

LUDD GANG



We made contact with an alien civilization
whose paper economy revolved around
something akin to financial derivatives
and indentured slavery and fidget spinners
for itchy trigger fingers they climbed
down the pine trees in gorilla suits
if we were in Canada I'd call that
moon a canoe hit me when I wasn't
looking under a stone loggia in speechless
exhaustion you can lead a horse
to water and make it drink
with this one simple trick

EDITED, TYPESET AND PRINTED BY ALEX MARSH,
DOM HALE, TOM CROMPTON & SAM WESELOWSKI

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LUDD GANG

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TOM BETTERIDGE

Dogs in English Porcelain

(August 2024)

with Vanessa Rossetto

it's static
its many stacked airs
and bow-hair cutlery
in dumb-light
inner state,
ground turning
low-mids
old dog-whine and
to the back
tape reels
spirals
it's hard to work to voice
drama
behind foreground
frequencies
tune in to
overtones
to domestic whir
hard
to work the grain that makes tone
acute
sharpening
stately drum interior

though occasional non-dom traffic
airy backdrop
maybe the structure of the poem is
kettle hiss where are you lately? I place
my hand to bark
to feel rivetted
heft
the relief of knowing for sure you're gone
to push out
into a world that survives
in its hardness you also
can lace your hand there
the world survives us both
unfurls us in it wally dugs
bowed airs stacked
resin layers
aggro agent-scratch
ambient pottery
cooking choreography I/you
alive in the audible
moment of string-snap
live in the reel someone shouts 'kill them'
are you dumbbells
there? in that shout you
the sound 'kill them'
battered
curled-up?
now ghost noises and small budgies
and the hob's on
Wirral track razor-clam-shell beach-litter
off-shore wind
farms a stitched mouth
in the face-up
heat-weld of

fascists on the street again
not only physical revulsion
fear
lone incapacity but also
ambient cellular recall
I see
yous mes sharp moment of ID
in the sum channel
and disavow it side-gain swallow vomit
the kettle descaling history
fears hatreds wrapped aspiring
cut-off
mic-rub and fishing wire, sweat
all mobbed up again algebraic
Richard shot a stoat
off the back of a rabbit the rabbit was screaming
gather generation, genera
the children of wartime parents
amplify and saturate wariness
hidden fears anti-intraceptive
pleasure-denial
and pressure
wooden-fence varnish
ochreous
apply soft-knee compression
and makeup gain
analyse its spectra
he had his teeth pulled out cause of trench mouth
a Hull, Southport, Liverpool signal
a Fetcham, Farnham, Farnborough
'kill them' except plausible?
in a state
in a home
dogs in English porcelain

convention
royal dugs fascia
the membrane holding the poem's
organs in place?
Ray the screw shoots sparrows from
the window fascia organ-grind
mother shoots squirrels
from the window grandfather
aims his rifle at kids from the open
window the poem soothes itself to sleep shoots
faceless people from the fantastic
window absurd earmuffs
stranded on the beach again
brushing grains from my fingers
whatsapp photo of Sigmar's father in Nazi uniform
are you still there? and the poem
that cannibalises the skin
holding its innards up vomits again
in hateful animation
loses its infant Is
corrals them in a shit pub
peaks in the signal
they'll beg for a police escort to their coach
to Leatherhead chalk-hills horse-fencing
anti-caravan bollarding
no
not those
I wanted to peak
speak from the insides
to reach out and through
for you wanted to articulate
separation
side-channel
to get sharp you/insides

they are the same
in sum and motor out
helical in local cosmos
so green woodpecker on Bidston Hill obvious
wanted to
couch history
eviscerate the cushions
airdrop them into the forties
but sudden back-song
forest birds and chorded drones
Wirral dunlins
action tonight Overbury St redshank
bullrushes
incongruous viola
open strings
the poem drops and heaves
peripheral harmonics
indistinct clatter
rushing choral out of the house
I and you
overdrive curtain-fire
into the street

LOLA OLUFEMI

November revived me!

She watched me glide across a wing
balance on an eyelash.

She splashed me across a city and inside it I saw:
loneliness,

surplus populations,
attempts to organise the lumpenproletariat.

I did not despair. How could I when I saw a man laugh in the eye of a
laser? The pen pitched inside of a friend's doubt and I seized it. Oh,
November revived me! I thought of the resource necessary to power a city,
what I had to ignore to be resuscitated. The lights called and
I spoke back, welcoming spring.

A duckling scraped her knee. Unafraid of mother's watching eyes, she
knew then what I did not,
the bread would sustain them both. I took this knowledge home, tried to
think complexly about aesthetics and discovered **there is violence buried
deep inside metaphors for the sublime.**

I was crushed. I held this understanding awhile, let it stutter,

de
grade / and then

rhythm returned and opened the road. For the first time *again*, I
screamed at the birds, moved by my own improvisation I was overcome
with wonder, I did not ponder the bottomless pit of the ocean, only tried

to save it from artificial intelligence and ensuing threats,
friends,
November revived me,
in-between guttural sobs and historical rupture,
lyric was the only way I could think to express
being brought back to life.

TESSA BERRING

Tell Me It Was Real

Send me out for watermelons
and one night

gaze with me
at foil-wrapped stars

Who can speak this quietly
about carving knives

and warm split loaves?

I want to press deeper
into the mattress

as a menhir would

OW

from the sannots

one

wet puppy nose president: next
your skeleton, officially
pardoned, climbs out your mouth. pity
the meatballs of the field: this spring
farmers praised their eyelashes, stain
on jack nicholson's shirt now. eat
topless, dipshit. we all know you
have nipples: the end's showing through

two

when you hit forty, a brick will
have achieved more. just as dense
but solid friends, a use, more time
to crumble in instalments. get
in: you've driver's ed with my hearse.
hands at tomorrow and zero.
mirror: 'ugh!' hit that wall head on.
one of these speedbumps is your son

twenty four

my eyes turned their tourettes to you.
the grand canyon glanced back: all holes.
one wonder, one windows in which.
hand me this morning yesterday.
how much seeing makes 'seen' honest.
i'm a big fan of your 'one more
outburst out of you' voice. mutants
like me, appreciate the chance

sixty four

saw tomorrow, death's therapist.
looked at his watch a minute in.
it's that far from doctor's note to burn.
goodbye, chin. bejesus, disease
dissembles dukes' and lackeys' jazz
alike. licking oblivion
takes more discipline than this: end
what you will do to me. again

one hundred thirty six

should age 'whoa' your soul's steady steed
threaten to look it in the mouth.
or point at me, say, 'no, that's him.'
i'll handle the trad rot admin.
cadavering, bad calendar
man: in death as in life: dateless.
sand rare. some addendum no one
reads to. an unrelated yawn

NICKY MELVILLE

from ABBODIES MORE COLD¹

aliens act

writing this to refract
mother's day 2023
[just circling back]
thoughts
of my mother's
cold a body
cold dead
hands
neglected
in the hospital
not on a drip
no fluids
while we were away
getting some sleep
&
just circling back
to the Aliens Act
of 1905
 Britain('s) *first*

¹ The Sequel to, and complex continuation (necessarily drawing on almost all geopolitical events, and the augmentation, or escalation, of the spurious and real connections those books developed, since 2020) of, *ABBODIES* (Sad Press, 2017) and its sequel *ABBODIES COLD : SPECTRE* (Sad Press, 2020). See next foot note for a few further particulars.

immigration law
which I wrote about in
*ABBODIES COLD*²
was actually drafted
in a panic
about Jews fleeing pogroms and
the threat
the fear
that they might take
English bread
out of
English mouths

we are/were told

the invasion then
is
the invasion now

alien is a noun
adjective
and
verb
in transit
err...
go!
asylum seekers
are aliened
by the current govern

² *ABBODIES COLD : SPECTRE* was beautifully described by my publisher thus: 'As neoliberal technocapitalism and fascism negotiate over the finer details of Brexit, pop legends ABBA team up with problematic fave James Bond to try to make sense of it all.' They don't, they can't.

meant

the invasion
so-called
by Cruella Braverman
so cauld
our very own
Uncle Tom
's Cabinet ministering
plenty cold bodies
in the boats
for sea spray
sea winds
see death
the ultimate body (un)warmer
[she's no longer cold
just ash
in an oak casket
not yet
interred – my mum –
not Braverman, sadly,
who
the other day
said Israel
should finish the job³...]

stop STOP THE BOATS
[intern ships]

the “alien invasion”
the root
of Britain's housing

³ This part added in May 2024, about a year after the first final draft of this poem.

problem because
not a day passes
but English families
ruthlessly turned out
to make room
for foreign invaders

the Alien Invasion
Startling in
crease in those
who come to stay
Daily Express head
line in the run-up
to the debate over
the Aliens Act

without the new law
the prime minister
 Arthur Balfour
told parliament
Britain would
irreparably change

what a declaration
no surprise this led to his
Balfour Declaration
sup port
for an Israeli homeland
keep them out of Britain
masKing
anti-semitism
enacted by
 Be it
the King's most excellent

majesty

and now we have
another [fuc]King
nation
ality would not
be the same
British sovereignty
wielded as
a weapon
[Louise has weapon⁴]
to exclude refugees
[the weapon is language]
still
the *Dailies* express
[and the language
far right(er)]
now
has rarely been
as weaponised
while on the ground
foot age
says otherwise
it is gaslighting
on an industrial scale
should this be a foot note?]

when war was declared
Jewish refugees classed
as “enemy aliens”
were interned in

⁴ Reference to the film *Arrival*, a key artefact I use in *ABBODIES*, where the antibellicose linguist, Louise, manages to do the right thing through language as a force for good.

camps across the UK
the largest
being
on the Isle of Man
Jews forced to mingle
with Nazi sympathisers
offshore detention
is nothing [who] [k]new
held behind
barbed wire
for up to three years

release the intern
ships

the Aliens Depart
meant
of the Home Office set up
intern
meant tribunals
throughout the country
headed by govern
meant officials
since 1914 all aliens
over the age of 16
needed to register their details
at local police offices
require
meant
of the 1914 Aliens Registration Act

the object
was / is
to divide

the aliens
into three
cat
ego
ries
[Mogg]
rise

there is no need
to draw
lazy comparisons
between British
policy and language and
those
 of Nazi Germany
echoes
Britain's own shame
fool policies of the past
are clear
enough

policies
 i s
polic e

MBIZO CHIRASHA

DEAR COMMISSAR

dear commissar

my poetry is

political baboons puffing wind of vendetta

splashes of sweet flowing buttock valleys of pay less city labourers

rough crackling red clay of sanctions smashing poverty corrupted face of

my village

presidential t shirt tearing across bellies of street hustlers

mute bitter laughter of political forests after the falling of political lemon
trees

dear commissar

my poetry is

foot signatures of struggle mothers and green horns

bewitched by one party state cocaine

new slogan hustlers boozing promises after herbal tea of change rhetoric
street nostrils dripping stink and garbage
tears chiselling rocky breasts of mothers who lost wombs
in the charcoal of recount
dear commissar
my poetry is
rhythm of peasant drums dancing the new gimmick
unknowingly
political jugglers eating voter drumsticks after another ballot loot.

AUTOCRATIC CLUBS

Breakfast of fat greased steak of political violence

and presidential jugs filled corruption orange squash

colonial maize sump served with rigged elections red-chill spice,

some chakalaka as lunch-meal

Dinner is a sumptuous beef roast of dead comrades and delicious pork
chops of

unrepentant foes

Red wine is a brew of uncouthed tears of poverty-ridden commissars

and bullet-drilled blood of unnamed green horns,

they died in the rough- crossfires of congress battles

Music,

-soprano is the teeth-gnashing of pregnant mothers,

-tenor is ear-splitting wails of funeral sirens

-baritone is the bleating and groaning of electrocuted dissidents

-alto is the clanking of handcuffs, poetry of regrets, belly pit-
supplications, and

praise hymns in isolated prison cells

Jives - thuds of stray bullets/the roar of grenade traps/raucous laughter of
assassin's gun

Dawn comes with dictators surrendering their anger to the winking sun
and walk unto propaganda podiums in style

Afternoons are a hustle, the cabinet is in a verbal vulgar session
and the parliament is another fist fighting drama

Night, dictators are back to the festival,
munching oil-greased steak of propaganda and drinking tears for wine

Other gimmicks of rigging the ballot are seasoned in political hot ovens
Commissars, chefs, and zealots run about serving elections biltong and
another

dinner glass of blood wine

And then another dance to another funeral song

LIZZIE HOMERSHAM

Vienna 20-24 April 2024

We do not know if our voices are appreciated as heard from the waiting area in the isolated room. Probably we should have been quieter for the benefit of other patients, many of them lacking visitors of their own

A man with a colostomy pack in the lift

A huge takeaway pizza box on floor 5, carried high, lid flapping

An attempt to buy bubblegum, thwarted, instead we bought strawberry Orbit

We tried to see a painting of poodles represented like clouds but the escalator led us elsewhere

Prater is where we went for release. I photographed Sam on a defunct ride turned into seating, the word Extasy behind him

We played shithead and I was twice (?) el presidente, Sam *el pueblo unido jamás será vencido*

Friends united, will always love Marina and Danny

FARE'S WELL

Thank You For Everything is Nell Osborne's newest chapbook, published by **Monitor Books**. The pamphlet includes a short "Poetry IQ Test" à la Jack Spicer's entrance exam for his "Poetry as Magic" workshop, which includes illuminating questions such as "What is your favourite public toilet in the UK?".

Amy De'Ath's first full book *Not a Force of Nature* was published by **Futurepoem** in a far-off place called New York City: "If a small increment would make you happier bro / Then I am your cab driver".

Almanac Press, a trans-artist-led nonprofit publisher based out of Helsinki, just put out *Beef Cherries* by poet, essayist, and editor Misha Crafts, a trans woman living in California who writes lines like:

I do not
hate
the contemporary
novel
but I believe
it hates me.

Glasgow's **SPAM Press** are seeking submissions of critical work inspired by sleep procrastination, neural net neurosis, somnambulist clickholes and more by 12th March.

The New Cambridge Chapbook Review recently published its first issue, featuring pieces on, among others, Maggie O'Sullivan, Andrea Brady, Andy Spragg, and a budding poet by the name of J. H. Prynne.

Dom Hale and Tom Crompton have written a collaborative statement on poetics titled *Mud Ramps*, published and pinged around by **Gong Farm**.

There's a new small press (they say) called **Mouthpiece** based in the West Midlands. Sightings include pamphlets printed on the occasion of the poetry readings *The Off Seasons* (featuring Nora Fulton, Imogen Cassels, and Luke Roberts) and *Three of Hearts* (featuring Steff Hui Ci Ling, James Goodwin, and Clint Burnham). Lord knows what they'll do next.

