

THE

DIAL

LENT TERM 2009

Scene from a hand:
Incommensurable (red biro). Vertiginous (red biro).
Train Tickets (black biro). Editorial (blue).

How to go about our second issue:

thank you for pausing
to pick up the Lent Term edition
(a Queens' magazine).

We pick what we like
as in pleasing ourselves
we hope they please you.

Without further:

Sincere thanks are due to: The English Faculty, The English
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Apple Sunday



Alba Ziegler-Bailey

Dog-days in autumn - what other days were there, really?
All three removed their clothes, as seemed appropriate,
The boys scrambled up, toecurling-wise and like two young
Eves, in a flurry of speckled limbs lobbed apples her way.
She spat the pips, for they could choke you, yet
She imagined swallowing them, and her tongue,
Thinking of what she'd have given - anything but her dignity
To be there in the crook of the crown of the tree.



Egon Schiele

Bruno Burton

Unripe green banana belly,
Why bare yourself to the butcher boys?
Why bare yourself to the carving knife
Why form a claw and forget you ever made it?

Three-day-old banana next to red stiletto shine
Blood on a tissue dries and goes muddy
Drip black currant tears on this salt-washed turquoise green fragment
Washed up out of the closed cupboard of years

Vine tomato glossed into acrylic plastic that chemical stench
That dress like wallpaper in a tobacco stained room
I'll put up a shelf and leave my bright orange peel there

Your slippers almost fit like a salt-washed turquoise green fragment
Your hair is washed with the tortoise shell kitten
Those brown paper boots crease over watercolour stardrips
What sea of white sheets crumpled your flesh putty floats out
And laps into black forest
Woman hold me like shore holds cliff
On a dull picture postcard in a puddle by the circus.

Spotlit on
leg, stockings
End in feet stretched into bloated sun stained sphinx
Calves meet knees in uncooked meat colours
Breasts fresh and bursting though stale cherry cupcakes
What sea of white sheets crumpled your flesh putty floats out
Dry eye paste
Stuck trained with dim beam for horizon

Blake-scale visions of meat-body distortion
Hang arms drooping hammers night's dumb anaesthetic
Sick god's yellow shadow in eyes of lost father
Shelter him marble-mother, cover bright child with calming.

Pope, Telescope

He smooths his hands over its hips
and pulls its eye to rest against his own,
zooms into the dark to study fireflakes
strung up and blizzarding
across the dome of atmosphere.

Psalms and intercessions drift
up to universal rafters, with Sunday smoke
from mouths, and lungs
broadcasting into black.

As he focuses the glass into the distance,
it doesn't seem to matter if
the star above the stable
was really only Jupiter,
bending closer just to see the fuss;

he means to keep an eye out for
his echoes bouncing off the asteroids,
in case an eardrum reaches up to catch
and beats a sacred cadence back.

Every night he sieves the cosmos through his sinuses
and scans the skies for codes, for explanations -
come morning, as the sun brights out the blueprint
he swings a fiery meteor
to wash the earth in outer space.

Charlotte Runcie

Selkie

They keep warm with the wool
and the stories they spin. They try to shield
their water-thin hides and they call their keening
a song. I learned all this, that a chest
can sting and go loud with the scratch of a man
on your neck. The language is storm,

it gets harsher and colder and weaker
and cries all night. And they gave more skins
of hide to me, and then of peat and straw,
skins of smoke, and tasks. A hunter married me;
I boiled up seals for him, and howled

saltily into his broth. I dreamed
I pulled on my old wet whiskery myth-suit
and pressed it to my nose and smelled it in,
learned to swallow it, to fuse to it,

oh, just to find where he buried it
to kiss my old nose and the glossy cavities
so dilated, where my eyes should be.

Charlotte Runcie

Song

sea crimson sometimes in this gentle breeze
and the figtrees in the green fields and from
queer little streets and pink and the rosegardens
and cactuses and Gibraltar beats against my cheek
of the mountain yes when half-conscious
of the joy it gives the Andalusian girls used
how she kissed me coming from a house
thought well as well City's walls set free
ask him with my eye long immured
would I yes to say yes and at large
put my arms around him where I will
so he could feel my breasts was going like mad and

Oh there is blessing fire and the glorious sun
that blows from the Alameda gardens yes
and the clouds and blue and yellow houses
and from the sky the jessamine and geraniums
and seems a girl where I was the flower
O welcome Messenger I put the rose in my hair like
a captive greets you or shall I wear red yes
and bondage and then I asked
a prison where he and then he asked me
now I am free enfranchised mountain flower and first I
may fix my habitation yes and drew him down to me
what dwelling shall I said yes I will Yes

shall be my harbour street and the fowl market all
shall I take up my and the poor donkeys
shall with its murmurs vague fellows in the cloaks
the earth is all before steps joyous, nor scared
at the old castle thousands of i look about, and
handsome Moors all in white be nothing better than you
to sit down in I cannot miss my way
with the old windows of trances of thought
a lattice hid for her lover come fast upon me
we missed the boat at Algeciras serene with his lamp

sea slipping half asleep and receive me in what vale
asleep in the shade underneath what grove
the carts and the bulls and me and what sweet stream
years old yes and those lull me to my rest
and turbans like kings asking me with a heart
the posadas glancing eyes should the guide I choose
kiss the iron and the wines in a wandering cloud
the castanets and the night I breathe again
Algeciras the watchman going mountings of the mind
and O that awful deep down is shaken off

JCH Potts

ungelic is us
Anon. Wulf and Eadwacer

Ungelic

JCH Potts

I

You on one island, I on another,
fens and thick thorns cover even the causeway
in dark.

II

I know you thought hopefully of me
in my wanderings,
whenever it was rainy weather
and you sat tearful,
whenever that other surrounded you
with his limbs:
joy for you, to an extent,
but loathsome too.

III

I took years to cast words that would reach
your island,
and I know you thought hopefully of me,
when you sat tearful.
But what could I find in my heart that was new
to get me there?

IV

How can a word once cast be cast again, and be enough
to reach you?
I might have said: You are my affirmation, the yes
at the end of my monologue.
But that very perfection of phrase
cannot see the present again –
will not do.

V

That riddle must go back under the hammer,
its fault-lines burst,
until brought to blood-heat it might be
reforged:
not steel, but wings wherewith
to overfly.

VI

It is different
for us.
What was never united man easily sunders,
our harmony.
What was ever united man can never sunder,
our riddle.

Found Poem

Richard Osmond

or
of the moon in a spiral horn

you glow like the face of things
like the ram of incident

it was the wolf or rather
 he wolf that came

hairstrewnarananounand

the compositor


he will the hawk
and I will
 undo undo undo

ripped off from score,
 betrayed from shelf
aloud biting: teeth to air
clamped on song, wrought
to structure air in heaviness,
then oxidise as rust or fall
 to realization bodiless
buoys, swimming in sound
and gnashed from page to prime,
suspecting all walls to well
 and fuse with air
and sky the voice in mortal
 announce; on wings of
song circling or loop the
 loop and even crash to
grounding roots in word
notated boxed to breathe.

On Interpretation in Music



David Grundy



what splendour where gone
(for harold pinter)

David Grundy

(i)

what
splendour
where
gone

(ii)

perhaps this will do better
when delirious on the verge I think in quite a clearsighted way
as I throw myself into my chattering silence
I buzz the door; you make too much noise,
long silence
for thirty seconds
what shall I do

Now, when our oft-relenting hearts are spent,
and beat concentric iambs through the day,
remember then those times, and what they meant.

Those summer days, when hours were easy. We went
along the cliff paths, each finding their own way,
saying,

“When our oft-relenting hearts are spent

we’ll remember this summer’s daze; how relent-
lessly you will have turned, saying,

“Stay –
Remember,”

saying,

“The time, and what it meant

was different, strange. So brave.””

The letters you sent
are bound up now in turns of phrase:

“So when our oft-relenting hearts are spent,

we’ll find separate redemption in calm content.
And though I find words specious for your praise,
remember now, our time.”

But what it meant

to me is nothing. Time and then contempt
have lowered your estimation in my eyes.

But now my oft-relenting heart is spent,
I remember: those times, what then they meant.

Now, when our oft-relenting hearts are spent



Katherine Waters

Sprung
Adam Crothers

Your dress was rose. The light was roseate.
The cellophaned roses in the plugged sink
would come into play later, and I think
your just-washed hair was something like russet.
Our kisses would move the earth, or sink ships.
Lovers without rest, behind a closed door
or up against it, up against much more
than was worth handling. My hands on your hips,
your tongue at my neck, always in the bed
of at least one of our brains the knowledge
that were the water to vault the sink's edge
and try its hand so wet at being rain,
all nonetheless would wind up in the drain
and the drying seas. The roses, red, red.

Today

I want to be a box
And then drag me away,
Ship me off to China,
Porcelain and parcel in
Thin paper liner.

Fragile fripperies,
Glazed glassed glare,
Old eyes, heads, hearts, hands
Handle me with care.

Alayisha Cordes

FROM the boat in the middle of the bay, fireworks arch up into the warm night sky. On the hill, the cicadas' buzz battles against the bangs. The lights bathe everything in pink glow. Standing on the garden wall, Agnès thinks she could topple all the way down through the town and fall into the sea.

The beach is heaving, illuminated in the gloom. She can't make out the people, only their 'oohs' and 'ahhs'. Behind them, the men have moved the long tables out of the road. Plates are stained with smears and saucers; big bowls hold traces around their edges, all the spoons are gone. She turns to see Papa swallowing the last morsel of tarte. He winks, smacks his lips, puts his finger to them: *Tais-toi, rien à maman.*

A last burst of golden green and the spectacle is over. Everyone trails slowly back to the tables, adults woozy with wine, children's heads lolling heavy on their shoulders. Agnès sees Marie catch Roman in her arms. Her own mother stops to kiss her godson's head as he is carried off to bed. Mama looks strange in the candlelight, smoke wafting from her lips like a ghost. She looks sad, the corners of her mouth turned down towards her chin. Out of the darkness, a hand clamps Agnès' shoulder. Gleaming talons dig into her skin. A wall of fusty perfume hits her, and Madame Ochin's scratchy voice issues out into the night.

"Béné, you must let me show the girls my Blessed Virgin."

In the darkness, Agnès shoots out a hand. Clémence's meets it instantly. They do not go to the Church in town, but they know about the Blessed Virgin. People mention her, mostly old people like Madame Ochin whose wrinkled smile she can hear cracking in the darkness. The candle beneath her mother's face makes dark under her dark eyes, in the hollow of her cheeks as she inhales. She has only half a face, the rest melts into thick air.

"No thank you, Madame Ochin, not tonight." Her lips wrinkle around the glow of a cigarette, her invisible jaw juts forward.

"Oh yes. They must see her, Bénédicte, they must believe."

Papa has appeared now, his tall frame looming behind Mama's skinny bones. His hand presses her shoulder; hers flicks ash with a tremor. Clémence bolts like lightening into Mama's arms, frightened of the heavy, unspoken air, always ready to play the baby when she needs to. Agnès scowls as the talons tighten their grip.

"Madame Ochin –" Papa's voice is like honey. Madame Ochin, deaf and determined, carries on. Agnès is turned; the old painted face with its colouring-book eyebrows and bright pink lips is thrust towards her.

"She wants to see, don't you? My Virgin, my Blessed Virgin from Lourdes who came to save me."

Mama makes a small noise. Agnès doesn't really see how Madame Ochin was saved. She still walks with a stick, hunched over like a witch. Roman's cousin Victor from the next street says once she was completely frozen, stuck to her bed. But Victor has wide flashy eyes and teeth to match and although he's twelve, Agnès doesn't believe him. Mama is getting up, bundling Clémence and her wide eyes into her arms.

"I'm sorry Madame Ochin. My mother went to Lourdes. It did nothing for her. Olivier, I'm taking Clémence to bed."


As her mother disappears across the gravel, Agnès is moved by Madame Ochin's steely grip. Papa too is being led down the hill, his hushed tones met and crushed by Madame Ochin's sympathetic coos. Her house sits low and squat behind its iron gate, four yappy dogs on guard. Its windows glow, curtain-coloured, like giant red eyes. Madame Ochin kisses the dribbling dogs, "my children, my babies." Two under each arm, it looks like she might eat them.

Everything inside the house sparkles. Crystal glasses stand on shiny tables. The lights all wear diamond necklaces. China shepherdesses glint and frames gleam. Even the carpet sinks glittering under Agnès' flip-flops. She's dropped the puppies now, and every time Madame Ochin speaks she lifts her hands grinning in the air. The swirling colours swim before Agnès' eyes.

"There."

A hush falls as Madame Ochin lifts one jewelled and jangling arm into the air. There, in her bedroom, in the space between wardrobe and ceiling, is the Blessed Virgin. A string of fairy lights hangs glowing around her neck, her blue dress could be real silk, three real pink roses in her hand. She looks right down into Agnès' eyes.

"There, child. Believe." •



Outside all is quiet. Papa takes her by the hand. The tables are gone, all the people in their houses.

“Papa, what is Lourdes?”

She hears him breathe as he searches for the words.

“A place for people who are sick, a holy place.”

“Why didn’t it help Mama’s mama?”

He is silent for a long time.

As 15th July dawns cool and grey, Bénédicte lies in Olivier’s arms. Agnès had been sleepwalking by the time she got back, but Bénédicte had known the girl would be amazed. She can see it so clearly, one set of beautiful blue eyes looking up into another, agog, entranced, bouleversée by the lights and the perfume and the scent of the roses. Twenty years later, an eleven year old’s tears still rise in her eyes. Why her mother? Why then? And all the prayers, the pilgrimages, the hours of desperate hoping. Olivier, still in possession of a buxom and imposing Marseillaise

mother, didn’t know what to say when she asked that. He had lain silently, stroking her hair, kissing her ear once before he fell asleep. In the wet morning light, she throws off the cover and goes onto the balcony to light a cigarette. The roses in the garden are covered in diamond drops of dew.

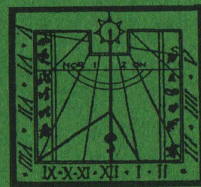
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