



BEAT THE DUST'S
LITERARY FACE/OFF ISSUE



VS

**Donut
press**

Introduction

Yer can't beat a bit of healthy competition, we reckon, so with this in mind we decided to pit a couple of small indie presses against each other in a Literary Face/Off. In January, Beat the Dust threw down the gauntlet to two UK-based publishers of poetry, Grievous Jones Press and Donut Press, and both kindly agreed to take up the challenge. Each press selected four poets from their stable to represent them and a "weapon" of choice...meaning in this case, a theme, which two of their own team and two of the opposing team would need to write about.

For Grievous Jones Press, representing its American Mettle imprint, we have David E Oprava (team captain), Misti Rainwater-Lites, Karl Koweski and John Dorsey. Their weapon of choice is the theme, *The Virtues of Vice and Vice Versa*.

For Donut Press we have Tim Wells (team captain), Tim Turnbull, Liane Strauss and Wayne Holloway-Smith. Their weapon of choice is the theme, *Gentrification*.

Who wins? You decide... and if you'd like to share your conclusion with the rest of the world, cool, post a comment on the live site.

Okay, competitors, ready...

Tim Wells on gentrification



Tim's latest poetry collection published by Donut Press is *Rougher Yet*. Here's his Top 8 combat-related song list:

F: War On The Terraces - Cockney Rejects

A: Ballroom Blitz - The Sweet

C: Where Have All The Boot Boys Gone? - Slaughter And The Dogs

E: Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting - Elton John

/: Runnin' Riot - Cock Sparrer

O: Generation Of Scars - Terrible Twins

F: Chaos - 4 Skins

F: Gang Warfare - The Strike

my nietzschean overcoming of culture

'And so the population was gradually led into the demoralizing temptations of arcades, baths, and sumptuous banquets. The unsuspecting Britons spoke of such novelties as 'civilization', when in fact they were only a feature of their enslavement.'

tacitus – the agricola

That there is

a Whole Foods Market

in Stoke Newington

was pointed out to me
by my lovely girlfriend
who cares
about such things.

I could never
step foot
in the place
for fear
someone I know
would see
and shame me.

But because
I love her so,
I would go
and buy her
soya milk
and salad
and face softener
at the one in Soho.

Far
from where
I live.

David E Oprava on gentrification



David's latest book published by American Mettle is *American Means*. Here's his Top 8 combat-related song list:

- F:** I Am The Warrior - Patti Smith
- A:** Lawyers, Guns And Money - Warren Zevon
- C:** Big Gun - AC/DC
- E:** Tender Comrade - Billy Bragg
- /:** War - Edwin Starr
- O:** Tin Soldier - Small Faces
- F:** Fight For Your Right To Party - The Beastie Boys
- F:** Bang Bang - Nancy Sinatra

moving on up

(and into her)

starved in my crack-of-dawn bedsit until the cock crowing needs a drain, dash, back in bed I lay contemplating conurbating, maybe with someone, anyone, a she preferably with long soft hair I can mend when it falls in the sink using glue stick and bits of blonde spaghetti string, she will have to be a musician so we can start a death-metal folk band, I'll play chainsaw and she can burn books by Gordon Ramsay.

one city merges

into another sharing

air, sex, food, and spit

a fickle bitch is loneliness, I contemplate where she'll put her self, girl stuff clutter boxes on top of the sparseness I've cultivated, pro-tempore void where tampons will go, no, consider a cat rather than a woman and still there will be shedding, clothes

on tiles smudged with rouge rubbed off in the heat of post-kung-po-chicken sex,
yes, conurbating, the appeal is hungering.

she tastes like crunchy

rose hips once fondled by bees

on their way to screw

in love with the notion of a yummy bed mate in a better locale with the passion and
problem she creates, sharing space, meanwhile I'm holed up here for my nightly
misanthropic meat beat on the bad streets, I mean, I should have a girl, I was into
cunnilingus before it was cool, but it's not the looks or the smell, it's the books I
read about how one mouth expels what the other one masticates.

stale sentiments reek

like whispers lost under the

humming fridge dust-wake

surrounded by crisp-crumbs and well dog-eared copies of pulp borrowed on the third
and fourth hand, I've found the roommate I want. A barbecue-smoked girl with blue
cheese dresses and celery stalk legs, a cumquat expression and juicy fruit lips, a
Roquefort demeanor with quail's eggs eyes that spy me with black pudding delight in
the span of a shitake sunrise over her new double-wide caravan hips.

Wayne Holloway-Smith on the virtues of vice and vice versa



Wayne's Top 8 combat-related song list:

F: Bring Da Ruckus - Wu Tang Clan

A: Fight Fight With Fight - Cats And Cats And Cats

C: Wallop - Chas & Dave

E: Fisticuffs In Frederick Street - The Toy Dolls

/: Getting Evil In The Playground - Neil's Children

O: Fight - Art Brut

F: Temper Temper - Rodney P

F: Kung Fu International - John Cooper-Clarke (from his Sony Album)

how it plays out

Waking again – still believing you're Barry,
the yodelling, mobile deejay from Bury,
who cut out the feature on his early retirement
from the local newspaper to send to his mum.

You shower and dry still wearing his thumb print
of baldness, think back to the action he got

from Sharon at his very last gig. The image
still dances like breath on your neck as you dress

so you forfeit your coffee, fearing an early return
from your wife. Acting on impulse you set off
for the High Street, look out for the young boy,
being pushed by his grandma, who stares like he knows you;

the couple in motorised chairs made especially
for the obese; that woman who walks her black Labrador
and always sort of nods in the direction of Budgens,
where the kid at the till calls you *bruv*.

There's a shift in the cramp-ridden guilt in your stomach.

As you pass Peking Chef, Laura Jacks, Purrfect Petstore
and the first of four betting shops in a row.

There's a vague recognition of your face in the window

of Subway, of the mole on your hand. It all starts to unfurl:

you remember the smell of your pillow, that last night

you got up for a piss. So, you head for the bench

outside Tesco to seek out that lady,

who wears the frilly pink dress – who looks

a bit like a cake, who usually laughs into a blue plastic bag

and is rumoured to have danced for John Tiller, in her day.

You settle beside her, in silence, again, and begin to re-live

the whoops of a crowd, the flowers and gifts, the lovers

she took, those high-kicks, those feathers.

Misti Rainwater-Lites on the virtues of vice and vice versa



Misti's poetry collection, *Sloppy Mouth* is due out on American Mettle very soon.

Here's her Top 8 combat-related song list:

F: (There's Gonna Be A) Showdown - New York Dolls

A: Fortunate Son - Creedence Clearwater Revival

C: My Way - Elvis Presley's version

E: Pretend We're Dead - L7

/: Asking For It - Hole

O: Catatonic - Babes In Toyland

F: Long Haired Redneck - David Allan Coe

F: No Feelings - Sex Pistols

marshmallow witch

Mother and maternal grandmother
and sister and cousins see this evil
in me and call it some kind of crazy
not threatening really
this brand of crazy
ain't the dangerous designer kind
won't see me behind the wheel
of a big deal car blastin' the bad girl
with sparkly polish lyrics
that could lead me down that dark
and oh so twisted Anais Nin Erica Jong

Anne Sexton road of serious fuckin' descent.
I'm harmless masturbation crazy
I'm naturally large but not obscene breasts fetish crazy
I help myself to the cornbread at Luby's
and get reprimanded and educated
by the world class employees
...I sang "Crazy" at Bar Crosby in Acuna, Mexico
and meant every fucking word but I was a virgin
...I hid from my staid first husband
in a studio apartment closet and drove him
to steal from Barnes & Noble to supply
my wish list and left him for a former speed dealer/
rock and roll drummer from Oakland
...I serenaded Joe Pachinko with "D-I-V-O-R-C-E"
and left a poem on his answering machine
as Kim Wu
I'm Robert Crumb on crack crazy
hidin' from the big ugly badly drawn world
singin' "my girl! my girl! don't lie to me! tell me where
did you sleep last night?"
sniffin' Kiwi shoe polish
shootin' cats outta my yard with a b.b. gun
wailin' country blues gospel ennui to
my two year old son with toy guitar
sellin' Ed Hardy xmas gift purse on eBay
carryin' Cymbalta and hand sanitizer
in Goodwill clearance sale fat Elvis bag
wearin' an altered art domino pendant
around my neck that features a bottle of
tabasco sauce to prove to battle weary
rural Texans how utterly hot and edible I am.
I take two bucks from my mother's third husband
and bet on the long shot, Givetheballtoleroy.
When he doesn't place I scream, "Give the GUN
to Leroy and tell him to shoot that good for nothin' horse!"
I agree with Ayn Rand
there is virtue to this insane selfishness
this grim and gaudy maw
I am quite the Ms. Pac-man
doin' my little crazy dot fruit ghost gobble gobble dance
but you can burn me
and lick me sweet

from your fat fingers
and the world like a Dallas food court shopping mall carousel
will my darlin'
continue to turn.

Tim Turnbull on gentrification



Tim's latest collection published by Donut Press is *Caligula On Ice And Other Poems*. Here's his Top 8 combat-related song list:

F: Stone Cold Dead In The Market Place - Louis Jordan And His Tympany Five

A: Alle Gegen Alle – Laibach

C: Battle Of New Orleans - Lonnie Donegan

E: Call The Army (I'm Alive) - Anti-Pasti

/: Flashback - Ministry

O: Staring At The Rude Boys – The Ruts/Young Mr Bizzle And His Chums The Gallows

F: Ohio - Neil Young

F: Trouble Trouble - Crazy Cavan

bohemians

You notice first a braying noise
and then the public bar's brimful
of quirky hats and canvas shoes,
ultra-skinny jeans and stubble.

Amazed, you rub your eyes and ask,
*Who are these angels and where from
and who set them the thankless task -
bringing culture where there was none?*

This influx fills you heart with hope;
the neighbourhood becomes a scene.
They push artistic envelopes
like it's Zürich 1917.

You talk to them, your life's enriched
with things you never knew it lacked.
They are so nearly cutting edge,
so avant-garde after the fact

a boundless future fills your mind –
you might be anything you wanted.
One sunny day you wake to find
the rent's gone up and they've absconded.

John Dorsey on gentrification



John's latest collection of poems published by American Mettle is *Sodomy Is A City In New Jersey*. Here's his Top 8 combat-related song list:

F: Hurricane - Bob Dylan

A: You Gotta Fight For Your Right To Party - The Beastie Boys

C: Eye Of The Tiger - Survivor

E: We're Not Gonna Take It - Twisted Sister

/: Ballad Of The Green Berets - SSGT. Barry S. Sadler

O: War - Edwin Starr

F: Eve Of Destruction - Barry McGuire

F: Between The Wars - Billy Bragg

a mountain of zen accusations

north vegas sits just
off the highway like a
discarded sofa a mountain of zen accusations
bathing
in the glow of
golden eternity a tourist
biting kerouac's style in
a kiddie pool with

the ghost of elvis
peaceful at 3:28am

we wake to the
rattle and hum
of
construction

here i am a
leaning tower of babel
a hunk a hunk
of burning love comping
an inferno of words
to the misguided glittering
angels filled with fear and loathing
at the ends of the earth

here even poverty has
its own beat filled

with history this city
where rumor has it
sinatra pawned the dancing shoes
of god after tapping his
way into stardom like
a true new jersey
alley cat

i think about these things
as i leave jacob playing
cards on the casino floor
to go in search

of the hotel pool

in the hallway i overhear
a young hispanic girl
pleading with her family
to bring her kids
for a visit only
to be denied the
payphone asks for another \$
for a few more
minutes of fleeting hope
she reaches into her
pocket for the last
bit of change everything
feels like a gamble
maybe her father won't
even pick up the
phone next time

in an hour she will
go out on the
street under the moonlight
with a vagina like a clown car

the bargain basement queen
of hopeless romantics

the scent of pot
rolls down the hall
i follow it to its
last breath like a
swooning lover looking for

a glass slipper in a whorehouse

i have always been
ready to dance with love
drunk on darkness i
go upstairs and wait
by the window for
the next sad song to begin

Liane Strauss on the virtues of vice and vice versa



Liane's new collection of poems due out with Donut Press in April is *Frankie, Alfredo*. Here's her Top 8 combat-related song list:

- F:** Step On - John Kongos
- A:** Eye Of The Tiger - Survivor
- C:** War - Edwin Starr
- E:** Get Up, Stand Up - Bob Marley
- /:** I Fought The law - The Clash
- O:** Fight The Power - Public Enemy
- F:** Boy Named Sue - Johnny Cash
- F:** Cows With Guns - Dana Lyons

the vices of poetry versus the virtue of verses

Homewards weaving in the glow of just gone noon-dawn,
my red-carpet train spilling like champagne,
my kisser a molasses of mascara,
more than a little the worse for the fine transports
of last night's month's worth of carpe diem odes
and already rueing as much as I can recall
of the recollection of the iamb, when whom
should I espy but a louche lollygagger of free verse
leaning languorously against a lamppost?

I know I should know better, but do I
take myself vocatively aside to chide,
"Hold your hysteron-proterons. Is that
an anacoluthon in his pocket or are we talking early Romanticism?"

Rather than reckon with the relevance of rhetorical questions,
I'm climbing out of my scarlet Ferragamos to eat scrambled egg
on toast out of the palm of his hands and batting my unleashed lashes
at nothing more than a lick and the promise of doggerel before lunchtime.

Doggone if within a week I'm not living thick
in the timeless tuneless lyric drift
of dark socks the floor has all but disappeared under.

How many times must I remind myself roundly
that if this isn't what comes of a lack of self-restraint
and a weakness for half rhyme, then neither does the inevitable:
"Hey baby, why do you flout my flute?
Why don't you bay me with your laurel of duo knots?"
To which I, no longer amused, needs must reply,
"Look me in the eye, wan tooter. Don't ply me with your threadbare verses!
Do the darn dishes!"

Halcyon Helicons! How is it I'm always taken by surprise
when, in the no time which this one keeps, I'm swooning
over the next pair of ample amphibrachs in a tux from Prada
and, invoking the notional fairness of war and love,
found and forged in the mesh of that old erstwhile net:
Chanel goggles agog, Hermes scarf lashed breezily under my chin,
taking hairpin curves and my pleasure along the Adriatic margin at speed
in a mediterranean-blue high pelagic flash coupé
and for the foreseeable future
happily back in the saddle of a fine heroic couplet again.

Karl Koweski on the virtues of vice and vice versa



Karl's new collection of poems, *Red Star Ascending* will be published by American Mettle later this year. Here's his Top 8 combat-related song list:

- F:** Two Minutes To Midnight - Iron Maiden
- A:** The Trooper - Iron Maiden
- C:** Run To The Hills - Iron Maiden
- E:** Aces High - Iron Maiden
- /:** Die With Your Boots On - Iron Maiden
- O:** To Tame A Land - Iron Maiden
- F:** These Colours Don't Run - Iron Maiden
- F:** Masters of War - Bob Dylan

guts to water

sunlight detonates off
a thousand splintered
shards of glass
like god's stripper glitter
strewn across the alley
stiletto heels of honed fire
pierce my eyeballs
threatening to create
a second migrainal sun
lap dancing my brain

two sun bleached Strohs cans
peek out like a couple winos
hiding in the tall weeds

I grab them up,
shake out the piss trickle
from their skunky innards
and push the empties
into my jacket pocket

I catch a whiff of rot
a bloated garbage bag
split open
entrails undulating
and I think for a moment
I must be hallucinating
until it occurs to me
I'm staring at a
buffet of maggots
and I wonder what
they must taste like
these squirming little
protein pills

a scream wakens me
turns my guts to water
a woman's keening wail
so much like my wife's
post collision that
I'm running toward
its origin
before I even realize
I should be running away

I recognize the brick bunker
apartment complex
the laundry room vents
below which I sometimes sleep
I recognize the brunette
lying on the ground
pleading for her babies
to run get help,
her two howling children
watching a man
I do not recognize
squirt lighter fluid

on the crotch
of her blue jeans

the man speaks to her
with a voice like
colliding metal
with words I no longer
possess the ability
to understand
he withdraws a Zippo
from his pocket
the silver catches the sunlight
sending kaleidoscopes
through my pin-wheeling brain

I think I should stop this
before it gets out of hand
but I haven't taken
my protein pills
and I don't know
what words to use
these thoughts form
and dissipate like exhaust
from a laundry vent
the man flicks the Zippo afire
and flings it on her lap

flames erupt from her crotch
her screams siren
supernovas into my skull
threatening cranial implosion
backing away
my eyes catch hold
of the children
their eyes roll in horror
I'm bearing witness
to the creation of me
two more hollow bodies
with minds like sieves
set to wander
the alleys of the world

and this knowledge
this destruction
at a molecular level
where the soul resides
spurs me forward
charging into the man
with all the force of
a locomotive colliding with
the car piloted by my wife

he collapses beneath me
as I drive my knee
into his groin
when he attempts to
shatter me with his screams
I gouge my thumbs
into his eye sockets
evicting the jelly orbs
on bungee cords
of blood licorice

I roll onto my back
the entire world spinning
with the stench
of burning denim and skin
and agony and ruination
twirling around
the nexus of me