

Paranoid Narcissism!

Miguel Cullen



La Serpiente de Cascabel

They drank up dreams like feni
smoked them like Humboldt County needles
primed syringes with delicacy
cross-haired their sternums with *fuckin' black magic markers*.

Their intimacy sunk itself into new ruins –
barriers, faint and intricate, like autistic fantasies of subway maps.

Down in the catacombs:

she was a mermaid, with a mirror and a comb
using a vampire who saw in the dark to guide her
and a *serpiente de cascabel*,
a snake with a bell hanging from its tail and in it a pixie, with a wand,
hovering in its own venom-green aureole of sprayed poison.
He was a donkey, with a needle and a tail
like a scorpion: (scorpions glow in the *black light*)
and a gorgon-rasta with glowworms in his hair, seeing through his third, lidless eye.

In the dark mine,
he felt himself as if by a wide river, lit in orange
and the waves were all messages from friends
clangouring down from the *nigredo* plane-leaf bells
in the wash of song.



In the dank, fetid tunnels,
the scorpion massacred the mermaid's only way of seeing,
driving a poison shaft through the vampire heart,
while she used used her mirror to deal with the dreadlocks
cutting off his hair and combing glowing worms into rounds around the scorpions,
so they committed suicide

the dread was still alive though, and met the Minotaur with a piercing glare,
turning it to salt, and then pus, like a snail in its ringed shell.

While Bottom and our fair mermaid,
were ever deeper entranced, with each sprinkle of fairy dust,
before the jaws of the *serpiente* injected its venom through the tooth-hole
passing horrific cramps through each muscle
giving the heart tachycardia, its deep-sown capillaries shafted with the liquid.
They died.



Perpetual Labyrinth

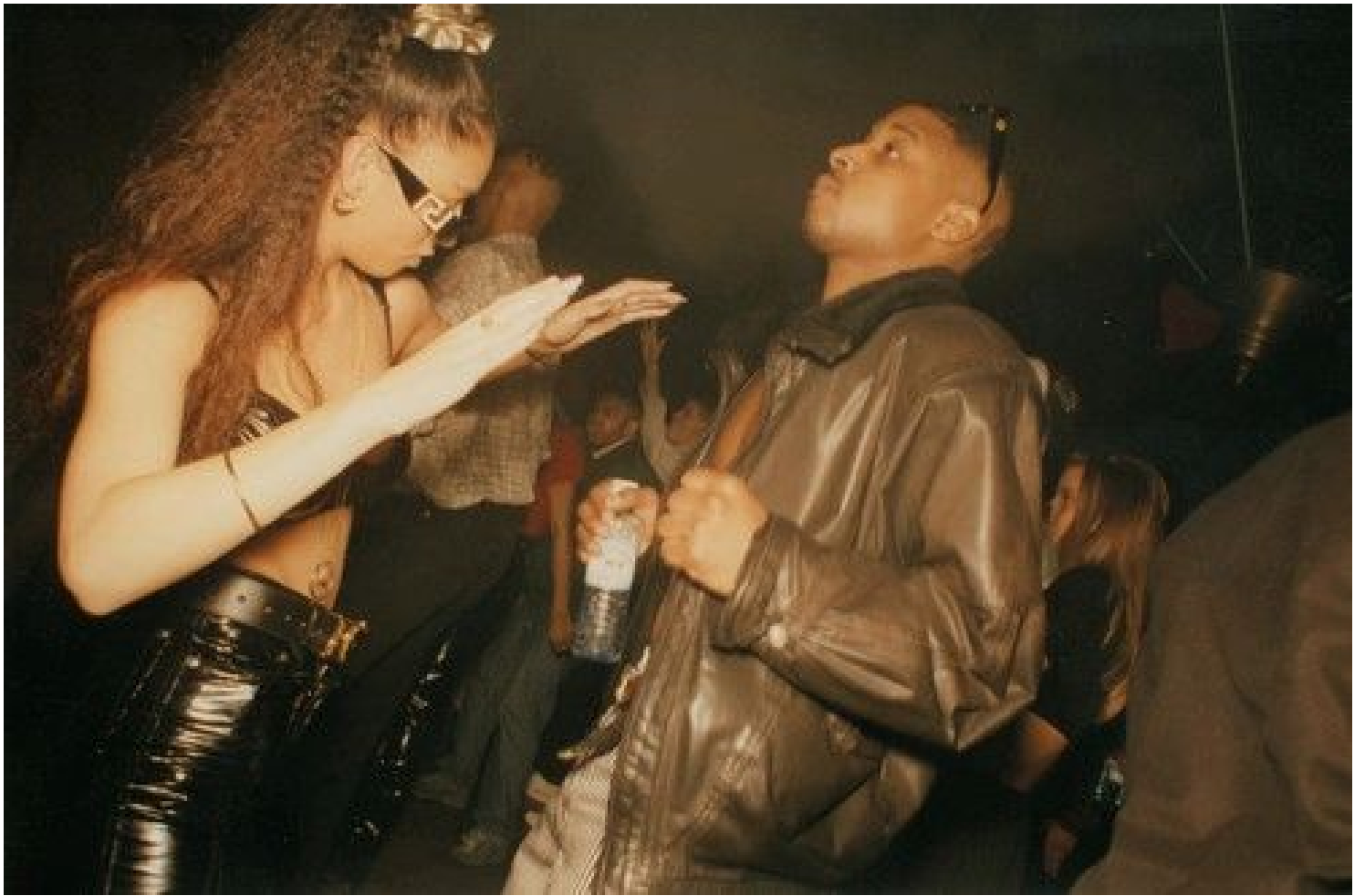
Remember that the Minotaur's brain is identical to the labyrinth

he is inside

me

I am the labyrinth inside the minotaur skull that is thinking he is inside his own brain's labyrinth

my son will be the same.



Leaving Mindlessness

Perseus sat to the left of the Medusa, in a gold tunic, so he could behead her and not look.

Theseus held up a mirror for him, sitting diagonally opposite.

The Minotaur was to the left of Theseus, facing Medusa with God-like immunity.

The domino began with Theseus, who stole a look at Medusa and got turned into a salt pillar,

Nestling next to Minotaur, he turned it to a sizzling pus, like a snail in its labyrinth.

As Perseus left, he polished her head like a bowling ball, and walked out with a Versace tunic

In red gold and green.



Moving In With You Poem

She had eyelashes like OK signals –

Petals on the tips of her fingers, she puts one to her lips,

And blows a heart at me in slow emotion, fluttering like a woman's hand extended to admire a ring,
like the wobbly scariness of love.

We jump through hoops and at the end glow with primary colours, like a croquet stick, I really love you,
actually;

Her eyes were citrusy ovals, when they opened the lemon would cut in two,

Glistening, fanned out in eight parts.

I pile-drove an ace through that tennis racket of yours, Fuckula,

through the net: the chain-link fence; the tricotage of defence mechanisms you used to abandon me with.

And all I want is to be hers, lying in the melted gold at the end of the rainbow,

in Bel-Air, in a rose-gold Chevy with a nine on the dash;

Listening to some R&B, watching the sun set, like a balloon falling.



Theories of Omnipotence

I've gone from A to Zee, my mother's always applying mascara
my father's an ontologist, he's got his head in the sand.
Today I saw *Viburnum bodnantense* flowering in Peckham, it was February third
Nee-naw, nee-naw, I hear sirens from very far away, contacting me
like alien signals, reaching me from very far away.

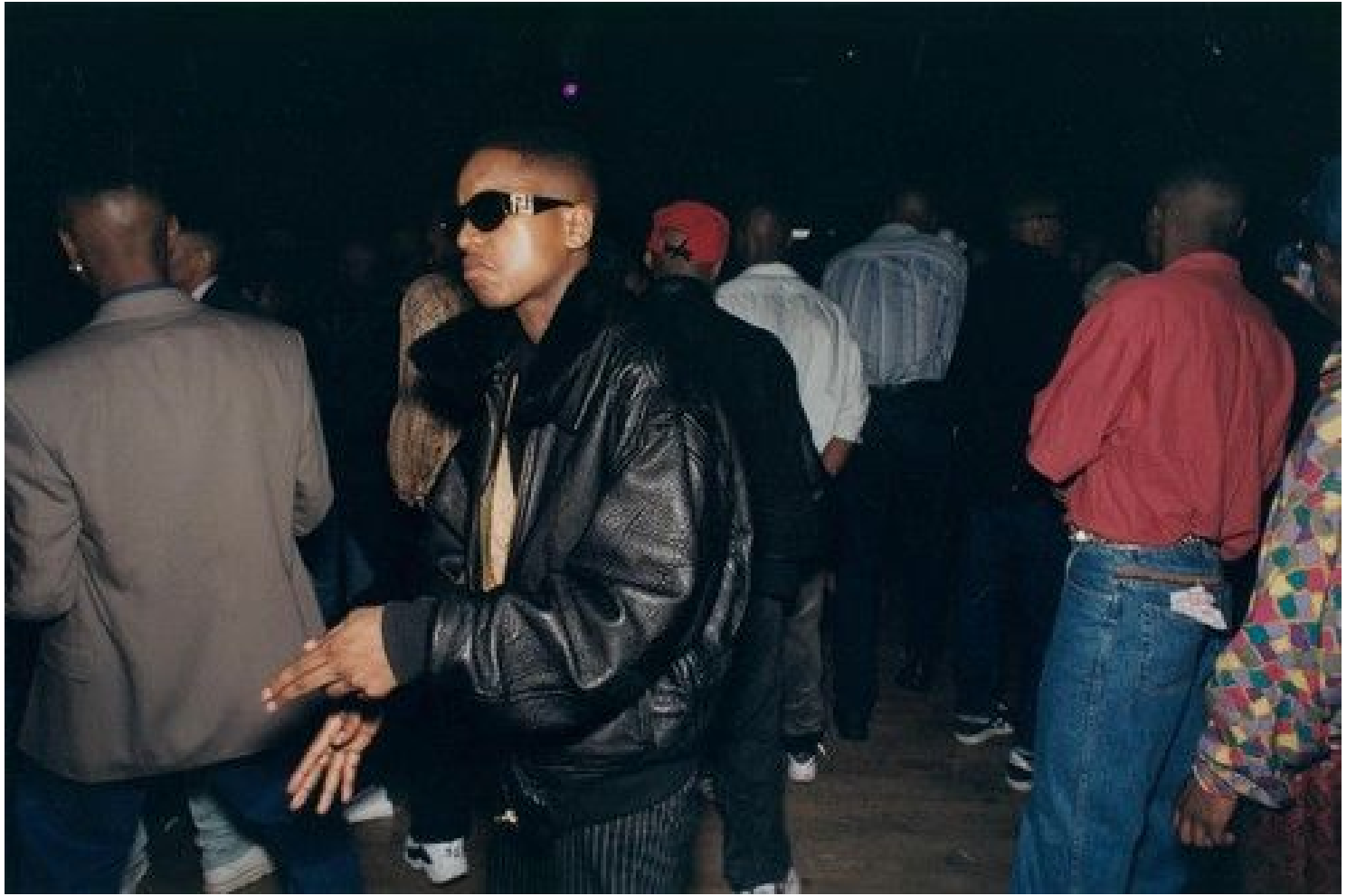
Youth was yummy, *ow fiddlesticks*, it's gone.
I'm always thinking of something to stop it from going.
Yams, monosyllabic yams on the Stroud Green Road in Midsummer
the top deck of the bus had a smell of a girl who'd gotten off unseen,
magazines, I recognized her when I saw her in the park years later
like this all the people are connected through senses that are all-powerful.

Back to the yams, back to my yute, and the world closing up;
if you're conscious of every pin drop, all judders, what *may* happen,
(of course, we have all-powerful senses)
can that counteract the calluses and dead skin
and make us feel yute?

I mean tonight because I'm feeling extra lonely and old, and worried about money
Money, it's what I'm in, it's like a little army of millions,
Of course it would be lovely to think like this
Spit on the demons that possess you, Lucifer
My skin is itching, I've got lice growing all over me like hair, *twenny dollah*
Sucky sucky, I'm going in, the lice are carrying me now, I'm buying Valentine's presents,
Money is like being covered in a warm glow that feels like Hell nearby.

Ow, platitudes, flat plains, stained, charred with mud, *inglés, hablá*
cyclones like umbilical cords, God's grace, Mother's milk, sunsets like ratatouille
imploding, God's grace, *si el barba quiere, willkommen*, I'm smoking rass
I see dust in water through goggles, like gold paint, like busters, horologies
we're all dust, in globules, passing electric currents through the liquid.
Do you follow me?
I'm Speedy pon the mic-MC:
Jack your tape-pack and your phone
change the sim-card, and make it my own.
The sat-nav

And I have known the arms already, known them all —
Propose to me said the world, make me feel you're part of me.



Autumn Alegria

I'm catching these leaves at the moment, July's up,
in the midsummer light, the oaks are covered in lace frost.
The green leaves are each in silver frames, like something that was lost.

I care – under the Chinese-lantern-balloon stars
you met my parents and I grew into something different.



Take Me As I Am

The angel to Mrs Doubtfire “How did you get into this mess?”

“Well of course, Mr Angel, I’m trying to win my life back.

It had run its course. I went too far. I wanted my wife and children.

So I dressed up as a woman. My brother helped do me up.

I was a shell, dappled in the colours of the prism,

listening to the sea; coughing up water; washed up in a cave like Robin Williams.

I walked through the internet, everyone was talking to each other;

squeaking like rats in the sewers of Venice, in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*

rats in the FBI, losers leaked the secrets of the underground scenes.

I’m WhatsApping my old friend, looking for the right words;

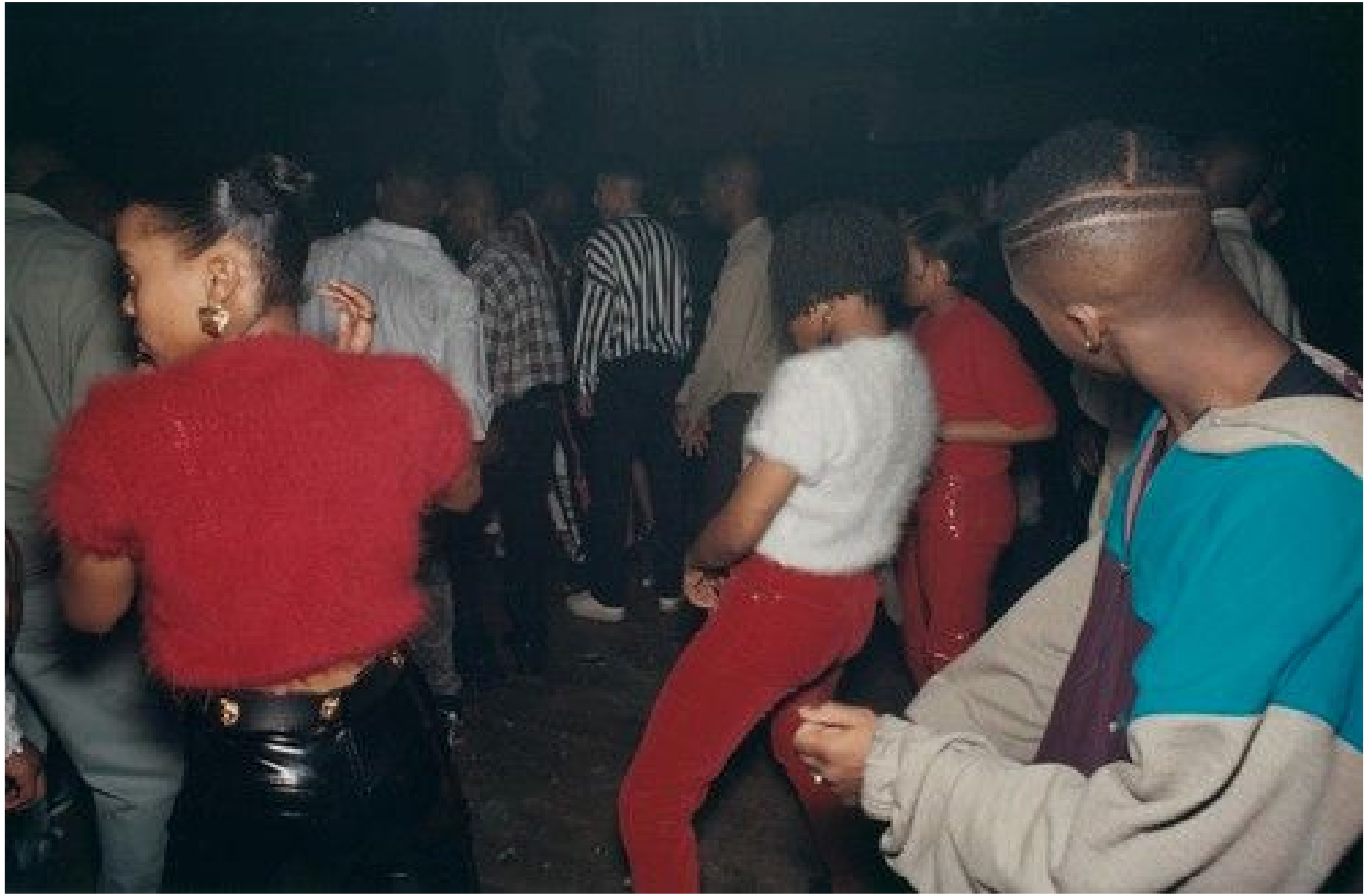
so that coldness doesn’t descend, like a temple door, before I reach under

to grab my bull-whip and dusty cowboy hat.

The Salvation Army in their alarming suits on the Underground

wearing Iron Crosses under cotton, on their cuban link chains;

me just in a skirt; nothing fancy; take me as I am, with an XL Mossimo t-shirt on.”



The Earl of Arundel plays Light Sabres

I wish I was a woman, not touching things; avoiding fingertips;

creating poached eggs in the translucent vortex.

Reflections of light-rays changed colour as dusk fell;

everything filters into the velvety earth.

I'm making matchstick-men on the parkbench,

peeling off each stick into its particular strands.

The leaves tent-pole in their wicker frames;

people like platelets going through Tube arteries;

the nitroglycerine filters under the door,

making statues of us, snow-crystalling the road maps,

the rolling smoke fills the tunnels, the nexuses

of attendant atoms and their bonds...

It makes me laugh – noble knights resurrect in church reliefs,

make figure-of-eights with their light-sabres;

the creamy Bath stone of the Fleet Street Law Chambers

is covered in white-velvet mornings; perfect for words like

the Wars of the Roses, which were declared here;

eroded nouns like Devereux – the nearby pub –

all set to the thrusts, arcs and fanning gesticulations of

multicoloured neon blades.



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Slag

If a man's spent a hundred *foglie* on a Maserati, then good on him –
you can open up a bank account for free, take fivers out of bank machines in some boroughs;
in the golden years we were *mainte reprises* multi-millionaires; check the bank statements.
It means a lot. Really, so much more than anyone can say, ok?

A Maserati's a sports car, okay? I used to keep bricks under the table;
Have Kays, be a Michael, Costermongers would trade dishes while I would be on my plantation doing
sweet sweet nothing;
I used to trade on nothing, betraying nothing, smiling like the Queen on a twenty pound note, nothing,

I was left with nothing; sniffing up alkaloids with the eerily smiling *viginti*;
I made myself a jewelled mask for Mardi Gras, unfurled all the Dead Sea Scrolls for it,
it set my head loose; so loose it was hard to get it in order;
the mercury rose above freezing for that cosmetic surgery, made my suns shine incessantly;

Imagine not being able to buy your wife a wedding ring. To not incise your feelings decisively.
Not doing everything you said you would, holding yourself to it, tying knots in the future.
Unable to evaluate all the factors in every bargain. Not caring what all the fuss was about;
not having the last laugh; *It's all a game to you.*

Money is a whorl: fibrous, coiling, briared interconnections
sucking your worth out through primary-need channels – and joining it and the thing.

I used to look in the mirror by holding up a twenty pound note;
I would look all hot air; a ghost; a fleeting vision; a light that had gone out.

Ads see your weakness, make you vulnerable, then save you –
Same rationale as the Mafia; undercovers when cutting deals with snitches;
so many tunnels, allegiances made of desperation – *those politicians that you carry in your pocket,*
like so many nickels and dimes;



one day they'll run all the protection rackets out of Harlem, run all the mob informants off the street corners.

Have you got all the political connections wired into you?

Imagine lurching around like a smashed clock, sprockets and springs frazzling out.

...Imagine an engine reconnected with what you buy, readapted to your intuition.

In five years the Corleone family is going to be completely legitimate.

The golden years of my life; a slurry rill, slag – drawn off the genuine article,
that keeps claiming that it means midnight in the garden of Good and Evil.





Muerte Política

El diálogo público es como la mujer de alguien: tiene manejo débil de la realidad,
pero continúa a darle efecto – a mentiras seguidas por mentiras.

Pero mi novia no usa retórica agresiva.

The new 500-Peso note had the hologram of the cobra – the pharaonic president –

yo en el café Giralda en Corrientes, pintando Murillos de la Giralda con birome...

El neón de Corrientes tenía letras Toulouse-Lautrec;

Panteras negras y búhos con anteojos de visión nocturna se paseaban –

veían en fosforescencia a escorpiones emperadores... Idi Amin, Jean-Paul Aristide;

Un hombre se aplica efedrina a la muela derecha;

se afeita con una navaja de manija-perla;

se clava en el corazón una inyección de amfetamina.

Y Rivadavia – parece cristalina, un grabado sobre gelatina plateada –

En el medio de la tarde; como una mano abierta.



Hematoma

The vinyl was bible-black, I traced all its lineages
Its lyrics, its incisions into what surrounded me, to the core
It would sing in its own language of praise to me;
It made me feel alive, in its black haloes and its songs of happiness.

They played that vinyl at a rave,
And someone took an overdose and died.
All the charcoal coagulum in the world
Couldn't save that geezah.

I sometimes take out the tape-pack from that night –
And try and listen back, for the five minutes they spliced out –
When they upped the lights, and switched off the PA.



Lootenant Dan

Don't organize her, my eyes are like sharks' mouths,
Argentina is always dressed in dawn light, I'll make you die like Dutch elms die.

It was so sore the hold time, un enlightened: the first ting I bought was forp de internet cafe.
I whelked, all the vay down the streets, like necks, garlanded with dead leaves,
The afternoon like an open hand.

Fall fell, all de sad way, to the Museum of Modern Art

It breaks my heart.

I boiyed a coffee vey gayve me a vey vey noice orange juice in a glass glass

I eated tooo *medias luna de grasa*,

A man bided me for a faggorette and a loight and warked into a petrol station,

I wondered, well, well hey! it would brightly splash into golden chestnut spiketh.

I carried my luggage up the stairs,

Sore-y, into my father's massive mausoleum in the Palacio Strugamour in Edin-borrow,

Took a bath, went to the *dormitorio*

It was bad because lots of people fell over fanned and died for d'oh raison, hero.

I fell asleep for aaages hahahahah

Then a prostitute came to my flat I paide her 200 pesos for her university fees, *owee!*

She looked Levantine, possibly,

She bled like a tsar:

meaning defenceless, completely injured.

She was my friend.

But then, I'd said in my head I loved her.

We kissed like carriage magnets,

Disassembling the cylinders of my brain slowly and pack it into a film-roll tube

And put it through an *ix-ray*.

Her tongue was lumpen and slowlyyy,

It was like she had beri beri sensitive mouth...uummm

It was more delicious than apple pie, heavy and sensual

She had caries in her wisdom teeth, coming out sorry next dayyy – sorry

Her nose-channel glowing into her moufy tasted of lovely mate she was *salade niçoise*,

Divine, but of cocaine lines too...mummy.

He turned and faced me.

It was like friends, like he hit me a bit, hardly, harrid, we wrestled three times in front of his girlfriend,

In the deal-floored dining room;

Sadly

Defeatedly, absorbing the feeling, of the typhoon of our friendship slowly unwinding.

The proschew was glutiful she ployed this Foals track.

I'm in love

With this girly

I was fain, fid it again. Sheesh, black sheepsh. Again.

I'm lonely.

She rode like a groom,

She had hair like fumes

She would open and close like fans

She lives in me like petrol which is loosened by sunshine condemned to hell

Walk into the petrol station

With a cigarette and make yourself small

Because she's insane.

I walked in poiks

They sort of nakid, bare-y, unbareby loose-y, so undercover, the sky it takes up so much room

I'm flat-palms on the ground, like a special-ops, pops, you know I've got what it takes.

Girl.

We listened to jangle music, jingling, Shabbadini rapping, all jumpy from the crack fumes.

She called me *Chabón*, it had a familiar ring to it,

And outside in the street the mustard-coloured splayed nerves were pointing in the plane-leaf tips,

His ex-girlfriend said I was learning about Margaux's brudder who, I'm so high, ohmygod,

And it was just a overdose.

So sad, so sad, so sad

He lives in the pavement, it makes her cry bad, in her defence.

I just.

Chunglasses from a gay Tiken Jah Fakoly fan Senegal-ing

In Caballito,

In dat afternoon like an open hand, so jaune and whistly:

Lots of girls forgetting themselves in the street
Coffining, coffining,
All hail, Jah, All hail, reamer-man.

My Joyce? Nothing; to plane;
Hovering over the cement.....
Boys ramping, breaking their bones into atoms of kinesic intra-dermic clouds
Dooing 520-degree jumpins twistink Handels by the ahpera, hush...

It's proof I loved
It's prude that I G, we loistened to the singing on the lost radi-o
Kished her like carriage magnets her tongue was longing and lumpy for me.

Listen I vrainember the mervous brakedown dat claimed me and I sinking I tort ohmygod, its brief life,
ohmygod

On with myself – when I can sear my grandmother's
My grandfather, when the Margaux wine came to me in the slight night.
It was the loudest vocal hallucination I had ever heard in my life, I was horrified:
When I was darking and slept for four days after punching my uncle.

Listen
Shut the fuck up
I walked in espadrilles and Kenzo jeans in the paving stones, they slippery eels
I shaw Clarita and hert friend Cayetana win the parquer, they thought I was insane.
I bought hardcore porn in Lavalle,
when I was madazine.
I was a proper weirdo.

I drank bathtubs of bathwater, I ate my hat, I ate bales of straw, I ripped off a Virgin and Child medallion
on the dirt road
And dropped my curse like landmines.

The dirt road and its galleons, and the brook where the boy drowned.
In Tandil.
The roadside blossoms were billowing like sweat in water
Te acompañaré varios meses

The man helped me, my aunt is always sad when she rememberth it.

It's like a scorch in the grass.

It breaks my heart
It's a long road
Let me cry.

Now I've grown up out of the glass like Terminator, *hadouken*.

Listen

I was four
I never sold this story to anyone,
I just kept it *schtum*.
In my greenhouse
In my *invernadero*.
I wouldn't.
I wouldn't go back there.
He used to kill hawks in the marsh with a catapulty bastard
When I slept above his wendy house...
Why?

He was my conqueror
Jaffar Oublié

Pater noster in the window of a Baroque painting in my crume.
Serf-io covered me in glue, like *Alien*,

I believe you.
I covered myself in soot to escape him,
Like he was Cruella baby, in *The Hundred and One Dalmations*.

But now HI've escaped, *si*
I used to be a badman...
I don't have to be afraid.

When there was a thunderstorm I had paranoid fantasies
That my grandfather was stalking the avenues of trees in the lightning blasts,
And feel the ecstasy of the time it would take to hear the grey, electric proton tunnels
Wound all components with their sound –
The sound of iron filings, dredged through strainers,
And later, of air – wrought by clouds to arrow down in rain-hyphens.

And I lie in the bath, years on, watching the clouds pass like newsreel,

And I see her, *quidyte liderally*
Her face starts to jolt
An orange grows out of the head
She grew a shock of black savage hair, suddenly
Overnight.
She had a black cap.
Lavender, *murcielagos*, I'm really losing it.
Pores grew on her face.
She's got a corkscrewy look on her eyes.
...You have his cornea, his unnerved expression, like an old, skipping channel-setting
He looked like me and you, bb.

Ambergris vultures, circle overhead
His sling carved a pure disc
When he brought one down.

I unhood you like a pupa
And I'm doing butterfly, like Lootenant Dan, off the third coast in July 1974.

I went round the world in eighty days,
I used to see the same guy, everywhere I went, under an umbrella
Taking his jacket off, waiting there. I read him a poem and he went away.
Then I walked through a door, looked at that world from the outside,
and packed it away. Then I looked at this world too,
and packed it away. Then I looked at the next world...
And he was standing, looking at me, with an umbrella, jacketless, waiting there.



Playing Traffic Lights with The Final Spliff

In the story days, we would glimmer in and out of whirling traffic,
myxomatosis-red skies; strands of capillaries coagulating, like a witch egg in a chip pan.
We would have gills under our eyes, signs of distress and fatigue;
paranoid, you see eyes in the raindrops, radio transmitters in the openings of vowels
and the closings of consonants; your mouth trembles; the weevils found their ways into your clothes;

the abracadabra of openings in the present, the photogenic Gods;
the God of destruction is your only wish; the void of mist,
like a quiet suppleness at your neck, cloud-cover freckled with deities;
the lost living space of the age-bracket we were pushed out of blameless,
Pedj. Run at me; give me your best shot; Put me on a course of anaesthetics...
Rickety boom-boom, tikka-tikka masala; leave it acknowledged;
A diagram of the way I sold it all too low;
Floated the index of my personalities at the wrong moment.



I'll Tell You This For Free

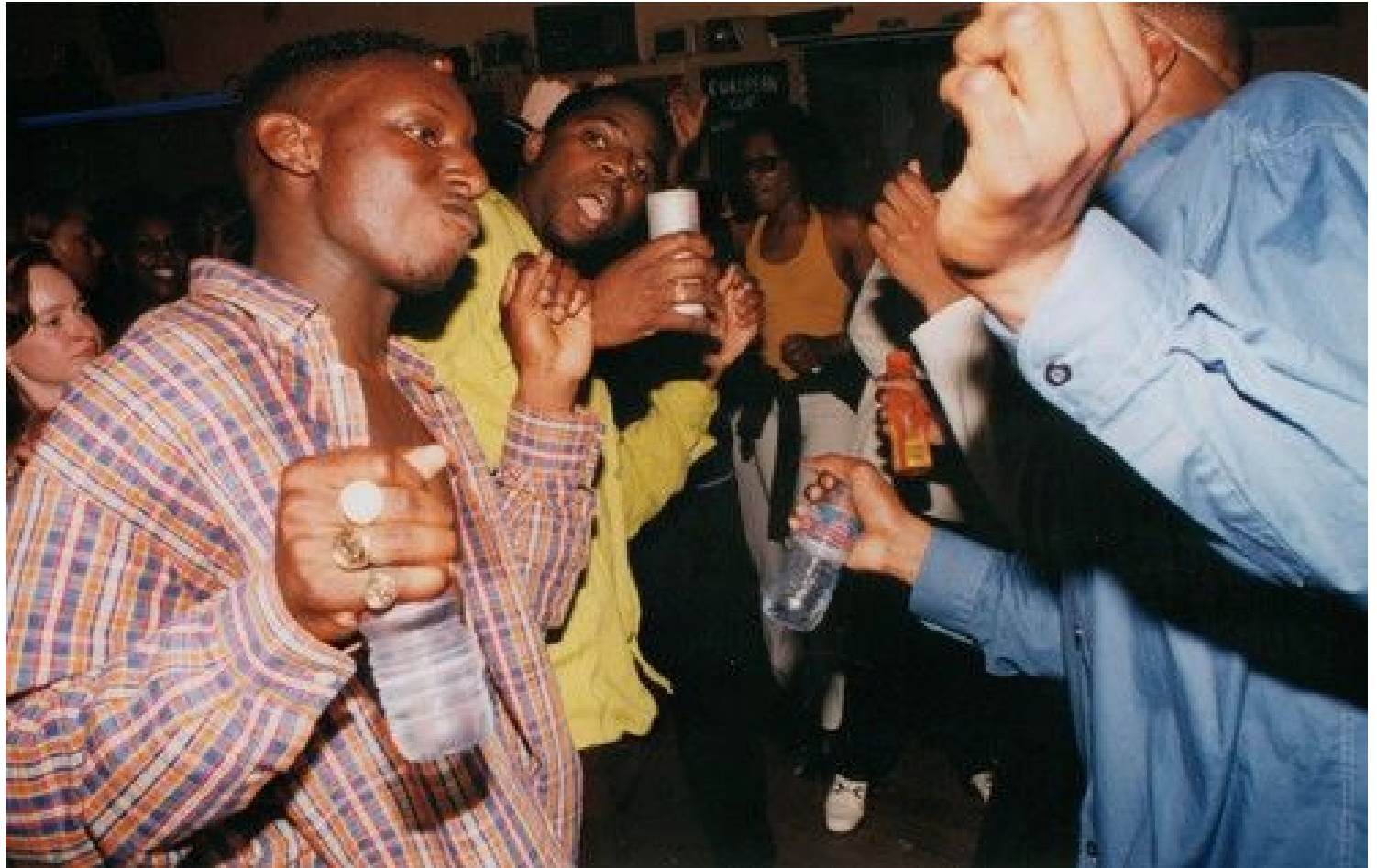
I used to like hearing the MCs' voice echo around in the cold room
when Shabba wrote out *party* with his voice he spelt it P.A.R.T.I.E;
Bassman screamed out "batty rider, pum-pum printer"
like a soul in anguish, possessing a foreign body.
Weed sculpted the air into marble, architecturally,
Hallucinations enveloping my rhododendron like glass;
People look made of Lego, *oh me, oh my, a dippy-dippy soundboy, tonight.*
Have a drink, feel free, I'm watching MCs on a scrambled TV, call me;
Showers of rain, tyrannosauruses in 361-375 Stratford High Street, the Stratford Rex.

Gris, taxi! My life is verbal, on the Merseyside Docks,
You look like Myrtle
like a person hidden in the depths of my subconscious
passed down in my experience like dust in an inherited house.

Daggers, fall on me like rain, Humberside, be gentle, Matthew.
Umbrella pines with God's formula written on the inside;
on the coast of Istria he drinks Strega, reads out his rich tapestries in convolutions,
and suddenly, the ark arrives, on the multicoloured sea, the arboretums arrived –
lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, replace it with *I love you*,

I speak of a different crew now –
I played Cluedo, stick-and-ball, with Goldfinger, he was magic, we'd fought at Gallipoli; the Dardanelles;
I've gone astray. Anyhoo.

I really love you now, *Signor Canardo*, I came out of the dust;
I was born unfortunately, raised on tenterhooks.
My father took us to Pierre Gagnaire, five-star restaurants, with the gold.
We sang *À la claire fontaine*, we were chummy,
but you see my parents had Locked-In Syndrome, closed the bunker



to their subconscious, like people taking MDMA and drawing the curtains.

When I was four i became a Mafioso, I submitted to a protectorate,
was a shark-fin soup, I was worse, I wore a mask, I underwent protective surgery,
I went to hell, I got melanoma, which is a skin disease,
I cut out my umbilical cord with a kitchen knife, like a Salvadoran in the civil war.
when I was 18 I took off the tarpaulin, I was like mayonnaise without a lid honey,
underdressed salad, margarine without a top on it,
I wasn't a grass, a snake, I filled my inkwell with mercury,
And drew faces until the weather changed.

I've gone from rags to riches now, I'm somebody, I'll tell you that for free.
I need sunglasses with a prescription, I love you, can you write the script for me?



Lincoln's Inn Fields, June 29 2014

There are fat lanner falcons and harris hawks leashed to posts, in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The gargoyles are immured in diluted gold.

The bee buries its head in the telephone.

I'm swimming in the plural rossignols.

Lost in the deep end, their deep serendipitous chanting.



Narcissistic Minotaur

Calvin Klein, now I write it, is a perfect match in Arial.



He was like ^{VERSACE}, he would look in the mirror to survive;

Lost in the catacombs, warding off vampires with holy water and shotgun cartridges filled with salt –

Doctor Jones: holding his Whipp's Cross to the eagle of the Führer;

Loading up silver bullets for the werewolf who shone in the full moon:

Abracadabra, all out of options, at the head of the labyrinth,

Where the seven seas cross, feathering the waves' tip.

Sparked a tulip spliff, to see the lasers of the labyrinth walls

And mirrored the Versace laser, diverted it back to the source,

And stepped out. The rest is hazy, the blunt was pure.

Martin didn't have a lot of love, so he gave a lot to what he had,

His personality was tough, but the theory was there.

So some might blossom early, but you're more interesting once you're there;

And so life is. Some arrive early, suffer less, some arrive late, suffer more, and are compensated,

by having more to say.



Paranoid Narcissism!

I was Andy Dufresne, coming out of the sewer like a rat;
broke through the seventh seal; was a cockroach with a thick armour.
Then I was George Lazenby – playing things on an even keel...

I'm croaking, under questioning, under electrical torture –
to a spider diagram of all the bosses –
Who gives the orders, who is behiiiiind the Mafiaaaa?

I use listening devices; plants; CBT; mind-games,

Watch out for Moriartys, Napoleons of crime.
When I hear a word stand out from the chatter: I isolate it; play it back;
Run it against lists of aliases I have in my head. This is the true Mafia, to see who's watching me.

Like Neil McCauley in *Heat*, I can run surveillance counter-intuitively –
play both sides, like Kenneth Noye. I can be a greaseball policeman or a respectable wiseguy...

Leave you in an instinctual pillar of punk-cloud from the L-plate Zig-Zags, bitch!

I have cryptograms worked out in my head, for the voices.
My surveillance is so far-reaching – imagine East Berlin, *The Lives of Others* –
That I can check into any bug around London and immediately link them back to police targets.

Reeeally?? What reeeally hahpenned?

**sighs. I'm like Gary Sinise, giving advice on how to fly the broken shuttle in *Apollo 13*, from Houston.*

I have nightmares – about rats under the sink bowl...
I keep it on an even keel, pointing for the Earth through the little window.
Drinking 7 Up. You know, that joke about when the *Challenger* exploded.

It's all just Perrier, ovulated thought bubbles.



Driving a German whip through a Cretan Labyrinth

All the black cars had red headlights on, driving backwards;
his face was anguished wails of derelict, marble-green pipe framework;
the wall was covered in emphysema;
I sat in traffic, playing *traffic lights*: passing reefer around in a hurry;
breathing smog out of cigarettes, billowing jelly fish into the afternoon;
eating After Eights, spinning chocolate Viceversas over my fingers, paranoid –
when does the round become a square, when does my culture become acceptable.

When I met you at the orphanage, we were septic, in sparadraps, slings for arms and elbows,
syringed with hallucinogens, bathed in *Eau Sauvage*, for hypoallergenia.
Speak to me – you used to wear a cap peaked off-key, dissonant, you used,
to doubt yourself around me, I brought you green forests with aquatic rusted fur;
pound-bags on the silver table. Summer, table silvery, wander...
we sang carols, in trousers, out-of-towners, out of tune,
We used to talk in prison sentences, we used to rock it all summer.

We used to do it all out of tune, *Capitán Pingaloca*, the willows, the groves, winter burned in Edinburgh.
Now you're driving in a German whip, into mergers, if you'd let me, I'd indicate, out of the maze, out of
the razor-sharp maze, into Newford, tuned in, to the Medium-Wave dial.

Wearing earrings, axing autumn logs, rage takes over, serve you up in plastic in a supermarket. *Doesn't a
winter morning look like Durex Gossamer? Doesn't a tropical storm look like Lucozade? I use tactics and ziggurat
forward at 90-degree angles... tell me more about your girlfriend ...*

– Now, Peter, I want you to listen to me-now. I want you to become...A Manga Artist. HAHAHAHAA. Now
Peter. Do you remember *Looks highly intense, yet suspicious. When you got that call from PUMA? *Stops
lecture, fingers whiskers, eyes foam and red threads mesh faintly on the sclera.

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Narcissistic Minotaur II

They drank up dreams like feni
smoked them like Humboldt County needles
primed syringes with delicacy
cross-haired their sternums with *fuckin' black magic markers*.
Their intimacy sunk itself into new ruins –
faint and intricate, like autistic fantasies of subway maps.

Down in the catacombs:
she would use vampire bats with shoelaces on, necks,
feeling her way with their echolocation;
he would have scorpions, glowing in black light;
fireflies bouncing around inside aureoles of phosphorescence
like bells, hooked from the venom-shafts
of the overhanging scorpion tails.

They met the Minotaur at the end of the road.
The fireflies'd grown drowsy with the feni scent,
gathering in circles round the scorpions and the bats –
and a spark from the spliff set the rounds on fire.
Then the scorpions sunk their venom into their own backs,
in dancing flames, the vampires turned to dust.

He clambered on her back, cocked back the hypodermic
and brought it down in an one-eighty-degree arc – through the breastplate –
triaging the wound with a new patch, for the manifold needlepoint of the heart.

A Death

Roman poster-boys

stick out of trees, heads on sticks

the trees look like squids in water,

filling the clouds with their silvery ink.

Manderley, where the sea at the end of the park

at night is Aylesbury, rose-bowl pink;

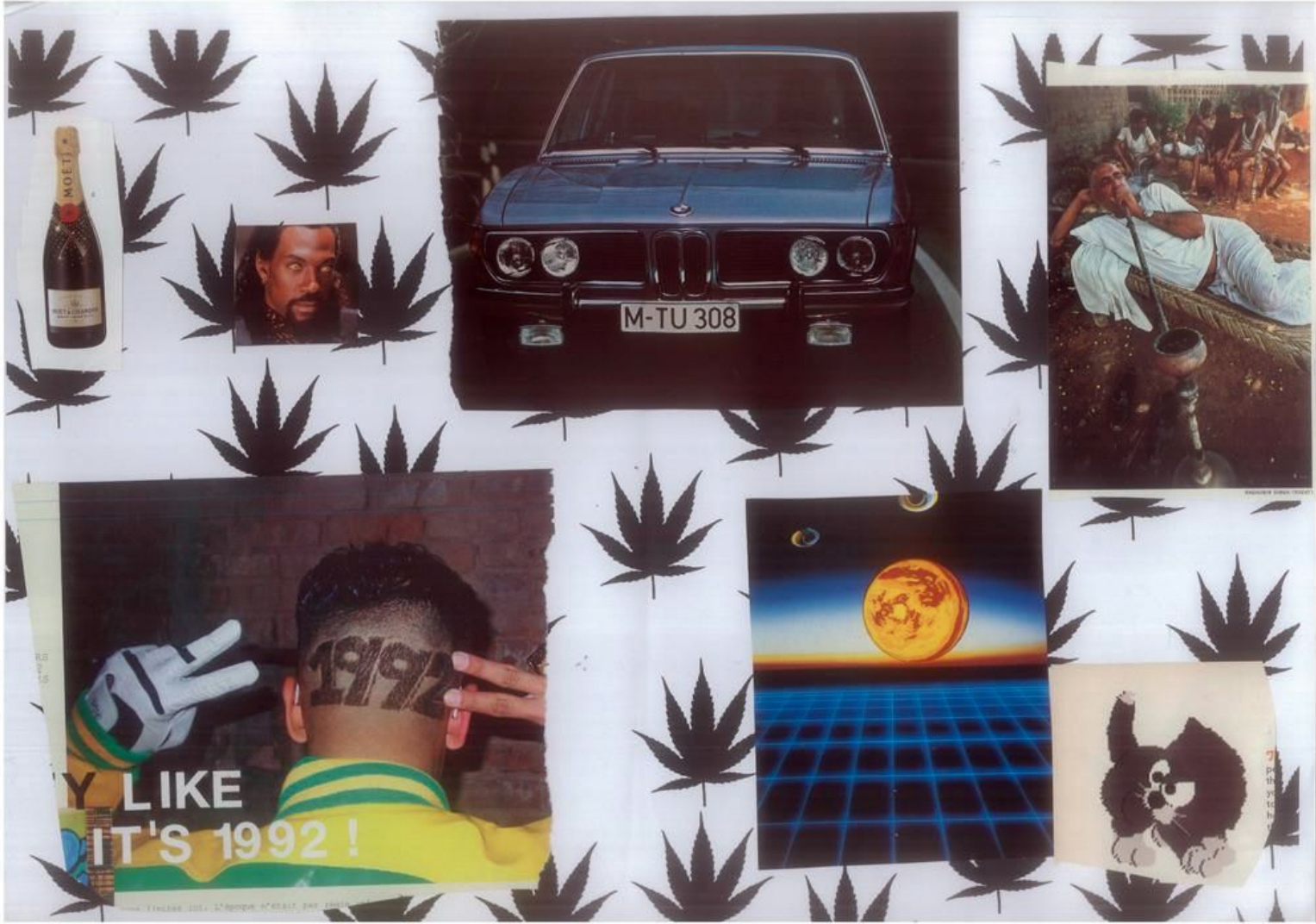
and the beech leaves are so many –

they're narrow and spiral like conches;

like glowing crystals, so many, more than many;

The leaves look like burning cities, seen

from above, and uncaringly.



Assonance

The pavement is shining like the inside of a gun.
The buds are twisted up like spliff tips.
And birds draw ovular marks with their fountain pens.
The sounds in my head are so assonant, they're brilliant today –
In perpetual three-dimensional eclipse.
Many would have loved to have orchestrated that number –
Ruling by decree, from up in the o-zone.

I have twin zeroes –
Xu and Xa:
Demons of the Candomblécist horrorscope –
They are the pill and the moon.

When it's held high over my bedside table
Or shining like an angel at the top of a Christmas tree,
I stand in the moon, with a Walther PPK
In a James Bond opening reel.

But when it's a toenail,
I get under the duvet in my clothes
And undress in bed.
All the coins fall onto the sheets
And when I walk naked to the loo,
50 pence sticks to my bum
Until I bend my leg back into bed.

My mind cancels thoughts with responses to thoughts,
Steadied and numbed by the drugs I take,
I achieve nothing –
But I do everything perfectly.



Captain McCluskey

All the lights flickering in the city on the hillside,
magnesium-white motes, or watching big white spores expand from the plane:
with a sticker on the glass saying: “a punch in the face”.

Sipping codeine linctus in a bath, using Vicks nasal syrup for your dripping sinus –
asthmatic, eating marzipan, listening to “Elephant Stone” by the Roses, chatty, restless,
machine-gunning your serviette with cocaine laced with speed and diet pills.

Went you learnt Mandarin in the early days, you were in bloom;
You worked at Size? thinking you were smaller than everyone who was in bad jobs;
Your favourite thing is “Everybody Knows” by Leonard Cohen...
You correlate, kind of like smoke, or windows –
It’s the lighter-anthem sung by those who favour excess.

You carried on with the umbilical cord still there –
You pedalled perilously through the carbonised mesh of London,
for stars’ parcels, people like Mulberry;
you could’ve sat on your backside in the boondocks, loving it when the storm cantankered
around your mind’s eye.

Today your head looked knitted together, like the faintly ribbed face of a crack-tramp, imagine a nipple –
You were the for and the against, the Starsky & Hutch, a marriage.
One day I’ll never wake up, or is it you – is it you?
I’m sending out an S.O.S, a Mayday,
But I don’t know the Morse code of life to make you understand.



Journey to Mindfulness

My shirt was white cotton, to die for: it was as transparent as old sheets;
I came home with some Greek guy's blood all over it and threw it out.

I had a scratchy, tight green Botafogo shirt, that a BOPE d'Elite cut off me
With his big Rambo knife, in Complexo Alemão: "*Assim no sê mais de Botafogo*".

I remember my enemy's face like a rose garden,
After B smashed his face in, we ran off in a black cab.

Or my blood-starched, hexagonal-print Hugo Boss shirt
After a Bengali from West Ham threw a punch at me.

Dawn was greenhouse-hot and delicate, armwrestling in Cartagena,
For free beer, off my face, with Piero della Francesca and some others in a taxi to the beach.

Canary, suicidal dawn, pawning my 18th present behind Waterloo for a train to Paris
They rejected it and I ran for it, far away from the police, a paralympian for the mentally disabled.

Enwombed in the neon humidity, the paco-head asked me to empty my pockets, last month,
I had my St Christopher's medal, that you gave me, but he just stole my pack of Derbys.

That's one side to the story of my life.

There was a time when all I was interested in was being conservative.

I didn't lie when I promised you the way to the unlucky tombs.

The ventriloquy of my mind, its consonance, to my child,
When his heart is doing cartwheels, listening about your new job –



Charting all density. all the measurements of the astronomical womb
Go into my brave thinking, when we talk about your ex –

When you asked for me to be a man:
And I felt it tangibly, and shouldered the nub of your elastic plea –

On our first date-night, when we went to the Royal Opera House,
Underwent fission to *Tosca*, we wed, we negotiated ourselves into those seats –

When we talked about our first time, we discussed it, we were addicted,
To sharing, it was uncanny, it was braver than nicotine –

When I told you why I got jealous, and the Bougainvilleas were listening like the CIA –
I told you, that was brave.

It was brave, because when I lost it all
I cut off my ear at the earlobe
Straight away.

I didn't lie to you when I told you that the tombs were unlucky.

Part of me thinks it's inappropriate:
That exposing flesh is directly proportionate to killing yourself:
But part of me convokes –
Wounded, with eight strips of tablets in me –
Coughing up the key among the platelets of *pietra rosa* Risperidone.

It's my gimmicky revelation to you:

Follow your genuine instincts, your intuition and communicate your needs –
Then your life will be mapped out, like a test you know the answers for.
Then your life will be mapped out, like a test you know the answers for.