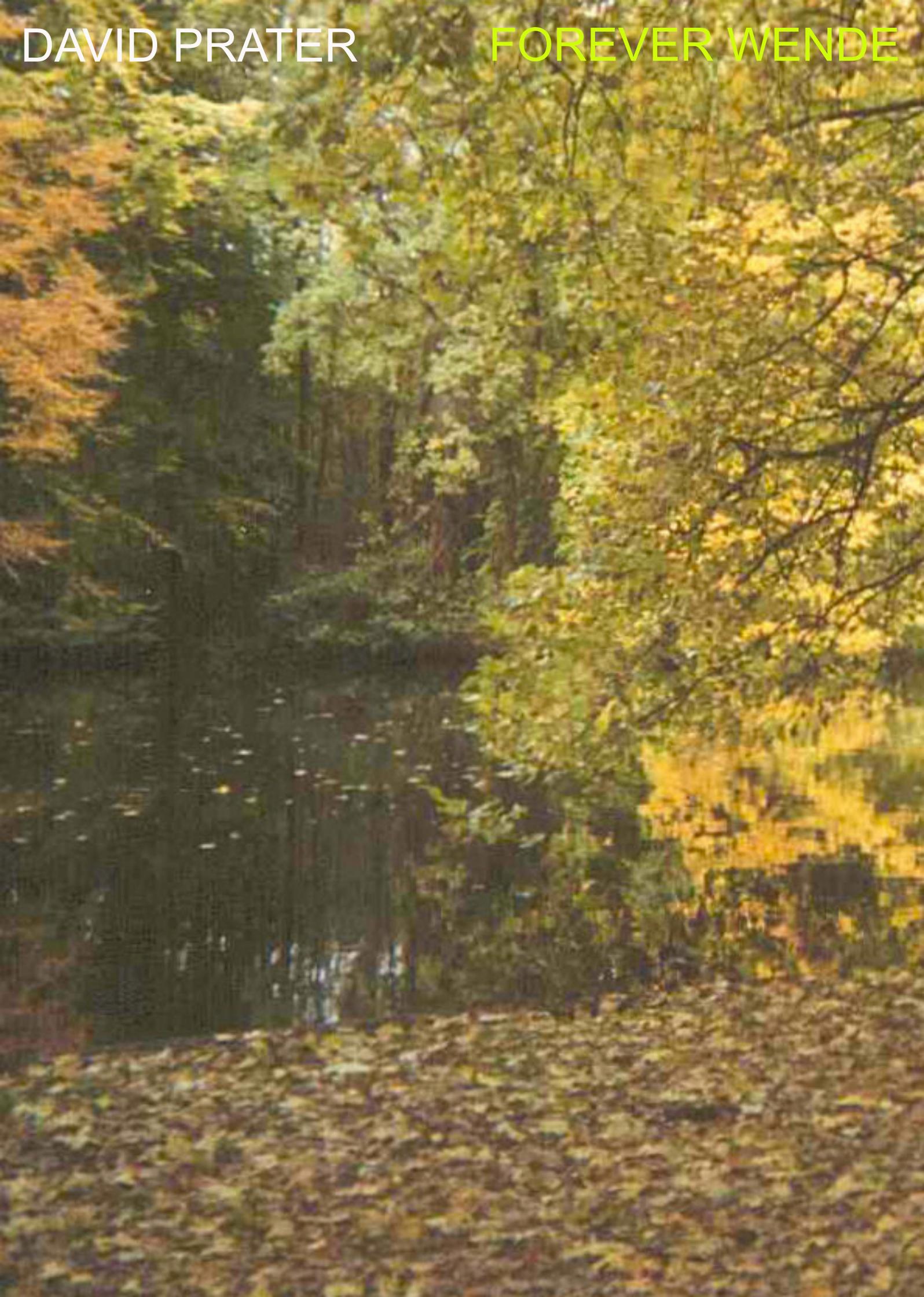


DAVID PRATER

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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ICH BIN EIN TOURIST  
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  
sommambulist 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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