

**Re: Re: Re:**

# Re:

**Andy Jackson & David Prater**





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*No sea monkeys were harmed  
during the making of this chapbook*



# This Stubborn Spotlight

I sat down and you trudged up to lay your grey muzzle on my knee, free of the pain of imagining being taken away, yet not

of the slow loss of bodily functions, nor the vague sense of what was coming – I'd stroked your head and looked into your eyes differently this time.

I don't want to let two-legged complications intrude into your old-dog dignity, but they do. Lines like these are weak and artificial.

So, I won't exclude facts like how Mum, who some would call your owner, never re-married after Dad died, but was sure to bring another pup home,

soon as she'd returned from the vet then drunk herself calm at a friend's house. Was our only honest speech with each other indirect,

through you? But let me try now to shift this rusted, stubborn spotlight, for just a moment, away from the human

animal. If I have to, I will leave you on this note – me not calling but you coming anyway, your soft bronze ears still keen, our two winter breaths

becoming one then gone, and how you looked into me, your tail slow waving, coming to its rest between your legs, as I left.

# Oh God!

oh god yeah god my god my oh  
yes james joyce ulysses yes yes  
penguin modern classics yeah  
my god yes yes & a penguin oh  
i'm coming over many penguins  
yes more penguins yes & books  
yes a book filled with penguins  
yes & lot & lots of poems yes oh  
yes yes stop no start go yes god  
oh yes leave it right there go yes  
yep yep schnell yes hell yes oh  
bless god yes yes yes god oh no  
god no yes no ts suck my breast  
eliot yes ts yes not yet go no oh  
hard as hit my arse & go hard ts  
go go go ts stop no go god go go  
hell yes heaven no go zone that's  
yes right there in english oh yes  
english yes that's english oh god  
pocket rocket god yes throbbing  
yes wet yes oh yes molly oh god  
yes blooming blooming god yes  
flower fucking yes my god that's  
yes yes yes not no god no god in  
a knot yes not there yet stop yes  
god yes god yeah no no go on &  
oh yes on & on & on a river yes  
yes by the river yes god on & on  
like a river yes god god no don't  
hold on god oh no gods all gone

# A Safe Distance

So there was always the body, just out of reach,  
whispering its suggestions across the negotiating table  
of each age, mustering its formidable troops up to  
the gates of half-thought, the tone not threat but

frustration at for how long we've barely been able  
to meet our bodies' eyes, face the truths they hold.  
I'm sure this eighties mix-tape of memories I've compiled  
is bound to have missed some underrated scenes,

but this need to know by speaking is impatient. You  
and I were the first in our group to buy porn, though  
it took us two attempts – we'd assumed *Playboy*  
couldn't cost much more than *TV Week*. Honestly,

it was the soft light pawing unveiled pale curves  
that interested us, not the shock of shallow gynaecology,  
though what of the body can survive such severance?  
One weekend, we took turns to streak, fig-leafed

in jocks, from the school's art-room balcony to the fence  
and back. I think we called it a dare, and never since  
felt the need to repeat or deconstruct it. Years before,  
our grade one legs patterned with gum-tree shadows,

we sat on either end of a bench, waiting for your mum  
to come again to comfort you in your homesickness.  
I was quiet and watched a vacant swing sway;

braver, cold or merely ill-equipped to say or do  
what you might have needed from a friend.  
What's changed? Every seven years are bodies

are entirely new, but faced now with this photo of us  
at twelve – fresh from the Bendigo Show, twinly grinning  
for the camera, monopoly money stuffed between our

bowl-cut framed temples and the arms of mirror sunnies –  
I see the allure of the games we learnt and still play  
to maintain a safe distance, which is at first theoretical

then real. Each body trembles in its isolation. We were  
never exempt. Leaving adolescence before we knew  
its worth, we did what people do – we lost touch.

# Maz

have you heard what they've been saying  
about old drug dealers & ex-girlfriends  
how it's hard to be quite sure who you'd  
rather avoid well believe me there's a  
choice i'd prefer not to make at any time  
let alone now you're probably a lawyer  
that degree having been financed by a  
mountain of small deals secreted inside  
bread rolls & take-away spaghetti under  
kitchen counters due to the cops or were  
they also buying once i arrived at the flat  
to find some guy there your dealer maybe  
although you were sweating it was winter  
i guess we each have our own method of  
payment but i was jealous of the intimacy  
who was i to judge your judgements you  
were always there for me never failed to  
deliver in a way i was in love with your  
cool mobile lifestyle i hadn't seen any of  
the movies you told me about we would  
meet in the strangest places bars parks  
the aforementioned kitchen then you  
cut off your grey hair & went bleached  
i knew it was a sign of our impending  
separation now i do not fear for you &  
often wonder whether we will meet in  
william street's neon shadows kenneth  
slessor never did quite understand the  
reasons for our running into strangers  
averting eyes like johns with no desire  
you remain the anti-flaneur the bright  
hope of entire generations still hooked

# Another Suicide Girl

Power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself.  
Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms.

- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.

'Til the first image slid from the printer,  
and I held that warm portrait, I didn't think  
I'd ever be beautiful, hot, wanted.

There're these few extra kilos, my glasses, the hint  
of a 'stache under a wide nose, my tats...  
During the photo shoot, in my head I had this  
looped image of myself undressing in the dark  
as if the light might burn. Now, if I focus,  
all I can see is Missy take my trembling hand,  
put on music I like, and pose me so naturally  
among my own toys and guitars. I am laughing  
over my shoulder at the camera I once saw  
as a torture device. It consumes my many

imperfections and leaves an impression  
of me I barely recognise – both dirty and coy –  
that'll make them look at my eyes (first, at least).  
It's in the exchange of glances arousal's found,  
and all those subscribers who'll see me looking  
back out of the net this way will appreciate me  
and know I'm not an object. Not that I care  
who logs on or why. This is about how I feel,  
being lifted up out of myself to a place where  
I can see how this body can be loved. Plus,

us non-models should claim our freedom  
to be seen – 'cos just the sight of a scar or  
a freckle's a spanner in the machine, isn't it?  
We decide exactly how we put ourselves out  
there, and hardly touch the airbrush function.  
No male gaze moves on us 'til it's all on-line.  
This is the brand of feminism that makes me  
feel real. Every one of our days contain such  
moments, turning on desire, waiting  
to be caught, and every shape ought to be

adored, even mine. What d'you mean  
Why?? – I just said... didn't I?

# Summer Bay Dreaming

this isn't *home & away* you know  
you'll never be tammin sursok &  
i'm not even sure who i'd cast as  
me i hate my waxhead arrogance  
but we haven't turned into digits  
yet have you noticed how a surf  
clubs transformed by childhood  
tuckshops free icees sunny boys  
how a girls smiles erased by the  
backdrop utterly fibro hopeless  
underneath a dead banksia tree  
holding eskimo bars gently like  
a riot of teenage freckles milky  
ways kiss & tells fad packets &  
secret crushes will you plunge  
down waterslides with me even  
though the mats are torn foam  
& the pools closing in about an  
hour maybe after that we could  
go down to the beach o-or watch  
the tee tree stream trickle down  
to join the waves observe the rip  
or feel for pippies with our feet  
i've got a bronze medallion now  
i can swim with all my clothes on  
just to prove it if that's not okay  
ill understand it was only ever  
a summer bay dream & after all  
you can't do that on television

# Everything Is Paid For

When he came home last night, it started as normal.  
He poured himself a scotch and listed his griefs  
like a condition report – the pawprints of tenants  
on walls, the black holes of their pockets, whining  
home-buyers, his dim pretty assistant – not noticing

the expression on my face. He took off his jacket and  
tossed it across the room as if it was the world's pain,  
and asked me how I was, out of habit. These last few  
weeks the dream we'd shared but drowned in our pool,  
buried under our tennis court and somehow forgotten

has begun knocking from under our grounds. When  
I finally spoke its words, he downed the whole shot  
and shot back, Have a look around, woman – what more  
is there to want? The look on his face almost made me  
think he was glad our lives had shrunk to the size of

my womb or his fist. He shook his head and grinned.  
I became one of those clients of his with a slight  
home loan, went quiet and turned to face the floor.  
He had just the place for me. He took me to bed.  
Now, in the morning, like a lost ghost I drift around

our community of gates. After some cue beyond sound,  
next door's dogs bark, and dig at the concrete. Other  
young mothers parade their newborn by the man-made  
lake. Everything's ordered here, and we pay for it.  
I return to find a sparrow behind the lounge-suite,

a feather and a smudge on the pane, a red hemisphere  
on the carpet. I can only lift her up, still warm,  
drop her in the bin and weep. There are not enough  
guards, alarms or fences to keep what's out there  
from us. There are so many victims. I have wanted

their pain, and now I think it is coming.

# Station Static

would you still love me if i was a type b  
if i gave up smoking would you kiss me  
it's a long way from bondi to kingswood  
country i hear your stocking's shimmy  
gazing in wonder upon your pale calves  
chats over bagels at a grim hospital café  
we talk of many things boring boyfriend  
why don't you leave him all sounds safe  
snubbing my nose at the car pool bitch  
life's too short for sexless psycho(logy)s  
on the train i thought for a moment we  
could get it on forever stop off at mount  
druitt maybe or disappear via granville  
i kept my eyes on the cityrail diagrams  
& tried not to think of thighs rubbing  
together near ashfield station there was  
a girl sitting on her boyfriend's lap he  
looked the wrong way at a guy coming  
down our aisle & the air was pressured  
they traded punches it was on for young  
& a million old men fighting their way  
towards them suddenly your body was  
pressed up against mine just trying to  
stay out of harm's way i suppose in that  
moment between lives we were lovers  
surely but we broke up later at central  
yes it was a necessary termination you  
caught another bus back to your bondi  
boyfriend (i sat there thinking of your  
stockings & the old woman who calmly  
told the bruised girl *just get off the train*)