FROM BENEATH THE KEYBOARD

A COLLECTION OF STORIES
FROM BENEATH
THE KEYBOARD

—A COLLECTION OF STORIES AND POETRY

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DESIGNED BY J. HEUDEBERT BROWN.

This book is dedicated to Jo Fremantle, who died in November 1986

FROM BENEATH THE KEYBOARD

THE INTENTION of this book originally, was to compile a collection of "anarchist short stories," but everyone seemed to have a different idea of the term "anarchy," which is great because that's what anarchy is, after all—you cannot impose rules on anarchist writers, it's a contradiction in terms.

Another intention was to publish everything without discrimination; this proved impossible for a number of different reasons (money) but it would be wrong to say that the material was selected. It chose itself. There was no problem in deciding whether to include the poetry, it was just so good it couldn't be ignored.

All the material in the book reflects not so much a desire for a lawless society as an unmistakable intention to warn of a future without hope, a future itself disintegrating into an unmanagable and socially disastrous state. Anarchists are not all the stereotyped drug taking "terrorists without a cause" or middle-class drop-outs, as the mass media would have us believe, even if CROWBAR, original publishers of SQUATROADS, could confirm that there are a few such creatures around.

Just as SQUATROADS satirises such conceptions, UPRISING takes the situation a stage further to illustrate a not so fictional scene in which all such aliens from an impossibly restricted society are terrorised out of existence until they finally turn on their captors—sounds familiar?

On the other side of the scale are the tales from very real situations with frightening implications. THE WAR AT 3 O'CLOCK tells of a young boy subjected to the double standards of a priest who preaches peace then beaths him, set in a situation of impending war, sordid in fact, but glorified by the comics the boy reads—a story of confusion, guilt and sadness.

Double standards are just as self evident in BACK, a reflection of a capitalist society gone haywire with a moral in it somewhere about naivety and wisdom.

BARCELONA: WORKING DAY and LIGHTHOUSE are both about what it is like to be human, two isolated experiences of characters caught up in situations out of control, senses of isolation, frustration and hope, that vital spark. The surreal episodes in OF THAT BRUTE ENGINE transform that spark into a veritable fire, fighting for freedom against the warning of the tolerance of situations getting out of hand.

It is too easy to accept without question.

J Heudebert Brown

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Illustration by Graham Harwood, from 'The Story Of John The Ordinary Man'

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SQUATROADS 1, from Crowbar

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BARCELONA: WORKING DAY by Matthew Wren

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THE WAR AT THREE O'CLOCK by Frank Jackson

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OF THAT BRUTE ENGINE by Dave Haden

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Illustration by Graham Harwood, from 'The Story Of John The Ordinary Man'

Special thanks to Leveller Graphics for the use of their typesetting facilities.
ALEX LEANED CASUALLY against his desk, beside his console. Jean stood a metre in front of him, the camera on her helmet auto-focused and ready to transmit.

"So, Alex, when are you leaving?" Jean asked.

"Today?" Alex shrugged. "Today I suppose," he mumbled.

"Wouldn't you like to give us a few details?" Jean suggested hopefully.

"No, not really," Alex admitted. "Anyone who's really interested can call me up on the console.

"Please Alex be a bit more cooperative, as a favour to me," Jean urged. She didn't particularly like running the TV station but someone had to do it and it had been a year since her last turn the night before.

"Oh come on, Jean, we all know TV is redundant," Alex snapped.

"You bastard!" Jean took off the camera and tried to smash Alex. That at least gave the fifty thousand consumers a laugh. Alex skipped out of reach and left the room. Slightly calmer she checked the console on her wrist, viewing figures had jumped by 17%. Combing her pink hair away from her eyes she switched to auto.

"Sorry folks," she smiled, "you all know what a shit Alex is. As far as I'm concerned he can go back himself. Anyways you can watch a rerun of an acid trip till I get over Drew Wilson's flat where he'll show you some more masturbation techniques. See you then." She switched to ran and the acid trip was broadcast. That was the trouble with local broadcast stations, they were full of shit. Still she only had another two days to go before someone else got lumbered with the job.

As she left Alex's flat she saw him packing away dozens of pairs of disposable underwear in preparation for his expedition to Brixton. She knew that it was fairly safe to go there now, especially after the Salvation '87 campaign, but she remembered her last trip out of Richmond, it was a nightmare. She spent two weeks in Camberwell for her PhD in social-antropology.

Alex saw her to the door. "Fancy coming? I could wait a couple of days until you had that over?" He gestured at the TV equipment.

"Me? Go with you?" Jean was shocked. "You must be jokin', Jez. I just hope the natives cut you up into little pieces and cook you over charcoal stoves..."
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"Me? Go with you?" Jean was shocked. "You must be joking, Jool. I just hope the natives cut you up into little pieces and cook you over charcoal stoves."

"Charcoal stoves?" he chuckled, "and what about the olive oil and the lemon rind that you put on when you're angry you're bourgeois through to the bone."

"Tuck off!" Jean turned and left, seething. Once in the car she keyed in Drew Wilson's name and whilst the car set off she dropped some tabs and settled down for the trip.

Alex laughed out loud once she'd gone. He had only invited her on impulse. She was the kind that he didn't really like women, especially following his gay consciousness course. But then he was a policeman like men that much either. It was a pity he would miss Drew Wilson's masurbation techniques but he felt it was time to go. He programmed the console for home security, set it to stun on approach and kill on entry. As a final thought he set it to record Drew's programme, he really was a slob at heart.

The car, a vintage 1966 VW Golf hatchback, was laden with supplies for the expedition, guns, food, some cash, dope and a couple of wrist contraceptives. He really was an explorer, twice he'd done the Paris red light district and he'd only pulled out of the Watts LA trip because of a strained palsy muscle. But his favourite was Brixton, dirty, vicious and still out of control.

As always he set the car on manual drive so that he could get used to driving before he really left the safety of the suburbs. He asked for music and the car asked him what he really fancied. He thought for a moment and decided on Grass, he always felt pure after a blast of Stations or 'Feeding the Five Thousand'. He felt good, he smorked some coke and let things go easy.

Trev stood at the window, peered through the wooden slats that made the_marble facade and saw the thick black smoke belching into the sky. It was a nice contrast against the dark blue of the weather.

"What are you looking at?" Alice wanted to know, she didn't like windows, not since she'd been hit in the shoulder by a sniper's rifle.

"It's the Barrier Block, look's like it's gone up for good," said Trev, reluctantly turning away. It was a good sight, the dark red flames flickering across the brown flats, eating quickly though the dam that had never held anything back.

"Probably the Jesus freaks burning out the Rastas, they've been getting biblical lately," Even as Alice spoke he work ed diligently filling the bottles with mysterious fluids.

"You sure these are gonna work?" Trev picked one up and balanced it in his hand, it felt right, a nice weight and easily gripable for a long and accurate throw.

The same formula that the racist bastards two months back, Alice smiled. She took real pleasure in her tasks, she refused to accept any of that science equals bang philosophy.

Trev went back to the window, the fire was just as furious, the flames threatening to throw where they choose. Now that the Barrier's gone I suppose the Rastas will want to take up some other place. D'you reckon they'll come here? Alice shook her head. "Not unless they want to come up against the Women's Militia, no Christians here I can tell you."

Trev nodded but didn't want to say anything. Whilst he agreed with the work that the Militia did he couldn't really cope with their pagan mysticism. Still, at least some of the anarchists, like Alice, managed to see things a bit.

"Finished." Alice stood up and screwed the tops of the bottles tightly. The latest batch of self exploding petrol bombs were packed for use against the small hard core of punks and skins, all fascists, who were attacking an Afro-American family across the street. The Black People's Army had tried selective cappings but the racists took it as a point of honour not to give in. And so the BPA approached the anarchists for help. The BFA were okay with guns but not too good with incendiaries. With anarchists it was vice versa.

Trev carefully placed the bombs in a plastic Harrod bag, he noted that one slip and the whole flat would go up but he was pretty well used to it. You kept a tight area and got on with the job. Alice cleared some of the more volatile ingredients and unlocked the front door. The balcony was clear so they both went out and double locked the door.

The streets was pretty well empty, except for a few brave souls out doing some last minute visiting. It was Thursday of course. The police were due for their weekly patrol, so people either got inside for safety or got in a good position for some snipping.

The flats across the way were deserted, the only sign of life were the fresh turds on the stairs and the puddles of yellow piss. The Afro-American family lived on the third floor, the nearest near the stairs.

Alice knocked on the door, two rapid knocks and a slap, and half a minute later the door was open and they were met by a tall West Indian in a tatty line in clothes and a sawn off shotgun. Silently he gestured to them to go in. Trev went in, clenching the Harrod bag, and Alice followed.

The Indian woman was at the kitchen table breast feeding her baby girl.

"How's the little one?" Alice asked, taking a seat at the table.

"He's okay, and the baby's fine too," laughed the Indian woman. Her real name was India but she preferred to be called Afa.

"We've got these," Trev pulled out a bomb and proudly displayed it to the Indian.

The black man came back into the room, he was wearing a police uniform complete with badge.

"What, Ms. Afa? Where did you get that from?" Alice asked pointing at the uniform.

Mursla laughed and turned around, he picked his finger through a little hole in the back. With the blood stain carefully cleaned away, it was almost impossible to see the bullet hole against his dark skin. All five of them, the adults and the baby girl laughed out loud.

After eight years in the force, three of those as Major, Tony Kinnock still felt a knot of fear in his guts whenever he went on duty. Thankfully as Major in the National Police Constabulary he only had to go out on patrol every six weeks. It was all the fault of the bleeding heart liberals at the Home Office. After the semi-war of Operation Salvation back in '92 they had decided that each cop had to do at least one day every six days for Community Service. As Major this meant a gut stirring day on patrol in Brixton once every six weeks. And every six days his ulcer gave him hell, but what else could he do. With an IQ of 74 and weight 300 lbs he was not very easy.

Actually patrol wasn't that bad. Six cops (he being the superior officer) would get into an Armed Social Worker Vehicle (ASWV) and cruise the streets of Brixton for five hours. This usually consisted of being a moving target for five hours. "Brother, when the darkies get a mob together they'll never light a rocketee to pierce the armour it usually meant a lot of noise and no danger. The last SAM 35 had been confiscated in Brixton in April '83 so there was little to worry about."

The younger cops loved patrol, they lived for it. They were safe inside the ASWV and could wipe out assorted blacks, whites, and assorted Others. Sometimes even the cops got a bit heated, especially when there were disputes about who was the killer, that was all part of the game.

The cops' union, the Grassroots Mobilising Committee for Civil Servants (Amalgamated), was actively engaged in a campaign to increase patrols to at least four a week per area, but the Home Office and National Commander were against the idea. Two hours into the patrol and events had already progressed from the normal. The ASWV had gone down Colerhourb lane quietly, a few snipers had wanted their ammuni-
tion, that was all. But as they passed the fortified automatic defenses of the barrier block it was up in flames. Major Kinnock even let out a yelp of pure joy at the sight, the Barrier Block held by memories for him. During Saluta
tion '97 the Brixton People's Soviet had taken the building and it functioned for three long and bloody months. In the end it took the SAS to pull it down.
In a fit of uncharacteristic excitement Kinnock ordered full speed ahead. The place really was alright, thugs once left behind on the sky. A cascade of broken glass turned into molten droplets and rained down.
The ASWV stopped at the impact of the inferno and the com
copers watched, stuck dumb with joyous amazement.
"Do you reckon they're niggering still in here?" one of the troopers asked hopefully.
"Nah, course not," replied the other. "I don't see why not. Immolation is a holy and beautiful con
ccept," said the Sergeant and wiped a tear from his eye. At this they all fell silent, filled with reverence and respect.
Suddenly a large claw of flame shot, some black and some white, blinded by the smoke they stumbled forward like zombies. The cops stuck inside the ASWV were not prepared for the suddenness of the attack. Curiously silently he accelerated, luckily once outside the suburban street the road was lined with innumerable and adventuress ventured into the inner city. He switched on his data loaders, cameras and audio, and swept quickly up Acne Lane.

"Move!" cried Major Kinnock and the judges and jereen
ted to silence. The ASWV jerked forward and clear of burn
ning rubble. The Barrier Block at last began to collapse on itself, the walls imploding and the storeys disintegrating. By nightfall all that would be left would be the cracked shell, smouldering cold in the darkness.
The ASWV rumbled down the street away from the burning and its dead Rantas. Kinnock directed that they head through Loughborough Estate. A snout had informed the Freedom of Information Bureau (the reformed Special Safety Co-ordinated Task Force) had been called the Special Branch) that Loughborough was where the revolutionaries had regrouped. Furthermore the anarchists, feminists, and se
tiplists were working together on a minimal basis. Kinnock knew that if this were true it would be a disaster, but he doubted that. The rooming houses had serious disagreements, all attempts at unity had failed in the past.
At the junction of Coldharbour Lane and Loughborough Road they received the first petrol bombs of the day. It was sugared on the course, but the Bombay Bomb would do at high temperature. Some of the rocksies fired a few rounds, but it was a desultory sort of response, the petrol bomber was well hidden in the ASWV and continued looking at the flames through the periscope.
"Sit, look at that, what a sight," Kinnock gaped at his console. Kinnock looked at his own screen. Another vehicle was in the vicinity, the computer couldn't provide accurate info on such an old sort of car, all it could do was provide the type. A VW Golf fireproof hatchback, year uncertain. "Attempt radio contact," Kinnock barked. He wasn't sure, either it was

a trendy tourist from the suburbs or the anarchists using cars again.

"No man, da is a real ting," Mutsha explained joyously. "Magazine's going down, it's a general 'cert Weekly to Everybody to the Barrier."
"But the Barrier burn down guy," said Baldy, relaxing.
"What they burn down the Barrier mat going down."
"At one time the bald head man realised the urgency of the situation. What could force a massive reinforced tank to turn back, not snipers, not molotovs, not bricks, something big! The bald head man switched on the microphone for his broadcast. "Oh brothers and sisters, oh friends and comrades, we have joyous news, wonderful news. Arise, wretched of the earth! Arise! Arise! All to our posts, all to our posts. Pigs at the Barrier! Oh friends and lovers and people!"

All over Brixton, and into Camberwell and Stockwell and Clapham people heard the magic words, the words of joy, the best and the trusty people. The word spread from mouth to mouth, heart to heart, soul to soul. Guns were made ready, bombs unpacked, sticks and stones, barricades were ready to go.

In Brixton they had long been ready, blacks and whites, gays and straights, young and old. The miniflux minutes of people were on their way to the ashes that had been the Barrier Block.
The held head Boreen went with joy at the thought of the uprising and the frustration at being away from the action.

"Hey, Afia called to the others. The pigs are going back the way they came."
"What? Mutsha wasn't sure he heard right. The pigs never turned back, they followed one route and stuck to it."

Alepo peered out the window. Bare enough the cummy but powerful tank was doing a three point turn at the junction. "Something going on," she said and all they knew she was right.

I'll get the rest of the block unit."

Mutsha, shotgun in hand, stepped off to round the rest of the RPA unit in the block.

The ASWV stopped in front of the VW Golf. Alex didn't even notice, he was weeping bitter tears of sadness at the loss of the Barrier. His slyly over the flames was near the fire, But around him swirled swathes of black smoke and ash.

Man has built many monuments of pain and suffering but could he do it with the ASWV. "He's one of ours," the Sergeant reported, the infra-red detector saw the he resulted in Alex's head, a cross between a criminal and a crown.

The silky bastard could get himself killed," Kinnock sighed.

The effects of the coke were beginning to wear off, so Alex swallowed his last few tabs of acid. The flames were begin
ning to spread and the body of the car was deliquescent from the outside walls which still seemed strong. In the embers he saw a few household objects which had managed to survive. He pieced them together and the bare bone of the embers were glowing and the crisp cracking seemed to be rhythmic music. The sight of Alex, even when it's down to this. The Barrier blows my mind. He almost jumped up and down when he saw the statue. In amongst the glowing embers was a massed pile of hairs which somehow survived in one piece. Alex couldn't tell whether it was the acid but the bust, still upright, surrounded by glowing patterns of orange and reds, seemed the holiest of shrines. He zoomed in and began the litany and liturgy to the Lion of Judah, an act of thanksgiving for he'd learned from the fundamentalist Nazis of Forest Hill.

Mutsha rapped twice and then slapped his hand down on the door. "Who can we get the baby to?" said Afia and smiled sweetly

"Oh come on, I'm no good with kids," Trev pleaded.

Alex took the baby Hope, "Well, get set for a crash course in consciousness raising," and handed her to Trev, who reluctantly handed over the bombs.

"It's not the fascists is it?" demanded a young black man, his bald head glistening. "What happened to the alarm system?"

"No, it's not. Kinnock switched off the megaphone in response. "But the whole idea was to let the tourists know that we acknowledge his warnings. This meant that either the tourists was too near the flames to hear or he was a deaf reporter from one of the TV for the Daily Star. Kinnock wasn't sure he felt his sphincter contract and his butt get sweaty. Things were not going well. The next step was obvious, someone had to go out and get the hell out, Kinnock didn't want to do it. He hated pissing in the face of the residents. "I won't ask for volunteers," the trooper looked disappointed, "I know you all want to go. As the senior off

The Sergeant shrugged. He zipped up his protective suit, donned the helmet, grabbed the gun and was ready to go. A rook checked the periscopes, it was difficult to tell with the smoke, and the heat sensor was useless by the fire, but it looked all clear. The henchman and the Sergeant crawled out, whistling the 'Clash of Guns'. He looked around, felt sad, and casually strode towards the ruins and thousands.

Alex saw the flash of silver in the corner of his eye. He was almost by the door, the door was a silver door, but he could not stop him from being approached. He His, Alex thought, the Lion of Judah and a spacerman. "It's too much!" He zoomed onto the astronaut and tried a negative effect, the blue sky became black, the flames were black holes, the Lion of Judah became a Teutonic Aryan. Alex stepped back trying to take in the whole cosmic significance of the scene. He stepped and fell back into the flames which suddenly leapt up around him. He seemed to fall for an age, an epochn he. The flames licked around him, somehow it didn't seem hot. His last thought was, shit man this is almost like spontaneous combustion, it's so natural and healthy.

The Sergeant stood and watched the body burning brightly, somehow he had expected a lot of screaming, or even some kind of catharsis, but even if the smoke was not. He tried to remember which Eastern religion practiced body burning. "There is certainly no damnation or immolation something to do with injections? After a while he got bored and headed back to the ASWV.

Alice sharpened herself against the rubble, the smoke offered some camouflage but the wind could change leaving her ex
posed. To her right some of the syndicalists had come up and had started to clean up, but they were calling it nominal
lyed after. The spaceman cop looked bored and in no hurry as he headed back to his truck. At the barrier there, had been the hatch opened in the roof of the pig truck and he took a step up. The smoke was still smouldering.

Alice seized her chance, she stood up, balanced the bomb, pulled back and chuck it. She hit the dirt, praying her aim was true. It exploded with a bang and a flash. A burst of machine gun fire from the syndicalists and all was silent. The smoke was blowing away from inside the ASWV. Two dead cops lay on the ground. A triumphant cry and suddenly the streets were filled with hundreds of hap

The Women's Militia put the fire in the pig truck and an anarchist woman took the controls. The truck was theirs.

Already the first clashes were taking place on the Bat
ters/Chelsea border, Strathern had fallen. The Revolu
tion had broken out in the streets of Brixton. The Revolution had begun. The REVOLUTION had BEGUN!

THE BEGINNING.
tion, that was all. But as they passed the fortified automatic benches, they offered the Barter Block was up in flames. Major Kinnock even let out a yelp of pure joy at the sight, the Barter Block held hundreds of memories for him. During Salina-
tion’3d the Bruxton People’s Soviet had taken the building and it functioned for three long and bloody months. In the end it took the tax money to keep it up. In a feat of uncharacteristic excitement Kinnock ordered full speed ahead. The place really was stalk, tongues once outstretched, held high in the sky. A cascade of broken glass turned into molten droplets and rained down.

The ASWV stopped at the junction with the inferno and the cop-
ners watched, stuck dumb with joyous amazement.

“You reckon they’reingers still in there?” one of the rookiers asked.

“Nah, course not,” replied the other. “I don’t see why not. Immolation is a holy and beautiful con-
cept,” said the Sergeant and wiped a tear from his eye. At this they all fell silent, filled with reverence and respect. Suddenly the door of the car opened and they all to the sound of music, spinning, singing, the scene was a canvas of staircases, three black and white, blurred by the smoke they stumbl-

ing forward like zombies. The cops stuck safely inside the ASWV

scooped the last of the unconscious man woman was

and beheaded at the head of a line of people who had shown no reac-

tion.

“Okay, reverse and get back to the Barrier.”

“Hey,” Afa called to the others. “The pigs are going back the way they came.”

“What?” Mustafa wasn’t sure he’d heard right. The pigs never turned back, they followed one route and stuck to it. However, in the heart of the dense crowd, by some miracle, a powerful tank was doing a three point turn at the junction. “Something going on,” she said and all they knew was right.

I’ll get the rest of the block unit.” Mustafa, shotgun in hand, turned to off to round the rear of the BPA unit in the block.

“Who can we get the baby to?” said Afa and smiled sweetly

at Trev.

“Oh come on, I’m no good with kids,” Trev pleaded.

Alice took the baby Hope, “Well, get set for a crash course in consciousness raising,” and handed her to Trev, who rehun-
tantly handed over the baby.

“Let’s get going,” Trev picked up the Harrods bag with the baby.

“Mustafa rapped twice and then slapped his hand on the door “Who can we get the baby to?” said Afa and smiled sweetly at Trev.

“Come on man, it’s me,” he explained pushing his way in to the flat.

“It’s not the fascists is it?” demanded a young black man, his bald head glinting. “What happened to the alarm system?”

“No man, da is reda ring.” Mustafa explained joyously. “He’s gone down, it’s a general ‘ert. Everybody to the Barrier.”

“Barter Barrier down boy,” said Baldy, relaxing.

“What the hell is that?” Baldy asked.

At once the bald headed man realised the urgency of the situation. What could cause a massive reinforced tank to turn back, not snipers, not molotovs, not bricks, something big.

“Bad luck man” Baldy whispered. You can’t get round the

side for the microphone. “Oh brothers and sisters, oh friends and comrades, we have joyous news, wonderful news. Arise, wretched of the earth! Arise! Arise All to our

poets, all to our artists. Pigs at the Barrier! Oh friends and lovers and pests...”

All over Brixton, and into Camberwell and Stockwell and Clapham people heard the magic words, the words of joy, the best and the truest positive word spread from mouth to mouth, heart to heart, soul to soul. Guns were made ready, bombs, unskilled, sticks and stones, barricades were ready to be torn down.

In Brixton they had long been ready, blacks and whites, gays and straights, rich and poor. The oncoming car and a couple of minutes people groups were on their way to the ashes that had been the Barrier Block.

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The ASWV stopped in front of the WV Golf. Alex didn’t even notice, he was weeping bitter tears of sadness at the loss of the Barrier. His exogy over the flames was near his

All around him swirled swatches of black smoke and ash. Man has built many moniments of pain and suffering but could none compare with this...” he asked almost chiding.

“‘He’s one of ours’” the Sergeant reported, the infra-red detector saw the request and he was led to Alex’s head, a cross between a chimp and a uniform.”

The silky bastard could get himself killed,” Kinnock sighed.

The effects of the coke were beginning to wear off, so Alex swallowed his last few tabs of acid. The flames were begin-

ning to subside, but the smoke was thick and choking, the outside walls which still seemed strong. In the embers he saw a few household effects which had melted together. He noticed the closer he got to the corner, the less the flames were glowing and the crisp cracking seemed to be rhythmic music to him. Alex, even when it’s down to this he is the Barter blows my mind. He almost jumped up and down when he saw the statue. In amongst the glowing embers was a mausoleum of Harbin, a ghost which somehow sur-

vived in one piece. Alex couldn’t tell whether it was the acid but the bliss, still upright, surrounded by glowing patterns of orange and reds, seemed the holiest of shrines. He zoomed in and began the litany and liturgy to the Lion of Judah, an army of the lion had he learned from the fundamentalist racist of Forest Hill.

“‘It’s no use,” Kinnock switched off the megaphone in reaction to the roar of the tanks. “Everyone out here is a tourist” he acknowledged his warnings. This meant that either the tourist was too near the flames to hear or he was a dead reporter from one of the TV’s for the Daily Star. Kinnock was unsure.

This meant that either the tourist was too near the flames to hear or he was a dead reporter from one of the TV’s for the Daily Star. Kinnock was unsure. He felt his sphincter contract and his bum get sweaty. Things

were not going well. The next step was obvious, someone had to go out and get them out of there. What Kinnock didn’t want to do was to turn around and leave, but that was im-
possible. They could shoot the bastard but Kinnock couldn’t trust the tanks. It was too risky.

“One of us will have to go,” the Sergeant offered tactfully.

“Perhaps we’ll kick the bastard down.” The troops of tanks were

Armoured vehicles. “I won’t ask for volunteers,” the rookiers looked disapproving, “I know you all want to go. As the senior of-

When the Sergeant shrugged. He zipped up his protective suit, donned the helmet, grabbed the gun and was ready to go.

A rope kicked the periscopic, it was difficult to tell with the smoke, and the heat sensor was useless by the fire, but it looked all clear. The burns hardened and the Sergeant crawled out, whistling the ‘Chase’s Guns of Brixton’. He look-

ed around, felt safe, and casually strolled towards the ruins and tried to impress on them how being aproaching him. Oh Jesus, Alex thought, the Lion of Judah and a spacemanc. “It’s too much!” He zoomed onto the astrauitor and tried a negative effect, the blue sky became black, the flames were black holes, the Lion of Judah became a Teutonic Aryan. Alex stepped back trying to take in the whole cosmic significance of the the concept. He slipped and fell back into the flames which suddenly leapt up around him. He seemed to fall for an age, an epoch even. The flames licked around him, somehow it didn’t seem hot. His last thought was, shit man this is almost like spontaneous combustion, it’s so natural and healthy.

The Sergeant stood and watched the body burning brightly, somehow he had expected a lot of screaming, or even some screams, but nothing. The smoke was very thin, trying to read what was going on, trying to remember which Western religion practiced body burning, it was called immolation or was it incinera-
tion something to do with injections? After a while he got bored and headed back to the ASWV.

Alice flattened herself against the rubble, the smoke offended some camouflage but the wind could change leaving her ex-
posed. To her right some of the syndicalists had come up to the wall and were trying to get a look but were falling back des-

erately. The spacecap locked bored and in no hurry as he headed back to his truck. At the controls there, had only just happened to the hatch opened in the roof of the pig truck and he took a step up. The smoke was suffocating.

Alice seized her chance, she stood up, balanced the bomb, pulled back and chuckled. She hit the dirt, praying her arm was true. It exploded with a bang and a flash. A burst of machine gun fire from the syndicalists and all was silent. The smoke was thickening from inside the ASWV. Two dead cops lay on the ground. A triumphant cry and suddenly the streets were filled with hundreds of hap-
penny people. The Women’s Militia put the fire out in the pig truck and an anarchist woman took the controls. The truck was theirs.

Already the first clashes were taking place on the Bat-
ters/Chelsea border, Streatham had fallen. The Revolu-
tion had begun. The engine of the world was spinning out of control. The Revolution had begun. The REVOLUTION HAD BEGUN!

** The BEGINNING **

**Move!** cried Major Kinnock and the jungs teared to-
silence. The ASWV jerked forward and clear of burn-
ing rubble. The Barter Block at last began to collapse is on itself, the walls imploding and the storeys disintegrating. By nightfall all that would be left would be the cracked shell, spitting colder in the dark.

The ASWV rumbled down the street away from the building and it’s dead Rastas. Kinnock directed that they head through Loughborough Estate. A snout had informed the Freedom of Information Bureau (the reformed Special Safety) it’s head who be called the Special Branch) that Loughborough was where the revolutionaries had regrouped. Furthermore the anarchists, feminists, and separatists were working together on a minimal basis. Kinnock knew that if this were true it would be a disaster, but he doubted that it was. The anarchists had serious disagreements, all attempts at unity had failed in the past.

At the junction of Coldharbour Lane and Loughborough Road they received the first petrol bombs of the day. It was sug-
ged before, but the night had been getting hotter with the temperature. Some of the rickies fired a few rounds, but it was a desultory sort of response, the petrol bomber was well hidden in the thicket Kinnock contended himself with looking at the flats through the periscope.

“Sit, look at this!” someone shouted and pointed his console. Kinnock looked at his own screen. Another vehicle was in the vicinity, the computer couldn’t provide accurate info on such an old sort of car, all it could do was provide the type: A VW Golf freddoor hatchback, year uncertain. “Attempt radio contact,” Kinnock barked. He wasn’t sure, either it was a tender tourist from the suburbs or the anarchists using cars again.
LIKE CLOSE ENCOUNTERS of the fourth kind a rectangular bright blinding beam of light bursts out into the dark street. The door limped off its hinges threatening to crack down on a Mohawk, a glue bag stuck to his lips. Mixed in with her breathing exercises were shouts, screams, yelps and polite squatters’ talk pouring out of the house.

A twelve hole DM was thrown through a window and Mr Godwin phoned the police for the sixth time. Not only had Crystal Palace lost 3-0, (the Oval had run out, also,) but there was a repeated hammering on his wall like a re-enactment of the Battle of the Bulge.

Next door Julian was putting on a Cab Voltaire single; it was his party and he had invited all his wierde trendy friends. The week before he had gone a bit arty and as an arts performance he superimposed a hundred fog butts in his hair, had PICAISO tattooed on his forehead, self-laced sausages to his chest and went to the launderette.

Mercedes agreed to photograph him in the spin dryer. Unfortunatelly the mechanism stuck and Julian was nearly minced. He spent six days on a life support machine. Jane went to see him every day, but Sabrina had been angry with Jane, saying she should be stronger, and he’s ‘just a wanker’.

The music was loud. Bill was looking at everybody menacingly, someone had stolen his Leonard Cohen boodle collection. Mad Frank, the self-confessed ex-Foreign Legionaire had done it.

By one o’clock the party is really jumping, like crazy, people sit, sleep and fall down the stairs. Julian is practicing vomit painting in his bedroom. Homebrew cascades down throats forming septic pools in their stomachs. IRA rebel songs are being sung in the basement and the sound of oral sex (groaning) can be heard from the back room.

Christian had bought a book from Collets called Socialism Way to Androgenous Pansexuality and it had influenced him deeply. He puts on a lover’s rock record and asks Bob to dance. He agrees and they hold each other tight, moving hips in time to the rhythm. Christian can feel Bob’s rasping stubble on his neck.

Jane smiles, thinking Christian is getting to know his inner being, and really she should start the osteopathic course for treating cats with back problems.

In the toilet Harry is feeling a bit ill. He notices something green plop out of his arse. Harry just can’t believe it and uses Julian’s toothbrush to fish it out of the pan. Urrrrgh! ‘It’s a congealed lump of curried okra.

Just then one of the ‘guests’ bursts into the loo, sees the green shit on the toothbrush, thinks Harry is going to put it into his mouth, whimpers, rolls his eyes upwards, vomits in mid-air and hits his head on the washbasin.

Elsewhere the floorboards creak and thump. Mercedes puts OMO up her nose, Julian has dropped some acid and is ‘really freaked baby’. Jane is having a serious talk to Sabrina about her attitude, Christian is showing Bob, in his bedroom, his collection of the works of Kropinski, and Harry is giving the kiss of life to his bleeding victim in the toilet when Bill walks in for a pee (embarrassing).

Next door Mr Godwin has a headache, with 19,000 people on the housing waiting list he knows he’s going to be in this street, next to the squatters, for a long time. Unless . . .

In the next issue of SQUATROADS find out what Mr Godwin is planning. Also—Christian and Bob split up. Jane’s acne erupts, Sabrina joins the Society For Cutting Up Men (SCUM), Julian is nearly killed again when the roof collapses. There is an invasion of slimy frogs in Mercedes’ bedroom and Harry tries to commit suicide in a bottle of Dentafix.

And the house is raided for obscene publications and the gas bill arrives.

MISS IRENE REGRETS, ALL SHE CAN SEE IS EXOCETS

Miss Irene regrets she has no food today
And she regrets her children had no play
Like Miss Onis she didn’t dine or dance
Gave her kids bread and onion sandwiches and no chance
To travel only from one street to another
 Didn’t even know Father or Mother
And Miss Irene regrets that she starred her family every day
Slaved and worked eighteen hours for low pay
All because Miss Irene was born on the wrong side of the street
Didn’t know the right people one had to meet
Oh why did we have such fools so one knows
As numerous as they say are the crows
And Miss Irene sits and sees all the mistakes she made
Wondering what to do watching that long cavalcade
The ones who’ve always done as they were told
Held all the hassle and none of the gold
They say that the streets are paved anyway
With that commodity as we pay every day
And I look in vain and Miss Irene regrets
That all she can see is the exocets.

WHAT ARE THEY MADE OF, I DIDN’T HEAR

What are little girls made of did you say
Sugar and spice and all that’s nice anyway
And what are little boys made of did you say I didn’t hear
They include politicians puppy dogs’ tails and I believe a smattering of fear.

THE HORRORS OF MISDEMONOCRACY

Good homes equality and education and heat
That’s the solution and enough to eat
Come on down and see the hovels of bureaucracy
And all the horrors of our misdemocracy

Irene Romilly
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Irene Romilly
BARCELONA: WORKING DAY

by Matthew Tree

"Regular, unchanging work is a dangerous drug. It is addictive, harmful to the body and mind, and it reduces people's natural talents. Working woman. Work creates anger by killing time, and as long as there is enforced work there will be a threat of violence; violence and work are interrelated."

From The Honest Practical Guide to Modern Living by Milianor Okumo Macht Frei Freim 1984

YOUR ALARM GOES BIP BIP and you open your eyes. Remember how little sun comes into your room in the mornings because all the buildings in Barcelona have lightless tunnels in the back, and lie in bed for all the time during which you should be shaving, showering, creapping, and going downstairs to the shop next door to get some mineral water and a cake, then you get up and do it all anyway in fifteen minutes, pick up your bag, and run into the street (blue sky, yellow-bronze walls, heel), as the sausage dog belonging to the status quo is blocking the pedestrian crossways and looking lost but you step over it andtip into the metro a few minutes later where you stand in awesome silence for a few more minutes and check your watch constantly, working out that if the train is four times faster than usual you won't be late for your first private English class. The train screams in. At the Diagonal stop you get off and run hard up the stairs but take it easy to the student's house though you're still sweating like a little pig when the door opens and shows you down a hallway to a cool room where you lay out your books and wait for the student who arrives ten minutes later, then you start the lessons, trying to he professional and correct, but you can hangover from the three and half litres of beer the night before is giving you trouble putting together a piece of another and you need a second shift and bluntly but you finish the lesson chat for a while to the student then notice you're running late for the next lesson so you pocket your liver leave the building and run down the Paseo de Gracia (blushing sun, plane trees trembling, fascists selling badges on a corner) and remember you to got to have something to eat and quickly, so hoping no one you know you go into a Burger King and order cheeseburger swallow it almost whole and then you remember your stomach's earlier request and run downstairs into the toilet and suck the chrom relief on the seat; when you get up you find that the roll dispenser is a new invention designed to save on paper and you can't get any of it out all at but eventually, by taking half of it apart you manage to get what you need and then you go out with muzak humming in your ear and walk to another tube station where you push past the kids and dozens of mothers-with-tiny-slow-walking-children and get onto a train; in the next fifteen station journey you curse all the couples who are constantly being offered seats while your legs ache and you realise you're in one of the new super-modern carriages, which have no ventilation even when the temperature is an average thirty degrees, but sooner or later, largely because where you are going is out in the sticks, the crowds thin and you sit down ignoring the man who doesn't have work and has got a wife and six kids to support and who is holding out his cupped hand to you until you get to the last station on the line where you step out into a blackening open space and have to adjust your eyes before you can work out where the bus stop is and then you run to it just as the bus is pulling off so you sit and wait, and with the propaganda which is scattered all over the ground then get onto the next bus you know the driver is the one who is having a go at his passengers and sure enough whenever a dear old trout who can hardly walk gets on he shoots off fast acceleration—watching her squawk—and, naturally, whenever he sees a crowd of people waiting with whole paniers of shopping he stops a few metres up the road and watches them puff and pant and then when they're barely through the door he shoots off again fast acceleration leaving the door wide open just in case anyone of them should slip or stumble you imagine; you get off cross the road walk into a factory yard then up the steps to the office section where you apologize profusely to the waiting students for being so late and then get on with the class they look a bit bored so you suggest a game at which they all perk up the game is guessing jobs and of course one of them pretends to be an air-hostess hohe enough said we all know what air-hostesses get up to when they leave the plane don't we? All that goes on for a while and then you chat a bit at the end about money because it's your payday and then you have a bit of a private conversation of which one of them is different from the rest, "executives who think they're in a film" he calls them and you notice he is on the edge of a nervous breakdown and you say goodbye and leave having a few words with the receptionist who reminds you that the summer is starting and that half the time there aren't even any students but you live with a bill off the beach or the tennis courts every other day she knows because she has to come up to them and she is one of the lowest paid people in the company and finally you say goodbye to her too and walk the twenty minutes to the station stopping off for a frappé and a beer on the way; on the platform you sit in the sun waiting for the train and then decide you need another beer so you go to the station bar which is cool and full of leakers, crammed with olives and tripe and squid laid out under glass) and you don't have to say anything because the barman knows you and what you have and then the train comes in so you swallow down fast and find a smoker; you haven't bought a ticket because often they don't check but this time they do so you pay double the fare and get out at the other end crying in the bushes and walk up to the shops to get something for your supper but they're all closed because in Barcelona they all open at six so you open the door of your block to go up three flights of lifting pant like a ladrador as you enter your flat which is as dark as Hades on a fifteen station journey so you curse all the cripples who a leg caught an eye infection and lost her job in all two days and isn't in such a good mood so you go straight through to your room where you decide to write of some other miles are away in London so to help you get in the right mood you collect your empties and go down to the bodegas round the corner who sells a sputtering woman; she helped you often serves hand and foot a crowd of grumpy old farts who do nothing all day except drink and eat and sit and they think you as you go in you have a child with her, get the beers checking that two of them at least are cold and back wondering if your flatmate thinks you are an alcoholic put one in the fridge and crack one of the cold ones place it on your table get a glass light a cigarette and write the letter then take it to the tobacconist where they sell stamps post it and go back up and crack another beer which you finish then you look at your watch and notice you have to leave for your evening lessons so you pick up your bag go out and wait for the bus remembering you haven't eaten so you cross the road get a sandwich to take away chew it until the bus comes and then sit on the bus take out some exercise this student did a week ago and try and mark it but the bus is bouncing too much because you're sitting in the accordion section the curtain of which is torn and you can see the grey rash of the road through it (and through the windows you can see twilight, crowds, rush hour traffic, flashes of a wide metal floor as you pass over a motorway) and you get off ten minutes late already cross a road dodging cars and run up the stairs three flights to where your evening student is waiting for you, she scrapes a living together working as an artist's model so you don't like taking money from her but you do and then sit and chat over a bottle of beer she's bought and talk over your respective problems and then you dip down the three flights (sky purpling nicely) cross the road run for the bus catch it home, where you pull open the street door climb the stairs thinking only of the last bottle of beer you have left which should be chilled by now well not much you find when you open it anyway and your flatmate comes into the living-room with the month's telephone bill in her hand and the telephone has been unusually high this month and neither of us can understand why the electricity bill should be so high so you offer her a glass of beer and work out that of the eighty pounds you earned this week you have ten left but at least all the lights still go on and you can still use the phone so you say goodnight to your flatmate and switch on the television but there is only an interview with an expert on an exhibition of her new heraldrsy so you switch it off and go to your room and read a book for a while then get restless and try and type something out of your own living? cheap beer and tobacco? cigarettes? no inspiration? numeroix? escape? late night bars? well in the end as the room is spinning and the security guard next door and his aged mother are yelling blue murder at each other and the four dogs who live downstairs are browning like Frank Sinatra you let it pass and sink into the sleep of the dead but not that dead because in the morning the alarm goes BIP
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YOUR ALARM GOES BIP BIP and you open your eyes, remember how little sun comes into your room in the mornings because all the buildings in Barcelona have lightless tunnels in the back, and lie in bed for all the time during which you should be shaving, showering, creaping, and going downstairs to the shop next door to get some mineral water and a cake, then you get up and do all this anyway in fifteen minutes, pick up your bag, and run into the street (blue sky, yellow-brown walls, heat), as the sausage dog belonging to the stationers is blocking the pavements and looking lost but you step over it and trip into the metro a few minutes later where you stand in awesome silence for a few more minutes and check your watch constantly, working out that if the train is four times faster than usual you won’t be late for your first private English exam. The train screams in. At the Diagonal stop you get out and run hard up the stairs but take it easy to the student’s house, though you are still sweating like a little pig when the cleaner opens the door and shows you down a hallway to a cool room where you lay out your books and wait for the student who arrives ten minutes later, then you start the lessons, trying to be as professional and clean as you can, and make yourself hangover from the three and half litres of beer the night before is giving you trouble, pull together, by talking to another and you need a second shit and urgently but you finish the lesson chat for a while to the student then you’re running late for the next lesson so you pocket your liver leave the building and run down the Passeig de Gracia (blazing sun, plane trees trembling, fashion selling badgers on a corner) and remember you got to go to a concert and you get in a Burger King and order a cheeseburger swallow it almost whole and then you remember your stomach’s earlier request and run downstairs into the toilet and suck a long relief on the seat; when you get up you find that the food dispenser is a new invention designed to save on paper and you can’t get any of it out at all but eventually, by taking half of it apart you manage to get what you need and then you go out with musak humming in your ears and walk to another tube station where you press past the thick crowds of mothers-with-tiny-slow-walking children and get on a train; it is a fifteen-minute journey so you curse all the cripples who are constantly being offered seats while your legs ache and you realise you’re in one of the new super-modern carriages, which have no ventilation no not even when the temperature is an average thirty degrees, but sooner or later, largely because where you are going is out in the sticks, the crowds thin and you sit down ignoring the man who doesn’t have work and has got a wife and six kids to support who and is holding out his cupped hand to you until you get to the last station on the line where you step out into a blazing open space and have to adjust your eyes before you can work out where the bus stop is and then you run to it as the bus is pulling off so you sit and watch the propaganda which is scattered all over the ground then get onto the next bus you know the driver he is the one who having a go at his passengers and sure enough whenever a dear old trout who can hardly walk gets on he shoves off fast acceleration—watching her squawk—and, naturally, whenever he sees a crowd of people waiting with whole paniers of shopping he stops a few metres up the road and watches them puff and pant and then when they’re barely through the door he shoves off again fast acceleration leaving the door wide open just in case any of them should slip or stumble you imagine; you get off across the road walk into a factory yard then up the steps to the office section where you apose merrily to the waiting students for being so late and then get on with the class they look a bit bored so you suggest a game at which they all perk up the game is guessing jobs and of course one of them pretends to be an air-hostess holeso enough and we all know what air-hostesses get up to when they leave the plane don’t we? All that goes on for a while and then you chat a bit at the end about money because it’s your payday and then you have a bit of a private conversation with one of them who’s different from the rest, "executives who think they’re in a film" he calls them and you notice he is on the edge of a nervous breakdown and you say goodbye and leave having a few words with the receptionist who reminds you that the summer is starting and that half these theories are necessarily based on the assumption that you’re off to the beach or the tennis courts every other day she knows because she has to cover up for them and she is one of the lowest paid people in the community and finally you say goodbye to her too and walk the twenty minutes to the station stopping off for a frankfurter and a beer on the way; on the platform you sit in the sun waiting for the train then and decide you need another beer so you go to the station bar which is cool and full of leaks and you order a pitcher of olives and tripes and squid laid out under glass (and you don’t have to say anything because the barman knows you) and what you have and then the train comes in so you swallow down fast and find a smoker; you haven’t brought a ticket because often they don’t check but this time they do so you pay double the fare and get out at the other end cursing yourself and walk to the bus stop and walk up to the shops to get something for your supper but they’ve all closed because in Barcelona they all open at six so you open the door of your block to go up three flights panting like a labrador as you enter your flat which is as dark as Hadès a fifteen-floated journey so you curse all the cripples who have a leg caught an eye infection and lost her job all in two days and isn’t such a good mood so you go straight through to your room to decide whether to write a letter to someone you’re in love with who really is a thousand miles away in London so to help you get in the right mood you collect your empties and go down to the dodeca round the corner where the mightiest woman ever you’ve ever helped you often serves hand and foot a crowd of grumpy old farts who do nothing all day except drink and eat and then that’s what you as in you and you have a chat with her, get the beers checking that two of them aren’t cold and then back wondering if your flatmate thinks you’re an alcoholic put one in the fridge and crack one of the cold ones place it on your table get a glass light a cigarette and write the letter then take it to the tobacconist where they sell stamps post it and go back up and crack another beer which you finish then you look at your watch and notice you have to leave for your evening lesson so you pick up your bag go out and wait for the bus remembering you haven’t eaten so you cross the road get a sandwich to take away chew it until the bus comes and then sit on the bus take out some exercise this student did a week ago and try and mark it but the bus is bouncing too much because you’re sitting in the accordion section the curtain of which is torn and you can see the grey rash of the road through it (and through the windows you can see twilight, crowds, rush hour traffic, flashes of a wide metal floor as you pass over a motorway) and you get off ten minutes late already cross a road dodging cars and run up the stairs three flights to where your evening student is waiting for you, she scraps a living together working as an artist’s model so you don’t like taking money from her but you do and then sit and chat over a bottle of beer she’s bought and talk over your respective problems and then you nip down the three flights (sky purple nice) cross the road run for the bus catch it home, where you pull open the street door climb the stairs thinking only of the last bottle of beer you have left which should be chilled by now well now that much you find when you open it anyway and your flatmate comes into the living-room with the month’s phone bill (telephone has been unusually high this month and neither of us can understand why the electricity bill should be so at least you offer her a glass of beer and work out that of the eighty pounds you earned this year you have ten left but at least the lights still go on and you can still use the phone so you say goodnight to your flatmate and switch on the television but there is only an interview with an expert on how to improve your hairdressing skills so you switch it off and go to your room and read a book for a while then get restless and try and type something about your own life? cheap beer and tobacco are a lot of fun in London and moreover it’s a good thing wondering what the hell did you go to Barcelona for and at the moment you can’t remember you just stupid sleep is stealing up before you have time to get to the heart of the matter (release from the door? break in the routine? joy of earning your own living? cheap beer and tobacco in London and inspiration? mania? escapism? late night bars?) well in the end as the room is spinning and the security guard next door and his aged mother are yelling blue murder at each other and the four dogs who live downstairs are crooning like Frank Sinatra you let it pass and sink into the sleep of the dead but that not dead because in the morning the alarm goes BIP
wank, wank, wank
your words disgust me
spewing out clouds
of intellectual vomit
that you expect me to swallow
wank, wank, wank
do you think I haven’t noticed
that you think with your prick
and the only true fact
on your mind is your ego
wank, wank, wank
always looking in mirrors
and punishing your women
for failing to be you
I hate your philosophy
with its charmed out, chewed up
regurgitated clichés
and I hate your gurus
that you quote like a bible
your religion that stops you from thinking
you think you’re so clever
and think you’re so big
when you spit on my anger
and laugh at my pain
fascist, capitalist, marxist, militant
your labels describe you
as you try to decide what I need for my freedom
and deny your hypocrisy
wank, wank, wank
your mouth flaps like a fish
as you flounder in dogma
stagnate in conceit
and preach your revolution
to the ignorant masses
when the revolution’s happening, brother
you’ll still be talking excuses

Jo Fremantle

Sad brown faces
remember back home?
Nursing a spliff or a beer to numb the cold that is more than just the weather.
followed a dream to this promised land
found a lie
became a minority.
All your children know the stories of sun, mountains and better days, and they strive to make a home of this our England because its all they know, because they have no better days to remember,
and maybe because they love it,
but often because they have no choice.
Go home old man,
or at least die on the way,
they don’t want you here,
do you want them?

Have you seen the mad woman raging in the DHSS?
Kissing all the men and writing on the walls;
she was some bodys baby
some ones golden girl
once upon a time.
Your laughter wont help,
nor will your pity
nor will a cigarette.
She doesn’t know her number, she’s here all fucking day.
She used to live in a house some where
some thing went wrong
and now
she doesn’t
fit any more,
How can she believe in king and country

Nonika Hendrickse
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Jo Fremantle

Nonika Hendricksee
I CAN REMEMBER the first time I saw the sea. I stood on top of a hill, at the very top, where the wind was strong and cold on one side and the other side you could see blue, bright blue, with houses and cars bustling alongside. It didn’t move—the waves weren’t visible from up there. Gallows cawing overhead seemed vulgar and I was very small on top of that hill. The thing that impressed me most was, can you guess? On the furthest point of the headland a finger of white pointing skywards—look at me, I’m a lighthouse. Beat that. I watch and stand sentinel. The mighty sea has a challenger. It winked at me it did, I saw it so—then turned back saying I’ll see you again sometime if you like. You’re my kind of gal.

Now in the city. Smells like back alleys where the cats piss, where you get mugged. Gangs of kids push by. The world turns and where are you? About to fall off. Like an initiation ceremony you must first of all survive alone on as little money as possible before the streets are your friends because you know them so well, and before some of the clamped grey faces crack into smiles and welcome home. When the man in the shop knows your name, you will be a regular.

Not for me this drudgery. I took the easy way out and got a dog. So then I had a friend who’d think I was the bee’s knees, and never have to try. Get involved. Man is a social animal. Well I’m a woman and what can society do for me? Twenty-seven last birthday and I’m certain sure that I’m the most solitary beast on earth. Where do I stand? Here in the dark outside the pub. I guess I could have a drink. There were two men who wanted to pay for my beer. I said no thanks very much. They had red eyes and bloated faces. I don’t like to have anything to do with those types. Me and my dog are just fine thanks. Those sort of pubs have high ceilings that have yellow peeling paint, no matter what colour they really are. They are the natural habitat of pissed up rollers of society, the working man. I said no thanks as I sat before, and I don’t belong here. This I know. The eyes of the regulars tell me so. But I only wanted a drink you know. I live all alone and beer can’t be the same. The eyes don’t let up and I’m leaving with my dog.

We weren’t so lonely and if the winter hadn’t been so hard then I know we would’ve been okay. Very cold that winter, and it never did let up. We were so hungry. That’s what I remember, being most painfully hungry. And nobody wanted to give me a job. I did try. I said—I have a dog and a stomach to support—but employers are very hard in the city. And we had nothing to offer. So I sold what I had, which was my body, just like in the jokes. This is another reason why that winter was so memorable.

The first time I remember only indistinctly. I felt foolish standing on the corner, and I never really believed anyone would stop anyway. Things like that aren’t real life after all—where’s something you call the woman who stole your man (or your purse). Women on street corners are waiting for a bus and I’m one in England starved and waiting. I thought the car pulled up so it’s owner could buy cigarettes. Or maybe he’s lost. Dodgy traffic systems round here if you’re not a local (a regular).

He rolled down the window and said—how much. I named my price, and that was the business end dealt with. He was fat and flabby and called me love, and other than that I don’t remember. Was I doing ANY one any good? Those punters, they were all vamps. Treading all over you—feeding on the flesh. Carnivores, you used like a toilet. I sort of half hoped I’d catch something and pass it on. Then I was in a funny mood for most of that winter.

And so I took a holiday. Just for a day I’ll go away, to the seaside. I have enough money—me and the dog need a rest—we’ll catch a train and forget the drear and the dull. On the first warm day of the year. See the sun—pale but it means well and not a cloud in the sky, we went back to the lighthouse—you might have guessed by now. The lighthouse is my home. I tell this as a close, close secret—don’t whisper a word—here goes—but if you speak the vampires will come. I’m sure of it.

There is a lighthouse far away built just for you and me (this to the dog) it’s white and stands, silent, right down close to the shoreline, if I see it, the sun is very bright, like something sharp, easy to break. So, the sea is bright blue—aqua-marine is it—and gallows cawing and wheeling about on the breeze. Always a breeze by the sea. Such a calm, the sand’s damp and cloying, can you see it?...do you ever think about children and what they think? Is it an adventure for them. They usually seem to be on the level.

The lighthouse is strictly my own and I don’t believe I’m interested in anyone else’s lighthouse. Can you imagine the smell of someone else’s lighthouse? It wouldn’t be the same. We were only together. I understood that two identical jumpers are quite strongly defined after they’ve been worn by two different people. Imagine green lamb’s wool—how insulative is the lamb.

Oh for the sea again. Desolation, peace no sex. Plenty of freedom trapped in a lighthouse.
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THE WAR AT THREE O'CLOCK

by Frank Jackson

ABOUT THREE HUNDRED schoolboys, ranging from between seven and seventeen years of age were running wild on the hard concrete playground of Saint Brendan's. Michael, aged ten, was with his friend Hickey. They were at the gate, they usually hung around there even though the knew that the Killer had warned them often enough not to in the periodic speeches he made to them from the stop of the steps, after he had brought every boy on the playground to immobility and silence with one long shrill blow on his rat-tat. And Hickey thought so had his mind and Hickey reasoned, the gate was in the playground, so they had some sort of right to be there, and anyway, the Killer had not given them the leather for being there yet. The reason they were there, and the reason they were not supposed to be there was that the Brother on guard duty at the top of the steps at the other end of the playground was not looking, they could nip out the gate, down the steps, and cross the street to Dywer's sweet shops.

O’Brady was on guard duty today. He stood in the distance at the top of the steps, the open main door of the school behind him, a thin wiry grey-haired man in Christian Brother black, smoking quietly and looking out menacingly over the noisy playground. One of the lay teachers came to the door, and he turned around to speak to her. Michael and Hickey saw their chance and made a quick burst for the gate. A second later they were halfway down the steps and out of view, the screams from the playground above them eerily distant.

They crossed the narrow street to Dywer's.

"There's going to be a war, you know," Hickey said out of the blue.

Images from the Hotspur and the Victor flashed through Michael's mind. Last week Captain Roy Bradford and his Spitfire Squard had destroyed a secret German submarine base. They had flown in with the sun to their backs so the Germans could not see that they were coming and were taken completely by surprise.

"Who told you that?" Michael asked, it sounded too good to be true.

They turned into the doorway to the semi-darkness of the sweet-shop. They stopped talking instinctively. Mrs Dwyer was behind the counter. She was nice but she was an adult.

Michael bought a penny's worth of black gutta.

He asked for a job-stopper. He stuttered a little as he asked and when he finally managed to get the words out, his mouth jerked open twice and he squirmed. Michael looked at him and thought how did the Killer think Hickey was trying to catch flies. That was the reason they called him the Fly Catcher. They shouldn't Michael thought, just as they shouldn't call him Cobblebays East because his ears stuck out a bit. He would show them some day, the way Captain Roy Bradford showed the Germans. But Captain Roy Bradford and the men of his Spitfire Squad were always good looking, while the captain of the German was always ugly, wore glasses and was skinny; that made him feel sorry for the Germans and sometimes he wanted them to win, but they never did.

Back out in the bright street and out of earshot of Mrs Dwyer they continued their conversation.

"My Da said it to my Ma." Hickey answered the question of a minute ago.

Michael looked at him unbelievably, it was probably another may-a-year story, you never knew what to believe, even with Hickey.

"Cross your heart and hope to die!" Michael demanded.

And Hickey replied and made the sign with an unexpected earnestness.

So it could be true.

"He said," Hickey went on authoritatively, "that at three o'clock tomorrow the Americans and the Russians are going to go to war and they're going to bomb each other. They reached the narrow steps that led back up into the playground, and while they worried about sneaking back in without being seen, the forgot about the war. At the top they peeped over to see if O’Brady was still watching. He was not, he distant black shape was bending down and his war putting the head over the brown wide-awake cap that they kept at the monastery. They were in luck. They made a rush for it, and O’Brady had straightened up to return to his vigil, they were a safe ten yards from the gate.

Michael did not get another chance to ask Hickey more about the war, because the Killer appeared on the steps beside O’Brady. He blew his referee’s whistle and silenced the playground immediately. Every boy from in whatever position he happened to be in. Any movement would have meant the leather from the Killer himself. He surveyed them coldly for a few seconds and then blew his whistle again. This was the signal for them to run to the top of the playground, and for each class to form silently into rows of two abreast. Then, he blew the whistle for the third and last time and starting at one end, where the older classes had
Alone now, they could talk.

Michael took the initiative.

"You say that you wanted us to say an extra Hall Mary today?" he said. "It's because this time there really is gonna be a miracle."

"Told you so," Hickey replied, acting unimpressed.

"That means he's a coward if he doesn't want to go to war," Michael said. "There's nothing really the President can do."

The Victor once a German spy dressed up as a vicar, and in England a vicar's a priest or a brother or something. Spies just have to come out, when they have to come out."

"Are you in disguise?

The ordinary people between them, Hickey would come up with some unusual piece of information and Michael would apply his vivid and generous imagination to it.

"There aren't any Germans in this war," Hickey objected.

"No, of course not, but he could be a Russian spy, couldn't he?"

Michael thought of how they shot spies and he imagined O'Brady's face, not knowing the President of America is an Irishman—so I have to be for the Americas or else I'd be a traitor, and a traitor is worse than a spy. And so do you, Michael.

"So the Russians will bomb Ireland then, won't they, Hickey?"

Michael insisted audaciously: "they'll have to, won't they, if Ireland is with America."

They were silent for a while then. They walked further along the path, not talking until it was the first thing he noticed everyday. Wondering what tomorrow would bring, Michael guessed at the footsteps in front of him. When he became conscious of his breathing he realized he was deliberately avoiding stepping on them to avoid the bad luck doing that might bring. He had always been careful. He wondered if he could tell Hickey about his not saying the Hall Mary. He wrestled with the decision for a while.

"I'm not going to tell Mary, the President said peace today," Hickey said.

He spoke defiantly but he was not at all sure of himself.

Michael looked at him afraid, his mouth jolted open and he squinted. Michael immediately wished he hadn't said anything.

"You'll have to tell that in confession," Hickey accused him.

"Don't be stupid."

Michael answered him immediately. He had gotten used to the President the last few days. He was almost as much at ease with him as he was with God, perhaps even more. He talked to him like he talked to God. The President was just as good at listening.

They argued the point until they came to the Presentation Convent and Hickey turned off to go up to the half-finished building. Neither had got the better of the argument. Michael was aware of the nagging feeling that he had perhaps done something wrong. He was a bit worried in the President's presence. It was all football pitch and the new factory, trying to reason the guilt he felt away. And why, he wondered, couldn't he have ordinary sex?

After dinner that night, when his mother and Ann had cleared up the dinner dishes, Michael and Ann sat down at it to do their homework. Ann was two years older than he was. As usual she immersed herself quickly in her books and copied out every word of his fourth or fifth in her history book. He represented that and her bestness, he was a boy and being a boy he didn't feel the necessity of her bestness.

His mother was at the sink doing the washing up. She wore her flowery apron which outlined clearly the round contours of her female figure. Michael had followed her swelling stomach with a mixture of uneasiness and affection. It was her, he thought, that it was a baby, but he had only the vaguest notion of how it got there and how it would be born. He was certain that Ann would enjoy the birth. Being with a woman, he was equaly certain that he was not supposed to ask her. Finally he came to the conclusion that she had taken a pill and that when she went to the hospital she would have an operation to get the baby taken out. The only flaw in this explanation was that did not know how to have babies in Africa—there, they had no doctors.

His father sat in one of the armchairs in front of the gas heater reading the Irish Press. His face was half hidden by the big round spectacles he comfortably set in the chair. From where he was sitting behind him, Michael could only see a bit of his brown hair and his slightly sloped, crossed and stretched out as far as possible to the warmth of the heater. He was always tired at nighttime, in the morning he had to go to the CLI office earlier that if went to school, so their mother had broken his arm on the fall before they got.

When he finished his homework Michael took out a bundle of old comics and started browsing through them. He read some old war stories with hangovers in them. He wanted one of his war stories.

"Daddy," he asked when he had thought of a question the questions did not answer clearly enough, "in a war, what do they use to make bombs with?"

His father lowered the Irish Press slightly and said: "Shells," and then, understanding the question, answered: "Well, ..try to destroy the enemy's industry and lines of communication.

What's industry and what's industry?"

Daddy?" Michael asked automatically.

But another was using Bruno's pen on the pot she had used for the stew and Ann was still immersed in her homework.

Industry factories, and lines of communication are roads and bridges and airports and railway stations. You see, those without those things a country can't work, or fight back," his father finished his work, and then casually and then brought the Irish Press back within reading distance.

The words "railway stations", uttered so casually by his father's mouth, Michael thought, his father might die. He had often been afraid that his father would die. He had often been afraid that his father would die.

"You're going to the station," his father said, standing up, which he often prayed to God to let it happen to him instead.

"No, I'm not," his father said. "I'm going to your home." He sat down in the other armchair in front of the fire. She took out a Woman's Own from under the cushion and began to read.

Johnny could almost remember the smell of the scattering German runnels.
of the track, it drove along the street. Some people saw it and got out to see what was happen-
ing; and they came and dug the children out. The boy got a special medal for children. He would like something painted on it, and it stood up the ribbons and reward. The boy always wanted to be of help to others.

In class that afternoon then did Irish and then English writing. As an exercise they had to copy a page from their English reader into their copybook. O’Brady spent the time walking up and down between the rows of desks. Michael could only tell where he was from his footsteps and the color of his habit, or from the sound of his getting in beside someone in a desk behind to show them how to make the lettering look neat. He was thinking of the writing through though normally he was proud of his neatness, and instead, began to stare out the window at the blue sky. His imagination filled it with Spitzers and Messiahenichs fighting a battle to the death, but he never allowed it to go as far as the Polish-German one. He was always given enough time to parochiate out. In the Hotspur once a German pilot parachuted out and landed in someone’s back yard, and he thought he was a threat to the boy if he didn’t help him to escape, but it seemed the boy was too busy to escape. When he was being led away by the soldiers he had waved his fist in the air and at the boy and shouted: “Schweinhufl Englaender”

Alone now, they could talk. Michael took the initiative.

“Do you think they wanted us to say an extra Hall Mary today?” he said. “It’s because this time there really is going to be a war.”

“Told you so,” Hickey replied, acting unimpressed.

“That means he’s a coward if he doesn’t want to go to war,” Michael explained. “Not being a priest or a priest or something. Spies just can’t do that, now, when the world is in disagreement.”

There was the often the way between them, Hickey would come up with some unusual piece of information and Michael would apply his vivid and generous imagination to it.

“Is there aren’t any Germans in this war,” Hickey objected.

“Of course not, but he could be a Russian spy, couldn’t he?”

Michael thought of how they spied spies and he imagined O’Brady was a spy. “There is a spy,” he said. “The President of America is an Irishman—so I have to be for the Americas or else I’d be a traitor, and a traitor is worse than a spy. And so do you!”

“Can the Russians bomb Ireland then, won’t they, Hickey speculated.

“Can the war stop?” Michael insisted audaciously “they’ll have to, won’t they, if Ireland is with America.”

They were silent for a while then. They walked further along the street, not far from the school. Michael was still very curious about everything. Wondering what tomorrow would bring. Michael gazed at the footpath in front of him. When he became confused and lost, he would try to get back to some point he had already passed by, and deliberately avoided stepping on them to avoid the bad luck doctors had said. He seemed to be careful.

He wondered if he could tell Hickey about his not seeing the Hall Mary. He wrestled with the decision for a while.

“I’d rather you didn’t tell Mary, peace today,” Hickey said eventually. He spoke defiantly but he was not at all sure of himself.

Hickey looked at him afraid, his mouth jerked open and he squinted. Michael immediately wished he hadn’t said anything.

“You’ll have to tell that to confession,” Hickey accused.

“Don’t be stupid,” Michael answered him immediately. Better at the betrayal even though he had expected it. “Tell the priest or the priest or the priest.”

They argued the point until they came to the Presentation Convent and Hickey turned off to go to his half-time. Neither had got the better of the other. Hickey would always go with the nagging feeling that perhaps he had done something terrible, and Michael with the nagging feeling that perhaps he had not done something terrible.

At half-time he got into the football pitch and the new factory, trying to reason the guilt he felt away. And why, he wondered, couldn’t he have ordered Hickey on his body to stand up to do something.

After dinner that night, when his mother and Ann had cleared away the table, Hickey sat down at it to do their homework. Ann was two years older than he was. As usual she immersed herself quickly in her books and copied from the books. He presented that and her bossiness, he was a boy and hated being bossed around.

Mother was at the sink doing the washing up. She wore her flowery apron which outlined clearly the round contour of her stomach. Hickey had followed her swelling stomach with a mixture of uneasiness and curiosity and at the same time he had felt that it was a baby, but he had only the vaguest notion of how it got there and how it would be born. He was certain that Ann was with the crowd of the town’s women when it was to happen.

He was equally certain that he was not supposed to ask her. Finally he came to the conclusion that she had taken a pill and that when she went to the hospital she would have an operation to get the baby taken out. The only flaw in this explanation was that it didn’t quite fit, but they had to do it somewhere.

His father sat in one of the armchairs in front of the gas heater reading the Irish Press. His face was bushy and calm, but he was comfortably in the chair. From where he was sitting behind him, Michael could only see the top of his brown head and his slimmered feet, crossed and stretched out as far as possible to the warmth of the heater. He was always tired at nighttime, so the mornings he had to go to the CCB office earlier that they went to school, so their mother had been cooking in the kitchen before they got up.

When he finished his homework Michael took out a bundle of old comics and started browsing through them. He read some old war stories with bumphings in them.

"Daddy," he asked when he had thought of a question the comics did not answer clearly enough, "in a war, what do they use tanks for?"

"Daddy lowered the Irish Press slightly and said, "What?" and then, understanding the question he had just been answered, "Well, em, they try to destroy the enemy's industry and lines of communication. What is the biggest tank in the world and what's its industry?"

"Daddy?" Michael asked automatically.

He was no longer as close in Brigh pad on the pot she had used for the stew and Ann was still immersed in her homework. "Industry is factories and lines of communication are roads and bridges and airports and railway stations. You see, without those things a country can't work or fight back," his father explained and actually and then brought the Irish Press back with reading material.

The words "railway stations," uttered so casually by his father, had made him think. He too had prayed to God to let it happen to him instead. It was a strange feeling, but a happy one to sit down in the other armchair in front of the fire. She took out a Woman's Own from under the cushion and began to read.

Every now and again she interrupted the silence to comment on something or other to his father who replied, from behind the paper, "I don't know.

When it was time to go, it was: "It's nearly ten o'clock you'd better get to bed now."
Michael was reassured. They did not have a television yet, they were going to get one at Christmas though, his father had promised they would. His Uncle Liam had a television, but they had been there in the daytime, so they didn’t have it on. It must be great, like having the pictures at home.

At the Angelus O’Brady did not ask them to say another special Mass. Mary was relieved, he would not have wanted to say it, but he was afraid that with his father being at the railway station, he might have.
he turned over on his side and closed his eyes, and thinking of ways his father would escape if the railway station was bombed, he fell asleep.

He woke up excited the next day. When he looked out the window it did not particularly look like a day on which there was going to be a war, but that did not deter him much; the sky was nearly covered with light grey clouds and the ground was wet, it had rained during the night, but there were patches of blue and it looked as if it would get fine. When he went down to breakfast his father had already gone out to work. His absence made him think of the railway station being bombed, but he reassured himself by thinking that it didn’t start until three o’clock anyway, and then went on his wonder if they would get a half-day at school.

School was not particularly different either. He thought O’Bradly might say something after the morning prayers, but he didn’t, he just started doing Irish as if it were like any other day. Michael was disappointed.

At the break there was the usual rush to the toilets. After that the bigger boys would wander over half of the playground, the smaller boys kept to the other half, out of the way of the bigger harder fast-moving bodies. On the stairs the tall round shape of Blabair was walked up and down impatiently, his hands sunk deep in the pockets of his habit.

When Michael and Hickory found each other there was still some chitter-chatter about the coming of the river. No one the day before, especially on Michael’s part, but as they talked, it faded. For privacy they wandered along the railings, it was quieter there and they would not be surrounded on all sides by their schoolmates. It was this tendency in both of them to be excluded from the crowd and to shy away from it which had first brought them together.

Again you sure your father said it was today at three o’clock. Mind you are sure that their relationship was back to normal.

"Course I am," Hickory answered, without the slightest doubt in his voice, "and it was on the television last night as well."

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At the Angelus O’Bradly did not ask them to say another special Hail Mary, they were relieved, he would not have wanted to say it, but he was afraid that with his father being at the railway station, they might have.

Afterwards at Cathismus, he missed his question and was told by Father that to be in line at the altar was of the utmost importance, one who had also missed. At the end of the questions O’Bradley gave each of them one quick slap of the leather on the left hand.

At dinner time it was raining again. He sat uncomfortably in the damp chilly shed eating his sandwiches. They hadn’t got any of the usual rations today. The cold rain, falling lightly over the empty playground, shrouded everything in a grey twilight. Maybe there wasn’t going to be any war at all. He crossed his bare legs to keep them warm—he still wore short trousers—and wished he was back in the classroom, at least it was warm there. As soon as he was back from the shed he hurriedly ran out of the shed onto his sandwiches and he had to move. He felt miserable until, when the other boys were coming back from their lunch, he heard a chuckle and let through some blue sky and sunlight. The greyness lifted and he felt better, and then later, walking along the railings, he began to imagine the world of war and adventure again. He was glad when the Killer came out and they marched back into the classrooms; three o’clock was getting closer.

The rest of the day they did English Reading and Poetry. His composition survived the habitual boredom and fear. When O’Bradley decided to give them their homework it was already a quarter to three. Several times while was taking down the sums from the blackboard he looked out the window at the sky. At the back of his mind was the thought of his father at the railway station; it kept him from committing himself totally to wanting the planes to come. It was the same feeling he associated with committing a sin—in the catherismus it was called his conscience—but he didn’t know why it should be committing. He heard the sound of a motorcar or a lorry somewhere in the distance and he listened to it, foolishly wanting to believe that it was an aeroplane, but the sound faded away slowly and nothing happened.

At five three had packed everything, except the pencil and copybook he was using, into his bag. Slowly, the clock on the mantel struck three o’clock. The bell would go any second now. It did—the metallic scream ripped through the school silence. They showed their books into the bags and rushed out of their desks, trying to make as little noise as possible—O’Bradley was still there. Outside, the corridor echoed with the running footsteps and the yells of a class which had gone quicker than they had been. Michael was one of the first out the door and into the corridor to join the others. He ran with them,Peter, following closely behind by their momentum. The cramped cloakroom was packed. He found his duffle coat buried under several other coats, grabbed it and ran on. He rushed out the door and down the steps; it was only then, when he reached the playground, that he could stop and think. He was knocked down by the boys coming down the steps behind him. The sky was empty—blue and empty, the grey rain clouds of earlier on were gone. The sun was shining and he listened to see if he could hear anything. He didn’t. He faced the high school building; it blocked off half the sky. Maybe they’d come from that direction, he thought hopefully, and ran towards the side gate. There were schoolboys on the street but he ignored them. The view was worse; only a narrow slice of the sky was visible between the houses on one side of the street and the school wall on the other; and with the noise of the traffic coming up from the town, he couldn’t hear anything either. He ran up the hill; from the top of it he would be able to see everything, even the church on the other side of the river. He was out of breath when he got there, but that did not keep him from immediately looking up and searching the blue emptiness. It was all visible, except for the bungalows behind him and some lingering clouds on the horizon beyond the river. He strained his eyes scanning it; he wanted so much to see some tiny speck or hear some faint hum in the distance; the speck would grow slowly into the shape of a bomber, the hum become the roar of its propellers. He searched for a long time before he allowed himself to realise that they were probably not going to come—it had been too good to be true.

He had missed Hickory now, he had probably gone the usual way home. It was just as well, he would have felt awkward with him after this.

Alone, it was a long walk home. All the way the sky remained empty and smooth, but he could not help stopping and looking up again and again to stare up at it for long tantalising stretches. Russia and America were a long way away, the planes hadn’t had enough time yet to make the journey.

He got home late. Ann, who got out of school at four o’clock, was already there. His mother asked him what kept him, he said he’d stayed back and played football. She believed him and he felt how easy it was to lie. Seeing her believe him, he felt himself going soft inside with a tenderness that was almost pity.

Dinner was hangers and mash, but he gulped it down and did not enjoy it as much as he should have. His father’s absence hung over him, becoming more oppressive every minute. It was the same every Friday night, when he went to Ryan’s with Mr Connolly, another man who worked in CIE. Michael would be in bed when he came home, sometimes the argument downstairs woke him up. His mother’s voice would be so bitter and his father’s so loud, almost like a stranger’s.

Afterwards, when she was clearing back the table with Ann, his mother stopped pretending.

‘Wouldn’t you think he would come home in time just for once,’ she said, ‘especially at a time like this. The only time we ever see him is when he has no money. What in the name of God am I supposed to do?’

Neither Ann nor Michael answered her. Her pain and a sense of shame kept them silent. Mary was on the floor playing with her doll. She doesn’t know what’s going on, Michael thought and envied her. Another night of it was starting.

On the pretext of going to the toilet Michael escaped from the kitchen and went upstairs to his room. There it was quiet and he could try and forget about it, though he knew that in a while he would have to go back down again. He took an annual from the shelf and lay down on the bed to read it. If he came home now, he thought, the row would be over in a few minutes and everything would go back to the way it was. But he knew he wouldn’t. He was annoyed at his mother too. Why did she have to go on and on about it? Why was she always wrong? Kevin and the others were okay without him and he could always make his own dinner when he came in.

From the window she could see the sun just about to set behind the mountains; a bright red disc reddening the clouds on the horizon gloriously. A few faint stars had already appeared in the darkening blue higher up. The purple mountains were magical and alluring. What adventures could you go on from that mountain, but then he remembered that there had been there last summer on a picnic and there had only been rows and no adventures at all. He stared at the disk of the sun and looked for dark specks. Captain Roy Bradford and his Spitfires had attacked the Germans with the sun to their backs, maybe the Russians and the Americans would do the same. He waited and watched, but the sun slowly sank, and no specks appeared. He was disappointed, but it didn’t matter that much, because he knew that they came at night too, when it was dark.
The rough chin rubbing against my face began to annoy me, the light bulb was very interesting, I couldn’t see it, it was off. I came inside me and immediately began apologising profusely, falsely. I really didn’t give a shit, heard it once, heard it a thousand times; bet he’s said it a few times too:

Thanks for the ride, don’t call me . . .
and on to the clinic

"Another morning after pill?"

Frowned at, moaned at, plastic gloved fingers up my cunt, bits of metal;

"That doesn’t hurt does it”

a statement rather than a question.

Leave with a plain brown bag full of rubbish, to put in my mouth and make me fat, sick, depressed or hygienic looking looking bits of rubber that go yellow after a while and tubes of smelly jelly that makes me itch.

All in the name of freedom,
all for a fuck

or wait wait wait, late late late, diary calendar, 1, 2, 3, 4, oh no, Monday, tuesday, 13, 14, two weeks OH NO, clinic bottles, wait wait wait, results oh no, oh yes, decisions.

Forms, hospital, tears, hospital, sleep

pain
guilt.

All in the name of freedom,
all for a fuck.

Nonika Hendrickse

RAPE ONE: FOR ANOTHER VICTIM

What do I say to you,
lost and wondering, still searching for your stolen body wandering through so many years?

What do I say to you, though I was once theiv’d, or more than once, even if over a hundred times, it doesn’t matter; how can I speak when all my words must seem like laughter, mocking?

What do I say to you from this body so newly returned and lost again, and still being found?
Myself, I still don’t know which is the struggle to be healed or what road I walk down now, so how do I explain to you?

Jo Fremantle
July 1986
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Jo Fremantle
July 1988
SQUATROADS PART 2

BILL LOOKED LIKE a pregnant miner when he came back from the shop lifting spree in the co-op. He sneered at Mad Frank belching on the sofa asLEEP. His feet stuck out of the raggedy blanket, blue with cold, chilling wind blowing through the broken window. On the second egg-smelling belch Bill left, really he wanted to smash his face in (he is very violent). Little did he know but Mad Frank was awake, a trick he had perfected in Angola in '77 when he was a mercenary. Everyone in the squat hated Mad Frank. They despised his orange hair, stories about the SSI, the smarmy smile, the broken teeth, tattered denim flares, his bulging codpiece and yellow belted print shirt. Had they known what he was up to they would have really killed him, "before it was too late!"

Meanwhile Harry was having a heavy time. His amp blew up and on the same day he was caught by the managers of Woolworths urinating in the photographic kiosk. On the way back from the 'nick' a piece of falling masonry fell on his head. He was put in the same ward as Julian who, when cutting up the A-5 section of the telephone directory to see how much could fit in a matchbox, accidently cut off his finger . . . blood, blood, blood . . .

Jane had battled some get-well cards and brought them wholesome doughnuts. Sabrina said she'd like to come off his nob.

Mercedes and Christian were in deep discussion: M: "If you stop eating meat but still eat fish, okay, but what if someone offers you a turtle?" C: "Ehmm," he ponders, "well I wouldn't eat a newt.

And to the backdrop of this conversation Bill is horrified to discover loads of drowned mice in the home-brew. It was terrible, as it was the beer supply for the forthcoming benefit for the local claimants' union. Bill reckoned that it would probably add flavour and it couldn't hurt anyone.

Earlier in the week however, a lethal poison was being injected into pet shop mice by Mad Frank, who was being paid by Mr Godwin. These were put in the beer-making buckets, half a pint would be fatal—there were 200 pints! It was Godwin's plan to kill off lots of lefties, degenerates, scroungers and the squatters, especially the next-door filth.

The benefit gig was really groovy. It went slightly wrong, the PA fell on the band, a loony drunk kept grabbing the mike singing 'bloosh, bloosh, woahahh', but everyone was having fun, that is until people started dropping to the floor, cavorting and trashing, gripping their throats. In an hour a hundred of them lay scattered in pools of vomit, eyes turned upwards, dead.

The newspapers called it suicide. The Labour Party raised it in Parliament. Tory Councillors had a celebration. Mr Godwin was unbelievably happy. The police traced it back to the squat and with a little pressure Harry made a confession saying he did it because he was depressed.

But really, Brains from International Rescue sends Virgil on Thunderbird One over to Brixton with a miraculous antidote and saves all the people at the benefit just in time. As the puppet hero leaves, Julian turns hanging his head against the bedroom wall and realises it was all just a dream.

Life was especially difficult for the rich, they gathered. They were under constant pressure to make crucial financial, political and managerial decisions, to attend board meetings, to be seen at an endless stream of charity balls and banquets. And of course there was the clothes they were compelled to wear! The boy was staggered at the brave suffering of these well-to-do wretches who, even on the hottest of days were to be seen staggering along under the weight of gold coats, thick sequined jackets, diamond-studded scarves, knee-high leather-jersey-encrusted boots.

The boy would run away leaving his tractor sitting in the field to sit by the river. He would throw stones into the deep water and muske, his thoughts as unadulterated as the river. He did not like the hard dull grind of farm work. He did not like to work for the big corporation who owned the land for miles about. It seemed to him that the family, all of them, from his old grandfather down to his youngest sister, were worked hungrily and continuously for little reward. They barely scraped a living, even more so because there were nine of them. But he saw the barn stacked high with all the rich produce of the farm, produce that, had they been allowed a share of it that was reasonable, would have easily lasted them through the winter. But the corporation took the bulk and what was left were no more than subsistence rations. The same was true for all the neighbouring farms. Everyday, before the sun rose in scarlet and long after it had set in purple, the poor thin farmers and their families worked at a furious pace. Just in order to stand still they had to keep running.

Who was happy? The question tormented the boy. He would lie on his back and stare at the oppressive sky. He would absent-mindedly throw a few crumbs of bread to the fish below the dirty waters of the river. But when he realised what he was doing he would stop at once. He should have been catching them instead of throwing them his dinner. He knew that his family might be too glad of even these few crumbs when winter came.

The sky warned that winter was not far away. Ominous clouds whispered cold death secrets; a carpet of silence began to be unrolled across all the fields and valleys and the birds left.

The question still vexed him: Who was happy?

He began to see how ugly his small agricultural world really was. It was not beautiful at all. That was only what the visitors said. The ugly dull sky; the withered grey trees; the carpet of dead tawny grass; the pozzmarkered moon and the watery sun, the killing wind that cut without mercy across the fields and marshes. He spent one miserable day sitting on the marshes. A few thin cows chewed the tough grass and must have wondered why he, who had a warm house with a roof, should choose to shiver in this place.

We aren't any better than animals ourselves, he thought. And yet we laugh and sing and dance and meet together to: go; drink and celebrate our wretched lives. Why? He remembered a time past when one of the important men from the head office of the granary corporation, an under-manager, had paid the farm one of his rare visits. He appeared at the end of each month and seemed happy to sit and take tea in the small back kitchen. He was here to check the figures, inspect the produce to see if it was up to their standards, but most of all to berate the whole family and the few workers and urge them to work harder, ever harder. It was a routine task, but passionately on every visit. Once it was done with and the family made all the general promise that they were constantly striving to
BILL LOOKED LIKE a preganot miner when he came back from the shop lifting spree in the co-op. He sneered at Mad Frank belching on the sofa asleep. He hit stuck out of the ragtag blanket, blue with cold, chilling wind blow in through the broken window. On the second egg smelling belch Bill left, really he wanted to smash his face in (he is very violent). Little did he know but Mad Frank was awake, a trick he had practiced in Angola in ’77 when he was a mercenary. Everyone in the squat hated Mad Frank. They despised his orange hair, stories about the SSI, the smarmy smile, the broken teeth, tattered denim flares, his bulging cordoupee and yellow biplane print shirt. Had they known what he was up to they would have really killed him, “before it was too late”. Meanwhile Harry was having a heavy time. His amp blew up and on the same day he was caught by the managers of Woolworths urinating in the photographic kiosk. On the way back from the ‘nick’ a piece of falling masonry fell on his head. He was put in the same ward as Julian who, when cutting up the A-5 section of the telephone directory to see how much could fit in a matchbox, accidently cut off his finger . . . blood, blood, blood . . .

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In the next issue of SQUARROWS Mercedes becomes a vegan and Christian joins the Anti-Buddha Society. Jane goes on hunger strike as a protest and chains herself to a traffic light in Trafalgar Square. Also — ten tabs of acid are secretly slipped into Mr Godwin’s cocoa, and Harry has a mad plan to strap explosives to his chest and detonate them inside Brixton Police Station.

"DIIH, DIIH, DAH, DARRRR..."

AT HOME HIS MOTHER called him precocious, jumped-up. He was not content to work on the farm for the rest of his life, that much was clear to his parents, brothers and sisters. The boy would run away for a few days at a time, merely to get away from the cruel labour of the plough, the digging, the barn-building. People often came from the big city and the distant towns. They were mostly wealthy people; some were only petty clerks, shop assistants and so on. Mostly however they were wealthy and their money glittered in the eyes of their rings and jewels. The scent of gold dripped from their lips when they spoke. They came on weekend get-away-from-it-all trips on first class trains and in luxury coaches. What they were getting away from the boy was never quite sure, but he had come to understand that the pressure of life in the city must be almost intolerable.

Life was especially difficult for the rich, he gathered. They were under constant pressure to make correct financial, political and managerial decisions, to attend board meetings, to be seen at an endless stream of charity balls and banquets. And of course there was the clothes they were compelled to wear! The boy was staggered at the brave sufferings of these well-to-do women who, even on the hottest of days were to be seen staggering along under the weight of gold coats, thick sequinned jackets, diamond-studded socks, knee-high leather jacket-encrusted boots.

The boy would run away leaving his tractor sitting in the field to sit by the river. He would throw stones into the deep water and mizzle, his thoughts as unformable as the river. He did not like the hard dull grind of farm work. He did not like to work for the big corporation who owned the land and for miles about. It seemed to him that the family, all of them, from his old grandfather down to his youngest sister, were worked hardly and continuously for little reward. They barely scraped a living, even more so because there were nine of them. But he saw the barn stacked high with all the rich produce of the farm, produce that, had they been allowed a share of it that was reasonable, would have easily lasted them through the winter. But the corporation took the bulk and what was left were no more than subsistence rations. The same was true for all the neighbouring farms. Everyday, before the sun rose in scarlet and long after it had set in purple, the poor thin farmers and their families worked at a furious pace. Just in order to stand still they had to keep running.

Who was happy? The question tormented the boy. He would be on his back and stare at the oppressive sky. He would absent-mindedly throw a few crumbs of bread to the fish below the dirty waters of the river. But when he realised what he was doing he would stop at once. He should have been catching them instead of throwing them his dinner. He knew that his family might be at peace of some few crumbs when winter came.

The sky warned that winter was not far away. Ominous cloud whispered cold death secrets; a carpet of silence began to be unravelled across all the fields and valleys and the birds left.

The question still vexed him: Who was happy?

He began to see how ugly his small agricultural world really was. It was not beautiful at all. That was only what the visitors said. The ugly dull sky, the withered grey trees; the carpet of dead barren grass; the poinkmarked moon and the watery sun; the killing wind that cut without mercy across the fields and marshes. He spent one miserable day sitting on the marshes. A few thin cows chewed the tough grass and must have wondered why he, who had a warm house with a roof, should choose to shiver in this place.

We aren’t any better than animals ourselves, he thought. And yet we laugh and sing and dance and meet together to drink and celebrate our wretched lives. Why? He remembered a time past when one of the important men from the head office of the grainary corporation, an under-manager, had paid the farm one of his rare visits. He appeared at the end of each month and seemed happy to sit and take tea in the small back kitchen. He was here to check the figures, inspect the produce to see if it was up to their standards, but most of all to berate the whole family and the few workers and urge them to work harder, ever harder. It was a routine argument, but passionately on every visit. Once it was done with and the family made all the general promise that they were constantly striving to
tunnels. Poverty and loneliness were simply diminished as problems. He was uncomfortable sitting in the cramped kitchen (with the occasional dog or sniffing round his feet) and he made little attempt to join in the gossip small talk about the label of the local pub. He was washed clean by the glitter of wealth. He made his way through the streets with a sense of purpose. An old woman who was praying on its steps told him of the great wedding taking place inside. A madman lay on his back, beneath the bare trees. He saw him, the personage, this fine-cut figure in a blue suit that was unsuited to the weather, the wet sun; inside sat a lustrous figure, slowly growing benighted. The stains and deeper wounds subdued before the sky.

He lay in bed and close behind the thin wall his father and the animals breathed. He held the bibliophilic through the open window. He could have quite simply reached out and picked it out of the sky, if he had wanted to. The great and the small, the sins and the virtues, perhaps even the somewhere false. How could such contradictions—between the lessons of humility and charity that he had learnt at church, between being human and being in the real world? It belonged to the world of his tortured dreams. The reality of the day-world was poor people fighting with all the strength of their bodies, minds, souls, to eke a living out of the raining land (both over and under ground) which was the chief enemy of the light and the greed of the rich city people lay on their backs under suns always warm and drank and ate every manner of fine food and exotic fruits, breads, spices, from every part of the world. Yet they were poor! How could this be? They must, he thought, be something noble in such futile labour. How else could it be explained? They sweated for nothing because they had never had nothing.

Before dawn and before his family had risen to resume the round of hardship, he was already on his way out into the day. The boy was gone. I must go to find the city, he had decided. There I will find not only fortune but nobility. To be in the city, be tolerable was to place oneself under a great strain as well as under generally fat people, but this I won’t find at home. It is all too easy to have a sudden. They ferried rich men, women and children about on their backs as if their lives depended on it. The streets in this bleak weather were muddy brown river down which flowed the slop of mess, animal and human waste, food decaying, all the dead or decayed parts of the beast, and the boy saw that this was a fact of good nature also but of necessity, and not necessarily of that, that there was no escape from it, that they went on. The carrier finally, after a few slow painful steps, knelt down before some malleable steps so that the fine rain could wash his face, but he didn’t, because he was gaunt and ash-grey, the colour and importance of a discoloured cigarette. He sat on the steps head down and knees (worn out like two bunch) drawn up. The boy ran out meaning to comfort her in some way but instead ran into the arms of some enormous distinguished man who was carrying himself a distinguished man upon his back.

"You! Careless boy, you have lost your rider it seems." He spoke in a language the boy had never heard before and he had no own skin. He replied that he was as yet too young to speak such. He nipped so "Nonsense," he said man beggars. "Your kind are never too young. Always willing to work hard for your pennies. You are the most promising, seeing those others."

"That is true sir. But for now my ignorance also means we weigh nothing.

The gentleman tutted. "Don’t be sorry for it, boy. You must not expect to be wise. That is the terrible burden that the likes of me must deal with. I am ignorant and a poor country boy I do not understand why it is that here others like you carry on quixotic foolishness."

The man almost wept for the boy’s ignorance. But he himself, being a prosperous tea merchant, and being wise and with the taste of the tea, he was a man of a better breed. Of course you, the poor, carry we rich about on your backs. But the labour of the poor is the same as the rich. Keep you from begging (only the lame beg here) and we feed and clothe you. In the dark, time, long ago, your kind were feeding the eyes like cattle and doubted you. I tell you, few, whom I for one model myself on, put up to it. We are beyond such barbarism. Also you will notice how and direct you from place to place and you do not foul the streets with quite the same embers. All we do is to help our fellow Man. And you also make less mess and noise than automobiles. Everyone lives off the backs of others. It is good. We go beyond."

You are my kind, follow me you will be put together by the belt which fastened under the boy’s stomach.

The boy set off at a furiously place. His energy seemed increased. He was in the midst of several great fields. The Royal rider was exalted and quelled and a madman. He beat and whipped the boy to encourage him. The boy cried at the pain but took the command silently and ran even faster. Only if I had an army of young men like him, the King thought; I could build an invincible army that would conquer all the neighbouring lands and perhaps there find even some young steeds like him to conquer other lands. I must remember to put him out to stud before he gets too old.

The day grew older and colder and in last the King commanded the boy to turn back to the city. But the boy seemed to be the first indication of the fact that he was a man. He was going towards the high dark mountains where slept the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. He led in and cried out and whipped again until blood streamed from the boy flanks but still he went on. He carried the King high into the air; he lifted him, with his great hand, and threw a halt to the bolt. He galloped, the boy stopped. He unlocked them and the exhausted rider slid over and landed with a squashing thud. He was having trouble breathing because he had been running so fast. He was slowly sinking descending but now their positions were reversed. The King, hardly able to walk away, had immense trouble and after a few minutes, what with the cold, the boy was cold, beaten and trussed up and carried off by the police. The boy was not rigid. He explained that the servant had been only wounded but in the event dismembered because he was too injured to carry the King on the rest of his journey. After the boy had been shaved and summoned to meet the King. The King lay up in a huge white bed encrusted over the headboard with a jewelled iron and was attended by his courtiers wanting to know why the boy had done it. If he proves to be insane, thought the King, he must be trying to reach me by beating me into the mithmaud to prove to my subjects that I am a wise noble ruler. The King scratched his very fat stomach over his great belly and said that he was hungry and in the cold cell, knew that he had to lie down again. The boy explained that he had not sought to attack the King at all but he feared his master. He explained that he was angry at the slowness of the man in such an esteemed position. The King was not pleased but said he was patient. It was not surprising that the last servant had been so slow because the King was, though it was never said even in whispers, that the servant had not been a servant in the back of his servants, let alone walk, without support. The boy was not a servant. He was the one that the King had put there to his stature and that furthermore, the boy, was the very one for him. The King was a wise and noble man. And generosity, though few, some thought the King decided the boy must be forgiven and instead in the exalted position of King Carrier. The boy was given severe training in order to build up his body but he

be all it now, put to shame. exhaustion. From running across the streets, the boy had grown used to the city. He had seen the great clouds, the high buildings, the ocean around the city walls, exhausted from lifting many heavy things. He had also grown more sensitive to the smell of cold sterling and washed with the tears of our profits," he sniffled at his own particular wisdom: he knew that profit was apt to entail sorrow, especially when fallen below projected expectations. The boy understood some of this, he thought the phrase something that he would have been able to use if he was not ignorant and a poor country boy. He do not understand why it is that here others like me are not growing. You are the most promising, seeing those others.

You are my kind, follow me you will be put together by the belt which fastened under the boy’s stomach.

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tunnels. Poverty and loneliness were simply dimmed as a problem. As a tea. He was uncomfortable sitting in the cramped kitchen (with the occasional dog or muffling round his feet) and he made little attempt to join in the gossip small talk, the laboured scolding of the gold watch and cuff links until it was time to leave. In the meantime the family of the manor house and his brothers labourediously cleaning the smart man's car. He felt a sickening resentment. It grated and dulled him against all the benevolence and cleanliness of his social class. Then it was possible to be brutally honest about the personage, this fine cut figure in a blue suit that was mid-sweat and half forgotten in the center. It was struck by the spectacle of the decay of proximity and distance between them. Outside the other sons and his two maids and the manor house and the gullies under the watery sun; inside sat a lustrous figure, slowly growing begrimed. The stains and deeper wounds swoosh before the sky as they went.

He lay in bed and close behind the thin wall his father and mother were talking. He heard them whisper through the open window. He could have quite simply reached out and picked it out of the sky had he wanted to. The great and beautiful things were in the sky. Yet they did not exist out there somehow false. How could such contradictions - between the losses of humanity and charity that he had learnt at church, between human upliftment and the inevitable in the real world? It belonged to the world of his tortured dreams. The reality of the day-world was poor people fighting with all the strength of their bodies, minds, souls, to eke a living out of the resting land (both over and under ground) which was the only thing that they could find and prey.

Outside the rich city people lay on their backs under suns always warm and drank and ate every manner of fine food and exquisite fruits, breads, spices, from every part of the world. Yet they were far worse than he. They had no need, he thought, something noble in such futile labour. How else could it be explained? They sweated for nothing because they had too much. And sweat was worse.

Before dawn and before his family had risen to resume the routine of hand-to-mouth, he was up and out, the whole day. The boy was gone. I must go to find the city, he had heard. There is no affluence but there is no profit in their society. They would live under a great strain as well as under generally fat people, but there was a great reason for it. I won't find a city by chance, he thought. They ferried rich men, women and children about on their backs as if their lives depended on it. The streets in this bleak weather were muddy frozen rivers down which flowed the slop of mess, animal and human waste, food decaying, all the dead or decayed parts of the city. In the churchyard he saw that it was a task of goodness but also of necessity, and necessary that it be done. And as he passed by otherwise he and all his family and friends would be nobles too. And then who would do the work?

For this was the general drabness disappointed him. There were many people but few were obviously wealthy. Most of them were no better off than he. Everywhere were beggars sitting forlornly in the middle of even the busiest roads. Crippled ex-soldiers in shabby uniforms, blind beggars in ragged shirts, old men with arms or hands had rolled them for by comrades or had perfected their own method with their legs and mouths. Old women put place mats in the street and asked for spare change from the great numbers. All this was strange to the boy, especially the lovely thin children who screamed abuse at him. The boy had never seen so many before. He had never had his own skin. He replied that he was as yet too young to make up his mind. "Don't you agree?" he said. "Sonsense," said the man benignly. "Your kind are never too young. Always willing to work hard for your pennies. You are luckier than many others."

"That is true Sir. But for now my ignorance also makes me weak," the gentleman tutted. "Don't be sorry for it, you must not expect to be wise. That is the terrible burden that the likes of me impose. I will have to rely on the cold steel and warnings and the tears of our profits," he sniffed at his own particular wisdom. He knew that profit was apt to entice sorrow, especially when fallen below projected levels. He was a changeable fellow. He knew that profit was apt to entice sorrow, especially when fallen below projected levels. He was a changeable fellow. He knew that profit was apt to entice sorrow, especially when fallen below projected levels. He was a changeable fellow. He knew that profit was apt to entice sorrow, especially when fallen below projected levels.

The boy understood some of this, he thought the phrase fearful. For he would never learn about it, as he would never have to. He was not ignorant and a poor country boy I do not understand why it is that rather others like me carry on about you. The man almost wept for the boy's ignorance. But he himself, being a prosperous tea merchant, and being wise and never having been a beggar before, he had not the time to weep. Of course you, the poor, carry we rich about on your backs. But I, in my labours, I am not like you. I have to keep you from beggary (only the lame beggars) and we feed and clothe you. In the dark ages, long ago, your kind were being sold into slavery, your mates being sold into slavery. I guarantee that we all help our fellow Man. And you also make less mess and noise than automobiles. Everyone lives off the backs of others. As long as you don't enlighten us with the idea that you are free to do otherwise, we will be grateful. But in the future you might like to think about it. For one thing you might like to think of your own freedom. You might like to think about freedom, and the idea of freedom in some sense. For one thing you might like to think of your own freedom.

The boy seemed to understand this, he thought the phrase fearful. For he would never learn about it, as he would never have to. He was not ignorant and a poor country boy I do not understand why it is that rather others like me carry on about you. The man almost wept for the boy's ignorance. But he himself, being a prosperous tea merchant, and being wise and never having been a beggar before, he had not the time to weep. Of course you, the poor, carry we rich about on your backs. But I, in my labours, I am not like you. I have to keep you from beggary (only the lame beggars) and we feed and clothe you. In the dark ages, long ago, your kind were being sold into slavery, your mates being sold into slavery. I guarantee that we all help our fellow Man. And you also make less mess and noise than automobiles. Everyone lives off the backs of others. As long as you don't enlighten us with the idea that you are free to do otherwise, we will be grateful. But in the future you might like to think about it. For one thing you might like to think of your own freedom. You might like to think about freedom, and the idea of freedom in some sense. For one thing you might like to think of your own freedom.

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RAPE TWO: FOR MY SELF

Turning her face blank to the wall, she stands
eyes pressed against stone
desperate to force tears from a body
already sucked dry, and old, and tired
as rusted metal; decaying she left
brown stains on his towel, on his pants,
one red and wet on his prick
as it drained; now she could crumble
like old cars into sour dust when touched,
as high and fragil as lines
of coke on glass; she could weep if
she dared even to speak against
the silence supporting her.

Leda was raped by Yeats as a swan
in feathers and heaven, not an aging man
foul in his fat with stinking breath
dripping sweat and silt into her mouth.
Pope raped his madonna's hair and
laughed at the world; these men created
high wit, lust and passion with their words
when she can only find disgust and ugliness,
ugly words and ugly thoughts
and poems that hurt.

No one's virgin, no one's whore
with no one to create beauty enough
to shatter the dark and quiet
but herself, lost in horror; sometimes
wondering if being strong was an answer,
if there were solutions easier
than freedom, if someone from now
will ever be enough inspired by
his noble sadness to turn
that awful hour into genius?

Even her nicely independent friends and lovers,
full of suitable outrage and anger,
are not enough, belonging only to herself
she cannot claim their kindness as a right.
Humbled to her knees in the faces
of their sympathy, her gratitude
destroys her, over and over in circles
of guilt. Alone, and stolen from no one,
when she climbed down off her pedestal
the world forgot her.

Jo Fremantle
July 1986

IT was red on the sheets like

BLOOD ON SNOW

and they weren't even white they were blue, it looked brown against them, but
the redness of it wasn't in the colour nor was it in the smell, if you touched it the
dampness could have been sweat or sperm in fact some of it was, but the
WHITENESS of that holy liquid was smothered by the REDNESS of it all.

I was accused
"Youre on"
I was guilty:
guilty of flaunting the dirty secret in the face of the sacred act. Now
it was up to me to make my excuses . .
"Oh sorry I thought I'd finished"
. . . or some such bullshit.
I pondered my approach and watched his reasonably impressive erection dying,
crusty and red. He covered it protectively, eyeing my bloody thighs as though it
had somehow caused his manhood to shrink.
A moment ago he was worshipping me . .
could have fucked me forever so he said.
"You didn't say anything"
"I didn't think it was worth mentioning"
I traced red patterns across my stomach, daubed my nibbles then licked my
fingers clean, leaving my index finger which I offered him

I made a gesture
"Fuck off"
I was rejected.
Employing my redundant finger I masturbated loudly . . how he
stared at the great red wanking monster.
. . . and with my orgasm I let out all the cries of anger and pain
that I was too much of a coward to show him honestly. All he knew was what
some one had told him
I tried
"Only natural normal harmless blood"
"Time for a woman to be alone with herself"
(essence of cunt yuck ugh)
I failed
I started shouting, He started shouting. We argued.
I told him to get out and started wanking again defiantly. He freaked out, he left,
then popped back to have the last word just in time to catch me one foot on the
floor, one on the bed putting in a tampon . . he left silently.

Nouka Hendrikoie
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floor, one on the bed putting in a tampon . . . he left silently.

Nouka Hendrickse
OF THAT BRUTE ENGINE

by Dave Haden

Illustration by Stuart Riddell

FAR OFF DOWN the misty lane a thin black figure emerged with the pale sunrise from a group of trees and sat off towards the town. He did not walk like ordinary men with a heavy stride, but danced his way along the lonely roads; tiny silver bells on his tatty black cloak ringing in wild abandon.

The early haze that hung damp over the autumnal fields and hedgesrows, he turned a few cartwheels, brushed off his hands on his patched trousers and plunged a few late daisies for his buttonhole. As he saw the first few houses he stopped as though in wonder, then shrugged his bent shoulders, and sang a song under his breath continued on his way.

The countryside faded and a neatly manicured town suburb took over. Children being banded off to school in gleaming white cars pointed and laughed as he passed, and for those that laughed kindly he tipped his battered old top hat and smiled a broad smile.

Onwards he danced, passing an army roadblock unsees, a whirl of black, silver bells chattering and six coloured ribbons at the back of his hat fluttering in the early morning breeze.

* * *

Garry traced a word slowly and neatly into the condensation of his window. "Catalonia" it said for a moment, then began to disintegrate as wet drops slid down his glass. He sipped another mouthful of hot tea and leaned back on the warm plastic chair. On the other side of the hard foamrtable Pete and Julie sat close together with one arm around each other’s waist, cups of thick frothy coffee steaming before them.

"I think you know that me and Pete are thinking of leaving the band, we’re just holding you down," Julie asked Garry searchingly.

"Just Julie," said Garry quietly, "I keep on telling you, you’re good, both of you, why on earth do you want to leave. You saw how people were over Pete’s violin solo last night?" Garry tapped his nails on the cracked tabletop to emphasize his points.

"But the excitement’s going out of it now," Julie protested, "it’s getting dangerous to play some places.

"Look, we’re a good band, we just need the right publicity and exposure, we won’t be playing the underground clubs for ever," Garry said, raising his voice.

"Yeah," said Pete absently, "I read somewhere that they might cut the TV to six hours a day. He looked as though he was going to say more but Julie gave him a squeeze.

She looked at Garry, sighed, pressed her lips into a tight line and went into the bright kitchen. Garry looked at the soft cream cakes arranged in their glass case like a row of dead butterflies. The high tones of a radio newscaster drifted out from behind the door along with the smell of toasting bread, mingling in harsh contrast as they ventured out into the yellowy cafe. "...activities continue, there will be no cancellation of the use..." scrape, scrape, butter on toast "...said the Home Secretary last night at..." clatter, crack, plates being pulled from racks. The radio was switched off and the young woman brought out three plates of buttered toast, one pile taller than the other, and crowded them onto an ornamented wooden tray.

"That’s two pounds and fifteen pence," she said forcefully, then added, "Please."

Garry fishied into his pockets, his mouth watering and produced two tarnished pound coins and a handful of coppers. "Thanks," he said, tipping the money into a narrow gap between the edge of the tray and the display of sweets and crisps. He picked up the tray, turned carefully and began to walk back across the ancient yellow tiles towards the table, but slowed down when he saw someone sitting in the chair next to his. Garry looked at Pete and raised his eyebrows, but Pete just shrugged his shoulders.

When Garry reached the table he slid the tray slowly onto the tabletop and stood in silence for a moment, scrutinizing the stranger’s narrow face.

"Do we know you?" he said in a flat voice.

"I don’t think so," said the stranger in an odd accent. Garry edged around him and sat down, shoulder against the damp window, and pulled his plate of toast towards him. The last bits of butter merged into the moist surface. He finished off his lukewarm tea.

"You look a bit good, go down well on stage, that," Julie said to the stranger to break the silence. Pete began to scratch his head and Julie kicked him under the table. He winced and scratched at his left cheek.

"On stage," replied the stranger.

"Yeah, all those belts and ribbons and things, the top hat’s a bit of an exclamation." Julie.

Garry suddenly thought he knew what the person was about but didn’t want to join in, and that might be the idea if Pete and Julie were set on leaving. He looked away into the dark pastel blocks of colour that permeated through the matted windows, trying to think of something to say. The word that he had traced on the window had been reclaimed by the condensation around the edges, as he looked through it, the grey haze of the wet road outside was replaced by a slow slide of khaki and green. A low thrum of a heavy engine outside made the plates rattle. An APO patrol. A low hissing came from Garry’s left ear, drowned out for a moment by a stilled din from Pete’s and a gasp from Julie as she put her hand to her mouth. Garry looked around quickly and was confronted with a round black sphere like a painted teardrop. He held gently between a mace class, a ring finger and thumb. From the top of the sphere a long thin tail of fuse hung flopping and splitting. The stranger looked into Garry’s eyes, Garry froze.

"It’s the bomb of Freedom, and though it could be detonated at any time, it should only be used when absolutely necessary," the stranger replied carefully.

At the instant he finished speaking two loud bangs sprang through the glass as the heavy doors of the APO vehicle were slammed and shut. Tense eyes flashed forwards for a second at the explosive sounds, then came back to rest on... nothing.

The stranger was gone. The only sound was a quick ping of the bell of the cafe door as the APO patrol, one man and one woman, pushed open the worn door and closed it again quietly. They walked sharply to the counter and said something to the young woman. They were dressed in what could have been army uniforms, but they were dark blue. They wore lightweight thin black helmets, dark glasses and green denim trousers. One of them turned around and the empty group of tables. She saw Garry, Pete and Julie, touched her companion on the arm and moved her head in their direction. He looked around, nodded at her and went back to questioning the girl.

The woman moved across the floor, heels thumping on the hard tiles and stopped next to Pete, wary.

"Pleases," she said, sharply.

"They produced the plastic cards slowly and laid them at the chipped edge of the table. When all three had been produced the woman reached out her thin gloved hand to pick them up.

"The window cracked all over but did not shatter as a low rolling thump sounded from outside. As the sound echoed away the woman flung the passes back at the threesome and was skidding to the door of the cafe, pulling her gun as she ran, and joined her companion, each pressed low either side of the open door, guns ready.

Garry wiped the cracked window gently until a streaky fragmented blur of black coiling smoke could be seen, rolling from the broken and flaming patrol vehicle.

"This would make a great song, you know," said Julie. Garry smiled at her.

Illustration by Stuart Riddell

Illustration by Houdsber Brown

* * *

"In this the road to Utopia, Old Friend," asked the man in the flapping black cape, Bella laughing in the wind. The woman wrinkled her walnut face with a broad smile and chuckled like gravity.

"Aye, Friend," she grunted, leaning in her worn stick and gesturing with her left hand on the road and you’ll get to Wherever, that’s near enough.

"Thankyou," he said and danced away into the dusky evening.

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Illustration by Stuart Riddell

Illustration by Houdsber Brown

29
OF THAT BRUTE ENGINE
by Dave Haden

Illustration by Stuart Riddell

FAR OFF DOWN, the misty lane is a thin black figure emerged with the pale sunrise from a group of trees and sat off towards the town. He did not walk like ordinary men with a steady stride, but danced his way along the lonely roads; tiny silver bells on his tatty black cloak ringing in wild abandon.

In the early hours that hung damp over the autumnal fields and hedgerows, he turned a few curlews, brushed off his hands on his patched trousers and plucked a few late daisies for his buttonhole. He saw the first few because he stopped as though in wonder, then shrugged his bent shoulders, and sang a song under his breath continued on his way.

The countryside faded and a neatly manicured town suburb took over. Children being bundled off to school in gleaming cars pointed and laughed as he passed, and for those that laughed kindly he tipped his battered old top hat and smiled a broad smile.

Onwards he danced, passing an army roadblock unseen; a whirl of black, silver bells chattering and six coloured ribbons at the back of his hat fluttering in the early morning breeze.

Garry traced a word slowly and neatly into the condensation on the window. "Catalonia," it said for a moment, then began to disintegrate as wet drops slid down the glass. He sipped another mouthful of hot tea and leaned back on the warm plastic chair. On the other side of the hard formica table Pete and Julie sat close together with one arm around each other's waist, cups of thick frothy coffee steaming before them.

"I think you know that me and Pete are thinking of leaving the band, we're just holding you down," Julie asked Garry searchingly.

"Just like Pete," said Garry quietly, "I keep on telling you, you're good, both of you, why on earth do you want to leave. You saw how people were over Pete's violin solo last night?" Garry tapped his nails on the cracked table to emphasize his points.

"But the excitement's going out of it now," Julie protested, "it's getting dangerous to play some places."

"Look, we're a good band, we just need the right public and exposure, we won't be playing the underground clubs for ever," Garry said, raising his voice.

"Yeah," said Pete absentmindedly, "I read somewhere that they might cut the TV to six hours a day. He looked as though he was going to say more but Julie gave him a squeeze.

She looked at Garry, sighed, pressed her lips into a tight line and went into the bright kitchen. Garry looked at the soft cream cakes arranged in their glass case lined with a row of dead butterflies. The high tones of a radio newscaster drifted out from the little door along with the smell of toasting bread, mingled in harsh contrast as they ventured out into the yellowy cafe. "...activities continue, there will be no complications of the use..." Escape, escape, butter on toast. "...the Home Secretary last night..." clatter, crash, plates being pulled from racks. The radio was switched off and the young woman brought out three plates of buttered toast, one pile taller than the other, and crowded them onto her streamlined wooden tray.

"That's two pounds and fifteen pence," she said forcefully, then added, "Please!"

Garry fished into his pockets, his mouth watering and produced two tarnished pound coins and a handful of coppers. "Thanks," he said, tipping the money into a narrow gap between the edge of the tray and the display of sweets and crisps. He picked up the tray, turned carefully and began to walk back across the ancient yellow tiles towards the table, but slowed down when he saw someone sitting in the chair next to his. Garry looked at Pete and raised his eyebrows, but Pete just shrugged his shoulders.

When Garry reached the table he slid the tray slowly onto the tabletop and stood in silence for a moment, scrutinizing the stranger's narrow face.

"Do we know you?" he said in a flat voice.

"I don't think so," said the stranger in an odd accent. Garry edged around him and sat down, shoulder against the damp window, and pulled his plate of toast towards him. The last bits of butter merged into the moist surface. He finished off his lukewarm tea.

"Your ould's good, go down well on stage, that," Julie said to the stranger to break the silence. Pete began to scratch his head and Julie kicked him under the table. He winced and said with catching:

"On stage," replied the stranger.

"Yeah, all those belts and ribbons and things, the top hat's a tree," explained Julie.

Garry suddenly thought he knew what the person was about: a priest. He joined in the band, and that might be the idea if Pete and Julie were set on leaving. He looked away into the dark pastel blocks of colour that permeated through the misted windows, trying to think of something to say. The word that he had traced on the window had been reclaimed by the condensation around the edges, as he looked through it, the grey haze of the wet road outside was replaced by a slow slide of khaki and green. A low thrum of a heavy engine outside made the plates rattle. An APO patrol. A low hissing came from Garry's left ear, drowned out for a moment by a stifled sneeze from Pete and a gasp from Julie as she put her hand to her mouth. Garry looked up quickly and was confronted with a round black sphere like a painted teardrop. He held it gingerly between a mace class, and felt the tip of his finger touch the thumb. From the top of the sphere a thin line of fuse hung flitting and splitting. The stranger looked into Garry's eyes. Garry froze.

"It is the bomb of Freedom, and though it can be detonated at any time, it should only be used when absolutely necessary," the stranger said carefully and slowly.

At the instant he finished speaking two loud bangs sprang through the glass as the heavy doors of the APO vehicle were slammed and shut. Tense eyes flashed forwards for a second at the explosive sounds, then came back to rest on nothing.

The stranger was gone. The only sound was a quick ping of the bell of the cafe door as the APO patrol, one man and one woman, pushed open the worn door and closed it again quietly. They walked sharply to the counter and said something to the young woman. They were dressed as though they could have been army uniforms, but they were dark blue. They were lightweight thin black helmets, dark glasses and gun holsters on their hips. One of them turned around the empty groups of tables. She saw Garry, Pete and Julie, touched her companion on the arm and moved her head in their direction. He looked around, nodded at her and went back to questioning the girl.

The woman moved across the floor, heels thumping on the hard tiles and stopped next to Pete, wary.

"Purse," she said, sharply.

"They produced the plastic cards slowly and laid them at the chipped edge of the table. When all three had been produced the woman reached out her thin gloved hand to pick them up.

"The window cracked all over but did not shatter as a low rolling thump sounded from outside. As the sound echoed away the woman flung the purse back at the threesome and as skidding to the door of the cafe, pulling her gun as she ran, and joined her companion, each pressed low either side of the open door, guns ready.

Garry wiped the cracked window gently until a streaky fragmented blur of black coating smoke could be seen, rolling from the broken and flaming patrol vehicle.

"This would make a great song, you know," said Julie. Garry smiled at her.

"In this the road to Utopia." Old friend," she said, the man in the fluttering black cape, bella laughing in the wind. The old woman wrinkled her walnut face with a bearded smile and chuckled like a rusty clock. "Aye, Friend," she grunted, leaning in her worn stick and gurgling to him, "610 on this road and you'll get to Nowhere, that's near enough."

"Thankyou," he said and danced away into the dusty evening.

Illustration by I Hoodesbert Brown
CAN PIGS FLY?

Helicopter, Helicopter where have you been?
We all miss the sound of rotor-blade scream!
And Indra-red cameras, recording the signs,
of extortionate rents, food, dope and fines.

Helicopter, Supersnoop! Is it true what they said?
That you're mothballed away in the maintainence shed,
 lenses of scanners all scarred by a flash
from yacht flare or rocket, nearly causing a CRASH?????

Chocolate chopper! is there nothing to do?
—even if we pay for a nimrod or two, to
watch o'er you as you watched o'er us—
plus satellites and marksmen stop every 'bus!

MACHINE SUPREME! Don't leave us this way
your almighty din gave such fun every day
comforted mothers and children Abed—
just can't hear crimes with you overhead!

Where oh, where can you now be seen?
Dispatched to the Falklands or Camberwell Green.
In Kensington, if it is allowed.......
directing lost tourists up Pom-br-eke Road!

There's another job we need air support for,
tracking infringers of safety-belt law,
no point in letting criminals run to ground,
call 'em David Martin, claim your Round.

PLEASE TELL US DEAR READERS, HELP US TO TRACK
THE MILLION POUND PIG WITH EGG ON IT'S FACE!

Rev. ARMITAGE. Can't Pray—GOTTA RIOT!

THE CLOCK on Lambeth Town Hall chimed four
times on a cold spring night. Rain danced on the
pavements, water rushed along gutters waterfalling
into drains. Three blue lights licked the wet streets
as they headed towards the squat and OPERATION
DUCK.

Their wheels skidded on the road halting to the
sound of doors slamming and feet running to the front
doors. Ten or so uniformed figures squashed
themselves into the porch prepared...

Inside the house Mad Frank woke up with the noise,
confused, thinking it was a jungle ambush in Angola,
he grabbed his machetes and dashed out into the dark,
accidentally stabbing the TV. This created a rather
loud explosion.

The whole house woke up. Christian, always
prepared for a riot and being radical, put on a black
balaclava. Bill was terrified as he looked down on the
three police cars below. Nash, colt and speed and
the brass scales were hastily bundled into a bag as
he reached for the rope ladder that was attached to
the roof.

Meanwhile, the front door had been flattered
and several groaning, grunting, burly, copper's were
galloping up the stairs. Julian, wearing purple
pyjamas, sat bolt upright in bed clutching his furry
rabbit toy. Booboo. One copper grabbed him while
the other started to viciously rip off the head, legs and
bunny tail desperately looking for drugs. Julian was
reduced to tears snivelling, "You bastards, poor
Booboo, my Booboo, what have you done to my
Booboo."

In the next room Jane was screaming "Fascist pigs"
and "Dickhead scum" as two men emptied her
drawers and threw her collection of earring clips from all
over the world around the room. Bursting into
Christian's room, with a loud, "You're nicked sonny!", they found him wearing a balaclava.

Immediately they spotted a box spilling over with
fancy lace knickers. He was arrested, making jokes
that anything he said would be TAKEN DOWN and
USED AGAINST HIM, ha ha ha ha. Christian tried to
explain that some pervert had been sending them to
him, one pair a day ever since he had left the Liberal
Party, and he thought these things were shackles of
women's sexuality.

By this time many of the neighbours had come out
onto the street, in their slippers and gowns. They saw
Bill in his T-shirt striding chapman up onto the roof and
then his silhouetted body running frantically slip on
the wet tiles, hands wave like a Cramps fan and then
disappear. Bill's life flashed before him—nosebleeds,
hungry potatoes at school, sacked from Macdonals...

as he fell through tiles, attic, lamphade and finally
coming to bounce on Mr Godwin's bed. The old man's
body shook in panic (please do not have sympathy for
this bastard) his Horlicks slopping out of the cup.

Brushing off the plaster from his shoulders Bill
mumbled an apology and rushed down the stairs
bumping into Mad Frank who was clutching a hatchet
and a bundle of sawn-off shotguns. With popping eyes
and dribbling saliva Mad Frank explained he had
been trapped in the toilet, and smashed his way
through Mr Godwin's wall and was going to "blow
away" any copper getting in his way.

Mrs Pledge, who lives up the road, hit her first fag
of the day as she shut the door. A helicopter wock-
worked overhead and down the road gun blasts and
red flashes lit up the night. Well she couldn't stop
now, she'd be late for the cleaning job, but she'd
surely read about it in the South London Press.

What will happen to Julian, will they be able to stitch
his Booboo back together? Will Jane ever be able
to eat another egg? And how will Bill and Mad Frank
escape?

In next week's SQUATOADS, Mad Frank has a
religious experience, Harry returns from New York
with sexual leprosy. Jane tries to eat jellied eels and
Christian discovers a long lost brother in Southend
who runs a hot dog stall for tourists in the summer,
and tries to get him to sell veggie burgers.......

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Illustration by Stuart Riddell
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