

issue 48
streetcake



slowly boris © sean burn

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ground level

When something that
Is nothing Happens and
My teeth vibrate and
Grind, I can only think
Of her. Of him and him.
When my skin begins to crawl
And a dark cloud gathers.
When I see that number still
In my phone. When I open
Doors best left
Closed and bolted and barred
I think of them. The three.
When my breath comes
In gasps and shudders
Shallow and quick
And I
Start to look inside
Where nothing
Good can
Be.
I close my eyes and
Picture them each
In fine and intricate
Detail.
I think of them.
The rest is easy.

Football Isn't Special Anymore

Football isn't special anymore -
not like when I was a kid.

Supporters all had smiles on their faces -
football grounds were special places -
the young and the old, the rich and the poor,
but football isn't special anymore,

there's too much t.v. football on,
so the novelty's gone,
a nil nil draw or a ten one score -
football isn't special anymore,

the football t.v. show - spoilt mid-flow,
but the half time analysis - a screen intrusion -
we hoped it was entertainment,

but the diagrams of circles and lines
shattered the illusion, oh what a bore -
football isn't special anymore,

football shirts once a nice simple strip
you'd be careful not to tear, now
an ugly kit plastered in advertising shit
you wouldn't want to wear, oh what an eye sore -
football isn't special anymore,

The ground announcer insults the fans by
yelling out - the team names - as if
they're too dumb to know who's walking out,

twenty two child mascots - an absurd a pantomime
as you can get - players holding hands with kids they've never met,
oh what a chore - football isn't special anymore,

managers under duress - to partake in conferences for
the gutter press - punished with a fine if they so decline,

the t.v. camera work of the pitch is too busy,
irrelevant shots of all the worst angles - a birds eye view -
from a pigeon dangles - spins round and makes you feel dizzy,

the meaningless obligatory pre-match handshakes - to
encourage fair play gesture fakes, but snub out of spite
and it causes a fight - once we were friends but now it's war,
football isn't special anymore,

t.v. cameras spying - obliged to show close ups
of drama queens crying - fuelling the tension
with a troubled face mention, awarding them attention
as compensation for the sin, of the hefty prices they were
charged to get in - a rosy apple with greed at the core,
football isn't special anymore,

there's not one player worth paying to see,
not one with charisma, style or presence -
not one you'd really want to be,

the ball is so light it's now a balloon -
bouncing high as a plastic moon, if
you kick it hard, it will catch the keeper
off guard - swerving two ways on its own,
so the scorers talent is still unknown,

the winners celebrate with an artificial routine,
of fireworks, glitter, streamers and confetti,
bouncing like puppets in paper spaghetti -
the silliest spectacle I ever saw,
football isn't special anymore,

football's now a non-contact sport, prompting
deceit by the penalty cheat, and players who choose
not to stay on their feet,

stadiums now all look the same - like a coffee shop chain -
bland, soulless, impersonal architecture - as if the tacky plastic
pictures on the outside won't aesthetically affect ya,

poor kids in the community ignored,
by the clubs that don't care -
that they can't afford
to even get in there,

you'll pay through the roof,
you'll pay through the floor,
because football isn't special anymore,

football isn't special anymore,

FOOTBALL ISN'T SPECIAL ANYMORE

mandy haggith

Suilven

Is
this a
concrete
poem? No,
Torridonian
sand stone.

a.j. huffman

Frustration

is a pill I swallow daily. Prescribed
at maximum dose, its uncoated form sticks
to the back of my throat. I gag on its delayed
disintegration, try to force it down into the abyss
of my overly-acidic stomach with two, full
16.9 oz bottles of water. I am drowning myself
in the taste of nothing. It seems appropriate
as I stare at the empty recyclables, seeing
my reflection in the shadow of their exchange rate.

Fantasy

I know what it feels like to be in someone's fantasy, do you? It's easy. All you need to do is pick your target audience, identify and set the scene, the desired outcome, and then it all begins to fall into place. My favourite one is the cinema, specifically the Renoir Cinema.

I pile my hair on my head, apply black eyeliner to the curve of my eye, wear a white shirt and then, and variations here abound, whether I go for a nice pair of jeans or a pencil skirt, depends on my mood. I enter the cinema right before they dim the lights and take a seat diagonally in front of the man I've chosen. I sit up straight, my long neck reflecting the light from the screen. I always pick a French film or a black and white film, so it suits the persona I've cultivated. He is a single, well educated cultural man. He has had long term successful relationships but with just something missing. He's left them now and spends time finding out who he is and living different lives he wasn't able to live when he was leaping from one relationship to the next in his youth. So he's a bit of a late bloomer when it comes to doing things alone. Then he sees me, an equally well educated cultural woman, his perfect match perhaps?

I always leave in the middle of the film. Usually it is in fact a film I've seen before so I know the perfect part to stand up and quickly exit. I pick an emotional part so something will resonate with him. He stops watching the screen, he turns and watches me instead, while watching me leave he feels like he's missing out on something, something that could have been, something that, if the films he's watching has taught him anything, was perhaps meant to be. That's when I've got

them. I've created a lasting figure in his mind, as alluring and see through as a silk negligee. Something he'll recall when he's lonely or horny.

But there is a downside, I can't risk going back to that cinema for awhile. He'll go back, he'll search for me. He'll go to films he's not interested in just to see if I'm there. Sometimes I can't resist and I do go back but I drastically change my hairstyle, my clothes, come up with a different persona.

I grow attached to some of these personas. They're hard to let go of. That French styled one is always a winner. I've even taken her to other countries, other independent and small cinemas. There's art student, single mom, unhappily married woman. I'm not really lying when I play these characters. I don't play characters I can't relate to, that's just theft. And I don't bring the characters somewhere they're not believable, that's just sloppy.

I often wonder how many men's fantasies I actually appear in. It'd be impossible to tell but thinking about it helps me get to sleep at night, like counting sheep. To think at that very moment all the men that I can't remember, that only glimpsed me for half an hour once in a cinema, are laying down just like I am and touching themselves and thinking about me. Sometimes it gets me excited, but more often than not it just relaxes me and I drift off into a deep sleep.

So you see, it's strange for me to be here. I'm not quite sure how to behave in something that's not of my own making. I don't feel comfortable. I don't think this was a good idea. And now I've gone and told you all about myself, my darkest deepest secret. I'm not sure what you'll think of me. Will you try to find me in a darkened cinema?

Oh? I haven't told you my real name? I must have forgotten, or maybe that is also part of the web I'm weaving around you, to ease you into sleep tonight. I'll just leave my purse here then, shall I? Pretend it's by accident, you can have a peak and

see if that reveals any secrets. I won't be gone long, just to 'powder my nose' as they say, I might come back, I might not, but isn't that what you'd like to know, as you sit here waiting for me, thinking about what it is I'm really doing? This is actually quite fun, this date. I never thought that app would ever work out very well for me, but here we are. And there are you, wondering if everything I've told you is a lie or the truth, but whichever you choose to believe, I know I've definitely gotten your attention.

7/7

Close by the un-
edifying surface
images of The London
Underground bombings

I come across the
Martha Graham Company
dancing Stravinsky's
Le Sacre du Printemps

& stay with that.
This is not denial
but a necessary
maintenance of balance.