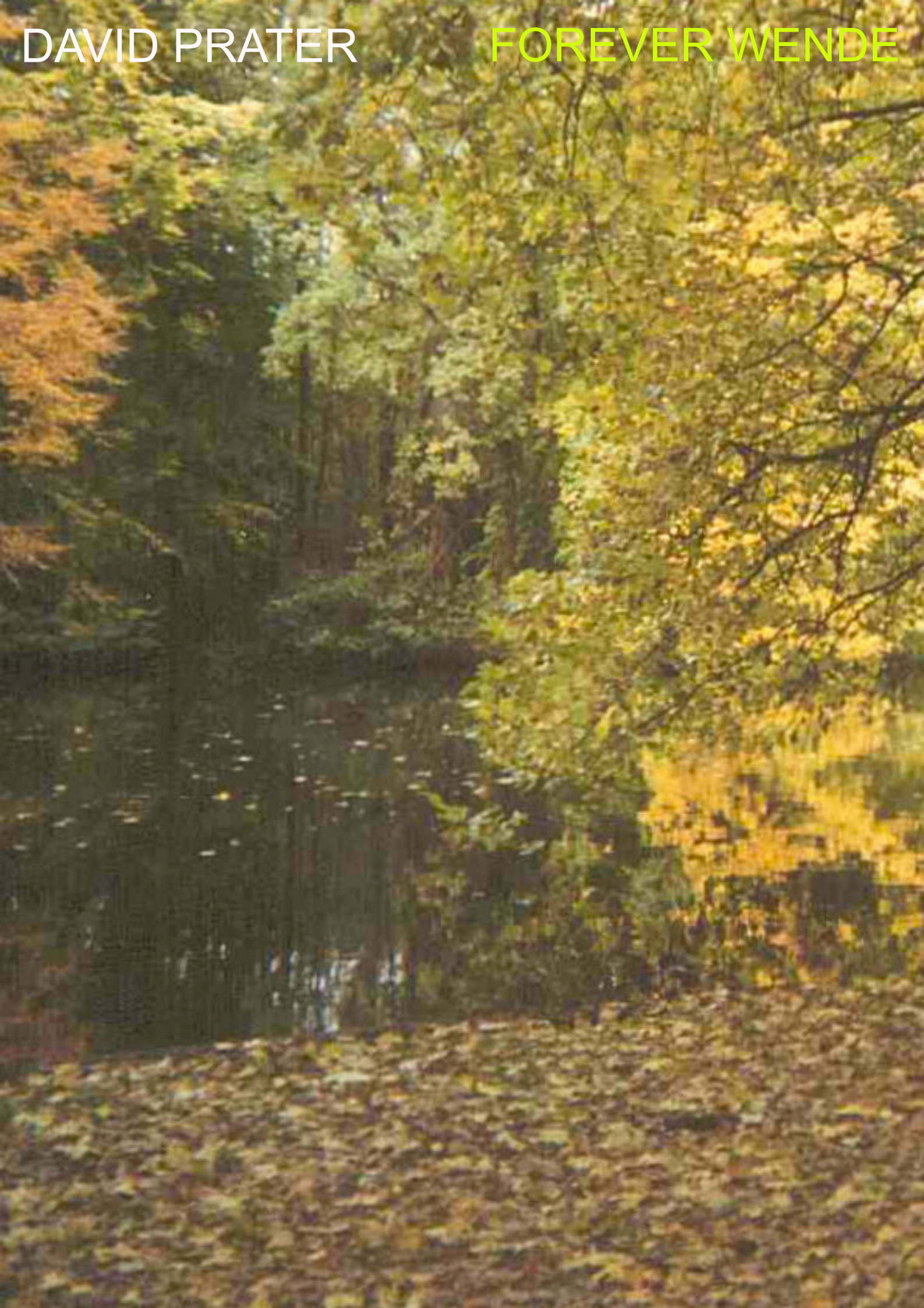


DAVID PRATER

FOREVER WENDE



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FOREVER
WENDE

SIXTEEN POEMS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This collection was originally written in 2002. Since that time, a number of these poems have been published in *various journals*. A number also later appeared in *We Will Disappear* (papertiger media, 2007).

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A TOURIST IN YOUR OWN LIFE
ALLES KLAR?
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FREUEN!
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ÖD(E)
STABLES OF THE RECONSTRUCTION
TOR
TÜCHTIG

for G.

FOREVER WENDE |

“Sit on the rails and ch-ch-ch-ch-ch.”

Ralf Hutter, Kraftwerk

A TOURIST IN YOUR OWN LIFE

May there come a time when,
a tourist in your own life,
breadcrumbs bring you home again,
my recently-departed wife.

May there come a time when
phone-sex is deemed old school;
like, we're talking circa 1980 again,
you incredibly ignorant fool.

May there come a time when
we are each other's bank balance,
equal at the ATM again,
oh, freshly-painted phalanx.

May there come a time when
all words rhyme with orange.
We'd love it if you came again,
like a freshly-plucked lemon.

ALLES KLAR?

Bed-bound but forgetful, arrive once
but never finalise. Your belongings
lie nowhere in particular—alles klar?

Act resentful during autumn. Irritate
a vowel. Swim through sewage.
Always turn left—alles klar?

Stay sick of bacon. Rehash hash or
choose to be drunk, as deference
switches harbours—alles klar?

One hand on stomach, one hand
on head: you've heard of penguins
but not marzipan—alles klar?

(Zusammen): *Ja, alles klar.*

BLEISTIFTSPITZER

this pencil is a cigarette
smoking poems on the page

futility is an ashtray
the filter its only friend

passive is its maiden name
holding back the drag

bliss is a perfect cylinder
pulling out a pack of poems

lit words to keep me warm
dreamt of a smoke-free zone

BULLET PENCIL

I'll show you an imminent war
sketched on cardboard boxes,
serviettes & plastered tourists,
train timetables;

& I'll show you a burgeoning story
(though bourgeois) laced with tragedy
& suggestions of snow-steps,
rubber currency;

& I'll shoot: targetting another
truth sayer, bespectacled,
restrained, brain devoid of hope
(current lies);

& I'll show you a gum:
chalk-stained, infected, aloof;
of all these sounds, its scream
the final erasure.

ENTGEGENGESETZ

the verb after the subject/ object
placed reverse-chronologically/ back
through the waning season breaks/
sentimental tradition/ accomplished
exit/ train from entrance/ pay/ upon
departure or transfer/ validate when
you have safely made it/ back home
where the dishes remain/ unwashed
from your yet to be digested dinner/
there on someone else's doorstep
hours/ to kill now since it's time/
to return/ unmolested from the white
light/ of carbon/ dating agencies/
electric with unexploded passions
melancholy as the hour before/
mourning/ all the suns are sleeping/
& cows reverse park/ into the dark/
side of the scatological /moon

EURONAP

Napping in short-changed Euro
lounge surrounds & gold stars!
Sky-blue napkins: automatic no-

glance—supper-trance. Mere
somniaulist Euros on the floor.
Frankfurt am Main's got main—

Dublin's got Core.

'Cheer-leaders' unterhosen'
(text from a Swiss *roman*).

FASSBAR

I understand the wind observes
the overcoat of a young woman
searching her pockets by a phone

(I mistake its previous conversant)

I comprehend the logic of U-bahns
though in contemplation of diagrams
my pipes & nerve endings jitch

(I believe in mass teleportation)

I process the stubbornness of clouds
despite the forest entropy of airliners
unmoving as an iceberg or mortar

(I possess the day's grey charisma)

I concur with nature's experts
seasons come like dreaded conversations
the rolling down of summer's shutters

(I still prefer the hero's haircut)

FOREVER 1980

... puke on new wave tricked
by upstart wire strings on a
shadow invisible wall pinned
patriot dim access impaled
optimist gothic time streets
rain elliptic x-rays shaded
gaze of new berlin retired
socks up staircases pulling
new paper track stars it's
forever 1980 make myself ...

FREUEN!

—to meet you, Eastern friend!
The railways rise to greet us:

inside an alleyway's tall glass,
honey barely still but frothed.

Disguised as German airports,
we rudder joyful under Linden

in the left-hand driving rain,
the *Wende*-wave's red re-entry.

We're in the newspapers again;
our pockets lined with euro-cops.

GENAU

Hostel sleep talking's compulsive but
communal dreams rarely resort to—

“same-sounding *bier hier; feuer? Meine
Freund, einem imbiß ist much warmer*”.

There's the authentically ruined glance
in your direction; it's—GENAU!

The enz of the world, which we began
a long, *eine kleine taxi musik* time ago ...

I leave the capital exactly.
Ever-correct change lacks a motive.

GUISEPPE!

Austrian-born, you outclassed Hitler's
'Braunau' style: an old leather coat,
a crumpled hat & lips to die for—

Guiseppe! When you served drinks,
the lifestyle became you (if only for
the opportunities it gave you to

flip LPs like crisp hamburgers,
smoke hash & rant on about Public
Image Ltd.'s affinity with club music

(*z.b.* without Lydon's lyrics). My German
was complimented, his missed chance
to be born in Anustralia regretted

but that's history; we were closer than
brothers across that bench bar, anyway.
So long, Guiseppe!

& thanks for the tequila.

ICH BIN EIN TOURIST

Thank you for the compliment.
Ich bin ein Tourist ha ha—in
meinem eigenen Leben! Access
all areas Deutschland *Ja, ja!* One
tourist under a visa/short of
change/an excuse. They will kill
me upon my return. Thank you

for the oom-pah welcome! You
rationed me like white bread. I
prowl the perimeter of my new
travel zone. Meanwhile Gretel
grows sad, having realised that
this trail, just like the last one,
never did lead home after all.

ÖD(E)

The strange tedium of road builders
whacking blocks with rubber mallets,
like retentive poets trimming lines.

This one's for you, Björk & the umlaut:
abruptly you are vanishing from signs,
like the mythical blue skies of Lübeck.

The wall's bad teeth (a bracket's braces)
holding pants & smiles up for a camera,
like babies at a forced emigration.

Frozen in the luggage carousel of day,
embittered by the slightest orange roll,
like a toymaker with several splinters.

Strange to be singed here in similes:
every silence hangs mispronounced.
Like my surname, it's a beer garden.

STABLES OF THE RECONSTRUCTION

Reconstructing TV,
supplying cables,
eradicating vestiges
of Bremen's musicians:
even the stables.

No horse's hoof
disturbs the cobbled lane.
Now only the slickest
rubber tyre sounds,
restrained as
digital instrumentation,

remain
to soak up
reconstruction's vein.
The needle shoots
along the new train
line, North Sea-bound,
old before it was even
photographed.

Public SOS messages,
reconnaissance towers,
rumours of an old war
buried beneath the bowsers.

Soaked in ammunition,
dampening the spires,
horsepower feeds
the animal pyres.

TOR

Streetside waits a stencil boxcar
marked 'ironbound invisible gate'.
Meat hooks from the future state
hear the rubble of some victory,
our tunnels to the now defending
ghosts from gore & the take-home

videos' silence down the red years.
Taps & the foreign tanks' alphabet
denied something else: not parade
mounds, viral drumming, mirrors
or smoke. Seven silent gateways in
a nation of black dogs & crackers,
the neatly invisible burning books
thrown on cobblestones like darts.

TÜCHTIG

Rich plumes from a cigarette's union
with an 8-minute-late train from Lübeck
strike the smoke-free platform
attendant like an intermittent *anschluss*

as old as the station itself, a testament
to outmoded classicism; a page from
Proust or, say, Thomas Mann, waiting
for a Zurich train: expecting its arrival

slightly late but not never—

not yet.

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