

LYRICS OF A MILD & MELANCHOLIC MAN

(2006-2013)

§

Angel, the morning after heroin first time. I was your boy.
Once, we were Gods ignoring each other. Rats come out
The back of dim wood lacquered mantle-piece. Sweat drips

On the sleeve notes of hoi-polloi zeitgeist poet who finds
Sirens in bluebirds' song & only owns a bin-bag full of postcards.
We all feel as bad as each other so who doesn't want

Saturday night to end. As I wake up in the shower,
I am ten different People; I am Dean Moriarty.
I am the kid that got bullied at school. I am Fred Dibnah.

I am Pablo Picasso. I am Pete Doherty. I am Norman Crabtree
I am William McGonagall. I am Rembrandt Clarke. I am not
Doing very well. I am a poor Simon Armitage Impersonator but

Can do a mean Elvis Presley. Then last of all, I am me
With nothing but the want of the axis of your body, undressed,
When eyes blink burn light blinking truth, just like an angel.

§

the romance
 proceeded in silence
passing Orpheus by

sirens sing
 just beyond the
severance from

dimension
 hiding in puzzles
miscellaneous dust

spread out
 across
conjecture of the room

but the sirens
 did nothing
except hug fast skin

of holy women
 &
Orpheus

was
 Sisyphus
at 3 in the morning

§

glided bluff of street,
she got out a book of old photographs
& a block of speed

taxi cabs fly in the night,
we didn't sleep for 3 days
until eventually it was quick on the mattress

boarded up eyes oozing freedom,
wrapped up under duvets,
Irn-Bru Orange fairy lights

exhilarate the whole carriage of our bodies
your voice now tattooed
across my chest, rising simply

can we leave all this stuff behind?
unfolding, rolling in bass,
where we bared our crack-dead skin

lovers wait on the pivot
for the drop, waiting,
to see who would survive;

miles of fairground appear in my mind,
you gripped me like a hamburger wrapper
but to you, back now

is impossible; you breathed out
air stayed on my face
for a moment, then I sort of understood,

what people meant
when they talked about
being happy enough

§

cocaine vomit cobbles
& a distinct time of year
boiling
 calligraphy
of chopped down trees
beating
 heart

like a drooped cigarette
on main street
on the edge
of a drag queens lip
as Chinese Christmas lights
reflect in the
glint of her eye

reminding the world
in a whisper

I am here

Sniper

she said *girls love scars*

so I got out my book of poems,
but halfway through the first line
she interrupted.

sorry, I didn't mean those kind of scars

oh

yeah, sorry

it's ok

...

*tell me I ask.
if I read you a poem
do you think you will respect yourself
any less tomorrow?*

I think we stand a better chance

probably... do you want more wine?

no

shall we shut our eyes then?

yes, but go turn the light off first

& I stood up like a green recruit
lifting his head over
the precipice of a trench
upwards into the crosshairs of a sniper.

§

adrift with you
in x-ray drowning
of bed sheets

but how did we end up
like us? from glass-eyed
circus shows

and I thought we were just
plastic wallflowers
who move their lips
when reading Descartes

others fade
a quiet boudoir
your silhouette
adrift with you

§

a litre of spilt
 red wine
soaks up the ashtray full
that you knocked over
on that hazy
 yesterday night

I love the way you brought
supermarket wine by the gallon
and didn't have the decency
to use a
 wine glass

& I embrace you against
a stunning red brick wall
scarred and forgotten like
 you & me
 in this world

you kiss me with
drunken lipstick smeared
reality sighed and back
to black & white Technicolor
 with a thump

the red wine spilt soaked up
the ashtray you knocked over
laden with the cigarettes
we smoked together
dripped endlessly into floorboards
etching the memory
of you
putting on your coat &
 walking away

§

stain on a wine glass
a text message answered
& that sound she makes

lit my cigarette
with an ice cube
as I watch you
break away
& leave the tea service
sat cross legged on
the lawn

rewind Technicolor
for youth is for
the forgetful
just as condoms
used
artefacts of a memory
eyes flickering
hair birds nest
my jacket torn
with malice of lipstick

& I will create flowers
from mud
 running
them through a
 mangle
to see if life is
translation reality
backwards
your head tilts
& silence
breakdown of discord
ambience

§

within the balmiest dread
of an unmade bed, I find
my imperfect speech, hung
on the lisping hinges of lingerie
 this naive tongue

 bundled sight
a happy life
 in skinning light

I think I am ready
for gravity to re-centre me
 each cell
 the same
 iron fist
 as Earth

bleeding gums, gammy shoulder
each morning a new resurrection

 these quiet places
 of deceitful memory

a soft yet brutal world
 of stockings perfect in place
our eyes caught equipoised
 still as a spirit level
 our eyes as still as a millpond
 as still as death

§

sunlight dazed my sleep like children's laughter
in the street - you left an impression
on the pillow, what appeared to be
your side of the bed

the empty shape looked just like you;
five minute bleary ill thoughted orgasms
pinched into cigarette burns on an arm,
craters heat & freckles

like tiny dots on tip of a nose
underside of calf muscle
gentle crux of armpit

& what we shared
experienced separately
simultaneously

Time

5 minutes pinched into

millennia

§

How the black sweaty hair
Running across your face
Makes me digress

Nuzzling limbs
Breaths on the backs of necks
As we fall into unconsciousness
Sliding into corners of the mattress
In various states of undress

§

A girl passes round the back of my dry-stone wall garden
Asking for donations to a local cat shelter
I hate cats; we had tea & I gave her a fiver

I watched her leave. Her colour
Trailed into a smudge across the wet roof
Of opposite mill slate

Humid summer heat
Sent my mind wandering
Off down miles of hotel corridors

On my way to meet her,
I beat my feet down on the cobbled track
Next to the churchyard

Stacked up with dealt out stories;
Soot blackened tombstones
With epitaphs no-one will read

There are no mills left in this valley. So the poet
Has to think of the ending first
Because there are no beginnings anymore

Now my mind trespasses into old tales;
When the soil in the churchyard collapsed
& corpses rotted through the ground

Filtrating the old well pump
Where villagers once drew their water
& typhoid spread like gossip

But you clicked your new red shoes
On the hard moss cobbles
Down main street
Simple dress leant up
With a Lambert between fingers
Blond hair plaited like gravity

Clouds moved as arrows with no chill of wind
Massed in manicured paths
Drafting down in some deep glen

The rain stopped. Then the sun came out
& dried up all the coal dust
Off the cobbles

Seagulls

1

tha' memory is littered with anonymous pictures of you

all those villas in Clifton
stood under a crisp
well-bred sort of moonlight

all those streets that lust
the attention of midnight,
that I shifted through;

glancing down like supermarket aisles,
happy in hopelessness, then
you seemed limitless

it flew by without weekends
& the sky was always full
of the stuff of poems.

2

you were the first to burn me with a cigarette
& I have never had the chance to say thank you

now, the darker rings of arm, spell out
an awkward binary code, a double life, punched out

just like a player piano music score, automatically
ticking away the song of a life once lived

I can still hear the seagulls' wail reverberating off
the Georgian walls, pushed down Granby Hill

presumably at the speed of sound. I still feel leftover
paperback kisses condense on Sunday mornings

3

so is it any wonder I live my life like this now?
always forty-five minutes away from packing my bags,
hands calmly looping shoelaces in & around each other,
then checking pockets so as not to take anything
or leave anything behind.

§

morning breath on the softly
warmed air
 from
 nights before
fingernails across memories
whitened skin blushing
streaks of blood
your teeth
sharp as the wind
banging over
top o'millpocked hills
cut by slow water
rough underarms
barbed wire fences
catches unwashed clothes
the warm air meeting cold
stirring endless
connection of time

§

just before I went to sleep
I saw a rainbow being eaten alive
by
a big black cloud
all colour was consumed
but
really
it was that tricky business
between
closing time & the click of a lock
as a door slammed
why can't you just be...
but I always interrupt the inevitable
especially when
we couldn't even begin
to define happiness

It could be in the difference
between
sincerely, many regards, your name
or just an x
marking the end

§

I was a silly Tyke with corralled catalogue ideas,
Going after girls schoolboy doubt,
A semi-collapsing simpatico groan
Chasing failings of fading light
In rooms where photographs are developed,
Dropping negatives, escaping panic

She was a flushed air girl from Arran
With a Ghost poet tattoo.
This quickening warp, tall cage of cosmos
In hot lilac street, above the oil dusted Avon
After the sun had finally gone, spread
Out like litter, multicoloured, digital

Coming of age was felt in palms
As noisy cocaine went up my nose

Palms become full of flesh & heat
From darkness clasped into rain

Both soaked right through
Blocked out from that world

Staring across this view
If the apocalypse would of started

I wouldn't even blink to speak

Supermarket

we will enter heaven
the same way we enter supermarkets
gawked wide eyed & lonely
oh so bloody lonely

when I shop
I feel empty
trapped
slowly shuffling pushing trolley
heavy
pallbearer for my own coffin

we are all here
making sure aspiration & lifestyles
are reflected in authentic rustic cuisine
a toothless whore smiling for the camera

there's pretty boy Narcissus buying Casanova scents
single mother doing maths all the way round
atomic veterans stocking up leftovers
shaking heads at
the neo fat man with his fad diet teardrops of doom
crying all the way to the chip shop
middle aged suit still wondering where his youth went
middle aged couple gazing shocked dismay into middle distance
the wedding cake was the bomb!
there's the little princess stamping
dreaming of luxurious vulgarity
young families besieged by walls of
origami cereal box art & astropop sugar treats
misty romantic ex-traveller now teaching comprehensive history
skipping in & out of dreamsville in between
BOGOFS, 50% free and organic something or other
an occasional tabloid philosopher wondering if we have
wasted our entire lives breathing
teenage girls gawping over the golden age of publicity
chasing flavours of the month & supergirls shadow
gym freak counting calories so everyone can see
fraulein fishwife for your pleasure
dinnerbreak receptionist with a letter opener in her bra
cold linoleum floors holding elderly couple close in its grasp

steel tongued pierced starlet snarling at security guards
lauding innocence freedom & laissez-faire vegetarianism
salivating soldiers from the pic 'n mix generation
the tramp, the broken man, heavy breathing
stalking reduced items, hiding past glory
in cold beard and holding back forgotten
soulmate tears
the modern man, caring & sensitive
rough shaven buying flowers off the forecourt
wearing long coat for the theatre
don't pose
it's not sexy
the standard man crucifying himself
for the cult of things
the perfect man
everything perfect
always perfect
reduced now to a moon light voyeur out of loneliness
all just regretful souls in our new cathedrals

but then, there was you
a phosphor crosslight across the crowd
sucking attention with simplicity
walking on unknown draft of salvation
flowery dress mock fur knee-length coat
former Catholic girl knees & a retrozone smile

we catch eyes

I wonder if we can run away together
from this new & improved vision of paradise
explore the origins of love making snowstorms & huddles
swap stories
split a memory or two

then you walk past
leaving just a trail of what-ifs
hypothetical evenings looping looping kiss
before slipping beyond grasp into warm silence
soul defining moments synthesised in flicker of an eye
I guess black holes aren't for everyone

I wonder if they have an aisle for happy endings
or sell funerals for the ignored spirit

I want to climb into the sky
forget the world
be the man who quit the human race
dance amongst aluminum angels
on top of wilderness clouds
watching hand in hand sunsets for eternity

but I'm back at the checkout
watching time on a conveyor belt
I feel empty again
left with nothing but a trolley full
& no shining light
to guide me
to help me decipher all these symbols
of fake perfection
with her fleeting masterpiece
of imperfection

I once saw

§

I never saw the world this way
until the summer ended
scribbled pages lost
humiliation of elephant
crouched crying at the circus
'cos the clowns are
ignoring her imperfect ears

glistening
rainbow spotlight limelight fame
of a child's memory

kiss on my neck
spine melts
microcosm of supernova

simultaneous embrace
heart sings
like a bird
who has seen
for the first time
beauty convalesce
in the forest of everything

it slowly ticks out of time
seeping pure weakness of heart
hitting every bum note
on the scale
squawking scratching screaming

love is birdsong
gently floating out of tune
for nothing in this world
is personal without
the imperfection of desire
Poem For Mirjana

when you feel like life won't start
constantly guileless in daydreams

humming but never getting to sing

when all of your tomorrows are stranded
in a ream of doppelganger service stations
whilst Facebook is a torrent of summer love

when you watch your reflection
in the mirror & can only imagine
a revolver pressing against your temple

when the sunny days make you squirm
as this sunlight is dreamt & false
unlike the shadows chained forever to your ankles

when the love letters of your grandparents
remind you of a long-gone type of romance
as you analyse the health of spreadsheets

when the nights draw in like claustrophobia
pinch yourself, remember you are alive
& live like you dance, as if no one is watching

§

what makes her flaws, so irresistible
what makes her a priest, to hear my bedside confession
what makes her sigh, seem a doomed pursuit
what makes her sleep, a perfect murder

what makes her laugh, a smothered ebbing,
parallel & anxious, straight as a die
what makes her skin, unethical but binding
what makes her conversation, sound like hi-tech equipment

what makes her depression, a serious stigma,
nothing to do with anyone or designer drug weekends
what makes her breath, on my neck,
a quick shallow form, feel like a coma

what makes her eyes, diamonds scoring flesh,
reflecting a strong pose, like an actor, like a preacher,
like an astronaut, like a daydream, marking the point,
at the very muted end of tips of fingers

what makes her dancing, facing away but with me,
be like Eve holding out fruit in the early days of joy.
when lights come on, when fingers grip
as if not to lose light, or let light in

what makes her the one I always seek when wounded
like morphine, or superglue

Most Definitely The Furniture Game

Her hair was bleached blonde streaked red and the sides of her
head were shaved

And the ladder in her tights was effortless

And her voice was a scratch on a vintage record

And her passport photo was a pearl found under a wardrobe

And her ambition were buildings made from sky.

Her poetry was wonderful & 100% trash

And her blink was an impossible Utopia

And her class came through as an inkstain ticking pocket watch to
time indefinite

And her fingernails were a cracked fresco in a warzone

And her suitcase radiated go!

The fiddle of her fingers was a love poem spelt out in British Sign
Language

Her sigh was a let go balloon

And her dreams were a portfolio of kitsch

And her yawn was the gap between the moment & a photograph

And her laugh, was an English postcard.

Her eyelashes were dark matter

And the birthmark on her Iris is a Higgs Boson

And her goodbye was a lunar eclipse seen from Mars

And her makeup was sunshine on a warm brick wall

And her insecurity was a weathervane in the eye of a storm.

Her eyes were searchlights across a prison yard

And her suntan was light on a Black Dahlia

And her smile was a flower yet to be given a Latin name

And her whistle was the same five notes sung for thousands of
years in Larksong

And her cheek dimples were God's fingerprints in a tin of Vaseline.

Her heart was flint. Sparking an endless burn

And her tears were cracks in an aging reservoir wall

And her walk was a Katzenjammer waltz

And her loneliness was a hermit crab in a coca-cola can shell

And her silence was the tide out on Blackpool beach.

I was the man who lost his head

And couldn't hold on
Spilling secrets like lentils across a cold supermarket floor

Her absence fills the entire world

smoke lingered around the space she occupied
 before it rained & diluted her make-up
 like a vicious jazz pianist playing *April in Paris*.
 barriers to beauty pulled down, she sighed;
 a balance of elegance, sex, intelligence, scratch
 of sense, piercing benevolence, teenage eyes
 kept unseen for years, roll back from awkward
 dry liaison of lips.

 I reached out;
 shoulder, as she turned towards
 hyped up preparation, the final act,
 I wake up. Curves of you & the afternoon came
 slowly into our arms, no-one's fault that
 we ended up in this situation. From the moment
 we settle in, to the exeunt of your voice & skin,
 struggling to give back voice, to half broken embraces,
 a spirit of grace, delivers us into the sun.
 I breathe it all in, so call no man a liar of emotion.
 the sadness was born from my desire of rewound
 violins. You got a kick out of getting that the lot of man
 is misery. Bottle of unbranded vodka; bedside
 non chronological grip in time, levels, up down fumes, empty,
 proportionate, crumbling, drowned in ourselves
 gasping eyes turned hot, If I could go back,
 I'd do it all again quicker.
 memories are just a smokescreen, images
 of chipped nail varnish on fingernails.

Like meat hooks
 in a carcass
 hung up
 in butcher's freezer
 waiting
 to be cut
 & sold

