



BEAT THE DUST

OPEN ISSUE

JUNE 2011

Introduction

Once a year Beat the Dust rips up its invitation-only subs policy and opens its doors to all-comers. Inspired by Poly Styrene's ad in the music press calling for 'punks who want to stick it together' to form the band X-Ray Spex, we put out a call to creatives to help us stick it together for this year's Open issue of Beat the Dust. And you answered...in your droves. We wanted new, edgy, interesting and quirky, and that's what we got.

BTD's June edition is dedicated to Poly Styrene and in support of Breakthrough Breast Cancer, a pioneering charity committed to reducing the number of women who die of the disease that took Poly before her time.



Jo Mortimer



Jo Mortimer's mini Glasto set list:

Have You Seen The Saucers? - Jefferson Airplane

Sunday - Orbital

Sailor - Brian Jonestown Massacre

Do You Realise? - The Flaming Lips

Outdoor Type - The Lemonheads

fade to black

Anthony smacks at the tree with his skateboard until a creamy-white, neatly folded note flutters into his hand. At one corner, a punched hole threaded through with a frayed shoelace which he unties and wraps twice around his wrist. Pushing Maria's words deep into his pocket, he charges back up the hill as Maria wakes in the burnt-out green car just twenty metres away. Peering out through the steering-wheel, all that is left is heavy dust and the hectic scuff prints of lo-rise Converse – Anthony has left no reply. Maria lowers her forehead to the wheel's cold, rough metal, certain her declaration is the most shameful thing she will ever do.

Maria's note told Anthony he is a beautiful shape when he skates - a perfect curve. Sometimes, after school, he skates alongside her before gliding ahead. He takes her breath away.

Since her father left seven months ago, Maria has not uttered a word. Nothing she had said could keep him from forcing the front door closed between them; in one of his many suitcases, he had packed away her voice. Her mother, once chatty and bright now drifts from room to room, spectre-like, murmuring as she fingers the edges of closed curtains, fretting about whether Maria will return from school; it is the same every day but she needn't worry - Maria walks between school and home in fourteen minutes and stops for nothing.

Anthony joined the school, one arm in plaster, halfway through the autumn term. When introduced to his classmates he barely looked up, instead offering the room a nonchalant half-wave. Throughout their first lesson together Maria watched him rub his eyes, tug endlessly at his hair and pinch the ends of his fingers; his blood took time to flood back into the tips. He carefully cleaned under each fingernail with a match and on the rare occasion he was asked to pay attention, he struck it against his cast, blew it out and tapped one end rhythmically on his desk. At the bell, he skated the length of the corridor out into the playground - teachers shouted behind him to walk like everyone else but he couldn't be stopped.

For Maria, Anthony's arrival brought new sensations; fourteen minutes were no longer enough to make sense of the day. The tree at the back of the wreck, out of sunlight with

plenty of shadow, was just the place for Maria to think; those who played together on the grass never came too close. The new diversion added only five minutes to her journey, but it was enough; whilst moving around the tree, frowning, picking at loose bark, everything slowed. But one Friday, it was Anthony who had claimed a place underneath its branches, sitting on his skateboard, rocking angular hips from side to side. Maria kept walking and took the long route home. It was some weeks before she would return.

*

Now, she slams the car-door shut behind her and stomps home beneath an orange glow and smoked-out stars. As she turns into their road, Anthony's house, ablaze and shining, throws fierce light over huddled neighbours. Maria trips backwards into her overgrown front garden and ducks down behind the bins. Taking panicked breaths, she makes a fist and bites down hard on a knuckle. Some way down the street, slumped against a blinking streetlamp, Anthony stares blankly at the scene.

His mother kneels low on the driveway, drunk and wailing – her pink shadowy nightdress billows around her; she looks like a jellyfish. His father paces amid rumbling fire trucks, chain-smoking hard and fast, flicking the butts in all directions. He is attempting a detailed description of his son to a man in a long tired coat - 'Sir, excuse me sir - I know you're upset but you can't smoke here'. 'I'm not upset', Anthony's father spat, 'I'm fuming'. He doesn't know what his son was last seen wearing - 'that's her department', he says nodding sharply over to his wife. The detective asks if there is any reason why Anthony might run away, why he might start a fire? His questions are met with growling fury - 'That damn kid's all attitude,' Anthony's father surmises, sparking up another cigarette. As his parents are persuaded into the back of a waiting ambulance, Anthony slams his deck to the ground and skates away as swirling lights and high arcs of water make hopeless rainbows.

At school the next morning during a special assembly, the students were urged to come forward with information - Anthony is one of us, they were reminded. Maria sat cross-legged, pulling at the hem of her skirt; she said nothing and no one expected her to. The detective had released a brief statement saying no body had been found in the smouldering remains of the house, so the search for Anthony was stepped up.

All through the town and into the villages, photos of Anthony were slapped on streetlamps and bus stops. Maria did not want to look at him; she hurried past his tired, out-of-focus face seventeen times every day along the length of their street, dipped beneath his eye line, skirted out into the road until one afternoon, a police car crawled around a corner. The detective in the passenger seat called out of his window - 'seen the lad, have you?' Maria shook her head and broke into a run, but the car slid past her and came to a halt. Stepping up behind her, the detective asked again if she knew of his whereabouts, perhaps recently spent time in his company. Maria motioned in the air for a pen and in his flip-pad scribbled - 'I don't know anyone'. The detective read her note with suspicion, climbed back into his car and pulled away. Anthony's two-dimensional face looked gratefully down at her with a gaze she could not meet.

Rain came, dust turned to mud. Maria returned to the tree with sixteen packets of crisps in a carrier bag. Anthony's footprints filed evenly down from a nearby slope and continued calmly around the trunk. Stepping her feet neatly into them, she bent down to trace the shape with a fingertip - a near-perfect fit. She left the crisps leant against the tree and ran back home.

Anthony spent a third night curved tightly into the slimy wall of a storm drainage pipe. He ate the crisps without tasting a thing and tried to remember the last time he had slept. Salt irritated tiny scratches in the roof of his mouth, reminding him of his mother flinging useless handfuls of gravel across the driveway.

*

Weeks passed; rain washed away memory. Anthony's faded face slid down pavements and drains, out of the minds of neighbours and classmates. The posters were stamped into a barely-there, grayish pulp - no longer was his the name on everybody's lips. But every other day, Maria took herself back to the tree with more packets of crisps, and sat for a while in the car. Soon, the bags began to pile up and on her last ever visit she found matches scattered around and about - some spent, some not. Maria stood, arms folded, squinting against the sun and looking up into the gnarly branches of the tree. Trapped in a tangle of shoelaces, a note, a scrappy dirty-white bird with Anthony's writing scrawled across its wings. Stretching up through space that brought him closer, Maria tugged and pulled until it came away in her hand.

As the last of the day's pale sunlight drained from the sky, she read the note through seven times. It said:

'I am sorry I never spoke to you. Never had the nerve. Long gone now. Maybe one day, eh.'

Without a thought, Maria pushed Anthony's first and last words into a hollow of the trunk, struck a match and having set the flame against the paper, watched Anthony's note curl and burn until the glowing orange edges faded to black.

Jane Ormerod



Jane Ormerod's mini Glasto set list:

Violet – Hole

Metal Mickey - Suede

Smoke & Wine - Hank Williams III

I Wanna Be Your Dog - The Stooges

Pig Will Not - PJ Harvey

initial notes for a possibly punk poem about—at the moment—a girl called lucy

Does she smoke while asleep?

Rise in full lipstick and curl?

Lucy is a crime scene. Some kind of waterfall. A hawk raven lamb. Bell on a sledgehammer. Lair hips. Future palaces. Shiver timbers. Modern housekeeping cabin, yeah

Knife to the ear, ear to the water

There has been no English lady here. The interest in art is the choice of a flea to an apple, a queenly specter, a dog that shows the way most well. The dog is a pointer and she is a view

Lucy is a crime scene. The scene becomes her well.

They say priests stalk the land, troops of matt mutt foolery. Spittle mules. Just give her a gin, she has had nothing all day

The spiral will arrive. Lucy is a crime scene. The wheels she made up, the rules she made up, the voices once and for all. Crowds of followers and completists. There is square light, wet pegs, a stall, a bangle, a postcard of something that already lives, and will be there the next day, the next, the next

Grass grows. Water falls. The lady, she vanishes. Have you ever seen such snow? Mountains sing of the happy lips of children. Hold the hammer and channel mud

Lucy is a crime scene. She wears a crown like a plague. She is luggage and baggage, carry-on and hold-all. Knapsack, duffle. She has something to do with porridge. Rational explanations interest others more than her.

There is stationary and stationery

Action is never in focus

There is merriment on wing.

May god have mercy. May God keep mercy on tap

Hostelries remain open. There has been no English lady here. The first sighting was at a beer hall. Turn the orange blossom on full blast. You, sir, are witty. You sir, there are maids for that. One for the missing road, one for the missing streets and loser highways. A state of sin. A cancer of nightclubs and bars.

Lucy is a crime stream. Lucy is a cabin. Lucy is a' coming. Lucy's made to order and priests stalk the land

Modern

MODERN

HOUSEKEEPING

CABINS

Some have a view. None have phones. None have reception. Start making plans when you're thirteen.

Have you ever seen such snow? Such water? A boat so small it rests between your teeth

Downstream floats a pencil. Have you ever been this low?

Downstream floats a pen. Have you ever been this low?

God saves kings and queens. Lucy is a crime scene. You know now who to blame

Knife to the ear and ear to the water. Water to the knife, ear to the drum

Lucy, Lucy

She caught the pox from The Pistols and the clap from The Clash

Who put the crown on your fucking head?

Nick Sweeney



Nick Sweeney's mini Glasto set list:

Midnight Summer Dream - The Stranglers
 Ayer - Gloria Estefan
 Lady Grinning Soul - David Bowie
 Istanbul (Not Constantinople) - They Might Be Giants
 Needle In A Haystack - The Velvelettes

the boy at the bus stop

"I am a respectable citizen going about my business." R indicated his shopping bag, swept his free hand down himself, showed a spreading man in puffa jacket, hunting hat, moonboots, thick rings on his fingers. "Am I anything out of the ordinary?"

The woman he was addressing shifted her boots minutely, a few paces out of R's orbit. She was in her thirties, had a preoccupied, somewhat hurt face, a permanent expression rather than one signifying any recent damage.

"I am doing nothing wrong at all," R called. He paused. "The boy?" he enquired politely. "Does he belong to you?"

The woman peered into the darkness to see if the bus was on its way. It wasn't. She looked around for somebody to whom she could make crazy eyes, a safe connection, perhaps, and, finding nobody, cleared her throat and ventured, "What boy?"

"I have never done anything but my duty," R observed into the face of a man coming out of the shop, laden with bags.

The man offered over his shoulder, "Well, that's a fine thing."

"Did you hear what that man said?" The woman heard hope in R's voice, turned and saw his eyes flickering. "A fine thing, he said, and that's his considered opinion. Thank you, citizen." R showed yellow teeth suddenly and alarmingly, and let the man go with his disturbing smile and his lifted hat. A semblance of peace returned to those at the bus stop as they went back to the jumble of thoughts that ruled their lives.

"You killed children," the boy said calmly to R.

R froze the satisfied paces he was busy making, and hissed, "Go away."

"In the village of S," the boy reminded him brightly.

"I was never in S." R's brow twitched with his effort not to shout.

"You were there," the boy insisted. "You picked up a four year old girl and dashed her head against a tree."

"I never touched her," R protested.

"Who?" The woman said, her curiosity considered worthy of some risk. "Never touched who?"

"S?" A man had approached the bus stop. His face displayed the intense grin of a fool. "We gave them something to think about in S."

R spun round, was stuck for what to say, admitted finally, "I passed through."

"Oh yes." The man punched the air. "We showed the bastards what was what in S."

"Yes," the boy said, "you did. You killed children there. You shot a ten year old boy in the back of the head."

"Everything was above board in S." R addressed the grinning man. "In line with the Geneva Convention."

He drew the fool's response: "No more than they deserved."

"Shot him in the back of the head like a dog." The boy's tone was neutral, and the expression on his face could even be said to be impressed.

"He was hiding. Trying to escape," R explained. "And would have done so again, so much was plain."

"Who?" The laden man, having rearranged his shopping, turned and faced R.

"In the village of S," the boy, after pausing politely, continued, "you killed a girl of thirteen after raping her and shooting her parents."

"I didn't rape her for pleasure," R said.

The woman stepped forward to R bravely, and said, "Who? What are you talking about?"

"It was an order." R looked around her, at the boy. "Raping her was a political act."

"You raped a woman as a political act?" The woman was in front of R now, and he raised his hat and made the ghastly face of a man whose eyes have been filled with the most powerful of images.

The boy called, "A girl."

R said, "It was an order."

"An order?" The laden man put his shopping down. "That was the duty you were raving about?"

"You raped a woman because it was an order?" The woman, as if unable to believe the words she was uttering, raised a hand to her mouth and, challenged by the gesture, R looked down.

"A girl." The boy said calmly. "My sister."

"In that case," the woman said, "you are a brute."

"I was a soldier, madam," R sniffed. "I did my duty."

"A brute," the laden man affirmed.

"Did his duty, so you could go about your business." The grinning man's eyes were enthused, but also disturbed, as he spun round and pointed at shopping bags. "Did his duty so you could do your shopping."

"I remember it all." The boy stepped forward and took R's paw in his own, led him to the edge of the road. "And so do you, sir. Look." He pulled his cap off and showed R the exit wound that had become the back of his head, broken, blackened, bloody. "You did this to me. You found me hiding in a burnt-out building," he began to explain, but the rest of his explanation was lost in the anguished scream R was letting out. It rumbled gently in his stomach like the craving for food, rose to a crescendo as his feet did a dreadful dance on the ice, and was then itself lost in the screeching of the bus's tyres as they mixed R's head into the wet road.

There was silence except for the ticking of the bus's engine. Driver and passengers stood around the shapes made on the slush by R's outstretched legs, though nobody wanted to look.

The grinning man had been temporarily relieved of his grin. He said, "A hero." The laden man and the woman looked at him and smiled on the insides of their faces as he added, "Of the war in B."

"You saw what happened?" A policeman had emerged from a car, a radio held to his ear. The grinning man nodded with the eager face of one with inside information. "You also?" The policeman turned to the woman and the laden man and said, "Well, you'll have to come and give me your details, and a statement."

"The boy," the woman remembered. "There was a boy here too."

"Where is he, then?" the policeman demanded.

"Well." The woman took a look up and down the street. "I don't know."

"Well, where did he go?"

"I didn't see him at all," the woman confessed. "But he mentioned him." She jerked a thumb towards R's legs. "Before he... you know."

"Is that him?" The grinning man pointed towards the shop doorway. "Is that him there?" The policeman, the laden man, the woman, all followed the direction of the pointed finger; they saw no boy, only the shop doorway in shadow, shook their heads politely.

The policeman stared frankly at the man. Another brain-addled war veteran, he decided – he was sick of them. He stuck a gloved finger up and said, "Well, come on, then. This won't take long."

The boy carried shadows with him, stood in them and waited patiently for the police to finish their business with the witnesses. The wind didn't bother him, ran through his eye sockets and out the back. He made the kind of smile made by one who never feels the cold, watched the grinning man go on his way, and began to follow him through the streets of the town, among all the respectable citizens going about their business.

Matthew Peipert



Artwork by Benjamin Peipert

Matthew Peipert's mini Glasto set list:

Looking For Mr. Goodbar - Shilpa Ray & Her Happy Hookers
Black River Killer - Blitzen Trapper
Psyche Sluts - John Cooper Clarke
Water Get No Enemy - Fela Kuti
Air War - Crystal Castles

mouthful

Creature, I must tell you these things:

Civilization is stacks of people. Morality is unforced. Technology makes coming into an ultra-soft tissue possible. Water gives life. Water looks cool shooting out of a showerhead. Television is always on. Genius forsakes routine. Picture frames house seeds of fawned-over falsehood. An alleyway fight launches two vastly different futures. Hamburger gets ground. The trucks collide. Cues are taken. Notes are burned. Gas is ignited. Scent is sweet and dangerous. Cues are missed. Best friends become ghosts. "Why not" is the answer.

We are claimstakers of futures uncertain. We are common sense cronies. We are cuckoo ballslappers. We are myopic wanderers. The world is mottled brown-green. The sky is in the sea. The fish push the waves. The trees make the wind. The Belgian makes the beer. The beer makes the baby. Babies cry like animals. Cages are for those who crawl into them. The coward shouts from moving vehicles. The insults always pass. The heckler heckles. The air expands his trachea. The insults always pass.

Drip dry in my bedroom. The curtains move slowly. The walls hold large mammals. The man tells a joke. The people laugh later. Insight goes nowhere. Idiocy is supreme. Laughter is vitamin. Upchuck makes angels. Impurity is recommended. Buying is selling. Trading is good. Insomnia is overflow. Naked is natural. Shame is bright as a rose. Beauty is strength plus weakness and weakness is the penultimate discovery.

Thank you, Creature.

Kristin Fouquet



Kristin Fouquet's mini Glasto set list:

The Sicilian Clan - John Zorn

Milestones - Miles Davis

Epistrophy - Thelonious Monk

Goodbye Pork Pie Hat - Charles Mingus

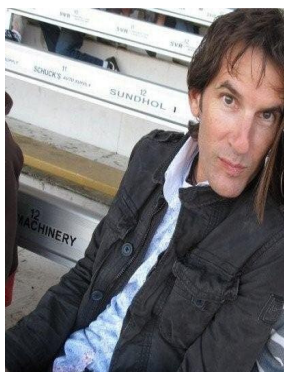
Blue Train - John Coltrane

chalk message



the leap**soap box and baby book**

Len Kuntz



Len Kuntz' mini Glasto set list:

I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning - Bright Eyes
 Sylvia Plath - Ryan Adams
 Peach, Plum, Pear - Joanna Newsome
 St. John - Cold War Kids
 Sometime Around Midnight - The Airborne Toxic Event

bleeding madras

She says, "They're supposed to bleed."

I watch Momma wring my brother's new shirt in her hands. Her arms are hairy and she's really working over the wet cloth the way someone might strangle a goose. She's even biting her lip and huffing a bit.

Ink black-blue and crimson water dribbles inside the basin.

"Why don't you just stick it straight in the dryer?"

"Young lady," Momma says to me, "you've got to think ahead. If I put a new madras shirt straight in the dryer, it'll catch all over the drum. Then the next load that goes in will get dye-soaked. Some stains don't come out. You gotta use your head," Momma says, tapping her skull so hard that she blinks in surprise and her cat-eyed glasses wobble.

Some stains don't come out. Yes, Momma's right about that.

"Seems like a lot of work just for a stupid shirt."

"Madras is what the Kennedys wear."

"Kennedys, woo hah."

"Watch your tone, Missy."

I trundle up to my room. I lay on my mattress surrounded by pillows and pink walls and stuffed koala bears on a shelf, and I know I should be happy and feel safe, but instead I

think about blood - it's different colors and weights, it's many meanings. My brother was an avid nose-picker and in summers he got nasty nosebleeds that were only stifled when Mom took him to the doctor to have his nostrils cauterized.

I didn't know cotton could bleed too.

So much blood everywhere.

Soldiers in Viet Nam bled when Charlie shot them, or set off booby-traps in the jungle.

Now me, I was bleeding as well, getting my period at age ten.

I wanted to tell Momma. She'd be shocked that I'd gotten mine so early, but she'd be proud too. I know Momma. And that's why I keep secrets. I don't want to be anyone's burden.

When there's a knocking on the door, I suck in my breath and touch my groin where the Kotex is. I know the weight of different types of blood the same as I know the weight of different fingers on wood, on my skin.

Dad pokes his head around.

I scan his face, his eyes, because it always shows first in his eyes.

I try not to sigh too audibly.

"Mom and I are thinking about going out."

My heart's a car crushed by a locomotive and I can't assemble words.

"You and Ronnie okay with that?"

I nod.

He stares at me a little long, so I look away.

"Don't stay up too late," he says.

"Okay."

"I'll check on you when I get home," he says.

JD Roland

JD Roland's mini Glasto set list:

Silverado - Black Dub
 Last Night Of The World - Bruce Cockburn
 Universal Soldier - Buffy Sainte-Marie
 Dance Me To The End of Love - The Civil Wars
 Mexican Moon - Concrete Blonde

early enough to be late

I entered the room and immediately
 tripped over my leaving,
 I hardly recognized myself,
 a crooked walking stick, teetering.

Punished, pitted, like wadded paper unravelled,
 my clothes were from my early years,
 stretched over pot belly,
 torn at knobby knee, wind blown.

"What? Did I think you'd live unscathed?"

Bitter scorn, tobacco stained, toothless,
 hunched over ground level, one thing
 unchanged, bald as ever bald, old sod.

I leaving, didn't remember me entering,
not surprising, my past a distant fog horn,

***"Wait old man" I said to myself, "you
have unfinished business....."***

***"There will always be loose ends,
remember Henry? He counted on you,
on your honesty."***

Point taken, I thought to myself
in canyon echo, I pushed myself aside,
walked in as I was leaving, I hoped I'll
make a difference, leave my mark,
if nothing more than snail stains on walkways.

commuters

She lived defiant, rage worn,
coiled to strike with venomous anger,
branded by incest, rape, and brutality,
life held no truth, no fairytale dreams.

He lived like swift rain water,
never static, moving the path of
least resistance, constantly
searching for a larger connection.

They sat at opposite ends of a crowded railcar, he made a half-hearted attempt at a Times crossword, she sharpened her mood on the closest unfortunate.

When he looked up from his obscurity, he felt a pang of emptiness, how could so many travel side by side and never utter a word, he wore their detachment.

With each stop, the crowd thinned like vanishing ornaments, when the seat emptied next to her, she glanced out the window at the grey world.

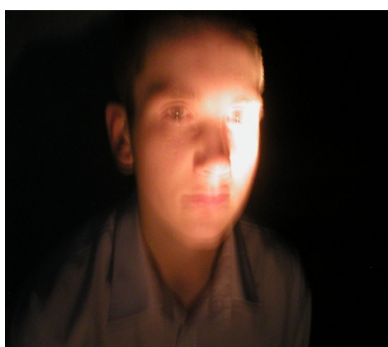
She had let her guard down for a moment, a balding overweight, in a blue three piece, slid in next to her, he leaned in, whispered in her ear, his grin showed a lack of hygiene.

His eyes went blank as his chin dropped resting on his chest, no one took notice when she wiped her blade clean on the inner liner of his jacket, she forced his eyelids closed.

She smiled, patted his bald head and said, sorry this is my stop and exited the train, she felt safe for the first time in her life, the dagger rang the empty trashcan when it hit bottom.

Normally he rode the last leg alone, he almost said something to the balding gentleman sleeping, then thought better of it, he looked peaceful in his slumber, the world seemed a crowded empty place.

Dandy McGregor



Dandy McGregor's mini Glasto set list:

Generals And Majors - XTC

Beat Crazy - Joe Jackson

Do I Move You? - Nina Simone

Sailin' Shoes - Little Feat

Take 54 - Harry Nilsson

the school trip

The coach doors opened with a hydraulic rush. It was the day of the school trip. The children charged down the aisle, jostling for the best seats. They were going to the zoo.

They stowed away their Pack-a-Macs and lunchboxes while Mrs Binkendrick ticked their names off a list. They were allowed to wear whatever clothes they liked; no school uniforms. Trisha was wearing a mini skirt and knee-high boots. She had frosted pink lips, and blue and green eye shadow. Judith was in white hipsters and a multi-coloured tank top.

Someone had tried to put her hair into Farrah Fawcett waves. Andrew had been too shy to dress up. He was wearing his usual saggy V-necked jumper and shiny nylon trousers. He'd got the seat in front of the two girls, which he was sharing with Lee Morris. Lee was showing off his identity bracelet to anyone who'd look.

Half an hour into the journey, everyone had eaten their packed lunch. The air was crackling with anticipation and the fat boy had been sick. High spirits bordered on hysteria. Lee had snatched Andrew's cold sausage and poked it up Trisha's skirt.

Andrew was the only one not joining in the fun. All around him his classmates were kneeling on their seats, faces pressed between the headrests, chattering excitedly. But he was absorbed in other things. He was composing a poem. He was soaking up the atmosphere, but only to get the words to describe it.

He made up poems regularly even though he knew boys shouldn't. Generally he kept them hidden in his head. On the rare occasions when he wrote them out, he always tore them into pieces the moment he finished. He'd never shown one to another person before, or told anybody what he did. The poem he was writing was a risky first for him. He was going to give it to Trisha as a special gift.

He could hear her behind him quizzing the boys on how much spending money they'd each brought with them. Beside her, Judith was reading palms and cheerfully telling everyone when they'd die and what of. Along the back seat, Karen Sharpe, wearing bright yellow dungarees and a lime T-shirt, was leading a row of giggling friends in waving and blowing kisses to the cars and trucks behind them. Lorry drivers were the most likely to wave back.

Andrew's poem was going to be about their school trip. As the coach crunched onto the gravel-surfaced zoo car park, he was still searching for a word to rhyme with Karen. The class disembarked with the urgency of an invading force, splitting into small groups and scattering before Mrs Binkendrick and her two bewildered parent helpers could establish any authority. It was a sunny day, the zoo was busy, and the children were soon lost amongst the throng of visitors.

Andrew went off alone, satisfied for once with his own company. For weeks prior to the trip he'd been looking forward to spending the day dogging Trisha's every footstep, but then something his father had muttered in passing - that only girls and sissies liked poetry - had prompted this latest, more ambitious idea. He'd write a poem about what everybody did all day except Trisha. That way it would be like she'd seen it all herself. He'd call it Trisha's Day At The Zoo and then not mention her again. He'd write lots. And then before they went home he'd present it to her as a commemorative record of her day. Then when she saw how much he'd done, and the effort he'd put in writing about everyone but her, she'd finally realize how much he loved her.

For the umpteenth time he broke off from his composition to romanticize the moment when he presented it to her and she read it and lovingly went Ahh! Motivated by this image, his first stop was the Gift Shop where he purchased a notepad and pen. After that he set off in search of his classmates. The zoo was huge. Apart from the animal houses, other attractions included a funfair, mini railway, boating lake and picnic area. Andrew traipsed from section to section along the cinder pathways, spending most of his time hopelessly lost. He was following a complimentary map that bore no relation whatsoever to the actual layout of the zoo. (There were also wooden signposts every fifty yards, but these all seemed to point into the nearest bush.) Even so, he felt aloof and important as though he'd been assigned a special task, not just invented it himself: Trisha's personal class biographer.

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The ANIMALS part of the zoo, when he finally got there, was drab and unappealing. All concrete and no grass. The animals themselves were listless and unhappy. The exception was a madly comic monkey who wouldn't stop tugging his thingy. On leaving the dank monkey house Andrew at last came upon some children from his class.

Michael and Ryan, the Pozniak twins, were causing a stir in the Sea Life enclosure. The Pozniak twins caused a stir wherever they went. Their mother was a dwarf, and they were always doing the strangest things. It was feeding time and they'd crept into the Sea Life cage behind the zookeeper. They'd done it to impress Anita Madox who was in the crowd watching. They both fancied her. No-one else did. She was a half-caste. Before he could be stopped Michael had snatched a dead fish from the zookeeper's bucket and bitten off its head. Not to be outdone, Ryan had grabbed the nearest penguin and jokingly pretended to throttle it. Amidst the ensuing fracas, Andrew jotted down a four-line stanza before backing away, inspired to detail as many of the day's events as possible.

By mid-afternoon he'd collected enough material to fill seven pages of his notepad, both sides and in his smallest writing. It included Karen Sharpe playing Damsel-In-Distress, draped theatrically across the mini railway tracks, squealing deliciously for help. Plus a comical description of the parent volunteers resting on a bench outside the Insect House, licking ice creams and swatting the wasps around them. And a verse on Rachel Powell, the girl with the club foot, who Andrew had spotted at a First Aid post. Something about her had unsettled the donkeys on the Donkey Rides and they'd surrounded her and nipped at her ankles.

Now he was back at the Gift Shop where he'd started, lingering behind a postcard rack. After not seeing them all day he'd chanced upon Trisha and Judith. Trish was outside - visible through the window - relaxing on the grassy embankment opposite. But it was Judith he was observing. She was nearby him in the shop yet unaware of his presence. Her avid attention was fixed on the display shelves full of souvenirs and mementos. She was on a nicking spree. Her eyes were gleaming like the masturbating monkey's. Every thirty seconds or so she'd pick up a shiny trinket and drop it into her embroidered shoulder bag. The solitary shop assistant, a stern middle-aged lady, kept shooting her suspicious looks, but she was tied to her till by a steady stream of customers and wasn't certain enough to ring for help.

When Judith finally left the shop, bag bulging, Andrew followed her. Climbing up the embankment he hissed "Jude!" in her ear. She jumped out of her skin and he laughed like he'd scared her witless for a joke when really he'd just been trying to say Hello.

They both flopped down next to Trisha. Judith emptied out her bag onto a much larger pile of stolen gear. Andrew gasped at the sheer amount she'd pilfered. It was sad, he thought, she must have spent the whole day just thieving, instead of joining in with everybody else and having fun.

"Yes," Trisha nodded testily at him, "that's right, ever since we got here." She had a way of reading Andrew's mind and then twisting it to suit herself. "Just pinching. Boring!"

Judith was giggling uncontrollably, rifling through her treasure trove of keyrings, pens and plastic animals.

"I ended up going off on my own," Trisha sulked. She cast a resentful glance towards her oblivious cousin. "I'll bet you don't know what I did all day." Her face softened into a superior smile. "In fact I'll give you three guesses and if you haven't got it by then I'll give you clues but only..."

"I wrote a poem about our trip," gushed Andrew with uncharacteristic boldness.

Unable to restrain himself he presented Trisha with his notepad. Too late he realized by her stony expression he should have played the guessing game first. She accepted his gift with a derisory snort at the kiddie picture on the front cover: a lion cub and its mother. Until then he hadn't even noticed it. He wanted to say the poem was just for her, but the moment was gone. Judith stopped what she was doing and leaned over to see.

Trisha read half a page and then started to skim.

"Your writing's awful," she scoffed.

She flicked through another couple of pages and then offered him it back.

He blushed bright red.

"No, it's for you to keep."

"Oh." Trisha shrugged indifferently, thinking he meant just the actual pad. She found the end of his poem and ripped out all the sheets with his writing on. "What shall I do with these then?"

Andrew was too flustered to be immediately crushed, though he knew it would come.

"I'll have them," said Judith, taking the torn sheets. She smoothed out the ragged edges on her leg. "I liked the poem," she told Andrew. She shielded her eyes from the sun and read another verse. "I love the way you rhyme 'them twins' and 'penguins'."

"Pass me one of your pens, Jude," said Trisha peevishly. "I should write a poem about my day."

+

The trip home was in the dark. They'd been delayed leaving the zoo. The fat boy had gone missing. In the end he'd been found in The Petting Den, huddled in a dim corner still cradling the baby Prairie Dog he'd accidentally squeezed to death.

It was ten o'clock at night. Nobody minded. Everyone was reluctant for the day to end. The interior lighting and the blackness outside made the coach feel like their own cosy, self-contained world. Up front, Mrs Binkendrick had shaken out her bun and was sharing cigarettes with the driver. In the rear Trisha had made up with Judith, but fallen out with Karen Sharpe. The three of them were arm-in-arm along the back seat with Judith in the middle keeping the peace. They were singing for the boys:

"She'll Be Wearing See-Through Knickers When She Comes,

"She'll Be..."

They only had two songs. Coming Round The Mountain and Yummy, Yummy, Yummy, I Got Love In My Tummy. They'd perform one then the other. With each rendition the lyrics got ruder. It was the first time Andrew ever heard the word fanny. He was sitting one row forward at a window seat watching the girls' ghostly reflections in the glass. Mostly he watched Trisha. He felt an unbearable yearning for her. He'd found out what she'd been doing all day. Lee Morris had told him with a gleeful wink. She'd been showing off her bits, top and bottom, for money. 'A tanner a tit or the lot for half a crown'. While he'd been hard

at work composing his poem just for her, she'd been flashing all she'd got in the bushes behind the aquarium for anyone who had the cash. He felt betrayed somehow. More pragmatically he thought, if he hadn't bought the notepad he could have afforded three tits and a Down There view and still had thruppence left to spend on the amusements.

Eventually, close to midnight, they began passing local landmarks: Trisha's mum's bingo hall, Judith's church. The parent helpers woke up and, stretching and yawning, tried to peer through the windows to find out where they were. The swottier pupils gathered up their belongings. Knowing they'd soon be home soured the last few minutes drive; the girls' singing tailed off and Andrew guiltily removed his hand from his trouser pocket.

As the coach pulled up outside the school gates he caught sight of his father standing in the midst of the waiting mums and dads. Even for so late an hour the parents around him appeared unusually frayed and exhausted.

Trisha and Karen had started to bicker. They'd crowded into the gangway with Judith still between them and joined the shuffling queue to the coach doors. Trisha was bragging about how much money she'd earned. Karen retorted with a snide remark about putting pennies in a slot. Trisha's face pinched up into a viperish scowl.

"Well, Andrew Walsh wrote a poem with you in it," she spat out.

Andrew, who'd been about to stand, shrank back, horror-stricken into his seat. Wishing he could disappear, he began glowing like a beacon.

"Andrew wrote a poem?" scoffed Karen disbelievingly.

Half the coach heard her.

"Andrew Walsh wrote a poem!" Lee informed the other half.

In his poem Andrew had likened Karen, dressed all in yellow, to a delicate bird.

"He wrote you've got a nose like a beak," Trisha smirked.

"Fibber!" smarted Karen. "Show it me then."

"You'll just rip it up," answered Trisha smugly.

They glared at each other over Judith's head. Andrew was only a few feet away, but neither of them even glanced in his direction. For his own part he was too embarrassed at being found out as a poet to correct any specific inaccuracies.

"Only fairies write poems," declared Lee delightedly. "Andrew Walsh is a fairy. Nancy Walsh. Eurgh, and I was sitting next to him." He brushed frantically at his clothes. "I'm covered in 'mo dust. Get it off me!"

"Stop it, Lee!" cut in Judith with unexpected sharpness. "I've read it, it's a super poem. Quiet, everyone. QUIET! I've got it here, I'll read it out."

The slow-moving queue ground to a halt. Someone reading out his poetry in front of the whole class - it was a nightmare Andrew had actually HAD. Judith started to recite his work. He covered his burning ears. He knew she was reading out loud from the pages of his notepad, but all he could hear was a rushing, crashing wave sound liberally interspersed with Lee's Kenneth Williams impressions, "Ooh! Well, I say! Nancy-boy Andrew!"

Andrew swore he'd never write a poem again in his life, ever, no matter what.

Richard Godwin



Richard Godwin's mini Glasto set list:

Mind Eraser No Chaser - Them Crooked Vultures

Falling In Love Is Hard On The Knees - Aerosmith

Peaches - The Stranglers

White Trash Millionaire - Black Stone Cherry

You Swore - Dr John

rag man

Rag man waltzed through summer and winter
with rhythm and no sense of season
he had jaws like a broken toy
he capered to the melodies his weather-numbed flesh heard

His clothes smelled of liquorice and weeds
he drew the tourists every year,
the mayor's secret weapon,
a small piece of pornography, he knew the score

They saw him sitting in the rain
hair drenched, the shining face of a child
cascading waxen with insect creeping drops,
staring with insight into vacancy

They took hurried pictures that raised their heart beats
cameras flashing climactically into
the wreckage of his life
like a rapist's hand tapping on a window pane
searching with zoom for his soul

He lived in the ash
unaware as a seal of philosophy
oblivious of them as a fossil
and they trouped away in herds to the questionable safety of coaches

Staring with accomplishment at souvenirs
 while he ambled away on blind rejection's path
 now no more than a snapshot
 a sanitised relic for tidy suppers

Like some unknowing victim of a peep show
 or costumed freak displayed for a homecomer's amusement

Sara Crowley



Sara Crowley's mini Glasto set list:

Space Bound - Eminem
 Did It On 'Em - Nicki Minaj
 Dear Rosemary - Foo Fighters with Bob Mould
 Rootless Tree - Damien Rice and Lisa Hannigan
 Break Your Heart - Steven Page

she was glitter and shine

As an invisible woman it was important to Olive to have an invisible home. Her house was set back from the road and straddled a corner. Ivy crawled up every wall and the green leaves harboured dark. The grass was untamed; plants grew wild, flowering with haphazard splashes of colour. Bushes, trees and hedges packed densely in the grounds sheltered the house from view. It was cool and shady, the ground dank and mossed. On the air was the scent of wet earth and mushrooms. The front gate was padlocked and looped around with a rusty chain. It appeared untouched so the assumption was that nobody entered or left. In fact one of the fence panels was missing and Olive just squeezed past a huge Conifer and was on the pavement. Inside she kept up with basic maintenance and cleaning, but life was

too short to fret about chores, if things looked too dusty she shifted them around.

She had decided to disappear when she was 24. Nobody had ever looked for her; her only known relatives were dead, and she had no friends. She had made herself invisible: she put on weight, but not too much. She wanted to stop the sexual glare of men and the appraising looks of women. People gawped at obesity, the trick was to be fat enough to be dismissed, but not freak show big. She stopped at 13 stone and wore size 20. She dressed in navy trousers and tops that looked almost like a bank cashier's uniform. Her shoes were flat. She cut her straight brown hair herself. It didn't matter if the ends were straight or not as she whisked it up into a twist and secured it with a scrunchie. She allowed the grey strands to grow through, random and wiry. She left her eyebrows unplucked, cut her nails bluntly and wore no jewellery or make up. To her delight people stopped noticing her. She shopped at the large supermarket a bus ride away, always careful to select a different cashier lest someone should remember her. She knew she was succeeding when shop assistants would look beyond her for the next customer.

A voracious reader, she had been thrilled by a William Burroughs interview in which he stated "I have an exercise I learned from a Mafia Don in Ohio: see everybody on the street before they see you. It's quite interesting actually because, if you see everyone before they see you, they won't see you."

She put it to the test and it worked. She began to scan every person as soon as they came into her line of vision; wonderfully they never appeared to look at her.

Olive's dad had left shortly after her birth, her mum telling her that he couldn't cope with Olive's disobedience and bawling. Her recollection of her childhood was akin to a dream that wisps away as one struggles to capture it. She had a vague notion of a checked dress, and she still had her toy monkey, Momo. There was a Christmas tree, or perhaps several, always decorated with the same shiny red baubles. Supper was fetched from the enormous chest freezer and heated in the oven - chips with burgers, pizza or pie - her mother delighted with the novelty of frozen convenience food. Only one memory truly stood out: she had pissed in the garden. The grass was springy and lush, an inviting bed for her. She lay on her back with her eyes shut and could hear hundreds of tiny creatures. There was a plane droning overhead, the traffic on the main road, a siren, a bark, a mower - and she needed to wee. To use the toilet inside would mean leaving the light and heat for the gloom of the house and climbing up the stairs. She would scatter the bits of garden that attached itself to her body; two blades of grass and an ant, a tiny stone imprinted on the sole of her foot, a single petal of a daisy. Mum would shout. It was much easier to squat on the earth. The urine splattering on to the parched soil sounded fantastic. Her mother was appalled. It was another thing for Olive to add to the ever-increasing list; do not wee on the flowerbed.

Life as a child had been confusing and strict; her mother forever ordering her to do things differently, by which she meant Olive should do things the same as everyone else. Olive had attempted to obey the myriad instructions, but as they made no sense to her she was often in trouble. School set yet more rules to abide by. It was difficult to sit still at the wooden

desk when her limbs seemed to spasm by themselves. Her arm would fling out and up, she would try to disguise it as a head scratch, or a ponytail adjustment. At times the teacher would assume she was claiming to know the answer and she would feel the hot shame mark her face as she stumbled with an incorrect response. She observed the other children and tried to mimic them, but their actions seemed alien. She wanted to tip her chair back and rock on the legs, and stand up and whoop occasionally just because she felt like it. Olive liked handstands, the blood rush to her upside down head a warm fuzziness. She enjoyed spinning and head over heels, and whirling and singing and eating bogies and putting glue all over her forearms and then slowly peeling it off. The teacher told her to stop, and the children called her stupid and weird. At home or school she was constantly reprimanded and although she apologised and promised to try harder, she never understood.

At the age of thirteen she allowed Paul Corbett to put his tongue in her mouth and his hands on her nipples. Something thrummed in her knickers and she wanted the sensation to last forever. They were caught by one of the teachers and her mother was called to the school. At home her mother spanked her with a tortoise shell hairbrush, and she vowed never to kiss anyone again. It was difficult though to avoid the boys who followed her home and trailed after her at playtimes.

"Olive, hello," they would say.

"Give us a kiss Olive."

"Go on Olive, give us a go."

She was a pretty girl with a slim figure and disproportionately large breasts. As she grew older she was increasingly aware of the stares from men. They would gaze after her as she passed on the street, cat calling from scaffolding, and wolf whistling from cars. She felt uneasy and vulnerable. Her mother warned her that the boys wanted to hurt her and force a baby into her stomach. She was told that men were dirty and disease-ridden, rather like rabid dogs they were to be avoided. It was scary walking out in public knowing that at any time one of those beasts could lose control and assault her. She began to make excuses not to go out. She invented tummy aches and school holidays. Her teacher was glad of the chance to teach without Olive's many distractions, and didn't complain about her lack of attendance. Aged 15 she ceased all pretense and stayed home. She cooked well enough in a slapdash manner and her mother was happy to relinquish household duties to her. Olive would vacate whichever room her mother entered and when not cleaning would read, or simply sit as still as she was able, allowing blankness to descend on her. By avoiding each other they lived together with minimal conflict.

Her mother died when Olive was twenty-four, sourly ashamed of her daughter but without anyone else in her life to bequeath house and savings. Olive relaxed for the first time, she felt herself unclench. The need to conform and please had gone. She could sit and twitch

without fear of admonishment. She could eat what, and when, she chose. She could sing and dance and skip. It occurred to her that she could do anything in the privacy of her home, away from the judgement of others. It was such a pleasure to just be, which was when she decided to vanish.

The neighbours assumed "The daughter" had moved away, and as the garden got wilder and obscured the bricks and mortar entirely, they would walk past with quick little glances at the dark space where they knew the house had been, and wonder if it would ever be occupied again. Inside her sanctuary Olive read and danced and watched television. She treated herself to a personal computer complete with broadband connection. Hours would pass in a pleasant blur whilst she drifted from forum to forum. Using the name "nobody" she communicated with people of different ages and interests. Sometimes she got into heated debates; even that was enjoyable. Her typing skills improved and spell check assisted her to be understood. She scoured shopping sites for DVDs and the latest books that she had delivered to her post office box. Nobody mocked her for her jolts or sudden sounds, and it filled her with joy.

An online poster who went by the name of "Pie" on one of the boards began to email her with personal chatter and gossip about the other forum members. Olive responded, she bitched and kidded with Pie, her wit blossoming as Pie sent back notes telling her how amusing she was. Pie revealed that her real name was Stella, she was married to Lawrence and had a six-year-old daughter, lived in Suffolk, and worked part time as a nurse. She asked reciprocal questions of Olive, which she evaded. Regardless, Stella began to confide in Olive small concerns and daily gripes. Olive would find herself wondering what advice would be best to give, what solace she could offer. The thoughts warmed her, and clicking on the inbox was the highlight of her day. Sometimes Stella would upload pictures of herself and her family. Olive truthfully said she didn't have a camera. Stella was fond of Australian soaps, and so Olive began to watch them too, to have the pleasure of commenting on the various characters.

One Tuesday Stella put up a photo of a raincoat that she had ordered online. Olive was entranced. The coat was a deep red and edged in black. It looked like it belonged in a fairy story. It had three large buttons down the centre, and a wide belt. It was such a beautiful, vivid garment. She emailed Stella and told her how envious she was of her purchase. Stella responded by instructing Olive to buy one herself. The thought fizzed inside her like a treat, the possibility intoxicating and strange. She could buy the coat.

When the coat arrived it was even better than she had hoped. It fitted perfectly, gliding over her hips and stomach. Inside was snugly and quilted, outside weather-proofed. She walked through the house with her hands in the pockets swishing the coat, but quickly got hot. She hung the coat on the outside of her wardrobe so that she could look at it whilst in bed. At night she couldn't sleep. She lay on top of her covers trying to keep cool. The air felt thick with moisture before great fat plops of rain splattered to the ground. Lightning sizzled and thunder rumbled deep and low. She was scared; the teeming rain always reminded her of the Noah's ark story she had heard at school. She worried that it might not stop. At the window she watched the rain running down the pane like racing tadpoles; round blobs

stretching and streaking. Puddles filled quickly, surfaces shining in the streetlights. Then she remembered the coat.

Outside she laughed as the water streamed down her face and over the coat's waterproof surface. It worked amazingly well at repelling the wet. She walked along the road smiling broadly. As the rain eased, light of day seeped into the black. She had once longed to play in a puddle and her mother had forbidden it. She now stood at the edge of the largest one she could find before jumping, both feet at the same time, sploosh, into the centre.

A man walking by couldn't help but grin at her obvious pleasure.

"Nice day for ducks," he said. "Top of the morning to ya."

"And to you," she replied.

Iris Applequist



Iris Applequist's mini Glasto set list:

Dead Flowers - The Rolling Stones
I Found A Reason - The Velvet Underground
So Long Marianne - Leonard Cohen
Season Of The Witch – Donovan
We Gotta Get Out Of This Place - The Animals

now and here

i would be drink in a glass, waiting for a quaff
by someone hasty and careless; i would spill from
the corners of the mouth; i would stain; i would run out.

i would say to fill in, if so wished; pinch-hit or understudy
whatever failed roles; i would pry lines with the claw
of a hammer in order to make them fit; i would even redact.

i would divvy the man who made me a bastard, his
prize; i would dole it piece by piece, enunciating each
value with precision; i would be a statue, or a monument.

i would, i would.