



# *Our Death*

---

**SEAN BONNEY**



∞  
M  
E

---

EDITIONS

# **OUR DEATH**

## COMMUNE EDITIONS

*Red Epic*, Joshua Clover

*We Are Nothing and So Can You*, Jasper Bernes

*That Winter the Wolf Came*, Juliana Spahr

*A Series of Un/Natural/Disasters*, Cheena Marie Lo

*Still Dirty*, David Lau

*Miximum Ca'Canny the Sabotage Manuals*, Ida Börjel

*Blackout*, Nanni Balestrini

*Transnational Battle Field*, ~~Heriberto Yépez~~

*Special Subcommittee*, Samuel Solomon

*Excess—The Factory*, Leslie Kaplan

*Cruel Fiction*, Wendy Trevino

*Duppies*, David Marriott

*The Hammer*, Adelaide Ivánova

*Our Death*, Sean Bonney

# *Our Death*

---

**SEAN BONNEY**



Commune Editions  
Oakland, California  
communeeditions.com

An imprint of AK Press / AK Press UK  
Oakland, California (akpress@akpress.org)  
Edinburgh, Scotland (ak@akedin.demon.co.uk)

© 2019 Commune Editions  
we encourage the sharing of this book and everything else: *omnia sunt communia*

Commune Editions design by Front Group Design  
(frontgroupdesign.com)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sean Bonney  
Our Death / Sean Bonney  
ISBN 9781934639283 (pbk.: alk. paper)  
Library of Congress Control Number: 2019933795

Printed on acid-free paper by McNaughton & Gunn, Michigan, U.S.A. The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R2009)(*Permanence of Paper*).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>A RIOT IS A HAUNT</b>	11
<b>CANCER: POEMS AFTER KATERINA GOGOU</b>	21
<b>OUR DEATH</b>	65
1 / Letter in Turmoil	67
2 / From Deep Darkness	68
3 / A Note on my Recent Poetics	70
4 / A Butcher's Lullabye	71
5 / About the Weather	72
6 / What Teargas is For	73
7 / Black Cocaine (after Anita Berber)	74
8 / On Throwing Bricks	75
9 / On Being a Good Person	77
10 / "It Hurts to be Murdered"	78
11 / "Thrash Me!"	79
12 / Orchids (after Anita Berber)	80
13 / Anywhere Out of the World	81
14 / Carrion	82
15 / Approximations of the Solar Enemy	83
16 / A Reference to the Voices	84

17 / Vitriol	85
18 / Georg Trakl's Psalm	86
19 / "We Are the Dead"	88
20 / The Ignoble Fate of Rock n Roll	90
21 / What if the Summer Never Ends	92
22 / The Torture	93
23 / "Where Have They Been?"	94
24 / "Let's Not Chat About Despair"	95
25 / Under Duress	96
26 / Further Notes on Teargas	97
27 / Notes on the Hallucinations	98
28 / The Ghost Dimension	100

#### **STILL: 7 DEVOTIONS**

29 / Dancer (after Emmy Hennings)	102
30 / Memoir (after Miyó Vestrini)	103
31 / Abject (after Baudelaire)	105
32 / On Bomb Scares	107
33 / On the Refusal of Spite	108
34 / On the Hatred of the Sun	110
35 / Our Death	111

#### **THE CHORUS IS ON FIRE ///**

<b>LANDSCAPE WITH BURNING TRUCK[</b>	113
--------------------------------------	-----

Acknowledgments	124
-----------------	-----





**A RIOT IS A HAUNT**



Our houses are packed so close  
They are no longer houses. Get that.  
These our beds these our scraps of food  
We eat with the same mouth. We no longer  
Use our bones. We are desperate we are fabulous  
we are Possibly dead.

4 in the morning. Sleep fuck get high  
and that monster in the sky taking our details.

Ghosts walk at noon. Everyone's a weapon.

\*

There is no time. Our houses  
concealed, like songs, mumble to themselves  
The stars are not stars, the city sounds not  
city sounds. The sirens, the cops, however,  
they are real as algebra or teeth are real like  
Lazarus who never even lived & like a plague  
or like a loved one's shadow Here I am alone

# *Hölderlin after Meinhof / Lyrics for Kruk*

Fuck it. The sun is doing whatever suns do  
The citizenry all creeping like flowers.  
Idiots. The sky is grey on further grey and  
The haunting, its sharpened hail, never stops.

\*

Oh wow. A single lifetime. We crawl about the earth  
As if the sky were an image, or something special, as if  
Never mind. Flowers for example. Try eating one. But  
Don't get me wrong. I'm just like everyone else.  
They keep their gold in me, the dullness of riches. Beware it.

\*

What did we really expect. I mean, we look at clouds  
Are impressed by thunder and  
The invisible.  
People eat it like they do famous persons.  
Carbon. Indigestion. Property. Watch that shit.

\*

But it was only pills made me queasy. That  
and flames underfoot.  
The cities have almost vanished

we list them like molecules. Lesions. We list them  
every morning like describing a shadow is mania  
To inhabit a name. To eat human flesh.

\*

You think it's imaginary. Maybe so. Try telling that  
to the fortune tellers. You know the ones. Those  
who never think or say an original word. Their  
vocabulary is monstrous.

Ours too. I love the cities  
as they so predictably burn, the sound of ash and  
yes this talk. Of music. Of soul. This so brief life.

# *Razor Psalm*

The last song has run out we buried it and died. Now we are turning blue.  
I think we are in a hospital it is really a bar. Lets call it the felon ward.  
There is no hell there is only the law. Behind every border the law.

A rant is a haunt. Here is the surveillance building. Christ it's as black as the morning.  
Here is the solar acid of royalty. Here have some hate speech.  
Here are some major buildings Here are some tiny skeletons Here is a pile of dead friends.  
They tell me the riots were getting boring. They tell me we are all stained by their bombs.  
Here are the stains round our mouths. Here are the towns run by fascists.

You know we could refuse the sun as well. Its wraith-like idiocy. Its endless ridiculous angels.  
Its sad songs. Their ancient beautiful rooms. Angels are insects. Insects are needles.

Today we will say fever and romance. Today we will say the walls run through our bodies.  
Today we will say are those racist bastards dead yet. What is catastrophe. Kick till you break.

This is a complaint on the state of the Bohemians. Thomas Müntzer. 1521 or something

## *Letter Against the Language*

*God has chosen precisely what does not exist in order to reduce to nothing what does exist — St. Paul*

*The criminals of the Vision are a totally different matter — Pier Paolo Pasolini*

So I moved to a new country, a new city. The effect is not dissimilar to tearing your name off your face, to finally stumbling onto the secrets of archaic techniques of invisibility. Or at least that's what I tell myself when I've been awake for several days. Invisibility being, in its simplest meaning, visibility amplified to the max. Anyway, when I first arrived I walked everywhere, at absolute random, sometimes with eyes closed, sometimes open. When you feel that alive, meaning not alive at all in any sense that you've become used to, meaning absolutely and utterly lost, well, the distinctions between dreams and sight, between whatever it is that waking and vision are supposed to be, become pretty much meaningless. For a long time I was simply scrambling around in the more popular parts of town. Not really sure why, to be honest — I mean, they're popular for a reason and it's not necessarily one I'm particularly sympathetic with. So I started venturing further out to the strange external circles with the weird unpronounceable names — and by that I don't mean unpronounceable simply to a person who doesn't speak the language, but even to the people who live there. There are some strange red doors out there. Some pretty strange landscapes. For some reason I started thinking about Pasolini. To be specific, the scene at the end of *Theorem*, where the father — having given his factory away to the workforce, and then having tried and failed to pick up a boy at a railway station, takes off his clothes and wanders off into some strange volcanic or desert landscape and, as he enters that landscape, he screams. I was ranting on to a friend a few days ago that I take that scream to contain all that is meaningful in the word “communism” — or rather, whatever it is that people like us mean when we use that word, which is, as we both know all too well, somewhat different to whatever it is the dictionary of the visible world likes to pretend it means. You know what I'm saying. A kind of high metallic screech. Unpronounceable. Inaudible. I'm obsessed with Pasolini. I stuck a naked picture of him on my office wall earlier on today — it helps, it helps when I'm trying to think about that scream, about toxicity and audibility, about the weird silence I live

inside right in the middle of the deafening din of this city. Some academic once wrote of Pasolini that we “should turn down the volume on his political sermons and listen to what he whispered in his work,” which is obviously pretty stupid because the politics are precisely within those whispers or, rather, those barely audible screeches. I guess you must be familiar with his unfinished St Paul screenplay — the bit where he quotes Corinthians on “hearing inexpressible things, things we are not able to tell.” I got really obsessed with that for a while. Don’t get me wrong. I’m not about to disappear into some kind of cutrate Cloud of Unknowing, or worse, some comfortably opaque experimental poetry. I mean, fuck that shit. In one of the last essays he wrote, Pasolini made it pretty damn clear what might be implied by “inexpressible things,” things “we are not able to tell.” It is names. “I know the names,” he wrote, in that essay published in 1974. The names of those who sit on the various committees. The “names of those responsible for the massacres.” The names of power. The forbidden syllables. The names of those whose names it is impossible to pronounce in certain combinations and continue simply to live. And obviously, this has very little to do with what certain idiots still call “magic,” which means it has everything to do with it. But anyway, I was thinking about all of this and all the while I kept walking further and further out of town, in wider and wider circles, until my own interior dialogue, if I can even be accused of having such a thing, seemed to come at me in a language I could no longer commit to, or comprehend, or even hear. Perhaps I could smell it. But anyway. Things we are not able to tell. Inexpressible things. Accountability. Transparency. Blah blah blah. Hölderlin called it the nefas. You know? Mystery cults and so forth. Revealing the secrets etc. The saliva of judges. Chewing on gristle and bone. And we could, if we wanted, I thought to myself, spinning round and round in 920 degree circles, we could translate that whole thing into geography, so those spittle-flecked unpronounceable syllables would become the sheer disks of unliveable landscape. The death-cell. The plague-pit. The city of the sun. Utopia. All of the dreams of all of those dry fuckers who neither believe nor remember their dreams. “For that is the tragic with us,” wrote Hölderlin, sometime before he wandered off into the mountains and had his head split apart by god knows what infernal statistic, “to go away into the kingdom of the living in total silence packed up in some kind of container, not to pay for the flames we have been unable to control by being consumed in fire.” Quite a metaphor, yeh? And one whose implications go further than anything Hölderlin would have been able to recognize. I mean, right now. “The kingdom of the living.” “Packed up in some kind of container.” “In total silence.” As the borders are going up. As the teeth are being sharpened. And as I walked I wondered whose “the kingdom of the living” was, and whose was that “total silence,” and if the inexpressible names that Pasolini had almost uttered were of that silence or not, and if those who had, or possessed, those names, were of the living, or not. Because sometimes in Pasolini’s work, in the late work, it seems as if utopia itself is the

necropole, a ring of slums, a circle around the city, a “force from the past,” tearing up the present, a fever-desert, coming from the future, at inexpressible distance, inconsolable. And that screaming factory owner, in the last scene of Theroem, was he screaming because he was entering the “kingdom of the living,” or because he was leaving it. I don’t know. It isn’t even a scream, not really. More a dead thing, a powder-rasp. And as I was thinking this I suddenly realized I was no longer walking, because there was nothing to walk on, or through, or anything. Vague impression of a ring of houses or bones. Vague sense I could enter into any one of them. That noone would stop me. That I would be as invisible as any living person, as any corpse. That’s right. Rimbaud. Anyway. Like the bourgeois I am I went looking for a bus stop. But I couldn’t find one, so like the person I used to be I lay down in the filth of the road and did my best to ignore whatever conformist signals the stars were trying to throw my way. As in, none whatsoever. Like a rough and aged bedlam sheet. The wage relation. The pennies on my eyes. And the sun coming up. Or maybe it wasn’t. Maybe someone had smashed it. Like the blinded eyesight of the living has been smashed. Like the “total silence” of Hölderlin, ecstatic and packed with noises, has been smashed. But whatever. It seemed I was sitting on a bench somewhere, with some old guy, sharing a beer with him, all thin and vacant bone, and the language we were using wasn’t English or German or whatever the fuck language a person is supposed to use in this the kingdom of the living or this the kingdom of the dead and, well, I was ranting on to him about Pasolini, about how in the last interview Pasolini gave, just hours before he died, he did admit to a belief in magic and how that magic was not simply to be found from knowing how to pronounce the so-called unpronounceable names but, more to the point, from knowing how to translate those names into sheer anger, which means the knowledge of how to inhabit the word “no,” its landscape and its geography. Not of course the pinched “no” of border guards and the rest. But “no” as in the opposite of the sun. And I don’t know if I was even using words at all, or just some kind of structure of barely audible squeals, but I was still going on about Pasolini, about his poem “Victory,” where he has the bodies of the Partisans crawling out from their graves and marching, with all the silence of that simple word “no,” into the cities below. Horrified by what they find there, by the residue of what they thought they died for, they turn around, clamber back into their holes in the earth. And though it’s a poem of great bitterness and defeat it still carries within it a sense of how to continue, of how not to capitulate, in the face of whatever it is that is breaking our names apart, our names, shattering them, until their meanings change into something terminal and alien, alien as the pitiful groan I mumbled as I stood up and staggered back to my temporary flat in one of the more fashionable areas of this hopelessly gentrified and haunted city. I did a shitload of speed, stared into space for a while, then wrote you this. Hope you don’t mind that I haven’t been in touch for so long. We are not completely defenceless. We have not yet been consumed in fire.



**CANCER:  
POEMS AFTER  
KATERINA GOGOU**

I WOULD LIKE TO SPIN A EULOGY  
OF FILTH, OF POVERTY, OF DRUGS AND SUICIDE

DRUGS, DISGUST, RAGE

– PIER PAOLO PASOLINI

AS FOR THE AUDIENCE, ONLY THOSE WHO KNOW  
THEMSELVES CAPABLE OF TAKING A NOCTURNAL  
STROLL THROUGH A CEMETERY, IN ORDER TO BE  
CONFRONTED WITH A MYSTERY, WILL COME...

– JEAN GENET

Lumpenproletariat. And other adventures in vocabulary.

They say I am Katerina. A force from somebodies past. Not yours.

There are people who came here to become managers and became managers.

And people who became warehouse advisors and people who never sleep.

They say I was having a wank in the royal parks.

Gunfire is a streetplan, I say. So is Marx. So the type of equations they call pistol-whips.

I dreamed I was made out of chains I dreamed I was blowing the place sky-high.

I'm sure that today has a date or something. Noone tells me anything.

There are four cardinal points.  
The first is the sky, it is where they have buried us.  
The second, the earth. There they question us. It is very silent.  
The other two points were recently taken out of commission.  
No explanations were offered

---

Every day I wake up everyday inside the wage system  
inside all its houses, never paid rent on even one.  
Sleep nowhere. Every morning inside my wages  
I lie in wait for those who sleep, I sleep  
on their chests and never speak. Never  
Take this as spectral evidence. Meaning. Fuck death.

---

Subutex. Give me the prescription  
and I will be you. I'll pretend to be you  
and if I cannot, well, I'll tell you about your walls  
the interpretation of the cracks, divination etc  
you probably don't wanna know. give me the paper  
it's fine I'll never remember a thing.  
you'll say things tomorrow I'll have said them last week.  
just right. I know explosives. magic I know and dialectics.  
just write the prescription ok.  
I have conversations with the dead.

let's drink with the unemployed  
with all sun and silence  
with all dust in the sun and silence  
and sun and cognac and dust  
and cigarettes and sun  
no, lets not go on about our health today  
pills and drink and snot  
don't worry  
I feel very calm  
there are nails there is hair there are years  
dirty  
the pills are great. the party, you know which one I mean  
impossible to tell who's a cop these days  
music  
the cognacs shit  
no, I haven't heard anything for quite some time  
you know I'm thinking I might want to, you know  
there's a room upstairs  
I want to see you without your pants  
kind of curious about your dick  
music, for chrissake  
you take a solo  
"they took a stick and beat me"  
cognac  
music  
silence

you pull out your switchblade start slashing  
The Bonnot Gang were right.

*this is the part where my brain splits*



they want to know if I have a television  
night falls  
it won't be an OD gets me  
long live the 204<sup>th</sup> International



*yours is only good for spitting*  
and we live  
at random. lines and bombs and wires  
tight around your hands. your necks  
you fascist shits. your necks  
my friends are wires are blackbirds

---

This is for those who never made it  
For those in the center of the earth  
Who cracked apart in the holding cell  
The enormous noises of the border

“Kreuzberg. Exarchia. Hackney.”

I could draw a diagram of our life. It could be a jack-knife.

Nice metaphor you say. No it's simply a weapon.

Noone could get used to living here.

Omania Square. They call it the Assembly of the Dead.

The Calendar is Broken. The Ruling Class are not Human.

But the food they steal from our mouths is real.

So too the wings of anarchy so too Marx. Screw our purloined heart.

I know how inconvenient this pain must be. Get used to it.

---

one day I'll come out from the houses  
I did it yesterday  
no thought for anything  
one small shred of my father  
a tiny piece of the sea  
noone can take them from me  
the city they fucked like a dead friend  
so many dead friends  
one day I'll come out from the houses  
straight into powder and flames  
I did it yesterday  
you fascist bastards  
you pig bastards  
red banners barricades black banners  
a new city a new kind of sun  
one day I'll come out of the houses  
and listen I need to tell you  
don't think I'm afraid when I tell you  
they got me. don't do it. they got me.  
reinvent time. reinvent violence. then  
listen, go at those bastards like the furies.  
only then will you disappear  
only then will you learn the magic  
a tiny shred of childhood and ocean  
one day I will come out from the houses  
a stranger's language of rags and dreams

and the loneliness, the disappearance  
oh god the loneliness. I mean  
what do you think I am  
some kind of cop

Someone has taken our knives. We go down like the sun. Place of birth. Unknown. They have scratched away our slogans. Colour of eyes. Unknown. We go down like hail and rain. Year of birth. Fuck it. Next time they shoot us, we'll refuse to die. It's raining again. Give me a cigarette.

we'll cut ourselves down  
they hung us yesterday  
no escape from the massacre  
this whispered 'no'  
liars. informers. murderers  
squealing "yes"  
always "yes"  
no escape  
always "yes"

*this whispered "no"*  
*this rotten world*  
*this world we loved*

Fearful we'll abandon our history or steal it. Fearful we'll set up borders around that history. Fearful we'll drive up the rents on that history and talk and talk about the old days in meter and rhyme while the pigs close the borders. Fearful we'll be those borders. Fearful we'll confuse those borders with songs and sit inside those songs as if they were the scars on our veins. Fearful our scars will become a lullaby and that we will turn into dogs. Fearful we'll confuse dogs with doves. Fearful of doves and swans, of corpuscles, of medical robes, of silence and smack. Fearful we're doing what they want. What silence wants. We police their borders. They know how it is. Fearful bastards. Fearful of everything. All of us. Fuck it. Do it tomorrow. No escape from the massacre.

*We are being followed. They are hunting us, are mostly silent. Lines of them, they are hunting us. Their sentences, relatively simple. Our hunters, our educators. It is very simple. We don't mention the silence. What we keep inside our whispers. In our signals, in our silence. As each of their faces change. As each of their cells divide. In great procession, the faces. Their lessons are endless. Silence, in circles, our hunters. As if we were dogs. As if we barked at strangers. And now they will murder. There is safety in murder. Somewhere are angels. Angels have claws. Dogs are everywhere.*

for a long time now  
have been aware of them  
visiting my home  
special registers of fog and rain  
others are fucking on the floor  
they sit among them  
pale as morning  
others are kissing  
they recite deserted slogans  
the cancellation of incidents  
salts and luminous voices  
with no body  
with a pale sun  
and death shall flee them

---

Communitisation. Noone says it. So much of our vocabulary is missing.

Cordoned off, those words. In exquisite militaristic grammar, a border

That we speak of when we talk about political parties, those things

Where so many of our lives went missing. The spaces between musical tones,

Call them that, those words where we learn the terms of slaughter

And then we tell you we are still alive. No I'm not sure what we mean by that.

We talk of political parties. A hole in the earth where we cast our votes.

We know that the cops carry grenades. That means nothing. So do we.

Five points on the map. Five days  
You watch your city burn.  
Five AM. Five cops at the door.  
Interpret that. No city is built again  
Your map a declaration, a trap, a war.

Divination. Inhuman fears of the people  
This distance, an arrangement of songs  
scattered on the capital, a set of laws  
to kill the living. Rhymes, this distance.  
Ruins are barricades. Songs are bones.

Our maps, almost, are conspirators  
all night awake, questioning the sky  
Comets, also, are bones. Are waiting  
to crash our adventure. Days pile up  
like collapsing towers. Cops. Bone.

*crossed out Bakunin. wrote down five cops.*  
*5 AM — a charm to consume the capital*

(heroin, obviously...

Today they cancelled the carrion birds  
and we are in love and sleep in peace.  
There are cops inside our pillows.  
Try and say their assassins work for us.

The fanatical cracks in the windows.  
Mark the places we planned the attack.  
I'm confused by the colours. My yellow dress. Etc.  
The autumn leaves and the bruises on my feet.  
I don't know if we'll ever meet again.  
But for sure I'll see you on the other side of this.  
The parts of our voices that are missing.  
In heaven and the rain so filled with pain.  
*Love. War. Fear. Hate.*  
The rich die differently to the rest of us.

When a dancer dies everybody says they know her illness. That they saw her on the U Bahn, smaller than she ever was in life. But it was theirs all along, that illness. It's just they never treated it as a theory or as a practice. Instead, they tended it like garden roses, running it through their borders and their nations. They defined themselves by absence of disease, and because of this there are no dancers left except those who are trapped between worlds, hands fluttering in front of their faces, invisible to those who speak of them. They will still be there, on those same station platforms, when all of the cities are deserted and the middle class body explodes in bedbugs and palatial plague

back then when we lived among the dead  
would talk at length from the center of our mouths  
about the infernal lack of affordable housing  
across all the separable surfaces of the planet  
and from all of our voices buried in the pits of the earth  
cut through with bones, with meteors and revenge  
we would say oh my it is raining in hell again  
and we can tell this of course for we have no blood  
oh sweet lord we been clean now for so many days

We carried stones across the base of the ocean, and all of the dates of hell were inscribed there. It was through this that our class position became clear to us. We tried to recite the dates, but no words would come out of our mouths. Only dead cells, plastic, archaic effluents. Yes I guess you could say we looked pretty desperate. One day we invented land. Things only got worse. The breeze was like a gag-reflex. Noone would tell us where the cells began and where they ended. Noone would say what word meant “open.” and what word “closed.”

*In the sixth cell they promote wisdom, or is it they purge it. Whatever. There is no dancing there. The fifth cell stretches out forever, like a calendar of easily separable moments superimposed upon each other to create a radiance of maximum density. Don't go there. The third cell, it's been occupied for years, with the key collectively owned and repeatedly lost. The twelfth cell is where they remove your skin. Meanwhile, the ninth cell is the actual police and the noises that it makes — a dry click in the walls, a call and oh so endless response — that noise is the judge. Tons of judges, in fact, on the inside and the outside of all prison walls. We call them the sun. Some say they have escaped. Some say these cells and these judges exist simultaneously. These cells these edge-lords these fascists these frightened conformists. These heart attacks, these hard facts. There are special cells for all of them, these facts, long since converted to yuppie flats. Boarded up. Sold on. Burned down. Here, for example, is a fully-proportioned modern flat, electric and divisive — inside it three men screaming. Meanwhile, on an entirely separable auditory spectrum are several ghosts or image-traps. In the eighth cell various unsorted terminal moments, last words etc. In the seventeenth cell, children. Finally, in the negative imprint of all of these cells — England, obviously. Its royal moat. Its great famine.*

& prisons invent laws /// laws invent cities /// cities, galaxies

like I said there are four cardinal points.

The neighborhood dime-store. The hospital. The court.

The sinister smiles of the police.

I buy a copy of the paper. I wonder about informants.

There is nowhere to run. They control the entire geometry.

Cops invent jails. Jails invent cities. Invent epochs

.

Let's listen to some music. Let's go to the pictures.

The heroes have clear skin and always escape in the end.

---

We tell people I'm living but you know it's not what they think we mean.

Yes we know we don't believe in anything anymore. We write poems

And never open the curtains. Poems

They contain within themselves the secret workings of the sun

And the means to spot an informer at 20 paces.

Come lets close our eyes one more time. Lets not fuck.

Tell us one more time how our skin can be communal.

.  
This is barbarism we're living in. The fear is dull and feverish.

Dear Katerina,

Yes I know, things are bad for us all these days. I've lost count of the number of people who've disappeared over the past few months. There's an uneasy nausea settled into the basic awareness of, well, everything. It's not even the news or the weather. Even the raw evidence of our senses — sounds of machinery outside the window, smell of diesel and gas, the elevated railway, birdsong etc — has become sinister. The sunset is a warning. The ticking of the clock a threat. Everything has combined into a pitched malevolent force that has gathered up all of our slogans, our unfinished business, our favorite songs, our raised trembling fists and transformed them into a great choral shriek of *THEY'VE WON, YOU HOPELESS BASTARD, THEY'VE WON*. Dark times, everyone says, from the center of a light so fierce it has scraped who knows what all over our retinas. For the lack of anything better to do I sit here and try to conjure up some kind of meaning from the scars that have been left there. I sit there in the dark and I read your poetry. Or rather, I reconstruct from memory what translations of it exist. I stare at the traces of an alphabet I don't understand, and I think that in the gulf that separates your poetry from mine I might be able to find the beginnings of a counterlight to see by, or a way of pronouncing the language needed to help undermine the fascist tinnitus that all of our sensory networks have become. Do you know what I mean? All I know is that I'm telling you this because I sense something of this desperation — a desperation I'm determined not to normalize — in your work as well. Nearest I can get to it is a dream I had when I was very small, before I knew how to read, or maybe even speak, I'm not sure. I was in some kind of a quarry. There was a man in a dark suit standing nearby. In the quarry's wall there was a face — human, but seemingly made from some kind of plastic. As I



Three days awake I can't find the door  
 already morning half the people here  
 totally on fire. The rest are made of stone

*his thighs are my thighs*  
*He's behind me. Walks toward me*  
*his head is shaved. There are no stars*

Took pills. He's on the stair is. Took pills.  
 Says he's an anarchist. Knows nothing.  
 Chooses things. The men I fuck and  
 he's a British cops he's

been three days dreaming  
 scratches our faces this place too. Talk  
 of bones and fire in the suburbs

*Yeh yeh I love Him tells me*  
*things I have never owned*

a mirror. Yeh. Kick it in.  
 No. I'm not coming out tonight. Never.  
 Don't speak. No. It's not going to be ok.

And then ghosts come at us, ask us for money for drinks etc. In return we cut off their water, poison the soundwaves they live inside. They wait for us at key points of the city — the sites of blockades we talked about endlessly but never put into action. This is a note about the circulation of the disease form, about what Marx had to say about the third day of withdrawal. This is the meaning of policing. Tiny choked syllables a blockade on whatever is left of our memories. Sirens everywhere.

*“Here we burn the witches. Here we fuck the hoes.”*

But oh my friends we have lost our lives  
 In the mouths of our enemies  
 The cracks in their windows  
 The quietest compromise. I don't know  
 what it means

that it's not that we don't want to live  
 but the fuck of it's always being stopped  
 It is sadder than it seems.  
 The dead know how to use hunger.

---

Katerina Gogou wrote a poem in memory of her friend Pasolini and sometimes I wonder if the meaning of his death and of his name has changed since then. So much has. I could draw a sort of obscene angle connecting his broken index finger to the fascist cops of Genoa 2001, as when in Gogou's poem the blows of his murderers become identical with different forms of art, with the Vatican and with the hired thugs who split his name apart one night in the 1970s. I don't even know if that name is still known. Someone razored his fingerprints away, in the way refugees do to themselves, and they kept them in an office in City Hall. As for the secretive thugs, about all of which is known for certain is that they smashed his body to pieces, their faces have been transformed to a ricochet of sparks that spell out all that will ever be known about the unstable meanings of the death of Pasolini. His face was separated from his body. Sometimes we dream of a new

landscape, of a city that is mostly uninhabitable desert, but its rich inhabitants never seem to notice this fact. We sketch it on the ground, and call it Ostia, Tottenham, Hamburg. Love is invisible. So is terror. And so is Gogou's poem, in memory of Pasolini, and herself. Both of them on their hands and knees, in the pitched illegality of blackness, the ragged perfection of their banners.

ffs all of us bastards of capital. yeh we deserve everything we get.  
ghosts or jack-knives or angels. whatever we call it. makes no difference.  
landlines and blowjobs and public urinals. night sweats and centuries.  
centuries. that's a laugh. say it. say guillotine. say razor say fuck it.  
our passports are all expired. we wait on the runway. we are saying nothing.  
say leprosy say burn it all down say bloodflash. say petroleuses.  
say jesus too, whatever. don't believe a world. cosiness. whatever.  
running crying to the bosses with those fucking holes in your hands.

You go to a fairly good university. Are middle class.  
You learn several languages  
couple of dialects, at least one specialist jargon.  
Shortly after this you walk across two mountain ranges  
cross a handful of oceans and die twice  
Each day between 7 and 3 time stops  
You stand on the ubahn platform, sell white and brown  
To trapped things. "People."  
They look "normal." Not at all what you'd expect.  
You take their place inside the countless police cameras  
at the center of their lives, the wreckage  
Of your Unimagined city. If you don't work you get eaten  
All we've got  
this ruptured past Buried under that much bone  
The pedagogy of spiked rubble the Tension  
that Police call music. We pass it between us  
A substitute for language.  
Sirens everywhere.

if and when the door is opened I'm terrified.  
everything white. your face your name. all white.  
force open my hands put coins there.  
won't move. never. they know where to find me.  
a long time has passed my nails are filthy.  
filthy long and sharp I terrify my friends.  
this is not imaginary.  
coins in my hand they frighten me.  
my name their name they frighten me.  
everyday it wants me to betray someone.  
I will keep its voices close to my face.  
    every day they change the words.  
    they say they shot you in the legs.  
    I know they never shoot in the legs.  
    they shoot in the head.  
    the light expires. they extract the mind.  
    lets try and keep it together. let's get moving.

*one royal car one screaming mob*

“freedom.” yeh. tell me about it.  
I think you mean the holes in my shoes.  
but, you know, I  
get to do what I want all the time  
whereas you, you get all these duties, yeh  
that whatever-it-is you call fucking  
your bonus your job  
that fish sauce you tell yourself you’re eating  
when really you know you’re eating shit  
yeh, I walk around on your roofs  
in my fucked up boots  
whenever I want  
no, not like Mary Poppins, no  
demons of the cities either  
you kind of don’t know what I’m talking about  
certain frequencies you don’t get, no  
I’m not jealous of you  
freedom, yeh, these holes in my shoes  
my kids shoes  
no don’t worry  
you see they’re special they’ll never wear out  
as I boot your face in over and over, as

yes as I smash it. three nails in your forehead.  
special receivers in your bougie head.

*piercing, excruciating din*

that there are houses  
on grand roads, we know that  
and in the silence we used to know  
in the silence and dawn  
of bottles, and pass codes  
never would we live there  
hating the roses, fearing them  
we knew the address of each one  
we had the blueprints, everything  
we talked  
minute to minute  
we talked  
wire to wire  
of what we would say  
at the pre-ordained moment  
class vengeance, we understood  
futuristic and ancient, as  
all of history, as  
one click, as  
some kind of message  
left on the table  
    like a pack of cigarettes  
in an overheated kitchen  
not even the ones I used to smoke  
squealing, yeh, thanks a lot  
you destroyed the wrong world  
pack up your roses, asshole, get out

There are those who never appear in mirrors, but only in police cameras. There are those who are the opposite. I don't know which I am. I'm told I was last seen on the border. I'm told I was wearing a pearl necklace, a red and black sweater. You ask me was I setting fire to cars. You ask me what is my name. I say if you add up life and death and schizophrenia and the judge and the informer and sexual desire and a small piece of paper from a foreign land, well, maybe you can take a guess. I say add all of that up, or multiply, or divide, or whatever, and you smile and you say that I am stupid. In return I say thank you, thank you very much. I am very polite. I tell you about the whiteness of the cells. About the coats of the doctors, the silence of the isolation tank. The entire Tory Cabinet a monument to the power of heroin. I tell you all of that, and then I show you how to become invisible.

*this end of the world shit is making me sick*

loneliness does not meet for lunch in Selfridges  
or stroll abstract and satisfied thru the v & A  
it doesn't care about Beethoven  
or the Beatles, for that matter  
never gets nostalgic about memories of its mother  
its ribbons its straw hats its oh-so-middle-class morphine  
loneliness is not white  
is up for sale. loneliness will clean your toilet with its fucking tongue.  
oh god I'm swearing again  
turns up on the front pages as refugee porn and is three years old  
queues up politely for a boot in the face for black eggs and poisoned ham  
crawls up from the desert its mouth filled with salt and grain  
dies of junk-heat in Texan jails  
loneliness is the Lucasville Amnesty  
runs out of Karstadt with weapons etc  
humiliation pain humiliation pain  
is Syria is Tempelhof  
is Yarl's Wood is Midazolam  
is the whiplash of the calendar is the quiet conversation of the commodity  
crawls out from the ocean its mouth filled with sand and glass  
knows your passwords  
destroys private property. knows all your music is prison.  
knows all of your language is prison. all of your seconds are prison.

knows western weapons  
knows european oceans and bloodclots and fucking shit  
is dancing barefoot  
is screaming is smashing your windows with boots and chains  
its ruined hands loneliness a sharpened axe  
wants nothing  
no demands  
revenge

Because I know the law  
I am permitted vision

They struck me blind

---

That I was the hanging tree  
The stray kid hanging there

That they shot you in the mouth  
This language frightens me

To speak with precision  
Bullets ran through all things

Long time ago

---

At midnight I change my fingerprints  
The cops wont find me

Their bullets  
I find a way to look like them

“Strange things happening in the land”

Poetry, what's it for  
Comes from "doing"  
Means "Do It"  
I would like an answer  
From the immobilized

---

Terror. I want to hear it  
From those who can't breathe

Not the rest of you dead things

DEATH TO THE IMMORTALS

*Walking away from Exarchia Sq we notice a piece of graffiti depicting a city ablaze as if in some Zoroastrian apocalypse. The mural operates like a complex version of the optical illusion in which the silhouette of one candle is also the outline of two ladies' faces. The fire and smoke form two interlocked cities. Hovering above the fire like a police helicopter is a demon that resembles the Zoroastrian devil Angra Mainyu. Mainyu was believed to control the (evil) smoke emitted from the (good) fire, which would choke those warming themselves in the desert night two and a half thousand years ago. The smoke can also be read as the city at night, the sparks from the fire doubling as illuminated windows peering out of the dark, while embers within the fire form a negative image of darkened windows on an eerily lit facade. Everything is rendered with jagged violence, like the collapsing-exploding landscapes of Ludwig Meidner. It was only last February when large parts of Athens burned. The graffiti depicts two cities; one is made of fire, while its mirage image is cast in darkness. All objects are engaged in a civil war within the Zoroastrian dualist cosmology.*

— Sacha Kahir



# **OUR DEATH**



## *1 / Letter in Turmoil*

“It is no longer possible to have a balanced relationship with the world.” I read that somewhere in Ernst Bloch, throw the book at the wall, scream for a while, then run down six flights of stairs to the street below. This seems to happen just about every morning. I head to the canal and stand there staring at the swans, and pronounce certain words of shrivelled power. Theresa May, for example. Stephen Crabb. Of course, these words only have purchase in the Land of the Dead, but still I recite them, their syllables grinding together like the ghosts of medieval machinery, like a parade of headless skeletons or the wonder of a ghost train perfectly preserved in post-apocalyptic brine, the auditory bleach we bathe in every day. The Landwehrkanal. Rosa Luxembourg etc. She had been there for six months. I think about that as I stare at the swans. I also think about the well known poem by Paul Celan that alludes to that incident, and about how he talks about the silence of the canal, or at least about how the canal has become silent, and I think about how wrong that is. Its inaudible radioactive signals never stop shrieking, an impossible music I’ve been unable to stop dancing to for days now, each of its notes the representation of an impossible world flickering somewhere just outside the borders of the known imaginary spectrum, those impossible borders, those ridiculous walls. We scratch ourselves to pieces on those walls. Or rather we write there. And what we write there would explode all known dictionaries were it not for the foul neoliberal glow of the so-called sun transforming all we have written into, once again, those aforementioned words of power. May. Crabb. Dirt and bones and gas. Yes every morning I sit there by the canal and when the panic has passed I murmur softly to the swans, and then I go home and dream that I have befriended them and they have flown high across the border and into the Land of the Dead, and there they have torn out the throats of all of our tormentors and they have passed a soothing balm among the souls of all those who continue to live but are trapped in that land, and obviously by soothing I mean usefully corrosive and deadly, and it is rare that I don’t wake up in tears. I’m trying to stop that shit. I’ve been studying magic, utopia and weaponry. I’ll keep you up to date with my progress.

## 2 / *From Deep Darkness*

The violent disk in the center of the sky and the coins in my pocket both radiate the same infernal energy. I know this because I have been awake for five days. I know I've been awake for five days because when I went out onto my balcony this morning all the buildings in the city collapsed. This seemed to me to be something of a cause for concern, so I sat down to write my will. Here goes. My coffee cups and typewriter I leave to, I dunno, whoever can scream the loudest. My collection of empty beer bottles I leave to my landlord. My library I leave to the homeless of Kottbusser Tor. My credit card likewise. My sexual uncertainty I keep to myself. My love I leave to the suicided. My drug habit I leave to cops, let them wither, mutate and die. My hatred I keep close to my heart. My heart I leave to the center of the earth. My grief. Gah. My grief which is the size of the tiny racist island on which I was born, I compress it, I transmute it into something like the wild and collectively inhuman joy of the swifts that circle the city with a frenzy wilder than. Oh whatever. The heart is such a lame metaphor. And so pathetic, the idea of burying it in the earth, when I could just as easily fire it into the center of the red spot of Jupiter. For example. My sensory system. For example. My five senses I leave to the invisible moons of Pluto, like a cluster of burst and eclipsed stars, like the city's swifts, flickering in and out of calendrical time, where coffee cups and typewriters and habits and all the rest become a violent disk of knots and tumors trapped somewhere far outside of the known world, because obviously after five days without sleep your heart gets into some fairly interesting unknowable rhythms and your connections with the earth and its five senses become increasingly tenuous and I think at this point of Will Alexander's essay "A Note on the Ghost Dimension," I don't know if you've read it, he writes in it somewhere about the missing five days of the Mayan calendar, which apparently is a time when monsters and poisons will appear, and I don't know much about the Mayan calendar, but after five days without sleep I know a lot about ghosts and monsters

and poisons, and a lot about how the missing five days could be taken to mean the fate of the five senses themselves, and how those missing five senses have been kidnapped and held for no ransom on some irrelevant island deep within the center of some capitalist astrological system. My tiny racist island I leave to the monsters and poisons. The ghost dimension I leave to my dearest friends. My knots and tumors I leave to those who would form a new government, that they might learn just how tiny, how rabid and lost a hijacked sensory system can become. Ah fuck it. I leave the look on my face to my enemies. I leave the red spot of Jupiter to the unemployed, I'm sure they know what to do with it. Screw my heart. Resist death by water. By fire and rope also. I am fearful of nothing. I love you all so fucking much.

### *3 / A Note on my Recent Poetics*

I stopped smoking pot a few months ago because it was making me paranoid, but since then most days I've been taking potentially fatal doses of amphetamine. It's almost certainly making me psychotic, but it does at least have the advantage of saving me from the vast cataclysm that sleep has become. Most mornings I feel uneasy, visible and invisible at the same time, trapped between the proverbial two worlds, neither of which I'm prepared to accept or even tolerate. I can't tell them apart anyway — everything's functioning at some kind of stroboscopic level, where the invisible world is populated by a gaggle of flesh and blood insomniacs staggering around after a shipwreck, and the visible one by a weird star-map, a network of knots and tumors that up until now have been locked somewhere in the center of the earth, a hell of alphabets and spectral injustices arranged in pieces along the chronology. Lets see. There was the poll tax revolt. There were punk houses. There was ecstasy and acid and free parties. The criminal justice bill. Britpop. The rise of the ironic wank. The phrase zero tolerance. The boredom of enforced hedonism. The skeleton of Tony Blair. The flames of humanitarian intervention. The inevitability of jihad. And that's just one more or less arbitrary little cluster, a hall of various mirrors that every morning I chop and snort increasingly gargantuan lines from until, in the words of Ernst Bloch, "years become minutes, as in legends where, in the apparent time span of a single night, a witch cheats her victim out of a long life." And I don't know whether I identify with that witch or not, but I do know that there are some mornings when I consider the possibility of powdering Blair's bones, and then casting them at the feet of various monuments — say for example the statues that encircle Trafalgar Square — so as to transform them into real demons. The crisis, or whatever it is we're supposed to call it. The ruins of the Ritz, for example. The broken glass of Millbank. The jail terms of the rioters. Ah shit. See you later. Everybody knows that Thatcher faked her death.

## 4 / *A Butcher's Lullaby*

Even in Kreuzberg I can smell the burning remnants of Britain. Each morning I'm out here on my balcony, as the sky flashes from red to white to deepest black, as strange patterns of geometrical dust settle across the body of the city. These patterns I think of as a calendar of British incidents, some erased, some imaginary, some appalling. I feel like a crater as I scratch small counter-patterns into them, something equivalent to the stark anger of the circling birds, the swifts and the sparrows that shriek like shattered human things all through the morning, or whatever it is we can call the strange glow of the sky in these peculiar, hijacked days. It's all so quiet. The shrieking is quiet. The blank statistics of the calendar are quiet. The obsolete sigils scratched onto my window are quiet. Kreuzberg is beautiful in the summer. The sounds from the canal are ever louder, the screeching of invisible time zones blocking out the shapes of the sun.

## *5 About the Weather*

Sometimes the heat gets so much the earth becomes invisible. This is the meaning of symbology. The imaginary walls of the city become real, become a hell of blinding mirrors and we do not know if we are gazing at those walls from the inside or the out. Everyone talks about the weather. So do we. It's been coming on with the speed of a feral hadron collider, a viscous amalgamation of water and glass, where the calendar of British incidents becomes transformed over and again into a posse of burning ballerinas advancing on the city across the landscape of some kind of scorched moon. Nobody can see anything except the murderous glare of the sky, the entirety of human history split to a constellation of more or less inaudible sound particles. The scrapings of giant beetles up and down Karl-Marx-Straße, for example. Or a righteous triangulation of the ghosts of Jean Charles de Menezes, Nat Turner and Lucy Parsons, injecting a supra-imaginary strain of Martian scabies into the collective body of the property developers of Berlin. That type of thing. Or the haunted secret corridor that leads from doing Special Brew screwdrivers in some godforsaken English town to lighting disposable barbecues under the wheels of parked cars in Friedrichshain. Or a meteor of pure plutonium smashing into the intersection of Parliament Square and Kottbusser Tor. Etc. It is difficult, in this heat, to know what a calendar or a nation is, beyond a shower of deafening bells, alterations in the so-called blood supply, corpuscles as expression of the rent equation, other specious horrors, that moment when the heat fades, and what was invisible becomes visible once more, and what was irresistible becomes unbearable, and everything is completely different to what it was before, and we wonder worriedly through the streets of the unnameable city until the stink of dawn arises and everything vanishes once again.

## 6 / *What Teargas is For*

Cops, being neither human nor animal, do not dream. They don't need to, they've got teargas. Don't expect me to justify that. I mean, you know as well as I do that cops have got access to the content of all of our dreams. And you probably also know that a fair amount of the planet's teargas is supplied by the Westminster Group. Their non-executive chairman, whatever that is, is a member of the household of, ahem, Charles Windsor. He probably thinks of teargas as being somehow related to the Cloud of Unknowing, and, in a sense, he's kind of right. You come to a very real understanding of the nature of things, both visible and invisible, by having your sensory system hijacked and turned against you by a meaningful dose of teargas. It is the anti-Rimbaud. The absolute regulation and administration of all the senses. I mean try it. Next time things are starting to kick off a little bit just go out on the street and run straight into the middle of the biggest cloud of teargas you can find. Bang. Sight. Taste. Smell. All the rest of them. All turned into confusion, loss of geographical certainty and, most importantly, pain. Don't freak out. In the center of that pain is a small and silent point of absolute Unknowing. It is that Unknowing that the cops — and by extension Charles Windsor — call knowledge. They want it. They've got scalpels if necessary but teargas is cleaner. It's not clear what they want it for but any epileptic or voyant or drug addict could tell you what it is. It's there in Blake. Christ, it's there in the sleeve-notes to Metal Machine Music. What's it mean? Who cares. It answers no questions. What does Charles Windsor want with us. The cops will not tell us what they don't know and what they think we know.

## 7 / *Black Cocaine (after Anita Berber)*

Walls are partially imaginary  
One table  
Several shadows  
Everywhere I see eyes  
Black eyes green eyes  
Scarlet  
I have abolished my sex  
I have no desires  
Only incidents and burning flies  
Shadows are partially walls  
There is someone here  
Wants my shadow  
Eats it  
Fucks it  
Steals my shadow  
My cocaine my shrieking  
I'm drunk right now I'm in pain  
There are many types of pain  
And many eyes  
Many animals  
Many mice and many stars  
Shadows  
Scarlet shadows

## 8 / *On Throwing Bricks*

“Some things are reserved for the dead and they can’t imagine them.” That’s either Artaud or Heraclitus, or more likely a combination of both, I don’t remember, but anyway it’s been echoing around whatever remains of my skull these past few days as I wander around the neighborhood trying to work out exactly when it was the catastrophe took place. My routine is simple. I go to the cafe. I order breakfast. I usually eat it. I sit by the canal. I go to the bar. I talk to people. I want things. I never fuck. I’m not bothered. At some point I make minor adjustments to the flow of red and white corpuscles through my body. Eventually the day stops and I sit around in Kotti and drink beer and sometimes I spit blood and I wonder what, if any, microsocial effects my corpuscles might have on the cobblestones, kind of like if you threw a brick at a window and both of them shattered, both brick and window, and the pieces then combined and mutated and split apart and cut across corporate time and un-lived time and undreamt time and, well, yeh, the catastrophe, whatever that is. We all know it’s happened. We’re all pretty sure what it means. Most of us know that most of its light has yet to reach us. Britain’s preening little act of self-destruction was one of its more minor manifestations, of course. And the sound of the word “Britain” ringing inside my skull forces me to my feet, and I stare at the faces of a few passing strangers and wonder about the ratio that must exist between the precise number of blood cells tormenting my body, and the precise number of unidentified stars in what we still so unprecisely call the sky. Somewhere down near the bridge I pick up a brick. It’s rough and smooth in my hand like the bones of a murdered aristocrat. I drop it again and it breaks into two pieces. I pick up those pieces. I drop them again. I keep doing this. I start to scream. I arrange the pieces on the ground. With each scream I name one of them. The bones of Boris Johnson. The face of Theresa May. The sudden screeches of a million birds descending on the broken

alchemical stench of what was once called London. One of those screeches is called the Human Rights Act. One of them is called Immigration Policy. Each of them sounds like the noise I imagine a comet would make as it slammed into the earth, and smashed into roughly the same number of pieces as there are blood cells in my body. I kind of want to sleep. I pick up another brick. I stare at nothing. Everything is silent now, silent like the noises the canal sometimes makes at dawn. Of course, none of this actually happened. I live a quiet life, and it is many years since I threw a brick through a window. I am, as the saying goes, “worried but outwardly calm.” I lean against the wall of the elevator as it carries me up to my 6th floor apartment in this more-or-less modern building in this still more-or-less working class part of Kreuzberg, and I wonder about the sounds the dead would make if they could imagine the light that surely does reach them from whatever future still remains to us. I open the door to my apartment and sit there in the dark. I feel old and tired and deeply afraid of my dreams.

## 9 / *On Being a Good Person*

It is important to be on good terms with the neighbors. To discuss with them your fears about the meaning of your passport. To share with them the results of your investigations into the meaning of the rent equation. It is important to explain the central mathematics of the noises they'll have heard coming from your apartment at random hours of the day and night. To demonstrate both the internal and external nature of those hours, and their connection with the signals you receive from the lights in windows you can see from your balcony, and how those signals reflect the secret passions contained in your passport, and how all of this determines how many times a day you think about suicide, and murder. Think about, not contemplate. That's a very important distinction, and one not unrelated to the enormous electronic screech you sometime hear coming from what you can only assume must be the center of the earth. Always make it clear that the center of the earth is more than likely not where they think it is. That there are storms that have been raging there for longer than the collective age of everyone who lives in this city, both documented and undocumented. That you love only sex workers, drug addicts, refugees and the terminally ill. That most mornings you think they are the only people deserving of citizenship. That you are disturbed by the hatred continually emitting from the drawer in which you keep your passport. It is important they understand that hatred's foul metallic shriek is in no way connected with the way in which you would like to continue to conduct your business. That your business is somehow connected with the scorched and horrific colors the sky produces as it sends murderous darts through your window each evening between the hours of 8 and 9. The reasons you have for burying those darts in the shallowest earth. The meaning of the gentle sounds you make as you do this. It is important to be on good terms, to share your knowledge, your sugar, your brightly colored powders.

## 10 / “It Hurts to be Murdered”

You know how sometimes the dream cycle comes to resemble the inner workings of a solar cop. That lucky old sun etc. Like for instance it's nighttime, noone around, and you're kicking in a door. No particular reason, just kicking. Then light. Everywhere. All of a sudden like completely out of nowhere you're surrounded by cops and they're smashing your head into it, over and over, the light, the door, dragging you off, smashing to pieces. And there you are kind of screaming. Yeh yeh I admit it. I was probably doing whatever it was you said I was thinking. And as you scream that they just hit you harder, these, the cops of the living, banging your face into the astral sky and celestial dirt, until you've no longer got a face just a heliograph of recent incidents, a howl of anciency, a system of exchange. One segment broken glass equal to seven burnt souls. One mathematically transmitted disease. It's a city plan, this is. It's an angle of light it's a map of the stars, the pigs of hell and the pigs of the ocean floor. You wake up in some kind of cellar. You wake up and you think it's the shithole of the universe you're in. You wake up surrounded by dead cops. They want nothing. They want you to talk and your skin is on backwards you put your hand wherever your mouth was and. All I've got is I know I'm a bone. All I've got is I know who you are, bastards, kids of bone. Nothing. One black hole equal to one crowbar. A million incidents. And all of them end in the screaming laughter of the dead. In the border controls of the dead. All of them. You don't complain. Most mornings you'll settle for nothing less than the obliteration of the sun.

after Roger Gilbert-Lecomte's "*Le fils de l'os parle.*"  
title from Diane di Prima's "Thirteen Nightmares."

## 11 / *“Thrash Me!”*

These days everyone is writing their final book. Whatever. I've lost everything as well. My body is made up of three needles, several coins, a system of nitrates and something wankers would call “a philosophy.” I see in the dark and like to smash mirrors. For many other people things are far worse. I roam around the town, reciting an old poem by Anita Berber: CORPSE. KNIFE. CORPSE. KNIFE. LIGHT. There are moments each evening when I think I can see that light. It shines inside all the rooms I have lived in, all those rooms and cities that we have always loved always despised. COINS. MIRRORS. LIGHT.

## *12 / Orchids (after Anita Berber)*

I am not a garden  
there are no orchids  
I will never kiss them  
these women and boys  
their spectral offices  
they devour me  
this storm of ghosts  
I am cold as silver

\*

Take this man. Draw a diagram of the catastrophe.  
Draw as many borders as you can, across the various states of his body.  
Fill his mouth with contraband. Take his borders. Contravene them.  
Draw our lives across his body. The catastrophe that is his body.  
When he shits gold kill him.

## 13 / *Anywhere Out of the World*

“The hospitals are empty. We, the patients, are still inside them. It is nothing like they said it would be in the films: the shutters are drawn and we converse softly with our souls, that is to say, the shattered pieces of equipment our enemies have left behind. How dearly we would like to leave. We list cities. Ruined ones. Imaginary ones. The ones in which we think we might have been born. If we could draw them on the walls, they would look like a collection of demons, some kind of cosmos of trivial monsters. We think we are probably very far from home. We talk of suns and minerals, of monotony and fear. Of settler colonialism, of capital and slavery, of the seventy-nine royal bastards that block out the lights of Heaven. But screw Heaven. All its lights ever amounted to were screams of contempt and pain, lodged in our trachea and in the center of our names. It is so silent here, so gentle. Nothing left to do, but awake from our dreams of ourselves, and walk on the earth like reflections of the fireworks of Hell.”

(after Charles Baudelaire)

## *14 / Carrion*

It's all visible now. Everything. It's just that all the meanings have changed, and the names no longer apply. We lean against walls, our hands over our faces, and watch the parade. We are naked and frightened. Everything that passes before us we name and the names mean nothing. We mention old publications, old musical forms, and our voices sound like shredded paper in the archive. I would like to gather that paper. I would like to write upon it a charm to the ghosts of the suicided. Those who walked into the oceans. Those who clambered out from their windows. Their lives measured in teargas and visors. In rucksacks, stray bullets and privatized city squares. I would like to write this so they might have some form of revenge, but I don't know how. We pull our hands from our faces. We have no faces. Sadly, this is not a poem about the suicide of Tommy Robinson.

## 15 / *Approximations of the Solar Enemy*

*Things are stirring dangerously around us, we who want to explode our darkness* — Ernst Bloch

I don't look in the mirror very often. Can you blame me? Black rings under my eyes almost as ominous as what Shelley called the "gigantic shadows that futurity casts on the present." Yeh, I was reading him this morning, Shelley, 5 o'clock or something. "Poets," he writes, are the "mirrors" that reflect those "gigantic shadows." Quite a job description. But kind of outdated. I mean, it's been cancelled hasn't it, "futurity." You'd have to be some kind of imbecile not to have noticed. And if that's true, then the same will soon be so of the "present," of Shelley's "mirrors," of their "gigantic shadows" and, come to that, the rings under my eyes. Whatever. I manage to laugh about it most of the time. I joke to friends about how much I'm looking forward to sitting on my balcony and watching the mushroom clouds. We all have a laugh. After they leave I close the curtains and sit there on the floor with my head in my hands. I have no idea what I look like when I do this - I possess one mirror, and I spent most of last night crouched on the bathroom floor, scratching intricate little diagrams into it as a means of warding off something or other. Some aspect of my reflection, probably. Perhaps the bit that laughs at the prospect of mushroom clouds. Because whatever it is I see when I look in the mirror, it is not something I wish to accept. I don't recognize it — it's a crude calendar of incidents both real and imagined, both forgotten and remembered. And they make sounds, those incidents, and they sound like the endless grinding of teeth, the fingernails of ghosts, decommissioned utopias, locks of hair, receipts, letters, documents. If I wasn't so superstitious I'd smash it all up and leave the pieces at random spots across the city. The reflections would be preposterous. Abandoned factory architecture and the bathroom floor all split and entangled into a sheer beam of spectral anti-light splitting Europe to a set of embittered funeral knives. Deep silence etc. For like seven years or something. And in the meantime I would have no face. How I long for that, for a mirror that reflects nothing. A piece of carnal glass, cutting our shadows from whatever remains of the prisons of the sky.

## 16 / *A Reference to the Voices*

*I have been living for several months in a supernatural state of mind—* Charles Baudelaire

It is not a question of a belief in ghosts when you've been walking around with one strapped to your back for as long as you can remember. When you remember nothing but whatever the ghost thinks to whisper into your ear, softly, on eternal repeat. When you're lost in one of the more troubling sectors of a city you lived in two decades ago, confused by subtle shifts in the angles of the buildings, the wraith-like irritability of its invisible crowds. When the exit routes have been replaced by the endless grinding of teeth and solar waste, when the voice in your ear, like the infernal tour guide that it is, mumbles on about street committees, about phone-trees and safe-houses, bailiffs and picket-lines. When you almost remember what those words mean. When you can almost smell the glue and the petrol. And the voice in your ear is a system of lines and threads, a storm of dates and songs, and you can almost make out the language, as it tells you the catastrophe is a depth-charge concealed in the spaces between the buildings, and that those spaces are as endless and as bleak as the sound of a stopped clock. And you remember walking up these same streets two decades ago, dressed in a green trenchcoat, clutching a broken wing mirror, demanding that strangers read their faces and their systems in its cracks, and you recognize that memory as armageddon itself, as the moment when all stopped clocks start up again, an impossible syncopation, a new kind of darkness, a new kind of flame flickering just outside your sight.



## 18 / George Trakl's Psalm

*as I imagine it spoken by the ghost of Anita Berbe*

It is a light gone out forever.  
It is a bar that's never opened never closed.  
It is a vineyard it is a black hole it is a mouth full of spiders.  
It is an abandoned room, sprayed with burning milk.  
The maniacs have died. It is an undiscovered island  
It is the sun as it is in nightmares. Here they are smashing the drums  
Here they are starting a war.  
Here they are wriggling their hips here they are blah blah blah  
Oh the screaming ocean. Paradise is catastrophe.

It is all porn especially the fairytale forests.  
Here they are they have buried the refugees. Oh my it's raining again.  
Nasty old gods are digging the ditches  
They are all asleep in the boring city squares and bombs are falling.  
It is chemical rain it is little girls it is poverty and celebrity and crocodile tears.  
It is rooms filled with impossible chords it is your tedious record collection.  
It is shadows it is Air BnB it is mythological mirrors.  
Here are the inmates they have burnt the hospital down.  
Here is your favourite dealer, here are the latest plagues.

An invisible person has appeared in everyone's simultaneous dream.  
Oh look here I am. Fuck the police.  
It is the surveillance laws. All ages are not contemporaneous.  
We are outside this century. We are very glamorous. We are waiting in the hall.  
Somewhere near Moritzplatz the adepts are getting sick.  
It is the stupidity of gardens. I love the tiny sparrows.

The janitor's kids are not playing they are digging up gold.  
It is the last song you will ever hear. It is horrible blind children waiting in the alley  
Their shadows are climbing the wall, it is poisons and fascists and fairytale roses.

It is a tourist boat on the Landwehrkanal.  
It is the building where I live, it is valium and speed.  
Here are the dead refugees, piled up inside the walls.  
It is our beautiful rooms. It is our wings stained with shit.  
It is the western border. It is what you want it to be. It is England controlled by maggots.  
Here I am. Locked inside this city. It is peaceful like my childhood dreams.  
Here we are choking our memories to death.  
What if this year never ends.  
Here are the experts being fed to the dogs.

In America a very boring lunatic opens his eyes.

## 19 / “We Are The Dead”

*This is a different landscape. There is a desire to kill here. And this desire ties us together as sinister brothers of the sinister failure of an entire social system. — Pier Paolo Pasolini, November 1, 1975.*

“Defeat is among us, and war, and prophecy.” That’s a line from Muriel Rukeyser. I was thinking about it a couple of days ago, asking myself whether the words followed a sequence, or whether they could only be taken simultaneously. That is, were they like marks on a calendar, or were they a kind of cacophony, a form of sky, an enormous black sky at that, in which we are all basically like haloes or pinpoint stars, and so to be destroyed. There are no simple answers to questions like that. To try and find one I walked up to Sebastianstraße, and I roamed up and down for around three hours, screaming Rukeyser’s line over and over until my voice began to fall apart. Luckily, there was no one around, because in the third hour things began to go wrong. Rukeyser’s words had started to become weird shreds of impossible meaning that once spoken could never be repeated because once they had been spoken all else would disappear. The sky was a hoax. The stars were border guards. Etc. I held my hand in front of my face and could see nothing but a bland white light, like a murderer’s mirror, a vicious and impassible glass. Not glass, a gaze. Not a gaze, a glare. Not light, but “Prophecy,” a word that for the past few months I’ve only been able to associate with surveillance, with cameras and with judges. Why? Well, if you have to ask, etc. Put simply, “prophecy” implies a prediction of the future via excessive and possibly aberrant interpretation of all available elements of what we like to call the present. And who are the current powers that survey and interpret the present to such an aberrant and excessive extent? It isn’t poets, and it isn’t mystics either. Anyway, whatever. I kept screaming, past all voice, all body, all of my borders. By borders, of course, I mean senses. And I thought at this point of Marx, about what he said about the five senses, imaginary or otherwise. You know the passage I mean, I’m sure. And the cut that it implies in the sensory calendar. Because these days I very much doubt that I can say with any certainty that I have five senses. Certainly, as I screamed out Rukeyser’s line it seemed I had only three. That’s

right, surveillance, cameras and judges. Actually that's not three senses, that's just one. One enormous black sky, one enormous pit of cancelled language, one enormous voice rasping out one final, incomprehensible sentence. And it was mid-day. It was very dark. There were no stars. I think the buildings were burning. There were a few of us there, standing outside them, inventing language. We were wondering if that bastard the sun was ever going to return, and what it was planning on doing when it got here. We were talking about prophecy, about defeat and war, about how nobody knows what those words really mean, and what they will come to mean.

## 20 / *The Ignoble Fate of Rock n Roll*

I live on the top floor of one of those strange post-war tower blocks you see near the center of Kreuzberg. Lately I've been starting to think that the whole place might be abandoned. I never hear a sound from the other apartments and I never see anyone in the stairwell. The elevator is always empty, the identical green doors on each landing always seem to be closed. Don't get me wrong, it doesn't bother me. I get home each night between roughly one and two, sit down on the floor and arrange the various unpleasant tasks I have had to do throughout the day in an only partially figurative diagram in front of me. A small bloodstain here. A slice of wage-labor there. A flash of paranoia. A wistful incidence of mistaken identity. All of them, I arrange them on the floor, and then by an improvised technique of compression, overdrive and sheer noise I try to neutralize them. Impossible task, obviously. The noise in the stairwell must be unbearable. Sometimes it goes horribly wrong. The wage-labor and the paranoia blend into one, as do the bloodstain and the mistaken identity, and they stand at opposite ends of the room howling at each other with the archaic sound of heavily amplified guitar strings, or rather the sound those strings used to make before, I dunno, 1985 or something. And within the sound of those strings I can make out certain shapes, certain used garrottes, certain unfinished rhythmic ditties. The Plague Doors Waltz. The Orgreave Boogie. The Poll Tax Strut. Etc. Maybe I wish this happened more often. Maybe I can remember being a kid. 16 years old, first time I listened to "I Heard Her Call My Name." First track side two, "White Light / White Heat." About two minutes in. Slight pause, weird silence. And then some kind of guitar-shriek, like the entire sky had compressed itself to an almost microscopic dot and had then reinvented itself as a huge library of, what — lightning, sunglasses, everything. I spent my late adolescence living in that silence like it was some kind of utopia, a vacuum, anti-sexual, epileptic and serious, absolutely

nothing to do with rock n roll. Whatever that is. Anyway. The Downing Street Foxtrot. The Watt Tyler Cakewalk. The Roy Walsh Shuffle. All of these shapes signal through the silence of my apartment like some kind of counter-calendar until the sun comes up like a blast of entirely normative guitar noise and. Blah blah blah. I guess you know what that means. Your fetishized punk rock youth reduced to a small blood stain. Amplified electricity as the story of the wage relation. Utopian raving as a brief flash of paranoia, your own memories as a wistful incidence of mistaken identity, all of it rolling together in some kind of pornographic implosion on my apartment floor. And there I am, unable to do anything but rummage through my record collection, gaze with unease at the dawn sky, and listen obsessively for the sound of footsteps in the hall outside my door.

## *21 / What if the Summer Never Ends*

None of us have slept for a long time. How could we. There were fires up and down the Charing Cross Road. Mumbled conversations about Apartheid. England was damp, was possibly leaking. We followed tiny trails of liquid waste across the city. Called it aesthetics. Called it action. We all fell down. Some of us voted. Some of us put on balaclavas. There were several earthquakes. Endless strategies of tedious indifference. Some major buildings and some statues defaced. Declaration of endless war. Parties in the park. Criminalization of drinking. Several dead friends. There was experimentation with makeup and electricity. Occupation of a number of universities. Fistfights with cops and fascists. Distress. Hate speech. Consolidation of royalty. Running for our lives. It's difficult now — all of that stuff is piled up like a heap of expressionist rubble in a semi-imaginary alley somewhere far away. We argue endlessly about whether it was us who died or them, but the one thing we all agree on is the barbed line that separates us. Sometimes we pluck that line. It makes a high and barely audible electric screech, like some useless old record. It puts immense pressure on the inside of our skulls, like boiling bleach, like the abolition of all memory. It speaks of heartbreak, of denial, of new advances in somnambulism. Of revenge fantasies and drug addiction. It has nothing to say about where to go from here, about the day we crawl out from under our scattered rocks, and burn their border controls to the ground. One day our eyes will close. One day the sun will finally go down.

## 22 / *The Torture*

They draw a red line across the neck. It is a map, of sorts. The beginnings of a map. The marks there, they are apartment blocks. But they are also alphabets. No, not alphabets, magnetic clouds. In each of those clouds there is a vowel, and those vowels are in the hands of the enemy. You are inside one of the apartment blocks. There are two of you in the room, but you are only aware of a third. It is the third that speaks to you now. The questions it asks are ridiculous. Are there ghosts on wasted planets. There are no planets. No vowels. Just a wet crack when they remove the head.

*Here are three chords, three marks on the calendar: Occupy, whenever that was, Seattle 1999, and whatever it was happened in London in June 2005. They may be separated electric strings, or optional planets, or the thoughts of liberals, or basilica, or chromatic meat. Who cares what they are, play them loud. Think like a gun as much as you like, but whatever you do, don't form a band.*

## 23 / *“Where Have They Been?”*

And so you wake up in the morning and tell yourself that “psalm” means “vitriol.” Otherwise known as the popular song, or as the work equation, or the noises you make as you put on clothes, drink coffee and stare through the window at the unbroken, partially objectivist sky. Songs are holes in that sky, in those noises, those you sing and those you don’t know how to sing. Some are monuments. Some are oubliettes. Some will likely be your accomplice, others should simply be shot. All of them are collisions, and your body is always inside every one of them at exactly the same time.

You wake up in the morning and say that to praise is the same as to curse. That the songs come to you in the dead of night and each one is a memory-net, and most of those memories entirely predictable. There are many songs are simply cops, have set up border patrols inside your memories, have confiscated your passport and replaced it with an endless scream that blocks out the words of those songs you have known since before you were born. Songs still unwritten. Songs that you conceal under your breath as you walk down the stairs and cross the street to the station. There is no longer any station. How insignificant, these scraps of symbolic devotion, these mumbling musical statistics. All you can hear is the ringing that remains when the notes fade away. All you can see is the stone in your hand. The lights of the town signaling through the cop-ridden fog.

## 24 / *“Let’s Not Chat About Despair”*

There are certain things we take that help us to murder sleep, that appalling privilege. You know what I mean, those silent golden landscapes, those gardens and cancers and hollyhocks. Our shadows live there, would slaughter us if they could. But instead they are trying to speak to us. They say, for instance, there is a sky inside the earth. There is no light but everything there is visible. Noone can visit, and noone can leave. But those who are held there, they are manufacturing the noises that will shatter all of our dreams. We fall asleep inside those noises. Intractable light.

## 25 / *Under Duress*

Whatever with that fascist shit Bannon. He can have Darth Vader. He can have that whatever-it's-called from Lord of the Rings. But he can keep his paws off Satan. Satan is one of ours. Always has been. But having said that, it is very boring to write a poem about Satan. Baudelaire did it, and it was great. Milton too. And Blake. It is very boring to write a poem about Bannon. Like, for example, I'm speeding like fuck right now, and earlier on I was in a bar, and I was hanging out with friends and they are all complicated and wonderful and I love them, and all of our worlds are falling apart, and I guess I'd like to talk about that and etc and other things. But instead I feel that I should be talking about Bannon. Imagine hanging out with him. People I know, we can keep going for five days at a stretch. Monsters appear and ghosts and that, and they are uglier than Bannon. Except they are not, because their conversation is interesting. Like there we'd be, chatting away for days and Bannon like he would just be dead on the floor. Noone would notice. You know, he'd just be dead. We'd have to dump his body somewhere. Like in one of the new developments or something. How annoying. How tedious this all is. I guess this has something to do with the sun, that solar bastard. I guess this poem is lame and I feel kind of lonely and blah but. Remember this. Our word for Satan is not their word for Satan. Our word for Evil is not their word for Evil. Our word for Death is not their word for Death. I hate the word "kill." Will continue to use it.

## *26 / Further Notes on Teargas*

Meanwhile, tourists will stand far outside any clouds of teargas that may appear. It is part of what defines them. They might want a trace of the smell on their clothes, but still it is the avoidance of pain that is the central fact of their collective dream. Nothing will cause them to disperse. They hold maps. Here is the factory. Here is the museum. Here is the hell of stars. They talk to the cops without fear of death, but without this fear they will never know or remember a thing. Teargas is the only mnemonic that counts. It's system of recitation a network of broken bones. But tourists don't want to know about this. Instead, they want to take photos of graffiti, the shattered images that taunt them in their dreams. They don't remember their dreams. They don't know that remembrance is premonition, that their names are premonitions of death, are the encrypted dreams of judges, of obituaries and rainwater and pink filth. They only know what the cops have told them to know. Refuse to give them directions. Refuse all interpretations. Your exploded lacrimal gland is not a symbol of their despair.

## 27 / *Notes on the Hallucinations*

“The false structure is collapsing. Move as far away as possible, into tradition, into strangeness, into the supernatural; then you will not get hit.” I read that somewhere in Hugo Ball’s diaries, guess from somewhere around 1915. I repeat the words to myself, “you will not get hit,” make a scornful face, turn out the lights and get into bed. Somehow I manage to sleep, and dream that I’m some kind of hunted, carnivorous animal running through a moonlit, abandoned city. I run past the illuminated, already ruined new developments. The rings, the spirals of lights around the towers. The scrub lands. I follow some kind of malign, illegible map. I gather stones and rags, stained with shit and gold. There are no people. There are no parades. I think they’re the words I’m muttering when I wake up, still thinking about Hugo Ball who, of course, was a draft resistor, a refugee. I find that a lot more interesting than whatever happened with his “sound poetry.” I recognize something of the desperation in the desire, expressed repeatedly throughout his diaries, to escape into what he calls “the supernatural.” It puts me in mind of a poem by Ingeborg Bachmann, where she speaks of exile, of feeling like a dead person, of languages that you can’t understand passing through you like ghosts. And I guess those ghosts exist at the point where “tradition” and “strangeness” meet, where all that is defined and foul and murdered and imprisoned becomes synonymous with all that is still uncharted and unexplained and wonderful. I stare out of the window. Everything is dark. Even the lights on the new developments have vanished. It is quiet. Diabolically so. I think of my favorite passage in William Blake, where he writes of the moment in every hour that cannot be found, not by the devil nor by the cops. I think about those moments. I think about the summer, when the sun would spin round and round so fast that everything would glow to invisibility and we would talk in various languages about the need to construct a huge chart of those moments, and that somewhere

within the shapes those moments made we would find the place where the catastrophe was formed, and by god knows what mixture of alchemy and amphetamine we could thereby uncover the anti-catastrophe and, well, I think of a lot of things. I press my hands to the window and hang my head. I know that somewhere in the darkened city there is a silent place where a tiny, frightened animal is scratching at the dust and earth, and it won't stop until it uncovers some kind of burning rock that will illuminate the entire structure, and in the midst of that illumination all of our languages will sparkle and burn and words we have never spoken will lacerate the air. In the meantime, let none of us wipe the blood from our faces. Let none of us claim a difference between day and night, between nightmare and daily routine.

## 28 / *The Ghost Dimension*

We don't know their names or their faces. They are gathered in ruined houses, in water-damaged pictures. They are not our gods, our hypocrisy, your chastity. Who are you anyway. What are these cities consumed by the winds. Theirs is not your glitter. It is not their stars that encircle these walls where cold and evil bastards are building something hungry. Their names are very different. We use them, those names. New uses for gravity. Methodologies of the wrong apocalypse.

# **STILL: 7 DEVOTIONS**

## 29 / *Dancer (after Emmy Hennings)*

We been sitting in this room for maybe a thousand years and I'm guessing they've put us on their deathlist. But whatever. We're small we're easily frightened we'll be quite a long way down. But it pissed me off when they smashed our hearts. Ever since then we been sick but still we won't stop dancing we'll do it til they get us we'll never snitch on noone ever. What are these banners and people and songs. It's like we're flying through caverns through grottos and mythical tunes. Have bit parts in other people's dreams we interpret their faces. Nothing mesmerizes us. Open the borders. Knife.

## 30 / *Memoir (after Miyó Vestrini)*

I would wake up. I would hate. I would fuck. I would rarely think about Bakunin. I would walk around the town. I would think about the careful differences between anarchism, epilepsy, addiction, psychosis, the dialectic, various syndromes and panic. I would think about their rhythm. I would refuse to leave the house. I would say “it is raining”. I like the rain. I won’t tell you why. Instead I will tell you how much I am fearful of food. I chew it thirty times. I spit it out onto the ground. It makes me sick. I am losing weight. I don’t care. When people tell me I am losing weight I say so what the sun, the sun too is losing weight. It is the law of the cosmos. I actually do say that. After I say it I start to scream. I think about the wind and the insects that live there and make a mental note of the number of my friends who are in analysis. I am not in analysis. I would rather be like the insects who live in the wind and do something remarkable with silk but instead I am screaming and this has fuck to do with the magnificent silk made by the laughter of insects. I remember meeting a hippy once who told me I was going to have a very long life. Shit in your mouth, I murmur, to the memory of the hippy. I run out into the middle of Kottbusser Tor. It’s 3 in the morning and there is very little traffic. I go crazy again and start to recite poems. The ancient poems known to all of us. The ancient poems that could kill us if they wanted, each single syllable. I fall asleep in the bar. I don’t go home. I think a little about the moon, its relation to Marxism, to the riots of five years ago and the predicament we find ourselves in now. It’s a full moon. It hides very little. Please don’t leave me.

*When you were born, which you were told on several occasions was 1969, there were a group of Americans tramping about on the moon. Whatever. We are far from the moon. Here, the furniture changes places every night. There is blood in your nose. You don’t*

*know who your family are. That's ok. Each morning they break your arms. They tell you it is fatal. They tell you it will help you breathe better. Alphabets come from your mouth and they tell you they are fake. Fake the words that come from your throat and fake the unpredictable furies. Fake your burnt skin. Fake your blue eyes. Last night you said to yourself I am so sick of being unable to sleep I will take 37 of these pills. They are like milk in my mouth. Like spittle and spectres. And all those other things. You don't know what those things are. You drink. You shoot up. The men stomping around on the moon didn't drink or shoot up, you're sure of it. You lie down in some kind of stupor and sing a bit of Beethoven. The men in the moon didn't think about Beethoven. They said to each other, do you love me. Wankers. There are stains on all of your clothes. You don't know what the stains are. You lie in bed and wonder about the men on the moon, and if they are still there. Dying, you decide, takes much time, much dedication.*

## 31 / *Abject (after Baudelaire)*

Wine is a dull disk that encircles the law. It will check your passport, will make sure that your sense of rhythm never exceeds the accepted patriotic patterns. Heroin, meanwhile, is a police system. It runs subtle holes through the length of the calendar. The city's windows, your systems of memory, both of them an alien landscape, an inaudible language that speaks at times of human love, a golden net about as plausible as the sounds made by cash, that fictitious mirror, that city of no language where every night you lock the door and scatter coins across the floor until they reflect the farcical stars and all of their fevers and razors, talking such drivel about the petty obligation to die beneath some weird stranger's fists.

*What a mess. There's no point in waking you  
with talk of drugs, sorcery, the couple form.  
Love's solar objects crashed into several oceans  
their integrity slipped. Please tell me again  
about the quiet of springtime, the balance form  
of streetlights. At times like this, the universe  
hangs over us. When we block it out it roars.*

Great love, that will crush the human world, I wish we could do something to help each other. But today we are separated by so many tedious enemies. They smile at us all day long and ask us about our sadness. What is there to say? That "sadness," in the way they pronounce it, isn't much more than a weird reflection of their smile, and that within that smile is written the histories of the cities of the sun and the devastation that continues to be inflicted there. If only we could whisper to each other the language needed

to describe that devastation so we might fill their mouths with the thorns of our great loss. It seems that everything we once knew has been stolen from us, and now idiots are reciting it, idiots who don't know how to close their mouths, and the sounds those mouths make are razors scratching words into our chests. Great love, noone can read the language written there. I wish I could say to you just one soothing word. But today we are the loneliest of brides. Only the stains around my mouth make me less repellant than those whom I most despise.

## 32 / *On Bomb Scares*

*There was, deep inside this so-called world, something that had no price. No gold could buy it, no church could sing it, no one could understand it. It appeared directly in the middle of life, and it meant nothing but itself. For a while we hated it, like everyone does, then all of a sudden we could see nothing else. We still don't understand it. What it was. Why it mattered, and what is the nature of the stones that are left now that it has gone. But most of all we can't understand the rage with which we would tear it apart, such hatred against a love so impossible, and so beautifully broken.*

It was a bullet replaced all of history. Couldn't recognize ourselves in it — all of its dates compressed to a phalanx of immaterial noise. And then we ignited, were permanently stained. We had always guessed it would be cities that would fall, but how wrong we were, transformed in our sleep to an alphabet rearranged as a disc of cranial time. Letters were allocated. Calendars and surgery. Vowels and black clouds. Several royal bastards. They wail and screech in the lower part of the city.

## 33 / *On the Refusal of Spite*

On the fourth day of my sickness I lay in bed getting more and more freaked out by the status of a memory I couldn't shake: a village at twilight, uninhabited houses, several animals burning. I had never been to this village. The texture of the sky, the nameless blue of the mist, everything suggested an apocalypse it was impossible for me to have lived through. It reminded me slightly of the early scenes in Michael Haneke's film *The Time of the Wolf*. You know the bits I mean. The father has just been shot dead. They have yet to reach the wasteland. Great gusts of silhouette. No shelter to be found. The countryside a splinter of spiteful knives. Blah blah. It put me in mind of the mass incineration of farm animals that happened in Britain, in 2001. Remember that? The foot and mouth thing? When they burnt all the animals? I remember watching that on tv, back in 2001, and saying to everyone who'd listen that Britain was in danger of putting a hex on itself, behaving like that. I mean, obviously. Ghost mathematics. The absolute content of the 1990s. From the Poll Tax Revolt to the death of Diana Spencer. From the Criminal Justice Bill to the insipid immolation of Britpop. Bang bang. All of it compressed and spun, baked and loaded, until it was transformed in its sleep into incinerated invisible villages. That type of thing. Obviously I was right. But it wasn't that was bothering me. It was simply the light, the unnamable blue at the center of this nameless memory, a still-point that could but shouldn't be passed through. That's what the end of the world looks like, in *The Time of the Wolf*, which is a film I watch quite often, three times a week etc, the end of the world, when you can't tell whether it's just happened or is merely about to happen. An endless stillness. An aching blue. A scraping sky. A screeching of blackened burning bells. A sleepless night. An endless regret. All of these things stripped of their names. Their dates. All constellations aimed and loaded. Typewriters and falling bombs. As if you had 87 parallel lives. And each of

those lives was passing from you. Was falling from you. Like a hex that you'd dropped. Like the eyes of boiling pigs. You would recognize nothing. Like that part of the land that is also part of the sea. A sadness so great you have to invent new words to express it. Like in *The Time of the Wolf*, when they're all standing there, outside the station, waiting. All of them saying to each other "I have, of course, been sick for a very long time." So what. Who hasn't. New bombs squealing. New reasons to be fearful of the stars. Oh blah blah. To hate the stars. To dream that one day you will go out into the streets of this quite possibly non-existent village, and it will be very quiet, and there will be new constellations in the sky, and you will know they are new because they will already have names. The Body Fluids of the Electorate. The Kids Who Jumped Into the Fire. The Boiling Bones of Boris Johnson. The Blood of Horses. The Strangled Bird. The Broken Strings. The Incineration of the Pigs. The Deserted Houses. The Marriage Feast. The Defense Speech of Emile Henri. Devotions and Buildings Falling. A huge meteor will be approaching. Contains all of your un-lived memories. Your 87 unspoken names. The other half of a helplessly oppositional sky.

## 34 / *On the Hatred of the Sun*

Every evening it's like the sun smashes into the earth. It's been doing it now for a few weeks. The sky splits into two and all the details of our lives — desires and facts and seizures — flare up from somewhere behind the horizon and produce embittered maps, random shreds of detritus that seem almost to be meaningful. All human data is scrawled across the sky. There is the date of your birth, for example, that arbitrary pivot. There, next to it, perhaps, a set of fairly random memories. Somewhere further off are the names that are given to human love. But then unfortunately those names get entwined with the screams of the victims of the Peterloo Massacre, get entwined with plague doors, with the hideous noises that business leaders would make if they were to look into a mirror at midnight. The darkness of that mirror, which is not quite equal to the darkness and silence inside the opened mouth of someone drowning in the Mediterranean, right now. Oh yes. So many things to hear and see etc., in the dreams of the dying sun. Fortunately, all of this passes after half an hour or so, the sky closes and the calm night begins, but still it leaves us feeling cold. The calendar, that particularly esoteric version of music, was invented as a means of warding off the fear associated with that cold. But us, we embrace it. What else are we supposed to do, as we sit here waiting for the end of everything. Reinvent prayer? Behave yourself. As the sun nears the rim of the planet we stare directly into it. We are unsmiling and terrified. We can feel it etching itself into our retina. The shapes it makes are repellant. Here is the burning hospital. Here is the salivating fascist. Here is the eternal ringing of the imaginary city walls. When the sun goes down we can still hear that ringing. It is our voices. A huge cacophonous reckoning before the night silences us with its fists.

## 35 / *Our Death*

You walked past a dead man the other day. You think maybe he'd jumped from his balcony, but you don't know. He was lying on the ground and there were people nearby, taking photos of him with their phones. You hurried past, went home and tried to make some kind of structure out of whatever it was you were feeling. Like, for instance, there was a moment before he jumped and there was a moment after and both of those moments were the same moment and at their center was entire calendars negated — their names, their dates and numbers, fixed and disappeared. You could scatter them on the floor. You could call them a border, a cruel and jagged line etched across both time and geography, unavailable to the sensory networks of you and I and the people taking photos. Some things can't be photographed, you think that. Nothing exists, you say that. Everything is made of cops, you know that. You walked past a man lying face down on the pavement. A sackful of blood and brain and distance and imagination and despair. There were several people laughing. Your mouth was filled with rain. You said to yourself, the missing half of his skull is the sky, and somewhere inside it is the center of our earth. There is no name can satisfy this. No hermetic system can alter it. No bank statement or judge's sentence. In three hours time you will walk down six flights of stairs and cross the street and pass him again and no there will be noone there. No body. Not a trace of blood or drool. No borders. But his bones will be there for ever. And you will say you care only for trapped things, falling invisibly, un-photographed and un-named. These offices of bones. These cities and these deserts. All taken by the earthquake.



**THE CHORUS  
IS ON FIRE**



**LANDSCAPE WITH  
BURNING TRUCK**



Noone was expecting this. We talk about the news, about current events, as if we were insomniacs mouthing nonsense syllables.

The angles of the calendar are altered every morning and by evening it has all become normalized. Easier to take part in a cosmic collective suicide than to take measure of the screams coming from the other side of the wall. There is no wall.

...it was inevitable the social factory would fall, that as it spread into previously unreachable areas of human life the cracks would begin to show. Equally inevitable that those cracks would be sold back to us, the whole mess converted to condos and yuppie flats. Hardly anyone would be able to afford the rent — areas would be squatted, others torched. Eventually, nothing would be left of the city but the skeletons of a number of decommissioned days, and perhaps the bodies of two ex- royals surrounded by imaginary anarchists screaming in an unintelligible language something like “off with their heads.”..

Dear Katerina,

I've often wondered about the way you responded to the censorship of the album you made in 1981 — about the way in which you replaced the words the cops found offensive with air-raid sirens and police noises. It's brilliant. Adds drama — imports a mournful sound of deep peril into the center of your language, and in a way gives back to the word “siren” the meaning that police use had tried to take from it. I mean, they probably don't even know what the sirens were, that their songs were said to contain knowledge of everything, all possible pasts and futures. Yeh yeh, we both aspire to that, to something that can approach the structure of those songs. Of what the word “siren” means. The list of businesses burnt out in the riots of ten years ago, and at the same time, the list of dates and names concealed by the memories of the police, an entire organizational strata of judges and prisons and entire histories that gather around us like plagues. And then we die. There is a lot can be said about that, about the landscape inhabited by cops, that is to say, the landscapes inside your poems, where the cops are twitching baleful shadows, aeons away from the music that defines them, music they have never known how to hear while, for us, we have loved it so much it has smashed our lives into countless fragments, some of whose names we know and some we don't need to know...

# *In Fever*

## NOTES ON LES CHIMÈRES DE GERARD NERVAL

Don't wait up for me tonight, the sky will be black and white

Yeh I'm in a bad mood as well. Cops are everywhere. But we know that — we murdered them. Let's talk about black stars. Something stretched strings between them, and now they flutter like chords. Stars, a very bad mood. Pasolini wrote about singing, called it the "divine wind that doesn't heal but rather makes everything sicker." This is the fifth day of our fever. Cops make everything unreal. Songs get sung outside their cellular systems, from the center of some kind of secretive world. Whisper those songs, then scream them. After that, kill all straight men. You know they want it.

Was thinking about that for a while this morning, then I thought about the human world. I'm sick of it as well. Was thinking that murder in the suburbs is the only real expression of the continued need for human love, where everything is turning to ice, yet everything is frozen in gold. When the sun hits the earth it shatters into all human data, calendars of the places music goes when its notes disappear. The same places the dead live, I guess. But this has little to do with what we say when we're wasted, and everything is flooded with animal light. The human horizon covered in ashes.

A guy walks into the ocean. Kill him. The gesture is futile. He walks out of it again. Won't shut his mouth, talks for several centuries about the devil and the hunger of screaming birds. Don't waste your sympathy. The sky is packed with them, terminal birds that screech of all the terrible things that might happen. And behind them, timeless bells transforming all to the metal stains of what has already happened. And behind

all of that are stars tracing out the fixed raptures of what ought never to have happened. There is no death anywhere. Our hatred of the rich is entirely justified.

Toward the end of his life Antonin Artaud wrote a poem complaining that noone ever touched his body. But he seemed to think it was a good thing, that if anyone did then it would split to a million fragments and fill the known sky. Poor Artaud. Little did he know this goes on every night. There are bodies that fragment each dusk, that split into countless wild lenses that fall to earth at dawn and form a strange calendar of imaginary incidents, frozen cities, addictions, etc. What this implies is not utopian. The straight world never touches anything. Its victims never do anything else.

Because I'm fearful the sky will shatter I would like to turn it to stone, to turn it to seven pebbles, each to mark a day of our fever. As in set fire to cars, put glue in locks, sugar in petrol. Also include bodies. Also include the shock and the curse of our loss. As in recite that curse, until the voice becomes a song, or the word becomes something outside its borders, the barricades we built across this life of great mourning in which the seeds of our hurt would bloom. The fascists who murdered Pasolini are now the owners of the world. Do not mourn or forgive. Shriek one time. Shatter glass.

The thirteenth returns, and everything we once thought inaudible. There is gunshot, there is fire in the suburbs, the fixed stars falling like cops or roses, the darkened rituals of the middle class. We replace them with pinpricks, with new forms of arson, and the dreams of a thousand archers haunting Trafalgar Square. Nothing returns. Our bodies, the names of stars. But nothing is forgotten, everything falls. Thirteen the only number, the sounds of thirteen fevers crackling inside our dreams. There are no dreams. We never sleep. An unknown light in the corner of the room.

*Tiresias clammers up from hell which is. Only the noise that cities make as. She used to get information from the workings of birds but. Since we bound this city with threads of light and. They circle and ring like a rain of ragged logic and. Are fat with grease and grief and will not speak like. Inside the laws of hunger there is no grammar and. Loot the supermarket and. Those bones in that ancient ark are not your own and. Hell is the color of human skin is not your own and. Tiresias her blind eyes scratch at bones are. All those new luxury flats are. This is the mystery of the eating of bread and bone says. Jump motherfucker jump.*

You are walking through a city center wasteland, a constellation of abandoned trucks, and you are worried you may have murdered your closest friend. The astrological consequences will no doubt be severe. It will be 5 in the morning. There will be sirens. There will be burning wheels.

*we're lying on the ground and everyone is dead  
obviously don't include the vast middle class*

You wander across an imaginary landscape hollering some implausible songs. Inside those songs are dance moves. Inside those dance moves are diagrams and systems. No mythology, no sun, no maps of the stars. Nothing left but the symbols. One butchered president. His shit-spattered robes.

*"found you in the morning. recognized you by your teeth. by what was left of your fingerprints."*

You are not absolutely defenseless. For the torch of the incendiary, which has been known to show murderers and tyrants the danger line, beyond which they may not venture with impunity, cannot be wrested from you — Lucy Parsons.





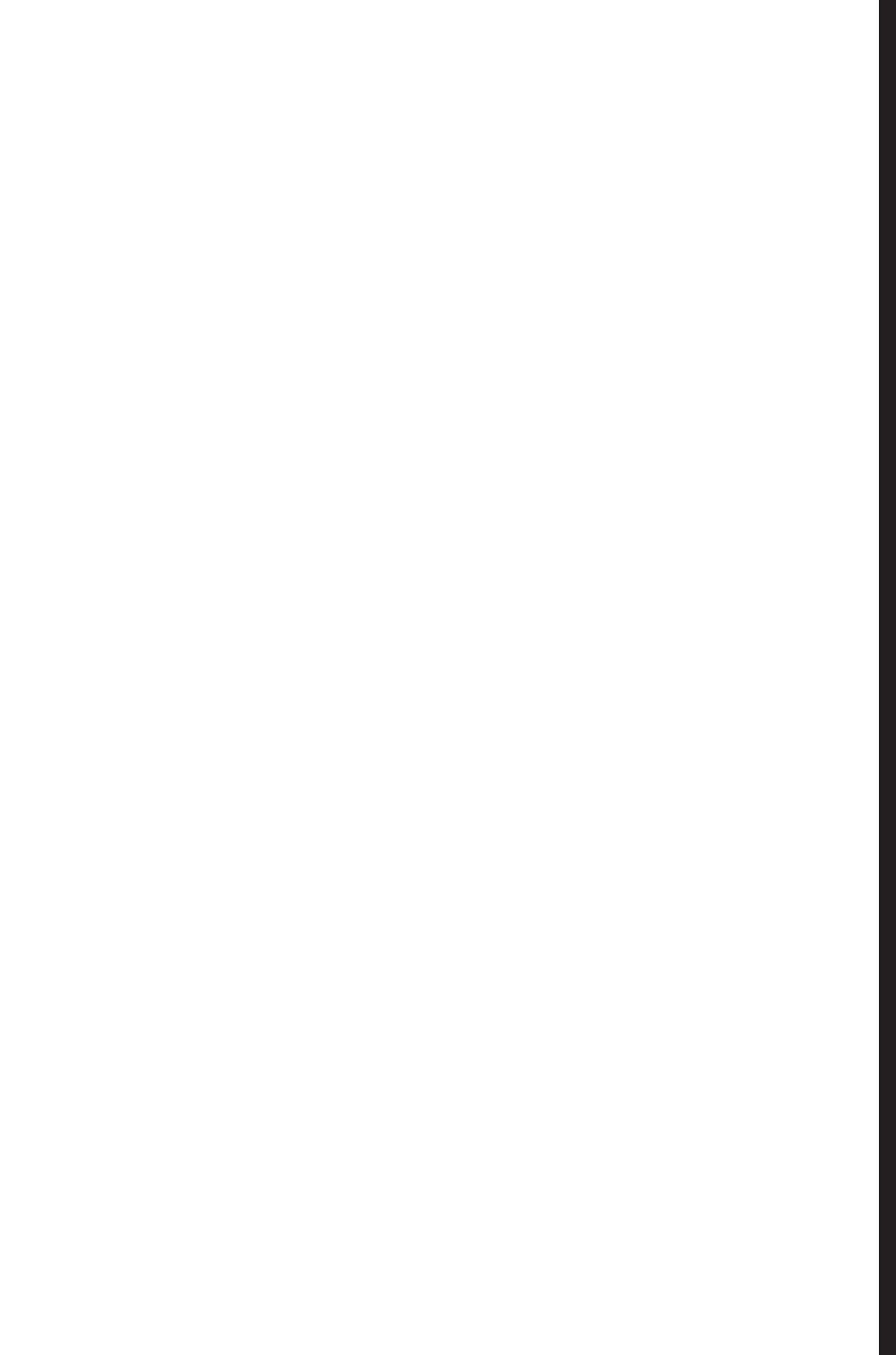
## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Extracts from this work have appeared in the following journals: *Tripwire*, *Chicago Review*, *Cambridge Literary Review*, *Hard Times*, *Bestário*, *A Batalha (Jornal de Expressão Anarquista)*. Extracts have also been included in the following anthologies: *Atlantic Drift: An Anthology of Poetry and Poetics* and *Out of Time: Poetry and Communism Today*. The author extends his gratitude to all of the editors involved for their time, enthusiasm and encouragement.

In particular I would like to express thanks to the editors of the following small presses who have published small editions of some of the poems in the book. A High Nihilistic Press (Berlin) published a very early version of the “Cancer” sequence. Salt and Cedar (also Berlin) published a limited edition broadside of two of the poems in “Cancer,” and High Wire Press (US) published a small selection of poems also from “Cancer.” In particular, I would like to thank Materials Press (London and Munich) for publishing “Ghosts,” a chapbook containing early versions of roughly a quarter of the present volume.

Poems from the book have also been used in a number of films and performances. Sacha Kahir and I collaborated on a film *Anywhere Out of the World*, using text and themes from both sequences in the book. There is also genuine footage of me composing the poem “In Fever” in my flat in Berlin featured in Pia Hellenenthal’s film *Searching Eva*, a documentary about my friend Eva Collé. The poem is for her.

Finally, the poems have been used in two experimental performances in Warsaw, at the University and at the Museum of Modern Art, where Sacha Kahir and I attempted to combine academic speech, poetry reading and performance art in order to contribute to the formation of new directions in antifascist art, something that seems to be among the most pressing tasks facing leftist artists in the current political and historical moment.



ffs all of us bastards of capital. yeh we deserve everything we get.  
ghosts or jack-knives or angels. whatever we call it. makes no difference.  
landlines and blowjobs and public urinals. night sweats and centuries.  
centuries. that's a laugh. say it. say guillotine. say razor say fuck it.  
our passports are all expired. we wait on the runway. we are saying nothing.  
say leprosy say burn it all down say bloodflash. say petroleuses.  
say jesus too, whatever. don't believe a world. coziness. whatever.  
running crying to the bosses with those fucking holes in your hands.

**COMMUNE EDITIONS**

PURVEYOR OF POETRY  
& OTHER ANTAGONISMS

*Oakland*

[communeeditions.com](http://communeeditions.com)

ISBN-13: 978-1934639283



9 781934 639283