



# The Disgust Issue

With:  
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# Editorial: Nothing's Shocking

by Adam Steiner, Editor

"I wanted to rub the human face in its own vomit, and force it to look in the mirror."  
-J. G. Ballard on *Crash*

One of the greatest faultlines when trying to write about disgust, is attempting to shock your audience. The cruel irony here is that so much of what disgusts is already familiar and prosaic. Sex, how it is done, and with whom; tastes and textures; raw facts of nature, such as animal cannibalism, held-up close (see our excellent section image headers in this issue) are mere deviations of very normal practices that often differ from individual to individual, culture to culture.

The Disgust Issue is interesting in that many of our contributions have not taken the easy way out and picked a simple bad-guy/smell/scenario and replicated it, wholesale. Much of the poetry and fiction goes deeper and takes-up the perspective of the easily accused, or isolates the most interesting or aesthetically pleasing aspects of certain disgusts, unwrapped from the moral blanket that keeps our personal sense of taste and normative behaviours safe and secure in their righteousness. Much of the artwork in this issue presents us with challenging imagery, particularly from a more feminist perspective, challenging the lazy dichotomy that divides beautiful aspects of women's bodies from others that are labelled culturally displeasing.

With the mass exposure of super-media (twitter etc.) little seems to remain private or is left unseen, wanting to know more is often only a few clicks away, and with many people keen to jump on the bandwagon and (often hypocritically) seek out the latest issue to be disgusted about, we are drowning in a censorious rain of famous paedophiles, gross food and pets rescued from starvation.

So where do we go with disgust? Cultural relativism allows live and let live sense of ethics, but when it comes to higher ethical concerns, such as FGM, it's hard to accept, much easier to turn a blind eye. One person's disgust is another's delight – I leave this open to discussion.

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# The Snake in the Toilet

By Ross Hargreaves

**I'm taking a shit when the snake licks my ass. It tickles and I'm like, "what was that?" It happens again, followed by a hissing sound. I pinch my ass shut and get off the toilet. The snake pops its head out and I fucking scream. The thing isn't thick and I can't see fangs, but it's a snake. Those dark eyes stare me down and I run out of the bathroom. "Holy shit, holy shit," I'm saying. My heart is smashing into my ribs and I can't breathe.**

"A snake," I say through my own panting. "Mother fucking snake."

I pull my pants up and peek back into the bathroom. I can't see the snake but I can hear it splashing in the bowl. There isn't a rattle, thank God. In the living room I pace around. I don't know what to do. Dad never told me about sex, he certainly didn't tell me how to deal with this. I do know I need to finish wiping my ass or I am gonna stink and chafe. Luckily I haven't thrown anything away since my on-and-off-again girlfriend, Penelope, left me. I grab some napkins out of a crumpled Carl's Jr. bag and finish the job.

Back into the bathroom I go. I look in the toilet and the snake is just swimming in there. The snake is green. Poisonous. Not poisonous. I can't remember what green means. My log has corn in it from the Big Taste Bowl I had at KFC the other day. You know corn, mash potatoes, gravy, little pieces of chicken. Makes my shit look like a bee hive.

I drop the dirty napkins in and the snake stars thrashing. Piss water jumps out of the bowl. I run out of the bathroom and slam the door behind me. I grab the baseball bat I keep under my bed

and wait for the snake to slither its way under the bathroom door. A minute passes. Five minutes. My heart finally starts slowing down. When I open the door, no snake jumps out at me. I hit the floor a few times with my baseball bat. Let it know who's boss.

My downstairs neighbor slams something against his ceiling in response. "Fuck you," I say. "I got a snake in my toilet."

The bat is raised, ready to bash in snake brain. The snake pokes his head out and sticks its forked tongue out. A fucking wise guy. Maybe the damn thing is stuck. I crane my neck to get a really good look and the snake seems free enough. Porcelain is slippery I guess. I can't see the bottom of the bowl because of the shit and the napkins. I gag and cough. Wet paper is sick. Even after it rains, the trash on the ground, that is disgusting. Wet paper in a toilet, goddamn that's nasty.

Now I guess I got to decide what to do with the cocksucker. I pace my apartment, drink a bottle of Bud Light, eat from a block of cheese, decide to call the thing King Hiss after the leader of the Snake Men. Like from He-Man and the Masters of the Universe. The phone book has pest control. Or I could flush it. Maybe it doesn't go down and sewer water gets all over my floor. I could call the super, maybe he stops by sometime next week. Those ideas all cost money. Money I don't have. Or.... I pick up my cell phone and go down my friends list until I hit Penelope. I haven't seen her in a couple of weeks. Texts, but nothing physical. She's been mad at me for some dumbfuck reason. This is a reason to get her over here. No one else to call. No rush to get rid of King Hiss. I have to show somebody or no one will believe me, right? Why not Penelope? Dad always said Mom never would have left him if they had a story. Penelope is short, big tits, likes to tan. I'm getting a bone thinking about her. The friend who introduced us compared her to a jelly roll. After I slept with her, I no longer considered the comparison a put-down. At first the phone only rings and I feel kinda stupid. My stiffening penis starts to lose some steam. Then; "Hey, what's up," and I'm full hard.

"Something unbelievable," I say. "Can you come over?"



"What? Something bad?"

"No. No. Something weird. You have never seen anything like this. I want to show you."

"Is this some kinda joke, Robert? I'm not in the mood. I just got finished at 'Pena Colada Me' spray and tan."

"Yeah. Getting ready for summer?"

"I think I look hot."

"Let me see then. Come on. Plus I really do have mysteries of the universe going on over here. UFO type shit. I want you to see it."

"Make fun of my tan and I leave." She's on her way so I clean up the Hungry Man dinners off my kitchen counter. Spray Lysol so the toilet doesn't smell as much. I decide not to take her into the bathroom directly. Nothing about poop is sexy. I open the door and I made the right call. She is wearing a tight low cut black shirt with plenty of cleavage. Her skin is the orange of creamcicles.

"Wow," I say.

She swats at me. "What's up? I have to go to work soon."

"Come on." I grab her hand. In the bedroom I stop her at the bathroom door. "Look at the toilet," I say and clap my hands.

At first nothing. Then the snakes head slithers out. Penelope screams and clutches at me. A comfortable tan heat comes through her clothes. I want to take a nap on her like she's a heating vent in the winter.

"You put a snake in your toilet, you asshole. Gross. Asshole. Gross."

I grab her so she can't leave. "Nope. It came through the sewer system. I was on the toilet and it licked me."

"It licked you?"

"It licked me."

Penelope lets go of me and moves maybe an inch closer. The snake looks at her and goes back into the toilet water. She jumps back into my arms.

"Gross," she says.

Back in the bedroom I kiss her. She kisses me back. "This is crazy," she says and I push her onto the bed.

Naked. The afternoon sun lets me see everything. I want to eat the tan off her. She smells like sweet chemicals and her stomach and tits really do taste like creamcicles. She comes with my tongue in her. Down there she tastes better than any popsicle. She sucks my dick. I rub her back while she's at it. My hands become slick with sweat and tan residue. I come. We lay there for a while not saying much; just slowly touching each other so we aren't apart.

When Penelope leaves for work I go back into the bathroom. I kneel next to the toilet. The snake splashes around and ignores me. "I don't know," I say. "Maybe I'll keep you."

# The Apocalypse Diet

by Fay McCloskey



This image is called The Apocalypse Diet. The idea behind it was from a period of time when I was recovering from an eating disorder and it reflects how certain horrors are overlooked, as long as weight is still being lost. In this picture for example the girl in the portrait doesn't mind about her wounds and hairy legs, features that may usually disgust. My website is [www.faymccloskey.com](http://www.faymccloskey.com).

# Viola Odorata

By Sharon Larkin-Jones

Your little faces snivel  
and gurn, white and purple  
below the hedge.

Every March,  
there you are, smelling  
of your old lady scent

and those sickly  
breath-sweetening cashews.  
Your little leaves,

heart-shaped clichés,  
shrink alongside the primroses.  
Do us all a favour, please

and shrivel  
up your own  
stolons.

# Rattus

By K Krombie



**Not so long ago, approaching midnight, awaiting a delayed train on a freezing cold South London platform, circumstances became a whole lot grimmer when an upside-down takeaway chicken box moved along the platform with startling rapidity. A collective gasp emerged as the present few witnessed a tail, visibly poking out from underneath the box, swinging pendulum-like against the concrete, the body within multi-tasking with food scraps and navigation; a brazen act.**

As the platform's human inhabitants took a step back from the wandering chicken box, the accompanying exchange of glances were filled with despair and disgust, a look synonymous with London after dark - and rats.

The plight of the rat from a human point of view (different from the pet rat, distinguishable by more palatable shades of fur that alters their context) is an arduous one reminiscent of irredeemable sin, disease, at best inconvenience. If, one might ask, the common rat was removed from the food chain, would it make a difference to anything or anyone other than a multitude of industry, as in the widespread pest control businesses that profit from living breathing mischievous vermin?

It is said that our common fear of the rat stems from an unconscious memory of the Bubonic Plague, ingrained in the human psyche from its devastating impact: a recurring pandemic which wiped out a third of Europe in the 14th century, making its last unwelcome visit to our shores during the Great Plague of 1665/66. Upon each resurgent wave, this melanoid pestilence greatly altered population, governance and the course



of history. The culprit, we now know, was a highly contagious bacterium called Pasteurella Pestis, carried by fleas and transported via black rats, stowaways on sailing ships. The disease, once caught, multiplied in the lymph nodes of the neck, groin and armpit, causing swelling, haemorrhaging and in most cases death after a swift but excruciatingly painful suffering.

Nowadays, *Rattus Rattus*, the black rat host of the Black Death, have been banished to a couple of tiny islands just off Britain's coastline. More suited to climbing trees and nesting among our former timber homes and towns, they have effectively been marginalised and driven out by changing environment and the brown rat, the inaccurately named *Rattus Norvegicus* (they did not arrive from Norway), a common presence in Britain since the 1700s. This larger, lighter shaded relative of the black rat, rules victorious in much of today's Britain, thriving off the filthy chaos of modern city life, able to burrow and tunnel into our modern concrete surroundings as well as being very capable swimmers in our rivers and sewers. It is the bold audacity of the brown rat, its apparent fearlessness, known to us from first hand experiences, horror stories or second-hand tales retold with abandon, which serve to unnerve and coax our morbid fascination.

There are other reasons; we know where they tread, among our waste, in our sewers, drains, bins, behind our skirting boards while we sleep, carrying infectious and potentially lethal diseases. We know too that they can breed at a rate that is both compelling and repellent. A pair of mating rats could be responsible for up to two thousand progenies within a year. Poison alone cannot eradicate these vast armies, recycled *in utero*. Despite their size, they can squeeze themselves through a thumb-size hole and they can gnaw through concrete. If a rat's life span exceeded the average year, its teeth would eventually grow through its own head. Just like their tendency for procreation, rat teeth never stop growing. They feast on their own lower ranks when food sources are low and if their population is forcefully depleted, they replenish their numbers via a deliberate ravenous breeding.

On a marginally lighter note, we've had

our fun and games with them. In Victorian England Rat Baiting was a crowd-drawing sport, where bets were based on the estimated rate at which a selected dog could kill the most rats, sometimes as many as a hundred placed in a noxious pit that doubled as an arena for cash-swapping spectators. The owner of the fastest rat killer, along with his winnings might take home a bloodied dog missing flesh and eyes; such is the ferocity of rats under attack. The expert rat-catcher who supplied the bait for many such events was a man named Jack Black. In addition to this, Black was responsible for breeding and experimenting with his rats and their varying shades, which resulted in selling the more domestic offspring - or fancy rats, as they were then known - as pets, sometimes to high-profile customers including Queen Victoria. He was also rumoured to have sold one of his pet rats to none other than Beatrix Potter.

Cunning creatures they may be, but are the estimated ten and a half million rats we cohabit with on this island actually good for anything? Aside from their popularity in scientific experimentation and their eagerness to consume our waste in all its grisly forms that may otherwise be left to attract other kinds of vermin, they are, so I'm told, vital to our ecosystem. While dirtying up the Earth with our own ferocious breeding, the existence of rats satisfies another human compulsion, which is the primeval desire for fable, be they scare-mongering anecdotes or disgusting tales.

In other words, if rats aren't good for storytelling, then they're good for nothing.

# Morm

By G Clarkson

was Lorm's elegant lady love.

A slightly graceless exterior enclosing  
a heart of cold. He was smitten,

three times bitten before they'd finished  
their first date. He was indulgent

when she got into strife with  
kids from the local school—arms

hanging out of their blazers—  
in all his life he'd never felt

so much out of control and yet rolled  
round with rocks and stones and things

like a Wordsworthian heroine loosely  
speaking he absolutely could maul

the bones of her. But she had a word  
which she would say and he'd stop munching

and say, Morm, my own, my delight, admiring  
ruby blood twinkling at her up-turned lips.

# Grammar Daddy

By G Clarkson

over a voluptuous ham  
he'd discuss his plans for her  
how— with her clipped speech  
and modulating vowels  
(rounded like a model's, if one could speak)  
consonants toned, morphemes sweet  
and syntax like a six-pack—  
she'd never lapse from verbal rectitude  
her rectum so correct  
not even her effluvia could fall awry

# The Hoxton Chicken

by Emma Cousin



## Cum Emma Cousin

Pendulum of maturity  
A swollen mass  
Of purley potential  
Like a swarming hive  
Hangs in purgatory  
Heavy arm of time  
Swings

Power and potency pivot  
Between finger and thumb  
Rubber and cum  
His job,  
done  
Thy kingdom kin  
Hovers on the horizon

He knows it makes that great sound  
When it hits the wall/floor/door  
Splat  
He knows she hates the mess  
Squash  
The sentiment of intimacy  
Smudges

# Chicken Feet Dance

by Emma Cousin



## Winter Legs

Emma Cousin

I remove my tights  
In a cloud of skin-smoke  
Retreating  
Raised hand covering my mouth  
As if stifling a shout  
But there is no fire  
Here  
Only flaking flesh residue  
Seventy denier  
Holds it all together  
The follicles don't warm or disguise  
They reveal  
Who says fur is not feminine

# does anyone else write erotic fanfiction about pope francis really no one i mean yeah me neither i was just wondering

By Phillip Gordon

**Tony Brillo sits on the front step of the East Wexfordshire City Chapel, folding origami cranes and stitching them together into a dashing pant-suit. Tony Brillo synthesizes condition-clothing by devouring three middle-eastern children before bed.**

Tony Brillo likes chocolate-chip pasta. "tony b," says a voice that sounds like this SSSSzzzLLLzzzSSzS-doyouthinkjesus-masturbated tyingoneoffintotheshroudofturinSSzchSzLzSShS.

"iTay Bay!"

Sticker on a sign post. Tony Brillo eyewalks up to voice, voice become a onething at any point in time.

Voice = Laurelola. She's a sex symbol parable biblical paradigm vagina secretly filled with glass. Tony Brillo is missing the fingerprints on his left-hand conjecture.

Laurelola: "tony its time for wednesday bells."  
. walks away  
—Tony it's



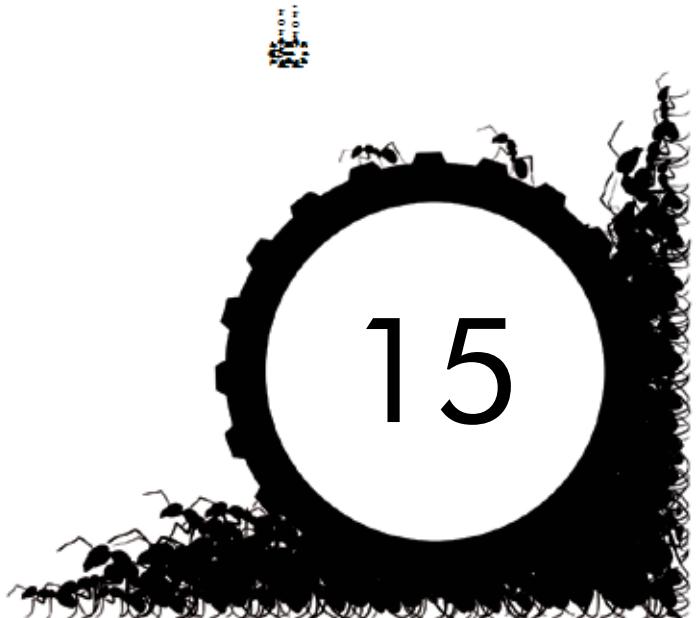
Tony Brillo stands up and puts on his paper hat. Laurelola has fucked every pastor in a five mile radius. Subject noun performs narrative verb. Our histrionic pair perpetuate progressive preamble postulate pettiness + apostasy = the penalty for an open bag of hot rank holy-water-flavoured potato crisps. After enough logological distractions you realize an unnameable part of you itches in a way you will never be able to scratch. Now we're in the back alley of the ice-cream parlour. I've decided indents can fuck right off. I've always vaguely admired equestrian phalluses—what's the point of all this? Thanks, Tony Brillo. —i will quite literally cut your fat nuts off. She's a charmer.—Happy-finebyme/by the way the alley 3 green metal dumpster™ brand dumpsters 2 overflowing bags of festering trash overflow contents: open can of peaches pear syrup uncountably many maggots uncountable repellent atoms distillation of filth into a quantum particle biblical allusions a smell I've been unable to place but reminds vaguely of sexs secks sects XXX the alley over fifteen billion delicious molecules ground earth carbon dating our two protagonists (place to advertise my twitter. [TONY BRILLO UTERS INCANTATORY STATEMENT]

A moralistic resolution occurs in the following format:

The content of this story has been arranged in such a way as to provoke a reaction from the reader exactly equal to the one you are now experiencing--every aim achieved. For this reason it is flawless and wins the Pulitzer. Tony Brillo is played by Mark Wahlberg. Laurelola writes a memoir about sexual abuse. This is a reminder that there are large people who take advantage of small people in filthy rooms and thusly we have a way of equating tears and vomit. This is a reminder that I never closed that parentheses.

Richard Dawkins: "Congratulations!"

The story is now over. Your life is irrevocably damaged for a minimum duration of five seconds. When you masturbate, the memory of death; incapable



# The Student Who Pissed on the War Memorial

By Antony Owen

That night you must have pulled moon there,  
watched it float with names of stale heroes  
through your stinking fog of Jagermeister.

You must have noticed those plastic wreaths  
weep from stone where suits ate bagels  
and freshmen upload laughs to feel connected.

You must have noticed the wooden cross  
left for men necking rum for a yard;  
some wet from whistle blowers.

Their fog was a yellow one, a devil's dress  
their sea was a khaki one, islands of skin,  
eyes pulled back by two full moons.

I never noticed your apology,  
scantly clad like moon in power station clouds  
and binge drinkers collapsing with new widows.

Taken from, *The Year I Loved England*,  
Pighog Press – forthcoming, July 2014.



# Don't Cross the Line

By Dwane Reads

Don't cross the line  
pick it after awhile it will heal  
forming a scab I shall not bleed  
stand alongside me together we are strong  
cheer when passing cars toot in support  
dont cross the line  
when others told us to give up  
shouted get back to work  
or when colleges went in hidden in buses  
as if white washed windows would save you  
we know who you are cowering under seats  
dont cross the line  
when the weather changed our savings gone  
skint hungry days upon us  
but never beaten  
defiant  
dont cross the line  
we watched you in disbelief  
passing through the gates  
clocking on in scabdom

# Ogres and Demons

By Ben Hayes

**Morgan was woken by the sound of the early-warning siren, shrilling keenly. Blearily, he poked his head out of his room, and hailed one of the men running past. "What is it?"**

"An ogre," he shouted over his shoulder as he ran on. "Kira's on the way out now."

Hastily, Morgan threw on his clothes, nearly tripping as he tried to get his shoes on before he finished with his trousers. Got to get to the walls before all the good spots are taken.

He dashed out of the door – he was definitely behind: the corridor was almost empty. He descended the stairs at a reckless pace, jumping the last five to the bottom, landing in a crouch with a hollow thung. Two last corridors, and he burst out into the pale sunlight. He jogged across the deck, and eeled his way through the crowd until he could see across the bailey to the outer walls. Pulling his scope from a pocket, he peered through it. Kira was standing framed between the gates, her hands casually in her pockets. She began to walk forward as they closed behind her, hiding her from sight.

Morgan looked upwards at the ogre. About a dozen meters tall, he thought, examining its rocky hide. Must be the biggest one we've seen in a year or more. He adjusted the focus on the scope, seeking its eyes. They gleamed black, faceted like an insect's, inscrutable. He shuddered. The creature was still a good hundred meters away, ambling slowly forwards.

He looked around for Kira. There she is. She was just coming into view as she moved out from the shadow of the walls. The ogre paused

momentarily, as it noticed her. Through the scope, Morgan could see Kira's jaw move as she spoke. I wonder what she's saying? Ogres don't speak; they're not intelligent. Whatever it was, it had no effect. The ogre started walking again; faster this time, gathering speed. Kira stood, hands loose at her sides, waiting.

The ogre broke into a run; Kira raised her hands in a fighting stance, ridiculous, like a child shadow-boxing with her father. As it raised one of its gigantic, gnarled fists, Kira took a quick step forward and made a sharp left block.

The air rippled faintly, just barely visible to Morgan through his scope, and the ogre staggered, off balance. Kira followed through, forward, right-step, her toe cutting a curve in the dirt, throwing up dust as she made two short jabs. Again, the air shimmered and the ogre stumbled.

Watching, Morgan saw a small puff of gravel fall away from its shoulder where the blows had landed. The ogre roared, a deep, rumbling landslide of sound. Even at this distance, Morgan could feel it in his chest. It set its feet and brought both fists down towards Kira in an overhead blow. The woman flung her hands up above herself, wrists together, and the ogre's fists stopped mid-swing as though they'd hit a wall. It brought them up, and smashed them down again, once, twice, thrice, and Kira sunk to her knees.

Morgan could see the tendons stand out in her neck, and a chill ran through him. If she loses... With a distant cry, Kira surged to her feet, throwing up her hands; she dropped back in a low sweeping kick, and the ogre fell to the ground with a thunderous crash. Kira stepped in again and performed a dart-quick flurry of blows, the air shimmering like water before her. A terrible sound cut the air as the ogre keened in pain. A crumbling mass of earth and rock fell away from its side, revealing the pale flesh beneath. The woman made a knife of her hands and drove it forward, and the ogre's skin split open, gushing black ichor. With a last high screech, it convulsed once, and was still. Kira staggered slightly, and turned back towards the village. She paused for a long moment, looking up at the audience lining the walls. Morgan saw her lip curl; then she turned aside and spat



blood upon the ground. She hates us, thought Morgan. Standing here and treating it as a spectacle while she risks her life for us.

He watched as she walked slowly back towards the village, her face a mask, hands once again in her pockets. What does it cost her, to maintain that facade? Thinking back, Morgan wondered what it had been like for her, when she first came to *Endeavour*.

Eight years ago...

The waves were quiet, that night. Calm seas and slow winds. Morgan lay on his bunk, too warm for sheets.

"...an esper. A girl, came out of the wastes."

Morgan pricked up his ears; nothing boring came from outside the village. Often nothing good, but still.

He could hear his mother, faintly. "The gate guards let her in? One of those freaks could—" "It's not like they wear a uniform, Lu. She's just a kid."

Morgan could hear his father settling down at a table. There was a quiet clink of glass. Noiselessly, he slipped off his bunk and pressed his eye to the keyhole.

His mother moved around the table, and poured herself a drink. "They're dangerous, Howard. That kid could push this hulk right back out to sea if she got a mind to."

"True," said the old man, taking a long draft from his cup. "You think the best thing to do is piss her off by saying 'nice to meet you, please take yourself off and die alone in the wastes'? She could help us, Lu. We've barely got two dozen shells left for the old cannons, and when those are done..."

"What? I thought the chief said that was just rumour and ramblings!"

Morgan's father snorted. "Would you want to start a panic? The 'free seas' idiots would never shut up if they got wind; they'd have us trying to shove the *Endeavour* back out ourselves, no matter she foundered before any of us were born."

Lamplight sparkled on glass as his mother

swirled the liquor around. "Yeah. But still, you think she'll help? What's to stop her taking what she wants and to hell with us?"

"She didn't have to tell us what she was, or ask nicely to come in," said his father, shrugging. "I figure she wants to make a deal."

"Do you think the council will go for it?"

"Depends what she asks for. How much is protection from the ogres worth to you?" His father took another long drink. "They won't like it – no-one will – but they'll deal."

And now, what does she think of that deal?

That evening, he sought her out. Kira wasn't hard to find; to some extent she was obliged to be available at short notice, and for the first time Morgan wondered just how constrained she felt by that. She was sitting atop the conning tower, looking out across the ocean, her legs dangling over the side. As he approached, she turned to look. Her eyes gleamed bright in the blue twilight, and for a moment he was reminded of the ogre.

"What do you want?" Her tone was neutral, forced.

"Can I sit here?" asked Morgan. What an asinine question. You sound like a nervous teenager.

Kira lay back, looking at him upside-down. She stared at him for a long moment, her expression unreadable in the gloom. "Fine."

Morgan perched carefully beside her, wary of the drop. For several long minutes, he let his mind go blank, gazing out at the waves, watching the water sway and sparkle beneath the moon.



How do I ask? 'Do you hate us?' 'Why do you do it?' Do I really want to know?

"What did you say, to the ogre?" he asked instead, not quite sure why. He felt her gaze on the side of his face, but did not look down.

A long silence; he could sense her thinking beside

him. "I asked it to leave," she said, quietly. "I said I didn't want to fight."

"I..." Morgan hesitated. "It must be hard. I thought today, we must sicken you; watching like it's a show." He looked down at her; her eyes were closed.

"Yes." She sighed. "It's difficult, and painful, and dangerous, and all I gain is a few weeks or a month of respite. And then, another one comes and I fight again." She opened her eyes. The sclera of the left one was crimson, where the tiny capillaries had ruptured. "Sometimes, I blame you for your weakness. I think, 'if I didn't have to protect them...'"

"Then...?"

Kira closed her eyes again. "Then I could find out: what then."

"Why do you stay?" asked Morgan, lying back alongside her.

"Because it's right. And..." Her voice was flat. "Because I've seen what happens to espers who chose selfishness."

A sharp chill touched the back of his neck.  
"What do you mean?"

Kira turned her head to look at him. One eye red, the other pale, glinting in the dark. "There are demons in this world, and they are women like me." She smiled, sourly. "Yes, there are times I feel contempt for the people I protect. But I choose to do what's right regardless, because it pleases me to do so."

Morgan averted his eyes from hers, looking up at the stars. "And if it didn't please you? Would you leave? Abandon us?"

There was another long silence. When Kira spoke, her voice was distant. "That's a question for another woman," she said. Then, softer, almost inaudible, "one I pray I'll never be." She stood, stretching. "I ought to sleep."

She started to walk away, then stopped and turned. "What's your name?"

"Morgan Lane," he said, still watching the stars. After a moment, he heard her start to walk away. "Thank you," he called out. "For answering my question."

The footsteps halted for a moment, and her voice drifted out of the darkness.

"Come and sit with me again, some time."

# A Vulgar Word

By E A Boxer

I learnt a vulgar word today  
Though few would hear me say  
Spastic, mastic, gesticulate  
Stick and schlep about my tongue.

That loved and lusted  
For Oreos,  
Invoices,  
Orifices of infinite whole.

Kept prayer about a cellar door  
For her own good  
The dug-out convalescent,  
Charlottetown is near me  
Grounded under sleep,  
Congealed by saccharin tone.

Nearly choked upon  
my nascent lust  
She spelt a an awful word today  
Mooted threat of "home".

# Rapture

by Jiwon Oh





'You can see the work in flesh at [tinawesaluteyou.com](http://tinawesaluteyou.com) the cafe gallery is located in Dalston Kingsland.

'My style of work is heavily textured, dark and always full-on-detail. I love density and building layers on top of another layer of a drawing. Creating camouflage, hidden faces and features. All of my previous works have hidden stories beneath the outer facade. Again, I leave it to the viewers eyes to narrate their own story. You can see these murals at <http://www.mewsofmayfair.com/>.

'The person who comissioned the piece told me to draw extravagant sluts and trannies everywhere on the walls [of the cafe]. I drew two females making extreme love but with heavy details in the hair, skin and body parts to intensify their movement. A lot of the viewers thought they were raping one another, which made me think that could also be the case!'

#### Bio-

Since graduating from London College of Communication, I have worked as a freelance illustrator, display designer and as a muralist. I enjoy engaging in the process of bringing illustration design into creative spaces. Recently, I have been developing my work using the format of wall drawings. I can draw anything I imagine on plain walls with my magic Sharpie markers. The marker drawings are so intricate they look like printed wall murals, turning bland space into a work of art, giving a room-within-a-room impression. I am dedicated to create strong concepts that can interact with viewers in various ways. As we all have our own precious memories, visually telling one's story is a wonderful experience for an illustrator.

# Force of Habit

By Alfie Brown

**In this issue dedicated to Disgust it seems right to treat perhaps the most disgusting topic of all, not the horrible and revolting Other, but what disgusts us about our very selves, that is, our habits and ticks: the biting of nails, the picking of noses, the scratching of testes...**

Bringing up the question of 'habit' among a group of critical theorists and philosophers will almost certainly move the discussion quickly towards the concept of repetition, and there is much that could be said about the way that habits make us aware of our fundamental compulsions to repeat. In the habit, the subject derives an odd pleasure which has no 'value' to the subject and may even be to the detriment of it (it can be painful or even fatal, as the man who recently died from biting his nails found). This pleasure involves repeating processes which have no 'purpose' but which nevertheless produce a little bit of excess and unnameable pleasure (what Jacques Lacan might call 'jouissance'). The point about this pleasure is that it cannot be used by the system, and may even show as Lacan suggests, that the whole system of our desires (Lyotard's libidinal economy) is 'entropic,' that is, running out of energy and ultimately tending towards anything but equilibrium. This would make biting your nails a strangely radical thing that can show us that a little bit of the way we are put together as subjects has no logic to it and may be unsustainable – giving us an interesting explanation of the idea that these habits come from insecurity; they happen because subjectivity itself is unsecure.

But are such habits as biting our nails and splitting our ends really an example of this danger-

ous jouissance – a failure of the system's attempt to make it appear like everything has a purpose, that desire is always for something?

Freud does indeed see such habits as an example of the failure of our system. For Freud, nail biting is a symptom of oral fixation, a desire to replace childhood oral functions (such as the sucking of the mother's breast) with other oral acts. For Freud, this demonstrates the subject's failure to become an independent adult. Strangely sharing something with this view, our general approach to such habits is that they are child-like (especially if one thinks of sucking one's thumb). Thus, the habit represents, in a strange way, the failure to grow up. On the other hand, Søren Kierkegaard's novella *Repetition* defines repetition in a way that reverses this idea of habit as the failure of a system. In that text, repetition exists as a way of constituting the stable identity of something through time. If we put our habits into these terms, what is different from Freud is that the habitual repetition is not the subversion of an otherwise organized and stable development of the subject; rather, repetitious habits are the normal way of the subject developing. This rings true simply on the basis that everyone seems to have them.

In her fascinating study *On Habit*, Clare Carlisle writes; 'we say that someone acts out of habit, but does this 'disposition' or 'tendency' continue to exist when the habit is not being exercised?' The key word when thinking about habits may be this one of tendency. When we say that we act out of habit, we imply that there is something behind our actions, perhaps a 'disposition' (a word which means both inclination and character – making a crucial link between the two) but even more specifically a 'tendency', a word that links drives to our natures. Bringing Kierkegaard back in: what we want to do in our habit is construct a continuity of tendency – the idea that at some internal level we have an inclination towards acts which is our own and which stays with us throughout our lives.

Thus, the habit does have a purpose. And part of that purpose is to appear not to have one. Far from being the indicator of an unbalanced subject, the habit is involved in the production of a balanced one; it makes it appear that beneath all

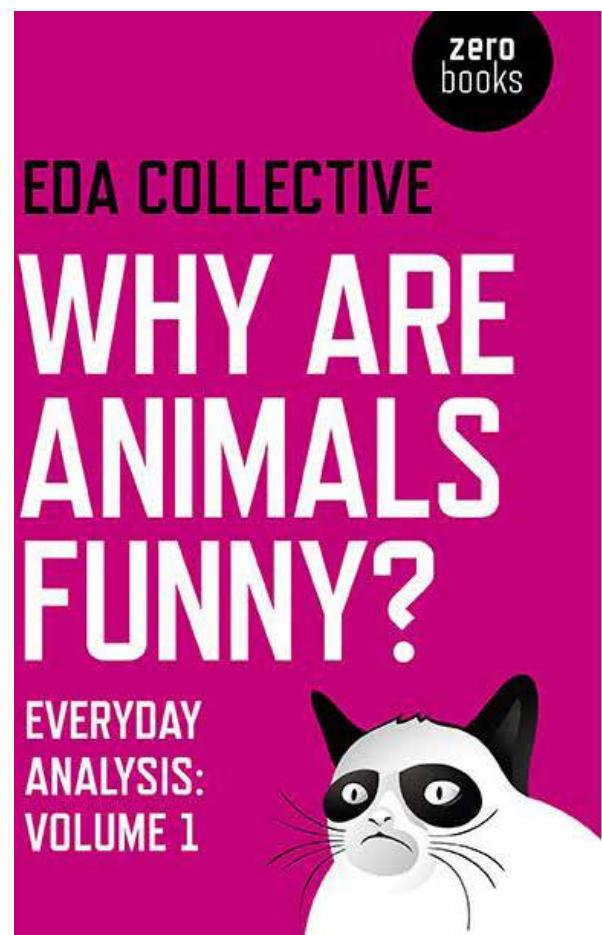


the changes that occur to us is a continuity of subjectivity with tendencies true to its nature that are difficult to shift. The thing we can't face is that if our habits change, so will we; it is only the habitual act that creates the disposition and tendencies that are our own.

In the song 'Breaking the Habit', Californian nu-metal Linkin Park present the habit as a case of self-destruction; 'I'm picking me apart again.' In his track on the same subject, British grime rapper Kano shares the sense of habit as tendency but knows that his 'automatic ballin' habit' is not something that acts against him, but something he cannot do without, it makes him 'automatically' great, framing narcissistic genius as habitual, an automatic tendency inside him. Repeated acts, though each repetition may be different, construct the subject as an imaginary continuity.

Ultimately, we see that we are not subjects with habits preventing us being ourselves, but subjects created by our habits, subjects who appear to tend towards the acts they habitually perform. To break the habit, the subject itself has to be broken. With the question of what disgusts us about habits, we come back to the role of the Other that we tried to leave behind at the beginning. We might say that despite what we imagine, the Other is not the owner, nor has any knowledge, of disgusting habits. Instead, what is truly disgusting is that the Other does not have any habits, making it appear perfect, which is why we try to keep our habits from it. But, since we need habits to construct our own subjectivity through them, the Other must remain as enigmatic to us as it does for this very reason.

This article is by Everyday Analysis, a collective project whose book Why Are Animals Funny? is available [here](#).



*Quote from Review 31: 'the authors have captured the joy of performance, the energy of protest and embedded this spirit within a theoretical framework that is admirably deliberative'*

*Quote from VOIX: 'the book's critical eye affects your real one and does (in a very literal sense) change the way you look at the world'*

# HCE Meets... Kate Tempest

**HCE: You're known as a poet, performer and hip-hop MC – and now you're releasing an album – which art form do you prefer?**

Kate Tempest: From the age of 13, 14, I was into hip-hop, people like The Fugees, Roots and A Tribe Called Quest and by the time I was 16 I was rapping myself. I was writing ever since I could but it's great to be back in the studio playing with rhymes again – it's still my favourite thing to do

**HCE: Who are your greatest influences?**

KT: I can't pick any one artist, I like Young Fathers; one minute it might be Bob Dylan or Kendrick Lamar, I like to see an artist's entire output as it shows their development, and I can sort of look back on my own work in the same way. In literary terms, I like Don De Lillo, there's no fucking around.

**HCE: Everybody Down is to be "remixed" from an album into a novel; this sounds quite innovative in the still rather static world of publishing, could you tell us more about this?**

KT: Yes, next year the novel will come out but I've already got 5 or 6 chapters written. It has more depth, it's an expansion on the story told in the music, but with more space to follow through the journey of Pete and Becky. Many of the tracks were already drafted in prose and the challenge of music is reducing this to three minute songs, doing more with less. The album and the novel inform one another.

**HCE: What are you trying to say with Everybody Down?**

KT: I don't feel I'm trying to say anything too specific, just tell a good story. It's great to be back in the studio, playing with rhymes to let the music speak in its own way.

**HCE: What about issues affecting young people, the type that helped to spark the England riots back in 2011 – surely they are in there?**

KT: It speaks for itself. There is a political element to most art, and I'm painfully aware of what's happening all around us in this country, but chiefly, the album is about characters, people in the story, not issues.

**HCE: What sort of sound does the album have, what was the recording process like?**

KT: They were very quick-fire sessions, when and where Dan Carey (Mr Dan, the album producer) had time. We recorded really fast but what's funny is that most of these songs are based upon one initial session we did in about an hour and a half, just trying things out, it all stems from that.





By India Crank

**HCE: Accents in music, particularly different takes on a "London" accent, have become increasingly popular in music – as a native Londoner – do you have any opinion on this?**

KT: I'm not so interested in accents, people sound how they sound. I think vocabulary is more exciting, the words and the language used. There was a brief spell where lots of British rappers used American accents but I feel we really have our own scene now in the UK. When I went to Germany, everyone was surprised, they expected me to speak in RP.

**HCE: Your performances and publications are consistently acclaimed – are you ever concerned about hype, or being over-hyped?**

KT: I would say I'm not really aware of any hype as such. The audiences have been mixed and that's great, but even then, it's not about who is at the shows necessarily, just the shared experience of everyone being together in the moment. In terms of

career hype, I'm just getting started, and while the album feels like a milestone, it also feels about like going back to square one, in a good way

**HCE: Finally, this is our Disgust issue of Here Comes Everyone – what disgusts you?**

KT: I would say, the way we live. Globally and in this country. Our natural state is peace and I think there is not enough empathy for others. But I'd like to turn that on its head and say that I am trying to find love for all these things that cause me disgust in the world.

# Disgusted at Dudley Zoo

By Neil Laurenson

I was only going to mention the car park  
That wasn't a car park  
Though I know they won't say sorry  
For charging £3.50  
To park in a quarry –  
No line markings,  
Just piles of rubble!

No, I wasn't going to cause any trouble  
Until I saw the monkeys –  
The monkeys with their bottoms out!

I said to the warden it's obscene  
And he said  
They're Sulawesi crested macaques –  
The females show their red bottom  
To attract males for mating.

I mean, it's just so bare-faced!  
I was going to tell him where he could stick his monkeys  
But thankfully  
I turned the other cheek.

I went back to the car  
And decided to visit again next week  
To fully un-appreciate  
What dreadful bottoms they are.

# Moth

by Karin Akopyan



# Water Birth 2

by Karin Akopyan



Karin Akopyan's figures are the expression of emotions and states of awareness, made up memories, sex fantasies and secret aspirations. Human beings deal with rhetorical questions, some of which remain the same regardless of the time and age they live in. Evoking, in this sense, the Jungian conception of the unconscious as a dynamic rebalancing of the rational psyche through collective archetypes, the oneiric symbols in Karina's work form a mise en scène of the universal problems of birth, curiosity, grief, carnal temptation, sin, betrayal, pain, illness, search for enlightenment, purification and death. Russian artist Karina Akopyan describes the work as her own confession.

# Green Demons

by Karin Akopyan



[Overleaf]

**Temples**  
by Karin Akopyan





# HCE Meets: Scroobius Pip



Scroobius Pip and Dan le Sac perform at the Warwick Arts Centre

**HCE meets Scroobius Pip (of 'Dan le Sac' fame) and talks beats, bling and beards.**

**HCE: Hello Pip, how are you, how goes the tour?**

Pip: I'm good man. I've had some trouble with my voice which has meant less chat but the shows have been great.

**HCE: Along with Dan le Sac, you have perfected your own style of mixing words (poetry, spoken-word, hip-hop) and music. How does this work between the two of you?**

Pip: It's always been very natural for us. I used to work in a record shop and I've always been a fan of music. It was from there I discovered punk and hip-hop, then jazz. Lyrically, I'm interested in rhythm and cadence, and Dan is a versatile producer who makes the words shine. In literary terms, I've always been a big fan of The Book of Disquiet (Fernando Pessoa).

**HCE: What do you think is the future of poetry and spoken-word performance? For some people they are reading from the same page, [apologies - Ed.] but for others live poetry is where it's at.**



Pip: I think people like Kate Tempest and Polar Bear are great. There's a lot in common between performance, poetry and songs, but for me I've always seen our music in a cinematic style. Each piece tells a story.

**HCE: Yes, one of my favourite tracks of yours is Angles which has that quality – it was great to hear it performed at the recent gig in Coventry.**

**Pip: It's a story of twists and turns, avoiding a really linear narrative that shows people's differing perspectives on a situation; it blurs the lines between heroes and villains.**

**HCE: You've had your biggest chart success so far with your recent album, Repent Replenish Repeat, as well as solo albums – has there been a change of styles for yourself and Dan over the years?**

Pip: As an artist, I always aim to progress and both

of us going away doing our own thing was a great way to progress before making another record.

**HCE: The track Gold Teeth, from the new album is a real standout song for me. Are you trying to critique hip-hop as a genre, lifestyle?**

Pip: I always try to avoid over-analysing everything – it's not a song with a game plan, it's kind of half-and-half between defending some of what's great about the genre and some of the clichés that maybe hold it back.

**HCE: On a final question: beards. They're currently in fashion in the hipster scene and increasingly discussed in mainstream media; as a well-known bearded performer, what do you feel about this rise in popularity?**

Pip: I'm sick to death of my beard, to be honest. But I've had it for ages and it's how people know me. I read a blog post recently that said having a beard was synonymous, in manliness terms, with being able to change a tyre. We once had a casting call for extras in a video and most of the people showed-up with a beard – that made me want to shave it all off and go straight for a mohawk.





## Next time in HCE: **Girls/Boys**

We're interested in anything that challenges or questions the nature of gender, sex, sexuality and identity. We want anything that challenges the gender divide, questions binary sexual characteristics and sexism.

As usual, we want articles, stories and poems that tackle the theme in an interesting, challenging or unusual way:

**What's more important for gender identification, the mind or biology?**

**What is it like to be between the supposedly binary gender states?**

**Will there ever be an age where people stop identifying themselves with their sexuality? A 'post sexuality' age where relationships and preferences are fluid and dynamic?**

**What's the difference between a 'ladette' and a 'tom-boy'?**

**What's wrong with throwing 'like a girl'?**

**Is art more interested in women than men?**

All submissions must be sent to submit@herecomeseveryone.me

- See more at: <http://herecomeseveryone.me/submit/#sthash.OsZgn6Qt.dpuf>

The background of the poster features a dramatic, fiery scene. In the upper left, silhouettes of people are gathered around a campfire, with orange and red flames visible. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds of smoke and fire, transitioning from deep orange at the horizon to a darker, reddish-pink hue higher up. In the upper right, a tall, thin spire or chimney is visible against the bright sky.

**FIRE & DUST**  
Open-mic @  
The Tin  
**24/6/2014**

# The Block and the Brew

By K Krombie

In all fairness, since the moment I'd met that dirty fucker Outlaw, there'd been trouble.

Scratching a portion of indecipherable plot into the dust on my chair-arm, I shivered at an overpowering sense of desire, then got up and out to look for him. I would search for his deft physicality, his soft-shoe creeping, in the awkward corners of the bone yard, led by my parched veins and gut.

I'd first encountered him at the local cemetery where I'd been searching the gravestones for a collection of double-barrel names appropriate to a story I might never finish. Only a few minutes into my search, a tall yet hunched foul-smelling creature jumped out from behind a plain Jones grave-stone, kitted out in a trench coat, brothel creepers and a gas mask.

A gruff, muffled voice made an obscene inquiry.

"Have you ever been in love?"

"Excuse me?"

"I won't ask you again."

"What a ridiculous question," I snapped.

Scratching the nozzle of his gas mask, he continued. "My name is Oscar Outlaw, and you are, sir?"

"I'm not telling you that," I said, not unreasonably. "Why should I?"

I sensed a growing grin beneath the mask. "You'll come to rely on me. 'Tis a fact. I've been watching you, wandering about with your grimace and notebook, jotting down insignificance and muttering obscenities, tearing your hair out and sobbing at your shortcomings."

"How dare you!"

"What you need," he said, "is the right sorta fluids."

This was outrageous. My day-to-day existence scanned through intrusive rubber-wear, as if cupped by a merciless doctor with whom I had made no appointment. This was a violation.

"Take your fluids and fuck off. I refuse to converse with masked stalkers about my love life and fluid intake."

He screeched back in retaliation. "It is you who are trespassing, son of Shakespeare. This patch doubles as my den and wage earner. I'm the gravedigger here, yet most of those who visit do so not to pay their respects to coffined kin. Oh no, they come here for one reason only, as a reminder that those of us who remain are indeed alive. Cemeteries serve as no more and no less than a checkpoint. And as for you and your sort..."

"My sort?"

Outlaw waved his grubby hand dismissively. "Yeah, prose ponces, you come here for inspiration and end up arthritic. Very bad for a writer that is."

I eyed my surroundings suspiciously. No doubt, some local enemy had set me up with the gasman.

He continued, "My mausoleum is a home to me half the time, my little patch of magic where I collect the good stuff. Aaah, the graveyard brew!"

In an accompanying gesture, he pulled off his gas mask. In turn, I exhaled and recoiled at a head that seemed to be the embodiment of a protest to the living. Outlaw was rotten, his unfathomable features and baldhead patched with flaking angry red sores. His age was a puzzle and his politics no doubt barbaric.

"It's good to get an airing, to feel the caress of fresh air, to feel alive, wouldn't you say?"

"And, er...w...what...?" I stuttered, unable to conceal my disgust. "I mean what, dare I ask, is the graveyard brew?"

Outlaw grinned a crooked shape and winked an eyelid of sorts, a withered flap of translucent skin.

"Outlaw's Elixir. From within my mausoleum."

"Your mausoleum?"

"Yes, the Outlaw mausoleum, my workshop in life, death, and the minuscule but potent bit in between. Over the years, I have devised a system of extraction. I drain from the worms and maggots the elixir they themselves drain from souls not yet



risen. The perfect tonic for those who think themselves half-dead, for in the freshly dead, there is a brewery of sorts. All past is little but a dream. This is the real awakening, a slice of life just past, a turntable spin of genuine soul."

Appalled by the severity of whatever condition he suffered from, I nevertheless felt for a moment overwhelmed by the idea that the wormed bitter fruits of fear inducing fairy tales might exist. Faced with the gravedigger, an assemblage of goblin tricksters sprung to mind.

"What could it do for me?"

"Sip it and see," came the reply. "To drink it is more conventional, it's up to you. The answers are in the brew."

"How much?"

"The first sample's for free, to make up for the diabolical taste. Most of my buyers are artistic sorts, a lot of writers with blocks on their egos."

I took with me my sample of grey fluid encased in a grubby tumbler with a slotted-in straw. At home, I procrastinated, ranted, dismissed and then succumbed by swapping a cautionary sip for a down in one so as not to squirm in its indecent hum. I drank from the poisoned chalice, deliberately without caution. Only my stubbornness, caught like the clap from erstwhile company, put a plug in any effort to regurgitate.

Sitting on the floor in the dark of my abode, I laid out a pen and paper on the floor in front of me. This play at ceremony only added to the absurdity of my having swallowed what, at its base level, Outlaw had claimed was shit from a worm or something like it. My resistance quickly eased into submission and suddenly I was a slave to this strange elixir. First, the hint of a familiar plot. Then full-blown images, as real as daylight. I recorded via rapid scribble a sequence of pictures too vivid for mere fiction, and yet this play of characters, clinging onto my immediate senses, I knew all too well.

I had via Oscar Outlaw's putrid miracle elixir, experienced the stories I longed to record, but as the effects of the brew wore off, so too did my memories. Outlaw had been right. The answers were in the brew. It had coursed through my veins at a rate that demanded repetition.

Pushing full bladdered strides over the rolling

folds of the Fields, I scrutinised the trees that concealed Oscar Outlaw's graveyard lair. For a few unavoidable moments, I leaned into an oak and urinated upon its bark, barely noticing a witness to this, an elderly woman, at a glance, an apparent vagrant.

"Go and use a toilet like everyone else," she rasped. "You filthy bastard"

I shouted out midstream. "OUTLAW, MEET ME HALFWAY AND BRING ME THE BREW."

"Outlaw?"

"Oscar Outlaw, do you know him?" Looking at her now, it didn't seem unreasonable that she might. Zipping up, I turned towards her.

"Do you always sit like that," I asked, "like an Eastern deity with your legs crossed?"

"What the bloody hell do you want? Leave me alone."

I looked her up and down which didn't take long. Even standing I imagined she'd be of medieval stature. She looked very old. Torn clothes barely covered her pink plump flesh. Her breasts, only partly covered, were surprisingly full. I imagined them as part-time pillows to napping tramps.

"Listen," I offered. "Will a bit of change make up for my being rude?"

She booted me with a lever-like foot, hard in the shin. I winced and then spat.

"What was that for?"

She eyed my spittle, gleaming like dew upon nettles.

"You are rude," she said. "And don't spit, it's disgusting. Go get your charity kicks in some other field."

"Me, disgusting? Pot kettle."



She fixed on me the bitterness of hindsight.  
"I've been well and truly shat on, defecated on by one arsehole of a world. Same world as yours. If you think I'm disgusting take a look in the mirror, prick. Now piss off."

My swift exit was interrupted by a dense jet of sick that instantly wetted the nettles alongside her. Appalled, she began to curse me at a great volume. I couldn't stomach it, literally, and so I pushed on over the taxing humps of Hilly Fields and across the road in search of a cure for my withdrawal symptoms.

The gate in front of the bronze mausoleum door was locked. The stone pediment above bore the carved Outlaw moniker. How many of his kind were in there I wondered? Had I sampled the essence of Oscar's family tree via his furtive manufacturing? I called his name to no avail and a burst of heavy rain set off my search of every acre and grave until I paused, wet and muddied, to vomit more violently than before. Shelter took the form of a decrepit old pub nearby that went by the name of The Clap & Strap.

A clap of thunder rumbled appropriately, as I made my cadaverous entrance into a dive bar if ever I saw one. Paper peeled from mucid walls while the bloodstained carpet may as well have supported a war crime. This was a playground for the unwashed; of them, a dozen or so now present, all eyes on me.

"What can I get you?"

The thickset barman emitted a deep shade of red to match the stains on his carpet. His large tuft-haired cranium dripped sweat onto his bar-top. I recognised it as the fall of testosterone, incon-

tinent with aggression. Instantly, I imagined him sleeping with a crowbar, eagerly stroking its length whenever there was the faintest suggestion of a break-in.

"Brandy, a double."

My body shook involuntarily for all to see as I battled to keep down what was certain to come up at any moment.

"Make that a triple...fuck it, a quadruple."

The barman looked over the pebble-dashed vomit from my chest to my knees; behind me, whispers exchanged. My quadruple hit the bar accompanied by a sneer from the host. Before I could reach for my wallet, he came at me.

"Are you gonna pay for that?"

Astounded, I replied, "How would you like me to pay, in blood?"

"Pay up," he muttered, his shovel-palm extended towards me.

I did as he asked. It was a harsh reality that I was especially unwell. I was losing a grip on whatever was keeping me upright.

The barman sneered. "Keep your filth to yourself, or fuck off out of my pub."

The Clap & Strap's custom paid attention as thunder rumbled even louder than before. I downed the brandy in one and made for the door.

Without warning, I pissed myself at the cemetery gates. During my failure to find that fucker Outlaw my poor, sick body descended into deeper darker trouble. With hissing lungs and a burning bladder, I pulled myself further into despair with each gravestone.

At the mausoleum, I felt cold breath down the back of my neck. The gate, previously locked, gave way. I tumbled through the open bronze entrance doors into the Outlaw lair. En route, the wrist, index and middle fingers of my left hand, my writing hand, snapped.

Within the damp, dark square space, a slit of soaked light from the gap in the door revealed three wooden coffins only half submerged in earth. The gasman was absent, as was pain relief, dignity and brew. A solitary worm wriggled upon the furthest coffin from my head. In a fit of temper, I lifted my foot and stamped upon it, then watched the two severed halves pause in alliance before



slithering away from one another in the throes of a slow, casual death.

"Hello? Helloo?"

A face peered into the crack from the outside world.

"Ah bollocks, if I'd have known it was you I wouldn't have bothered. I wandered in here, saw some poor bastard trip and fall, thought I'd help. I needn't now though."

The Hilly Fields vagabond had chanced upon my dumbfounding misfortune.

"Just like the others," she muttered, "looking for Oscar, ay?"

Time is a hard thing to fathom when exhausted, hallucinating and dripping with rain, vomit, mud and urine. I wasn't sure how long I'd been in recovery, or in fact if I was better off now than I had been in the hole.

Kneeling stiffly on the gravel in a nearby cemetery aisle, I observed her cross-legged position in front of me. "So you do know Oscar Outlaw?" I asked.

In truth I didn't see it coming, the small, fleshy palm on my inside thigh. Tilting her head closer to mine, she exhaled an intoxicating breath and replied, "As well as you can know anyone in parts like these."

Successfully tugging open my zip, she instantly clasped my erection. For such a slight hand, the old dear had a firm handshake, rhythmic, paced, almost too adept for my erratic blood flow.

She whispered her odour into my eardrum. "Me finding you here was no accident. I followed you from the Fields. You got me thinking see, about the state of you, vile and disgusting, worse than me. For a moment or two, let me unblock you."

I began to weep as her firm tug eased off. Kneeling on the wet gravel with a notable grace, she took me down her throat with an ease that suggested I was good for her. If a mothering blow-job was possible, if not socially acceptable, then this was it. I continued to cry in the guise of a child undergoing the maternal patch-up that follows a particularly nasty graze. Amid the sucking and gurgling, she donated the expertise of her years with the rapid flick of a wizened old tongue.

What had briefly been comforting gave way to an intractable aggression. Despite her capabilities, this would not do. Clasping the back of her head through thinning locks, I gripped tightly and began to move back and forth of my own accord, a volatile jerk that gave instead of received. As she gagged, I wept some more and then cried out as an old ghost, a thing of the past, observed and scrutinised from the not too distant, like the old pervert I knew him to be.

Oscar Outlaw's pinprick eyes met my own. I grinned in defiance, then instantly, came.

I was given no time to release myself from that poor woman before Outlaw whacked the side of my skull with his shovel. "Get away from her!"

My head split open instantly. Blood gushed onto the upturned face of the old woman. Outlaw howled over my wound. "You're not welcome at the mausoleum no more. No more brew for you, son of Shakespeare!"

The woman, apparently the property of a grave-digging drug-dealer, pushed me back into the mausoleum through the gap and crack went my right leg. From within the boxed-in torture that surpassed all prior pain, and amid my screams of agony, I heard her wail her apologies, none of them for me.

Pushing her away from him, Outlaw jumped into his lair. He stood, feet either side of my hips, watching me, absorbing my fear, entranced by the pattern of blood I could feel spilling over the coffin beneath me. Raising his shovel above his head he announced, "Happy endings don't come cheap."

# Inside Out

By Tom Wyre

So you turn me inside out,  
Turn my stomach without compassionate eyes.

Your brumal, brutal brazen blade,  
An atrocity welded to your arm,  
Tears at my skin, my dead mother's gift,  
Her blessed cocoon tugged from my bones.

Shocked nerves convulse and shudder,  
Flinching from your vice laden fingers,  
Turned to talons, clawing with greed.  
A sickening epitaph worn by vanity,  
Their pockets bulge with empty cookies.

My muzzle mimics a cry for help.  
So much pain, my dignity falls discarded,  
As I scream, and I retch and I scream,  
And my wretched blood streams,  
And the tears of rain fill my gaze.

All this time as you stand on my head,  
Your humanity lies buried on its head.  
Your footprint lacks the soul  
You once had when you were a child.  
Your lost innocence, where did it go?  
Once grazed mercy, twisted into scars.  
Misplaced whispers upon a mandarin sunset.

Now I summon a stare into your eyes,  
Searching for one reason, one answer,  
My executioner, how much does the devil pay?  
A candle's flicker burnt in an abysmal lantern,  
A hope, its brightness devoured by the starved night,  
By the darkness, the abyss behind your eyes.

As the light in my look fades to match yours,  
I see your shredded smile lies bleeding on my fur.

From the anthology *Restless Bones*,  
Born Free Foundation, 2014



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Tom Wyre is the current Staffordshire Poet Laureate who in addition to appearing at the prestigious O'Béal festival in Cork has just returned from performing at the wonderful 4 day poetry festival in Laugharne and the associated Dylan Thomas (DT100) celebrations. He will be performing specially commissioned new work on the 11th July 2014 at the National Memorial Arboretum as part of a special evening of remembrance in the year of the centenary since the outbreak of WW1.

His latest book complete with CD is called *Through The Lucid Door* published by Hub Publishing.

# Territory

By Holly Magill

He nurtures his cask-brewed views;  
cossets them within cupped hands,  
like his Saturday night fourth pint.

Occasionally, inevitably, they spill  
when some fool jogs his elbow.  
He mops, yet spreads,  
with a few choice words,  
of red-top strewn press:  
it blots yet it stains  
his prejudice,  
Permanent XXXXX.

The glass is ready. If necessary.

That sort seldom come in here:  
not twice, at any rate.  
He doesn't want any trouble.

Closing time sighs, tired  
as Carol's lazy-eyed wink  
as she wipes down the bar.  
His kingdom is secure,  
no borders breached.

Perhaps on his way home  
he'll stop  
for a Chinese.

# Moths Leaving Head

by Jamila Walker



"Although I am not disgusted, horrified by insects, many people are I know are, they also are not too keen on open wounds, however enjoy both, hence my image attached. I love a surgery television programme and watching creepy crawling going about their business, the colours, they way they move."

# Disgusted of Leicester

By John Kitchen

**Leicester City, the heady days of Martin O'Neill and Filbert Street, an away supporter was trying to drive out of the car park as the crowd was leaving the match. The car was edging its way amongst us when somebody angrily blocked the way. The driver opened his door, leaned out and asked why people were being so difficult. "Is it because I am black ?" he shouted.**

One of the spectators called out, "Don't be stupid, mate. This is Leicester."

This issue of HCE is about disgust. The reaction towards those things that offend our senses, that might make us dirty, spread disease, do us harm.

Tony Blair, won three elections, but his actions led to Iraq and Afghanistan. He is probably thought of most fondly by the present conservatives and loathed most by those who were once his supporters.

Similarly the Liberal Democrats, Nick Clegg and Vince Cable in particular. We all know what the Tories are like, we expected better of the Lib Dems - disappointment leading to disgust; a we-won't-forget distrust. It affects our attitudes to the police after Plebgate, the Police Federation, actions against peaceful protest; the NHS after the Mid-Staffs scandal; the banks and their bonuses; workers in Care Homes etc. etc. If the people in these institutions acted no better than you expected your sense of outrage would be so much less.

I have always been proud to live in Leicester. We are one of the most multi-cultural cities in the UK, Generally we don't do racism. I was delighted to be asked to work with a theatre company in writing a piece on East African Asians coming to Leicester in 1972. I had always thought of the welcome provided by Leicester as a symbol of an enlightened and forward thinking attitude that has continued to the present.

Imagine my feelings on discovering that on 15th September 1972 Leicester City Council placed an ad in the Ugandan Argus which stated:  
"several thousands of families are already on the Council's (housing ) waiting list."

"hundreds of children are awaiting places in schools"

"Social and health services – already stretched to the limit"

The advertisement finished with :

"IN YOUR OWN INTERESTS AND THOSE OF YOUR FAMILY YOU SHOULD ACCEPT THE ADVICE OF UGANDA RESETTLEMENT BOARD AND NOT COME TO LEICESTER."

As it turned out most Asian families were not deterred and thanks to 9 labour rebels on the council attitudes changed.

I commend the bravery of those who made that trip from East Africa and those labour rebels. As for the majority of the City Council and those people who displayed such a lack of humanity, that knowledge stays with me. Perhaps I now have a less naive view. I prefer to remember the football fan who laughed at the accusation of racism with, "Don't be stupid, mate. This is Leicester."



# No One

By John Kitchen

It's just lying  
no one's picked it up  
incubating  
more toxins in there  
than Assad's chemical weapons  
at least a week  
not been moved  
walked past it  
every day  
twice a day  
well  
there and back,  
have to, it's a cul de sac  
three houses down  
you'd think someone  
could just shift it  
yeah, you'd need gloves  
or one of them litter pickers  
not bare hands, the thought  
all them bacterias inside,  
cause blindness they say  
but what I don't get  
is the mentality,  
I mean bagging it  
in one of them cheap  
greengrocers' bags  
red and see through stripes,  
that's got to be the nasty bit  
you know, warm  
straight out of the animal  
all squidgy and reeking

it's stuck to the sides  
almost black  
can't dry in there  
can it  
couldn't bin it  
like any normal person  
it's dropped  
bag of shit, tossed  
you'd think  
somebody'd've picked it up  
dropped it in a wheelie bin  
probably ten days now  
rancid pestilence in a bag  
well if someone catches something  
it ain't my fault,  
bloody dogs,  
can't stand 'em

# Bloody Typical after Peter Reading

By John Kitchen

in my most beautifully tended garden  
the ginger tom has found a place to shit

\*

we voted, we cheered, we hoped  
but his beliefs had space for  
invasion, water boarding,  
extraordinary rendition

\*

their touch once made me shudder, now  
I squash little ones between finger and thumbnail  
blue pellets of poison'll do for the big 'uns  
bugger the wildlife

\*

the parking space isn't quite wide enough  
the stairways stink of piss and fags  
I've forgotten to note which floor

\*

it's a moral duty to get them off welfare,  
bingo and booze, it's what they enjoy  
of course, we're all in this together.

\*

How many thousands a week ?  
It was harder to miss than score.

\*

Zero hours contract for a carer.  
minimum wage for a carer.  
A carer ! It's all you're good for.  
You abuse your charges, you disgust us.



HERE COMES EVERYONE

SP