



Front Cover

Earl of Seacliff

Christmas Surprise 2008

Featuring work by:

Michael O'Leary (Godfather, Editor in Chief)

Brian E. Turner (Technical Editor)

Mark Pirie (Friend of the Family)

Niel Wright (Friend of the Family)



Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop
Paekakariki
2008

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Niel Wright

The cover shows a work entitled ‘What a scream’ from the Earl of Seacliff’s exhibition ‘A Helen Clark Retrospective’ held in 2002 at One Eye Gallery, Paekakariki. The Earl is seen holding an original Edward Munch painting signed by Helen Clark. The photograph appears courtesy of the Dominion newspaper.

Printed by Otaki Printers (2005) Ltd, Otaki

Published by:

Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop
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Aotearoa, New Zealand
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Web site: www.earlofseacliff.co.nz

ISSN 1177-715X

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*The fishes swimming in the sea
Sing to thee a threnody
The sailor drowned
Will hear the sound
Of fishes singing in the sea.
Anon*

*You may be a boy and you may be a girl
You may be bald or you may have a curl
You may dance a jig, waltz, or do a twirl
But wherever you are in the world
Its Christmas Surprise from the Earl*

Michael O'leary

WHIP (Work Haphazardly In Progress)

Adapted from the novel Magic Alex's Revenge

In the wooden lonely cell phone tower
Captive of his own wild genius
His next train of thought entered
The station of his open mind

What you might call his very own
'Schumann Cavity', a bit like saying
'*Nihil in Sacculo quod non fuerit
in Capito*' in the philosophical

Rather than the pecuniary sense
The secrets and inventions in
The "Nothing Box"; a sealed cube
With randomly-blinking lights

Developed all those years ago
Now had become common currency
Haunting him gleefully, like
A perpetual neonic nightmare

Holding the small bowl that
Held his *eye-pod* aloft, he
Intoned from his heights
"*Introibo ad altare Dei,*"

Sure he was another tinker
Like all Greek philosophers
Off the Floating Island, just
another burden on the sax players ...

... so quietly sang the Don
For his swan-song, now he's gone
Krishna had mockingly referred
To him as a neo-Nikola Tesla

A wound acted out with a Bowie knife
Mountains high, rivers deep, gain
Satori by chanting ' $V=IR=Om$'s Lore' so
Say their Sweet Lord's earthly minions

A soldier's deeds on a battlefield
Can be measured by what is seen
His bravery and his heroism lives
Well beyond the realm of dreams

Headlines proclaim his patriotic
Life, and TV news shouts his fine
Contribution to the country that made
Him, his example, his spirit so fine

But there is another type of soldier
Who fights an enemy within
Who doesn't live with lice in trenches
Yet, whose struggle is just as grim

This soldier does not fend off bullets
His dangers are his own fears
His bombardment is not from a foe
No, he is attacked by his own ideas

He is the Internal Soldier who no-one
Can blame, as unseen he was
Captured by a capricious enemy
That no-one can see because

He is a different kind of 'Unknown Soldier'
To whom there is no mon-u-ment ...
Frag-men-ted ... No-one can understand
His ... nightmarish existence ...

Nor his attempts to be free ...
Of the Struggle of the Magicians, the questions
Were asked: Did Jesus play His guitar
Gently weeping for the world
He had come to save?

Did His Moroccan musical instrument
Tunefully lament the captive slave?
Did the Son of God (the son of man)
The son of a virgin woman too

Rock and roll with His troubled times
Singing 'Doowop, doowop, deedo?'
Did he pick up David's Lyre and sing
With the merry Magdalen at the tavern?

Did He rave on the same old song
Like the Likely Lads at the Cavern?
You're a long time dead ...
At least until eternity, so sing and relax
... just, Let it be, yeah, Let it be ...

... the man stands off-centre
stage right, aloof and judgemental
in his Old School Tie and sporty
sports jacket. Turn left at Greenland

and see The Ice-man who cometh
from Iceland, Gandar Thor Cortes
yodelling up the canyon, with
the ice-pick that killed Trotsky

held on high, while the woman,
Nella Fantasia, is twisting something
about in her hand as though she
was making *Knodel* or dumplings,

in long flowing skirts and chastitty-belt
blouse, she holds her hands to her
forehead, a nude standing stage left,
as though she is in Esseee-anguish.

Above hovers the three Children of the
Apocalypse, riding towards Valhalla
in their little bright green pleasure machine ...
but, their love could not be of this world

and he wept silent and inwardly for he
knew that even if he lived to be a
thousand year reich ora million dollar rich
that he had met the woman he loved,

which is more than a lot of people do,
but that they could never be of this world ...
Quando para mucho mi amore de felice,
corazon, Mundo paparazzi mi amore

chicka ferdy, para sol, Cuesto obrigado
tanta mucho que can eat it, carousel ...
a great storm blew up and the sky
darkened and her image also darkened

but he knew she would always return
with each flash of lightning, with each roll of thunder
and then the rains would beat heavily
completely engulfing the headland

and he never felt more alone ... we are still
waiting for not I but you and your Nana in a green
blouse ... are a simpleton ... but he loved
the flight of the hawk and could distinguish it

from all others, no wonder he called himself
a conquistador. He would stand rapt,
gazing at the long preenings, the quivering poise,
the wings lifted for the plummet drop

the wild re-ascend, fascinated by such extremes
of need, of pride, of patience and solitude
himself turned almost automatically from
his wifeless reveries into a hawk and with a

quick glance over his shoulder at ...

Brian E Turner

A Short History of the World

A caveman saw the moon glide
In the unbroken sky,
And wondered what could explain
Such calm serenity.
Elders invented demons
To explain the mystery.

A savage saw the sun beat
From the clear blue sky,
And wondered what could create
Such awful potency.
Witch doctors invented God
To explain the mystery.

A Roman saw the comet scream
Across the dark night sky,
And wondered what could ensue
Such dreadful majesty.
Seers forecast doom
To explain the mystery.

A soldier saw his comrades die
Under the bloated sky,
And wondered what his fate
At life's end would be.
Priests invented heaven
To explain the mystery.

A modern man saw his dream decay
Into the whitewashed sky,
And wondered what could dissolve
His individuality.
Psychologists made graphs
To explain the mystery.

A poet saw the people fight
Under the jet trailed sky,
And wondered what could explain
Such gross stupidity.
Scientists created bombs
To explain the mystery.

– Brian Turner

Note: This poem was previously published in *ARGOT, A Literary Magazine Vol 1, No. 3 1962* with the above byline. Currently at least two recognised poets publish under the same name. The relevant authority for this author is: *Turner, Brian E. (Brian Edward), 1936 –*

B: No-where in particular.
A: I see. (*Pause*) That means we don't know who we are.
B: I think that is correct.
A: We don't know who we are because we don't know where we're from.
B: In a way.
A: In a way?
B: Yes. we're not from anywhere in the normal sense because we're not people in the normal sense.
A: Not normal?
B: No.
A: Abnormal?
B: No.
A: What are we then?
B: Different.
A: Different? I don't understand.
B: It's the sound of a different music.
A: I thought we were talking about ourselves, not music.
B: We are music.
A: Can you hear it?
B: What?
A: The sound of the music that you just mentioned.
B: (*Listens*) No.
A: You can't hear it?
B: I strain to hear.
A: Elves music?
B: I can't hear it?
A: Tinkling bells.

B: I can't hear it.

A: Just beneath the thresh-hold of thought.

B: I can't hear it. Perhaps it's an illusion, perhaps you hear things other people don't. Do you hear it, in your mind?

A: Perhaps.

B: I can hear sounds, in my mind's ear...

A: What do you hear?

B: Elves music.

A: That's what I heard.

B: Tinkling bells.

A: The same as I heard.

B: The music of the spheres

A: I think I heard that too.

B: The sound of the syllable Om.

A: I knew you could hear it.

B: I think I can.

A: (*Pause*) I'd still like to know...

B: What?

A: Why we are here. Where we're from.

B: It doesn't matter.

A: Doesn't it?

B: We are here.

A: Yes.

B: We've arrived.

A: Yes. We've arrived.

CURTAIN.

Mark Pirie

HUGO: THE GUIDE DOG

down the street i go
 woof woof like the others
panting happily though the job i do
 is different. i'm Hugo the guide dog,
a golden lab, and wherever i go
 i lead my master.

other dogs follow & obey
 their masters, or do tricks
but i – i do the opposite
 every tread i make affects the one i lead.
one wrong turn causes danger,
 even immense harm. *woof woof*.

i can change a life each day,
 so now my master leads a better life.
down the street i go
 i'm Hugo the guide dog,
a golden lab, and wherever i go
 i lead my master.

“TOUCHING FROM A DISTANCE”

A sonnet in memory of Ian Curtis and Johnny Cash

Pop culture has a habit
of criss-crossing at alternate
moments. One person's death
and destruction parallel's another's
much in the same way that
love lost, that ironic pop-joy,
can be felt in another's song.

Just so, in the case of Ian
Curtis and Johnny Cash. The Cash
song 'I Walk the Line' and Joy
Division's 'Love Will Tear Us Apart'
surf the waves of each singer's
feelings, as if 'touching from
a distance' their inverse isolation.

SONNET ON A PAINTING OF A STEAM TRAIN

For the Paekakariki Station Museum

Steam billows circular through Kapiti air
as a train emerges from the tunnel near
Paekakariki, its pistons working hard. The beach
and the old island relaxing behind are much
the same, but today it's electric passenger and goods trains
that still run this century old line to Wellington.

This majestic painting represents a bygone era
yet it exudes an innocence, a glorious aura
captured so well by artist, W. W. Stewart.
Almost Wordsworthian in its idyllic presentation:
the Kapiti weather calm, sky blue – as far as
the eye can see, grass waving as it passes by. It's 1904,
and they are still in love with coal and steam.
You can almost sense the fun for those passengers aboard.

BULL

“Wellington police officers were obliged to put on their cowboy boots and muster up their rodeo skills early today, after receiving reports of a bull wandering the streets of residential Wainuiomata.” –
www.stuff.co.nz

At about 1.30am, it was time to go for a moonlit jaunt. I left my paddock and jumped the fence - the farmer's lights were out -

and all the cows had agreed to keep silent about my 'night out'. But what I encountered in Wainui amounted to something of a labyrinth

as if I was the Minotaur, a monster to all who I encountered. Soon enough a security guard phoned the cops, and they were on

to me in a jiffy. Their blue heel rodeo boots were swift I tell you, as they rounded me up and herded me into a paddock. I didn't get up

to much that night, just mooing
loudly at the moon, trampling
the odd flower bed, and leaving
behind my muddy footprints,

which must've frightened some.
Lucky for me, there was no
Theseus, as the Police finally phoned
the farmer to take me home.

Niel Wright

Five Sheets of Epigrams

CAVEAT AUCTOR

As you lay dying, Dennis List;
I feared thereby were put at risk
Of being lost
Novels written ; but stored on drive or disk.
This circumstance is sure to irk;
If perishes a lifetime's work.

DRESS WORDS

Not to the Celt or Kelt
But to the Nordic
Belongs the dress word: kilt.

WHILE FRIENDS

While friends are going down in flames;
Am I such a high flyer?
Master of bullshit and flimflam.
While friends are going down in flames;
I bear aloft the oriflamme
Of confidence and flair.
While friends are going down in flames;
Am I such a high flyer?

RATHER

Rather like Nielsen Wright a wraith
Than ghost like Philip Roth,
Or man of wrath like Physkon.

UPON THE KING

After the big parade as Wright
Mere epigrams could Shakespeare write.

LIKEWISE

Public and private the laments
And sycophantic compliments
Of Ovid in a kindred spirit
I read, likewise an outcast desperate.

GLOSSARY ITEM

Earned popular hate,
Did Tarquin the Haught

KA MATE KA ORA

Coterminate by an odd quirk
Of fate your adult life and my life work.

TIME IV

So far decade by decade
In passing indicates;
How tail of youth decayed.

AT LYONNESSE AGAIN

Autumn in Nelson with light winds
Arthur assuages of his wounds.

JUST AS STORY

An easy catch I for romantic echoes,
Just as for stalking cat green gechoes.

ONE FOR DEMY

Light winds blue sky autumnal sun
Prime spot make else industrial Nelson.
But soon enough extinguish
Industrial noise and agricultural stink wish:
To linger in no demi Eden longer.

AUTUMN BREAK

A Jonah as much Omar
By waters Hippocrene
A grapevine as sunscreen,
Rests after epic Homer.

IN GOOD STEAD

The lived in detail, background myth;
These are your stock in trade, wordsmith.

BRAIN DEAD DREAMERS

Never unacquainted with sorrow
Lived hero as human as Zorro.

MARATHON WOMAN

Gym and street hardened woman, fifty one
Sees you still the robust and nifty one.
Not do you the years soften.
Such from the first at twenty seven,
Such after twenty five years
So well do you survive years.

RELIEF

Three epigrams relieve the urge
Of Muse on epic once to splurge.

INDULGENCE

How come in walking round
I still imprint the ground?
What further mark?
Is given me to make;
Having achieved so much;
As none alive can match.

SOMETIME PRINCE

By whatsoever cognomen:
High priest or patriarch of Jerusalem,
Of Jewry solemn
Ikon and gnomon
Was to the ending of his rule
The Prince of Israel.
Comes sometime Prince of peace:
A man as history's centrepiece:
Jesus: the adventitious Christ;
Rabin by politics star crossed.

AS ROVERS GO

To woman tourist skiver bad:
No wilder George shows her death bed.

MEASURE OF MAN

I pad on sans pedometer.

QUOTABLE

With years and winters

Trouble,

 Quoth Shakespeare only quadruples;

With outdoors heavy and straight

 In Molesworth Street

Come downpours of rain

 On Gertrude's umbrella

And Claudius sans its fellow;

With for him to follow

 Indoors

An unwelcome migraine.

MEMORABILIA

More than a simple if not simplistic

Plaque

 The rather's

 My brother's

Wristwatch and strap of plastic,

Black.

NO WAY

What hope in hell was there to schedule he her?

 A life that never we led, Julia.

Michael



Mark



Niel



Brian