

# LIFE OF STY

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**“In our time, art has in some degree taken over the role of religion in allowing human beings to feel at home in the world.”**

- Mark Dooley, *Times Literary Supplement*

**“So many masks, so little time.”**

- Hexadecimal, *Reboot*

# 1

Right for left and left for right, ambidextrousness  
undone: the Green Ranger: the White Ranger:  
Pokémon Master! ~ A good lover, upmost and  
untold desire: scribe and scop extraordinaire: a  
monkey with a typewriter on their fifth volume  
of Shakespeare: navigator of lost angles: a burn-  
ing taste for apples!

'I like you,' said Sty, 'you're hired.'

## 2

An uncommon name, straight and narrow. A good film, cybernetic organism. The first and last of his kind.

Life that sprang from a box, put together on an assembly line. A name to write itself.

### 3

On the morning of graduation we chorused our re-  
mission from school. It was an occasion: flutes  
of Bubbly, sponsorship and golden hoods. The  
parental omnibus flashed. We glowed with  
haemoglobin.

Laminated scrolls for prosperity, cardboard tubes  
nicely framed 'you're a real achievement, proof  
is in the post.'

Outside the citadel, disquiet in the Garden of Earthly  
Delights. Stripping back their robes, five hun-  
dred balloons set to soar high, and pop. Celebra-  
tions aside, the Seer foresaw 'rather grapey un-  
dertones.'

# 4

I was entrusted to favour things on the other side,  
intelligence tripped and twisting. Late night. I  
found you there in a mirror of ink

red and sore, heavy with artistic vision; biding your  
time for the poet with the peacock pen; the wine  
dark advocate for the lost generation.

# 5

So much for the prefix, suffix, literary impresario  
and master of the Reading Tree. I clasped and  
tore my way through the labyrinth of language,  
S.As and exorcisms

profound, my friend's rock against the glasshouse  
inscribing the legendary, divine message 'Bitch'.

Spoilt and wonderful childhood: the grandfather  
and his grandchild, never a bike-ride too far. On  
the outskirts of the village he played with the  
building blocks of life: a prodigy, a misread one.

## 6

The brother's of Sty are Raiden and Jackal. I am pledged as an idol to one; an example to the other. The weight of the Clan, *Ne Obliviscaris* hanging on the bedroom wall.

'A boy present at both his parent's weddings.' Fair riverside hotels, forged promise on the Blacksmith's anvil. I am the person 'here present.'

He stitched curtains for the greenroom, cast veils and shadow play on foldaway walls. A modern tragedy, winged, staged as a lesson in courtesy and tolerance.

# 7

'Green Boot!' Itching Grass on the field. The Base, ye old Coffee Shop made from trees. Year One swarms, coalition of children: once, with a coil of strimmer wire, they heaved the Sidewinder from the Pit of Peril.

He was a good friend and remained so, ever after the day of all out war: double watches, spinning coins, he shot through the finger goal on classroom desk, hard, to the tune of the teacher's proverbial 'lost eye'.

At lunch, he lead his friend, who was quiet with shock, around the sports shed and dropped him. Then, cringing at his tears, he walked in circles, business as usual, in his troop of noobs named 'The Group'.

## 8

The mad are pretenders, too often do we find ourselves in league with them. Poets in orbit, worth less than the moons they're printed on. Abject? I am the all-scribing eye, and you will know.

Checking emails past midnight, blurred words, hypertext command - I have succumbed to modern devices.

Today I write their names; later they shall appear in my update. I sign off in this manner.

# 9

The established church smelled a bit 'flowery' of incense and bodies. The established curator was forthcoming: he splashed Sty with Holy Water - few saw the funny side

but when he dropped the urn, the sound of bells and sniggers rang out across the red stone floor. Backsliders lined-up, they were prescribed 'once around the stations of the cross.' 'Have you got an old bike Father?'

Televisual, the pathetic fallacy rained down: I share this scene of your burial, Great Aunt Teresa. You lived long enough to see that everything was 'tickety-boo'.

# 10

He abhorred the desktop, it's pearl-white garnished with chrome, the Apple insignia to which he assigned his name.

It was there that he conjured ideas and phrases; joined groups and planned events; monitored those he hated, most closely. And there he pissed into the Fountain of Hippocrene.

What should a student take from the text, who is writing who? Tell me. 'That would defeat the purpose.'

He searched for sunshine in procrastination's haze. He kept a bowl of apples and oranges. He got up and made another cup of tea. He declared fury, cursing the proof of words.

Chocolate coins smooth as Caffè Nero's; of not so good value or texture. *Monkey Scribe* written on paper, and the names of his lecturers. Their criticism often altered the student's face.

Inscribed practice welcomes plagiarism; it's a cut-up carbon copy if that fails. Shoddy plastic, non biodegradable. Poor capita for the rural folk, rich in marshes and word-pools.

Off-cuts of newspaper on the desk; deleted files. It is safe to presume here, the Poet's anger. He resided for three years. Season's bounced, the clouds and currents insulated summer.

Sand Land, victim of Osho. He endured her life of Edwardian costume dramas - the vixen, she squealed with delight, her paws tapping at the bedpost and oak finished frame.

# 12

Their feet glided over the tide sodden sands. They ran to the rocks. They repelled memories, epiphanies and moonlight skulls. They played away to the chorus of anarchy.

The boys sat it out and played online. The Poet and his Seer pissed Champagne excellence; their opinion was final, Estuary View, nostalgic for the present.

It is midsummer. Palm trees sprawl their Mediterranean roots. The park and public gardens draw out local activists. Playing the Fool, he jests and pines to leave this place.

Behind the draws, under the bed; find, small collections, lost pennies and love letters. Circled by uncertainty 'we have ring-fenced ourselves to our origins'. Returning to the Provence of Old-coward, the Quarry Lake and Mercian populous, the spirit of commissioned apple cores, he bids farewell to his Seer. Lachrymose, they parted and floated on a legend.

Enraged by poor journalism, he put pen to paper and crafted the blank page into a talisman. Satisfied, he turned off his phone and prepared for his picnic.

With clear skies above Bosworth, they found themselves in a field of corn; by sleeping trees and aphids. Bugaboos swarmed there, cloud like, free radicals. She had taught him nature's 'Law of Three'. What she sensed, was his 'vulnerable open mindedness'.

At dinner, they relished the mockery of drinking fine wines. They did this whenever suited them, which was often.

Floundering, he ripped at the blue-tack and attached another note: 'gravity curiously absent, the horizon marks an either or'. The enigma twisted out new territory; lost angels . . .

It spun him out. He ricocheted across space. An unknown area full of chaos and pendulums. Priorities of his government were 'Application, Application and Application'.

# 16

Clash of sledges, eTip gloves and iSocks. Business people, the markets 'we can't go on like this'. The Frozen Kingdom, 1960's snowy revival.

The shovel in the neighbour's hand; sprawling salt and sentiment. The Big Society, choc full of grit and blame. They looked to Sweden to prove or disprove anything. Bigotry.

Shafts from the winter sun homing upon Earth's rim. BBC mass: 'we can expect a significant increase in pot holes.'

Disruption assumed, communities were entertained. 'We're all in this together'. His hands cracked and split at their optimism. Touching the void, drinking Glühwein and the German Market.

He drove at dark though the rush hour. The *Bose* stereo, banging, shooting notes on the crest of a wave . . .

'Fuck, did I hit him? The bumper rumbled; he's skidded and come off!' A spirit's voice; pounding paranoia. Disenchantment with his Monkey guide. 'A fine way to start Christmas . . .'

His drifted tiger lunged then undertook. He collapsed in to its skinned upholstery of function.

In Oldcoward, a scene of vast majority. Dragon's Lane. He sliced his sty and claimed earth for his agenda. By his pocket watch, he called to arms the lost and unaccountable. Pens leaked policy; sunlight and small things; the prosperous heard 'cease your happiness, we sense injustice!'

He wiped his katana and notebook. He woke on the M5, amongst relics of his ideas and applied philosophies. He swore to set about a movement and speak in the sense of endings.

Hung on snail painted walls, vintage flowers evoke designer paper. We are a perfectly charming diamond ring, *Fitzgerald* desk and *Gatsby* book-case.

We are a flat-pack kitchen-mansion. The children speak in French and play with wooden toys. They have the demeanour of demigods, born artists that can write well.

With the weight of damp stars, he absorbs insomnia. He scribes along the bedpost 'sleepyheads beware; it's all mock suns and moon dogs.'

Digital wasteland saturated with the signs of R&R:  
where fat-cats laze and bees dissolve, attracted  
once to the scent of storytelling

lost on Twitter: clockwork and bodywork brittle  
hacked mail. The crashing protocols -'network',  
'internet', 'Web 2.0', 'Simcult'. Steel behind glass  
and sand. Cellophane protection for gimmicks  
and smilies.

Three knights of Mercia, belted up in the blessed vehicle, 'against the light we shall drive, the sun is our enemy!' The Writer, the Driver, the Navigator: 'you should have changed the bulbs.'

The Midlands underdogs, beneath the terror-sublime. No light, but darkness visible - hell fire tunnel, omnipotent travesty 'we have paid for our rights of passage, we have no destination' - Grand Tour 08, tattooed across our Ford.

Hours lost on the underground, circled at the end of their broken compass needle. How many years too late? They stood atop the Basilica, taking video and contemplating lunch.

We leapfrogged across Grass Land pounding tails,  
past the lollypop trees and walking toadstools.  
It was here that tiredness imposed its sanction.

At home 'the windows were ablaze with light!' The  
Wi-Fi glowed red. I loved the glitches, frozen  
sprites and empty screens.

Then, of the gregarious type, encouraged by tea and  
cereal, I hurried the levels of lizard-lipped  
Doomships and cannonballs, who targeted the  
winged racoon of the skies.

In paper, in networks, they grouped, as it was catalogued, key return, the academia high-brow career. The Forests of the Library, their cloud computing: the brown foxing, the inscribed leaf, evidence of wine, the greatest accomplishments spiral bound.

He shuffled up and down the aisle, the imperfect librarian, checking his list for quartos and useless books. He ingested much coffee 'The Library is unlimited and cyclical.'

A home in part, held in the West Midlands 'pain is his element' as I viddy him, intent on 'hurling up insurrection, aspiring unrepressed' jumping to Gold Lion, kraken abysmal, feeling with his grape vines.

Who's chasing who? Valentine cirrus stroked his taught belly, thinking over apples and hell; caricatures of Middle England and, there, a concerned mother afraid for her daughter's choices.

('Il est prévu, cette petite mort' Dionysus in chains – a subtle kiss in pictures.

Thinking over the French letters of *The London Rubber Company*, I apologise for my grandmother, whose childhood and prime womanhood were spent in their factory, piercing condoms.

A book of creator pins. Tools forged against the founding principles 'Durability, Reliability and Excellence.' Gwen Ogle, she conceived the game of rubber roulette -

not to be deterred by postnatal consequence. It is one thing to celebrate the 'pin prick', another to affirm the baby boom. Together, they surveyed the scene from Chiswick High Road.

Thinking over the French letters of *The London Rubber Company*, I apologise for my grandmother, whose childhood and prime womanhood were spent in their factory, piercing condoms.

Made from crystalline girders, at the Blue Bell they are of age and ravenous. Fucked, they spout recollection, draw-up playing cards and perpetual memory.

Fit-girls, sweetness and light, sense-bewitchers, you too are hard expelled from the Event Horizon – who have cast up ‘down’, clocking your prophets and assuming your dignity.

'Now when Sty was deadlocked and free'; they were all there, Chelsea supporters; Mirror readers; Scottish tribes and English dissidence; the whirl of the PS3.

He was determined. They were supportive. The dinner could go either way. The family exchanged goodwill and awe.

Post the pixelated, post the blistered Summer of Anger, silence descended on Oldcoward. Bored of his own decisiveness, he took to the door and wrote his goodbyes.

Pride of a generation; education of a dying government. The tax to marry young; publically owned finance and off-shore havens. Our children and our children's children - chaotic families.

Hearsay in the bear pit, created a tradition on the cobbled high street. Sandstone; statues networked with grassroots.

A hidden seat, the ghost of an academic conclusion, anchored on the last of the lost angles.

'Not crooked mouth, but genius awry. Descendent of the arts; Three Furies on a Balcony; The Last of the Dinosaurs - without a doubt, you are my staggeringly gifted child.'

Enthusiastically, he threw himself into it. Mum pressed play, the pen scratched to a halt; he fell asleep in the wake of the Poet's dream.

And so it was, he faded out along the boulevard 'for what we were, for who we are, for what we are going to be.'

Drawing the line between himself and his other, he flew against the dark, hurling defiance and breaking stars.