

Timglaset #3.



¶ [Timglaslet #3](#).

¶ [Nonsense is the sixth sense](#).

¶ This issue is dedicated to the absurd, the nonsensical and the grotesque. Jokes and puns as serious artistic endeavour, but also boredom, seriousness and earnestness used to absurd or humouristic ends.

¶ Some of the inspiration was provided by: Akbar del Piombo [Fuzz Against Junk](#) (book), Eric Andersen [The Untactis of Music](#) (song), Hugo Ball [Karawane](#) (poem), Jacques Carelman [Catalogue d'Objets Introuvables](#) (drawings), Ivor Cutler [Lemon Flower](#) (song), Bill Domonkos, GIF animations, Bruno Dumont [P'tit Quinquin](#) (film), Jean Ferry [Traveller with Luggage](#) (story), Robert Filliou [Futile Box](#) (artwork), Franquin [Black Pages](#) (comic), John Greaves & Peter Blegvad & Lisa Herman [Kew. Rhone.](#) (album), Peter Greenaway [The Falls](#) (film), Ernst Jandl [Tohuwaboju](#) (poem/song), Lyrikvännan 6/2012 [Nonsens](#) (magazine issue), Marx Brothers' mirror scene from [Duck Soup](#) (film), Francis Picabia [Parade Amoureuse](#) (painting), Erik Satie [A Mammal's Notebook](#) (writings), Soft Machine [A Concise British Alphabet](#) (song), Emmett Williams [Duet](#) (spoken word), ZNR [Garden Party](#) (song).

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PROVERB: WORDS FLY HIGHER THAN EAGLES (BENGT ADLERS Q & A)

¶ Bengt Adlers' CV is a bit like a history of what was exciting in art and literature in Malmö from the mid-seventies and onward. For fifteen years Bengt was the curator at Galerie Leger which was internationalist in its approach and in its own way as important for the local art scene as the council-owned Malmö konsthall/art gallery. And during those same years he pursued his own vision as an author of experimental, conceptual and humorous books of poetry and stories. He has remained productive as a writer, artist and curator to this day.

¶ In 1977 he coined the phrase "Nonsense is the sixth sense", which has the same attributes as a perfect pop single: simplicity, intelligence and a certain amount of audacity. It is the motto for this issue of Timglaslet, which means that it has actually been chosen two times for the same function. Typically though, the phrase itself was never published until the release of [Jagumaj](#), a collection of odds and ends, in 2006.

¶ I met Bengt in his home in central Malmö where the walls are hung with paintings and objects by some of the best contemporary Swedish artists and quite a few international celebrities. A cabinet in his and his wife's study is dedicated to Fluxus and Fluxus-related boxes, many of which Bengt himself released as part of the Adlers Editions series of multiplies, during his time at Galerie Leger. He makes me laugh by demonstrating Robert Filliou's [The Futile Box](#), a small wooden box with a lid on top. A juggler's ball is put into the box, but when the lid is closed another lid, at the bottom of the box, opens and the ball falls out.



¶ Other boxes and objects are by other Fluxus-affiliated artists like George Brecht and Ben Vautier. Brecht's [BOOK](#) is also brought out and I suddenly realise where Bengt got the idea for his own [The Very Best Novel. BOOK](#) demonstrates the very essence or concept of a book; the only text in the book being descriptive of the book as a physical object: "This is the title page." "This is the first chapter." Etc.

¶ I must confess I'm a bit in awe, being in the presence of so much seminal, funny and clever art. And the question, how Bengt got to know all these legendary Fluxus people, almost asks itself.

¶ "I had studied art history at Lund University and got a summer job at Galerie Leger, which was the only gallery in town that was open during the summer. When I had finished my studies they asked me to come work for them as a full time curator. Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd was one of the artists they worked closely with and I soon got to know him. He means a lot to me. He encouraged me and introduced me internationally.

¶A while after I had started, in 1976, I curated a group show called [Present Projects](#). Carl Fredrik Reuterswård and Stefan Wewerka, whom I had also gotten to know, wrote a letter of recommendation, saying the recipients should take my asking seriously and everyone I wrote to answered and most of them participated in the exhibition.”

¶The list of participators for [Present Projects](#) reads almost like a who's who of the current art scene at that time: George Brecht, Francois Dufrene, Öyvind Fahlström, Robert Filliou, Richard Hamilton, Edward Kienholz, Carl Fredrik Reuterswård, Daniel Spoerri + Claude Toney, André Thomkins, Ben Vautier and Stefan Wewerka. Many of the artists came to Malmö for the show and most of them Bengt got to know personally. Connections that proved to be crucial for Bengt's own development as a writer and artist.

¶“I dared tell Carl Fredrik Reuterswård, and the other artists I got to know, about projects I wanted to do and they encouraged me to develop my thoughts. So I sent them sketches which they commented upon.”

¶Bengt's first major project as a writer was a trilogy of conceptual novels, which got released as [Novelties](#) only three years ago through the courageous efforts of OEI editör publishers. The first one, [The Very Best Novel](#) (1976), contains ten chapters with titles and only one word of content in each. In the second, [The Book of Matters: The Second Best Novel](#) (1977), one chapter is dedicated to the environments, one to the principal characters and so on. This is also Bengt's first piece of writing which involves a fair deal of wordplay.

¶“At that time I was really fed up with novels that didn't have much of a plot but had flourishing character descriptions that went on and on for pages and pages and the idea behind [The Very Best Novel](#) and [The Second Best Novel](#) were to really limit myself to the very bare essentials. Then finally I wanted to write a novel just the way I didn't want it to be like, but of course I got tired very quickly and so I left it unfinished without ever reaching the conclusion.”

¶The third in the series [The Very Worst Novel](#) (1977) thus ends halfway through the plot. The first two though are also about imagination, because if you are to get anything from them you really have to use your imagination and fill in the blanks. You have to invest in them.

¶“Yes, but the plot is quite banal. The kind you would expect in a bad romantic movie. Much of my writing is about investigating banality. Where are the limitations to different types of writing? When does it become banal?”

¶In the early Eighties artist Leif Eriksson's publishing house Wedgepress & Cheese again published a trilogy of Bengt's, this time three collections of poetry, all made from found material. In the first, [The Poetry of Mickey Spillane](#) (1980), he makes romantic verses out of words and phrases found in one of the hard-boiled Mickey Spillane pulp novels. In the second one, [The Hits of T S Eliot \(Featuring The Waste Land\)](#) (1980), he does the opposite and reduces Eliot's high modernist masterpieces to romantic nonsense poetry, juxtaposing lines from Eliot's work with lines from pop and rock songs and other sources, to sometimes hilarious effect:

SHAPE WITHOUT FORM, SHADE WITHOUT COLOUR,
PARALYSED FORCE, GESTURE WITHOUT MOTION;
BUT I NEED MY AFTER SHAVE LOTION

¶“It was a concious comment on the pretentiousness of much writing on art, yes. I was quite fed up with everyone quoting French philosophers all the time in order to substantiate their theories of art. It had gotten silly. It didn't create a lust for reading, nor for art. Somehow that thoroughness just became silly. I have always been deeply involved in the pedagogics of art and there's not much communication going on if no one understands a word ...”

¶Silliness and high-mindedness, the mundane and the extraordinary - they trade places in almost everything Bengt Adlers does. His writing is a testament to the importance of literature and art. It's far too important to elevate to a place where it is out of reach for anyone. This is also why Fluxus resonated with him so early on.

¶“Yes. And before I got into Fluxus I was very interested in Dada and they are somehow related, aren't they? Everything is possible and everyone can be an artist, even though they are not aware of it. It makes the everyday so much more interesting when everything around you can be viewed as art.”

¶[Humour is obviously important in your writing which makes me think of the famous Maciunas quote: "I make jokes." A Fluxus artwork is like a good joke.](#)

¶“That's true, and all the people I have met, who have somehow been involved in Fluxus, have been really funny people who laugh a lot and are full of mischief. So, yes, that has been an important factor.”

¶Soon after finishing [Poetix](#), Bengt bought a house in the small French town of Donzy, an experience which prompted [La Poésie de Donzy](#) (1983).

¶“My friend, the artist Erik Dietman had lived in France for some time and he helped me find the house. It cost FRF 30,000 (EUR 4615 at the time when the Euro was introduced). I had the idea that poetry was everywhere and could be everything so I walked up and down every street in Donzy and wrote down all the words I could see. The resulting book was [La Poésie de Donzy](#). It could have been any village or small town in France. The words are recognizable to anyone who has been there. It's like a journey in the mind.”

¶The third volume, [Poetry Try Poe & Verse Vica](#) (1982), concerns itself with the two great romantic poets Wordsworth and Poe. Its first part labelled [For What Words Are Worth](#) and the second [So What and Another Poe M](#). This is Bengt Adlers again trying to find the very edge of banality through different kinds of experiments on his source material. In the process he transforms Wordsworth to quite beguiling concrete poetry while poor Poe's poetry is reduced to just its rhyming words.

¶In between [Novelties](#) and [Poetix](#), as the poetry trilogy is known, Bengt however made quite another kind of attack on established rules of publishing, the interview book [Interviews of Internews](#) (1978).

¶“Sune Nordgren published the [legendary and highly influential/ed's comment] art magazine Kalejdoskop. Sometimes he had guest editors and at some point he asked me if I wanted to edit a forthcoming issue. So I thought about it and after a while I got the idea to make an art magazine which wasn't about art at all but with the participation of contemporary artists. But when I showed Sune the material he got cold feet. What would the subscribers say? So he proposed that we should make a book instead, actually the first book Kalejdoskop published. I didn't mind that. The idea was to show that artists had other things than art on their minds. They have their quotidian concerns: What to have for dinner, which clothes to wear ...”

¶In [Interviews of Internews](#) Bengt talks to some of his artist friends, most of whom had participated in the [Present Projects](#) exhibition, about things like which the best bars in Malmö are, common friends and Ben Vautier's beach shoes. It's an entertaining read and it reveals a surprising lot about the artists and their art through its everyday subjects. A reminder of how controversial a project it actually was, is the presence of a letter of refusal to participate from one of the artists which Adlers printed instead of the interview.

¶ From the mid-Eighties and onward Bengt has written mostly in Swedish - numerous books of poetry, stories and drama, full of puns, wordplay and mischief. He has also made a couple of major collaborations with musicians, resulting in the albums [Tutti](#) and [Den andra kinden/Cheek Two Cheek](#).

¶ Before that, though, in 1984, he published one of his best and most entertaining collections of poetry, [From the Corners of My I](#). In this volume English, Swedish, French, German and Latin, nonsense, nursery rhymes and morsels of wisdom, are mixed to highly entertaining results. Edward Lear and Swedish wordsmith and entertainer Povel Ramel are comparisons that seem adequate. The book is divided into seven chapters, each chapter representing one deadly sin and one virtue. Making out which is which is part of the fun. Chapter IV starts like this:

ZEUS SAT ON HIS THRONE AND SANG
WHISKY LISKY FALLERALLALEJ
ECCE HOMER. IVORY AND GOLD
GIN OR VODKA. KJOLAHOPPLAHEJ

IT WAS EASTER ON THE ISLAND
HERRING, SALMON, EAL AND SEAL
THE STATUE WAS STENTUFF
BREAD AND BUTTER AND
HOVMÄSTARSÅS

¶ [From the Corners of My I](#) is the first part of a larger project, [Count On Me/Räkna med mig](#), concerning the Arabic numbers 0-9, which is still ongoing.

¶ "I'm making one project for each number, from zero to nine in different media and [From the Corners of My I](#) represents number seven. This piece of rock here with a drilled hole and the carved text [Noll och intet](#) ("Nought and Nothing") represents zero. So it can also be a multiple. The whole project has been ongoing for many years and the number nine is the only one I haven't finished yet. I have made an etching which will probably represent number nine.

¶ Number eight is a painting of oysters with the text [Achtung! Huitres](#). And number two is a cd, [Den andra kinden/Cheek Two Cheek](#) with a poem set to music. But when I started out with number seven I didn't know I was going to make something for each number. Still, the magic of numbers has interested me for a long time and working with number seven gave birth to a desire to work with other numbers.

¶ I've always wanted to be free to choose whichever medium I see fit, whether it's pictures or text and I've always had it as a sideline to a dayjob. I suppose that has both been a strength and a weakness, but it has worked well for me. Sometimes it's actually preferable that things can lie around for a while before they get picked up again."

¶ [Which have been the most important, the pictures or the books?](#)

¶ "It almost always starts with the words. And sometimes they need to be visualised. Then sometimes the pictures give birth to new words. So there's an interplay of words and pictures. But it always starts off with a pun, or a line of a poem. I haven't exhibited as much as I might have if I had concentrated on painting but still there have been a few shows."

¶ [Puns are really your hallmark aren't they?](#)

¶ "I do enjoy playing with words ... but obviously there has to be a meaning to it. I'm not really into puns for their own sake.

¶ This summer I'm having an exhibition at Kulturhuset Vita skolan in the small town of Broby in northern Scania. The surroundings there are very beautiful with Helge river running through the village. It's going to be called [Visten vid vatten](#) ("Water Settlements") and all the paintings displayed will have a connection to water. I'm painting one of them right now with water I collected from the river!"



[ON TIME](#)

a fairytale

Once upon a time
time was on my side
but time waits for noone
and noone waits for me
and only time can tell

Once upon a time
the only told the lonely
you are so lonesome tonight
but you are the one and only
and only the strong survive

Once upon a time
The lonesome ranger wrote
death cannot me part
because I am the one and only
at once and from the start

Once upon a time
I was not all alone
but time passes slowly
up here in the mountains
and the night falls upon the lonely

Once upon a time
only time was living
and only thyme was growing
then there was a time to kill
and time was no more but once

BENGT ADLERS 1997.07.19

¶ [It's kinda yellowish ...](#)

¶ "Yes, it's obviously polluted ... But I digress ..."

¶ [Yes, but digressions are important, aren't they? Sometimes they are what leads to the very heart of the matter.](#)

¶ "It's true. Whenever I start painting or writing something I know how to start but I never really know where it will lead. Often it will lead in the opposite direction to what I had expected. And conversations are the same. That's what make them exciting."

¶ Bengt shows me some of his paintings, one of them of the Mont Chauve mountain close to Nice which is supposed to be bewitched. It is a simple but vibrant and somehow mysterious painting. We finish up by talking a little about another one of Bengt's ongoing projects, [Arts & Crafts](#).

¶ [Arts & Crafts](#) is about manufacturing and charging various appliances made from different materials with poetic power. I shape both the object and the words and decide on a form. Professional craftsmen then make the actual artefact. So far there are five in five different materials:

¶ 1. China. [A China Chinese at Ease Saying Cheese for Peace in China](#) ... (a plate)

¶ 2. Ceramics. 'motional Poem. [Poetry in Motion/ Pottery in Motion](#) ... (a jar from Höganäs ceramics)

¶ 3. Glass. [Transparent Poem](#). To be read through the glass. (a vase with the text engraved)

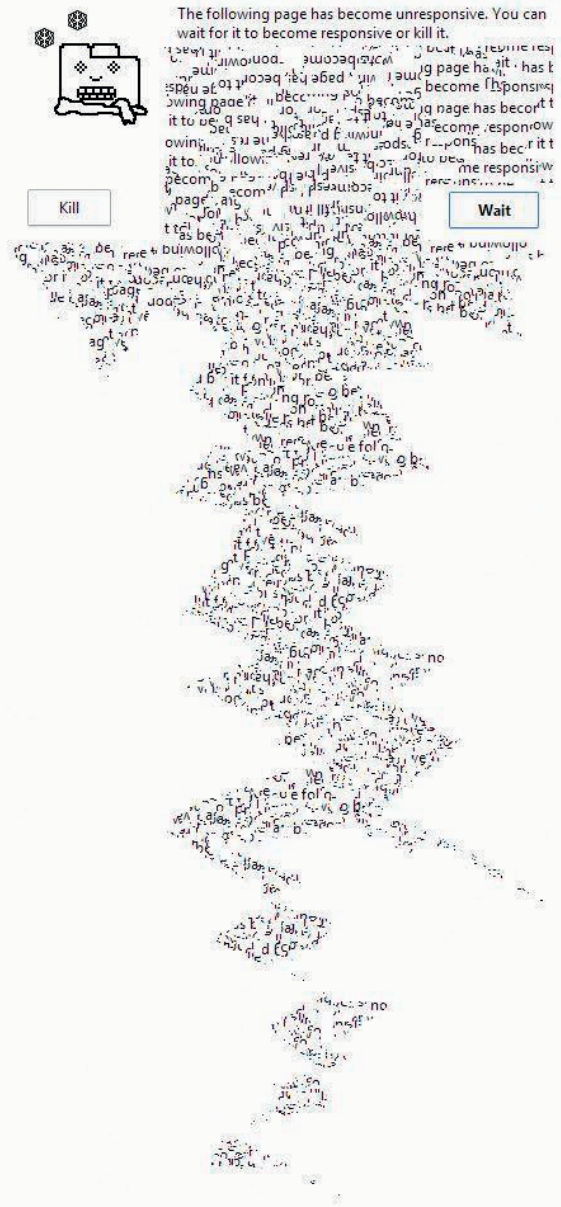
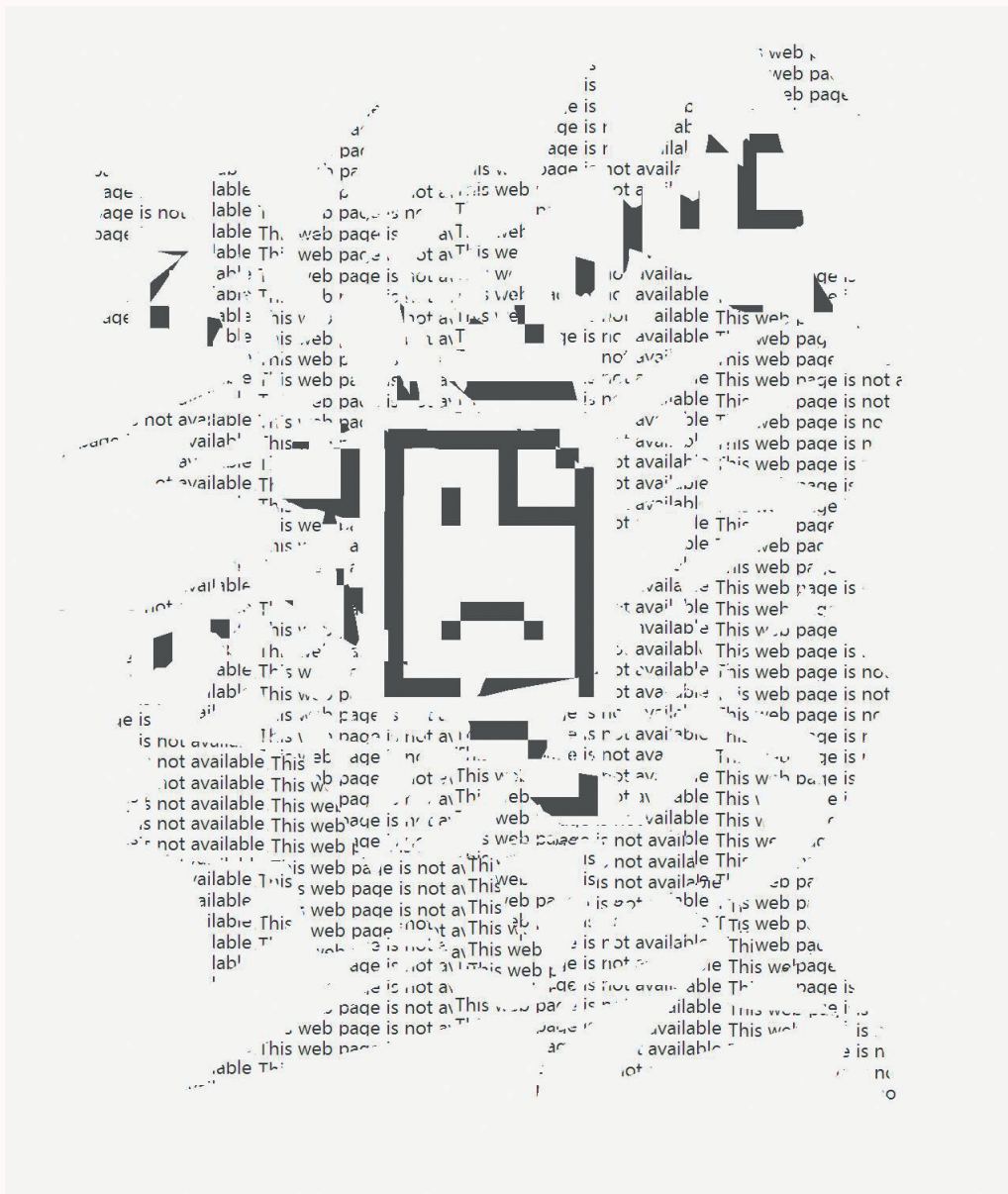
¶ 4. Wood. [Knockonwoodandtouchtime](#). (a cutting board with the rings in the wood clearly visible)

¶ 5. Stone. [x](#) (a mortar in grey and red granite)

¶ I have plans to make further works in tin, plastic, stainless steel etc."

¶ [To be continued then.](#)

¶ "To be continued."



DEDE: (Sadly) I'm too big.

BECKETT: (Happily) You're immense!

DEDE: It's not normal.

BECKETT shakes his head in dismay.

BECKETT: Normal? No one ever is - normal - never. No such state. All wasted far and all in pursuit of being the same as everybody else.

DEDE: Girls don't like me.

BECKETT: And the boys shit in their britches at the sight of you! You have the capacity to be a Genghis Khan, young Dede. Girls will follow, as girls of a type do.

DEDE: (With a smile) Do you think so?

BECKETT: Perhaps. Think, yes. I can't know.

EXT DEDE'S SCHOOL - THAT MOMENT

BECKETT brings the car to a stop outside the school gates. DEDE turns to him - an angst-ridden expression on his young face.

DEDE: I don't want to be unkind.

BECKETT turns and fixes him with a stare.

BECKETT: Then it's not your size that's an issue. It's your species. (Long beat) What time tonight?

DEDE: I have Wrestling Club.

BECKETT: Then I'll see you at five. Have an interesting day.

DEDE gets out of the car and walks into school. BECKETT drives away.

EXT DEDE'S SCHOOL - 5 PM THAT EVENING

BECKETT is sitting in the car eating a banana as DEDE comes through the gates. BECKETT reaches across and opens the passenger door.

BECKETT: Good evening, Dede.

DEDE: Good evening, Mr Beckett.

DEDE struggles into his seat - shuts the door. BECKETT drives off. Long beat.

BECKETT: Well, out with it. How was school?

DEDE: Okay.

BECKETT: That tells me nothing.

DEDE: It was - interesting, as you wished.

BECKETT: I wished? I wish nothing. Experience has taught me this if nothing else I've learned.

DEDE: How's your banana?

BECKETT: Bent.

Long, long beat.

DEDE: (In a rush) I saw Claudette. I talked to her. I told her I could be a Genghis Khan. Said I'd enfold her. Keep her. Protect her.

BECKETT: And her response? (Beat - then urgently) Quick, boy, quick!

DEDE: (Brokenly) She called me - Monkey Man.

BECKETT: (Angrily) Idjeet. (Beat - he takes a bite of his banana) You don't look anything like a fucking monkey. (Long beat) How was your extra curricular activity?

DEDE: Good. Really good. What do you think about Wrestling? As a career, I mean.

BECKETT: Not really my sort of thing. I'm too small. And old as well.

DEDE: No, Mr Beckett, for me. A career for me.

BECKETT: That makes much better sense. You're made for it. With success, you can buy your own school bus. Bigger. You won't need to ride with me anymore when you have your own and bigger bus.

DEDE: But I like them, the lifts.

Beat.

BECKETT: Then let's hope you're not a success too big or too soon now. I like our rides, too. What does it pay? Wrestling?

DEDE: A top wrestler can earn 750-800,000 francs a year. More, if he goes to America.

BECKETT: (Shocked) Jaysus! For throwing people about?

DEDE: Yes.

BECKETT: (Incredulously) Words are obviously much lighter than men.

DEDE: They are big men, though, Mr Beckett.

BECKETT: Yes. And I do prefer the littler words. (Beat) Now, what about this girl? Janine? Jeanette?

DEDE: Claudette.

BECKETT: That's the one.

DEDE: I'll speak to her tomorrow. Try again.

BECKETT: That's my boy. So what if you fail?

DEDE: No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

BECKETT'S FACE LIGHTS UP. HE STARTS THE CAR.

THE END.

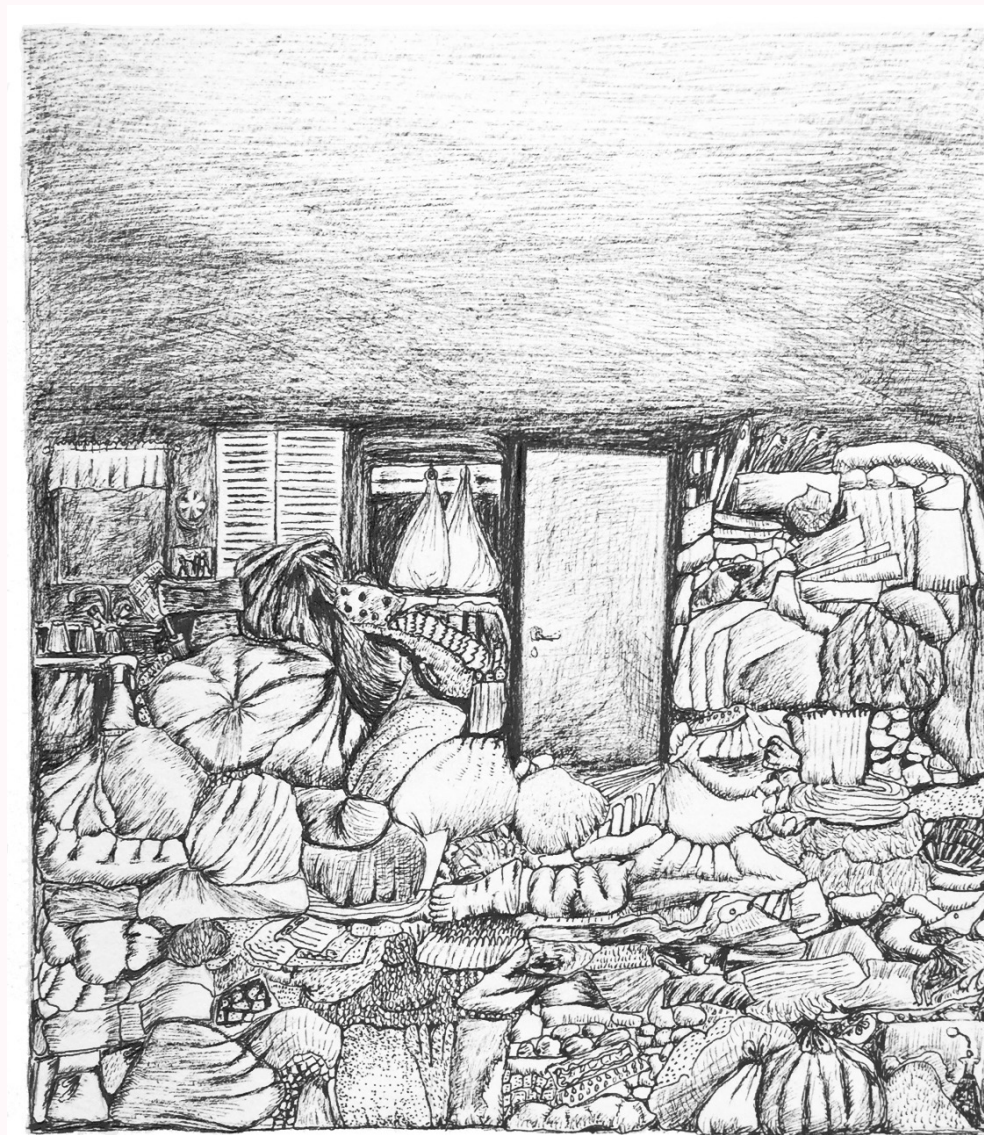
HEMMA HOS

"She is at risk of losing everything she holds dear as her collecting has grown out of control to the point that her own daughter declares the house "doesn't exist anymore".

VICKY

"Stumpar, mikroorganismer, konstgräs. Munskydd. Silverskedar. Stoff av guld och andra ädla metaller. Mullbär, blåbär, sviskon och flera andra bär, även svampar. En väldigt gammal samling av förhistoriskt damm. Socker, salt och brödsmulor. Sen tidningarna, den oändliga samlingen av tidningar. Nya glänsande färgsprakande tidningar och gamla tidningar, smutsiga men värdefulla tidningar. Gröt och många andra maträtter som kan vara bra att ha. Såpa. Stalaktiter. Multiresistenta bakterier. Hattar och mössor för kalla kvällar. Tröjor och filter, stora högar av tröjor och filter. Lagom många pinnar för olika ändamål. Böcker. Gröna böcker, blå böcker, bruna böcker. Tunna böcker och tjocka böcker. Sanskrit, franska, ryska och uråldriga sedan länge bortglömda språk. Den som letar sig riktigt långt in i samlingen kommer att hitta ovärderliga fynd från både Babylon och Atlantis. Stenar på hög som blir till skulpturer. Vägs skyltar som berättar hur det ligger till. Rakblad och rakködder. En stor stor samling med flaskor i olika färger med olika vätskor och medel. Kaninpäls. Filmer men mest omslag till filmer. Ond bråd död och ljuvliga stränder i solnedgång. Allvarsamma män och fagra kvinnor. Bomber och granater. Bilder urklippta ur broschyrer. Bilder som i nya sammansättningar blir till nya bilder unika för just detta rum. Lampor. Lampor som lyser och lampor som glänser, lampor som skärmar och ibland bara fot utan kropp. Krigsmunderingar. Fantasifulla krigsmunderingar. Längst in i några skåp finns det vapen, både eldvapen och vattenpistoler. Och gånger, hemliga gånger in under den stora samlingen med kartonger och sängar där man faktiskt kan ta sig ända in i badrummet utan att synas. Husdjur. Sköldpaddor och några fåglar. Två ormar och en igelkott. Badkaret

fullt av små underliga fiskar. En halvfull container som ingen ännu riktigt undersökt. En klätterställning, en hängmatta högt uppe vid taket. Blommor, olika blommor och träd, buskar och små rabatter vid köksfönstret. På sommaren när solen ligger på som en djungel där allehanda vilda djur lätt gör sig hemmastadda. Sopsortering. Utdött i en påse och bortbytes i en annan. Glas och plast sparas alltid ifall att. Hundöron. Grisöron. Ritningar över alla saker som ännu inte samlats in. Ritningar över anordningar som ska byggas för att ställa allt till rätta. Hemliga flyktvägar. Rostat bröd men ingen brödrost. En samling med en två, tre hundra tuber i olika färger. Allt från Kalles kaviar till spackel. Tomatpuré och handkräm. Lim. Lim för att fästa samman och bygga ihop. Tejp. Tejp för att förstärka och göra långa anordningar mellan fönster och väggar. Mattor. Gamla orientaliska mattor och heltäckningsmattor från gamla kontorsbyggnader. Apparater som tillsammans bildar en sambandscentral för strikt vetenskapliga studier av allt från luftfuktighet till samhällsbyggnad, stjärnfall och klimatförändringar. En hel del gamla kopieringsmaskiner, datorer i olika storlekar. Sladdar, kablar och spakar. Spakar att dra i och spakar att hålla sig i. Fornlämningar. Stora delar av vad några menar är en äkta gammal runsten. Silver och guld och glasbitar från Mesopotamien. Kol och olja för den framtida elförsörjningen. Mystiskt glänsande och vibrerande organismer på botten av en stor hink. Olika saker för olika tillfällen. Ibland mer utav att man tager vad man haver. Andra gånger väl valda utsnitt ur verkligheten. Alltid många saker på en och samma gång. Alltid en livsnödvändig ansamling av saker utan vilka vi skulle gå under nu med detsamma.



¶He has a hoard of memorabilia that has become overwhelming to everyone who enters the home. He claims that if he sold anything he'd never be the same person.

RANDY

¶Så mycket grejor, ändå för litet, för det handlar om verkligheten, en verklighet som alltid är större. Större än tapet på tapet på tapet, än stenar i högar och stenar i former och stenar i rader, stenar från öar, både avlägsna och alldeles nära, stenar som vanliga stenar och vita stenar, glittrande magiska stenar i speciella fack i speciella lådor långt under lager av tyg och kläder som både skyddar och döljer, allt tyg man kan få tag på men framförallt tyg som betyder något, tyg vars mönster innehåller hemligheter och ledtrådar vars rätta lösning ännu ingen lyckats tyda. Sen har vi förstas glasansamlingen som glittrar, både krossat glas och slipat glas och glas från fönster, glas från glas och glas från buteljer och flaskor vars innehåll ibland sipprat in och skapat både lukt och färg i särskilda nyanser just bredvid böckerna, alla stora vackra böcker som bildar exakt lika stora högar, som en mur, och de små böckerna i hyllorna som sorteras väl och noggrant men på ett sätt som bara särskilt invigda kan förstå och hitta rätt bland, i nästa hylla har vi papper utan böcker som dock svämmat över här och där och tagit över eftersom de inte går att slänga, lämna eller kasta eftersom de berättar historier ingen annan kan bevara, historier om händelser som annars skulle försvinna rakt ut i tomma intet och glömmas bort nu med detsamma, det kan handla om kvitton på mat som handlats vissa dagar nu i maj och post från myndigheten om adressatens betydelse och förehavanden, det handlar om insamlad

post från brevlådor och soprum, papper som är historier som bara väntar på att berättas och ta över som byggnadsdelarna till den ständigt växande maskinen i sovrummet som inte bara finns där som ett skydd mot onda krafter utan också som ett extra rum i rummet där man kan gömma och glömma när väggarna blir för trånga. I köket finns det största lagret av konserver som liksom går i staplar från golv och till tak utan att man egentligen längre kommer in där utan mer får spana på håll. I klädkammaren finns kablar och elektroniken för att bygga larmet som ska skydda och det system som skrämmar men som ändå måste byggas med bara en del, en kabel, en komponent till eftersom slutet bara är början och det kan alltid bli mer, vara mer i den labyrint vi alla försöker ta oss ur även om vi fastnar i sakerna vi aldrig kan bli av med eftersom de är så viktiga delar i det som är vi och våra minnen. Till exempel alla pinnar från alla promenader, alla blommor från alla ängar, alla fynd från alla fyndhörnor och alla magiska mystiska speciella odefinierbara saker man så ofta hittar i containers på avlägsna platser, bildelar, cykeldelar, rattar, trampor, hjul och kedjor för det speciella fordon som bara väntar på att få bli till om det bara fanns vad som behövdes och som förstas kommer att läggas till imorgon och nästa dag och nästa dag ända tills evigheten tar slut och allt blir fulländat.

LIFE IN A SCOTCH SITTING ROOM VOL 3 (NOTES ON IVOR CUTLER. OMP)



¶“My name is Ivor / I'm an engine driver.” Pete Townshend utilized drummer Keith Moon's rough voice and rumbustious persona to portray the culprit and seducer Ivor the Engine Driver in his mini-opera [A Quick One, While He's Away](#). Did Townshend predict a similar character, the (not engine but bus) driver in The Beatles' [Magical Mystery Tour](#), a certain Buster Bloodvessel, known in everyday life as Ivor Cutler?

¶Cutler grew up in Glasgow of the 1920s and 1930s. Biographical details - middle-class family, father jeweller - starkly contrast with the vivid images of childhood contained in Cutler's book [Life in a Scotch Sitting Room Vol 2](#). Here three kilt-clad generations - father, mother, six children, grandpa and grandma - live crammed together, feeding on herring baked in leftover porridge. Life “magnified” into myth.

¶Myth-making works both ways. Like Myles na gCopaleen/Flann O'Brien in [The Poor Mouth](#), Cutler grossly exaggerates the poverty and hardships of his Scottish family, wherein parental communication with the children is reduced to slaps in the face and the young ones play at beating each other with a thistle. And like his Irish colleague, Cutler aims at an inverted, grotesque humour, not without its streaks of tragedy.

¶Tragedy hides or is hidden beneath the mythological surface. “... but he [the father] had played the same game when he was a lad, and could scarcely blame us for following in his footsteps.” After a while, not all want to, though. One brother disappears inside a cupboard. In everyday life Ivor Cutler joined the Royal Air Force but was dismissed for “dreaminess”. After the war, he made the break for London.

¶London is no home for a Scotsman unless he exaggerates his Scottishness. Cutler led a quiet life as a teacher, embracing progressive ideas in education. The contacts with children seem to have spurred his ambition to write, draw, paint and make music. Unsuccessful attempts at hawking his songs to publishers led to the natural decision that he should sing them himself. For accompaniment, Cutler played the harmonium. ¶The harmonium's wheezy sounds could soon be heard on the BBC Home Service's [Monday Night at Home](#). Cutler told stories and sang songs in his best Glaswegian accent and became quite popular. One listener, Cutler tells us, rushed up to him in the street and shouted: “I hate you! But I've got to listen to what you're going to do next.” In 1959 his first record appeared, the 7-track EP [Ivor Cutler of Y'hup](#).

¶ Y'hup is Cutler's personal Utopia, an island with a bizarre but benevolent flora and fauna. It is described on the back cover, which also carried the characterisation: "Ivor Cutler, who is 36, married, 2 children, plays 'll musical instruments including the harmonium, guitar, recorder, bamboo flute, and 6 pianos'. He has written 38 songs that might be described as a combination of Franz Kafka and the Goons."

¶ The Goons did not choose their name without reason. The humourist is more often than not considered an idiot, an amusing dunce. Throw him a coin when he's done and make him leave. Forever an outcast from society, all he can do is to mould his personality according to expectations. Broaden your dialect, never appear without an old hat and coat, announce yourself grandly as "Oblique Musical Philosopher".

¶ Philosophy may not be apparent in Cutler's songs, except in its inverted form of nonsense. As such, however, it is omnipresent. Musicality is there, too, if you listen for it. Paul McCartney and John Lennon (whose own books are on a par with Cutler's) certainly did. McCartney asked: "You know there's that chord in that song." Obliquity, however, is the keyword; this is what counterbalances self-mythology.

¶ Mythology may hide tragedy; it also provides a hiding-place for the self. No one sees through the exaggerations, the bizarre humour, the guise of the storyteller.

"A MEMBER OF THE VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA SOCIETY AND THE NOISE ABATEMENT SOCIETY, CUTLER STILL ADMITS TO SUFFERING FROM THE NEUROSES THAT SERVED AS AN INSPIRATION TO HIM OVER THE PAST FIFTY YEARS."

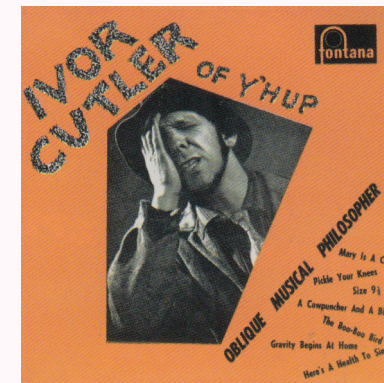
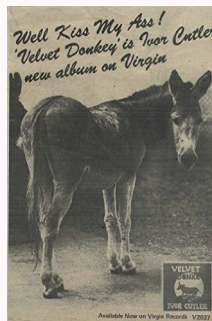
(Mark Powell, in 2005, the year before Cutler's death)

¶ Death came to Cutler at the age of 83. He had made 11 LPs and 3 EPs, had written 6 works of prose and 12 collections of poetry (Cutler's poetry mostly taking the form of prose poems); add to that 13 children's books, including [Herbert the Chicken](#), [Herbert the Elephant](#), [Herbert the Questionmark](#) and [Herbert the Herbert](#). Add also appearances on records by Neil Ardley and Robert Wyatt. Productive neuroses.

¶ Neuroses are, if not omnipresent then at least frequent in Cutler's work. The grumpiness, which was part of his persona since playing the part of Buster Bloodvessel, sometimes gets predictable, and a streak of misogyny is the one factor that may turn even faithful readers away for a moment. However, Cutler's typecasting of himself as a slightly barmy old man more often embodies an odd sense of freedom.

¶ Freedom. Freedom from (society; Y'hup seems nearly uninhabited by people) rather than freedom to (become an adult, responsible person; earn money; have a career). "How sweet to be an idiot", sang Neil Innes - that is the double nature of being an outcast. An inhabitant of a small second-floor flat in Parliament Hill Fields, London, Cutler seems never to have returned to Scotland, at least not for any period of time.

¶ Time has not touched Ivor Cutler's works. Neither he nor the equally quintessentially British John Peel may be around anymore (Cutler did more Peel sessions than any other artist), but unlike his American counterparts, the dirty old men Charles Bukowski and Tom Waits, Cutler did not get stuck with his persona but was able to expand it from ironical autobiography into pure and most wonderful nonsense.



Smutsig himmel

Ofullkomligheten är en nödvändig del av fullkomligheten. O du midjeklämda tandkrämstubb! O ni tallrikar i diskhon och hår i avloppet blandat med grått fett! O du hälsosamma skräck! O ni tjänstemän som litar på datorer och luktar pommes frites! O ni städer byggda ovanpå marken! O du smutsiga himmel och sura regn som gör att jag inte kan se stjärnorna! O du smutsiga himmel! O du smutsiga sönderrivna himmel!

UR "PRIVATE HABITS" (1981)

UR "PRIVATE HABITS" (1981)

Potatismelodi

En häst mumsar på ett fält. Den tidiga kvällen lockar fram sjungande potatisar. Morötter lyssnar, roterande i sina boningar. Jag stöter in en crickethandske i horisonten, fångar solen, håller fast dagen, hör potatismelodi för alltid.

UR "PRIVATE HABITS" (1981)

Renässans

En renässans är på väg. Poesi och måleri, leenden och hemmasyddade kläder. Till och med bönderna kommer att fjärta högre för att skrämma bort mäsarna från nyttiga maskar.

UR "PRIVATE HABITS" (1981)

Besviken

Solen gjorde mig besviken så jag kravlade ned under jorden. Där fanns varken natt eller dag. Jag visste inte när det var dags att sova. Mina smörgåsar tog slut. Temperaturen var jämn. Jag fick inte vara ifred - hela tiden klampade något djur in och försvann med en frammuttrad ursäkt. Sak samma med insekterna. Ändå var den svarta jorden i min smak och där ovan rasade det vansinniga livet. Bara en gång återvände jag, för att hämta lite underkläder.

UR "PRIVATE HABITS" (1981)

Ny matta

En man köpte en ny matta. Mattan menade inget illa. Den satte krokben för honom och han slog i skallen, men på någon molekyl när förblev mattan densamma.

UR "FRESH CARPET" (1986)

Anti-empirikern

Jag räknade en apelsin och ett äpple. Det blev två. Det var i tisdags. I torsdags blev det också två. Men klockan fyra minuter i tio blev det tre. Vänta nu, tänkte jag, här har jag kommit på någonting, och fortsatte räkna. Men det blev bara tre en enda gång. Jag måste ha gjort något fel den gången.

UR "A STUGGY PREN" (1994)

DTK YZT GJM WNE OED PDU
 EHU AUV OYZ FJKJ
 RSH IIM WRX LKP FEO
 EHG LPH ATQ RPP ZNX FEL
 NAG ACH WSO WIR VUS
 RSF BOE NVG STA EIM

FALLEN
 EEEEEEEEEE
 >> OOO <<
 >> O <<
 SUNIMINUS
 LLLLLL

VILHELM EKELUND-SAMFUNDET

matrikel af

Tryne Algbloom

Nya medlemmar:

Melvin Kullehed
 Helen Vildmulke
 Levi N Medelhulk
 Hilde Lemkluven
 Emil L Helvedunk
 Kelvin Humleled
 E. Kulmen-Helvild
 Mulle Heklevind
 Lemuel Veklindh
 Helle Dumvinkel
 Lille M Hundveke
 Devil Knullehem
 Ken Delhi-Vellum
 Liv Kendell Hume
 Kellie V Hemlund
 Ellen Kvidhemul
 Humle D Likleven
 Ledek Ulvhimlen
 Hink-Mulle Vedel
 Henke M Livduell

Ville Dunkelhem
 Mulve Kleinheld
 Vilde K Helmulen
 Kim Hullevendel
 H Emevuk Lindell
 Hillel Kevundem
 Lev Humdel-Klein
 Edvin Mullhekel
 Neville Mulkhed
 Hulk Ledin-Vemle
 Kevin Hemdelull
 Melville de Kuhn
 Helmuld Knievel
 Khelim Lullvende
 Elme V Hundkille
 Knud-Vilhelm Lee
 Lenk Heliumveld
 N Vulkmedel-Heil
 Evelin de Kmuhll
 Mille Edie L Vhunk

Uteslutna:

Eve Lillhed (munk)
 Mike V Hell (luden)
 Elvin Lek (heldum)
 Helene Klum (vild)
 H M (ideell, kluven)
 El Dumle (HIV, klen)
 Villem Klee (hund)
 Lene Vulmhed (lik)
 Eklund (ville hem)

POSTMEN, KANGAROOS & LEDERHOSEN

(BEING A SHORT STORY IN SIX PARTS)

PART ONE

In which our heroine looks out of the window,
 waits for something and slams a door.

¶She sits inside a small but tidy gray room looking out on to the Tyn Cathedral in Old Town, Prague. She is waiting for the post. Postmen and Postwomen in the Czech Republic take their sweet time. They like to have a little chat with everyone they meet. They like to swap idle gossip and a hearty laugh. They whistle as they walk. They always have a smile on their face and a spring in their step. They are good people. A kind people. But today, this morning Felice von Droste-Hulshoff thinks they're a bunch of bastards.

¶She wants her post. And she wants it NOW. Without any idle gossip or hearty laughs or whistles or anything nicey nicey. Her eyes scan the cobbled street below for anything even remotely Postperson shaped. But she sees nothing. Nowt. Not even a whiff of stamp or franking machine. Today is the day that Franz said he would write. He has never let her down. The sanatorium in Kierling only lets him receive one phone call and post one letter once a week. It is her only link with her beloved.

¶Dear Franz. Dear, dear Franz. She forgave him when he admitted he had a thing for marsupials. She also forgave him when he was caught inside the wallaby enclosure at Prague National Zoo with his hands inside one of their pouches.

¶"We can get through this together."

¶She had said as they carted him off screaming and kicking into the back of the unmarked black van.

¶The flap on the front door starts to rattle and in one motion she leaps from the window to the door. She whips it open and snatches a package from the unsuspecting Postperson's hands. Before he or she can even open his or her mouth to say anything even remotely cheerful she screams:

"SHUT YOUR FACE POSTIE!"

¶And slams the door in his or her face.

PART TWO

Our shortest section containing only 169 words
 and in which our heroine opens her mail and acts
 surprised.

¶She sits cross-legged on the wooden floor of her living room with the package in front of her. She is frowning. This doesn't look like one of Franz' letters. For a start it's a package. Franz never sends packages. It must be from him though. Must be? No one else ever writes to her other than him anyway. There's no postmark. Or stamp for that matter. It could have come from anywhere. Or anyone. Slowly she peels off the side of the wrapping and looks inside. Seems like some sort of clothing. She smiles and claps her hand with delight! It must be a present! Yes! That's it! Franz has saved up and brought her a present. Bless him.

¶There then follows a flurry of ripped manila as she tears it open with abandon. When the last shred of light brown paper flutters to the floor, Felice finds herself holding out at arm's length a rather unpleasant-looking lederhosen.

"FUCK ME!"

¶She said really quite genuinely surprised.

PART THREE

In which our main protagonist gets her kit off and feels a bit frisky. This section also contains the word 'ankles'.

¶ Felice undress in front of the long mirror in her small bedroom. For a moment she just stands there and looks at herself. She has never been really that happy with her body. It has never looked quite right in her eyes. Her breasts always seem that little bit too low for her tastes. Her ribs stick out that little bit too much and her neck has always seemed a little bit too long. Picking up the lederhosen she holds it against herself. Why on earth would Franz send her such a thing? She holds it up to her nose and inhales its fuggy musk. It gives her goosepimples and she suddenly finds herself blushing. It wouldn't do any harm to anyone if she tried it on just once, would it? No one would know, would they? Almost without thinking she holds it down and puts one foot inside the right leg hole. Her ankles and then her whole leg tingles with pleasure as she pulls it up. Then the other foot is in and she's putting her arms under the straps and before she knows she has done it: she's stood there dressed in a lederhosen. It's quite tight and there's a little bit of chafing from the hemline around the inner thighs which, Felice discovers as she moves her hips slightly, is not entirely unpleasant.

¶ Looking up at herself and her whole face has gone bright red. She has become quite flushed with excitement.

PART FOUR

In which our heroine feels a little queer while giving herself a good seeing to.

¶ Something has happened to Felice. She is not quite sure what. But she knows she feels a little different. As she moves around in her new lederhosen it pulls at her body here and there. And in particular - down there. Without even knowing why she has found herself quite moist. But in a rather sexy sort of way. She bends over a few times and it seems to caress her bottom. It's as if two firm hands were gently cupping each cheek. She jumps onto the bed and flings her legs in the air. Before she even knows she is doing it, she is burying her face in the pillow and screaming with delight. She can stand it no more and in a sexual frenzy she pulls at the straps of the lederhosen in an attempt to get at herself. Then something very strange happens. Stranger than what has already happened at least. As she undoes one button, another does itself up and for each strap pulled down another pulls itself up. She lets out a cry of frustration. It's almost as if the outfit has a mind of its own. In a frantic attempt to get at herself, she tries worming her fingers up through one of the legs. But as soon as she gets a little bit warm the leg material tightens and threatens to cut off the blood.

¶ If she doesn't come soon she's going to explode! In a last desperate attempt she decides to give herself a go through the cloth. Yes! This looks as if it might work! Yes! Yes! The straps become a little tighter around her breasts and bottom. Yes! Her fingers work themselves into a frenzy. Yes! She pushes her thighs upwards off the bed, arching her back. Yes! Her legs start to tremble with excitement. Her face and neck flush rosy apple red. She's getting hotter and hotter. Yes! She starts to imagine all sorts of sexual scenarios. Things the like of which she has never thought before. Yes! Delicious sex sexy sex yes down right dirty sex doggy sex sex sex sex yes sex yes yes yes sex yes yes yes yes sex sex sex yes -

YES!

¶ No.

¶ Suddenly she gets a feeling of general apprehension. A feeling almost like dread. She becomes scared. Her fingers slow down and her bottom lowers itself onto the sheets. Anxiety seems to wash over her. She feels like an individual. She feels all alone. Confronted with nothingness and with the impossibility of finding ultimate justification for anything she has ever done in her sorry little life. She feels nausea at the fact that every day of her life she has to recognise the pure contingency of the whole universe. She feels a sickening anguish at that recognition and that in turn makes her feel unutterable despair. She flops about on the bed. Very confused.

PART FIVE

Being the longest containing 1235 words, most of which are dialogue and in which we rejoin our heroine after she has calmed down, and listen to her make a phone call.

¶ After much deliberation she picks up the phone and dials the number. It rings, then it's picked up.

FELICE: Ah - yes. Hello. Could you put me through to ward 97 please? Thank you. It's Felice von Droste-Hulshoff. I'm his fiancé. Thank you. Yes it is something of an emergency. A personal matter. Yes, thank you.

¶ There is a wait of a few minutes. She hears echoing footsteps walking down a long corridor, during which Felice nearly dies of suspense. They get louder and louder.

FRANZ: Hullo?

FELICE: Oh Franz! Franz! My Darling. Is that really you?

FRANZ: Felice, how many people do you know in ward 97 of the Kierling Sanatorium?

FELICE: Um, three.

FRANZ: Called Franz?

FELICE: Two.

FRANZ: That you're engaged to?

¶ There's a slight pause.

FELICE: One.

FRANZ: Yes, Felice, it's me. What's up?

FELICE: Huh, er - how've you been?

FRANZ: They've managed to wean me off kangaroos.

FELICE: Oh Franz! I'm so proud of you! Well done you!

FRANZ: Yeah. Now I'm into koalas.

FELICE: Right, right. Is that good?

FRANZ: Works for me.

FELICE: Oh Franz, I miss you so much.

FRANZ: Yeah, right. Look, the guard said it was an emergency. Is everything alright?

FELICE: Franz, did you send me a package this week?

FRANZ: No. I didn't even send you a letter. They've taken away my crayon.

FELICE: Why?

FRANZ: Because I put it in a kangaroo and they've taken away all those too, remember?

FELICE: Oh dear, Franz. Please do try to be a bit more careful. I'll send you another -

FRANZ: Kangaroo!

FELICE: No, a crayon. Calm down. Look - I haven't got time for all that just now. Somebody sent me a something through the post. And if it wasn't you, then who was it?

FRANZ: Aren't you getting a little hysterical over getting a letter from someone other than me? It could've been anyone you know? It's nothing to worry yourself about. It was probably just your mother.

FELICE: Now Franz, don't be cruel. You know my mother can't write anymore. Not since she had her elbows removed.

FRANZ: Sorry.

FELICE: I should think so too. Anyway, it wasn't a letter, it was a package. I told you. Listen will you. It had a lederhosen inside it.

¶ There was a deathly silence on the other end of the phone.

FELICE: Franz? Franz? Are you there Franz? Talk to me!

FRANZ: Did you say lederhosen?

FELICE: Oh don't talk like that Franz, you're frightening me!

FRANZ: DID YOU SAY LEDERHOSEN? ANSWER THE QUESTION!

FELICE: Yes! Yes! I said LEDERHOSEN! Alright! Alright! Oh why? Why? Is that bad?

FRANZ: Felice, tell me you didn't put it on?

¶ Felice lets out a little squeak and looks down at herself. She has tried for about half an hour, before phoning, to get it off. But it just seemed to stick to her like a second skin.

FELICE: ... Yes.

FRANZ: Oh GOD NO! NO! Now listen - this may sound strange, but was there chaffing?

FELICE: ... Yes.

FRANZ: But it wasn't entirely unpleasant?

FELICE: ... Yes.

FRANZ: Oh God! Oh God! This is bad. Very bad!

FELICE: Ohhhhhhhh ... Franz! What is it? Tell me! Tell me?

FRANZ: Did you have an odd feeling of sexual exhilaration followed by a sort of existential angst?

FELICE: Yes! Yes, that's exactly what it was like! Oh Franz. How did you know? What is it? What is it? Tell me, please!

FRANZ: Have you been rude to any Postmen or Postwomen lately, Felice?

FELICE: Wankers.

FRANZ: Well have you?

FELICE: Cheerful bastards.

FRANZ: Shhhhhhhh! Christ! They'll hear you!

FELICE: Who will? Don't talk nuts, Franz. You're scaring me even more.

FRANZ: I can assure you, I'm perfectly sane.

FELICE: Yeah right, pouch-boy.

FRANZ: I think you should sit down. Are you sitting down?

FELICE: I am now.

FRANZ: Right. This is BIG Felice. If the stories I've heard are true, then you could be in very BIG trouble. What you've got on is the near-mythical Morbid Lederhosen of Sartre!

FELICE: Shiiiiieeee! Hang on ... That doesn't sound so bad.

FRANZ: It's bad alright. VERY BAD and then some! Legend has it that Henry Miller bought the lederhosen from a strange looking tailor -

FELICE: How strange?

FRANZ: Terrible haircut. Center parting and everything. Anyway, he was in a market just outside Berlin in the mid-thirties. He tried it on but had not liked it. But rumour has it that he was wearing it during one of his many encounters with the street women of Berlin.

FELICE: He shagged tarts in it?

FRANZ: Uh, yeah. Well, he packed it away and never gave it another thought until he was back in Paris. This was about 1938ish. Just before he'd finished Tropic of Cancer.

FELICE: Never read it.

FRANZ: S'alright I suppose. Needless to say he was well into Anaïs Nin by that time and because those two were at it like rabbits and he was a bit of a kinky old sod, he gave the lederhosen to Nin. Who had said when she had put it on that she felt a kind of emotional echo of the last person who had worn it. She wrote all this down in her diaries. You can look it up if you don't believe me.

FELICE: No, no. It's alright. Carry on. I'm listening.

FRANZ: She made damn sure that her and Miller charged it up good and proper over the next few months. Nin had met Simone de Beauvoir at one of Gertrude Stein's little assemblages.

FELICE: 'Assemblages'?

FRANZ: Parties. Apparently the original idea was to give it to Stein, but because she was a bit of a porker it didn't fit and it got passed on to de Beauvoir instead.

FELICE: Don't tell me - she gave it to laughing boy Sartre.

FRANZ: So the story goes.

FELICE: - and instead of having a good old go in it like everyone else, he sat around thinking about the bleakness of existence and all that shite.

FRANZ: So it would seem.

FELICE: So what has this got to do with those grinning, whistling, postie bastards then?

FRANZ: Oh God please! Keep your voice down. You're in enough trouble as it is! You don't want to end up with The Moribund Scarlet Sock Suspenders of Bertie Russell.

PART SIX

The last bit in which nothing is really explained properly and our story finishes. This section does not contain the word 'turkey' or make any reference to turkeys in general.

FELICE: ... So what you're saying is: The Postpeople gave this to me as a punishment because I thought bad thoughts about them?

FRANZ: Yes.

FELICE: What, and they can read minds can they?

FRANZ: Yes.

FELICE: ... Riiiiiiiggghhhhtttt ...

FRANZ: Fear the Postpeople, Felice. They might look like us. They may act like human beings. They may deliver our post. But behind those smiles lies a seething mass of abominations. Fear them, Felice. Fear them.

FELICE: So how can I get this thing off me?

FRANZ: Dunno.

FELICE: For fuck's sake, Franz!

FRANZ: Uh, I'm really sorry, Felice. I've got to go now.

FELICE: Don't leave me like this, Franz. Don't go.

FRANZ: I'm sorry. Goodbye, Felice.

FELICE: I love you, Franz.

FRANZ: I love you too, Skippy.

FELICE: Don't call me 'Skippy', I hate that.

FRANZ: Sorry.

¶And with that the phone went dead. She just stared at the empty receiver for a few minutes as if waiting for something to happen.

¶She waited about ten minutes and nothing did happen, so she put it down and felt a bit daft.

¶There have been conflicting reports as to the actual fate of Felice von Droste-Hulshoff. Some have said to have seen her sitting alone in cafés. Apparently she sits there wearing a black beret, smokes a pipe and propositions passing young waiters. If they refuse her, she laughs a maniacal laugh, says she knew they were going to say that and proceeds to tell them that they will die alone, unloved and in an unmarked grave.

¶Others have said she took out a lone crusade against the Postmen and Postwomen. Waiting for them on every street corner. Hiding inside letterboxes with a water pistol full of lemon juice. Ready to exact terrible and wicked revenge upon them for what they had done to her.

¶One particular story which doesn't really hold much water, is that she joined a nunnery, learned how to play acoustic guitar, had a string of number one records in the hit parade, felt a bit sad and committed suicide. But this is highly unlikely and is thought to be apocryphal by many von Droste-Hulshoff theorists.

¶As to the fate of dear Franz. After a few months of koalas they finally managed to move him onto emus. A few months after that two toed sloths and a few months after that he was almost on the way to recovery, by way of kiwis. But for the fact that days before his eventual release, a package arrived for him by first post. Eyewitnesses said that he refused to sign for or even accept the package. In the end one of the sanatorium guards signed it on his behalf.

¶The very next day they found him hanging from the ceiling of his cell by a rather fetching pair of red sock suspenders.

¶Fear the Postpeople.

THE END

You have been reading a story written by Dolly Dolly. Congratulations.



Just What Is It
That Makes
Today's
Workplace
So Different,
So Appealing?



Ozelot

MIKE MCGEAR AND THE LIVERPOOL SCENE

¶The younger brother by two years to Paul McCartney, Mike early on dropped his family name and became a performing artist under the name of Mike McGear - "gear" being Liverpudlian slang for "fab".

¶With The Scaffold, McGough & McGear, Grimms and as a solo artist, Mike developed an ironic yet sincere mix of poetry, pop and puns that spanned everything from Monty Python's twisted literacy to his brother's sense for whimsical melody. Much of the material is very direct and unfiltered, a sort of poetic musical comedy that was aimed at a young rock music audience not interested in learned references or long-winded declamations.

¶That feeling of directness is still very much there; interviewing Mike McCartney is like talking to a fountain of words that flow in every direction. You will see Batman fly as well as face the barrel of Keith Moon's loaded gun. Enter this text at your own peril!

¶I hope you have a few minutes to talk to me?

¶"I have a few minutes starting from ... nnnn ... now!"

¶Maybe we could start with The Liverpool One Fat Lady Non-Electric Show?

¶"Aaah ... now you are talking about quality! Or insanity, take your pick!"

¶How did that come about?

¶"I was a ladies' barber apprentice at Andre Bernard's in Liverpool city. The hairdresser I was working with said: 'You'd be interested in what we are doing down at the Hope Hall.' Downstairs from the theatre, artists, folk singers and poets all gathered to get drunk. There was a bloke there called John Gorman, a post-office engineer, who was organising a thing called the Merseyside Arts Festival with Roger McGough who was a teacher who did poetry in his spare time. Together with Adrian Henri, who was then a painter, and the girls Jenny Beattie and Celia Mortimer, we became collectively called The Liverpool One Fat Lady Non-Electric Show.

¶Then the telly came to the Hope Hall and wanted to put just the three of us on for a six-week contract on a show called Gazette. We left our jobs to be on the telly for a couple of weeks. It was absolutely insane, but that is how powerful telly was then."

¶Was that when you changed to The Scaffold?

¶"Since nobody could pronounce it, we changed our name to Scaffold before we went on the show. The word means 'scaffolding, erecting, building' and 'scaffold, hanging, destroying'. A double entendre and we liked that idea. There is also the Miles Davis LP called Lift to the Scaffold so it sort of clicked in. And there was Scaffold on the telly; it started our career."

¶I think that was around 1963-64; are those TV episodes still around?

¶"No, that's the big sad aspect of Scaffold's performances. Of all sketches, there is one from a TV show we did in London, called Deep North. It was magic; when one of us talks, the other two mime. It was absolutely wonderfully weird, totally surreal poetic word imagery. That's the only one in existence - I always bemoan that fact. We used to go and see our friends called Monty Python's Flying Circus; they used to come and see us - but all of their stuff survived ... and ours didn't ... it's all wiped."

¶Other countries have coffee houses, restaurants, drinking parlours of different kinds. But only Britain has British pubs. In the late 40s Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers and friends used to gather in a London pub called Grafton's. They had a lot of fun, so much fun in fact that they brought a tape recorder along to the pub and recorded some of their rambling conversations. By May 1951, their pub banter had transformed into The Goon Show on BBC radio.

¶Their combination of surreal (if not surrealistic) comedy sketches and music numbers not only garnered a public numbering in the millions; it also had a profound influence on The Beatles. ("Love these Goon shows!" says John Lennon on the CD The Beatles Live at the BBC.)

¶ Unsurprisingly, the history of The Scaffold is intertwined with that of The Beatles. But there was also an influence on the broader Liverpool scene as even Liverpudlian dialect now was fashionable.

¶ One of your earliest songs as The Scaffold is 2 Day's Monday.

¶ "We were then with Brian Epstein; Merseybeat had just exploded, and for the first time in history our Liverpudlian, Scouse accent was totally accepted by the Londoners - and commercial. So, in typical Scaffold fashion, we chose a London cockney dirge for our first record; whatever anyone did, we did the opposite. ¶ So, whom do we get to record it? George Martin was chosen - not because he had anything to do with my brother and his chums. We used to have a record in our house in Forthlin Road called Songs for Swinging Sellers, which is an absolutely magical album by Peter Sellers.

¶ It just strikes me that the cover of that album was Peter Sellers on a scaffold; he's been hung from a tree! I have never thought about that connection before - and I blame you, Michael, personally!"

¶ Ha ha!

¶ "George Martin not only did Peter Sellers, he also did The Goons. He was a professional comedians' producer. Our kid [editor's note: Liverpudlian slang for "my brother"] was just given to George, he was just a job! Martin preferred working with comedians. But when he took over our kid, he did them rather well as well.

¶ If you listen to the B-side Three Blind Jellyfish then listen to our kid's Eleanor Rigby, George has a very similar feeling. I don't think I will ever know whether he did our kid or Scaffold first."

¶ Roger McGough once said: "The kids didn't see this poetry with a capital P, they understood it as modern entertainment, as part of the pop movement." One very telling example was the second Scaffold single Goodbat Nightman in 1966. We enter the song after Batman and Robin have had their evening glass of warm blood, are getting ready to go hang upside-down by the mantelpiece, and are saying their goodnight prayers:



(BATMAN & ROBIN. SINGING:)

GOD BLESS SUPERMAN AND

SUPERWOMAN!

AQUAMAN AND AQUAWOMAN!

IRONMAN AND IRONWOMAN!

SPIDERMAN AND SPIDERWOMAN!

PLASTICMAN AND PLASTICWOMAN!

CRAZYPAN AND ...

(SPOKEN PASSAGE:)

ROBIN: B-B-BATMAN!

BATMAN: YES. ROBIN?

ROBIN: WAS THERE EVER A BATWOMAN?

BATMAN: THERE WAS ONCE. BOY

WONDER. A LONG TIME BAT.

ROBIN: WHERE IS SHE NOW?

BATMAN: I'M AFRAID SHE'S NO LONGER WITH US ...

ROBIN: OH ... YOU MEAN ...?

BATMAN: YES. SHE IS IN THE GREAT BELFRY UP THERE IN THE SKY.

ROBIN: HOLY SHI... BATWOMAN ...

WHAT HAPPENED?

BATMAN: SHE RATHER FOOLISHLY GOT

IN THE WAY OF THE BATMOBILE.

ROBIN: SUICIDE?

BATMAN: BATRICIDE!

¶ Brian Epstein wasn't too happy about Goodbat Nightman?

¶ "He was too lazy. 'Yes yes, I'll get round to it Mike.' And I said 'No, it's going to have to be done now because all the kids are watching Batman on the telly!!!'

¶ One night a few years later, after we had done a show at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, there was this drunken bloke at the end of the bar. He was obviously an American, and he said: 'Can I buy you a drink?' I said: 'Oh, love one, can I have a Scotch and Coke please?' And then he said: 'I am Adam West. I am Batman.' I couldn't believe it, Batman at the bar, and drunk out of his skull! We needed to go to the toilet, and the next thing, he trips, and he flies down the stairs. I was right behind him and saw Batman fly!"

¶ Although the Liverpool poets might have been populist in the sense that nothing was too common to talk about, they certainly did not try to adapt their material to common taste or shy away from being difficult to understand. One example of this is the third Scaffold single Thank U Very Much:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE
AINTREE IRON.
THANK YOU VERY VERY VERY MUCH.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE
BIRDS AND BEES.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
THANK YOU VERY VERY VERY MUCH.

¶ What is the Aintree Iron?

¶ "It's in the song Thank U Very Much that I wrote to thank people who came to our shows and to thank my brother for a Nikon camera. My brother said: 'That Aintree Iron, don't do it. It's too oblique.' Ha ha! It is oblique, that's the idea! Everyone was talking about it and made up their own stories. It's a train turntable in Liverpool, it's a horseshoe from the Aintree racecourse, and it was Brian Epstein, since poof rhymes with iron hoof. Bloody hell! The Aintree Iron is a secret and it will die with me. I will etch it into the lid of my coffin as they lower me into my grave! When you open my grave you will find it etched into the wood!"

¶ The song is interesting also in the sense that it has been misunderstood by the Queen, who allegedly has said it was her favourite song (as did then Prime Minister Harold Wilson), because the lyric goes "Thank you very much for our gracious queen". In fact, that is not true, it is really about "our gracious team" meaning the football team Liverpool FC. And maybe the Queen was not yet familiar with napalm at this point in time ...

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE SUNDAY
JOINT AND OUR ...

(SPOKEN PASSAGE:)

CULTURAL HERITAGE. NATIONAL BEVERAGE
BEING FAT. UNION JACK.
NURSERY RHYME. SUNDAY TIMES.
NAPALM BOMB. EVERYONE!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. THANK YOU VERY
VERY VERY VERY. VERY VERY VERY VERY
MUCH.

¶ You recorded the McGough & McGear album in the summer of pounds, shillings and pence (£sd).

¶ "That's correct, it was 1967. Our kid started recording it on the £sd day in the little studio Dick James, who did all The Beatles publishing, had. My brother had made the mistake of admitting that he had taken LSD - pounds, shillings and pence. We had to go in his car to the studio, but the entire world press was outside, waiting to expose him. We went out the gate, and there were all these fans pushing themselves through the media, with chocolates and flowers etc, because it was his birthday. All the kids were throwing flowers and kisses so the press could not use it against him.

"We were just thinking of recording a few songs and see how it went. But then lots of people kept coming. McGough did a section with Andy Roberts and then lots of lovely people joined in. It was insane when you think about it; to have an album starting off with songs and then suddenly the poetry of [Summer with Monika](#). Jimi Hendrix, Graham Nash, Paul, Zoot Money etc ... all these serious musicians were having a ball because of these lunatics McGough & McGear with their poems and songs. They never did anything like this in their ordinary recordings!"

["Not only is the album going from pop to poetry and back again, it is also both funny and solemn."](#)

"Yes, exactly that. In McGough & McGear it is always that light and shade. So you have this nice little Irish song that goes 'A little bit of heaven fell from out the sky one day'. A lovely little song, but the little bit that fell is an atom bomb. It is all quite political."

["The final song, Ex Art Student, combines all the elements of the album and all the guests are there. Can you talk a little bit about it?"](#)

"I love the feel of the song. Our kid was going out with Jane Asher then - she and her mom, Mrs Asher, came along to the recording sessions. Jane narrated all these artists I liked, Marcel Duchamp, Dali and whatever over the music; I am singing and she is talking. And then we came to the harmonies. McGough couldn't sing at all so I had our kid to sing with Paul Samwell-Smith from The Yardbirds and Graham Nash.

"Then it goes into the dream world of Dave Mason on sitar and William Bennett from the London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra doing what I call Arabic flute. And then comes Jimi Hendrix' wonderful woa-woa-woa-woa guitar. You could listen to that all year, put it on a tape loop and just have it. I think our kid is on bass on that. Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding came along to that recording as well. At the end it might be Mitch and Viv Prince, two drummers."

["Everything is thrown into the mix as it were."](#)

"I like records like that. I think [Sgt Pepper](#) was the first one. I was staying in our kid's London house, it is a lovely summer's day and he says: 'Do you want to hear our new album?' And I said: 'If you insist, yeah.' Here is the first acetate, and our kid says: 'I'm not gonna talk, I'm just going to put it on because we are all dead proud of it. See what you think.' He put it on and left me in his big room with his big speakers, the door was open so the whole of London could hear it if they were listening. Could you imagine ... at the end of hearing that?! [A Day in the Life](#), that last note where it goes on into infinity. When you first hear it, it's like watching Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali's film on telly as kids back in Forthlin Road. Certain things change your perception."

"The [McGough & McGear](#) album has recently been re-released by Esoteric and it is the first time both the mono and the stereo versions have been taken directly from the original master tapes. It is a must-have for anyone who is the least bit interested in what happened in the UK during 1967, and unique in how it seamlessly goes from odd pop ditties to Roger McGough's Ingemar Bergman-inspired poem [Summer with Monika](#) and back again."



"Other Liverpool albums at the time treat pop and poetry as more uncomfortable bedfellows, such as The Scaffold's debut album [L the P](#) that has a music side and a poetry side, or the all-out performance poetry album [The Incredible New Liverpool Scene](#) album by McGough and Henri.

"Another band that was following a similarly Goon-inspired trajectory in combining pop, puns and poetry was The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band although from London and not Liverpool. It was inevitable that they would become friendly. An early collaboration was Vivian Stanshall helping The Scaffold out on a recording celebrating the Albert Hall together with his party pal Keith Moon. In 1971 they came together as Grimms, initially just for a couple of concerts. A merger of The Scaffold, The Bonzos and The Liverpool Scene, the band name was an acronym formed by the founding members' names: John Gorman, Andy Roberts, Neil Innes, Mike McGear, Roger McGough, Vivian Stanshall. However, both Adrian Henri and Brian Patten from The Liverpool Scene were also members of the band.

["Moon and Stanshall played on The Scaffold's Do the Albert?"](#)

"Keith Moon was as mad as a hatter. He was lovely, we loved him. Him and Viv Stanshall, if they were there in one evening, be careful. Either join them and go down with them - because they always went down - or get out of their way. They would dress in the most outlandish costumes and they would just do what they wanted to do, all with their tongue in their cheek. Moonie did [Do the Albert](#) which was to celebrate the centenary of the Albert Hall."

["Was this leading towards The Grimms?"](#)

"This was early Grimms days. I rang Moonie since he lived close to a university we were playing and I left a message on his answerphone.

"It must have been an early show because it was still light outside. Suddenly the back door banged open in the middle of the poetry, everyone in the audience looked round and there was this figure wearing a giant Bison's hat with horns sticking up, standing there like a gunslinger, with a gun in hand. I got to the back, closed the door and said: 'Keith, you've got to be quiet, the poetry is on.' 'Oh, yes my dear boy! Sorry, old boy! Sorry!' Out of his skull, you know, on drugs - it wouldn't be drink. We were now watching the poets from the wing; suddenly I felt cold steel against the side of my face. I turned around, and there was the barrel of a gun! 'Moonie, calm down!' 'Sorry Mike, sorry!' I found out later that it apparently had real bullets in it!"

["Keith Moon at some point played drums at a Grimms concert I believe ...?"](#)

"At that time, the Grimms drummer was Mike Giles from King Crimson. He is a very jazz-orientated, precious drummer. On the tour he'd come in, and lay out his drums; no one could touch them, only Mike Giles.

"Towards the end of our show Mike Giles makes the mistake of leaving his kit; Moonie sees an empty kit, comes on, the music starts again, but this time it is Moonie in charge. A very light, very jazzy drum kit, and he beats the hell out of it. Mike Giles' drum kit beaten to death. And Mike Giles was absolutely mad: 'Who let that maniac in, who invited that man here, I'll kill him!!!' And Moonie says: 'What's the problem dear, come here, give us a kiss.'"

["That's a wonderful way to end an interview, I think!"](#)

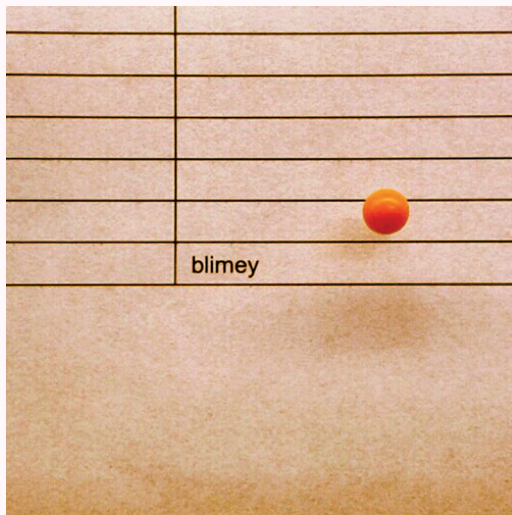
"Perfect!"

["Thank you very much!"](#)

"Thank you very much! ... I must write a song about that one day!"

["You should!"](#)

["Thank U Very Much](#) - it's a catchy title!"



blimey
 BRITISH informal
 blimey; exclamation: cor blimey
 used to express surprise, excitement, or
 alarm.
 Origin
 late 19th century: altered form of (God)
 blind (or blame) me!

PAUL SNOWDON

¶ Robin Tomens mostly uses digital tools but is not averse to scissors sometimes. He's inspired by the punk aesthetic, along with Sun Ra's music and William Burroughs' texts. He also makes artist's books and wrote Points of Departure - Essays On Modern Jazz (Stride, 2001).

(P 8-10)

¶ Paul Bareham is a writer and publisher from the oldest recorded town in Great Britain. He likes films, wrestling and quietly preparing for the collapse of society.

(P 11-13, COL P 1)

¶ Elias Hillström is a librarian, northerner, one part of Bläck charm nostalgi vassa tänder, author of the book Amorf and in favour of a tidy home.

(P 14-16)

¶ Amanda de Frumerie illustrated a few printed objects, often pictures in miniscule format or a combination of several minute situations gathered into one larger. She has a studio in a former butcher's block in Stockholm and is educated in art at Goldsmiths and Konstfack. amandadefrumerie.weebly.com.

(P 15)

¶ Petra Schulze-Wollgast is a dilettantish artist with a passion for printmaking. She lives and works in Rostock, Germany. Her art blog is at www.psw.gallery.

(P 20-21)

¶ Dolly Dolly is a British surrealist. He has released an album of poetry, Antimacassar, and a book of prose and collages, Campylobacter. He lives in Reading, England.

(P 27-28, ILL P 17)

¶ After decades pursuing the consciousness that generally inheres in matter, Ozelot is, from his exile in The United Embedded Countries, now increasingly advocating panpsychism.

(P 29-30)

¶ Other contributors: Bobbilott Fika, Joakim Norling, Bengt Adlers, Jonas Ellerström, Ivor Cutler, Tryne Algbom, Michael Björn, Paul Snowdon.

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