you parents and your ilk
Spare your children the horrors of MILK!

Claire Lady





You said:

"What do you want for breakfast? Cereal or toast?"

As my nine year old feet thud thud thud down the stairs;
 Sleepy eyes, barely open, and unbrushed hair.
 Fuelling my body with soggy rice krispies,
 All washed down with Jack Daniel's whiskey.

I said:

"Is he ok?"

You said:

"No. He's passed away."

The globe is a still flame.

An edge of adolescent body looking for someone to blame.

My warmth is torn out of my left,

Half of it stolen from my chest;

Disconnected and withering;

The bottle on the table, shimmering.

You said:

"Maybe you're confused today?"

I said:

"No, mum; I am gay."

Exposed completely by the three words

I swore would never whistle through my lips.

Concealing my truth, until my solar eclipse.

I lost a mother and a father; until they realised

they would lose another child:

Me.

A waiting game turned me to potions, as they could set me free.

You said:

"You're young! You can drink as much as you want!"

At first, it was fun.

Never did I think I'd use this substance to make me feel numb

Devouring more and more any time, every day of the week,

Until my heart gave up, and took her last beat.

You said:

"Every time I see you, you're always drunk or high.

You need to stop, or you're gonna collapse and die."

Everyone overlooked the sincerity because of my age.

They couldn't see my cry for help; intellect disengaged.
The laced juice and fairy dust brought out the truth from my core;
All of what I thought were my flaws.
My cursed memories, that made me a cursed memory for others.

You said:
"When the clock hits 22:22, you think of me and I think of you"

I said:
"I'm sorry. I can't love you."

I was trying to escape, while you forced me to stay,
I was binded with tape,
You were blinded with a concept of love;
Living in this dream world, only looking up above.
Ignoring my seemingly incomprehensible state,
Every time it occurred,
Again and again.

You said that when you touch my lips, you can make me alive.
Then why
Do you
Make me feel like my insides have been scrubbed and erased?
You've unpacked my vital organs, shredded my binding veins;
Distorted my self worth.
Now the clock is moving slower,
And I'm still waiting for the alarm to go off.

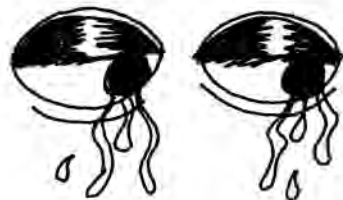
Silence remains.
Taking center stage.
I wait for the pain to tick on by;
Instead it defines me.
Imposed on the past
Each slice of laceration entirely disfiguring my being.

One thing that's not spoken about enough today
is a young person's addiction that never goes away.
It stays right there in their head, and taunts them,
because they're too young to rest.

You said:
"Na-night, God bless."

You still love me;
Even when I love myself, less and less.

Aalia Zorko



Dom's Next Night

Puff of smoke.
Chitter chatter clattering
like swords.
Stuporous eyes battling
to see straight to dawn.

Dom is on a mission,
feet thunder clapping the street.
The scent of the club coaxing him,
hanging in the air
like freshly baked banana bread.

Urgent blood
booming a bassline in his head,
Dom seeks the company
of his absent-minded friends –
he spots Jonny.

There he is,
leaning against the wall
amongst a 'Where's Wally?' group of people.
Dom pirouettes his way through,

"Mate, why ain't you in the queue?"

Jonny's eyes are a solar eclipse.

The moon sits in his iris.
As full as tonight's.
It's blocking out the light.

"Waiting for you."

Jonny chews on nothing but the words.

His hand lifts
as if its ready to slap
Dom grabs it,
a two-man clap,
They draw in close
and pat each other's backs.



Pulling away,
a small package strays
from one palm to another.
Jonny's smile morphs.
A Cheshire Cat grin dwarfs his face.
Inside
the lights
mimic the people.
Chaotic and dancing,
darting around with no real reason.

Dom tries to find solace in a human face.
He tries to connect with a pacing person.

Puff of smoke.
Chitter chatter clattering
like swords.
Stuporous eyes battling
to see straight to dawn.

Black holes placed where eyes used to sit,
lone limbs exploring this pit.
Awareness dimmed
by the drugs and rum.

Dom decides to join them.

Over there,
Jonny roars reuniting with a troop of baboons,
a bunch of boys barking in the corner.

Dom takes his chance to slip to the loo.

Step step
lock click
sniff sniff
quick quick.

Dom stumbles out.
Lights louder than before.
Music brighter now.

He approaches the bar,
and a feather of a girl floats behind it.
She turns and grips Dom's gaze,
with galaxy eyes and butterfly lashes,
throws one back,
inviting him
to play a game of catch.



But his thoughts
are shifting tectonic plates.
His pupils are pools of tar.
His skin is inside out.
His heart is a flickering star, dying.

His nostrils,
fated to fail him,
bleed a bead of vermilion.

He escapes to the garden,
though no grass grows here.
Just dandelions peeping through
the cracks in the concrete.

There are puffs of smoke.
Chitter chatter clattering
like swords.
Stuporous eyes battling
to see straight to dawn.

Rachelle Foster





THE TAROT POEM

The High Priestess
You sit in the echoing unspoken
Depending on your silent advocate

The Tower
Cold, wet despair supplants your hollowed heart
Crumbling the façade so long maintained

The Magician
Your cunning makes this moment manifest
Each trick you have performed has led you here

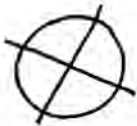


Temperance
The scales are level, you find your balance
Moderation on the terms you dictate

The Devil
That determined path, paced unrelentant
As you commit to the extraordinary

Judgement
All forgiven, no trial to convict
Coaxing absolution like the piper

The World
Here the fulfilment no one disputes
The end and the beginning interchange



Death
At a sunset, bedecked in finery
The inevitable change is coming



The Star
All scrubbed clean in the privacy of hope
Your renewal is not for witnessing



The Sun
Open and unashamed you are joyous
Riding with your radiance, nothing hid



The Hierophant
Now fall supplicant to the status quo
Doctrines bound by a silent legacy



The Chariot
Control is yours as you see fit to steer
Promised with such focus and furrowed brow



The Wheel of Fortune
In your turn you toss a coin in the air
And follow the path of consequences



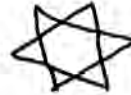
The Lovers
Go seek your partnered peace in compromise
Comfort in the soft warmth of another



The Emperor
Scaffolded by order of the mighty
Held up by systems you inherited



The Hermit
Caution schooled by abstract introspection,
Your conscience murmurs underneath the noise



The Empress
Enthroned in your bounty you are supreme
Completed by abundance you've grown



The Fool
Unbound, guideless as a child you proceed
Flirting with a precipice you can't see



Justice
Consequence will meet consequence in time
And a subjective balance will be struck



Strength
Massage your limbs in an assuredness
Revelling in the power that you find



The Hanged Man
You start to see the world turning over



The Moon
Uncertain you address the fearful lies
That must be ended ere the moonrise



Ben Harrison

Wild Choices

An old wooden lobster holds its claw in the air,
road signs squeak in the wind.
I grip your hand as we cross the road.

A crow swoops along the balcony
above our heads as we clop
inside the old saloon.

There's a Christmas tree in the corner.
Baubles made from cowboy hats, diamonds and hearts.
The old boys are sat around
reading their futures
from a deck of cards.

The glow in the moon beats down onto
the dirt outside, where the Ace of Spades
digs into the earth, where a wolf lurks howling
at the bloody crater of a bullet in his chest.

'Everyone's dealt with so much death already.'

You wipe the mud from your forehead
ask me to give you a hand
burying the bastard.
I weakly pull at the edges
wondering about his mother.

You tip your hat as he rolls into the hole,
thuds back into the heartbeat of the earth.

The fingertips of our barkeep pulse
against your whisky bottle, slides it across
the mahogany bar, and when it reaches your palm,
knocking the Queen of Hearts off the edge of the deck,
you spit on the glass.
Polish it with your handkerchief
before taking a swig.

The gramophone twinges with
Hey Good Lookin' Whatcha-
Hey Good Lookin' Whatcha-
Hey Good Lookin' Whatcha -

You flick a gold coin in the air
turn to me and say
'We're gonna own this town.'

Bridie Squires



Is This the Queue?

Is this the queue?

It is
A perfume slip stream
Where I hang on one hip and word
Preserve side by side
Exchange decay
In 50 ml monologues
Slow dance in small spaces
Sharing next day delivery static

This one's free

And I am bursting to sit in this spin
To send sorry paper bouquets through the lowest letterboxes
From this capsule of felt tip free verse
Where every swear is a sonnet
and
listen
Just outside they are shedding the smiles
They tried on in the dark

*There's no loo roll, this one's blocked
Will you hold the door? It doesn't lock*

This is our tiled sanctum of survival
We echo together from our confessionals and
I confide from my own handwritten hollow
*I've lost my friends
We didn't choose a place
before the night took us*
I'm absolved by an anonymous manicure
Feet blessed in God knows what
You can hang with us until you find them
It says

*Oh babe, please don't cry
It's alright, I'll hold your hair*



No judgement, remember
You've been there before and
Soon off the spectators' seats
To read the night by the sink's sheet music
In chorus
Fly tipped tissue kisses, loose acrylics, eyelash wishes
Resting on wilted lime wedges
This is where compliments refract
Repaid from fresh lips

Ah thanks so much, so do you

And still we pretend we don't feel it
That thickness
That threatens to slip through the triptych
That lands heavy on locked doors
That grabs for hands stamped with promise
That lines a stomach with shame
That falls from dehydrated mouths that say
I don't get it
She's only had two drinks

Can you zip me back up?
Into these man-made expectations
Purified with tequila salt
And poorly reapplied politeness
To flood the night's hardest edges and
Flirt with characters as outdated
As our mascot's triangle dresses

Does she hear us?
On the other side of the door
Overflowing
From this room of one's own
Where we leave the breath before
Text me when you get home

Sophie Diver



Speed, Distance, Time

...18 years old, walking home along Alfreton Road
my ears remember the baseline pulsating
from the Garage party my mum didn't know I was at,
remembers hearing the car creeping behind
my nostrils remember sunk smoke
unravelling into the night from the tinted windows
the four pairs of male eyes
measuring the width of my hips and waistline
how one of them called '*yo, slimmaz*'
and another bragged, '*my dick will snap her spine*',
how they followed me
my hands remember becoming fists
how my nails cut imprints into my palms
I remember how I escaped, but the month after
Zena was found bruised and swollen.

I remember walking from the supermarket in Prima Porta
the thread like road, the 34 degrees sun
my skin remembers how my hairs stood on end
when two men in a white van hissed
'Bella figa quanta costa'
the chugging engine
my muscles remember how they tensed
when the van stopped, the doors opened
my wrists remember their clammy grip
how they cornered me against the thick green
how quickly I became feral and scratching
my teeth remember how they clenched
when a male friend casually advised
'you shouldn't wear shorts when walking alone'

I decided not to call the police
my hips remembered the eyes of the policeman in Kingston
how they strip searched my safety
the dark of night and his eyes inescapable
how he rubbed his groin then laughed and said
'ah just mans nature, yuh nuh'.

My body records the undulating violence
that disfigures a walk
into a mathematical equation
speed, distance, time.
How slow is that car creeping? How fast can I run?
How close is that man walking?
Will I make it home, this time?

loney Smallhorne





2. ~~Dr. Williams~~ for a lady

or Superstition
is wonder that's
given up on
enquiry

• This is the last time
I look to you
through the burning frame

in the burning house
~~down~~ the ~~burning~~





**nonsuch
studios**

dizzy ink.



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