



Lune Fiction

Issue 1



20th February 2006

Bade mein Hof!

Lune: River rising near Newbiggin, county of Cumbria and flowing 45 miles westward and then southward to empty into the Irish Sea a few miles south of Heysham in Lancashire. The river drains part of the northern Pennines and its entry to the sea at Sunderland Point is marked by extensive sand flats at low tide. Lancaster is the major town. (Encyclopedia Britannica 1997).

Fiction: A thing feigned or imaginatively invented; an invented statement or narrative; an untruth (Oxford Dictionary, 1993).

Lune Fiction

Issue 1

Editor: Humble Sam

POYSE: Mollie Baxter

Co -Editors: JM de Vrind & Leo Davies

Design & stuff (i.e. pictures) : John William Montgomery de Bas (from his exhibition 'Angels of Rome')

Published by Humble Texts

Contributions: Mollie Baxter, Nygel Harrot, Louisa J. Reynolds, Humble Sam, Jane Scargill, JM de Vrind, Ken Walton & Herschel Waters

Comments, advice, complaints, contributions, donations and sponsorship deals can be sent via our contact address.

We will choose to ignore letters we don't like

Originally published October 2001 as hardcopy except where indicated otherwise

God Save The Duchy Of Lancaster

ISSN 1754-7172

Next Issue will be out 20th March 2006



This issue was sponsored by
the North West Arts Board



Conditions Of Sale:

Look, sorry for appearing to be square, but apparently my legal team has advised me to say the following:

This magazine has been published subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this edition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

All stories, articles and letters are copyright (©, thank you Mr Desmond) of the authors. Actually, now I think about it, the same goes for the pictures and all. Finally, the views that are expressed here are not necessarily the views of the editor and publisher.

And there we have it.

Editorial

Greetings! This being the first edition of Lune Fiction, I suppose I have to explain what is its purpose: Flash Fiction by Lancaster's writers for a discriminating audience (that's you, that is!). So, what is Flash Fiction? Flash Fiction is very, very short stories. As a flash is a brief beam of light, Flash Fiction is meant to be about snippets of literature and those moments in life that change your perception of the world, whether slightly or profoundly, for better or for worse. Flash Fiction relies heavily on implication and more often than not a suggested plot.

However, I have been informed by certain members of the public, who have read this issue, that Lune Fiction is "humourless", "second rate", and "morbid in tone". Luckily, the first two opinions were expressed by two overeducated sub-normal members of the human race who are easily confused by words.

The third opinion, however, does worry me, as this edition is not intended to be morbid. It is the second edition, that will be morbid. It will deal with the difficult topics of death, exits and endings. So, let that not put you off reading and enjoying this, the first edition of Lune Fiction! After all, being miserable is a question of attitude.

Furthermore, literature is not meant to be about life and pleasure nor death and pain. It should be thought-provoking and should not hesitate from discussing issues that are relevant. And at the moment, it is obvious that death and the passing of things (e.g. the security and safety that we experienced until a few years ago) are of utmost significance. Anyhow, there we have it. I hope you like what you find and

if you don't... tough!

The main thing is that you enjoy the stories presented to you in this edition.

Keep on reading in the Free World,
A bientôt,

Humble Sam



PS Look out for the Flash Essay - it's experimental!

PPS Now that I think about it, this issue is a bit macabre.

Contents

Editorial

Letter To The Editor

An Armed Assault

Waxing Lyrically

Lancaster; Friday Night

Daybird

Sock It To 'Em, Mikhail

Roundabout/ High On Paint

The Small Baby

Whalley Speaks

Flash Essay

Changes

A. Smith

Jennifer Aitken

Looks like Death

Hawnielocks And The Three Enormous Dandelions

Hell Hath No Fury ...

Trouble With The Law

Williamson Park

Waiting for Rain, Oh!

The Sea Is Weird



Letter To The Editor

Makes You Think

Sir.

Today, in the bath, I discovered I can lick my own right nipple. Not bad, you might say, but for some reason, I cannot quite reach the left one. I have tried repeatedly.

It now hurts to talk and I hope no one asks me why I am so quiet.

I can't wait for my next bath.

A.Woman

An Armed Assault

A security guard is in hospital after being attacked in Lancaster by an armed fruit. An unidentified banana struck 50 year old Jimi Scythe with a bin bag this morning. Mr Scythe was carrying a large amount of cash which the robber got away with. The incident happened in Penny Street just after zen o'clock.

The robber speeded away with two accomplices, a strawberry and an apricot, in a fruit bowl stolen yesterday from Pizzeria Giuseppe's. The bowl has been found abandoned somewhere else.

The police say the criminals have left the area in a hyper sonic juggernaut. The armed robber is yellow, quite long for a banana, slim, and has a brown complexion. The strawberry is six feet round, heavily built, and is wearing a green clothe cap. The driver is a genetically modified apricot.

The police say they are indeed very naughty fruit.

1st published in 2nd edition of the-phone-book.com

Waxing Lyrically

There are many trends apparent in the modern world. Often they appear unrelated.

Last night I decorated my room with tea lights, enjoying the aroma of vanilla that permeated the air. My eyes fell upon a magazine lying open at the classifieds.

"It's never been easier to remove unwanted fatty deposits



from tums, bums and thighs!", it proclaimed. "Thousands of normal women enjoy the benefits of liposuction - why don't you?"

In the glimmering candlelight I pictured thousands of women, prone, Hoover nozzles slurping naughtily under the skin of their thighs.

"Where does all that fat go?", I wondered, lighting another night light, and placing it in a dish of water, where it bobbed peacefully.

I can't afford liposuction, but I can enjoy these little candles, so cheap and abundant these days.

A wick popped fattily.

Lancaster, Friday Night

"What are you up to, sunshine", they asked. "Nothing really", I replied, hiding the spliff from prying eyes. A spotlight was staring into my eyes. "Don't look like nuffink to me", one of them muttered. "Look, I can explain", I murmured.

"No need", said a gruff voice.

I woke up in a cell a few hours later. I had some bruises and a broken nose.

I don't think the police know what they stand for these days.

Daybird

i.

I only phone so late, because I know she'll be waiting up for me.

'Hello?'

She's sleepy.

'Alright, Babe?'

'Hii-ya...' Her voice relaxes, 'Are you still coming round?'

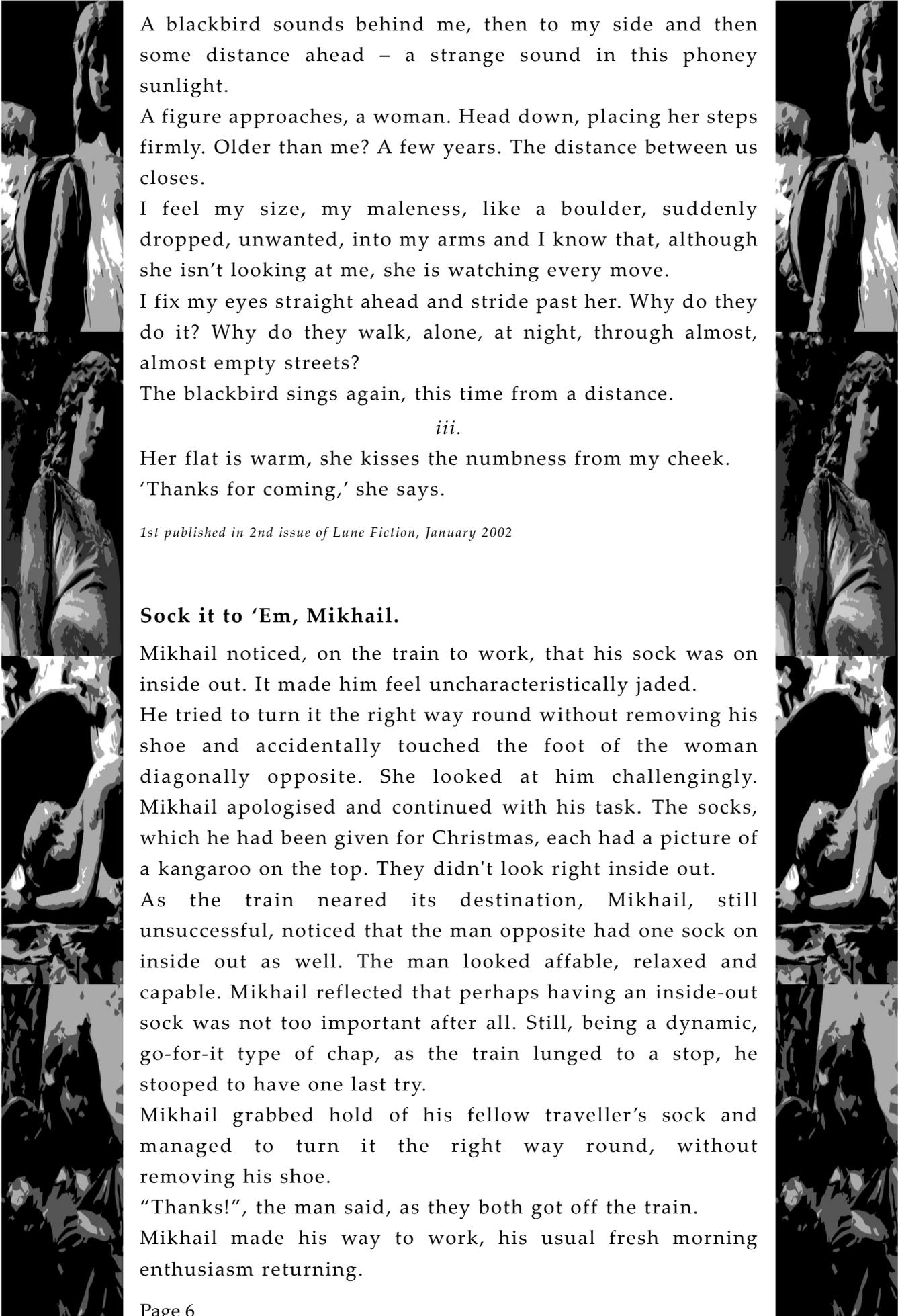
'It's not too late? She gives a laugh I can see more from memory than hear.

'Of course not.'

'Ok, give me half an hour.'

ii.

I re-enter town, this time without my work things. The midnight chimes have long since cooled in the air. Everything is cold, black and street lamp orange.



A blackbird sounds behind me, then to my side and then some distance ahead – a strange sound in this phoney sunlight.

A figure approaches, a woman. Head down, placing her steps firmly. Older than me? A few years. The distance between us closes.

I feel my size, my maleness, like a boulder, suddenly dropped, unwanted, into my arms and I know that, although she isn't looking at me, she is watching every move.

I fix my eyes straight ahead and stride past her. Why do they do it? Why do they walk, alone, at night, through almost, almost empty streets?

The blackbird sings again, this time from a distance.

iii.

Her flat is warm, she kisses the numbness from my cheek.

'Thanks for coming,' she says.

1st published in 2nd issue of Lune Fiction, January 2002

Sock it to 'Em, Mikhail.

Mikhail noticed, on the train to work, that his sock was on inside out. It made him feel uncharacteristically jaded.

He tried to turn it the right way round without removing his shoe and accidentally touched the foot of the woman diagonally opposite. She looked at him challengingly. Mikhail apologised and continued with his task. The socks, which he had been given for Christmas, each had a picture of a kangaroo on the top. They didn't look right inside out.

As the train neared its destination, Mikhail, still unsuccessful, noticed that the man opposite had one sock on inside out as well. The man looked affable, relaxed and capable. Mikhail reflected that perhaps having an inside-out sock was not too important after all. Still, being a dynamic, go-for-it type of chap, as the train lunged to a stop, he stooped to have one last try.

Mikhail grabbed hold of his fellow traveller's sock and managed to turn it the right way round, without removing his shoe.

"Thanks!", the man said, as they both got off the train.

Mikhail made his way to work, his usual fresh morning enthusiasm returning.



Roundabout in Warden Park/ High on Paint

Wendy turns slowly, remembering when she was eleven. Graham, her father's friend, "I pulled back the covers to have a look at you last night. You were beautiful, all sprawled out...". The sunset sends swathes of colour across the darkened sky, this is the park where a man is known to fiddle with children. On the roundabout, she turns slowly on her back, hair trailing on the ground, this is where she used to stay with the boy she loves.

Turning slowly, I see swathes of red cross the darkening sky.

The Small Baby

The Davros in a pushchair regards me with a face empty of expression.

Every Tuesday, he is here.

I... just... want my giro.

He's watching me; I know it. I want to lift my eyes, stare him out, but it would be futile.

That afternoon, I return to the wise man to request aid against my Nemesis.

"You have faced him with a still mind and an open heart?"

"Yes, Master."

"You have made the stance of the dancing crane and purged your body of all that is impure?"

"Yes, Master."

He opens his eyes slightly.

"The whisky didn't help?"

"No, Master."

His eyes close once more.

"Then... it is over."

"What?"

"You can try... but you cannot... outstare the baby. A Buddha... who has no need for blinking."

There is silence. I want to cry, to rage and scream, instead I say nothing. Finally I bow my head.

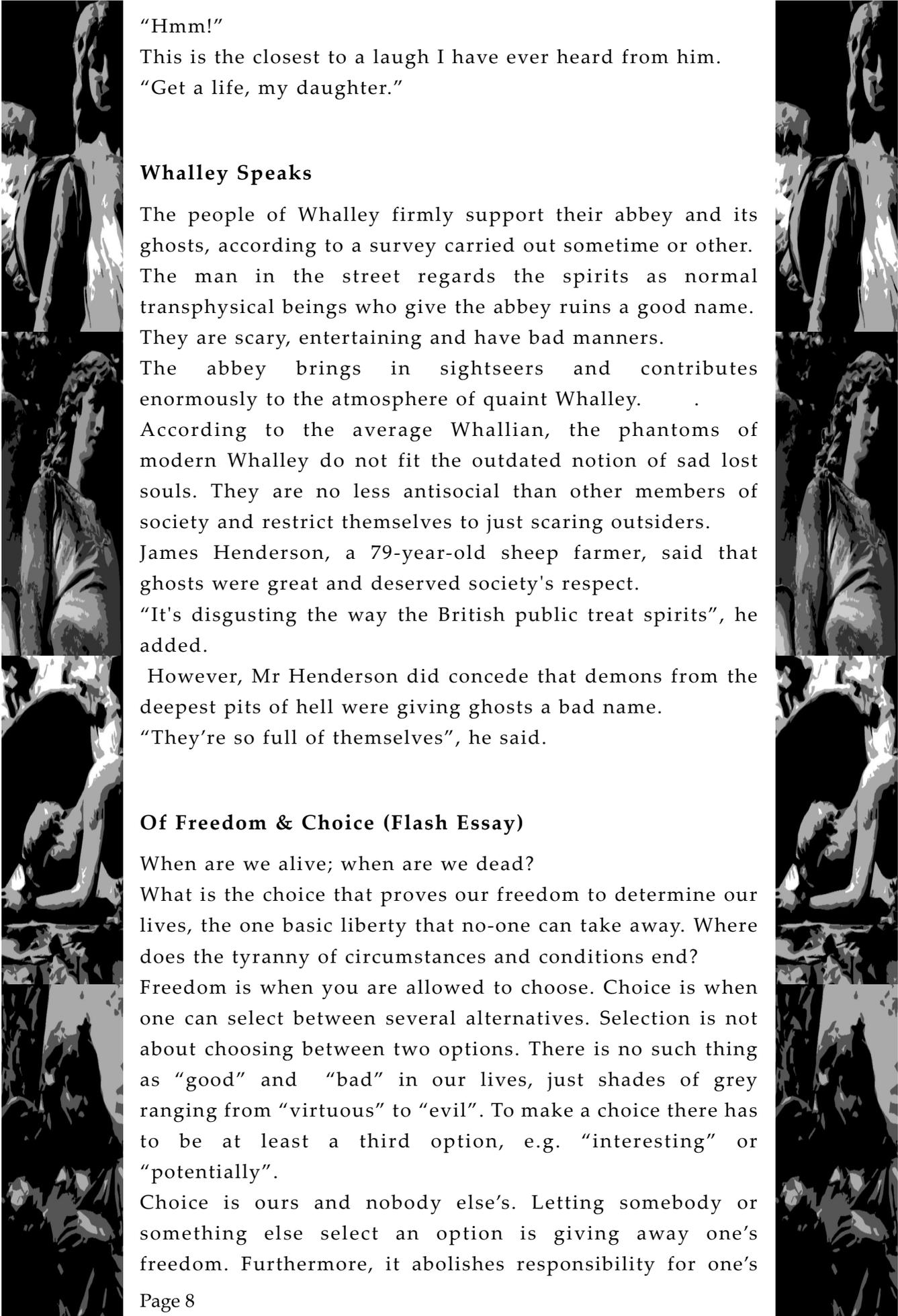
"Yes. I see the truth of it."

My Sensei regards me benignly.

"Good."

I summon what little dignity I have left.

"Master, what now?"



“Hmm!”

This is the closest to a laugh I have ever heard from him.

“Get a life, my daughter.”

Whalley Speaks

The people of Whalley firmly support their abbey and its ghosts, according to a survey carried out sometime or other. The man in the street regards the spirits as normal transphysical beings who give the abbey ruins a good name. They are scary, entertaining and have bad manners.

The abbey brings in sightseers and contributes enormously to the atmosphere of quaint Whalley.

According to the average Whallian, the phantoms of modern Whalley do not fit the outdated notion of sad lost souls. They are no less antisocial than other members of society and restrict themselves to just scaring outsiders.

James Henderson, a 79-year-old sheep farmer, said that ghosts were great and deserved society's respect.

“It's disgusting the way the British public treat spirits”, he added.

However, Mr Henderson did concede that demons from the deepest pits of hell were giving ghosts a bad name.

“They're so full of themselves”, he said.

Of Freedom & Choice (Flash Essay)

When are we alive; when are we dead?

What is the choice that proves our freedom to determine our lives, the one basic liberty that no-one can take away. Where does the tyranny of circumstances and conditions end?

Freedom is when you are allowed to choose. Choice is when one can select between several alternatives. Selection is not about choosing between two options. There is no such thing as “good” and “bad” in our lives, just shades of grey ranging from “virtuous” to “evil”. To make a choice there has to be at least a third option, e.g. “interesting” or “potentially”.

Choice is ours and nobody else's. Letting somebody or something else select an option is giving away one's freedom. Furthermore, it abolishes responsibility for one's



actions. We may be considered to be insignificant specks in the cosmos, but for us humans the individual is the measure of all things. One must determine one's life on one's own.

So what is the individual's basic right? It is, of course, the right to live. The ultimate choice is between life, death and vegetation: Do I want to live? Do I want to be dead? Do I want to waste away, living a meaningless existence?

This is the choice every new day offers us. When you get up in the morning and say "Yes, I want to be alive!", then you know you can lead your own life. If you choose to die, then you know that it was your choice to die and nobody else's.

Naturally, the tyranny of circumstances and conditions can still conspire against you. A lorry might crush you or a mad-man might shoot you.

But that means you would die a free man.

1st published in 2nd issue of Lune Fiction, January 2002

Changes

"Let's swap lives," I said.

"What?" We were standing at Lancaster Gate.

"Look, no-one can tell us apart. Everyone thinks we're twins. Even our parents can't tell the difference. Let's swap lives."

He just stared at me.

"What have you got to lose?", I asked, "You've failed your degree, you've no job, no prospects, no hope. We could have a little wager."

"Ah, one of your wagers!"

"... and if you win, you get my life. First from Oxford, management position in pater's firm, penthouse apartment, Ferrari, yacht and the only debutante in West London who wears red leather thigh boots."

The last one got him. "So what's the wager?"

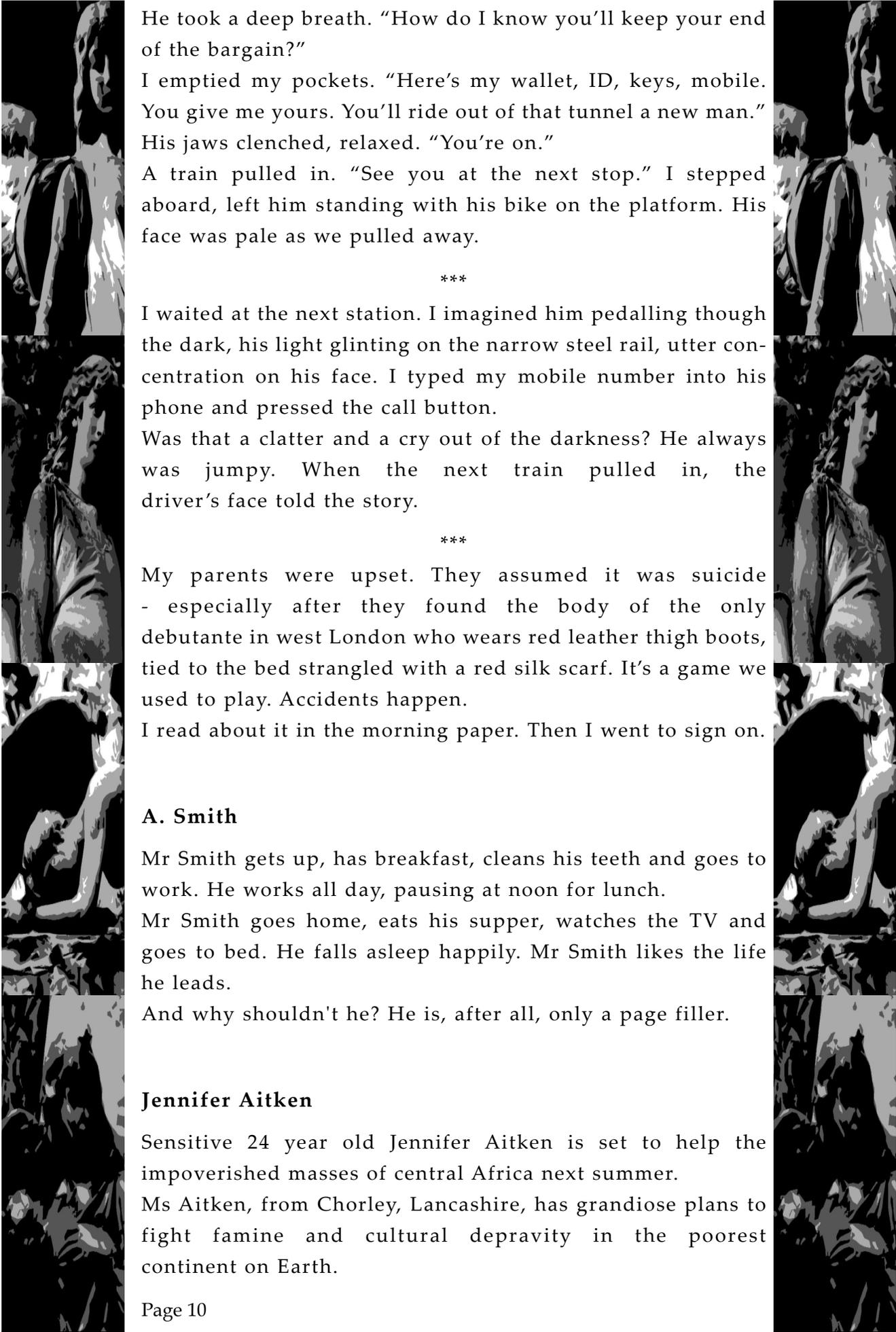
"You have to ride your bike along the central rail to the next station."

"What? That's live!"

"You've got rubber tyres. come on. School BMX champion of 1989. It's a doddle."

"What's in it for you?"

"Life's too easy. I like a challenge. I want to prove I can make it to the top under my own steam."



He took a deep breath. "How do I know you'll keep your end of the bargain?"

I emptied my pockets. "Here's my wallet, ID, keys, mobile. You give me yours. You'll ride out of that tunnel a new man." His jaws clenched, relaxed. "You're on."

A train pulled in. "See you at the next stop." I stepped aboard, left him standing with his bike on the platform. His face was pale as we pulled away.

I waited at the next station. I imagined him pedalling though the dark, his light glinting on the narrow steel rail, utter concentration on his face. I typed my mobile number into his phone and pressed the call button.

Was that a clatter and a cry out of the darkness? He always was jumpy. When the next train pulled in, the driver's face told the story.

My parents were upset. They assumed it was suicide - especially after they found the body of the only debutante in west London who wears red leather thigh boots, tied to the bed strangled with a red silk scarf. It's a game we used to play. Accidents happen.

I read about it in the morning paper. Then I went to sign on.

A. Smith

Mr Smith gets up, has breakfast, cleans his teeth and goes to work. He works all day, pausing at noon for lunch.

Mr Smith goes home, eats his supper, watches the TV and goes to bed. He falls asleep happily. Mr Smith likes the life he leads.

And why shouldn't he? He is, after all, only a page filler.

Jennifer Aitken

Sensitive 24 year old Jennifer Aitken is set to help the impoverished masses of central Africa next summer.

Ms Aitken, from Chorley, Lancashire, has grandiose plans to fight famine and cultural depravity in the poorest continent on Earth.



As part of her Golden Duke of Edinburgh Award, she is leading an expedition to Moboyi near Mobaye, somewhere in Africa. She will be restoring an old Fin-de-siècle style brothel and help build a factory for the production of Glaswegian chocolate bars - Mars bars soaked in cheap whiskey for four days, then boiled in lard for several hours.

“I'm really looking forward to this expedition. It's something to think about while studying at university, preparing for my Advanced Feng Shui certificate and screwing around”, says mosher Jennifer.

If time allows her, she might conduct some scientific research while in Africa. Or maybe not.

Outgoing Jenny intends to raise £250 for her services. She also intends not to come back with an unpleasant viral disease.

Looks Like Death

*Don't get familiar,
Me and my boys'll have to kill yer...
Bitch nigger with the audacity to blasphemy*

Got yourself caught in a motherfucking tragedy
My grandmother couldn't keep anything down - had to take major surgery. Over the following months we worked a groove across the bare Pennines. Oxygen mask, IV drip, “I could've been dead,” she told me over fresh flowers. The new incarnation child visible under her disappearing hair.

*I need immediate assistance. I'm losing stability, I can't shake it. 77, do you copy?
77?*

Finally,
Warning - Oxygen-rich environment

I flinched at the door, “I didn't expect to see her like that”, her mouth a gaping outlet in pasty white. No response to our votive concern, wrinkled oedemas soft as spider webs, eyes drooping and dull with effort, lungs in labour, the wizened shell sending out its life.

I have to breathe the air you breathe I'm inside you
In a room inside a room I'm inside you
That face kept coming to mind while I took fresh air. In cowardice I didn't stay. But privileged to have seen this.
I haven't lost her.

Quotes: Unkle, Psyence Fiction 1997

Hawnielocks And The Three Enormous Dandelions

Once upon a time, in the faraway country of Northumberland, there was a right little goer called Hawnielocks who was out in the woods smoking weed and picking mushrooms. "Hey Dude," she thought, "this is like so pangalactic", as she tripped over her feet and landed face first in a puddle.

"Stupid cow", said a sweet little bunny rabbit hopping past, "that will teach you". And indeed it did, for the cold water knocked some sense back into her incredibly small mind.

"Oh floppy discs", thought Hawnielocks, "where am I?"

Just then she noticed a cottage in a clearing.

"Excellent, brilliant", she exclaimed.

However, she didn't know that it was the house of the Three Enormous Dandelions and she entered the house without realising in what grave danger she was putting herself in. And that's grave as in serious and not as in where corpses are laid to rest, I'll have you know.

Anyhow, anyway; Hawnielocks, to her disgust, found three bowels of dung on the dining table in the living room. She tried some but it was most foul and she threw up and passed out. After a while, she regained consciousness, threw up one more time because, hey, that is like so controversial and decided to inspect the bedroom, for she was most whacked out and needed a good kip. However, there weren't beds in the room but pots in which plants could stand! How cool is that?! Hawnielocks was most perplexed by this but decided to have a go at being a plant. Just then the Three Enormous Dandelions came back home from work.

"Oi", said Dandelion A, "which fucker has been tasting my shit?"

"Hey, gang-goolie", roared Dandelion B, "which poo-bum has been trying my shit?"

"They must pay the price!", whispered Dandelion C.

The Three Enormous Dandelions searched the house and found Hawnielocks in the bedroom pretending to be an orchid. Quivering with anticipation, their pistils extended, they banged her till she came and came and became green with chlorophyll.

She was now pregnant with Dandelion C's child.

The Three Enormous Dandelions sucked out her brains for, among other equally valuable reasons, brain matter is more nutritious than shit and they hooked up her body to a weird looking machine straight out of a Hans Giger nightmare that kept her body alive till she gave birth to Dandelion D. Then her body was thrown in the pit in the back yard with the other bodies.

And the Four Enormous Dandelions lived happily ever after.

1st published by Humble Texts, December 2004



Hell Hath No Fury Like A Woman Scorned

Joan left Bradford and moved to West Bank after retirement. She occupied herself making scones, being the treasurer of the Ladies' Circle and riding her Harley Davidson, bought with a lump sum, along Morecambe prom.

Before long, the people of Morecambe started to complain. Cycling on the prom had already been causing annoyance, but this was even worse.

Joan tried to pacify them by handing out her home made scones with jam and cream, before starting to ride. The people of Morecambe were having none of it.

"Why doesn't she ride along the front at Hest Bank?", one said.

"Then, she'd sink into the sands and not cause any more trouble", another muttered darkly.

Joan, stung by their comments, for old age had affected neither her hearing nor her ability to be offended, charged along the prom out to sea, did a one point turn in the air and drove straight through Morecambe's pride and joy, The Midland Hotel.

"That'll show them," she said.

Trouble With The Law

The police picked on me. They said: "You have the right to remain silent".

So I said:

"

".

And I meant it!

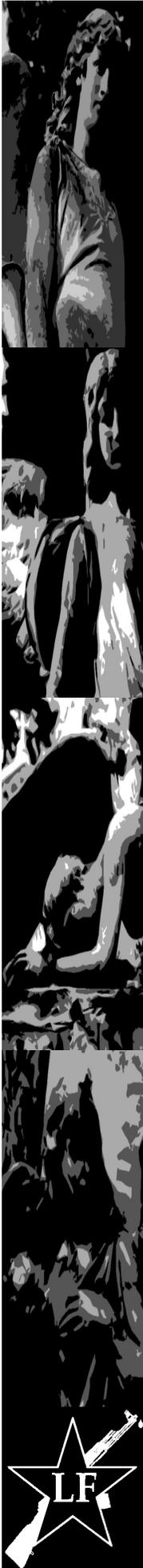
Williamson Park

My love in his frustration leaps up and down, sparking his gas lighter in an attempt to incinerate, one by one, the midges circling his head.

"... Get... Gah! ... Aha!"

With one last expletive, he collects his things, stomps around me and sits down again some distance away.

The midges leave a polite pause, waiting for him to settle. Then they quietly tumble over me to reclaim the space



above his head.
I sigh and enjoy the view.

Waiting For Rain, Oh!

The river Lune was waiting for the rain to come along. It was worried, for it was busy drying up.
“Don't fret”, said the ghost of John O’Gaunt soothingly. “It’ll come. It always rains in Lancaster”.

The Sea Is Weird

Sea weed and sea salt. The sea is weird.
Sea weed floats in salty water; lives in the dark. Sea weed flows with the ocean currents.
Sea weed and sea salt. The sea is weird.
The dead struggle through forests of kelp. They stumble over anchors embedded in the sea bed; they fumble through the dark at the bottom of the ocean.
Dead friends mingle with the creatures of the deep. Deceased relatives are trapped in the sand. Soul mates live below layers of salty water. Sailors and fishermen, children and women are lost forever among the dark green forests of a watery world.
Sea weed and sea salt. The sea is weird.
A shark casually swims among the dead. Oblivious to the plight of those around him, he sneezes and blinks. A squid meeps. It has a scarred eye from fighting with the sperm whale. Ignoring the dead, the squid looks for something meatier.
Sea weed and sea salt. The sea is weird.
And then there’s that weir made of timber and steel. It is decorated with barnacles and other strange things. Stand at the front of it and stare out to sea. Towards France, Ireland, the Netherlands or Norway. And the smell that hits you in the face with lust and longing. The smell of the sea, the salt, the fish and the dead.
It was there beneath the weir, at low tide, that I first made love to you.
Sea weed and sea salt. The sea is weird.

1st published in 2nd issue of Lune Fiction, January 2002

finis



**This issue was sponsored by
the North West Arts Board**

