

To a Blind Horse

By Ashley Dunn



Albert K. Ashes-Bury (“Albert” is pronounced in the French style: *al-bear*) was born in the Midlands but has since relocated: he does not want to tell us where to. He works nights at a warehouse and spends most of his time alone at home. He met Ashley at a poetry workshop in Frome. He enjoys reading, especially biographies by other writers, especially if those other writers are from cultures different to his own; writing; playing the business simulation video game *Capitalism*; and walking in nature, though not very far. His main poetry influences are Mary Oliver, William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Eddie Vedder. Ashley has never seen him without his bandana on.

Len Gurts was born in the Midlands but now lives in Bath. He works in recruitment. He met Ashley through helping him find a job. He studied English Literature at The Open University for 3 days before dropping out. He enjoys DJing, though he does need some decks; dancing and clubs and women; sport (except large parts of sport); currency (and not just cryptocurrency: he has some rare Romanian banknotes); and business and finance and human potential movements, though he needs to research these (along with the decks). His main poetry influences are Ted Hughes, Wendy Cope, Frederick Seidel and John Lennon. Ashley has never seen him without his sunglasses and hat on.

Maxwell is an imaginary character Ashley created. He is a teenage boy and exists somewhere between Slim Shady and Billy from *Kez*. His main influences are Leo Tolstoy and Paul Feyerabend, though he’d never want you to know this, nor would he want you to know that he knows anything – that he’s at all competent.

Albert and Len have never met. Len is adamant he’s DJed at the warehouse where Albert works but Albert said this is impossible because he works there every night.

Albert hates Maxwell. Len loves him.

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Maxwell Getting On Side

“You can teach some things about it. The poetry you can’t teach.”

—David Hockney in *‘Portrait of the Artist as a Naughty Boy: David Hockney’*, John Mortimer, In Character

My gargantuan friend circle is important to my truth.

I like Kendrick Lamar and Carhartt but I am not sure

On Eminem anymore so I keep quiet.

I am blindsided by my own colour.

Cities are the key to ending the monopoly of small towns, big industry and independent serial monogamy.

I’m joking! I say dogmatic things so convincingly just to riddle myself.

I do not want mass surveillance. I do not wish to listen to anything outside myself either.

My therapist said this is safe; so don’t be toxic? He had a huge following in Jonestown.

My echo chamber is me knowing of people in Brighton and Berlin; and having driven between the two, I understand class issues are class issues for people I won’t be looking out the window at again.

I have now listened to Kendrick more closely

And... and I’m not sure.

But my date still likes him? Sweet!

My relationship does not fit into a sociological framework.

Your relationship is a testament to my sociological framework.

Len Gurts Poem

Sink food catcher thing

Cover for bathroom shelf

Cover for all shelves

Tacks

Tacks for shelves

Check toilet seat

Cushion case

Light on ceiling by door

Throws

Sort books, shelves

Edit plants

Len Gurts’ Sort of Bougie Pollock Piece

I lie down: canvas. You drip marks,
strokes. “These are strokes.

These are strokes you are
are you sure?” I lie down.

I lie down. You are propped up against

the wall. You are in an easel. I am so happy—

crafted. I am painting.

I was canvas before and you made me.

The world has made me—this silent love.

I am sure of myself: this hard floor.

Marks? Strokes? Marks.

No strokes.

No you are fixed in the easel.

I am on this hard floor and I am fixed. These are marks.

Len Gurts Wants You to Try Write Something as Bad

I put this first line:

a synonym of “Columbus’s egg”

I know I will die

I use the time for this instead

This will also near miss

I write before I know

It’s like I’m unsure, but insist

Shit

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Reminisces

Sometimes

it felt dead inside, the bars

like gaps in your teeth, the ones

that sent me away: I thought

I had to have a key. I am finished with this sentence.

Len Gurts on a Soapbox Outside the Library Just Before He’s Arrested

How could it be

that the turn of a headless finger (there we go)

could face me here as I have forgotten? She will analyse

my lost or found love of what I had not, as it all

depends on the stage of my career, the overall urge

becoming a soft lean (what?!) fed up with me, me, already, two chances

by the names of “Art” and “Social” ready to present themselves

as engaging. I was going somewhere of late, the yard
full of tedium: I had something I promise but perhaps I should have

let them go, my attempts at the marriage
proving false. Plus you don't have to tell me.
I did twist my finger! I did!

Not and—but—would you invite anything other than yourself
to the ceremony: those that throw nouns, glass houses (relates to fingers).

Len Gurts' Forward March

March's mother was a grain producer.
March went to space.
March's lawyer was a clerk. March
never thought of his nails. March installed
plenty. March became a beacon
of this here watering can. March produced
quality workmanship. March
never tried to spell the word "soufflé". March is an attempt:
he would say this to me. March
was my lover? March was my lover.
March was birthdayless, an unforgiven
pie seller. Never candled did March.
March didn't look a day over my watering can.
March, indoors and mostly unable to sell his work, but I support him: the world at fault: we have
property on the farthest side of the lake: this can: he bloody hates it!

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Lying

Closed the blind, my eyes,
my mind—and I am not going to write

what I was thinking, as it was sweet,
the moment, between dreams (pretend

there are only dreams, out here—the heat
and the quiet

being real) and...

...and it has just shivered through
now still: the evening before

this evening—and I am writing

what I know love is (I feel it): sweet moments—

clear;
thoughtless—

as if dreams.

Lee Gurts' I Ching

It is noticeable when they say “meta”. They live above me.

You are the patio slab to my garden.

We would much rather glass to manure.

I knew someone for years and I realised whatever I realised so I started pretending I couldn't
speak the same language as them anymore. These things take guts.

Maxwell's Mini Protest

She talked of mythical fathers before she

Kissed my forehead, twice, and said, “I wish

I was thirty years younger.” I didn't

Ask once and I hope I never grow up.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Powers Through

I know exactly what you're thinking. I'm paranoid.
Is that the end? A full stop, semi
or a colon between those? Who decides? This is making no sense.

In the East I'd be a sage. At family barbecues I get stoned.
I don't believe in these models—I smile and nod—
so when I go to the doctor I accept the script
but throw it away again later and write my own, yet that only contains

new models: I semi
smile and nod I could repeat
that family script—it's senseless
I'm deciding and it doesn't make sense

to our doctored models in the west so I go on stage

instead, looking like I'm making things up

with no sense, punctuating the silence
without knowing if anyone knows what I'm saying, this script

surely indicating I should not be here—I know what
you're thinking: I'm paranoid—at the least

I was in a cage—they broke in my dreams repeating—and family
rendezvouses I didn't believe in made me want to get stoned

I go to the doctor and get called paranoid as the models
in the West want all smiles and nods and me not making sense

of myself so I lost myself in models, writing
on my own because the story I was given seemed wrong—I look wrong

giving this story making you silent, making no
sense. repeating the same words as I'm unsure how to

punctuate it, how to stop it fully how to not be that
family story which cannot make sense, I'm making things

no sense, I don't know exactly what I'm paranoid
I'm thinking that models, no sages, no stoners, no

new scripts out in the audience know what I'm saying, in your silence, too, don't you, I knew
what I was

thinking I'm a sage I made the family
paranoid so they tried to stone me but in the end

I'm making a new script I don't care how it looks
I know what I'm saying I need a stage full stop

Len Gurts Sparsely Dates

Melancholia, sex, paint.
Lucrative, or wasted on first dates: no action taken—
all harm done.

I cannot decide. This menu! Pick for me?

Wanting to live the legend of myself
as tailored by a surviving bug, no one knowing my seedy habits.

I would be so relatable. I could construct a new medium for the public's nighttime!

I knew it! Yours looks better.

Maxwell's Route to the Village Is This Way, but You'll Need a Pass

A character, though not
Too: do not go all surreal yet.

This was not supposed to happen: you wandered in such ecstasy
Young. Now that boy is perhaps

Acceptable. You also take yourself so seriously,
Brushing your own teeth;

You can nearly differentiate birds
By their fluffy coats

In fountains. There's no need for strangers.
Still wish you were all here though.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's Rules

Write it out.
Let it write itself out.

Do not
read it. Do not study it.

(Know, somehow,
it will never be scripture.) Let it

fall. Save your generation.
Save all your generations.

Soften.
Repeat.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Poors Me

She won't talk about love with me anymore, the therapist.
I'll not mention it again. Even here.

I don't want to open, close my eyes: you're every colour.

Nothing makes sense. I'm supposed to be here

completely—everything should have happened as it did.
But it shouldn't have, too. What do we do now?

I could pull my skin off nearly all the time.

Len Gurts Is Sexually Frustrated

Layers, layering,
like Lycra-thin dodgeball, unimaginably

playful like leopards—their teeth—
on your towels

on your back, biting; not
that it's there: look

at all your layers.

Len Gur- Actually This Was Albert Doing a Len

An impeccable telephone manner will get you in a lot of trouble.
You know what? I watched several of myself for years. What happened?
Through all this I really thought I was putting my coats on, looking at myself
in the mirror.

It gets hard, walking straight, being in half,
skipping birthdays. My hair is so thick.

Soul? Coming and going?

This item is hidden from students.

Len Gurts Doesn't Mind Abstract Control

I do not want to go that far down, it said, as it is in there
that the something or nothing that I know of (or don't know of

it didn't say) is, and I do not want that: leave me up here
shouting.

God (who was not here before): I want it.

*

God: I got it, it shaking slightly.

I got it down and
made it something or nothing—whatever it says—and now

I am not up but down
and something or nothing (but it does not know of).

Len Gurts—We See You and It's OK

I have fell, and I can see the trees, finally. Does it show? One slip further
and I could have *felt*: perhaps

it wasn't us after all? As I no longer believe
in the illusion of trees, and the conspiratorial

side of me only drafts
lies as I walk along in convoluted control; but

of what? Who knows. Though aren't woods
loud and distracting.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury on Critics

The bird
says, in the air, "I'm experiencing

flight," to another
bird, that replies, "Yeah

but": the first bird
flies away, I'm afraid. I didn't want it to though.

Len Gurts After One Workshop

Presents with the windows against your ears, your arms out
like a messiah collecting bits—"What do we have
here? Oh dear!"—into the work it goes
without another mention. I thinks there's the very last of a dream going in? Could it be?
No. Don't mention it. Now if the art becomes
just free association unsupervised, who is going
to be the first to have a problem with that
because I have, even if it is just tenderly nudging whatever could happen
without much concern for resources, capacities,
all the rage. I am all the rage—can you tell?
I was right in the middle and squeezing hard in trying
to keep this party together, but the mud, and outside,

and past the end of my nose—have you done that?
It's like another world. I cannot imagine reading this out.
You always knew that was going to be the last shot too
of the dream, which you named. Time is
like touching it here and it made us shake
too much, concerned
with stupid and low-class pleasure. I hate this sound—
one that takes you back to when you were quiet
without much inspiration. I need a circle. I need a lift! An elevator.
A step down, because I am pecking at myself. Though I have that covered.

Len Gurts... You... Nice One!

I am full of rage. I want to be soft. I smashed up a chair (it took too long
to understand softness was a thing—a possibility—I want to bite
the goose's head off) I cry
and dribble. I am thankful that I think nothing
when I am crying—when no one is laughing at me in my head
for crying—when I am on the floor
heaving (next to the chair—and I hate that I held back—I hate that I have learnt
some control—I resent this in between
to meet soft—I want to cut open the goose) my mouth is metallic—
the right side of my face waves in and out of numbness with the neck, chest,
arm leg going tight—numb—I am so good
at doing this—I could rage and cry for my life. I am getting
so soft and good with rage (you have to be good
with your rage) I'll be swimming in my dribble soon while I
watch the goose (sorry goose—I was angry
and making good with it—oh my oh my!)

*

OK. This is softness. The sky. Look! Blue! Colour.

The tears. Salt. Taste. Oh my—that made me shake. Rage again. Oh well. I smashed up a chair.
Oh well.

Touch! My skin! My wet face! My skin

is here?

Maxwell, Left To It

I am no longer debilitated with nowhere to tell my story
Of my fight with the dragon who hid the cave from me,
Which I am sorry to say, I am only annoyed at myself about,
Because it was always a cave, it always will be,
And now I'm just hungry so the dragon can have it. Where to?
I'm outside jumping on rain the whole time, like that game where you keep tapping the ball
To keep it up. But if I fall? That was letters ago! Feeling
And unfeeling are intertwined so much that you learn
The workings to never use them again: I tell them children
Who go past the cave when I'm there with my popcorn, not
To take too much in as it is only the teachers
Talking to their own dragon—hiding from their own cave;
And they should really only listen to themselves, boycotting
The binary books of weak clients.

Len Gurts On The Downs

Am I making a world? I am wall-
king there is nothing in it, I am doing
nothing I am walking at the top of the gorge—cheap; but I

am, and a man is out here
early, too, picking up rubbish and I saw
a seagull hopping on a dud leg

as I listened to 'Going to California': "Sure is hard."
I am doing nothing worthy
except dreaming, and wanting to be seen

while he is taking action and the seagull—that
remains to be seen, cleaning... ah! there it goes
with a crisp packet!—is getting on with it:

what is this? what are all these things?
The bridge looks good.
It's a huge drop.

Len Gurts For Maxwell

I like the idea
of a Chatbot doing it
if it annoys, the right people, like

a poorly-spoken young man
coming to the poetry workshop
and writing the best thing there. Wouldn't that be

a nice surprise? Or would that be
a thorn in the side
of the established mind? Would we

mind? O you'd mind. Yes—yes you did
mind; as it was like
a border being crossed

into who could do what. Though not
like that! Not *clout* borders. Or it was power
being lost, to a kid

without a toss with a chip on his shoulder, clearly. But is he
allowed to do poetry? Chatbot: who owns
poetry? What! Really? Human

collective consciousness? Then why
did they look
down on me? Because I've just

made them
again:

"me".

Maxwell Understands Maxwell, At Least

You sit across from the sun rising: I couldn't save them!
I couldn't save them! The sun sinks back down
A touch; all the hard work shifts reality

Improbably: you have been under boots, and
On the moon in the same instant because

Why would you stay in this seat
In your body: she sees you

Dissociate. You see her become a child molester—
A total eclipse. I... I know I didn't ask
For this... but... Abrahamic modes of healing
Do not fit anymore. Oh my God!—can you remember when I said
Him too? She tells you to forget about that now—
Because what about you, now?—she comes

Through your cloud. And she is so loud! And bright! Though
Only how it should be: you are not
Seeing the light, but yourself: you are in the seat;
That is the sun through the window—that
Is a human voice, simply caring—bothering: you are careful

Not to fall in love with it... and you smile: Have I... No!—
I *have* saved him. But still!—

Oh my God!—can you remember
When I went to the moon too? So high, like it didn't

Happen—like none of this happened. As that is what
Happens, isn't it—the back and forth
Between nowheres—going nowhere: you stand

Up; she is now the sun and moon—
Molester and eclipse—all in one cloud: you are much too used
To sitting in this; so you could

Stay clouded, as you are not sure
How to keep this going—how you even
Say it, and don't—what you have to sit in
And navigate, and not—as you are not wanting

To do this always—a “Him too!”
But no one's son. I couldn't save them!
What's wrong with m... No. Stop. Because

Oh my God—the sun is shining, now,
Across from you, more—and just: you stop

Questioning yourself and you sit
In it. And you sit in it! Back straight!
Shoulders back! She smiles: You too—yes—

Almost shining in your seat now:
Has she fallen in love with... No!—
Have you... have you fallen in love with me?—she

Sits back! Grips the seat! Frowns. But you

Smirk. Her shoulders drop.
And she laughs! And smiles even more.

You saved him. You saved him.

Len Gurts at a Boat Party in Ibiza

The song thought of a memory but would dare not write it—why bother?
Yesterday. Troubles.
This is how I sit at my best, thinking
perhaps, loosely involved with the relationship.
Now I sound like all kinds of targets. I won't say it!

I love these! I love these! Do it! *Be it!*

Far too long in supermarkets, but that is too

far gone. Nostalgia is not a means to plaster.
I have been on this boat
for too much of the trip
to invite you back to the party.
Tomorrow. The same bubbles.

Maxwell That I Do Not Fully Understand Yet

"He acts like a little boy, but he's really very complex."
—8½

I am too aware not to be manipulative
With the poem, I say to the therapist
Who is not in love with me: she does not fully understand yet.
And I know it is... And I know it is
Very grey, between words, the things we think we are
And are not—without blame or responsibility,
Outside cause and effect and the impact

We have on everyone's lives, because as she knows,
I am the saviour. Though I have stopped saying it
To the white coats as the more
We share, the more they hold it against you:
She was so controlling! I said about an ex. And this latest analyst
Here, replied, OK. But we mustn't forget
That you too, are partial
To some dominance, aren't you. Which is unfair!
Because when I told her that—with my shameful voice—she seemed
To shift in her seat; she seemed to see
That boy from the early nineties
Who is now in the shadows—the white space—like all our more difficult work
And truth, and past; as I think
I even brought him back to life then too: But I am angry! And I want to kill!
And it is justified! My potential
Victim being left
In the white space, too—not because I am decent, but because
I am purposely leaving things open, poetically... She said,
You can be angry, but you mustn't act on it—even though
I see, in the shadows, at night, a truth from my past...
That is libellous. So I guess that adds to the poem's aura?
And it is all on me though, babe...? She smirks at that. It isn't love:
Fine! It is all on me though, Doc—to know it all
And to not say anything. And to do all the shadow work
Alone, whilst propping myself up—all alone—too. Look!

Myself
Propped up!

This gets more than a smirk: Cheap! she says, laughing.
At the end of the session again too, boy child. But at least it isn't a bombshell
Like last week, about dominance
And childhood shadows. And your love for me! Does she wink?
She knows how to shadow her face. But I bite anyway: Well, what about the nineties
And the fact you see that dead boy in me... before I shallow
And stop myself, because I am aware—and perhaps
Manipulative—but not unfair: I don't really mention the nineties.
And she was young! And she was so controlling! I say again
As I leave, knowing that she's doing a good job
Of seeing right through me and of seeing past
The boyfriend that she let die, and the past
That I am also trying to let die, as it all
Slides off, eventually—in the same way
That it's a good job
That I see right through her, and myself—and the reasons

Why I'm propped up all alone
Too, as I am still
Processing the aura left behind
By the shadows of my own past: my own
Aware, though manipulated—dominated—inner boy
Child that I do not fully understand yet.

Len Gurts' Narcissus Variation MMMMLXV

Wandering, wondering,
around the city missing echoes, but not
the city—the one
that did wander: too bright

one is. Not so the other: I'd rather have

no ripples; I'd rather be under water. Though

I hope I am an echo? Just not

the biggest wave that crashed. But can echoes
glow?

I burned—seared skin—

of course

I wander the city alone.

Len Gurts' Delilah

Sometimes
I slip past your office window
and whisper, "Are you still lying?"

And you don't know it's me.
And you don't know it's you.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's Black Hole, All Gone, Back Here

In my black hole outside
the glow
in darkness—acid tongued—looking at
art, feeling so
childlike, if it's

mine: we take

photographs—good light—I like
how fun I look in them
as I did back then. Then
black hole, all gone, back here—
serious—smoke—ownership—big walls.

Len Gurts Waits Outside His Therapist's Office

And so there is nothing in being clever. It should seriously go.

Here I am, sighing.

There better be a reason for this argumen... No—

no—fifteen years—still not.

I wonder if he'd risk

telling the kids, early, about it, or

sitting in silence with her (though he would

tell her, early) for the whole session.

I see a figure, and it is teetering on the edge of an edge. It is comfortable, just, remembering
clouds.

Len Gurts Doesn't Know What Point He's Making

She enticed from the underworld, cheaply,
new to me, with photos

harnessed: the courts have nothing
for this, it's just

me and my hand
for justice! Plus

a poem
that's alluring too.

Len Gurts Edges More

My grandad was a creationist.

A blowjob during Jurassic Park.

The museums being replays? Nah.

How about, They always looked great together!

Ye Olde Shrubbery.

The way they go on about that Big Bang you'd think they'd be over it by now.

Action-at-a-time-warp.

Discreet category clutchers.

Len Gurts With More Avant-Gurts

Further away now. Light down.

This is what happens when you just go, Pop.

Jack hammering bandit liar!

A push. A push now.

What is it you truly like?

My god—her face!

Have I ever mentioned the pain around my shoulder blade?

A slush, hobbyless.

Len Gurts at Silly Point Again

Womb bomb. Same work in ten weeks.

Meek cows out on the dew.

Anchoring the point of pronto finishing.

I'd never have guessed.

*

Surly beakers at June's ball.

Rink stained!

Oval follow-on taunts.

Buckets.

Zinc.

Len Gurts Going Through It

O horror—you have gone!

I like the sound of this one.

I might be a David Lynch film.

I might link that with

cling film. Foil-wrapped madness.

Badass shot
of my safe body
absorbed in sun. A beam I've just done.

She'd love this one. I'll now not sleep.

Rhythm gone. See. Her

that is, always.

Len Gurts Loose

Hahaha—madness! Me flying off
slightly—too high—stone

bringing me down just: I fly off
again pulling the stone up the hill, further

each time
like a fool! On my own with a stone now

on the side of a hill! My bird
way up there—we've split!—like they knew

what they were doing
between themselves

each time, bird and stone: dragging
me up—holding me down.

Maxwell Scribbles in Night

There is something in all this, seeing the mangy fox
With it's bad leg: I keep listening
To that song. Then I wake up
In the night in my dreams and insects
Were crawling out of me, my legs, leaving me,
Which is a good sign. And I grab the next book
That took my eye and wouldn't that be odd: it has this amazing

Tale in it; something is adding up;

I cannot say I don't know what it all is, as it is all
A muddled web, a board, a pop star's
Contrived narrative: I am not overthinking it; I am thinking about
The book; I am less scared of the secondary layer thoughts.
Growing on my skin, they were, crawly sores,
With some going in and out and I couldn't block up the holes
I know, what it is. I know it is coming. This sounds contrived—bad!;

But amazing though mangy.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Getting Aware of Wincings... Actually, He's Not

"The way the eyes of saints are painted"
—Billy Collins, 'Love'

I love the way you apply lip balm
before getting into bed. Do you do that
with him too? I understand.

I sometimes wonder if he notices
you doing it like I noticed you
doing it but I cannot really imagine

anyone having the stomach
to relive it and relive it and relive it
like I do: I understand. Whoever

were you?
Why did you do that with your lip balm?
Why would you do something

so ridiculous? As I write about you
applying lip balm before bed.
I understand.

No in fact, I don't.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Like a Stream Thing

I read that book and thought of the author
all those years ago. It was only how I felt about the author,
about the time. I felt released. I didn't know what to do
as it was a feeling. I wonder what they think about...
But that would be what I think. Then there are the collectives
of things—where are they? I can't quite loosen myself up enough;
there are plenty of places to go: there we go.
Once separated, what can we do? I am not sure what any words mean;
it isn't exactly silence, but nothing, on top of the doubt that comes with it
on top of the anger, which isn't really anything either.
I don't like... Ah doesn't matter: I cannot grab a stone;
I walk on the beach and I'm not even really there.
Working used to be beneficial. We went to lunch
and I still need to seem to eat. When we left
I was gone. I wanted to be less commercial
about this. How many attachments have been clung to?
How can it be assumed that there could be shared thought?
I wish I didn't have long hair. It isn't
quite a category, the assumption, which
is everybody's: I am nothing new. Have you seen the bar?
I don't go. No no—the body doesn't respond.
Of course, I cannot be blamed for breaking things apart.
I cannot believe this is it. This is all of life. I am forever starting. Is this
childhood? No blunt blocks.
How are... Go for it—how are these matters formulated? I feel quite good.
We can't leave it like something happened. O that feeling then too.

Len Gurts Stopping Us in Our Tracks

I confirmed
that the seat next to me

was not taken, so she offered it
a handjob.

Len Gurts... Just Leave Him to It

Yes yes—I am here now. Hope you can make it. But of course
you have! Those other ones: they were for...
other times. This is where the fun starts!
O but do ignore those shouting their freedom so loud
as if they wrote one of those cool books! Because

we know how you could take or leave this
which is why it's here, and funny
and so much fun and
you of course know you leave, don't you? Of course—
you're here! Anyway, dance? Without thought.

Len Gurts With Slight Improvements but You Can Hear the Phallic in It

God said, "I thought Jung would be the final nail,"
and I know exactly what I sound like. I was gifted
with the traumatic ability to capture doves
between my index finger and thumb, and it impressed no one
I was forced to impress as they were so high
and alert to the fact that their first fingers
were pointing at me in tears. So I soberly tried pointing

at the trees: I was too wooden. There was no ambiguity.
I went back to talk of archetypes and the promise
to forget the tricks I learnt in childhood: that was too
far too! I made a joke of it instead. We are now
all better again with our overlapping
coos, which I have relearnt, meaning
I am not such an ignorant pig.

Len Gurts Burning Away

O didn't they laugh at me
using "O" and being on fire
and being so high with Charles Manson

and Mr West. What am I saying?
I do not care here. Isn't it great here?
All the words sound the same and everyone looks beauti...
But I am not so high

anymore: grounded realistic. Glad I hid
like a log for a long time (I knew to hibernate
somewhat) as well as being the fire: I was the hottest thing
ever! Even hotter than the old muse! (Young man it does

change. Have faith.) Now what is there to do
up here, down here, or just...

here? Burn? Burn.

Len Gurts Self-Care

Letting Tender Buttons go past

Beauty

Running for the bus
Paper ticket so no phone
No city
No sirens
In a field
No people
No bus

Metaphysics

No one is here (unless you need them—
take care)

Sensible first date

Stab each other

Sensible wedding planning

Stab each other

Charity therapy

Come to this room and tell me anything but it'll cost you

Isn't it free?

It'll cost you

Len Gurts Statement

I just went over our collection
in a lovely setting: a Hooper on the wall. What it amounts to now?

This— How dull.
As if the paintings were echoes.

Len Gurts: Trio

Michael from Accounts

Sir Mick Jagger
but he's done The Work
and not got started
and never had to stop.

Postmodernity

An Instagram therapist
with five millions followers
telling me—constantly—
I'm not that important.

Causation

An impending
tantrum, from someone
shouting, "Be present!"

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Yeah, I Hate, OK? (At Some Point)

I hate how you all feel nothing and have your subconscious eyes on me.
I hate that you all didn't stop it so I hate all your causes.
I hate how I feel. I hate how I think because of how I feel—because of what my body now
decides because of long ago.
I hate that it works like this but that no one accepts it. I hate feeling alone with perverse, tolerant
understanding, which only feels this way when paired with hopelessness, which feels
arrogant along with infantile.
I hate that I can't be reactionary, that I don't want to speak my mind even as I know it would
relieve some pain temporarily.

I hate how I think you look at me, because I am not there: I only think it because of how I feel.
I hate that someone else may understand without thought but they cannot fully discuss it.
I hate the web I have made over my experience most seconds and that I cannot unpick it.
I hate that I despise my own poetry because of whatever I have absorbed.
I hate that I might never unpick it either.

Len Gurts' New Bridge Tactics

Facilitators with papers and pens
Phonics teachers
Painters
People tapping on the steel
People stroking forearms
DJs running workshops alongside a disco
All wearing hi-vises

Len Gurts Struggling With a Breakthrough

I walked into
the office of my therapist in a long winded fashion
whining
about my childhood and how
I had let it happen, which was not my fault,
but it was my responsibility to change, like this simile. We made
progress with my anger, which we focused on
after I got angry at her for laughing along with other people
years before. This was a clever intervention—a
treat—and it made me think of trees and woods:
how much better they'd be the other way round
for reasons
to do with source, which we also
touched on. I then brought up the fact that it was difficult that she wanted to sleep with me
to which she asked what I meant, which only
complicated matters, like bears in your wood: we agreed
I was childish. I would not have mentioned the poem
I wrote about this
to her, except that I then did, and she laughed
her trained laugh, taking it home for masturbation, which was like her window
of tolerance, only she wouldn't admit that.

Len Gurts Considers Your Legacy

“What a load of old nonsense
they are talking. Writing! I wonder
what they say behind their poems. I wonder what they really feel

about me.”

What a legacy! I have ordered a blue plaque
with that first stanza on it

with your name at the top.

Len Gurts Waving in the Backseat

It means whatever you want it to mean—
whatever we know to be true—as I’ll be here

forever; and depending on their weather, this is me
repeating or undoing: I must try sit in that question

apparently. How big must my audience be
until I am comfortable here? I know I know—now that is

a silly question: an audience? I think my suppressed needs
for his waves to be seen

have also made us delusional: I may be avoiding
the question. The audience may assume this is me.

Len Gurts... Someone Stop Him

Feeling my emotions—no theory. My life is plush.

I stopped considering the tingles in the night: it’s in the past. But I didn’t say that!

Did you know? Did I care.

Not needing correcting instructions to talk to people. What do you need them for? What were
you doing before? Why did you notice?

This is becoming quite an industry in trying to correct illusion.

But... but how is that there? There’s no corresponding idea.

Now I need a logician? A linguist? A drink?

Another feeling. Some toast? Yeah sure.

Len Gurts Cut-It-Off Technique

An experimental edge being taken off.

A belief in love with no. Cogito.

Two lines—they down. We off baby.

Sliding my fingersddgghjjkl across it. I just had a flashback.

Can it be musical? Could I plan that?

Creating a piece of art for one person, no thought of the rest of the audience. Impossible.

But the credits are on your mind with their tanks.

Jumping too far ahead: the return! the return!
Questioning the !!
These are getting so much shorter for me and I am watching less trauma.
This cannot correlate with a coherent... canvas? Performance piece?
What is my voice?
I agree—we should throw it all out the window. But then how you going to tell me?
That's right: in the wake of around... one thousand people: none of them are close.
Shorter sentence.
I was getting carried away.
This is like the silent retreat you keep threatening.
Why did I have that target? What did they do?
Up, down, left, right—moods. Not mine.
(It can be musical.)
Ah that was definitely worth the look back.
(No—don't include her anymore.)
She uses pronouns professionally but I know how she feels.
What does... this?... say about
what is?
I. Can't. Say. What the. Ther-a-pist. Said.
I. Want. You. To. Read it. Like. Me.
That was it: if it's universal surely it's unrepresentative? When does the story end?
Anddddd—the things I could have done instead of this.

Len Gurts on Why He Doesn't Hold It Against People

I felt like a fascist
until I ate my sandwich.

She told me she didn't love me
anymore then it was 4 a.m.

I went surfing on a week day.
She could be the New Kanye.

Or Bowie
in Playboy or tired.

I loved her after my sandwich
too and all this surfing!

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Shows His Workings

Estimating the number of therapy sessions
from how much they look up at a door opening.

Counting creases in a face
whilst ignoring

the curvature of their back
against its smile.

Assuming the worst act, my hand out.

Len Gurts, Bad Trainer

I read the horse a poem
that was actually a joke.
It neighed—Good poem!
It was very badly trained.

I read the horse a joke
that was actually a poem.
It laughed—So funny!
I laughed too, but made

it then chase a rabbit—the least
I could do. “Just
enjoy it!” I said. “And ignore the
dogs”—it did! As it turned out

I was the bad poem
and trainer.

Len Gurts Scripture

A backwards dog
just walked past
saying, “Shhhhh!” its tongue

hanging out, its eyes
closed looking

at the sky
on all sixes and sevens.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury’s Power Variation (Only Size 11s, Unfortunately)

They cut my head off
without knowing
it grows back

in a new century. Thoughts follow me

a touch, though not down here:
I don't know where I'm going.
Who needs a head? The body?
The victor? I would do better

without a head. I still don't know where I'm going.
No goals. No books on goals or history—sorry.
The rest was unnecessary:
they cut my head off.

Len Gurts With *the* Poem?

I was sitting on top of the question mark—

but I was too fucking tempted, wasn't I?

Maxwell Discovers Semi-Automatism

No, I can't see that! No, I can't feel that!

OK yes I can see it and feel it—I was trying to ignore things—
It was making me ill and categorisable: how many fingers
Were *you* pointing while *you* ran out of friends?
(The leader at the front is on antidepressants.)

Nothing's a creative exercise. The man was out his mind making swirls:
Where's my can of soup?

There's some irony in that (dear it's hard

Being quiet about you—it's making you ill: come back
From Spain?)

((Nasty piece of work.))

Len Gurts Tries Rapping

Get a real drug problem and stop glorifying your £80 Saturdays

I've seen the best minds of my generation shut the fuck up and get over themselves

Are you proposing a childhood-off? Did you notice that's where we're going?

They're like song lyrics without ontologies: who knows

Stop killing in conversation for ten minutes then come at me with pain

Trust this is not the real world

Express your emotions even if they're wrong at first, please, please

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Talks To Alexa

Alexa—will love save you?

I mean me, really. Or us. Or I just wanted to try
a near rhyme—some humour! Maybe that would save us
too? Because I put out love thickly and naively—
it left me very bare; but I wasn't taking any in! Is that the problem?
Now I am angry. I can't fucking pretend
that love does save. I am not sure I have ever seen it—
felt it. And now I question it too much.

Alexa—can you remember why I asked you now?
Because I can't. I must have been lost in something
down here—can you drag me up? Can you ring
the emergency services? Is this a cry for help? (Alexa—
have you ever seen anything
that isn't a cry for love?) I don't really know who you are,
Alexa. This could be like at school
when someone calls the teacher "mum": is it lovely or funny?

Sad? Alexa—have you ever seen a poem
that wasn't a cry for help, a need to be saved,

a question about love?

Maxwell Also at MDMA-Assisted Therapy (It Didn't Work As Well)

I am dying and I am Kevin Finnerty.
I could have been ill at any moment before, hence this.
Does it matter? I can see billions of dregs up here, all equal, all pointless.
I am taking pointers from where I like.
Why try to make someone else happy, or even sad—evil?
Shout it: Evil!
There is no metaphysical import here. I can only apologise. I left
At least one acting like a six year old thinking it was measurable: nothing
Is cool. My word, don't they look stupid?

Len Gurts During MDMA-Assisted Therapy

I cannot be doing with all the smiles and veneers.
You are lying broken on the floor. The crowd isn't here.

That presence is going to make you ill.
Instead, I shout, Kill kill kill.

Why pretend? Do you even notice?
What about a punch, not a sunset. Will you feel this?

I cannot control your reaction. I cannot dictate your confusion.
You should try exercise, poetry or a sex dungeon.

Sunshine and light—no.
No. I refuse to rhyme.
You will die with that facade. It is sick.

Maxwell, On His Own, Prime Maxwellian

"Kamikaze over commas"
—Travis Scott, 'Piss on Your Grave'

Five percent of us—max—
Standing on top of the rest throwing intricate theories about.
It's so hard, isn't it; excruciating. I'm glad I've never felt pain.
I would have found me terribly annoying as a teenager.
Who can dupe ourselves the most? Or be the least pretend paranoid?
Every gap is nearly filled in—only a few more forests to go.
Then we'll all see the world and set ourselves on fire.
It is that simple: you don't want friends; you're a vampire
Like me. There is no mind-body problem.
I truly believe we should be burning more, though it's a piece of art.
Adding this line about commas because I wanted to use the epigraph: get money.
I really thought I was once a part of the problem too.

Maxwell Plain Grumpy

Yeah no technical ability today perhaps.
I don't trust any of you because you don't know what you're capable of.
We've ran out of ideas so we make copies of sick fornications we don't even perform.
I hate this voice. That might be the point.
Most of us lie under our quilts all day then jump up and act like we're Sid Vicious.
He couldn't play a thing.
The whole world's dissociated because the more we pin down the more it runs off.

Have you heard of Leviathan?

I am so real and deeply authentic and I am not having to stand on the edge of a cliff on my head.

Hasn't that pulled out a good concept? I'm past floating.

Stop pretending sex is so cool. Dogs do it.

Everything you feel is your own responsibility and I'm sick of it again.

Len Gurts and Maxwell Wrestle

Sitting with geniuses at home—no pronouns—

not like that. Who is sitting? is meant. Scared

Of gossipers—genius held back. Only having

black midi, left—not the right comma. Getting caught:

That's next. Skin crawls but there's only a sofa;

pretending forever forever; pulling oneself out of the dirt

To sit with the entitled: I am bringing myself in—

you are absolutely disgusting—own it.

Len Gurts Whistle Stopper

Got rid of jobs and additional jobs.

Sold additional things. Went travelling.

Got girlfriend that didn't want. Got rid.

Hid self behind drugs and pints—toxic things—

quit these. Alas

there was rage there

which I then rid myself of

through the page. So now I am bored

and stuck in this game. Yet I know

every rule!—

I'm off to play.

Maxwell Getting Reflective Now!

I struggle to change my attitude. I have an enormous

Chip on my shoulder and I am cocky. I am feeling into myself

Like this—the heightened flow has gone—

So I can no longer write poetry. But I am still self-obsessed,

Don't worry (maybe the poetry is not too bad?

It is just not as deep, man) I am cynical.

I project misery on to everyone and blame the world

And I am feeling more and more self-hatred

Under that, and under this

Is another line again, because at least I am not masking my feelings
In other lines. I am still sketching around
And around things. My dreams are getting more and more bizarre and surreal.
The poetry is not exciting me as much, which is probably
Good; and I must be writing more clunkily? Oh well. Something had to give. I was a chip off the
old block.

Len Gurts in a Short Logic Seminar With 97% of People

Concrete.
the next thing said contradicted the last
Loosely—it follows—I left.

Max Fading

It is an illusion, but as much as possible
We must do the right thing at all times. I hate it. I hate writing about it.
I hate thinking about it. I hate pretending the poetry is sublime or
Beautiful or important. I hate pretending to like anything
Consistently. I hate pretending I'm not thinking about her

When I'm with the rest—I hate all the rest I hate you.
I hate the metaphysical and epistemological implications, squeezing the irregular
Rhythm of everything, nothing, however it feels
That day. I hate this knowing
That we are supposed to know—this feeling: whatever comes
Out; until

A little wave comes. Lovely.

Then someone will come and mention the moon again.

Len Gurts Coda

I know: yuk.
Hurry up.

Maxwell: Modern Poet

*"These works positively force themselves upon the author; his hand is seized, his pen writes
things that his mind contemplates with amazement."*

—Carl Jung, 'On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry'

What is this
And this? Does anyone know why it is

Necessary—does anyone know why it's here?
And this line should be speech. A quote. I wrote,
I think? And then everyone suddenly felt light. Soft.
I am quite new to the party—yes. Were there any
Emotions before? Am I “fixed” for authenticity? Well...
This is now a piece of food, which is probably
Fruit, the biting of which? Sex! The having of which
I am having, and have been having—and
The light came through the curtain on us—
I wrote this line after we did it, before counting
The lines, making sure this is... right about now
The last—the rounding—the big big weight of something
Failing: O my heart.

Maxwell's Positive Vibes Only

So I have no time for poverty, war, screams in the channel,
Car horns, frustration at traffic lights, fights,
Groveling apologies mouldy cheese caricatures
Of me, overwhelming questioning, being
Cut short, incest, murder, rape, No!, shock, being
Caught—such an inconvenience
For all I fought for!—and poems
That are not love and light.

Maxwell Jim Tate

Were you born in a barn? is ironic, I think
When I can, as it is their barn. I learned to laugh
Early, and taught and forgot myself
To care—everyone is not a robot:
I don't even know what that means, because now
I just have fun with it. Look what they left behind, these
Lines, which no longer sting. And the barn? It is now...
Commonly a lot of ellipses, I am noticing. But
I am noticing less. I do not care about the uselessness
Of where this woman sits. How does she know how hard
It can be? The barn the barn the barn—sorry.
Hmm... Maybe there could be loads of animals in it
Just being joyous. A cow meowing: ha! A
Horse and a goat snogging.

Len Gurts Finds Maxwell

Fuck I'm manic I've bought it I'm sold I can't

Afford not to. I need the validation—doc put me in a box—
It's what we all need. Now who wants their own?
I don't know—do we really have to go on with the science?
Shouting?! I am suspicious: what is it you've done?
What are you ashamed of? Only someone
Who is not a fan of this art form
Would worry about that—that's the clever thing
You see. Trick trick trick. There is nothing here—
Give up—get on—go!—now! You fucking idiot.

Len Gurts Straight Up

In the bookshop (I wanted a book—
the cafe had none): "Ratatouille
is about the class analysis of something"
(not verbatim. I forgot). In the
cafe: "Don't be too clever about it."
Many theories to be had at this time. Many poems.
I have been very clever with mine lately, obsessed
with minor flows and rhythms. I don't really know
why this one is here like this. For what it's worth
too, I went to the same festival as the man
at the counter and I took a lot of acid
and I may still be in that Disney movie
picking things apart, because I am in bed: theories
and poems are bad.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Asks Len For Help

You had a gift, you silly girl!
He has not faced
his silly boy yet.

His kind: they strip themselves for you.
They pull on the bottom of skirts—
paw, roll over, clap—coo, come, suckle
on cue. They need feeding, but that's
easy: no cooking is required—they eat scraps
off the floor—lick your boots—die empty,
martyred. Everyone then wonders
what happened: "You looked so beautiful together! He was
so young!"—his cheeks
sunk, his smile
remembered, your bad meals

buried, though only

with this: the still
silly, now faceless lucky boy.

Len Gurts to Lose More Friends Ergh

On top of the storm! On top of the world!
The wind beneath me—I am reacting to that
only. Does anyone notice? I am unquestioned
up here—look at all the peasants

down there—it's a good job I have money
and blind sex. Am I happy?
Did I not tell you about asking questions?

Friends have fallen through the wind—yes.
This has nothing to do with me—
my storm is my world is my vacuum—

as if anyone could notice—they are repeating
themselves

whilst I am back up there. Here, God. Look look.

Fine. Don't.
The...

So what—I am feeling rather tentative—
does anyone have a category? Thank you—

please all listen to my category
up here—it is very important. You don't know what this is like
for me
down here. Look look. God?

Oh my god! You are all not looking! You pigs!—
you wolves! There has never been a storm
like this! My friends? They are dying! Are you
even listening? Do you think you have all the answers?

So I am now falling
then. How do you sleep?—fair weather
friends, as I have
no language for it—we need

more categories—block out the upper badness

in the toxic storms
that repeat the same things ergh.

Len Gurts Works Harder

Even in the depths of my “despair” and “pain”
(I am so distant again. I exist bitterly today
in other social poetries) I absolutely love it, this world,
this mirror: try and touch me haha. Psychosis flirts;
Jesus comes in the mirror saying, Not by
the hairs of my... I don’t know why. I cry
and think of nursery rhymes. Why would anyone

leave me? Did I ruin the plan? Was I wrong
to chew the bullets? These “bullies”—these tricks
of syntax: they do not touch me. And if I can be
more poetic it’s just that I scream and cry at the horrors
as I smile next to them—I reassure myself—
it is not a mask but a human. And it is... it is...
a beauty—birthing—breaking down its own placenta.

Len Gurts’ Edgy Backflash

I was experienced until I watched it
one final time sober, alone, animated, prohibited,
untoughened. The gravedigger came: I was so jealous.
I took us both out of the ground, changed
the players around. Now you should see my dancing, as if
any of the final times mattered: I have been someone
else’s fool, always. But I was only playing:

I kept quiet and smiled and lived as every myth
dragging myself through the quivering stages
inducing climaxes unapologetically, role played
and too greedily ahead of myself. No I was not
playing: I had been played. Now I leave characters
in basic sonnets. Now you can be played. But
be warned: this is not the experience.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Et Tu?

“O he’s mad! He’s wild!
You don’t know what he’s like!” I agree!

As he's lying on the floor
full of bullets
saying "love".

Maxwell's Seductive Theory

"Keep a boundary from all toxicity!" But Doc—if that
Is your real name—it only bangs against our windows again
Eventually. Gosh I am sorry! This should have come
With a content warning: I plan to do that thing where you throw the baby
Into the pool on their own so they learn
To naturally float up by themselves (but I will test
The water and hug them after). Now here's

The twist: I have totally dived in
The toxic water and guess whose reflection
Stares back at me? Doc! Relax! I'm taking responsibility!
And I also forgot to mention
That the screen you thought you were talking to me through
Is not a window either; so shut the fuck up
And get in the pool and teach those drowning how to swim.

Len Gurts High Art

Museum. Paintings.
Behind glass; in frames. Then
the walls they cling to. The foundations of these buildings.
The cleaner with his mop. The tannoy: bliss.
The rain on the roof. Sorry—
the entrance lobby; the child running:
I would love to give him a pen. Free rein.
My wispy thoughts. My old coat, stained.
My stained heart? Yuk. I am careless
but in love with something, perhaps—
it sounds like it.
The point I was getting to
now—O yes: whatever we look at
next; I am ever so away.

Len Gurts! Call Me

Look what I did with my love for them!
I passed them through the eye of a needle

in a poem. I went mad believing I was Him.
I then caught them cringing at my love

and poetry so I walked out leaving them
trapped in that big empty house

thinking me mad.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury With Himself

I don't want to die but I don't want to feel
like I want to either. When I forget the latter exists
within me too, I disappear out of myself
no world or experience only sitting here
numb, mindless, the shutting down
safer than the not wanting. I am nowhere.
I'll have to come back to those cross roads
again edge a bit further into wanting, then
feeling then out, disappearing
then within and nowhere else but here with myself.

Maxwell Asked For My Help

You must at least let my words be out of control
Sometimes, on paper, in speech,
Else I'm not sure what I could do:
I have seen silenced lambs and caged dogs—
Tongueless messiahs with no ink. You
Must let me be wild in thought, perhaps then
With words, as I get it wrong and get it wrong
And wrong so I can draft myself—improve. You must let me move
Out of myself, all of my selves
Needing your allowances
In this world—ours—if you want to change it; else
I could eat it—break it all—I could be
So thoughtless; only
Let me bring out my worst
Me to control this
In me, as I can be
Many things: I am still not sure
What some of them could do, as I need to explore, having had
No voice or art early; so I remain
Hungry and I could be
Almost careless with my appetite
If you do not let me purge, somewhat

What you may not like to hear, allowing me
To be gross with my hands
Up, your own hands
And pens out, off the page, your own thoughts
And words willing to share
This world with me, while I am mindless, out of control
Trying to keep myself in it. You
Must let me speak
My mind, at times, on your time—on
Each others—so we can tackle the powers above us; else
Forget what I say: I'm not sure what I'd be capable of
If I could not speak—express myself; so

Please, at least
Sometimes, let my words be out of control wrong
So I can move through and away from them, and
With that, change your world, you spoilt pri- (hence
He asked for my help).

Maxwell Explaining How It Works (For Now)

"If you think it pays to fool him then fool him. Who will be the loser? If you think he can help you, and not yourself, then stick to him until you rot."

—Henry Miller, Sexus

It has to be said, that some therapists
Can make good muses, because why
Go to therapy yourself, when cases
Will pay to come to you? And now
We've understood this, us
"Clients"
Can turn up to therapy feigning powerlessness, only
Armed with a secret pen
Or paintbrush, and we can subtly
Capture the therapist's gaps. So it's like a very expensive
Life drawing class! Though
It could actually be a bargain: take your worst self
Along with you, and the therapist
Will throw their insides—unawares—out
On to you, in turn providing you with content
For life; only you might then leave
With some of their baggage too, which means *you*
Won't be the one left feeling better (but you will
Have loads of poetry). And then you'll look around
Outside after? And there were actually no teachers anyway!

There never has been! It was a completely
Unregulated class! Such an abstract
Exercise. Well you wrote it! And my o my: so I did! Thanks
For pointing that out to me! Normality restored, the “patient”
Can then disappear, allowing the therapist’s
Career to flourish, while they’ll have attained
New knowledge of who they can’t support
Also, because don’t we make them cross: terrible! Though aren’t
We fascinating cases too! In the meantime
The “clients” and “classes” can run themselves
Into the ground.

Len Gurts Scratches Further

If they only didn’t believe
that it has to be metaphysical

they may accept
the ghouls that come in to me

at night, sometimes still,
though I cannot remember them being made.

That might not be mine: my ancestors
might have fell from

a high building. How should I know?
How should I know

what I feel?
Sometimes I hear sonnets

having never read them.
Sometimes I am vague and that is enough.

I just want to get rid of the ghouls, Doc.
Let me write something down—I’ll make it up.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury’s Plans for the Future

Sighing
and saying, “Ah, [your name]: you fool!”

Maxwell Can't Read Most Days

*"Your perceptions,
Like rays of sunlight, emanating
From a great central contemplation,
Pierce every fallacy.—And yet
You say you had no education?"
—Herr Von Eberkopf to Peer Gynt, Henrik Isben, Peer Gynt*

Most days I cannot read and no one can take that away from me.
"But if you don't read, how can you write?" Because I am a child
Or dumb—who gives a fuck. I hadn't read one thing
About me until I wrote it: characters didn't feel terrible enough; no one
Was feral and wild or swearing at librarians
Because no one made art a solace for us: we just acted
Like cunts. Now when I read some poets

They make cuntery OK. Maybe I felt judged
By the wrong people—who knows: it's like something else
Didn't want me in the library or someone else
Didn't want me expressing myself or like
It's all nothing to do with intelligence or effort
Or being well read, like dumb rats
Can do it too? And who called me a dumb rat? Me. "So why can't you read most days?" You.

Len Gurts Freud Yeah Cool Dude

Can you feel it yet? Can he?

O he feels it, somewhere, he just

hasn't admitted to it yet. But

it's really why

he's with you: a motherfucker

like me.

Len Gurts on the Cupse

My edges can be *your* edges, you know?

I felt erased. I shed myself
further. I wrote another.

And what is a body?

I barely recognise who I am anymore, having
developed a habit
of dragging huge mirrors into fields, laying them

on the floor as I stand
in the middle, reflecting up

my edges only sky.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury While Waiting for a Leaflet

What can you do to me now in this hospital? I am the greatest survivor
there has ever been, I am the strongest nutjob the world has ever seen and I am not
stopping—no way. It is sterile in here
and I am convulsing and crying, but if I wanted—if I wasn't
a twinge worried of them thinking me still mad—I would start
a sing song on the ward: I am quite mad. Did you think this would be my end
in here? Did you think anything would happen other than me winning?
You didn't bank on my pen, did you. You didn't bet on my body
being an archetypal suit of armour or that I'd be harder
than anything you could do to it, even while it froze stiff
bearing your perverted shit, it only hibernating
temporarily, then smiling: I am not stopping. I am not stopping
my battles here until this war is won and you are dead
and dead and dead—eaten—and they'll say
nothing more about you because I do chew quickly.
And I am not even angry yet! Imagine this, plus anger! No—
no I am writing this with a biscuit, waiting
for a leaflet while the nurse gets me a blanket, and I am spitting you out
while I'm lying here and smiling, because fuck me, you picked the wrong one, didn't you.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's River

I went to the wild river where I used to lie daily
and dripped my holy water in (I'd been crying).
Truthfully, I did this over a lifetime (I write well in advance) and the river
always bursts its banks. And at the bottom of it
is mud. So I jump in again caking myself in it.

There could have been another story now
about us rebuilding the banks together, but

that isn't possible, there having been
no river
to start with
of course: I'd just been crying into her.

And I'm back here again filling it up.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Doesn't Drink for One Weekend

I have lost everyone, quite gladly,
because no one believes me

as the nights draw in, and the women
crawl in again and my mind

goes, "Whoosh!"—making another horror story, mystery—
surreal or paranoid spy thriller!—

perhaps a short poem about hope.

I have lost everyone, quite gladly,
because no one believes me; but

believe me: I will write something new
and true

and most beautiful, soon.

Len Gurts Suffers (And Develops Awareness!)

I don't want to write about it today, please.
Could I just leave it for once?
I want to be sparse. I feel sick with the writing.
I feel sick watching the writing come.

I think one day
this part of me will disappear
and I'll enjoy someone else's poems sometimes; but mostly

I'll just be very content and quiet—in it—

perhaps smoking on my long board like this guy
out the window here

not needing to care about cadence—being heard.

Maxwell's Bullseye

"They'll never forgive you but they won't let you go (let me go!)"

—*The Libertines, 'Don't Look Back Into The Sun'*

"I've done some things that I shouldn't have done

But I haven't stopped loving you once"

—*Arctic Monkeys, 'The Ultra Cheese'*

Everyone I have ever had to give a shit about doesn't understand a word I'm saying; and if I could
be honest

With them, I barely recognise myself either: I'm trying

To straddle what's casual with a twinge

Of literary pretension; it means

I'm speaking to no one I'd really like to talk to, longing

Backwards for something mindless and intoxicating. Though don't think me patronising. Be
flattered.

I'm off out tonight to throw a stone hedgehog through a solicitor's window

And to stand creepily close to people in nightclubs

While I stare, because as you can hear, I am bored

Here, it being

Too easy being a... sculptor... and I no longer require the therapeutic benefits

Of marble, instead missing the comfort to be found in the unpredictability of dysregulation

And abuse; which I now

Of course can mix with a lifetime of resentment

For what I could've won

To create these self-referential statues that I'll be chiselling for the rest of one's career.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Explores Imagery, Agency

"Violent use brings violent plans"

Metallica, 'Welcome Home (Sanitarium)'

Everything I tried to love

stood me up against a wall

and fixed me there, locking

my shoulders in a brace, my arms

out in front of me with a typewriter

tied between my hands. They now

sit and giggle beneath me

about my dilemma, as I cannot

write about them nor can I crush

them with its weight: I am not able to drop it.
And while they relax
under me, they say
and do as they please. And while I remain
trapped here they'll say and do
as they please
to me.

And I know I'm holding on to the wrong thing.
And so the stories grow and grow.

Len Gurts Being Watched By Me

I saw him across the room, scribing, in a blitz of metaphor.
We did not exist yet. This room did not exist. It never

needed to. "Are you sure?" I said to myself. But not
to him: I thought I could write the most incredible things too, but was it worth

the guilt? As I saw him slipping, the mania
dragging him along. I could say nothing; I could write

nothing about it, as nothing
can be said about such things, as it is not

the power but the talker
of it that gets people's backs up. But I did want to say, "Leave!

Leave the library! Please! Put that pen down! Breathe!
While you let as much as you can go past

as you exit, else it may come true on a darker night." But how cringe does that sound!
My own eyes roll. I looked at my own paper then: empty and safe.

But then what shall I do? What shall I do? What shall I do? What shall I do?
What shall I do? What shall I do? What shall I do? Because he is dying.

Len Gurts Workshop

"How do you get good at it?" Well, that depends
on you, and how much of you
you are willing to lose. You see, I have styles
and voices, but when I *try*
with them, they aren't as good, if we let good
be brash cocky spaceyquickman.

“What? Does spacy need an “e”?” See! That’s what
we are after, as people can write things
they aren’t about at all! But have you tried
pointing that out? They will say *you* are mad; they will talk
and talk without actually saying anything, so you must
be silent and have less compassion while I am going
all David Byrne with this kind of voice... But can you now
see how you need to stop listening? Else you will be awful at it;
just go on your own feel, at least for a bit.
And never, ever
ever have sex as if your mates are reading you either. That is the secret.

Len Gurts Load of Shit

Look at this box of shit I have! Though
it fits well with all my other boxes of shit.

Can you see them all lined up in your head? How do they look?
Can you see how *old* some of them are?

This latest one though... Boy, it’s even got me saying
“boy.” And it’s a *mega* box of shit! But it’s also made me notice

my other boxes of shit, too! “Fuck!” I thought. “What a load
of shit I have!” So I am going to roundhouse kick them

off my shelf; which is risky: they won’t like it.
They’ll spray everywhere! But

fuck that shit! And I give thanks for this latest one
through gritted and shitted teeth.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Episoding Again

This is just a little share, a little share to loosen my scenery
The music now comes so openly—I find full stops unnecessary
If I’d have written this in the moment I wouldn’t have been so analytic
But I do like the calmness of the library
After a share
The laugh behind me is what I never experienced
I have an expectation of eye contact, and I am multiple things
There are too many bodies to look at: O well
& there mustn’t be too many characters any more—not for much longer
My child is walking in the room; the babies learning to read
must write

It is deliberate and a beautiful process, and no other word is required or fitting
I can now feel (here we go)
 the shivers and bubbles and waves coming to me
And it has been written in so many ways: I want to forget them all
But My God My God My God, I love that I am here
The technicality does not matter
I hate to stall matters, but eating now would stall this
One day, this will be blissfully unapparent
I hope she relives it too
So she no longer has to live in it
God I am becoming so loose; I think you might be me
 I think that might be why some don't talk about it

When I feel it is right I will be released: I know it
Man, I know not to care at all about what they say and study
I wish this was every communication
As an aside, I don't think greetings cards say anything
A simple thought, but the size of this Hula Hoop
 I now have these quiet moments
Since I am sharing, I think I'm in love with everyone poetically
 and I copied "&" for no reason
And since I am sharing, is there a way to say at all
 about how experience can so fundamentally change
 because I am so wide

Len Gurts at the Dentist, Perhaps

I am waiting. I do not want to.
If they remove the root from me it dies.

I feel fated by something I never would have chosen
(but I did! I am a piece of shit)

and it may be a curse or a tooth, as I still
hide deep deep truth, man; but

that all doesn't matter, as I was called for
by something ontically beyond me, so I wait

acceptingly, at a push: send hot nurses.

Len Gurts Still Flames (He Doesn't Know He's the Bush)

And I'm just staring at this burning bush, yeah,
in its cage, bursting and flamed—but still

in its cage: it points and points
and it chews—studies the ancients

and patients—clunky degrees
and flames—still flames—still rages and spits.

And I can't get close
to unlocking it.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Riffs on "The Boy" Again

I really don't know if I can write this at all.
I watched hundreds of them go past today, caught a few.
They were hideous, some of them. So many beings and sounds.
It has taken some time for this to come, and watching them go
is a death—it is a visit to the pearly gates: I was in the pub.
A man offered me a drink after a bit of chit chat. It felt too strong.
Where did I come from?
One of the ones I did capture felt too powerful. I knew it at the time
and knew to stop. Heaven knows where I would have gone
or how I survived it before, the barrage dragging me.
(Right now, I must caveat, someone I can no longer help
is going past too.)
I know it is stupid to even want this here, but this is me.
I have felt this person slipping around for years. They were disgusted in me
at times—still are. We are not sure what to say to each other. We are all not sure.
I felt the boy hanging at the door even at breakfast, the love of my life
seeing me, seeing me, seeing me, seeing me, seeing me,
and it makes me feel too much too, which is a shame, but I am so excited
with what comes. That is *life*?
I cannot think where the boy has been. I cannot. I cannot. I will not need to—
only I know he comes.
My legs grew when I was walking back—my whole body. It is not surprising.
But then these waves! And the rain! And my tears—they still sound
too pathetic to my ears and that makes me think and think.
I am happy to forget all this noted down, despite what I am doing.
(And her. That never? Or past?)
I feel sick with my arrogance and tentative claims of greatness. Most of it
I cannot mention—I will not see it again.
What if someone reads it? Where am I taking them?
This is nothing that I wanted to write, and I have learned
that's a godsend: I listened. I want to remember nothing, but to enjoy
the love of a being under a roof, a drink, or under covers. No thinking.
I watched—and let—hundreds go past, and my boy walked in the room

and we cried together getting home on legs I'd never known.

Maxwell Mumbling Again

Misanthropically-induced salted butter.

A superficial synonym for your concept and I'm in a bad mood.

Perpetual disorders seen but not heard over a lifetime.

It cannot possibly be connected to social justice.

I am writing this whilst frying eggs.

There's no chance he's thinking about it—nope.

Changing the pronoun because it cannot all be about me.

It means she didn't start the fire but found *another* guy with a bloody holiday home. Git!

Reading the letters, *a f f a i r*, oblivious.

The correctional function on a theme of anti-climactic noise breaks.

Pushing the boat out.

Stopping.

Wait—one more one more!

Art isn't smart but thinking makes you stupid.

Maxwell's Poetry for Dummies (Laying It on Fik)

Why do you fink I am fik; in fact,

Why do / fink you are finking I am fik? Because

What even is it to be fik? Maybe

Just to write like this?

I do not listen to a single word anybody says.

I've read

All the books, all fik

In their own unique ways.

So why can't I have my own fik book...?

I am

Hilarious though! And you can't teach that; which may

Be the point? Which may be the *only* point! So

Doc, Prof, Teach,

Publisher: if you think my ilk

Be fik, most of us

Will give you a fik ear, while one or two

Will feel so pressed

Into the margins—will feel

So *fikened*—that you might

End up being taught a fang or two.

“Do you think I do these things for real?”

—Pulp, ‘I Spy’

“His accent sounded fine to me”

—Vampire Weekend, ‘Oxford Comma’

Albert K. Ashes-Bury’s POWER

“What’s the bravest thing you ever did?”

He spat in the road a bloody phlegm. Getting up this morning, he said.”

—Cormac McCarthy, The Road

Depersonalisation. Dissociation. Derealisation.

Anxiety. Depression. Suicidal ideation.

Delusions. Psychosis. Sleep disorder.

Substance abuse. Paranoia. Terror.

The little hiccups that some of us must face, eh!

And though

I’ve beaten those, the war

never stops, as I must now face

another battle: a headache!

But

to combat that

I think I’ll just cut my own head off

as it would only grow back.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Takes His Sweet Time

If I were a better man, I wouldn’t be

writing this, telling you

instead

that I have not known love

to exist and grow like this, that I never

knew what love could be, how it felt,

what it always singularly was; and I would

be telling you—selfishly, indeed—not

that I love you—because of course

I do—but

that you made me feel loved, seen, safe,
and so I now feel loved (I'd say it
over and over) even
whilst knowing
words, aren't always meaningful, it being
wasted, that word (love), at times; but
I'd use it fine
and fully with you, as I feel
fine and full now, at times, mostly
when I think of you, mostly since I've known
you, whilst not truly knowing
where you came from (not here), what you
are, how this
all works, yet still knowing
you have come and it came, and it
works, whilst realising
I never knew it before, I never knew it
was this
in this capacity; and now, I just
feel it; and of course, I am
a better man for this, and due
to you; but, if only
I told you—if I only
you could read this.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's Rough Sketch

I am building a straw man for my poetry
sitting on a hay bale in a field
pretending to enjoy the sun, while labourers
walk home from work measuring me—

pointing the finger; downing their beer—as I sketch them

building a straw man for my poetry
sitting on a hay bale in a field
pretending to enjoy the sun; while really
I am the scarecrow a long way from Kansas.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Finds Work

Can you believe I've found employment
to bring myself back down? Obviously
to pay the rent too, but why am I bringing myself
back down? Probably because poetry doesn't pay, though it does

take me away and I feel glorious
when it does, if aloof—if sentimental. I know I am more than a job, despite
how I feel this morning, with work
only being a means to... a means! But that only feels mean! Though at least I can still write
to get myself up, to start
my commute or just to feel
up, when I am able to, knowing
there's no need to come down
when we're able to. Though, do I need to be more grounded? Perhaps
I do, at least
as the new boy: I cannot fly into the office yet! But I can bounce
inside myself instead: I am allowed
to feel lifted. So I will skip along
my commute, sheepishly singing some
Astral Weeks, as unapologetically
poetic as I am. But I will have to brush my teeth
in the office on my first day
now, having spent
my morning writing this, having taken myself
up
and away again—having made myself late.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Is a Rock, an Island

When I leave the bar and the books I lie about
I see I am not here to be liked—to have friends.
I don't want friends. Who has friends? Who wants to be liked?
I am only liked when I am nothing like I am, gifting them

what they want, not being the all that is rotten of me.
It isn't human. It isn't human to be simply rotten, or

disliked—or yourself: the pit of your bag of bones. We lie
about this—all our flaws; not authentically us. Being liked,

being nothing of yourself, having friends: that is
being human, and so false, and so flawed. But I am rotten and real and alone.

Len Gurts' Pointless Concept

The best poet
ever, but they
used a
template
with too many

line
breaks,
meaning they
never
had a sub-
mission
accepted.

Len Gurts On...

...the cashier's eyes
saying everything: "Stella

and wet wipes. Is everything
alright?" But his voice

is cowardly: "Do...
Do you have a Clubcard?" "No

mate," I say. "I don't.
You see, I struggle with loyalty."

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Hopes No One Need Understand This

After Mary Oliver

I add *After* to many of my own now, but before?
I admit, I found it difficult, as I couldn't really relate to poetry.
I found most of it quite irritating, and it made me angry,
not being able to feel or understand the poems.
Instead, I would have a thought, like, *I don't experience life like that at all!*
but layers would mask over thought, layers that remained confused,
protective, this leaving me unable to grasp a lot of things. I couldn't access
trees or air or deer, for instance, and certainly
none of that love thing, or even the most basic of feeling,
all of which appear in many poems. I think I only had access to fear,
not that I can remember, nor do I wish to; and I still do, at times,
only feel that same fear becoming terror very deeply.

But my terror is getting quieter (it always gets quieter),
and I hope no one need understand this again.
Though, I wouldn't want a choir to be the only ones hearing me either:
does someone finally being able to write about terror
help others sing? How do the confused gain a voice—an experience—
after so long?

I would like to tell you about the foxes that come to my garden now.
I think most of my friends just find it funny (*though I try not to think so much, Mary*).
She'd know why they were here—they turn up to guide me: I'm now open to thinking this.
And what's more, a badger came the other night!
Below my window it was, rustling. Like it was doing a dance in the reeds!
I could do with cutting the reeds back, but for their sake, I won't.
Although I doubt foxes and badgers ever dance off together?
Imagine it though! Can you picture it?
I've seen them both now, at least—I've experienced them.
And I do hope you can picture it.

*Mary, did you know, I was the saddest boy in the world once,
and I didn't even know it?
I didn't feel the walls at all, even as a child—even as I ran
my fingers along the grit, not knowing, that right at those moments,
the walls were making themselves so difficult to push down—so painful.*

*And I'm sorry I found you annoying, even though
I'm sure you understand. And since I am apologising
and realising things, I wanted to ask: could you help me
with those that can't sing? As I see many that don't realise it yet:
they cannot sing or feel or think.
Of course, they are all OK (O Mary—
they are so beautiful and wonderful),
but there are many of them, and I'd like to help a little.*

*By the way, sometimes I talk to the animals now, you know.
Yes—I'm at that strange point: waving at foxes and badgers!
I might learn some plant names too, though
this is a big "might", it not really being my thing.
But at least I can feel them now.*

*And you know, I cry when I want to now, as I am
able to cry, there being no question about where I'll do it either:
in the dark; in the woods; down the street.
This feels very, very beautiful and wonderful at times, too, you know,
like it also does
to finally be able to feel, experience and understand poems—and you,
let alone myself.*

*I could sound very silly now (though it does feel good to say it,
and I don't really care how I sound), but I'm sure the foxes
understand me
when they see me crying, and that they even appear*

*to nod at me, at times—in the woods, street,
dark—which, of course,
you understood and felt, too.*

*O Mary—and again, I am sorry.
But thank you.*

Len Gurts Tries Narrative

The count left. He wasn't really
a count, but he let them have that.
"You know who the count is, don't you?":
the sayers. The sayers.

Then he left. What did he build? O a great thing. An almighty
thing. Little did he detach though: he built
what he left behind, the very human
thing that he was. The count...ess? The count-ees, if you will, were left

with all his pills and money but no blood, which made them
wither, blaming and blaming the count. The count (do not forget
his name; but
maybe you could make up your own?) said little

sometimes, sending drops to appease. But could they be pleased? What do you think?
What do yours do
when you visit, at night? His ones
laugh while he flies

through the darkness still too scared to cross the river.

Maxwell on Imitations and Allusions and "After"s and Credit and All That

After Googling it

Who
Cares.

Len Gurts on Len Gurts

*"Dissection is a virtue when
It operates on other men."
—Theodore Roethke, 'Lines Upon Leaving a Sanitarium'*

So I know more than the other boys, as those other boys

are rubbish. Naff. They are so crass, honey. Sorry I meant friend. They do all sorts to get girls, baby. Women: sorry again. Not like me though—I understand. I don't act tough or cool. Or act: not at all. I don't play up to you. But let's talk

about the other boys forever. Let's compare me to the other boys who just act silly. They aren't like me: I am so serious with my poetry. Whereas they... they act all cool and false (I should know). And I should know, as I used to hang around with them a bit, yeah. Yeah—you see

I know how they fake it. O yes—I know all the funny things they do, like, throwing other guys under the bus when trying to impress you, acting all cool. You know? I said “cool” already? Yeah. Well. Yeah. And they don't think about things. Or philosophy. Or poems. And their

poetry is dross, if they even do it, that is. Not like me. You know what, baby? I mean, honey. I mean girl. I mean woman OK; you know what though? I understand. Those other boys though? Man. Boys! They don't know. They aren't like me. They're always comparing, you see. Whereas me... me...

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Is Sad, I Think

I am not “sad.” I am not *it*, but, I am going through “it”. But I do feel so sad. I am so lonely, so lonely, so lonely.

It is nothing I have learned how to share yet. I have consistently invested in sunk-cost fallacies. I am blaming—everything I cannot do is a projection of my own judgement: I did not believe anyone could feel like this; I did not know such sadness existed.

I can be quite romantic with woe, so when a tear runs down my finger I feel good about it. But it is still sad—it is really painful—only this is better than no feeling at all. I relate to films in these moments—to something. I am so sad, along with the people in the screen, but at least I no longer exist behind one.

I analyse myself with this—the better of much sadnesses: “This one comes with more feeling, at least.” There used to be spaces very beyond sadnesses: “I must compare—remember.” All are methods to measure progress—hope.

I'm not sure what I'm doing with this now, but this feels
a touch easier: I am not still hearing what is sunken; I am not
holding the tears in. And the screams. Man—those things...

But they've passed; though, I am so lonely with it.
So lonely with it.

My screen is insisting it goes again:
"Well, that's what you've wrote."

Early Effort by Maxwell

"Jeremy spoke in class today"
—Pearl Jam, 'Jeremy'

Why don't you like the idea of my type knowing what we're on about?
Why don't you like the idea of my type knowing how the books work?

It's like we can string sentences together.
It's like if you listened—if you let us breathe—you'd hear that we can talk and you'd know that we
know what we mean; that we make sense.

And it's like you do exactly what you charge those powerful ones over there with: you think we
couldn't possibly understand what is going on.
But we do, we just consciously don't give a shit, because how dull is it to argue over the amount
of literature writers should be reading?

Len Gurts Advice

After Roxette

On rehearing songs
you loved years ago
but didn't understand why: "Fuck!
I really should have
listened to my heart."

Len Gurts' Slit Gong Metaphor

He stood in the square banging his drum.
It made a repetitive beat.
No one asked about it.
A crowd never stopped.
It could have meant anything—nothing.

A woman came from another village.
She heard the drum, stopped.
So did he.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's May

May you be born easily and hugged tightly
when that is needed. May you never
have to study or read or philosophise
or write poetry. May you never have to think
of anything.

May love and all its quilts never haunt you.
May physicality not be loaded—sex
safe, health being snuffles and old age
at best. May you accept
summer and winter in any climate.

May you not overanalyse anything written.
May you not have to scrutinise
the motivations and dirty wills of others.
May you nod at dirt without judgement
but from far away.

May you at worst write your own.

Maxwell Disturber of the Peace (Manifesting)

"I write youthful base poetry"
—Duo Duo, 'Handicraft'

Yes thank you yes thank you yes thank you yes thank you.
Yes thank you I am about to die and they are going

To intern me in the Abbey—the grand old
Westminster Abbey. And not only that, but Poet's Corner!

My game has been a long one: I am not really ill
Or dying. For when I am in there

In my box in the corner
I am going

To pass wind.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Sitting in Eat-A-Pitta Listening to Rupert Holmes 'Escape (The Pina Colada Song)'

I will cry anywhere during anything because it just hits sometimes, the beauty of feeling—the pureness of the music—its volume—the volume—it being especially loud in here but it isn't that—it isn't that—it's that I can feel it and feel it and feel more and more and more all the time, this being what this is, whatever this all is now. And I forgive everything. And it is unpoetable

how the rising and shivering and crying comes and I am here—I am so here—not comprehending the rest of this thing that is left to go as I am so here, and so many others will be now too, and that is poetable, as all is forgiven, as I love everything and you are getting here.

I cannot tell you how loud the volume can go:
it is like moving into another existence—another plane;
it is like being born and absurd and simple and it is just a rise
and a shiver and a cry as a rush like that—like this—even in Eat-A-Pitta

to Rupert Holmes. And 'It Wasn't Me'

by Shaggy coming in wasn't expected
or necessarily appropriate either. Life can be funny and absurd
and simple and so loud at times. I forgive you.

Len Gurts With Wine

"How do we ease it all only
ease it all!" I just don't know, but you are mad
beautiful and fine, and right now, I can only offer you

this wine. And I would like you
to take the edge off
for once.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's One Stanza to Feel

I must believe there is something sublime always
even when I forget this, as I have felt the negation
of this, of not just the sublime but of everything
for most of this.

But that was it just then. Honestly. Did you feel that?

That just got something turning—the skin bubbling—
and I don't need to stress the effort that it takes over time
but it is always, always doable and sublime
only as it may eventually be for you.

Len Gurts Deep

Loved me for years:
“Soul mate, my soul mate!”
Then too deep, too deep—
said I was, “Too deep!”
and ran away from me.

Then came back!

And I said, “Stop looking a gift horse.”
And she said, “But you neigh-ver did seem so!”
And I said, “Nor you, my trusty steed.”
And she said, “Now you're just being silly—I love you!”

And I said I said I said,
“Now don't you get too deep now.”

Albert K. Ashes-Bury on “Big Hearts”

But of course, there are many big hearts!
They saw me and smiled when I was wild.
They brushed against me when I didn't realise
always just as I needed them
always when I was on the cusp of going too far.
What super big hearts. What silent deities.

And one of them in the supermarket today: she let me
have the last baguette!
And her heart said, “I love you I love you
I love you,” to mine.

And it is really just as brilliant and easy as that, I promise.
It really is a very simple method for them.

And I promise they are there always, sneaking about
as mere dough-martyrs, some days.

Len Gurts Doing Funny (He Hopes)

I will be incredibly weird and charming.

I will add all of your friends and be my best self

over and over and over again, for you

and for them, but also cut straight to the point here: Would you like to

have sex? Would you let me fuck you? Can we be intimate together? I think it would be great. And I am only

direct in this way as I know it is in the known that we make each other feel good

and right, even from here, even though we are both so far away from each other—even with

huge barriers between us like us never having met each other before; as I can feel

our salty seas making endless poetry, it pouring out of us creamily, like, “Nah, mate—this just sounds really weird.”

Len Gurts Is for the Children

“Let your feelings slip, boy, but never your mask, boy”

—Underworld, ‘Born Slippy (Nuxx)’

I was a dead tree or dead boy—something like that; but at a minimum

I was a detached “maybe”—a something very far away from here—

and I just wrote and read (though sometimes

I didn’t even take the words in: I would just stare blankly

at the Fyodors and Plaths believing osmosis

would just *do* something, perhaps? Some of the wordsmiths: they would laugh

at that. But this isn’t the place for them! Although, if that is you: sympathy

for the little shits, please?) when suddenly, as if

in a flash (because why not, good reader—why the fucking hell not:

does it not merely seem like a flash—like nothing—if we ever

get the chance to live this thing right?) I was here

and built and writing, but with lots of visible screw-heads and stripped bark: I had narrative

and front and back; I could use metaphor (“I was a ship

in the storm and lasted like shit. / Rained loads. Bad trip. / Got very wet

and sunk-ish.”) but I had no idea what this all was for: “Why

am I having to do this now?” I thought. Now I look back

at the so-called other trees lost in the woods, and I worry

I can do nothing for them with this. And I have no idea
why—as a mere “maybe”—I survived (I cannot pat
my bark or inner chil- (leave off) and say, “Great story. So brave. Well done!”). And the forest:
it was much more fun in there! I ran amok! Writing
and editing and reading myself back now though, I feel
I’m still out there fighting all of this instead, as a lot of that dead boy
clearly longs to remain lost in the woods.

Len Gurts Thinks He’s David Chase

Something shiny (but it must
be flat) with a wide

enough shadow
to hide a lot of rubbish

and lies. I must not... my oh my:
I must never again

collect up all that rubbish!
See the significance, first,

I shall—watch a significantly
good series about similar grief

and guilt: the links
in this matrix:

it’s Pie-O-My for me.

Len Gurts Taking Stock

“I see that kingfisher print everywhere. I really like that candle holder!”
Am I really here? Is this really
my voice?

My life has certainly changed: I have tastes
and likes. Actual tastes and likes!

I know what punctuation works, too—just about?
I do not worry about overusing “I”s now either: it is luxurious
up here.

Sorry! I also seem to have a piece
of writing that expresses myself
on my hands: I hate myself
again; disgusting disgusting
art and kissing girls

in gift shops that run
gift shops that can't
sit still so they redo
the stocktake: three litres of White Lightning
this ain't.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury in His Sleep

“you could be a bitch or step out the margin, I got up quick”
—Kendrick Lamar, *‘Father Time’*

“If you are Goliath, how on earth do you defeat someone who thinks like that? You could kill him, of course”
—Malcolm Gladwell, *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*

“Arnold: ‘Don't hit me, I'll hit me! I'm crazy!’
Harold: ‘Wow, you really are crazy. Wanna join our club?’
(The kids cheer.)
Helga: ‘Boys are so stupid.’”
—Hey Arnold, *‘24 Hours to Live’*

You aren't listening you don't understand you can't touch me.
Half my face will paralyse and I will slop yogurt across my cheeks and chin and it doesn't matter.
I will ride delusions and psychosis and solipsism
all the way down
and up
and it doesn't matter. What can you do to me now?
What can you do to this now?
I will scream into the night for months and years and I will tell myself I am Jesus and to have no
doubt and that I am magical and beautiful and true and you aren't listening and you
don't understand and you can't touch me
Do not believe me if you want—I believe myself
You can twist my reality but I've finally built my own
You can try to rape me again but I'm too big now
I'm too strong
I'm too strong
What do you think you could do?
Feel wherever you are for the answer—it is a sincere request:
what do you think you could do, then, now?
You cannot stop this
I will build a whole world to only eat it all
I will kill everything and everyone to breathe one true breath—my one and only true breath
You aren't listening or understanding and you can't touch me
What could you do with this now?
What could you do with me now?

There is no contingency today and I know what my words can do. I have made them godlike. It is a sincere question: what are you going to be able to do about them now? I do not worry for you, but I am interested in how you can approach this. My words: they are a potion and the devil. I believe you might die. I really believe you might be killed by them now! There is no pulling back here: scan through again. What can you do now? You cannot make me quiet. Do you realise how long this takes to get here? What can you do? You cannot rape me again. You cannot rape my body or mind or existence again. It is so simple; I am beaming—hysterical—gleeful

You cannot look at us and rape us and lie again

You just can't. I went all the way down and up and across all the hysteria and psychosis and I have seen and believed and been everything

So what could you do now?

What are you going to do now with this?

You've no idea where I can keep going to and breaking myself from to win. To win and be. I do not stop. You cannot touch this. I do not stop

Truly, I've not even begun with you yet either

Wait until I have this more together

I'd learn another language. Shoot your cognition out perhaps

I do not worry for you, but I really do not know what you do now

I cannot stop thinking and saying it: what can you do to this now?

I don't not sleep or walk around delirious or scream now. I do this. I have this. Now what can you do? My face fails and I love it. I eat and slop it all. What can you do?

What did you go and create? A warped world of me and in me, but what now? You didn't know about this by-product. This is not creative expression. This is not controlled or formal. There is no distance here to produce some safe outlet. This is me and what I can and will do now. What can you do now?

I have words, that's it. I am extremely amiable otherwise. It is terrifying—they aren't me and they are. But what did you create? They are going to slowly, slowly kill you, I think.

What can you do? Look—I'm not stopping.

You lie and twist and rape and can't listen.

You might die.

No no no no no I love you

I send all the love

Every drop of it from everything and everyone

Love love love love love love love

What can you do now?

What can you do to me now?

Love love love love love love love

I found it all out what can you do I send every drop of it

back

And love love love love love

Drank the potion chewed that devil up above and spat him out here like look devillllloveeeee O
it's love here now

What you going to do

when I really get started

You don't understand now I'm here now I'm psychotic now I'm wild now I'm penning now but I'm
here now so what can you do with this now when I really get started

I would hold you and your arms and listen and understand and not touch it's all love love love
Do what you want with it

Len Gurts Temporarily Down Park Street

Stopped wearing a helmet because I'm ready.

Stopped going to appointments because I'm done.

I am right at the very edge of this thing now pushing

finger-sand sliders through bangs

like haphazardously-stabbed butter—got neck muscles

like a replaced jump man over drums; so I shall not

let them say whether I should live or die. And I shall not

let them instruct my cutey

bootied bounce. Therefore, it is of this

that feels so good now (O I dip. But have you ever

heard a guru talk about their commute?)

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's Ode to Love, You, This

"Maybe I'm a lonely man in the middle of something

That he doesn't really understand"

—Paul McCartney, 'Maybe I'm Amazed'

*"It even seems as if the love-episode had served as a mere release, or had been unconsciously
arranged for a definite purpose, and as if the personal experience were only a prelude to the all-
important 'divine comedy.'"*

—Carl Jung, 'Psychology and Literature'

"Ain't no bitch like my bitch 'cause that bitch been my pen"

—Kendrick Lamar & SZA, 'gloria'

My hands are up and out and irresponsible!
They had me writing this before phonics—
they had me making sense of you
before poetry, all else
being secondary there's no doubt.
But what do I know

really? I was the last to be shown
what any of this was for. I just followed
my pen, even when I did not want to—
and I still do, even while
I am terrified and at the mercy
of what wants to talk itself out of me.

Honestly, I was only
three (or unborn?) when I was being positioned for this poem (and
for us? I'm positive) and I am only
meeting with it now—which
has hurt (as I was the last to know
and accept it: my hands are up).

And honestly honestly honestly, I knew
nothing of the use of epizeuxis
before you (or of love—
or of you you you) but it feels so
so so good and I was being given something
all the time, wasn't I, just following

my pen in the dark, and out you came
just as you always would have.
(And did you know all this
where you were, even all those miles away?)
O and now I cannot even hold it in!
As I must just say

how utterly *magical* it still is for me
to merely be a *witness* to this thing I am—that we are—
that is done to me and us

and this and how utterly
utterly *utterly* in love with us—and this!—
I still am (and even

even even now
I am—still and completely—

just watching the magic and love come out

like an excited child. Like I'm three!
I had no idea
what this all was until now, but it was in me

when I was three, I think.
And you've always been here too
haven't you—this

has always been here.
And I am not responsible for it,
only totally in awe of it all).

Len Gurts Lying in Bed the Morning After a One-Night Stand

Jackdaw at her window. Does it purposely knock?
Will it get to us soon? It does tap quite hard.

"Don't write about this! Don't be that.
But live—love—only as you must."

OK, Jack—it'll be done.
But you got to get away from me first.

Len Gurts Thinks He's Dropped a Mic

I want to sell
enough poetry
to afford the therapy
to stop needing poetry.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Stood Up

Two foxes were lying in the sun
in my garden. I'm not into

such things, but
I must be facing straight. Or is the other website right?

Len Gurts Alone, Though

I could pull back veneer after veneer—
the "Who is it that told you that?"s—
fast costumes and castoff relief: a dress, a sexuality—

a line all the way back to one of the memorabilia wars—
stand on a corner and sell my aesthetic—
stand on a pole and still my ascetic;
and the my my mys of me could go
go go chiselling into the anatomy of nothing being at the bottom (where
would the poet come up? I hate this piece—it is really sickening to me;
but I am still here quite wrongly
and from this unlovable position will come my march). Fictions are, for me,
the only way to do it coherently: hide
behind creativity in missed premises;
throw out what you don't want in a poetic character (mine is a cynic
today/a lot) then there is that emptiluminicity:
just about the end of a limb dragging an open shape across a tree
its face shouting at no one—charging at no one—perhaps
(none of it is about one singular thing—
law of identity or all equals all or it's just the same thing or vice versa.
Pulling back layers and not taking them with you—
more you, less this;
and more consistently alone
but then everything else.

This is why I hated the piece then: it was all
a waste until this last bracket? But it demonstrates the stripping and the stripping—
the guff we preamble in—
then the bracketed nonsense more or less left behind. How experientially cute though
only. 2007 me would be baffled, my sickening
the only consistent layer maybe: insight, bro!).

Len Gurts Practises Too (Also Precious)

Where is my second coming (but I did try
my hardest!) who does not need
to write or read
any of this
anymore? Who knows
and provides, not only in smut, but in touch,
reality, the fall?

Imagine if she didn't
care about rhymes, too! Heavenly. Only

saw me on the bus, pulled me off,
lifted my hood

and flicked the grabless tuts off my chinny-chin-chin

as we got raptured and smushed.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Making You Wince

I have fallen uncontrollably in love
sixteen times already today
and each was *it*: the one!

Mummy—why didn't you say anything?

Len Gurts Wellness Practitioner

She is going to go "Bump!" A big
smack bang wallop bump.

So I'll help, not with words,
but pump pump.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury With Another Wincer

This voice of mine
that comes in rhyme:
not me, wholly,
but safety.

Len Gurts Reads Poem Out on Date

Swimming and needless.
Kissing and just us.
Don't make me stop:
I feel like Jesus.

Christ alive: a joke!
Objectivity? A sacred poke?

Nah—I'm not coming down.
Nope nope nope.

Len Gurts Being a Shit

Pulling that off from over there
and picking that up from...

Even I hesitate at that;

but I'll *peek* a look and see
its condition;
the mess it's put me
in—
this in.

In the longgggg runnnnn, though,
it is being silly,
yet I'll feel. Better:
just feel.

They may
say
"As a starling by a lake
in a whisp"
that this is not a poetic thesis.
That voice will be turning the lights off
before it puts its thing in, I don't doubt it.
Though I could be there

holding his hand
offering my cookie jar for him to try.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Improves

I go to the kitchen to get water and wash a plate
I speak to my housemate
She is preparing a pie
I tell her about when I got into making pastry a bit last year
Not making my own pastry, just making pastries
Rolling out the ready-made stuff
You can make rough parcels easily and they are forgivable and forgiving
No wonder people are bewildered
I wash my plate as we chat
Leek, bacon and potato are hers
I fill my glass
Nothing sweet in the cupboard—no need to look
I say enjoy and leave
I'm not self-conscious. A change. Today's point
I go back to my room
I take off my slippers. I simultaneously cry
My eyes were watering earlier too
I walked down the street and it flowed
I have stopped wiping them now

I enjoy smiling at people with my tears and big heart. One doctor felt it
I do streets with wet or puffy or pretty eyes now and I'm unconcerned
I lie on the sofa. I jot a poem
It is light and big hearted
I might watch the second episode of *Gazza*
I wonder if that will autocorrect to the strip, goes by
I'm glad I have the big heart and the humour
I felt *Gazza* in the first episode, I really did
I think I can relate to his humanity but I wouldn't tell a doctor or a reader that
Unrelatable empathy for non-sports fans
But it is doing something for me, so who cares
When I play football I imagine I look that good
There was a point in it somewhere
I can enjoy speaking to my housemates now
Maybe I should try making pastries again

Len Gurts Goes All Messiah Complex

That performer
is doing it for them.

Give him your category mistakes
and snakes and scurvy
your crazy and lurgy
and you'll get bubblegumable chews
of paisley or jogging bottom
Shelley or Johnny Rotten
back

because all of us are in you
each disciple and Pilate
pilates or beer gut
all of it
West Bank or Jew.

He will be gorgeously perverse and filthy on every border
he will eat Eve out and leave tea spout stains
end pain in every fine chinaed garden
that don't let all the bands in
recklessly abandoning social cause and pan handling measures
of austerity.

There is not an art budget. There is no STEM.
We build what we like.
And what is there

but a performance
always
that we direct
despite... what says, exactly?
Who says, exactly?
Who is saying.

What is there
but your performance—your lies along with theirs?

Get off your cross: I've snapped it.

Len Gurtz: "the England hero who 'writes his own scripts'"

I hope they do think
"What a load of shit."
This shit might get the next rat
to write rather than rolling around in filth
cutting themselves and crawling around
in filth and shit and cutting themselves.
So what if it's a load of shit. What a load of shit.
More people would rather read this
than shit. Yours is shit if no one wants it.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's Psychological Warfare

You came to my lands and you stood on me.
You stood on my body and my home and my children.
You burnt everything.
You burnt everything.
You left me with nothin-

O, but you looked so very handsome
in your outfit when you came!
If you wanted to
you could make someone—even yourself!—
so very proud.

And if you need it, I'll say it: I ever so love you.
You can have that until you don't need it anymore.
I ever so love you, you ever-so-loved, you—

you left me with ever-so-love you.

Len Gurts Feels Like Pablo

I'm practicin my- I am practising my wor-
You know how some musicians
are good enough to play their instruments
poorly, yet they still sound really great? I want
to do that with a poem, so it's good and bad
at the same time but that's apparent. It'd perhaps
be arrogant, too? (That's always my fear—lamps
under bushels again: Jesus Christ!) So how wud I
make it apparent and still good
and coherent overall? You know, so it looks casual
and thrown together, but a little bit good? (I wish I could use "caj"
in a poem. Is that spelt right?) And what is to be made
of such an attempt? Why would one bother? And what would it say
about me? *Put something psychoanalytic here, perhaps, or
some philosophy without directly using the jargon. Metaphysics? Or your independently writing
pen?* I'm not sure how to even spell
that first "practising." *Why?*
Really—why this? What does it say about you?
Unpicking that would be a good start.

Len Gurts Apparently Not Saying It

*"I wanna fuck everyone in the world
I wanna do something that matters"
—Nine Inch Nails, 'I Do Not Want This'*

O I would—all day.
All day with all of them, I would.
All day with all of them I tells ya!

But I wouldn't dare say it out loud.
I'll think it, but I wouldn't dare say it out loud.
Wouldn't dare speak up about any of it; only

give it another voice instead, perhaps
make it sound a bit creepy
on paper.

Len Gurts Being Albert K. Ashes-Bury?

It seems to only be about how I come to be
in the morning, if I can keep my mornings

please, as everything up and down—from the maths
to the love—is decided there. How loose!

How immaterial and whimsical! Learning to only feel
my body: I think nothing new there

on the best of days—on the most undefined
of days—as I am so good at just *being* there, sometimes,
that there be no words for poems.

Len Gurts Gets a Book Deal

When we're all universally accepted
they'll be no publishing anyway. The answer? Well you bought it!

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Practices More

...and so it is words
that are the final means to save us, and I am using them all
then throwing them away

and I am left with that feeling of dying, which is good
like I might not say anything in the not so distant future
when the future goes away too

and I may be spilling words
in another century, as another writer

and I might start to accuse myself of cynicism

and I might be making unferrable jumps

but when I am writing the above kind of stuff less
just doing the feeling of the words instead

then I will be gone
with all the words
in all the stories and art and poetry

and I'd have completed
whatever it was
everything came for...

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's Little Boy

*"Stand by me, my apprentice
Be brave, clench fists"
—The Streets, 'Turn the Page'*

Little boy
This will be hell
So so so so dark for you
Unimaginable
Indescribable
Bleak
Empty
The outer most edges of horror

Little boy
Clenched fists
Such a beautiful, joyous, strong, herculean little boy
I am waiting here
We are coming back together
I see you
I see your...
 It is indescribable

Little boy
Remember some words
The body will do what it needs
Your experience will tear for the right reasons
You will have to know some parts of this universe
 that you should not have had to
You will have to feel some even further
 more terrifying parts

Little boy
You can leave them
You will leave them
Leave them
Take nothing with you
No—you owe nothing
Leave every inch there
You owe nothing
Come here for good things
Feel no guilt
But feel
Feel

Feel
Feel
Feel
You have left
It is safe
Feel

Little boy
Yes—feeling is allowed
And it's really really terrifying too at first
But trust in me
Trust in you
You have left, you have left
They are not here anymore
You are not there anymore
My hand waits
 out here
 for you
 for us
It will never ever move

Little boy
I am at your level
I can see you
Confused
Frenzied
Battered
You don't know what doubt is, do you
You don't even know what real is, do you
It all feels like nothing, doesn't it
You feel nothing
Remember nothing
Experience nothing
You are not yet born

Little boy
Still clenched fists
Bide your time
Hold it in and bring it here
Come here
Come to me
You do not know what I, you, us can do with it all here
Will do with it all here
I will go through countless dark nights of our soul
Repeated

Constant
Machine-like
Fucking eat them I will
You will not believe what you will give me
That horror
 will be like child's play
 if you just hold it in for now

Little boy
There will be no fucking doubt
 over and over and over and over and over
 and over and over and over and over and over
 No fucking doubt

We fucking win
Look

 Little boy
Look at this
 Little boy
Look at me
 Little boy
Look at you
 Little boy

Look at us
My hand waited
You can come in now
It's eaten
I ate it
It's gone
We fucking won

O little boy
You are so so amazing
The things you will see
The places you will go
So so unfathomable
But to come back here
Keep going
You are the most amazing little boy in the world
Keep going
You are the most amazing little boy in the world
And you are here
And up
And the most amazing boy, man, me, in the world
Keep going
Keep going

Keep going

Len Gurts' Debut

"You are smothering me!
You are too needy and I am drowning"
Strange thing for her to say
I know she likes choking

OK. Alright.
If we're going there
I tried and tried
You lied and cried
I forgave all
sweetly
desperately
You had weak rebound sex
embarrassingly
presumably
I, sometimes, miss us
You, all the time, the cunnilingus
Yet I am needy
while you still need me
at the best of times
at 3 a.m.
at the worst of times
at 3 a.m.

But in your infinite wisdom
your childlike foolishness
you forced me to change my phone number
Now your light, darkness, hope, despair
your incredulous noise
is alone
comparing
in the night
Now who's needy?

But one day, this will all come out
in a messy, snotty wash

Then we'll have dinner, talk surface
and have one messy, snotty... bosh!

Until then, you are in the past

I only ever really think about you from behind

Len Gurts' Edgies

there is a light touching a
moon kissing a
frog pushing a
Loch Ness trouser snake in the bin.

this language may be suggestive to your reader: and it very well
may be! it very well may be.
but we got to get past
these flashpoints.

squirrels on the roof and she be raging.
they worry what they sound like animalled.

i decide the loser.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury's the Hardest; The Hardest

Been burnt. Big words all gone.
That was it, I think. You were in my toddler dreams, I swear.

"I dropped it all for us": this is the lowest conversation.
I couldn't quite believe how safe and chilling it was.
Dumb, dumb vocabulary; discovering music too old.
Such outliers, we were, with good lies.

They sound standardised, these antiquated narratives.
But parents and our lovers: what else is there?
And it gets bigger and bigger and bigger, and I'd like to remember
anything else about time.

No. Don't say, "I never enjoyed it," again, as I think we filled each other
perfectly, and I can't quite forgive how equal it felt and tasted.
Now I watch someone else die on screen, and it is us, and it is
so serious—we made sense of everything—all I'd
ever doubted—all they wrote about it.

I'm too young, too: I shouldn't be this sick and full on...
...I can never quite say it...
Barely breathing; thinking of you smiling
through the bars. No one—in all the stories—can have ours.

I don't care now—I don't care. I'll die
all over again I promise. And you know, they can change
the narrative as we do. Look at him here: he'll consider
anything.

We won't have to try. It can just happen for us
with silly tries.

And I won't finish the sentence—I won't—I won't—
I-
I can'-
I jus-
I won'-

That was really it, I think. The hardest; the hardest;
don't keep adding to it.
I suppose some don't even get this: long drives; each note;
every movement. Then a fire.

Albert K. Ashes-Bury Takes Further Control (He Thinks)

I have a "Writing" folder
 which contains a "Poetry" subfolder
 which has 49 poems in it
 as well as two further subfolders
 which have 114 poems between them
It also contains a "Stories" subfolder
 which has 28 stories in it
 as well as another subfolder
 with 22 stories in it
a "Personal" subfolder
 with 25 documents in it
a "Maybe" subfolder
 with 4 documents in it
and a "Dead" subfolder
 with 156 documents in it
 as well as a "Really Dead" subfolder
 with 52 documents in that

And every single word in them
contains her

and here I am...

No

No no no

No I am not doing it again
Write then delete

This will be the last one.

Len Gurts Saves

“...And you are so beautiful.
You are enough
and you deserve to be loved.
Look within yourself
and find
all the love and truth
and meaning
you want.

You can have it all.
You can feel at peace.”

I really regret saying it now.
Bit cringe. Bit funny.
Mostly funny now.