

Five Love Songs

Most lyrics do not work particularly well when presented as poems but can hopefully still suggest a flavour of the song. The drawings which accompany these five love songs were executed a long time after the original recordings were made and were included in a book ([A Roomful of Wires](#)) for which David kindly contributed a foreword (and Sylvia took an uncharacteristically flattering photograph...)



Concerning Me and You and Flying

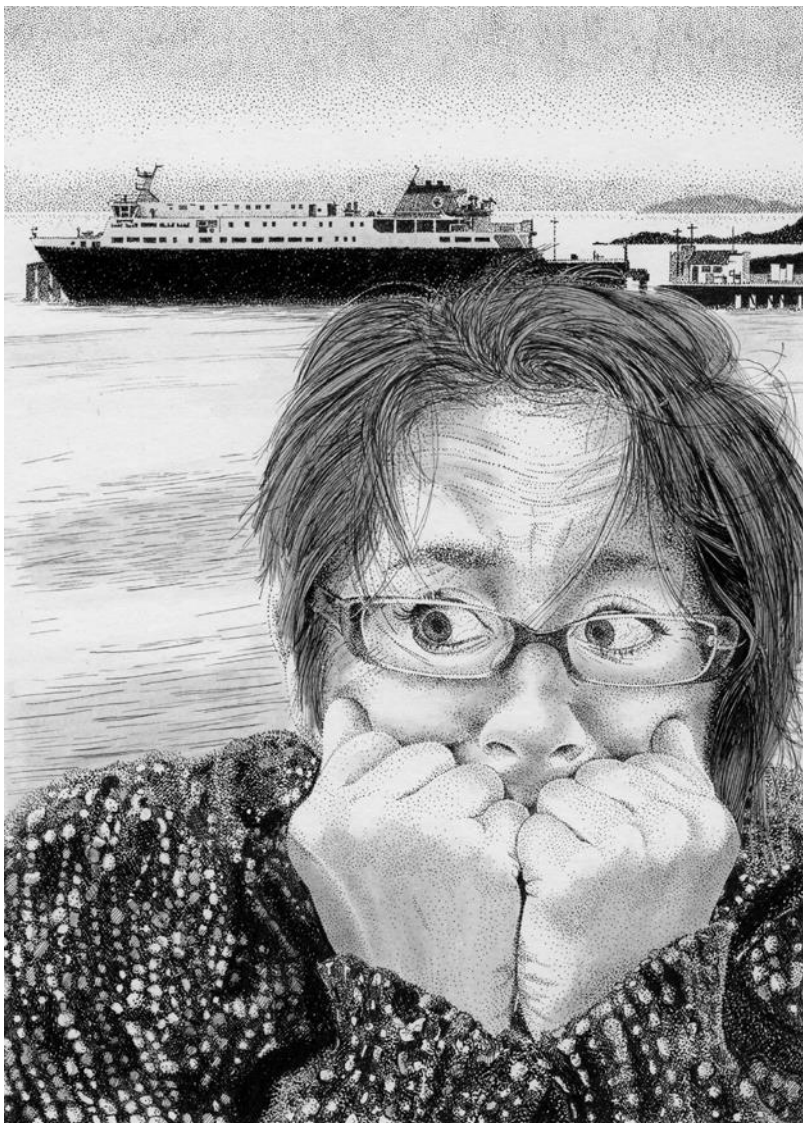
I'm getting close to crashing through a window
Just to see what's on the other side
I want to drive my car into a river – do a little homicide
I want to take an axe to this apartment
Put a hole in everything I see

I'd like to meet you somewhere after midnight
We'd dye our hair, put on a disguise
Run away and live with you forever – leave the others way behind
I want to tell them all how much I love you
Write you notes and tell you every day

The Earth is spinning but I'm clinging on
Handles vanishing one by one
The spell is broken and the chains are working free
I feel the chances multiplying concerning me and you and flying
I think I've found a chink in gravity

I want to feel the force from the explosion
To have you near me when the smoke begins to clear
All they'll find is a heap of blackened powder – we'll simply disappear
And I can even picture their expressions
As they look up and see us shrieking overhead

I feel the chances multiplying concerning me and you and flying
The spell is broken and the chains are working free
I'm too too too tired of even spacewalk freedom – want to cut the cord and slip away
I think I've found a chink in gravity



Secret Love Too

I'm keeping quiet for the sake of fascination
I don't intend to hack my romance down to size
A secret shared is an experience diluted – a real emotion sterilised

I'm never going to take the lid off my secret love
(So secret that she'll never even know)
You won't catch me leaking details of identity
I keep it here inside, all warm and clandestine
No point enticing Jericho
Keep all the ecstasy inside parentheses under my pillow

Nobody understands about love anymore
They're too wrapped up in its circumstances
Love is the ink in the pen, not the word on the page
Don't give a damn about your pygmy romances

We walk together past the scenes of dissolution
I take her hand and ask her like a referee
if she could dream us into something less unsweetened
She strikes a tragic pose and turns me into stone,
delighting in the energy
And as she puts to sea, I hear her call to me, that I may follow

Nobody understands about love anymore
They're too wrapped up in its circumstances
Love is the ink in the pen, not the word on the page
Don't give a damn about your pygmy romances

*Note: **Secret Love Too** was inspired by a short passage from **On Hagakure** by Yukio Mishima, viz.*

The other day I was talking to a group of people, and I told them that the ultimate love I consider to be secret love. Once shared, love shrinks in stature. To pine away for love all one's years, to die of love without uttering the beloved's name, this is the true meaning of love.



That River

Which power led me here?
Which spirit steered you to my side,
blessed us then just walked away,
leaving us here in uncertainty?

I find myself alone
and quiet now I speak your name
Blowing a hole through my heart
Bruised with the violence of wanting you

I'm waiting in limbo, just kicking my heels
Keep testing the water to see how it feels
I'm frightened of rapids, I'm scared of the sea
But I promise I'll be there
I'll jump in that river if you'll jump with me

Why do you turn away?
Do you sense one glance could cut me down?
Let us have done with these games – circling each other like animals!
Come take me in your arms, remind me how it still could be
Help me to break down the doors I placed there to stop me from loving you

I've made the arrangements, we're booked on the flight
And now I discover that I've no head for heights
So I'm keeping my eyes closed – I just don't want to see
But I promise I'll do it
I'll jump out this airplane if you'll jump with me



Glue

Today's the day – she'll shave her head, paint her house red ominously
And in the night, she'll make her way through the darkness, looking for me
She glues my world together in such extraordinary ways
I'm rooted by that look in her eyes that says:
"So you think you know better?"

Well I'm a rabbit in her headlights
I'm taken up, spun around and sent on my way
Which I suspect provokes some questions:
Why does she come and why doesn't she stay?
She glues my world together in such extraordinary ways
Tomorrow when I wake she'll be gone
and I know there's no way I can stop her

Some say there's daylight
but here I'm unaware of the passage of time
She's got her own life to live and yet she's taken mine! She's taken mine!
Hers is the long, long shadow creeping up from the foot of my bed
It's blacking out everything – it's in my eyes, it's in my head!

Today's the day – she'll shave my head, paint my house red – obviously
And in the night she'll drive her car to where the ghosts are and turn off the lights
She glues my world together in such extraordinary ways
Tomorrow I will wake in the sun and I'll know there's no way I can stop her



A Squeal of Brakes

I'd like to say a word or two in my defence
And should I mention love – well, it's by accident
For when I started going under, you couldn't stand and watch me drown
So ain't it strange you should be driving the truck that struck me down?

You'll get so used to Lonely that she'll become your friend
Who'll slowly stitch your every hour into her stratagem
And handing you the options,
she'll smile as you refuse them all
She'll trip you up and be the one to catch you when you fall

Baby save me from myself
I don't want nobody else
I don't want nobody else but you

I heard no warning bells
I saw no danger signs
No vague penumbra of a premonition lurked between the lines
Seems that a squeal of brakes is all it takes to understand
But look at what I've done my darling –
I'm but a milk float of a man!

Baby save me from myself
I don't want nobody else
I don't want nobody else but you

Baby save me from myself
I don't want nobody else
I don't want nobody else but you

*Note: Yes, I know, I know – a double negative. Consider though (**I Can't Get No Satisfaction** by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. 'I can't get any satisfaction' doesn't really cut it somehow – and the double negative in **A Squeal of Brakes** eventually proved to be prescient.*

A Few Drawings

Most of these drawings are done in a similar way. Most of them are portraits, as I consider people to be much more interesting than bowls of fruit. The majority of the picture is produced using technical drawing pens to draw thousands of black dots. Spot colour and shading are then added using an acrylic wash over the top. Very occasionally, I will also use oils. As it is an additive process, it is long-winded and often terrifying but at the same time, immensely satisfying when it works.

I was once scolded by a friend who told me that many of my titles were unnecessarily oblique. I replied that there was a reason. Think, for instance, just how much less successful **Bohemian Rhapsody** might have been had Freddie Mercury decided to call it **Mama Just Killed a Man**.

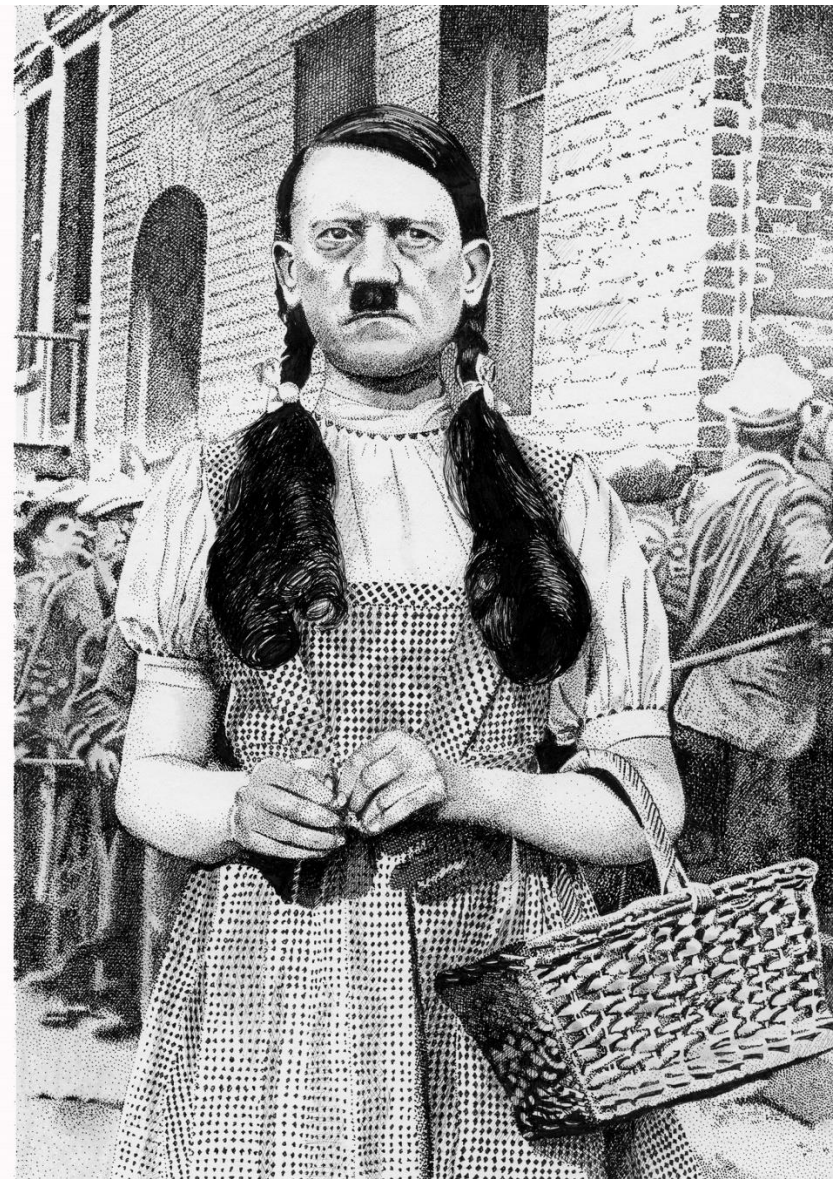
Some of the titles I think of as punchlines which, I hope, add a certain frisson to the drawing once the penny has dropped. Others might indicate the source of the subject matter and others yet are – well, unnecessarily oblique probably. However, should you happen to agree with my friend, then please feel free to make up your own titles.



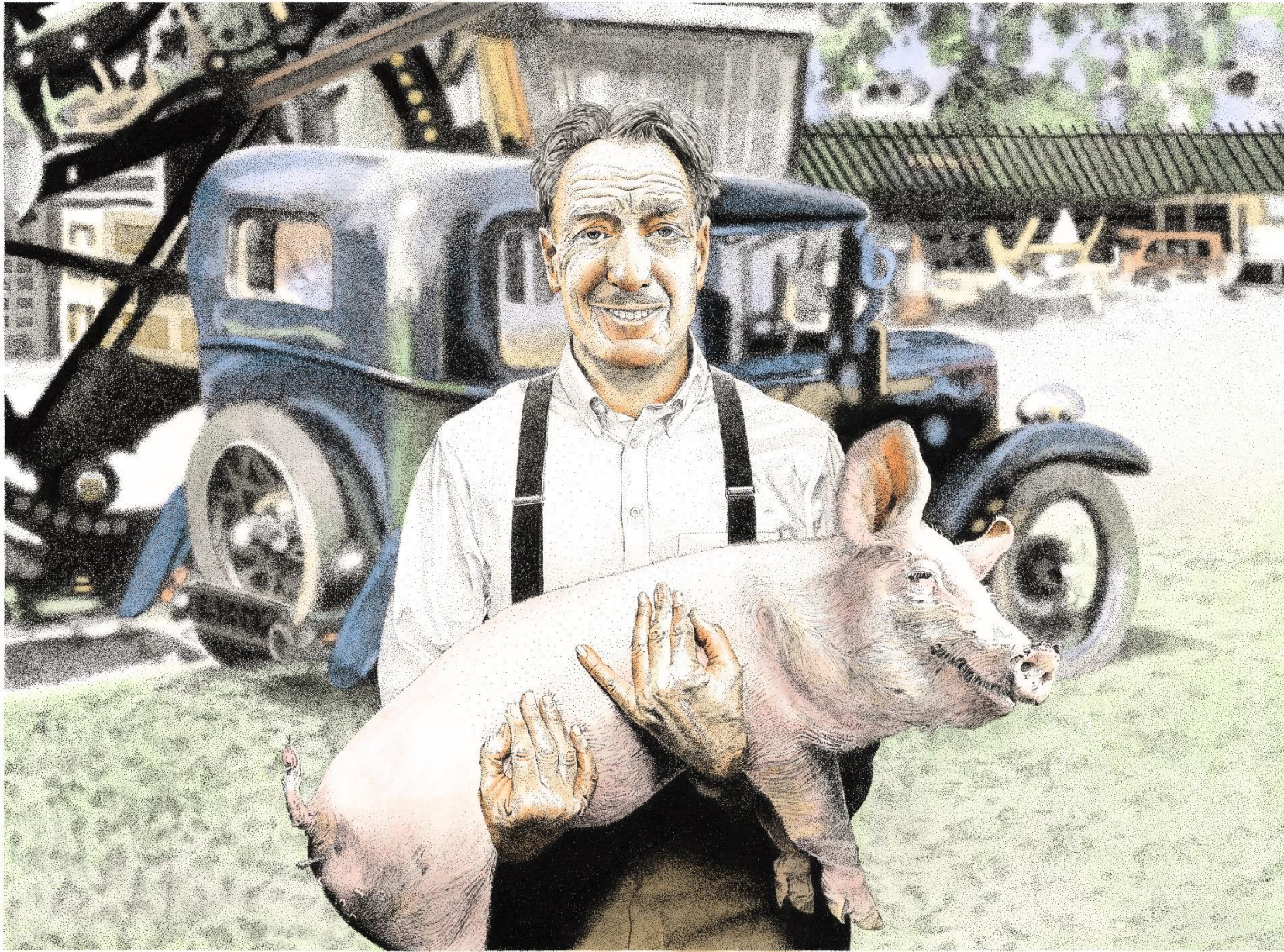
Right: **Bank Holiday Monday**



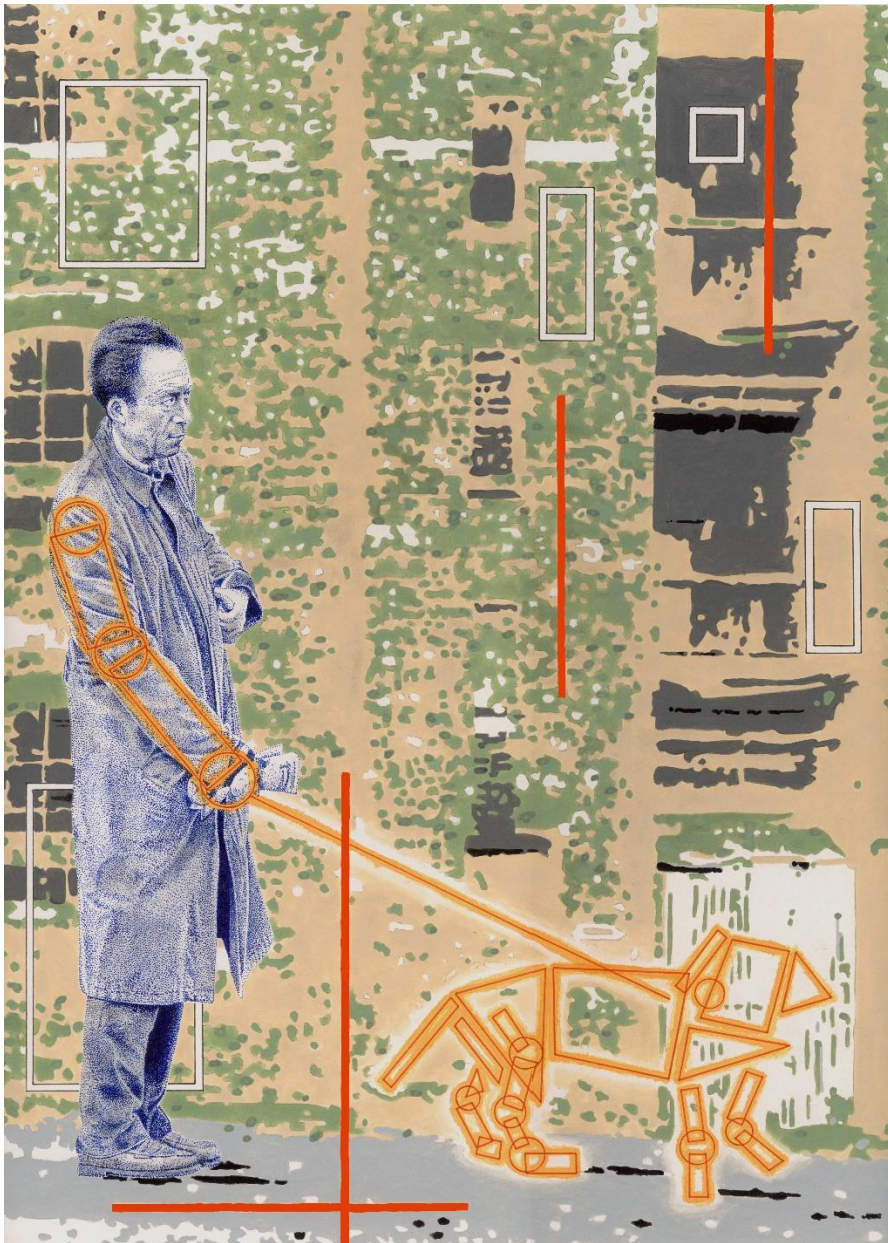
Maelstrom



Spotlight on the Dirty Thirties



Mary's Gift



Albert Camus Pops Out for 'The Echo' and Sees a Ghost



Jean-Paul Struggles with 7 Down

The pub was starting to fill up and was getting busier still. People were having to shout to make themselves heard. Very soon they could barely hear each other speak above the hubbub, so in dumb show agreement, finished up their drinks and left. After a short walk, they managed to find a nearby café in Hope Street that was still open and were soon nursing their cappuccinos within its warmth.

She asked him one or two innocuous questions: where did he live? (Chester.) Did he know Liverpool very well? (No, not really.) Then she put down her cup and without speaking, took a small pencil and a notebook out of her pocket. Several things passed through his mind in rapid succession at this point. He wondered if perhaps he was going to have to submit to some kind of formal interview before the evening could continue or whether she had a part-time job as a journalist – or even if she was about to start a shopping list. None of these things would have surprised him particularly. She licked the point of the pencil and held it poised dramatically in the air as if about to take dictation. She tipped her beautiful head to one side and looked at him askance.

‘Ever read *The Dice Man*?’

‘Yes, I have,’ he confessed, ‘and more than once.’

‘Good!’ she whispered, ‘Feeling adventurous?’

Susan put her hand back into her pocket and withdrew two small red dice, which she rolled across the table until they came to a stop against the cruet set. The basic rules of the game were straightforward enough: from a list of options, one rolled the dice to see which of those options to follow. When the dice had chosen however, it was paramount that its will was then followed; this alone was sacrosanct. As one became more familiar with the game, so usually the options became more adventurous, which is where the trouble normally started.

He made an educated guess that Susan had probably done this many times before: *two* dice? That gave them a lot more options. He wasn’t altogether sure whether he was going to be as brave as her, or, more accurately, as reckless. He felt vaguely uneasy. For the first time, he noticed that the dice were showing snake eyes but refused to acknowledge the bad omen.

After an initial period of head scratching, the dice eventually informed them that they were to go to the cinema and, having consulted a tired copy of the *Echo* which somebody had thoughtfully left behind, they rolled the dice again to determine which film they were to see. A small independent cinema nearby was showing a horror schlock for one night only and they accepted their fate with resigned glee. As he stood up to leave, Susan said, ‘No, sit down. We haven’t quite finished. We still have to ask the dice how we should respond to the film.’

She really *had* done this before. James seated himself once again and she pushed the pencil and notebook across the table at him.

‘Now, option number one,’ she began, chin in hand, ‘– happy, obviously. Got that? Okay, option number two, upset – no, not upset – *distraught!*’ As she spoke, his handwriting skittered across the page like a Jack Russell let off the leash in an attempt to keep up with her runaway train of thought. By the time they had got to the last option they were grinning at each other like a pair of idiots.

They arrived at the cinema just a few minutes before the film was due to start. The building itself had seen better days and at one time had probably been quite magnificent. Now though it was like a beautiful woman a little past her prime – and perhaps awaiting a hip replacement besides. The cinema had, like so many of Liverpool’s marvellous old buildings, been threatened for some years with closure but had, despite many uncomfortably close grapples with accountants, managed to survive on its own shaky terms. Everything here was shabby and worn out, from the flaking plasterwork of the ceiling to the shiny and distinctly unhygienic seats. Even the tickets in his hand, ostensibly fresh from the cashier’s machine, now magically appeared creased and dog-eared.

The general atmosphere was one of acquired if not quite elegant decay. He looked around and tried hard to imagine just how it might have been fifty or sixty years ago and invented a young woman selling choc ices from a tray and an usherette raking the seats with the light from her torch as she led them to their places. Perhaps there was even an organ rising through the floor, played by a studious looking chap with thick glasses, a pencil moustache and Brylcreemed hair. A lion roared and then, as if by alchemy, the usherette faded and became Susan, seeking his hand with her own as they negotiated their way through the semi-darkness.

The other customers numbered just twelve in total and were all at least as old as the cinema itself. He wondered what mystical force had led to them all turning up

here this evening. Perhaps they had all arrived together many years ago and just never left. They were all sitting towards the back of the auditorium, homogenously spaced apart in the classic British style, so he and Susan sat down in the middle of the empty front row, the screen looming up above. The lights dimmed and after a mercifully short presentation of the following week's films, the main feature started up in grainy monochrome. Susan turned to him and opened her eyes and mouth wide in mock alarm.

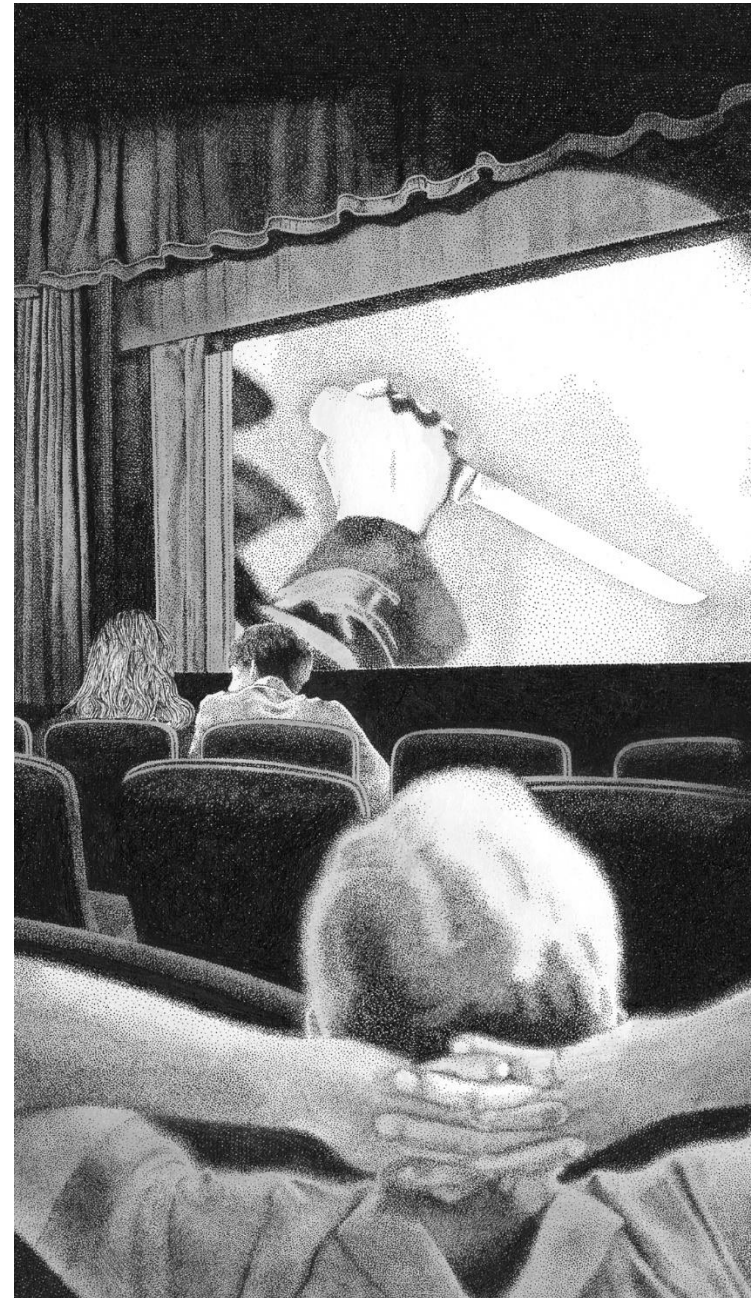
The film was predictable enough and plodded unerringly along the well-worn plot line like a tram. He turned and cast a glance at the other people in the cinema. They were all looking quite bored except for one man who was already asleep and snoring peacefully. James quickly turned back to the screen as he heard the tell-tale cue from the soundtrack. Somewhere a wonky Bontempi organ played a weird minor seventh and a shadowy figure leapt into the frame brandishing a large, glistening knife. Susan screamed loudly. He wheeled round and looked at her in shock and she nudged him urgently in the ribs with her elbow.

'Come on – *terror*. Remember?' He managed a little strangled cry at the back of his throat and she rolled her eyes theatrically. 'No, no – you'll have to do a lot better than that!' The sleeping man had woken up and was looking around in alarm. The atmosphere inside the cinema appeared to have congealed.

With Susan's encouragement, he managed an almost passable scream at the point where the killer struck for the second time and liked to think that he might even have improved again with his next effort if the manager hadn't enquired politely at that point whether they would like to leave. The other customers ignored the sinister and ghastly events now unfolding up on the screen and watched them instead as they stumbled up the aisle and out through the glass swing doors into the cold Liverpool night.

They ran up the street together until quite out of breath. Susan stood in front of him, holding on to his arms and shaking with uncontrollable laughter, her cape whirling around her slight frame like a witch's hat. Both Lime Street and Liverpool Central stations were close by, so they decided to walk to Moorfields, which was, deliciously, farther away.

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As they approached Moorfields through the rapidly emptying Liverpool streets, a sense of apprehension, to which James could not attribute a cause, appeared to descend slowly upon Susan and became more pronounced with each step. It was cumulative, like watching an image form upon a piece of photographic paper agitated in a darkroom tray. An unexpected awkwardness seemed to be opening up between them which was completely at odds with the way they had been responding to one another no more than thirty minutes earlier. This disquiet, which at first he dared to hope might be no more than his imagination at work, was at length made apparent by the actual physical space that she had managed to place between them by the time they reached the station.

Finally though, sitting on the train, she seemed a little more at ease and he assumed that whatever had been bothering her was diminished here in the company of other people. Paradoxically, the bright lights of the carriage and the introduction of the outside world served only to accentuate the sense of intimacy which he himself felt, now that they were no longer alone, as though they were suddenly public property and exposed to judgement for the first time.

Quite unconsciously they had assumed exactly the same positions as those of their first meeting. They sat opposite one another, chatting easily, if unspecifically, as any two old friends might but still he could not shake the overriding thought that she was slowly slipping away from him. She seemed vague and distracted. Aware too that they were fast approaching Hooton, where she lived, he asked her whether he could walk her home, although he knew full well that she was more than capable of taking care of herself and would probably refuse. He was right.

‘No James, it’s out of the question. I live more than a mile away from the station and it’s nearly midnight. There won’t be another train for hours.’

‘Then I’ll walk back to Chester.’

‘Don’t be daft. It’s much too far.’

‘Okay,’ he smiled, ‘let’s roll the dice then. Odds says I’ll walk you home and evens says I won’t.’

‘No, this is too important for any of that nonsense. I’ll be fine. Look, I’ll call or text you or something.’ The train slowed down and they both stood up awkwardly.

James could sense her gradually disconnecting from him. He couldn’t fathom why, which made it intolerable. As the train drew into the station and just before she was about to turn for the doors, he put his hands gently upon her shoulders, feeling her hair brush against the back of his fingers. She looked up anxiously. He leaned in as if to kiss her cheek but she turned her face to one side and put her hand on his chest, pushing him firmly away.

‘No – please. Don’t.’

Taken aback, his expression must have betrayed his puzzlement for Susan dropped her eyes as she spoke, quietly but calmly.

‘Look James, there are things you don’t know about me; things I’ve not told you. I’ll call you – I promise. I had a really lovely time tonight. I have to go now.’

The doors slid open and the next second she was gone. She stood there alone on the platform, unsmiling and holding his gaze as the train pulled out, at the last possible moment giving him the tiniest of waves. He sat back down in his seat in confusion and frowned. Snake eyes then. A minute later his phone buzzed and he read her text: *‘I’m married’* it said.

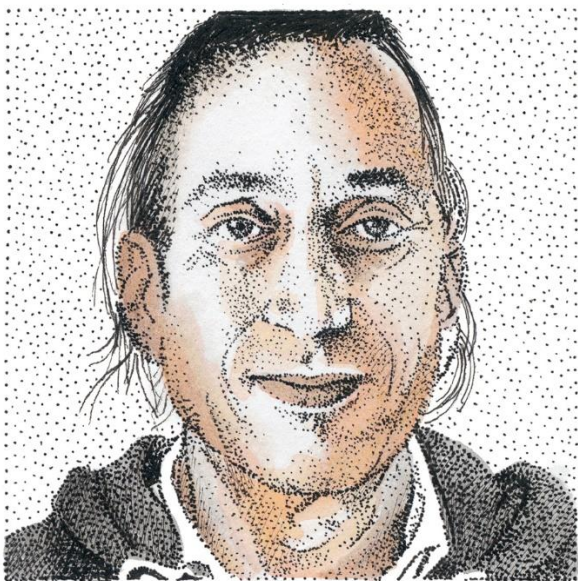
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Susan watched the lights of the train disappearing into the curve of the night. Standing on the edge of the abyss, she counted to three and then, with resignation, pressed the send button. Now that she had summoned up the courage to light the fuse, she held her breath and quietly awaited the inevitable turbulence which she knew would imply some part of her world collapsing during the ensuing blast. She sat down heavily on a cold metal bench, her mind in turmoil. She felt both relieved and wretched at the same time but no possible combination of these two emotions could have accounted for the sudden light-headedness that had now seized her. Had she been honest to do what she had just done or had she been simply foolish?

Biting her lip, she dropped her phone disconsolately back into the pocket of her cape. She took out her wedding ring and screwed it reluctantly back onto her finger, then breathing rapidly, stood up and left the station feeling fatigued and numb. She had not gone more than five hundred yards before her phone beeped urgently and she stopped, steeling herself to read what she knew could only be James’ response. She read it and felt as if she’d just been kicked in the head by a horse.

‘So am I’ it said.

Three pages from *Small Lives*, a book containing forty portraits with accompanying texts. The portraits were all drawn after using the somewhat 'Mr. Potato Head' approach of swapping around and/or adding to the features of existing faces, then re-drawing them. This nearly always resulted in the new face suggesting a characteristic or a job of some sort. Most of them were based on real people, some worryingly so. I am fairly confident, however, that it will never stand up in court.



Nigel
Builder and Acupuncturist

I just couldn't make ends meet as an acupuncturist and I'd always been good at DIY so I started to do a few jobs for friends here and there and the business just took off. The lads on the building site always say: 'If there's a problem with the plumbing or electrics, just get Nige to bang a nail in somewhere.'



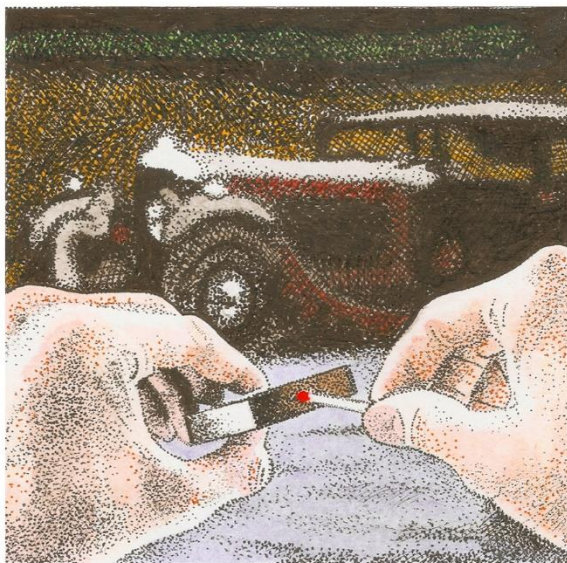
Janet
Librarian

As a librarian in such a small village, one feels obliged to try and uphold certain moral standards. If someone returns a book and complains that it is 'dirty', 'a bit risqué' or – like this one – 'pure filth', I file it in this back room. This then makes it easier to find should I decide to take it home and check it out more thoroughly.



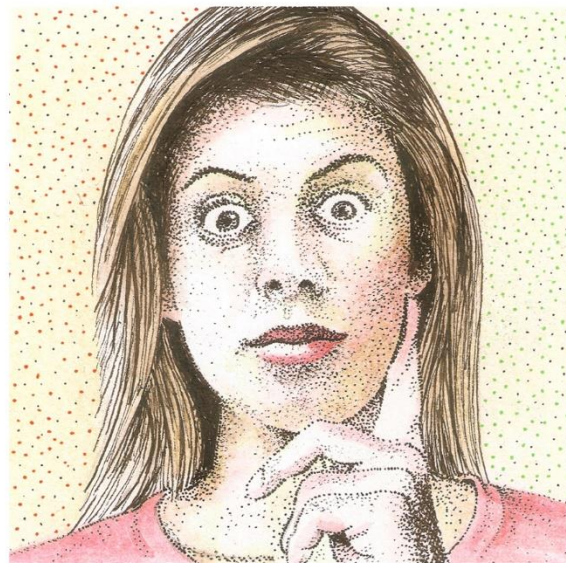
Colin (and Aristotle)
Ventriloquist

In ancient Greece, ventriloquists were shamans: they'd interpret the noises of the stomach in order to tell the future. So, as you'd expect, 'Ari' here is a bit of a philosopher. Trouble is, he's got a potty mouth and I never know what he'll say next. He'd better tone it down a bit next week mind, when we're on Radio 4.



Elizabeth
Heiress

Poor Gerald. It can't be easy, jetting all over the world in first class just to look after his many global business interests – with nobody to keep him company but his beautiful young secretary Olivia. And when he *does* come home, his pride and joy is this vintage 1930 Bentley, not me. I do wonder sometimes if I might be a more understanding wife – and I can be so clumsy too. Look – silly me! I've gone and spilled petrol all over the garage...



Diane
Online Publisher

Believe me, publicity is *so* important – unless you're very rich. Otherwise, chum, your blockbuster is headed for obscurity. Tech may mean that today's new authors have more control but the old rules apply: in the world of advertising, my friends, subliminal is *still* the name of the game. Before I continue, how many of you folks out there in the audience have heard of the word 'acrostics'? Does anybody know what I'm on about? Anyone?



'Henrietta'
Pantomime Dame

Oh no – there he is. Little Johnny from Aylesbury, bang in the centre of the front row as per usual. I must've squirted him with water a hundred times, told him my best jokes, had him wheeled around the stage on a unicycle... Everybody else loves it but him? Nothing. Not even a sodding smile. If the jelly down the front of his trousers doesn't work tonight, I'm packing this in. I wonder if that Darth Vader vacancy has been filled yet...

Lastly, two ceramic pieces followed by a stained glass window.



A pair of bookends for the kleptomaniacally obsessed



A 'stream of consciousness' jug designed to indecorously spill its contents when used



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