

*JOHN D ROBINSON*  
*ALWAYS MORE*

*NEW & SELECTED POEMS*



Always More: New & Selected Poems  
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Horror Sleaze Trash  
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## PRAISE FOR JOHN D ROBINSON

John infuses this book with his unique view of the world, and it isn't a sugar-coated view. He writes about mental illness, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, love, sex, and the struggle he goes through to keep on writing. He knows these things from personal experience, but the main thing about John is that he doesn't leave us feeling hopeless. That is the crux of his message — there is light shining through where hope lives on in the end. Thank you John, for the opportunity to invite us into your world.

—Carol Draime, author of *The Bridge*

John D Robinson's stark and honest poetry pulls no punches and gives zero fucks. This selection will take you on a journey through the good times and the bad. He simply tells it like it is.

—Martin Appleby, Paper and Ink Zine

These are survivor poems, battle scarred verse that hits the soul and assaults the frontal lobe. Here is a poet who has lived several lives and emerged on the other side intact.

—Joseph Ridgwell, author of *Burrito Deluxe*



*Dedicated to Carmelina, Bonita Rose, Grace,  
Ava, and Stanley, with love to Mum & Tony*



JOHN D ROBINSON

# ALWAYS MORE

NEW & SELECTED POEMS





## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

### THIS POETRY BUSINESS

'Okay, so what is it?  
That some poems of  
yours have appeared in  
a literary publication?  
What does that mean?  
What does it do for you?  
So fucking what!  
Who gives a shit?  
Blow it up my ass!  
The world doesn't know  
or even notice  
shit like that,  
it's far too busy!  
And what's the point  
of it all anyway?'

'I don't know'  
I replied

THE CONCERNS

'You only seem happy  
or content when you're  
stoned or drunk or both,  
all your waking hours  
are consumed by this  
and of course, sex'  
she said

'That may be' I said  
'But I'm a poet'

'So that gives you a free  
licence to be an alcoholic  
drug taking bum whose  
only concern is with his  
own little seedy world'

'I haven't signed a contract'  
I said

'Don't call me,  
I mean it this time,  
don't call me again'

The door opened  
and slammed shut,  
the sun had spent herself  
and I opened a bottle of wine

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

### WAY BACK WHEN

I'd undo my school trousers,  
she'd be wearing her short  
school skirt and we'd find  
some discreet place and let  
our hands freely explore  
one another

We barely spoke,  
there was nothing to say

Our eyes screamed  
as our innocence began  
to melt, our fingers wet  
with lust and something  
we didn't understand  
but couldn't stop

We'd lean upon each other,  
feeling guilty about  
something we didn't  
know of, but we were  
damned if that was  
going to stop us

DANGEROUS

Standing at the urinal  
dick in my right hand  
when half-way through  
my mobile began to ring

With my left hand I fish  
inside my leather jacket,  
jiggling and wriggling  
this way and that before  
finally retrieving it,  
answering 'Yeah?'

'Hi, are you okay?' she asks

'Well, I've got my hands  
full at the moment' I say

'Where are you?' she asks  
'I can hear an echo'

'I'm taking a piss in  
the supermarket crapper'

I look down at my shoes,  
noticing I'd splashed them

I glance over at the guy  
in the urinal beside me  
and for some reason  
I give him a wink

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

He frowns,  
quickly zips up  
and disappears

'Are you there?' she asks  
'I need some cigarettes'

'They're bad for you' I say

'So are you' she says

I don't argue with her

I zip up, wash my hands  
knowing that I am  
more dangerous than  
a pack of cigarettes

And I step back  
into the supermarket  
feeling invincible as  
I join the queue with  
the other nicotine addicts

LOSING IT

I hadn't expected  
so much blood and  
she hadn't expected  
so much blood

And it shocked us  
for a moment and  
there came a strange  
silence between us  
as we beheld the bloody  
sheets and we held  
each other close to  
make it feel right

Her mother sound asleep,  
in the next room,  
while from outside  
we heard the yelps  
of urban foxes

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

### THE SCENT

The scent  
of your pleasure  
upon my lips  
takes me back  
to earlier days  
and to times when  
time was something  
we took for granted

And now,  
some years later,  
your passion sweet as ever  
and the clock-hands  
dare not move  
but rather hesitate  
and linger like  
two weary birds upon  
a gently swaying  
cable-wire



DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE

Fully clothed, I awoke  
next to an old, old woman,  
whom I didn't know and  
she was also fully clothed

Her skin wrinkled and  
sallow, almost translucent,  
toothless mouth agape and  
snoring like a chainsaw

Surging to my feet,  
I lurched for the window  
and puked my guts out  
into the streets far below

I wiped my mouth and  
found my back down  
a flight of creaking stairs  
to where an old, old man  
sat asleep in his armchair

I found the bathroom  
stole some valium  
splashed cold water  
on my face and then  
I staggered down  
another flight of steps

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

I pulled a beer out  
from the fridge before  
locating the front door and  
then I walked outside and  
vomited once again

I didn't have a fucking clue  
of where I was but I knew  
I'd find my way back  
home some way,  
somewhere,  
somehow

I would do it,  
cos there was no  
place left to go

## THE TOUGH GUY

In my teens and early twenties,  
I thought of myself as one  
of the tough guys:  
in the army,  
in the factories,  
in warehouses and  
work placements  
but construction sites  
were quite an awakening

I found most other guys  
were twice my age,  
my height and weight,  
worked twice as hard,  
drank twice as much,  
fought twice as harder  
than I did

Very unwisely,  
one summer afternoon,  
I chose to pick a fight  
with one of them

This quickly escalated  
into a scene of much  
potential carnage

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

It took 5 guys  
to hold back my assailant,  
stopping him from tearing  
me limb from limb,  
and it took 2 guys  
to stop me from  
running away

And as things  
began to cool and  
tempers leveled out,  
my heart rate slowed  
back down to its regular rate  
and I thought of something  
Sonny Barger once said:

‘Everyone’s a tough guy  
until they meet one’

THE GARAGE ROOF

'What the fuck  
are you doing  
on our garage roof  
at midnight?' he hissed  
at me through the window

I was intoxicated and  
the sudden opening of  
his bedroom window  
had startled me a bit

'I've come to see  
your sister'  
I explained

'Is she expecting you?'  
he asked, smiling wryly

'Kind of' I replied  
'Here, have a drink' I said  
offering up the bottle of wine

He shook his head  
in response

'Just come in  
and be quiet'  
he said

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

'Thank you' I said  
as I climbed in through  
the window

'Be sure to leave by  
the fucking front door  
and don't fucking disturb  
me again' he said

He was 15 years old and  
his sister was 6 years older;  
I was a few years older than  
her and we were in love

Her parents knew nothing  
of our romance and this  
was best for all concerned

By 4am I left the house  
by the front door  
as requested

'Goodbye' she said  
from her bedroom window

'Yeah, see you again'  
her brother said  
from his bedroom window  
before closing it  
softly behind us

HE'S EVERYWHERE

Without doubt,  
he was the most obsessive,  
possessive, aggressive and  
paranoid sociopath I have  
ever known

Every word emitted from  
his mouth was a negative,  
a vile or coarse put-down  
of his wife or his children  
and it was always done  
with a childish sense  
of humour

He was driven  
by something ugly  
and he would telephone  
his wife a dozen times  
a day to ask where she was  
and whether she with anyone  
and had she spoken to any men  
and when he kindly permitted  
her a rare night out,  
he'd inspect her knickers  
for sex stains upon  
her return

It was okay for him  
to fuck other women  
but this attitude didn't  
apply to his wife as far  
as he was concerned

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

But she fucked others  
anyway, mostly his friends  
and he didn't have  
a fucking clue of this

He fathered 4 children  
and at various times  
threw them up against walls  
or down to the floor  
and he threatened to cut  
the brakes on their bicycles  
or shred favourite clothing  
or smash up toys and  
computers and other  
precious things  
they enjoyed

He was of large stature  
and a low intelligence  
and he was scary at times  
and he's your next door  
neighbour, he's your father  
or brother, he's a judge  
or a banker or perhaps a social worker,  
he's a chef or a policeman  
or a farmer or a miner or maybe  
just a lazy son of a bitch

He's everywhere  
and the chances are,  
you know of him already



JOHN D ROBINSON

A SNAP-SHOT OF JOANNA

She wasn't too fussy  
what drugs she took  
or how she took them

Shot, snorted, smoked  
or swallowed,  
it didn't mean a thing  
to Joanna

She had a big heart and  
was perhaps overly generous  
and this was rarely, if ever,  
to her advantage

She once told me  
that one time she was  
on her way to see her dealer  
for an early morning cocktail  
when she was stopped by  
an unkempt and disheveled  
old lady who told her that  
she had no money or food

Joanna opened up her purse  
and gave the old lady  
her drug money

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

She would prostitute herself  
to quench her chemical thirst  
and this often put her in  
dangerous situations

A few years back  
she just barely survived  
a frenzied knife attack by  
a deranged speeding stranger

And I'd see Joanna,  
passed out in the street,  
skimpy clothing revealing  
her tortured body

And I'd think of  
her two children  
who had never  
known their mother  
and her silent parents  
who lived someplace  
far away

She had no friends  
she could rely on,  
no one to turn to for comfort,  
for love or whatever she felt  
was missing from her life

JOHN D ROBINSON

And she died  
of a heart-attack,  
just days away from  
what would have been  
her 34th birthday,  
and she will be all too soon  
forgotten in a world  
that revolves around  
narcotics

In a world seeking something  
to ease the pain and banish  
the awful darkness of the heart,  
we could never understand  
no matter how hard we tried,  
we couldn't

And it'll beat me  
one day too,  
just as it did you,  
Joanna

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

### A DAY OFF

I stayed home  
by myself

The house phone didn't ring  
and the mobile was  
switched off all day

No fucker knocked  
on the door to tell me  
where my life was  
going wrong

I took some codeine and  
smoked some joints and  
then took the dog for a walk  
and I didn't see a single  
asshole to bother me

I made lunch and  
then took a nap and  
no one expected  
anything of me

And I listened to the radio  
and I didn't give a shit  
about anyone else  
and it felt good

Like a day off  
from every fucking thing  
in this life that we've  
made for one another

NEIL AND THE KITTY CAT SCRATCH

We'd met at a compulsory  
government work placement  
for the unholy wayward  
misfits of all kinds

Neil was tall and solid  
with one static eye and  
a grand sense of daring and  
mischief, and we got high  
on the garage fumes and  
smoked grass in our lunch breaks  
and swallowed pills without  
knowing what they were

And one time,  
Neil was giving the task  
of painting a 'NO SMOKING' sign  
in 3ft red lettering upon the wall

Hours later, Neil hollered  
that he had finished

He had painted 'NO SMOCKING'  
but no one had the heart  
to tell him as he stood  
pleased and proud  
of his artistry

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

This was years ago,  
but then one day recently,  
we chanced to meet  
outside of the offices  
where I work

We greeted one another  
before I stepped back and  
stared down at the stump  
where his arm had once been

‘How the fuck  
did that happen?’  
I asked in disbelief

‘My cat scratched me,’ he said  
‘It became infected, I ignored it,  
and then it was too late.  
I went into surgery and  
came out 4lbs lighter”

‘A kitty cat scratch?’ I asked

‘Yeah’ Neil said with a grin  
‘But the drugs they gave me  
are fucking brilliant, I’m  
wasted anytime I like’

JOHN D ROBINSON

And I watched him roll  
a cigarette, quite the trick  
with one hand, but he smiled  
just like he always did

I offered him a light and  
looked at his stump and  
thought of what his arm  
looked like 20 years ago

And then we looked at  
one another, and he smiled  
and he said 'It's cool man,  
really. Stay lucky!'

He turned and walked away,  
and I thought of my 4 cats,  
and 'NO SMOCKING',  
and Neil from back then,  
and his severed limb  
upon a cold steel tray

And then I dragged  
my lucky, sorry-ass self  
back into work

A TALE OF PARENTING

Her parents weren't to blame,  
honest hard-working folk;  
they raised 3 daughters  
but the middle girl  
caused them much sorrow

She took to speed and  
alcohol and bad men  
and she had 3 children  
of her own, 2 girls  
and a boy

Bringing up children  
didn't quite work out  
and the grandparents  
often took their custody

The baby boy was taken  
into foster care from birth  
and he never even knew  
or met his mother



JOHN D ROBINSON

One time she unexpectedly  
turned up at my apartment,  
we smoked some grass  
and drank some wine  
but she was also friends  
with my estranged wife

Weeks before her death  
I saw her on the street

Yellow skinned and bloated,  
I knew she wouldn't last,  
her kidneys packing up  
and heart worn out  
already

She took a beating  
from a loan-shark  
on behalf of the asshole  
she'd been living with  
and a few weeks later  
she died in hospital

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

A few years prior,  
her eldest daughter  
had been sentenced to life  
for attempted murder

She was 15 years old,  
a near fatal stabbing,  
knifed the guy's gut and then  
ripped the blade upwards

She writes poetry in her cell  
and it is really quite good  
and the bastards took her  
to her mother's funeral  
handcuffed and flanked  
by 2 officers at all times

She writes poems in her cell  
and they are really quite good  
and she dedicates them  
all to her mother

CONSULTATION ROOM 1

A black and white fluffy  
tough-fucker veteran  
warrior brawler  
of 16 years

He'd take no prisoners  
and he'd take no shit but  
he was very sociable and  
one time he went walkabout  
for a couple of weeks and  
returned home hungry  
and limping with  
a slashed footpad

He was almost mute;  
he would open  
his mouth wide and  
make all the gestures  
but no more than  
a squeak would  
come out

He had feared nothing  
in life; I had seen him  
square up to an excited  
Rottweiler and challenge  
moving vehicles and  
noisy garbage trucks  
didn't bother him none

And I always figured that,  
following a nuclear war,  
only 2 beings would  
be left alive:  
Keith Richards and  
my old cat, Souly

I've my doubts now;  
he's no longer moving well,  
he's neither eating nor  
drinking, but when  
he looks up at me,  
I can see no trace  
of fear in his eyes

He still gets outside  
to toilet, making sure that  
if it's the last thing he does,  
he'd shit in the next door  
neighbour's garden

His mouth opens and  
emits a small cry and  
I lay down beside him  
to stroke his back and  
he purrs just as  
loudly as ever

JOHN D ROBINSON

And he lasted  
a further 3 days  
after that, moving  
ever closer to his end,  
until finally it was  
time to let him go

I took him to the vet  
and I spoke to him  
as the nurse depressed  
the syringe

‘Goodbye my old friend,’ I said  
‘I’ll see you around the corner’

I kissed his face  
one last time and  
then walked away,  
heading for  
the nearest store  
to buy some wine

FOR THE BETTER

There are days,  
perhaps too many,  
when for my own  
safety and for  
that of others,  
I stay in bed  
or at best don't  
leave the house

But even this  
is no guarantee

Like today, I was  
at the kitchen table,  
reading from my  
1st edition copy  
of Dan Fante's  
A Gin-Pissing-Raw-Meat-  
Dual-Carburettor-V8-  
Son-Of-A-Bitch from  
Los Angeles'  
when there came a  
rude knock at the door

I wasn't expecting  
anybody

'Who the Fuck!'  
I barked as I put  
my book down

I opened the door  
to two silver haired,  
well dressed persons,  
one male and  
one female

‘Yeah?’ I said,  
glaring at them

‘I’ve some pamphlets  
here” the guy said,  
holding up some  
glossy paperwork  
asking WHO REALLY  
RULES THE WORLD?

I stared hard at the guy,  
fixing his eyes and  
said “I do”

The silver haired lady  
let go a nervous laugh;  
when I turned my gaze  
to her, she stopped and  
took an interest  
in her shoes

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

'Is that all?' I asked,  
looking back  
at the man

He looked puzzled,  
frowned and  
said 'Yes'

I closed the door and  
made some espresso  
and watched the rain  
begin to fall outside,  
anxiously waiting  
for the next asshole  
to intrude upon  
my life



LIT TALK

Not often do I read fiction

My wife reads it feverishly,  
crime and thrillers,  
murder mystery novels  
and often she will  
tell me of the plots  
and of the characters  
and I never feel impressed  
and will scratch behind my ears  
or tune into the radio

‘Well, what are you reading?’  
she asked me one time

‘Okay’ I said  
‘I’m reading some  
fiction right now,  
Tropical Animal by  
Pedro Juan Gutierrez’

‘What’s it about?’ she asks

I tell her  
‘It’s about fucking and  
poverty and filth and  
survival and censorship and  
desperation and fucking  
and rum and cigars and  
broken men and women  
and some more fucking  
and painting and poetry  
and the seedy sleazy world  
of Havana and then there’s  
even more fucking’

‘Oh!’ she says  
‘It’s starting to rain,  
I better go and get  
the washing in’

NO RETURN

Crackling from  
the Sunday radio  
came a voice:

‘Now let us pray  
for the broken hearted  
and the lost souls of our world,  
the alcoholics and drug addicts,  
the ghosts of our towns and cities  
that have wandered far from  
the path of righteousness  
and now walk the roads of sin;  
let us pray that the gates  
of heaven open up for  
our brothers and sisters,  
for these wretched spirits;  
let us pray’

I had just finished  
rolling a joint of  
very powerful weed  
and I felt thankful  
that someone was  
sparing a little time  
with a prayer for me  
without expecting  
anything in return

ON MEETING AN UNDERGROUND POET

Uglier than the photos portrayed,  
with long, thin greying hair  
and a mouth full of stained  
and rotten teeth; his voice  
was brittle yet warm

I ordered him a beer and  
an orange juice for myself  
before answering the question  
on his face:

Why wasn't I drinking?

'I went to a party in 1979  
and walked away in 2009,  
and now I don't drink  
during the day;  
I take enough codeine  
to slow a herd of elephants  
and I smoke countless joints  
and then I lift a glass of wine  
about mid evening'

He smiled,  
nodded his head,  
like he knew what  
I was talking about

I knew we were going  
to get along just fine

HAVING A DRINK WITH THE OLD MAN

I had left her in bed;  
it was early morning  
and we needed  
a loaf of bread

By chance or by fate,  
or just plain bad luck,  
we met and he asked  
“Fancy a drink?”

“Of course” I said

“Where?” he asked

“Your choice” I answered

We ended up on a ferry,  
crossing the channel  
into Belgium,  
and for three days  
and nights we stayed  
drunk and crazy and  
slept a few hours in  
a bus depot and we  
staggered into carnivals  
and danced with nuns  
and kissed the hands  
of fat barmaids

And then,  
3 days later,  
returned home  
weak and fragile  
and vulnerable but  
my lady was angry,  
very angry

'You bastard!  
I've been phoning hospitals  
and police stations  
for 3 fucking days,  
I didn't know if you  
were dead or alive!'  
she screamed

'You're a lousy  
thoughtless beast,  
and you didn't even  
bring back a fucking  
loaf of bread!'

DURING THE LAST WEEK

Ricky, the carpet man,  
said to me that he was  
'living the dream'  
though he looked  
fatigued and could  
barely raise a smile

One of my asshole  
bosses said that he was  
'not too shabby'  
but I could see  
that he was clearly  
deceiving himself

Simon, a young factory  
labourer, said that he was  
'trying to make it happen'  
but gave no further  
details

Tom, the gardener,  
said that he  
'could be worse'  
and of course  
he was damn right

Murray, the removal guy,  
told me that 'it's hellish,  
a different hell every  
fucking day'

And I could see through  
his thick, black and grey  
pirate beard that he was  
speaking his truth

Carmelina, after reading  
a poem that mentioned  
her beautiful breasts,  
said to me  
'How would you like it,  
if I wrote about your dick  
all over the internet?'

I thought, it'd be okay,  
providing it was  
complimentary,  
but instead I said  
'I couldn't give a shit'

Jean, a long retired bank  
exec, said that she  
'wanted nothing more  
than to die' but  
she didn't have  
'the courage or  
imagination'  
to kill herself

And I could even  
see death looming,  
waiting in her shadow,  
resting against  
the blank wall  
behind her



SUPERVISION

'I want you to write a list  
for our meeting tomorrow'  
my supervisor requested,  
'something that will be  
helpful to both of us'

'Okay' I said  
and made the list  
as requested

Here it is:

Don't be aggressive  
Don't use obscene language  
Don't bang fist on table  
or raise and extend middle finger  
Don't be sarcastic  
Don't get angry  
Don't make threats  
Don't throw stuff around  
Don't spit or curse  
Don't get belligerent  
Don't be subversive  
Don't be antagonistic  
Don't be provocative  
Don't be hostile  
Don't be impatient  
and most of all  
Don't be an asshole

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

I gave him the list and  
he wrote at the bottom  
'Don't forget this list'

WITH THE JOB

I was living in  
this small room that  
came with the job

The other 5 rooms  
were occupied by women

We shared bathrooms  
and they would drape  
their thongs and stockings  
on the radiators to dry,  
a pleasant distraction  
while bathing

They all had boyfriends;  
I had an on-off thing  
going with a couple of girls  
but mostly I'd just stay  
in my room drinking wine,  
smoking and listening  
to the radio

And sometimes  
one of my neighbours  
would knock on my door  
late at night, upset  
following an argument  
with their boyfriend

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

And I'd offer them a drink  
and we'd sit upon my bed  
and I'd listen as they  
bitched about their guy

I'd look them over and  
imagine what I'd do  
if they were mine and  
then they'd thank me  
for my kindness and  
understanding

And then they'd rise  
and leave me all alone  
and aroused, staring  
out the window  
with less wine

A KEY MOMENT

At the time I was occupied  
between my woman's thighs  
when I heard a key  
enter my door

Turn, click,  
and open

I quickly sat up and  
looked into the face  
of a former lover

'I came to return your keys'  
she said, looking at  
the woman sprawled  
out across my bed

'Yeah, thanks' I said  
taking the keys as  
my new lover giggled  
and the door slammed shut  
and we were alone  
once again

Before picking back up  
where we'd left off,  
I dropped the keys  
into her hand-bag  
on the floor beside  
the bed

WHAT HAVE SOME OF US BECOME

She died aged 2 years old  
weighing only 13lbs;  
prior to her death  
she'd been starved  
for days

100+ physical injuries,  
belt marks, bite marks,  
cracked ribs, missing teeth  
and trauma blows to her head,  
deep cuts stitched at home  
with needle and thread

She was locked in  
the bathroom and slept  
in the bathtub covered  
in blood and faeces

She was just 2 years old  
when she was tortured,  
starved and sadistically  
murdered, like her life  
meant nothing at all

She had never once  
been outside of the house;  
the neighbours didn't  
know of her existence

JOHN D ROBINSON

Her mother has a history  
of drug abuse and  
child neglect and  
has an IQ of 67  
and may evade  
the death sentence  
for this reason;  
she is pregnant  
with her 8th child

Her father has a record  
of violent assaults upon  
women and minors;  
today he was sentenced  
to death and well-paid  
legal bodies will plead  
for his life  
like his daughter  
did for hers

He is 32 years old,  
guilty of vicious cruelty  
and murder;  
she was just 2 years old  
and guilty of nothing

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

Her life was pitifully short,  
never knowing of love,  
knowing nothing but pain  
and suffering, seeing  
no one but those  
brutal bastards

Death must have been  
a true relief

I'm no believer, but  
I like to think that she's  
now in a better place,  
finally getting to know  
of gentle love



SPITEFUL ANNIE

Annie was a long term junky  
who had switched to being  
a spiteful alcoholic

She came from wealthy  
country folk who constantly  
bailed her out of jail  
and homelessness

One cold night I took  
'C.E.O. Tony' around  
to her place to make  
the guy a sandwich

'Why the fuck do you keep  
bringing these bums  
around here?'  
Annie asked and then,  
'He's not going to shit  
himself is he?'

'I hope not,' I said

Meanwhile,  
Tony had fallen asleep,  
slumped in a wooden chair

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

'I'm going,' I said  
'I've got work  
tomorrow morning'

'Fuck you'  
Spiteful Annie said,  
'You pussy'

I didn't argue with Annie,  
she was spiteful  
and it was getting late  
and she was right

A FRYING PAN

It was a vile potion  
of vodka, beer,  
wine and cider and  
it was always just  
a question of time  
before some kind of  
shit would happen

‘Fearless Fred’  
was not an alcoholic;  
he was a ‘house-breaker’  
by trade and he was,  
by all accounts,  
quite good at it;  
his climbing and  
scaling of buildings  
was near on legendary

We were in a flat  
up on the 14th floor  
when ‘Wonder-Tramp’  
dared ‘Fearless’ to climb  
up to the 17th

‘Fearless’ was drunk  
but he wasn’t stupid  
and he wisely refused  
the challenge

'Wonder' made a move  
for the window himself,  
grumbling beneath  
his breath that he'd  
'fucking do it himself'

We urged him not to do it,  
to forget about it and  
have another drink,  
but he was drunk and  
belligerent and adamant  
in his quest

It took a blow to his head  
with a heavy frying pan,  
delivered by his wife,  
to make him stop

WATCH-OUT

We opened up  
all the windows  
of the moving car

The fly was ignoring this  
and flew around unabated,  
irritating and annoying  
the hell out of us both

My wife swiped at it  
across the steering-wheel

The fucker was quick, but  
I saw it coming towards me

I didn't want to murder it;  
I karate chopped it  
with my right hand,  
stunning the thing  
and knocking it towards  
my open window

Instantly, I followed up with  
a lightning left backhand  
that knocked the fly  
clean out of the car

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

It was awesome;  
it took me by surprise  
and I knew this feat  
would never be  
repeated again

I felt just like  
a codeine-hash  
stoned Bruce Lee

‘Did you see that?’ I asked

‘See what?’ she asked

‘What I did with that fly!’

‘Fuck the fly!’ she said,  
having sadly missed  
my display of  
superhuman  
powers

SHIT ART

I was way out of my depth,  
in London, at a private  
viewing of works made  
out of cowshit from India;  
the artist had spent 6 months  
on a grant finding the muse

He'd framed the pieces  
behind glass with typed  
explanatory notes beneath  
that made no sense to me

After 15 minutes  
I became bored of  
staring at cow shit and  
hearing the phony voices  
of the pretentious viewers  
and I asked my friend,  
who had invited me along,  
where the nearest bar was

He looked at me with disgust

'Across the fucking road' he said  
'Just don't be late  
for the bus, you've  
got 2 hours!'

'Fuck you' I grumbled  
as I turned and  
walked away

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

Apparently I snored  
like a drunken fucking  
jack-hammer the entire  
100 miles back home

He never asked  
what I thought  
of the exhibition  
and he never invited  
me to another one,  
either



ARE YOU

'Okay' I said  
'You don't have to answer  
these questions, they're  
not obligatory'

'I'll oblige, I'll answer  
the questions' said the  
sweating, heaving,  
hulking beast sat  
opposite me

'Okay' I said  
'Are you:  
Heterosexual  
Gay  
Bisexual  
Transsexual  
Celibate  
Same gender as at birth  
Impotent or  
incompetent?'

I smiled as warmly  
as I could

'None of those'  
the wobbling, perspiring,  
toothless, hairy-chinned  
creature answered

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

'Okay' I said

'I'm normal'  
said the monster,  
trying to perform a smile

'Yeah, I thought so'  
I said, ticking a box

ALWAYS MORE

Julian was tall and skinny,  
too skinny perhaps, and  
he was gentle, creative,  
articulate and very  
effeminate in his  
mannerisms  
and manners

When we first met  
he was kicking heroin  
and for 3 or 4 days  
I witnessed his  
withdrawal and I held  
him and he clung to me  
and then he found  
God and fell in love  
with a friend of mine  
who had also recently  
been reborn

They married and had  
2 sons, the marriage  
lasted perhaps  
several years, and  
then Julian split with  
God and his wife and  
children and found  
a male lover and  
moved from town  
to city

His sons visited  
a few times and  
retuned with tears  
and cigarette burns  
and bad dreams  
and they never saw  
their father alive  
again and neither  
did I

Later, his lover  
died of AIDS  
and Julian had  
the same diagnosis

He committed suicide  
and I remember Julian  
one time telling me  
of blowing truck drivers  
in midnight deserted  
car parks and that  
he would have done  
anything for a push  
of heroin but God  
had saved him

There's a lot more  
to this story  
as there will  
be to yours,  
but for now,  
for Julian,  
this will do

THE NEXT MOVE

I was wearing an expensive  
American football jacket  
that didn't belong to me  
with an XXX pornographic  
magazine stuffed into  
the inside pocket, which  
wasn't mine either

I was staggering around  
in an apartment that  
I didn't belong in  
and was wondering in  
a speed and brandy  
fueled frenzy just what  
the fuck was going on

I fell asleep in a utility room  
beneath a pool table and  
was awoken by the loud  
voices and footsteps  
of children upstairs

I quickly pulled myself up  
and found an exit that led  
into a large back garden  
where I collapsed  
beneath a tall tree

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

3 or 4 hours later,  
I awoke once again

I was miles from home,  
I was fucked up and  
felt like crying and  
then I found a joint  
in one of the jacket's  
other pockets

Although this didn't belong  
to me either, I lit it up,  
breathed in deep and  
began thinking of  
my next move

MISUNDERSTOOD

'My mother doesn't understand me  
and it's upsetting to me that  
she doesn't understand'  
she said to me

A squat, bald, toothless  
64 year old guy who had  
recently (and superficially)  
changed his gender,  
he was no longer Colin but  
Julie and wore a huge and  
hideous oversized blonde wig,  
a gaudy orange dress,  
clumsily smeared-on makeup,  
and an ill-fitting pair  
of bright red flats

She told me that when  
she first visited her mother  
in the care home as Julie,  
her mother had laughed,  
for the first time in years,  
thinking that it was a joke

And it took a while  
before he could explain  
to her that he'd had  
these feelings all his life  
and now was the time to  
finally let free his inner self

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

And her mother said that  
she would never be able to  
bring herself to call 'him'  
Julie and that he'd always be  
her son Colin and that it was  
probably just a phase  
he was going through  
and that he would  
eventually outgrow it

'Maybe she needs time'  
I suggested

'She hasn't got much  
time left, she's 96'

'Maybe shaving the beard  
would help some'

'I've been thinking  
about that' she said



THE ACCUSATION

‘Some asshole told me  
that you write poetry!’

‘That’s just fucking ugly  
gossip bullshit’ I said

‘I thought so’ she said  
as she ordered another  
round of vodkas

‘I mean I knew it was  
bullshit, you can’t even  
spell your own name!’  
she said laughing

‘Spell it? Fuck, I can’t  
even remember it  
half of the time’

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

### CODEINE HAIKU

The heaviness of the limbs,  
adrift in Mahler,  
the morning has gone

### DIAZEPAM HAIKU

She hits me gently,  
calms the inner flow  
to a beautiful trickle

### GRASS HAIKU

The shackles of green  
perforate the chains  
holding ransom to a truth

### WINE HAIUKU

The sharp crackling of ice cubes  
as the wine is poured  
no holier sound

HANG IN THERE

Hang in there  
like a ghost falling  
into the rain,  
like a ship drifting  
into a smothering fog

Hang in there  
like it's your last  
breath, the final  
word spoken,  
the last page  
read and turned

Hang in there  
and scream the  
injustice you feel,  
that you see, as a  
third of the world's  
human population  
lacks shelter,  
food and water

Hang in there  
like heaven itself  
awaiting its fate,  
like waiting for the man  
on a street corner  
who will make things  
good again

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

Just hang in there,  
whatever it takes

THE TWO GIRLS

I had read poetry  
in a local bar and  
she took me back to  
her room afterwards

We had some drinks  
and smoked a joint  
and then she took  
off her shirt

She had very  
large breasts

I was flat on my back  
as she straddled me,  
took my hands and placed  
them on her breasts and  
then unzipped me

Next thing I knew, she was  
lying there beside me;  
I couldn't remember  
a fucking thing but  
I admired and gently  
fondled those breasts  
of hers as she whimpered  
and moaned in her sleep

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

I licked and kissed her  
nipples for a while and  
got aroused myself and  
then from out of nowhere  
a beautiful white fluffy  
long haired purring cat  
pounced upon the bed;  
she snuggled in close  
and fell asleep

I left the two girls  
sleeping and made  
it home in time  
for breakfast

BICYCLES AND BUSHES

'I swing both ways,  
though I prefer males'  
he once told me

'Physically I haven't had  
a partner for over 20 years,  
but let me tell you something,  
cycling is sexual'

'I mean I cycle  
60 miles or more  
every couple of days,  
and say after 15 miles or so,  
I need to pull over and  
find some bushes and  
work one off'

'Quite often I'll masturbate  
3 or 4 times a day  
when I cycle, I don't  
know what it is,  
but it works  
for me'

'Maybe it's the saddle  
and the constant friction,  
I don't know but the thought  
of someone else involved  
is just repulsive'

'All I need is a bicycle  
and some bushes'

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

### A PROCESS

Too fucked,  
too drunk,  
too fucking  
stoned,  
too far away  
from harmony  
to give a fuck  
about Heaven,  
I write poems  
instead



THE DROOPER

'Wow! I'm sorry, I mean,  
it's not you, it's me!' I said  
pathetically, confused  
and disappointed

'Look, don't worry,  
it happens, it's  
the alcohol'  
she kindly said

'I've been drunk for years  
and I've been fucking for years  
and this has never happened  
to me before!'

I was embarrassed  
and in shock

'Please, it's nothing,  
lets wait until morning  
then see what happens'  
she suggested

By 7am I was fully restored  
and by 8am we had sexually  
exhausted one another  
and lay satisfied as others  
were making their way  
into offices, factories, buses,  
trains, building sites, shops

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

'Would you like some wine?'  
I said 'I've a bottle  
in the fridge'

'Wine is the most important  
drink of the day' she replied  
and I knew we were  
making it good

THE ACCEPTANCE

He told me that one time  
when we were drunk,  
I became aggressive,  
provocative and that  
I threatened to beat  
the shit out of him

I told him that  
I couldn't recall that  
evening and apologised  
for my behaviour

He accepted this  
and then I told him  
if he ever mentioned  
it to me again I'd  
beat the living fuck  
out of him

He accepted this  
and we shook hands

THE CUCKOO

When the police  
raided the property,  
they found 6 machetes,  
a large quantity of  
heroin and cocaine,  
two persons sprawled  
unconscious on a sofa,  
a large sum of cash  
and 2 teenage boys  
hiding in the loft,  
who had been reported  
missing a couple of  
weeks earlier

The official tenant  
was not present and  
would not be found  
until 2 days later  
when a dog walker  
found her body  
hanging from a tree  
in a local woodland

SHE IS BEAUTIFUL

My face just a few  
inches from her pussy,  
her legs spread wide,  
she is beautiful

And I watch as she  
masturbates and  
climaxes

Daylight fades as  
her moans of pleasure  
tremble into its vastness  
and people begin to  
make ready for  
the evening

She quietens softly  
and lies still as I move  
and wrap my arms  
around her and  
my neighbours close  
their curtains and  
lock their doors,  
shutting out  
the world

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

She is beautiful,  
the street lighting  
sprinkles into being  
and small garden birds  
have fallen silent  
as she brings me  
between the moment  
of life and death

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Ten minutes of questions  
and answers about my lower  
spinal pain and how I was  
dealing with it: exercise,  
codeine, valium

‘I need to ask you  
some further questions,  
company policy’ she said

‘Okay’ I said

‘Are you married and do  
you have children?’

‘Yes, what about you?’

A moment of silence

‘Do you have any issues  
with sleeping?’

‘No, your phone call  
woke me up’

I heard a deep sigh

‘Have you ever taken  
recreational drugs?’

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

'No' I said, holding  
the phone at arms length  
and taking a hit  
on a fat one

'Do you drink alcohol?'

'I can't abide the stuff'

'Do you have any hobbies?'

'Yes, I draw pictures  
of Billie Holiday and  
make paper boats'

'Do you regularly engage  
in physical exercise?'

'Yes, but that's  
a private matter'

I heard another sigh

'Have you any issues that  
are currently impacting  
upon you?'



‘Yes, the cruelty,  
the callousness, vileness,  
the murderous greed  
of the human race,  
global warming,  
poverty,  
the poisoning of oceans,  
the destruction of forests  
and my wife is really pissed  
with the postman who keeps  
walking across our  
front lawn’

She let go a faint laugh  
and then finally said:

‘Okay, we’re  
done, goodbye’

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

### SUMMER DEW

Her eyes closing  
as if in slow motion,  
her being stretches,  
reaching for something  
that isn't there,  
tense and beautiful,  
almost heavenly,  
lost in moments  
beyond pleasure,  
then, she relaxes,  
breathes heavy  
and embraces  
me, warm as  
summer dew

THE ANTICIPATION

I watched  
the beads of  
perspiration  
trickle down  
between  
her breasts

We'd spent one  
another and we  
had no more  
words to say

We lay quiet,  
safe in our  
own thoughts,  
anticipating the  
moment of  
goodbye

THAT SCARED US

Our entwined silhouettes  
give way to darkness,  
we cling to each other  
in the potential  
consequences of the  
moments we had shared,  
that had made  
us lovers

The future is  
always uncertain,  
except for death,  
we knew this

Even back then  
it was life  
that scared us,  
not death,  
and nothing  
has changed  
ever since

THE NAVIGATION

Gentle to the touch,  
softness of voice,  
she lay draped like  
a flag across my lap

I stroked her hair  
and trailed my fingers  
slowly across her face  
like a long-lost  
treasure just found

I spoke silently  
to her warmth and  
imagined that we  
would love eternal  
but I knew she  
didn't want  
this

She knew it  
wasn't real but  
let it go and  
allowed me to  
navigate the way  
to our loss

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

### BEGINNING TO END

Beauty is waking up,  
wisdom is knowing  
you are awake,  
and truth will tell  
you that you  
are fucked

A POEM FOR NIKKI

The couple had applied  
to adopt a dog from an  
animal rescue sanctuary

They were scrutinised,  
their home was visited and  
lengthy conversations took  
place and they were accepted  
and introduced to Nikki,  
a gorgeous abandoned  
2 year old labrador

The couple were reported  
to have fallen in love  
with Nikki instantly

They took Nikki home  
and within hours,  
beat her to death  
with a metal pole,  
skinned her and then  
ate her for dinner

A couple of days later  
the sanctuary visited to  
enquire as to how Nikki  
was settling in

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

Instead they found  
her organs and body parts  
strewn about the dirty kitchen  
and in unwashed cooking pots

Initially the couple denied  
any wrong-doing and said  
that the dog had run away

Later they were charged with  
animal cruelty and punished  
with a 10 year ban  
on keeping pets

I'm wondering right now  
how this poem  
makes you feel

Perhaps you wish  
I'd never wrote it,  
but this is a poem  
for a dog called Nikki  
that may haunt  
your thoughts  
now and then  
as she does mine



JOHN D ROBINSON

LISTEN TO ME SON

Back in the day,  
there were poetry readings  
in the back of 'The Pig In Paradise'  
and I became a part of this scene  
of junkies and drinkers and artists  
and wasters and burnt-out hippies

And one night,  
my proud drunken old man  
came to see his son read  
and he witnessed firsthand  
the obligatory applause  
and the nodding of heads  
and quiet whispers of 'bullshit'

When it was his turn,  
he shuffled onto the stage  
and slurred a sexy dirty-ditty  
and I witnessed a reaction  
unlike any I had  
ever seen before

Voices were raised in protest  
boos and hisses were heavy  
beer bottles were thrown  
across the room

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

I ushered him offstage  
to safety and we were both  
laughing hard and I realized  
that he'd delivered something  
that was seen as unacceptable,  
a punch to the face of decency,  
seen to be way below the sterile  
stagnant standards of all  
without a sense of humour

And on this  
very rare occasion,  
my father became  
my teacher  
and my hero

LOOKING THE OTHER WAY

I looked away,  
I couldn't look at her,  
I didn't want to see  
the pain, the hurt,  
the sorrow and  
resentment,  
not again,  
in her eyes

'You fucking  
look at me!'  
she screamed

I lifted my  
hung-over head  
and obliged

I saw the anguish,  
the feelings of betrayal  
and disgust falling in  
heavy droplets from  
her beautiful eyes

After some time,  
she became quiet  
and composed  
saying softly,  
'I love you'  
before she began  
to weep anew

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

I looked away,  
down at my feet  
and listened to her  
sadness as the world  
kept on spinning,  
knowing it was  
only time or  
heaven that may  
have a chance  
of healing such  
a wound,  
as evening began  
its descent and  
I was thankful  
as always,  
for the silence  
that followed

THE HOME

I wanted more,  
I was blinded with ideals;  
she knew what she wanted  
and I wasn't part of it

I held onto a corpse  
for a long time,  
endlessly trying  
to resuscitate it

Finally I gave up  
and was stabbed  
with a freedom,  
and I fell in love  
with everything,  
and I buried myself  
in poetry and drugs  
and alcohol and when  
I finally crawled out,  
I found the universe  
in the eyes of a woman  
who saved my ass  
by crafting a world that  
became my true home

THE RATTLE SNAKE

She would have  
fucked a rattle-snake,  
crawled through sewers  
and walked across  
roads of razor blades  
and drowned herself  
in the vilest nests  
of abuse  
and she did,  
for a hit,  
for a high,  
for some kind of  
warmth and affection,  
something that made  
her feel real and  
alive and it all  
came to nothing  
in the end

She was so much more  
than this but she was  
blind to her own  
beauty, a prostitute  
to her addictions,  
a saint of the streets  
martyred in a derelict  
building, holes shot  
through her arms,  
trickling blood with  
her eyes still shining

RUBY

He lived with a pigeon,  
his entire apartment  
was covered in bird shit;  
he dealt good hash  
but it was a horror,  
no surface was  
left untouched

It didn't seem to  
bother him and  
the fucking bird  
would walk and fly  
around pecking and  
shitting everywhere

No doubt he loved that  
pigeon, it would roost  
upon his shoulder as  
he cut your purchase

He made it with  
a woman one time  
and she told him,  
'That fucking thing  
has to go or I do'

So she left,  
which was a shame,  
as she had a nice ass  
and she didn't shit  
all over the place

When the bird  
finally died,  
it destroyed him,  
and he moved back  
in with his parents with  
volumes of photographs  
of this fucking pigeon  
he had called  
Ruby



NOT TO SLEEP

Delicate  
as a shaggy  
meadow mist,  
she rests,  
weary,  
in my arms,  
not to sleep  
but to  
shapeshift  
every time,  
into my  
muse

GETTING INTO IT

'What do you mean,  
your Muse? Duende?  
You refer to it  
as female'  
she says

'It is' I tell her  
'Duende, the spirit,  
the Muse'

'You know she's there  
when you write?'  
she asks

'Without her  
I would never  
pick up a pen'  
I say

'What's her name,  
this Muse of yours?'

'Carmelina' I reply

'You live in a fucking  
dream world'  
she said and  
I didn't argue

THE ALPHABET ADVICE

Now, after 4 decades  
I cannot remember  
his name but I still  
remember some  
advice he once offered

‘When you go down  
on your woman,  
write the alphabet  
with your tongue  
and by the time  
you get to M  
she’ll be satisfied  
no bullshit’

He was right,  
and I’ve kept  
to this advice  
ever since,  
never reaching  
beyond the letter J

TANGLED

Shapes blended,  
bodies wrapped  
and tangled like  
barbed-wire,  
time had  
temporarily  
stopped in the  
sparse, cheap  
rented room

The invisible  
calendar shredded  
and strewn across  
the floor like the  
abandoned clothes  
of lovers

Evening would  
envelope them  
and morning  
would release  
them into a  
world unaware  
and uncaring  
of their fading  
silhouette

THE BEAUTY & OBSESSION

It was the promise of fondling  
a big pair of breasts that led  
to me getting arrested

My father laughed his ass off  
when I explained that she'd  
given me an obviously  
forged prescription to  
present at the chemist  
and that when I came  
back with the goods,  
I'd have ten minutes  
of handling, sucking,  
licking and caressing  
her lovely breasts

He nodded, grinned  
and then he said  
'I would have  
done the same'

We lifted our drinks

'To the beauty  
and the obsession  
that men have with  
women's breasts'  
he said

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

We drank deeply  
as his wife looked on  
through codeine  
smudged eyes,  
shaking her head  
and playfully cupping  
her breasts as if  
protecting them  
like babies

NO FUCKING

He followed me into the urinals  
and stood behind me as I pissed

'I hear you think  
you're a tough guy'  
he said

'Maybe you've heard wrong'  
I said, finishing up  
and walking over  
to the wash basins

'Just don't fuck with me'  
he said

'I'm not going to fuck with you,  
but maybe, your girl' I told him

'Maybe you'll try' he said

'Yeah, I might do' I said

'Maybe I'll fuck with your girl'  
he said

'Okay, let's not do  
any fucking tonight'  
I offered as a suggestion

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

He nodded

'No fucking' he said

'No fucking' I said



EVERYWHERE

For several moments afterwards  
as we lay satisfied, listening  
to our deep breathing and  
the dull hum of passing traffic  
going nowhere and  
everywhere,  
she said:

‘You certainly  
weren’t the first  
and you certainly  
won’t be the last,  
but I’ll always  
remember you’

‘Thanks’ I said,  
just before  
I fell asleep

She was gone before I awoke;  
a one-nighter, not even  
knowing each other’s names

She was petite, pretty, with  
short brown hair, hazel eyes,  
small soft hands and  
she has a smile,  
so natural,  
so real, so true,  
that’s what I remember  
of her these 30 years on

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

She'd be 60 or so by now;  
she may even be dead,  
she may not be and  
I really don't care

We were strangers,  
then, now, and forever

But she's with me tonight,  
in heaven or hell,  
it doesn't matter;  
it's just the being  
together somehow  
that counts

THE GOLD MINE

'Her pussy is a gold mine,  
her fingertips are  
velvet flowers'  
I'd written

'What is that bullshit?  
What the fuck does  
that even mean?  
Gold mine pussy?  
Velvet fingertips?'  
she said after reading  
a poem that I had  
dedicated to her

I didn't know what  
to say and then she  
started laughing

I looked on feeling  
dumb and foolish

After a few moments  
she leaned in closer

'Thank you' she said  
'That was nice.  
Now come here,  
the gold mine  
is all yours...'

NO REASON

We'd been drinking for three days,  
we'd hardly slept or eaten, and  
we'd just opened a bottle of wine  
when he came at me,  
I don't know why

The punch to my face  
came from nowhere and  
I sprung back in shock before  
firing three punches in return  
and he hit the floor and  
through his cut lips  
began laughing

I sat down beside him,  
pouring two glasses,  
blood seeping from my nose,  
discolouring the wine  
as the sun began her descent,  
and we embraced and waited  
for something else to happen

A GOOD NIGHT OUT

'I got home about 3am,  
I was slaughtered,  
booze, cocaine and grass,  
I was good, I was alive,  
you know, so  
I put on some sounds  
and then passed out'  
he told me

'A couple hours later  
I came to as my front door  
was being smashed in'

'I got up to see  
4 police officers  
walking towards me'

'One of them turned off  
the deafening music,  
another began exploring  
my apartment  
whilst the other two  
explained to me  
that they'd been called  
numerous times about  
excessive noise'

'I knew I was fucked;  
I had several healthy  
marijuana plants growing  
in the bathroom'

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

'I was busted for anti-social  
behaviour, noise pollution,  
breach of the peace  
and cultivation with  
intent to supply'

'I was handed a hefty  
fine and 100 hours of  
community service work,  
plus two years probation'

'It was just bad luck  
at the end of a fucking  
good night out'

HITTING HOME

The wine is hitting home  
and it's a good place  
to be right now

At home with a couple of  
bottles of chardonnay  
and the poems are  
offering themselves up  
like cheap whores  
or fallen angels  
taunting and teasing  
like a 1950's  
censored Elvis

The wine is hitting home  
as millions of strangers  
around me starve and  
fall victim to oppression  
and injustice and abuse,  
as animals are hunted and  
forests are burned and  
oceans are poisoned

It's a good place to be,  
as the wine hits home,  
numbed and fucking  
useless against the  
relentless mad  
swirl of it all

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

Just for a while,  
as the wine hits home,  
it's a good place to be



THE FUCK-UP AGAIN

'I offered myself, you know,  
or a blow job and he told me  
that it wouldn't even cover  
the interest on my debt,  
and I blew him anyways  
to sweeten him up because  
I didn't have any cash and  
he gave me a bag to keep  
me straight and I owe him  
even more now'

'I don't feel good  
about this, but  
what else can I do?  
I'm fucked,  
I need help'  
she said

And that was true  
but I was on the bum  
for some wine and  
some codeine and  
I didn't give a care  
about her fuck-up

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

And I walked away,  
trying to ignore  
her voice,  
calling out after me  
like a desperate  
beggar, a stranger,  
much like I was  
myself

EXPLODING TROUSERS & THE TRUTH

'I really don't want to go'  
she said

I had also been invited  
to the wedding reception  
but declined instantly

'If I don't go, she'll never  
forgive me' she said

I looked at her and  
shrugged my shoulders

'Phone her and tell her  
that you hope it's all  
going great but you  
really can't be  
bothered with it all'

'I can't say that!' she said

'But it's the truth' I said

'I know, but I can't do that,  
what can I say?'

'Okay, tell her  
that there has been  
a sudden explosion  
in my trousers and that  
when you've stopped laughing  
you're going to have to  
help me out with it and won't  
be able to attend the party'  
I suggested

She laughed a little and said  
'That's just being silly'

'Not being able to tell a close  
friend the truth is silly' I said,  
grinning while rolling a joint

'I better start getting ready'  
she said, walking off and  
no doubt thinking of  
my exploding trousers

JOHN D ROBINSON

IN OUR 20's, A DRUNKEN EARLY EVENING

I would guess that  
she had her reasons  
for her actions

The heavy glass  
ashtray thrown in  
semi-darkness was  
a quality throw  
and opened up  
a deep gash across  
my nose

I picked up  
the nearest object,  
a cauliflower,  
and threw it back  
towards her screaming,  
missing my target  
by a long shot

I felt the warm blood  
streaming down my  
lips and chin as  
I began to laugh

She moved in darkness  
and switched on a light  
and began crying  
and apologising as she  
looked at my face and  
then behind her at the  
shattered cauliflower  
upon the floor and  
then knelt down  
and embraced me,  
kissing my bloodied  
face, diluting the red  
with her tears

NOT WANTED

We arrived at the police station  
stinking of a 4 day riot of booze,  
hash and assorted other drugs  
and we were in no mood  
to be fucked-about with

‘Let me see now’  
said the front-desk officer,  
looking down at some  
paperwork

‘And who are you in relation?’  
he asked

‘I’m his son’ I replied

My friend meanwhile  
was still incapable  
of speech and  
just stood there  
smiling dumbly

‘Okay and you’re going  
to take him home,  
out of our town and  
back to his own town  
yes?’ the officer asked

‘Yes sir’ I replied

15 minutes later  
he was released  
without charge,  
singing lines from  
‘Folsom Prison’  
as he shadow-boxed  
his way into the streets  
of a town he wasn’t  
wanted in



A ONE TIME YOUNG MAN'S BLUES

'You'll have to get rid of it'  
she said in a harsh whisper  
to her daughter

And then, looking at me  
with cold steel eyes  
of resentment and  
disappointment  
she said:

'And you'll have to pay for it'

I walked out  
of the bar in silence,  
leaving the two  
of them alone

We were teenagers  
and we were in love;  
she was seventeen and  
pregnant and months away  
from a university dream;  
I was eighteen and  
a factory worker  
with no ambitions

But we saw it through;  
I raised the money and  
visited the private clinic  
that was way out of town

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

It was a sad place  
full of sad and ashamed  
faces of young women  
and we were in love  
and we held hands and  
I wanted to say things to her  
that would be of comfort but  
I didn't and I couldn't;  
I was sad and I didn't  
know what to say

After a short while  
at university she brought me  
a copy of Kerouac's *Scattered Poems*  
and she said goodbye forever

That was three and  
a half decades ago;  
I still have the book but  
the inscription she wrote  
has since faded

Faded like a heartbeat  
never heard,  
even once

NO HANG-UPS HERE

Mostly I feel  
uncomfortable  
and irritated while in  
the presence of the living  
but here amongst the dead,  
I'm strangely calm  
and most at ease

There are no hang-ups here,  
what went wrong  
in life remains and  
what went well  
in life remains  
in equal measure

There are no hang-ups here,  
no competition,  
rich or poor,  
lucky or unlucky  
in life; all here are  
equal once again

Before me stand  
2 headstones,  
2 guys who barely  
made it past 50,  
but both were sons,  
husbands, fathers  
and grandfathers  
in their own time

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

And of course I  
can't help but think  
of my own impending  
end but mostly I  
just feel indifferent

The graves are both adorned  
with cherubs and angels  
and buddhas and plaques  
of sentimental words

Plastic flowers and  
cheap solar lighting  
but all of it with  
a certain quiet

There are no hang-ups here,  
it has all already  
been done

THE BALLS OF JAMES DEAN

Somewhere,  
sometime ago  
I'd read an account  
of when director  
Elia Kazan introduced  
the bright young star  
to the cast and crew  
of East Of Eden

And how he'd walked  
up to them each in turn,  
fellow actors/actresses,  
lighting, sound, scenery,  
and camera operatives,  
producers, script writers,  
catering crew, costume, etc,  
and pushing his beautiful  
face close to theirs,  
fixed his stare and  
spat 'Fuck You!'  
to every one  
of them

'Fuck You!'  
he spat, and then  
onto the next  
'Fuck You!'

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

Now there are times  
when I wish I had  
the balls of James Dean,  
on a Monday morning,  
fresh back at work,  
venting such feelings  
to the many soulless  
assholes I encounter  
on a daily basis

But I'm no rebel;  
rather, these days,  
not even a giant of  
invisible inconsequence

JOHN D ROBINSON

AN OUTLAW IN THE MAKING

My dear mom is something  
just short of being clinically  
obsessed with the cleanliness  
of her house and one of her  
blinding golden rules is  
under no circumstances are  
OUTSIDE shoes to be worn  
INSIDE the house

If the fire-fighters were needed,  
mom would force them to remove  
their boots before entering  
to deal with the flames

The rules are drilled into you  
from a very early age

My nephew is 5  
and he is very bright  
and forward thinking

A little while ago,  
he was playing out  
in the back yard  
when he needed  
something from  
INSIDE the house

Without hesitation,  
he strolled INSIDE the house  
still wearing his OUTSIDE shoes

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

His mother reminded him  
'Samuel, you know you're not  
to be wearing your shoes  
INSIDE the house'

Without pause in his stride  
or even turning around  
he said 'Well, I am'  
and carried on walking  
INSIDE the house  
still wearing his  
OUTSIDE shoes

There came a stunned silence,  
wide eyes and mouths agape,  
and a sense of disbelief  
from all witnesses

And when told of this  
I laughed and laughed  
and nodded my head

5 years old and already  
an outlaw in the making,  
doing things his own way  
despite the rules

I raise a glass



TAKING THE PISS

'I hear you think  
you're a tough guy'  
Eddie said as we  
stood together  
at the urinals,  
'that's bullshit'

'I'm the toughest'  
I said, grinning  
in reply

Eddie finished,  
zipped-up and  
waited for me

I finished,  
zipped-up and  
walked over to  
the wash basins,  
looking at Eddie  
in the mirror

He stood still,  
watching me  
wash my hands

'You going to wash  
your hands Eddie?'  
I asked

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

'Fuck no'  
he said

'Then don't ask me  
for a dance later'  
I said, grinning

Eddie laughed  
nervously and said  
'I don't dance'

'Well, fuck-you' I said  
and waited for  
his next move

He stepped over to  
the wash basins,  
washed his hands  
while looking at me  
in the mirror

'Maybe later'  
he said

'Maybe'  
I said

RESTLESS & HUNGRY

3 decades ago we were  
restless and hungry and  
we fucked and fooled  
around at every  
opportunity without  
hesitation; morning,  
noon and night

In caravans, tents, on  
top of buses, in trains,  
guest rooms, hotels and  
motels, bathrooms,  
kitchens, hallways and  
alleyways and subways  
and parks, cinemas,  
gardens and theatres,  
and of course,  
countless bedrooms

And Jesus, between  
the two of us, we had  
an adventurous and truly  
wicked imagination;  
rocking and rolling  
mid-afternoon in a  
cold-water apartment,  
the sun gushing into  
the room and caressing  
your naked ass as  
I held you tight  
from behind

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

And then the door bell  
rang and it rang  
relentlessly, viciously  
and without mercy  
and we pulled away from  
each other to answer  
the door to my drunken  
old man with a smile and  
an armful of stolen goods  
wanting somewhere to  
hide it for a while

SHARKS & BUTTERFLIES

We were talking about butterflies and  
how some species migrate thousands  
of miles annually, moving at speeds  
of up to 30mph and riding  
the swirling thermals  
and forceful winds

‘The power and intelligence of  
these delicate creatures can be  
comparable to that of the great  
white shark’ I said

He smiled wide and  
nodded his head slowly  
in appreciation

We were stoned  
on a mix of potent  
hash and Valium,  
our eyes mere slits,  
our throats bone dry,  
our minds and bodies  
saturated with a heavy  
peacefulness that made  
discussing the beauty and  
wonder of butterflies and  
sharks in the same breath as  
something that felt really  
quite natural

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

And in that moment,  
the silent TV screen  
showed the aftermath  
of a suicide bombing,  
somewhere in the  
beating heart  
of the world

THE NOSE JOB

'The bone structure of your nose  
is completely abnormal,  
have you experienced  
a facial injury?'  
the ENT doctor asked

'As a young man I was involved  
in countless physical altercations  
with guys who seemed  
to hate my nose' I replied  
they'd punch it, kick it,  
pulled and twisted it, spat at it  
and shouted abuse at it;  
really they just  
hated my nose'

'I see' she said  
concealing a grin

'I don't get involved  
in those scenes nowadays'  
I said reassuringly

'That's good' she said  
unimpressed

'Chances are you've treated  
some of my opponents'  
I said, smiling

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

She didn't respond  
as she tapped away  
on her keyboard

'Goodbye Mr Robinson,  
the results will be  
sent to you' she said  
without looking up  
from her screen



THE OPPRESSIVE ONE

'I find it oppressive  
when you don't talk to me,  
I mean, 20 miles and you've  
barely said a word to me;  
it's uncomfortable' she tells me  
on our way to work

It's just barely 07:30,  
my meds haven't quite kicked in,  
and I've smoked just one joint  
and drank one cup of tea  
and talking bullshit small talk  
isn't my kick anyways but at this hour  
it's way beyond my interest or energy,  
even from the one closest  
to me in this world

'What shall I talk about?'  
I asked her

'I don't know, something'  
she replied

'Did you know that the ostrich  
is the only bird that shits  
and pisses separately?'  
I asked

'Fuck me!'  
she screamed,  
shaking her head and  
welcoming the silence  
that followed

THE FOOTSTEPS

Everything is as it should be,  
everything is here,  
except for you and  
that changes  
everything

Bessie the dog is sad-eyed,  
the cats are all sulking,  
the radio sits quiet,  
the TV is off

Your absence strolls  
around the house;  
I can feel you  
moving past me

Evening has noticed,  
its autumn presence  
falling like a soldier  
weary of war,  
putting down his  
weapon and laying  
down his head on  
the earth to hear  
your footsteps

Finally coming home,  
knowing everything  
will be okay

THE ASS OF GOD

Patricia stabbed Ronnie  
3 times in the stomach  
but he survived and  
they got divorced

Texas was a one eyed manager  
of the 'Dripping Spring' and  
after 3 years he hit the road  
with 18 months of takings

Ruby was held hostage for 48 hours  
and forced by a fuck-freak into  
sex acts her modeling career  
had never anticipated

Julian was a junkie and bisexual  
and a talented artist who  
committed suicide by heroin  
after his partner had died of AIDS

Monkey Dave, the hash dealer,  
died of a broken heart after  
learning his beautiful wife  
was being fucked senseless  
by his friends and customers

Linda, also a drug dealer,  
was sexy and wore short skirts  
and tight white panties  
and low cut blouses and  
died of cancer aged 45

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

Niko was a junkie  
and we all assumed  
that he'd die of O/D but  
cancer beat his ass aged 44

Ricky was a sweet kid  
but a methamphetamine  
induced heart attack  
took him aged 29

Sailor Al was stabbed  
to death in a hovel,  
Gordon froze to death  
on the streets, and  
Mick the Karate survived  
4 gunshot wounds and  
even lived to take  
his revenge

Tony, the street drinker,  
told me he was going to  
shove this life up  
the ass of God

JOHN D ROBINSON

SHE WAS LOADED

Earlier tonight, Miles Davis'  
take of 'Time After Time'  
came from my radio

And the last time  
I heard that tune  
was one night when  
a self-destructive friend  
knocked at my door

I could see that  
she was loaded  
and she opened  
up to me

I could have easily  
taken advantage but  
just rolled us joints and  
poured some wine instead

When I awoke  
the next day,  
I was all alone  
and the next time  
I saw her was  
in a casket

And I walked away  
from that funeral as  
I have so many others,  
time after time again

YOU KNOW HER

30 years younger  
and I imagine her  
petite physique  
safe next to me,  
to hold and protect her  
from what lays ahead

The predators, hunters,  
perverts, charlatans,  
conmen and freaks that  
are sure to be lurking  
in the filthy cracks and  
crevices wherever  
she treads

I'll be a distant  
memory soon,  
one of many faces  
in her life thus far

You know her,  
she may be  
your daughter,  
sister or friend

But you know her  
and maybe once  
you were also  
her yourself

POETRY FREE

Every 6 or 7 weeks  
I decide to make it  
a poetry-free-day

I won't respond  
to poetry emails,  
I won't read  
any poetry or work  
on poetry books  
or broadsides or  
answer interview  
questions

I won't open  
poetry packages  
arriving in the post  
or respond to texts  
or phone calls re: poetry

And today was supposed  
to be a poetry-free day

And I did well,  
for the most part,  
creating a collage  
and watching  
'Way Of The Dragon'

Until after a few  
glasses of wine,  
I fucked it up and  
wrote this poem

MY EDITOR

'You have used  
the word 'cunt'  
7 times in this poem;  
is that really necessary?'  
my wife questioned

I informed her of  
whom the poem  
was about

'You're right, it's  
absolutely necessary'  
she said



HOLDING HANDS

'Don't worry now,  
it's okay' she offered

But it wasn't that simple;  
it was just the beginning

She knew it too,  
of course, but  
she just couldn't  
bring herself  
to admit it

It wasn't okay,  
and I knew  
it wasn't

'I know' I lied  
and we lay together  
quietly, our minds  
chasing their own  
separate journeys

Our pathway  
had ended and  
we both knew  
this deep down  
as we held hands  
for the last time

STILL WATER

I saw him sat  
on a park bench  
overlooking a lake;  
it was 10am, and  
he was drinking vodka  
and gazing out across  
the still waters

I moved by quickly,  
quietly, making sure  
he didn't see or hear me

He's my oldest  
and dearest friend,  
peaceful and gifted,  
silently killing himself  
in the sunshine  
but he'd tell you  
that life is beautiful  
and we are all in samsara  
and that there is nothing  
really ever to worry about

When you're drunk  
by mid-day,  
there isn't much  
to worry about and  
life can be beautiful  
until you have to do it  
all again the next day

FOR A TITLE

I really don't give a fuck  
about how others think  
of me or my work but  
I'm not so insensitive

And would like to think  
that a few souls would  
say something like  
'he was a fine human  
being who loved children  
and animals and nature,  
a gentle spirit and  
spiritual guy who  
scribbled poetry'

That would be nice  
but I think I'd prefer  
'he was a codeine swallowing,  
hash smoking, wine drinking,  
no bullshit son of a bitch'

LIT COMBAT

‘Usually, there are 8 or 9  
of us and we read some of  
our poems each in turn,  
mostly our own efforts,  
and the listeners  
offer up comments,  
highlighting strengths  
and weaknesses,  
how the work  
made them feel’

‘Are there many  
fist-fights?’ I asked

‘No, no, no’ he replied  
‘we’re all very civilised’

‘Oh, I see’ I said  
losing all interest  
instantly

A GOOD SUGGESTION

'What the fuck is  
wrong with you two?'  
one of the police  
officers asked

We were sat on the floor,  
propping each other up  
and grinning beneath our  
bloodied and bruised  
facial injuries,  
maybe we were even  
holding hands

'You morons waste  
too much police time'  
said one of the officers

We began giggling  
and helping one another  
onto our unsteady feet

'Just kill each other quietly'  
one of the officers suggested

It was a reasonable request  
and it made sense to us  
so we sat back down and  
started arm wrestling

NAILS IT DEAD

I know life  
can be cheap,  
precious,  
and fragile

Even with love,  
time is a chain  
of wasted moments,  
thrown to oblivion  
like scattered bird-seed  
without a thought,  
footsteps tread within  
a world of blandness  
and dead-ends

Love doesn't always  
save your ass;  
sometimes it  
nails it dead

Love won't save your ass,  
least of all from yourself

SHAKE IT

'I stumbled into  
the kitchen about 8am  
and saw an attractive  
young woman dressed  
in just a tee-shirt,  
opening cupboards  
and rummaging about

'Good morning,  
where is the coffee?'  
the smiling stranger asked

'On the shelf there'  
I said, smiling back

'Thank you, would you  
like some coffee?' she asked

'Yeah' I said,  
'What's your name and  
what are you doing  
in my kitchen?'

And 25 years and  
4 children later,  
she leaves me for  
my asshole brother,  
who she's been fucking  
these 3 past years  
behind my back

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

I still love her and  
I hate myself for that;  
he's my brother and  
I want to kill him,  
and I've told him  
first chance I get  
that I will

But that first morning  
with her, all those  
years ago,  
let me tell you,  
it was so,  
so beautiful  
and it's still  
a part of me  
to this day

It fucking haunts me  
and I just can't  
seem to shake it



WHAT IS IT?

It was hard to guess  
how old he was;  
he looked ancient  
as he shuffled  
to the counter  
with a £5 note

‘How can I help you?’  
the cashier asked

The question seemed  
to fuck him up;  
he couldn’t remember  
what he was wanting  
from the store

‘Cigarettes? Tobacco?’  
the cashier asked

He shook his head,  
frowning, trying to  
think of what it was  
that he’d wanted

‘Lotto ticket?  
Scratch cards?  
Stamps?’

Dumbfounded,  
he could only  
shake his head

Meanwhile, a few people  
were getting pissed-off,  
cursing him beneath  
their breath;  
a few others in the queue  
called out their own  
helpful suggestions

‘TV guide? Vapours?  
Matches?’

Again he shook his head,  
looking puzzled  
and confused

‘A pack of rubbers?’  
I suggested, stepping up

He shook his head and  
laughed a toothless  
laugh and then said,  
‘I’ve got a couple of packets  
left over from the 1970’s  
in the bedroom cabinet,  
but I’m buggered if  
I can think of why  
I’m here’

‘Good luck’ I told him

‘I can’t remember  
the last time I had  
some of that’ he said

ORDINARY FOLKS

The apartment was small,  
cramped, grim, unkempt  
and a lingering staleness  
dampened the air

He was in his mid 50's  
and was dying of  
alcoholism

His daughter was  
in her early 20's  
and made a living  
shooting porno  
in sleazy back rooms  
with perverts, drug  
dealers and other  
desperado types

She told me  
they were 'good,  
ordinary folk and didn't  
need no fucking help  
from anybody' as she  
pouted, flirted and  
smiled at me with  
dismissive eyes

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

The old man just  
sat sipping brandy,  
staring out of the window  
and smoking a cigarette

He didn't say a word  
the whole time  
I was there

2 weeks later,  
he was dead and  
she scurried off  
to the city, seeking her  
fortune in the sex trade

Ordinary folks was  
what they were

IT SOUNDED GOOD

Coming from the seeds  
of a seaside drunk and  
a regular school cook,  
I had a head start  
on some I guess but  
it didn't always  
feel this way,  
as when the tutor would  
ask each pupil on their  
father's occupation

Okay, I was spoilt  
with four choices:  
drinking,  
gambling,  
fighting, and  
incompetent burglary

While all around  
I heard things  
like builder,  
shop-keeper,  
labourer,  
policeman,  
factory worker,  
taxi driver,  
and so on

Now and then  
a boy would say  
'He's in prison'  
prompting sniggers  
of hushed laughter

And I knew how  
that boy was feeling,  
not ashamed of his father,  
but not knowing him either,  
like the other boys with  
more conventional parents,  
but still loving him  
just the same

And when asked on  
my father's occupation,  
I would sometimes answer  
'he's an anthropologist'

It sounded good  
but I didn't know what  
an anthropologist did and  
neither did any of  
the other boys

And the tutor would smile  
through a puzzled frown  
before moving on  
to the next boy

COWBOY HATS AND RAILWAYS

Another time,  
Drunk on wine  
and beer and high  
on hash, both of us  
wearing these ridiculous  
oversized Stetsons,  
he dared me to climb onto  
the railway bridge and swing  
above the railway tracks  
and it didn't seem to be  
a bad suggestion  
at the time

And as I dangled  
from the iron bridge  
above the tracks,  
I thought of a time  
when I was 8 or 9  
when he had passed out drunk  
and I didn't know where we were  
and I couldn't wake him up  
and I shouted and kicked  
and punched him with  
tears in my eyes and  
he just wouldn't  
fucking wake up

## NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

And I just walked away,  
leaving him in a blackout  
and somehow I managed  
to find my way back home  
and my mother hugged me  
like she never had before  
or since and my father  
returned home a few  
days later

And I hung from the bridge  
above the railway tracks  
and he climbed up  
to join me and  
we sang a few songs  
until our arms tired  
and we decided to  
climb back down

And we both threw our Stetsons  
down onto the tracks and  
went off in search of  
another bar



THE PROFIT

'I don't care what  
you write anymore;  
no, I don't mean that,  
but everybody is making  
a profit out of you,  
don't you see it?'

'Tell me, whose the mug?  
They publish you, right?  
They send you 5 or 10  
copies of the book and  
you give these away, right?  
But the publisher, they sell  
their copies, right?  
And that doesn't  
bother you,  
does it?'

'Right' I said

'Right' she said

MEANT SOMETHING

'It's what you said afterwards,  
that really meant something'  
she said to me as we  
both lay quietly  
side by side

I lay silent, still,  
just trying to remember  
what the fuck I'd just said,  
but my mind was wet sand,  
a mesh of blurred pictures  
and splinters of brokenness,  
drunk and high as I replied  
'I meant every word'

She leaned in then,  
kissing my face and  
spreading her nakedness  
out across my own,  
merging seamlessly  
like heaven and hell

JOHN D ROBINSON

GIVE ME A PEN

Give me a pen  
without guilt  
without fear

Give me a pen  
with grit  
with balls

Give me a pen  
without prejudice  
without ambition

Give me a pen  
with blood  
with fire

Give me a pen  
without regret  
without longing

Give me a pen  
with freedom  
with heart

And I'll give  
you a poem  
you can blow  
up your ass