



Lune Fiction



Issue 6

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Do the Lune!

Lune: noun. A fit of lunacy or madness; a period of frenzy; a crazy or unreasonable freak. [Obs.] (Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, 1996)

Fiction: noun. Something untrue that is intentionally represented as true by the narrator. (Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, 1996)

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Some letters sent to us will be published and others won't

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God preserve us in prose and verse

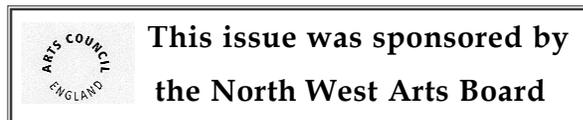
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Conditions Of Sale:

Urbi et Orbi.

It is my solemn duty to announce that this magazine has been down-loaded subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or



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cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this edition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser. *Help! They're coming for me* : / All stories, articles and letters are copyright of the publisher and contributors. *No, really they are!* Actually, now I think about it, the same goes for the pictures and all. *Aaaaagh* Finally, the views that are expressed here are not necessarily the views of the editor and publisher.

Editorial

This new collection of flash fiction consists of many extremes. Chiefly ,there are only eleven stories: two are the ultra short stories *Pub Night* and *Cure*, another is *Sketch*, an epic flash piece. Why the difference? Where does flash fiction stop, where does 'normal' fiction start? When is minimalist literature too long or too short?

This is not just a dilemma that occurs in literary fiction. Consider abstract artists like Miro and Kandinsky. How minimalist are their works? Which painitngs of theirs are statements said with little input and which pictures are statements with too much input? Similarly in music: Steve Reich's *Piece For 26 Musicians* is a melody that very slowly reveals itself but lasts for an hour, whereas Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony* has several music lines and musical variations based on one theme, but it barely lasts half an hour.

The definition of the length (and nature) of a flash fiction piece is arbitrary and it is best left to the reader to decide what is and what is not minimalist literature. Perhaps one day, in the not too distant future, there will be a general consensus, as to how long (and what) sudden fiction should be, but in the mean time simply enjoy this magazine of mini sagas.

Keep on thinking in the free world (it's not a crime yet),



Humble Sam



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Letters to the Editor

Dear Madam,

Alas! I knew it was only a matter of time before the male gaze descended onto these hallowed pages.

Mr H. W. Bamfrey obviously harbours a deep loathing for women else he would not pour such condemnation on an activity sacred to the daughters of Eve i.e. autonippolinguus. To you, Mr Bamfrey, I say only this: the Medusa is still laughing; and what's more, she's sticking her tongue out.

Grace Hermione Jones

Postscript. Mind you - you had a point about there not being enough pictures.

Sir,

Is it just me or have the men in grey just abducted Humble Sam (*Conditions Of Sale*)?

Leo Davis

No, not me; Jomar de Vrind (HS)



Lancaster Walkabout

After having observed my observer for a few minutes, I looked at the green hills to the North, turned my gaze on Morecambe Bay, smiled at the memory of making love to my former wife on the beach at the dead of night, flicked my cigarette, proceeded to walk down the cobblestone path past the castle with its grand facade, ignored the arrival of new





convicts, went past the new archaeological dig where Norman artefacts were being discovered on a regular basis, brushed some ancient dust of my black trench coat (it must have been waiting for me for aeons in the charity shop), marched on to the cross-roads of China Street and North Road, waited patiently for the lights to change, hurried through the city centre, looked at a poster proclaiming the advantages of mobile phones, walked down Cheapside, raced along (in a leisurely sort of way) past the new bus station, crossed the road, onwards and upwards over the Millennium bridge, scratched my goatee, passed a hand through my thick brown hair, sauntered down the cycle path, stopped after a few yards, checked my fly was not undone, turned to the tall gaunt suave looking man who had been staring at me while I was having my cigarette break outside the priory and asked him what he was looking at.

Henry Leaves Home

Henry moved out a month ago and got a place of his own about two miles from me. I went to visit him for the first time on Tuesday.

He had everything well set out in a neat, compact kennel, water bowl in one corner, food in the other, and in the middle, his favourite ball, the blue one with orange stripes. I nearly cried when I saw it.

I did see a stray bone near the entrance.

'How about putting...' I started, 'erm, sorry.'

Henry sniffed and carried on walking around his new home, his head held high.

'How you finding the neighbours,' I ventured.

Henry's head lowered a little. 'Dog called Geoff over there, always boasting about how his kennel's made of fine quality wood and barking loud at night,' he muttered.

I felt hope rise like a breath of air in my chest. Perhaps Henry would decide, in time, to come home.

'Steve's a good mate, though,' he added, 'showed me how to build a conservatory from branches, and then we went for a drink.'

I sighed.

I hope you don't mind,' I said, 'but I got you a little house warming gift. Shan't be a sec.'



I got the giant sized biscuit from the car.
When Henry saw it, he bounded towards me like when he was a puppy and licked my face.
Then he regained his composure. 'Thanks. I'll have some of that for my tea, give Steve a bit too'.
I hovered by the entrance. "See you soon, then, I guess".
"OK. Thanks for coming", Henry barked.



Driving home, I resolved to clean the car of dog hairs. They always did smell a bit.

Pub Night

Bored by their chatter, embarrassed at running after you, angry at your swank, I broke my hope in glass against the wall.

I see my message sent back from your retina.
I don't know who started it.



Mourning

Charles' death came some time after Gillian's. He became an ex-hamster.

I couldn't take it in at first, seeing him lying there, his little furry body. Gillian had just disappeared into the night and later I heard they had found a body: I never saw it. Charles' death was more of a reality.

I've had trouble coming to terms with it, remembering him running round on his little wheel, doing somersaults off it, swearing at visitors (he had learned how to speak), in a way that I pretended to be embarrassed by, but was really amused.

Thinking of my wife, Gillian's death, reminds me of Charles' death.

Perhaps time will heal eventually.



Geraldine's Passion

Geraldine was coming out with her habitual comments: "They just come over here and take our benefits; something for nothing."

"Yes, I see what you mean, Dear," Geoffrey said. He put his jacket on. "See if you can get a discount from the plumber. The Jacksons managed it with their electrician."





He left.

Geraldine waited from her home in Bradford suburbia. A shadow crossed the doorway. "Hello, love", he said. Geraldine stared.

Jamil was dark skinned, tall, thin yet muscular.

He broke the silence: "Come to see to your pipes, love."

Geraldine's face burned as its colour changed.

"Want me to start?"

"Oh... yes... please!"

During the week, while Jamil worked on her pipes, Geraldine became a new person, one she didn't recognise. Jamil was so different from Geoffrey and other men she had fancied.

She couldn't help staring at his capable, wiry arms, his firm, round bottom.

On the Thursday, Jamil turned round and said, 'You're an attractive woman, Geraldine, for your age.'

"Thank you, Jamil", she replied, "and you're..."

"No, seriously, you have an alluring maturity, a ripeness, like Helen Mirren, only older."

"Don't..."

Jamil sorted out Geraldine's pipes, and neither felt they'd got something for nothing.

Cure

Take a cat three times a day after meals; let your lap be its Comfy Place for sleep. Purring will intensify then subside. Feelings of pointlessness should start to ease. Repeat as often as desired.

If symptoms persist, increase dosage to two cats.

English For Beginners: Lesson 3

We are at home again with Family Barraclough. Tension is growing between Mr & Mrs Barraclough

1 Mrs Barraclough: What's wrong?

2 Mr Barraclough: You have been seeing our neighbour again.

3 Mrs Barraclough: So? What's your problem?

4 Mr Barraclough: Why do you always see our neighbour when I am away?

5 Mrs Barraclough: Because he is always kind to me.





6 Mr Barraclough: And I am never kind to you?

7 Mrs Barraclough: Yes, but he is a real man!

Germaine and William are playing outside again:

8 Germaine: What was that?

9 William: What was what?

10 Germaine: That bang! What was it?

11 William: I think it was our father's shotgun.

12 Germaine: No, not our father's shotgun?!

13 William: Yes, our father's shotgun.

William and Germaine go back inside the house:

14 William: Dad? Mum? What has happened?

15 Germaine: Mum? Dad? What has happened?

16 Mr Barraclough: Your mother is no more.

17 William: Why is Mum no more?

18 Germaine: Yes, Dad! Why is Mum no more?

19 Mr Barraclough: I shot your mother dead. She was a slut,
a tramp and a harlot!

20 William: But will you not go to prison?

21 Germaine: Yes! Won't you get sent down?

22 Mr Barraclough: Not if I can help it!

23 William: What if we tell the police?

24 Germaine: Yes Daddy! What if we tell the police?

25 Mr Barraclough: Here are £100 for each of you!

26 William: We love you, Daddy!

27 Germaine: Yes, Daddy! We love you.

Sketch

What can I say? Should I have been there when it happened?
Or do I thank my lucky stars that I wasn't? Do you know? I
don't. I really don't.

I was a few miles away when it happened. Swimming in the
pool at the leisure centre, I presumed Steve was sitting in
front of the box, eating his dinner. Zoë must have been
upstairs in her room, redecorating the walls and listening to
jive-driven music rumbling out of her stereo set.

Zoë would have been studying the walls of her room with a
critical eye, Steve would have slowly been chewing a particu-
larly tender piece of meat while a bottle-nose dolphin swam
across the TV screen. I was busy trying to master my second



mile and Jim was having his head bashed in.

Later on, just before bed time, Zoë and Steve told me what the police had got out of Jim. As Jim was lying in bed, reading a good book, for he felt under the weather, his flat mate walked in, inebriated by drink. The flat mate demanded that Jim give him money. What was he talking about? Jim didn't have any money. Jim didn't owe him any money. Jim told his flat mate to go away and let him be. Jim had a bit of a cold. The flat mate glared, mumbled something incomprehensible and sauntered downstairs.

Jim picked up his book.

After a pleasant swim, I came home to our house in the middle of a respectable neighbourhood. I didn't expect anything to be wrong. I thought the nasty looking stains on the carpet and walls in both the hall and the sitting room were paint. Then Zoë walked into the sitting room, her overalls covered in a red brown substance. Behind her in the kitchen, sitting at the table, were Steve and a police woman.

Jim needed a lemsip. He was thirsty and feeling worse than before. He got up slowly. His head was pounding. Jim put on his dressing gown and slowly made his way downstairs. Entering the kitchen, he was surprised to find his flat mate, whom he had now known for four or five years, slumped in a corner, singing to himself. Jim ignored him. He wasn't in the right kind of mood to ask what was wrong, let alone comfort his friend.

Jim put on the kettle, opened a packet of lemsip and turned his back on his friend. The flat mate got up, grabbed something next to him in the corner.

"What", I said, sitting down abruptly with a cup of tea in my hands. Drops of hot tea splashed onto my jeans. I didn't take any notice. "Jim got his head bashed in by a radiator. Stu did it. Jim told us. He came over here. An hour ago", said Zoë, "His face was covered in blood and bruises. Stu bashed him over the head. With a small radiator. As Jim was making himself a lemsip. Stu crept up from behind. Started to attack him with a radiator."

Jim was attacked with force, not accuracy. When a man is drunk, he can be aggressive. But never calculating. For a brief moment, Jim's friend paused to gain breath. Jim used



this breather to grab Stu and fling him in the corner. Stu crashed into the corner, slumped and ceased to move. Jim regained his posture, made his way to the front door. He didn't want to use his phone and he didn't know what his friend would do next. Besides, Jim wanted people around him. Even if it was just the comfort of strangers.



I saw the police woman off . Zoë had gone to bed and Steve was clearing up the kitchen, as one does before going to sleep. I waved good-bye and went to the kitchen. Steve and I sat down with a brew and a roll-up. The clock in the living room could be heard ticking away with vigour, the fish tank glowed vividly in the semi-darkness. We didn't talk much. Outside the clouds dispersed and the moon came out. It started pouring down with rain.



Jim was in hospital. His flat mate was in the same building. In the morgue. The cause of death hadn't been Jim's strength. And it hadn't been that some vertebrates in Stu's neck had been dislodged by the impact. Sticking out of a shelf at the bottom of a kitchen cupboard, next to the door with its cat flap, was a knife. It was stuck, wedged in. As Stu landed, the knife entered his spinal marrow. Accidental manslaughter. Garrotted by one's own carving knife.



Steve had let Jim in. He was covered in blood. Zoë gave him a drink to steady his nerves. They called the police and an ambulance. Zoë forgot about her room, Steve wasn't hungry any more. I must have just finished my second mile and was splashing about before having a shower. Jim told his story. Ten minutes later, the police and ambulance arrived. They helped Jim, they interrogated him. A police man found Stu, a paramedic discovered what had happened to him.



I rubbed myself down, got dressed.



Jim and Stu were taken away and a police-woman was left behind. She was ever so nice, ever so helpful. Zoë and Steve made her tea.

Steve and I started talking about this and that and how lucky I was not to have been there and how Steve and Zoë wished I had been there. We pondered the problem of removing blood stains from carpets. Our landlord wasn't going to be too happy.

We finished our tea and our smokes. We called it a day.





In bed, I stared at the ceiling, watching the shadows play on the pale surface. An owl was shouting abuse in the distance, a rat was chasing a cat across the green. Somewhere, nearby, I thought I heard a mermaid sing.

Flash Essay: On Lighting Up

In the book I'm reading, everybody smokes. It is incidental to the story, but each character quietly and indirectly describes themselves through the act of lighting up.

In this way, we gain clues to the character usually even before they speak.

When I think back over what I've read, there are two characters who do not smoke, or at least, gave the impression of not smoking: the Mentor and the Villain. Both were inscrutable. Apart from them, almost all other characters are described in the act of smoking. There's the woman who smokes Virginia Slims (three puffs before dropping it); the anonymous cigarettes of the narrator with his vague and blameless life; the man who smokes unfiltered Peace.

The brand itself tells tales, but more telling is how the match is struck: shaking hands make repeated attempts necessary, youth and nimbleness mean a girl can hold the box and strike the match using just one hand; access to an excess of money means one woman can have her cigarettes lit for her.

I do not smoke. Perhaps this makes me anti-social. Perhaps the people I meet up with, particularly the smokers, resent the lack of signals I provide when lighting up. Perhaps I am as inscrutable as the Mentor and the Villain.

The McGee Show

After watching 'The McGee Show', John went home. He sulked into his pie and chips, dreaming of steak. "Lucky Sod", he muttered, "He's no better than me. Must be rolling in it by now. Why's no-one asked me to do a show like that?" He folded himself into the lines of the sofa and watched reruns of Pop Idol until 2am. He was back at work by 9.

Dave McGee wiped the greasepaint from his brow. He was tired but content. Tonight's show had been fair. He tucked into his supper of porridge, with a spoonful of honey swirled in. As he ate, McGee mulled over a new part of his act. Oscar scratched at the gap between the window frame and the wall,



wondering if this was a new way to get out of the flat. A cat was a good source of material, mused McGee, but then, everything was.

At midnight, McGee made himself a cocoa and climbed into bed, where he noted down the days ideas. Oscar butted his hand, purring for attention, but finally had to make do with licking himself. Jottings done, McGee tapped his chest and took an angina pill. He turned the radio volume to 2 and bedded down to the tune of 'Sailing By'.

"Goodnight, Ada", he said to his wife, who had died ten years ago.

Oscar repositioned himself along McGee's spine. They went to sleep.

The Issue

There once was a little boy, only seven years of age, who woke up one morning to find a small issue at the foot of his bed.

The boy wasn't afraid, more curious than anything else and he started to play with the issue. Just then his father called him down to breakfast.

"Daddy, Daddy; there's a small issue the size of a kitten in my bedroom!"

"Don't be silly! Eat your breakfast and get dressed otherwise you'll be late for school."

When the little boy came home that evening, the issue had grown the size of an alsatian.

"Daddy, Daddy; guess what? The issue has grown!"

"Don't be ridiculous! Eat your dinner and then you can watch a bit of tv."

When the boy went to bed and said good-night to his new friend, he noted that it had grown the size of a pony.

The following morning, when he explained to his Dad that his friend the issue had grown, the father laughed and told him to brush his teeth. On leaving the house, the little boy said good-bye to his friend who was now the size of a shire horse.

He didn't say anything to his Dad.

After school, the little boy said to his friend; "I wish Dad would realise that you exist. Then you would stop growing."

The issue grew to the size of an elephant.





At tea time the boy decided enough was enough. “Come on Issue”, he said, “let's eat together with Dad in the kitchen.” The issue happily obliged and they both went downstairs for dinner. There was mushroom soup, bread rolls, ginger ale, toad-in-the-hole with mash potatoes and blackcurrant for pudding. Everyone tucked into this hearty meal and enjoyed it... but the father refused to acknowledge the elephant in the room.

James Jones and The Ghost In the Machine

As the cow slid down the barrister, James Jones inspected the contents of his briefcase in the most meticulous of manners. I was there. I saw it.

James approved of his lunch. He stroked his gold gilded lap-top computer; he was dismayed by the empty papers cluttering up his briefcase. Who were they? What did they want from him? Where had they come from? Why did it always happen to him?

The cow thanked the barrister and wandered back to its meadow. The barrister picked up his things and sat down to work.

I was there. I saw it.

Stalking the parameters of my mind, James packed his seven things, put away his lap top, downed his pint (chug, chug, chug) slipped into something substantially more comfortable (and pretty fancy too, it was), grabbed the cow by the horns (and mighty horns they were indeed, indeed), abducted the barrister (missionary of all things naughty), kissed the girl good night and casually slipped back into what is known throughout the land as my mind.

I was there I felt it.

Flash Essay : 'On Lighting Up' (Reprise)

In the book I'm reading, everybody still smokes. The pages are getting yellow.

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