

Poetry

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Mark Shoat

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2003

An Uncut Message for the BBFC

Horrific images? Dangerous crimes?
Bloodthirsty vampires? A sign of the times.
It will pass, all this violence - but in the meantime
Perhaps you could leave it for us to decide

Whether we watch it, or whether we don't -
If we don't want to watch it, we promise - we won't!
For God's sake don't cut it, or take out the 'F's,
If you make it for kiddies there'll be nothing left.

A story's a story, it may need to 'disturb'
To have some kind of impact on an insensitive world.
Your censors are rubbish, I'm sorry to say -
I hope you yourselves will be cut out someday.

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Live a Little

If there's a point in living
I do not want to know.
I'm happy doing what I want -
I'll go, when I go, when I go.

There's people think so much of life -
What to do, where to go, who to be.
But thinking more and more, the knife
Speaks ever more clearly.

So shut off the lines of hate and love
And listen to something new.
The world may once have been that good,
But now - well, take my cue.

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Beautiful Lie

Yes, I admit how I'm sad at times
I was so close to dying, I heard the chimes
Beyond thinking, there's a lonesome place,
A space, a jumping-place without grace.

These thin red streaks all on my arm
Remind me, thank God, that I've done no harm -
How thinking of death never crossed my mind,
Till I forced myself to feel left behind.

The thought of dying doesn't start me crying -
I am not gone, but not for not trying.
I'm petrified, though - what if I died?
What if I was gone and no one cried?

But thinking of all the things I've done -
The time I've spent here - I know that I've won.
It's always been clear that this life is a lie,
But never so beautiful - I don't want to die.

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Essence of Life

Us humans like to pity ourselves,
Act like we're sitting on the "damaged goods" shelf.
If conflict is the essence of life,
Why do we bitch about all the strife?

Arguments clear the air, they say -
Make it easier to face each other for one more day ...
But everything we do right now,
Is set out to solve it all, somehow.

And every solution has its flaws and pitfalls,
Like we're doomed to be sorting it till we end it all.
Yet in all the chaos, there's always a reason
To leave something open, to say "hey, just teasin'".

The open ending makes us think,
But still, into pity, we continue to sink,
Sitting in darkness the rest of our lives,
Faking a reason for being alive.

Why are we faking? What do we argue?
How will it end? What's left for me and you?
I think this, then think "hey, just fuck it,"
As we all do, each day, as we continue to mug it.

Suddenly from nothing, a something appears,
To counter the darkness we live in for years.
And that keeps us high for some beautiful days,
And it stays with us, a good thing, for ever and Always.

:)

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Lonely Ape

I saw a lonely ape, and pondered
What was he wondering as he wandered?
His jaw agape, his eyes wide open
The world before him swelled like an ocean.

Before this day, he'd known no more
Than the apes who knew him, the girl next door.
He saw the clan, and - guilty-like -
Strove hard to differ from those he was like.

He saw a bird, it stood, amazed,
A lonely ape? How was he raised?
The ape and the bird, in this ocean of trees,
Stared at each other for hours on the leaves.

He returned, the ocean fell away,
Through all his life he'd remember that day -
The other apes cursed to hear his tale -
To him, his home felt like a jail.

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Feelings Change, the Life Loves Range

The bullies were better than you they
stuck to their guns, kept consistent they
may have been persistent but I knew
where I stood.

With you it's impossible, no way
I can never know, you quickly change
from praise to slander I'm trapped between
where I weep.

You think you try to help, maybe so
I don't think so, I think the truth, deep
you only care for one, one, one, one,
one you want.

Real love, you wonder, love you fear, can
Tear away at your heart and you just
Turn away, pander round with playing
games to hide.

Your heart won't rest till you look it in
the eye, at the fear, release those tears,
decide for once, roll the die, you must
choose your fate.

So be inconsistent, I know you,
Life not choice will rule, your inner light
Will fight your strongest will, and I will
Kill the hate.

Separation hurts, hurt can't be learnt,
Each time it strikes like knife it sears my
Heart and I can't love when pain so strong
Highlights pride.

When you're on the side that smiles I love
To see you share my tide that washes
Tears of worry all gone dry and I
Wish they won't.

Life so hectic now, these times, words crushed
and muddled, nothing missed, no meanings
Lost, has meaning gone away with those
dry tears? Sleep.

All I know is death is there and love
Will always feel that fear, when the loss,
imagine! when they're gone, so long, the
rest is good.

Never

Society hails the loner
It can never be.
They as them, I as me.
We
Never
Live in harmony?
Okay.
And that's the tragedy.

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Nightmare

You sit there, stare at me
I look down, frantically
Wondering just how we
Got to be here.

Yell "SPEAK UP!", point at me,
I read words disjointedly
But blankness just follows me
Fuels my fear.

This is my dream to be reading to you
To be having you listen, to have someone to move;
This is my fantasy, needing you too,
Finally knowing there's something to prove.

I finish the last line
Finish the song
Moved, you applaud
But I feel I've done wrong.
Who are you to tell me, who am I to know?
We go our separate ways, alas, and so and so and so ...

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there's so much hate in the world
that I can't understand what to do
when somebody holds their hand to me
I'm scared ... and then there's you

people seem to like, I guess
but I stress when they are near
I can't find a way to tell them
though I retreat, to me they're dear

closeness terrifies
life's so full of lies
there's no words for the wise
my feelings are too well disguised.

let me think, don't rush me, please
I need some time to organise these
feelings that crowd me, feelings that pain
do I go with you, or stay against the grain?

you look at me, uncomprehending
making me feel my world is ending
making me wish I could let you see
just what this world means to me

I look at me, look in the mirror
I'm confused too, to the truth, I'm no nearer
pause - wait - there's time, just rest
ignore emotion, ignore confusion, there's no test

rest

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Go Figure

Thinking, Thinking, "Cease my brain!
"Let me off this wretched train!"
Thoughts course through my mind, can't rest -
Could it be I've failed the test?

Thinking, Thinking: misery,
Writing this soliloquy.
Trying to create some order,
Reaching only pale disorder.

Love can help it, words can hurt,
I commit while others flirt.
I can tease and I can argue:
I choose not to, chaos ensues.

Go figure.

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Love

Confused or torn apart,
It doesn't matter
You won't shatter
What is in my heart? (emotion, blood)
You will always have devotion, love.

What is love? A word,
Absurd, a burden
I must wear till it shakes me off
That will make me one half of a whole,
Possess my soul.

Just a new set of sparks in my brain -
If I only saw this, but I see cosy rain,
I believe that this feeling will drive me insane
I believe in these stories, these sexy night trains.

Romantic trains and flowing rivers,
Emotion is NOTHING, still it makes me shiver.
You have changed me, this was not planned -
But please think on it, please, and then take my hand.

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Waterbottle

I try so hard, imagine,
You're so safe within your skin,
But it's too much the passion,
I've a whole space to fill in.

Something nice to wake with,
That couldn't burn or scold,
Never cease reminding me,
Even when I'm old,

Of how the days are precious,
How the nights are warm,
Just be nice to wake with
To a glowing happy morn.

To snuggle close and feel you,
On a night as cold as sin,
The care I'd take in knowing
When you're empty, that you're thin.

I'd watch the water gently,
Making sure it's not too hot,
Be careful not to break you,
Afterall, you're all I've got...

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Emotional Notes

Something for once that I can't, won't put into words
Something for once I can't say, I just give to her

The passion I hold 'twixt our desperate discussions
Pricks me quick like a lone breathing pin cushion

A feeling I thought couldn't slacken
But this feeling no ink could e'er blacken

First I learned its rage, then I learned: things change

It's sick such happy people should deny what's on this earth
And yet I've been happy too, and I can't deny the mirth
One can feel when all things real seem to drift, just drift away
And a glimpse comes flashing in the mind of seamless Summer days

Big shiny cars and not one of you smile
The river you cruise on, a gravelly Nile
Walking on by you, I feel the refrain
Of the ghosts of your errors you refuse to name.

Did I make me?
Did I fantasize this life?
Did I make God
To cause confusion in the night?

Where's this hate from? A cycle,
Causing death over mere trifles:
One slings arrows, one a feather,
One will die, be gone forever.

All of my past spread before on a platter
All poison, all tasteless, my god! what's the matter
With me here your silence turns into a storm
Without me I'm happy, but your fear turns to scorn,
Rage mounts up over moments, tick-tock, time goes by
Till the time I return and you're ready to fly
Out the rage, out the torment that tears your insides
Load it off onto me so I'll be hateful next time.

Next time won't be, I won't flee anymore,
This runaway nightmare's the last I'll halt for;
You're the past, life's too fast, I will master this guilt-
I'll remember you, tearfully, but if I stay, I will wilt.

So, the end, and I see
Happy fears approaching me
Life or strife, I can't choose
No one can, but - my muse ...
Oh I see her, won't flee her
Farewell, you won't be her

Anymore
and I close the door.

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Want-Need-Love

I want you, I need you,
I need you to know;
How I feel you, inside me,
No way I can show.

You asked me, why bother?
You dreamed of me, why?
Don't know why I say this
I just have to try.

We talk so, real often,
We know things, so true
Does loving mean wanting
Or needing, or you?

All honesty failing
I'll proffer a lie
And repeat once again
Let's just give it a try.

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...As She Left Me Moving On

I found this star for Christmas
It's so beautiful, it shines,
Just like you, the one I got it from
But you're no longer mine.

See it shine,
You're not mine,
I've a gift without a lover
You're a heart without another
You'll do fine.

I found this smile you gave with me
A picture of us, here, you see
I was so nervous when we met
It seems not long ago. Forget.

See my smile,
So fragile,
We were friends walking together
Thought I'd feel that way forever,
Well, awhile.

I found a piece of truth inside
A feeling that I will not hide
You wanted truth, I give it Now,
We'll get along with this, somehow.

See me smile,
You're still mine
I was wrong to think it truer
But you're beautiful, you're newer
Please still smile.

I'll find we talk a little less,
We'll be less open now, I guess
But more than anything, I Know
I want to share your happy glow.

Be with me,
Let me see,
You want more, you need, I know it,
And I must give up, you showed it,
We are free.

The Ghost of Christmas Spirit, Past

There's Christmas trees up all around,
Once thriving stores are closing down-
And as I look upon this town,
I cannot help but hesitate...

Ex-chart music playing loud
And loner shoppers form a crowd,
Their breath condenses, forms a cloud,
And I feel cause to celebrate.

No price unhalved, no clerk unnerved,
Was that a Santa? I'm being served
By people paying credit bills
And pale detoxers popping pills.

A child is screaming, wants to leave,
And I don't blame him, the child is me,
But momma warns him, yanks his tether
In end-of-January snowflake weather.

Littered white leaves drop on my hair
I've entered the lair where the poor man stares
They reach for me and ask for money
I wish them to a place that is warm, maybe sunny.

Walking alone now, smothered in snow,
Waiting for something, for what, I don't know-
I return to my life now, I return to my home,
Remembering nothing, 'cos life's not that slow.

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I Was All Imagination

I was all imagination
Till you stole a piece away
When you kissed me in our corner
On an up-till-then-boring day

The taste of your lipbalm
Your skin touching mine
Here's me hoping it's love
For the very last time.

A heartbeat away,
Or less, I guess,
As our lips engage a soft caress
And purge what we don't need to say.

The chaos of your perfume
Scents of roses mixed with life
Hugs my senses like an eggshell
Cuts my soul through like a knife.

The moment it was real
Will stick forever in my mind,
A moment that you made me feel,
A feeling no words can describe.

The time you caught me by surprise
And kissed me, made me close my eyes,
I kissed you back, you didn't mind,
That look was something more than kind...

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aWake?

Petrified, we all but stand still:
From fear rises quickly a fiery illwill.
In wake of disaster, few words are spoken -
Still life in the City means mourning has broken.

Sudden, all wordly:
The calm passed, a storm
Rises jubilant - Nonsense. -
Hysterical norm.

Ruins remind that we're meant to be haunted,
Beckoning future forced motion, resolve,
And rather resorting to chaos, reported
Most quibble, some mourn for the lately dissolved.

Your ghosts watch you weeping,
They did not want this.
Know that while you were sleeping,
They stopped by to kiss...

Say farewell to your lovers,
Let's never look back
And perhaps we'll recover
Un-willed-for attack.

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Your Blurriness

Jails within jails,
Prisons, sum of the mind -
When You forged us these bars,
I bet You thought it kind

To make bars ever wider,
To give us some hope?
To counter Your kindness -
Logic. - make hard to cope

With views of perfection,
Brief glimpses outside,
But for us, the insiders,
You made bars too wide

And outside is blurry,
Perfection is vague
Yet compelling enough,
I guess, that's Your sweet plague.

Some seem to ignore it
Or maybe not notice,
Did You gift them with curtains?
Or bless them with blindness?

All I know is I see You,
Out there in the blur -
And it keeps me going,
*T'es toujours dans mon coeur...*¹

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¹"You're always in my heart," (French)

Why

Why are you so mesmerized by the preacher
And quick to be acting in "Singing His Praises",
Yet slow, *deathly* slow, to just do what he teaches
And loathe to risk changes that challenge the ages.

You exit the movie all moved and inspired,
Your blood bubbles over with emotional fires,
But the goosebumps will fade if you talk it to death:
Think on it *yourself*, that's the test.

You're lacking the courage of queasy convictions,
You pale at the concept of taking a risk:
You'd rather be awed by inspiring depictions
Than live it and suffer your own scared conflicts.

You balance opponents and weigh right or wrong,
So blind that the opposite's the same:
I say, opposites *can* co-exist, that's the point,
I say, that's the world's perfect strange game.

So, tough if you thought it to death's door already,
I guess the deadend that you stand at is final:
But I know the resolve that you've come to's unsteady,
It's brittle, will snap like old vinyl.

P.S., (God I'm kind!), please be open-minded,
Save now this poem, my time's turned precious,
But I won't say again, and you won't be reminded,
We *all* change, we must, and you must...

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A Thing of Unimaginable Beauty

The artist proudly steps before me
And humbly unveils a blank space
On the wall from beneath a jet black shield -
Enquires imagination: I see a face.
"I call it," he splutters,
"A Thing of Unimaginable Beauty."
Pregnant pause. Humour him.
"Who's the artist?" I enquire
He shares a private joke with himself.

"The question is not who but when!"
Humour him. "When was the artist, then?"
He accepts the challenge.
"The artist *is* when you imagine him to *be*."
The artist self-destructs (he dies!),
Shuddering fragments of beauty to the
Octopus ink of a lonely black sky.
A work, composed to a score by Moniker Eludesme
Wearing a mocking, silly old wig.

"Can I tempt you with tennis?"
A question, rigged, he surprises.
Coupling: verb. Various lustful enterprises.
(No. Twas you who were on the wrong page.)
Connection, clarity. Trapped, in a cage.
"So when does the artist cease to be?"
"Push my button, I dare you." "I see!"
(What button?) He wins the game, I let him.

Erotic dawn. Forgotten wine
Abandoned to cream sheets in favour
Of a passionate nocturne (Moniker Still Eludesme)
Red wine. The button? I loved him.
He dared me. Feebly, I whimper,
"Do you have more buttons?" Silent response.
The artist ceases to be. The space on the wall:
Filled, with funereal bouquets,
Strangers weep, he's gone away.
(What button?) He's paid his dues.
Resolve: a memo. Look to the stars for clues.

Imagine him. He ceases to be if you don't.

FIN.

This Be a Story

This be a story of dirt on the breeze,
Fighting valiant soldiers from across unknown seas,
Not knowing the Princess for whom they were seized,
Nor caring the castle on which they make seige.

This be a story of reason, in time,
A canvas of points joined, together, defined
Not by logic nor effort but a brief letting go:
About not standing close, of pain wrought long ago.

This be a story of how we make aims,
Of how we make much of the rules of a game,
Of how we deny all the facts we're the same
As soldiers, all weary, across this terrain.

You're all troopers, just sitting there, get it, y'know?
Just sitting there thinking, you know it, you grow!
This be a story, nay, this be a tale,
Of a hero - that's you - yes, you're *right* to turn pale.

"This be a tail - see, look at the cat,
He has a tale to tell, listen to that,
Thinks it be funny to try on a hat,
And see, it be funny, him wearing that hat."

So, root for your own, because this tale be yours,
Above all your own thoughts rule, and really no more:
Consider it, ponder, go, live out your life,
But nobody cares if you do wrong or right.

T'aint watcha do, it's the way that you do it -
Advice that it's taken me long years to master -
If fortune be calling, it's your call to rue it,
Not ruins be building nor ruining faster.

Call on your thoughts and then pick the best one,
Ransack your mind, pick, try it, it's fun!
Then *do* it, or write it, or say it, express it!
Some way, that you've got to, or wasted it festers.

So you picked your card now, dwell on't, remember,
Let it be guiding from Spring to December,
Make it deciding in all your decisions, more,
Use it! Religion, and more, it is *yours*.

Photos

A time before I backwards-died,
A time I wasn't known,
A world I wish I could've been,
And places, people, I've not seen,
And my life, so far, in between,
How thus a world can grow.

My father there, thoughts blank on breeze
Of ocean salts and sandy beach,
Who could (or would) have thought he'd go
So soon before I'd get know
His warmth, his love: his feelings, though,
Will stretch beyond his reach.

I'm touched to view these frozen times:
Spooky, though, *they're* left behind
While we keep moving through this life,
While petty trifles brief excite,
My heart, a beacon, sparks alight
As history here unwinds.

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