

# dirty white everything

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## **Dirty White Everything**

The worst thing you ever did  
was to make me feel self-conscious  
about the scar on my left arm.  
As if someone had told me  
my favourite clothes  
didn't suit me.  
Or my over rehearsed dinner party anecdote  
wasn't funny.  
I can only imagine you now  
covered in blood,  
looking like you fell out of purgatory.  
Dirty white everything,  
dull as prescription drugs.  
They tell me I fall in love too easily.  
Sharing beds with conveyer-belt idiots,  
breathing, like two junkies,  
into each other.  
But I have held him sober,  
and seem to be the only one who knows,  
man never really set foot on the moon  
unless he took off his boot  
and felt it between his toes.

## **Intravenous Cuisine**

It's okay  
because we've got the wind turbine view  
and the parking doesn't run out  
for another two hours.

It's okay to sit like it might not be  
to treat it like a dinner party  
where one guest is in bed at the table  
all cutlery and drip.

We're politely ignoring the backless robe,  
the hand sanitiser between courses  
and noticing "you didn't eat much,  
are you feeling okay?"

And it's okay  
because that warm disinfected piss smell  
scraping your tonsils is to remind you  
you've never been cleaner.

This is the safest place  
despite being more machine than people.  
And it's all okay because I'm the VIP overnight visitor  
sleeping upright in an armchair.

The lights will wake me tomorrow  
and despite it being June  
they will make me think it's Christmas.

## Four Poster

Never beg a stranger for empathy  
even in the same ward  
same bed  
different situation

I spit a grit smile  
at the girl opposite  
she just does not  
smile back  
guilt hits tear ducts  
nostrils  
molars  
especially when her mum  
gives an unapologetic entrance  
common but not in courtesy  
screams “not this shit again”  
iron clasp on painful wrists  
drags her daughter  
as a butcher drags heavy meat  
drags her daughter  
as I dragged dolls with one shoe  
as I dragged you

and my mum  
tired  
from sleeping in an upright chair all night  
gives me that look  
that was 4 years coming

## Taxidermy

The point of the car journey  
Was to see the dead badger.  
So when we rolled up  
And there were two,  
I thought of the saying about buses  
That single women always use  
When talking about single men.

We debated  
If they were exhausted from a failed pilgrimage  
Or if Juliet was slumped just 200 yards away  
From her Romeo.  
We wondered if it was an omen  
Of Christ's second coming  
Or something.

In my opinion  
We simply gave road kill  
The sympathy it deserves.  
No one wants to die  
Legs akimbo,  
Something other than  
Fast food litter  
To entertain those lorry drivers  
On the longest stretch  
Of the motorway.

## Ode to a Fly in a Ceiling Light

I see you  
you don't see me  
but this is not  
police interrogation glass

This is you, preserved  
in neither amber nor sap  
but your own plastic shell  
intrusively electronic  
it doesn't allow for  
eavesdrops on the wall

Suspended sentence

in light and air  
the speck  
on the room's eyelash  
death becomes  
a constant 60 watt day

## Catching Flies

Train drags itself back to Swindon,  
back legs a burden, wounded animal.  
Sitting backwards, wrenched  
all fingernails and heels and  
Fay Wray King Kong scream,  
spitting lipstick saliva at authority.  
I am dragged home back to  
awkward adolescence,  
the floor is sticky  
with discarded lollipop stick.  
Dragged towards  
Job Centre Tuesdays,  
orphaned shopping trolleys,  
trees blooming Tesco plastic,  
garish carpet and  
knick-knacks that only ever remind you  
of buying them.  
I look out the window  
see a dead seagull on the tracks,  
look back and notice  
a spelling mistake  
on the safety card.  
The man sat beside me  
looks like my dad  
sleeping with his mouth open.

## Swindon Makes Me Feel Like A Russian Bride

Boxes ticked then stamped  
with excessive saliva  
with recycled customs  
recycled red white and blue

Arrive all catalogue smile and pholcidae legs  
laughing and nodding and laughing  
dragged to football games by barcode wrists  
reject public affection  
reject catering van hotdog  
envy real trophy lifted by real man

Continue applying lipstick as absolute necessity  
continue laughing and nodding  
and laughing and weeping  
in the toilets of a country pub

Learn churned out marriage manual  
that taught you Sputnik highs  
Tchaikovsky crescendos on dress rehearsal bananas  
and to always remember to say thank you  
afterwards

All Power to the Imagination!

Lie back  
and think of Novosibirsk

## **On Sandymount**

Your eyes remind me  
Of how I've never finished  
A pint of Guinness

"you'll suffer eternally

for the  
sake  
of good tweets"

abigail's party  
    drinking cider  
        paul is accusing me of sitting decadently  
do not waste your time with people who think they're too  
good for pop music

Wow, is that sign really necessary?

Twat cunt Angus is a cunt  
    owner of - 20 embarrassingly bad book covers for  
classic novels  
    worshiper of - ex girlfriends  
    and Sub-par Ping-Ponger

This is SERIOUSLY addictive  
You certainly are, Brandon!  
I like words and whiskey.  
you should buy me a sympathy pint  
for having no mates

Aaron is glad he is the father

4 Weddings and a Funeral for the  
smoking, snogging and bunking off again behind  
the Internet  
generation  
that is awesome and surreal Jeff

Do not RT this

if i can't  
#  
then what has this whole thing been about

## The Yielding Flesh of the Girl

Watch cranes in the distance  
take away  
rather than build

We are thinking in camera shots

Long shot from behind  
we stare hours before  
museum etiquette  
at sculpted bodies pointing towards the loneliness  
of their severed heads  
in Greece

The question of morality  
in tracking shots

Hand held point of view  
flicking through  
postcards of the paintings we bypassed  
to get to the gift shop  
first

Bernini's  
in fingertip imprints  
Proserpina's thighs

We are taught  
sculpture and poetry are equally malleable  
and neither have the right to surrender

Our close-up  
our lips move  
as we read silently  
as we get the plaque  
around our accents  
as I recognise  
the unspoken  
the broken torso  
as ours

before you did

## Self (Marc Quinn)

You took 8 pints of your own blood,  
Froze it, and out of it  
You sculpted your own head.  
Art, on a life support.  
Most people were disgusted.  
A wretch really echoes  
In an art gallery.  
Red really chokes conforming white.  
Behind the glass case  
Your untamed, decapitated animal sat,  
My very own Lord of the Flies.  
It spoke to me about  
The fragility of life,  
Questioned who, out of the two of us,  
Was more human.  
My gut instinct when faced  
With you looking a million pounds  
(or around that rumoured, at auction),  
Was to lick.  
To erode your sorbet cheek with my tongue  
To taste, in cold blood.  
I researched that the head and the blood  
Both take up 8% each  
Of the weight of the human body.  
I wonder if you knew this.  
I wonder if it has any significance to your vision.  
I think of how you must be  
So much colder  
Than the death mask.  
I think of you every time  
I get a rush of blood to the head.

## St Peter's Clipboard

*When I'm at the pearly gates*  
*This'll be on my videotape*  
All knobs and no remote control  
On a television older than I am

I'll ask to see God's diplomas  
When I'm at the pearly gates  
Grab St Peter by the lapels, he's  
All knobs and no remote control

This'll be on my videotape  
Me dancing like Eva Braun  
Under unstable chandelier  
Laughing wide open with lipstick teeth

On a television older than I am  
I will watch years of colour-blindness  
A life measured out in waiting rooms  
Under unstable chandelier

## **Fever**

You can try to drag  
boys your own age  
upwards  
to middle age  
with insistent lipstick  
incessant heels  
but you won't  
mould surrogates  
out of off-colour  
paternal clay

These men  
pay for the meal  
but forget to hug you

This is London  
they won't be having that  
they tell you  
exactly  
what youth tastes like

You never knew a man  
who didn't think twenty  
was getting on a bit

## Five Down

Distorted talk show host  
Draws me  
All acrobatic tantrums  
Manipulative iris  
Strung up by the wrists  
And drowning in an egg cup  
Match him  
Raise him  
I draw me at worst, windswept  
His dank opinion  
A damp crotch dirty phone call  
I footnote paternal script  
As all  
Monkeys and typewriters

## Count To Zen

He thrust at me  
all the cologne sting charm of  
Richard Gere,  
unshaven unshowered unshackled,  
high on sleazy sour sex  
with his flies undone.

12 point plans  
precise as voodoo needles,  
speeches so impressive  
he'd chew off his own tongue  
sure that he'd never better it.

I mourned the recently deceased  
British stiff upper lip,  
forced family hugs on strangers.  
One woman waterfalls tears  
from my rigamortis shoulders  
down my back.

Confused by unhygienic embraces,  
mouth full of someone else's  
cardigan fibres,  
the world's most arrogant man  
acting as the wind  
to my Marilyn skirt  
drags me by my ankles  
into enlightenment.

Lolling heads gawp at him,  
eyes black and nothing but pupils,  
stuck on the victim carousel.  
He salivates green and grins money,  
he rough hands his wallet  
splitting stitches,  
stuffing suffer money like  
last week's newspaper.

Nausea sticks itself  
to the roof of my mouth  
and I am the only one to notice  
what enlightenment really means  
when I see the picture of his  
wallet window wife  
on a cruise.

And she smiles like a pin up  
on the side of a 1940's bomber.

## Marilyn Monroe's Sex Tape

He just wanted to watch  
as the only man  
to see her face  
like that  
who she never loved  
or intended to see.

Unlimited control  
of the play button,  
of all that flesh,  
re-watching  
that head movement  
that fold in the skin  
when her leg is lifted  
up.

That fold in the skin  
when she turns  
to look behind her  
from all fours.  
He is too aware  
of all that flesh,  
too aware he'll never taste  
a pixel of porcelain skin.

Holds his hands  
cupped up to the screen  
tracing the fold under buttocks  
of evolved beauty.  
Hands sweating  
unevolved  
sexual attraction.

Her eyes worth enough  
to pay as much as he needed  
to hide her from everyone  
ever.

## Making Paul McCartney Cry

We sit legs crossed,  
backs against the bins  
in a supermarket car park.  
You are early 60's Paul  
'y'know' twang endearing  
as that guitar,  
but you are parentless without an instrument.

And I tell you holding hands  
is boring  
and I'm prodding at the collarless,  
the mop-top Lego hair,  
itching for you,  
saying that  
if it wasn't for your eyes  
Picasso tweaked to the verge of tears  
I could just as easily  
want any of the other three.

I tell you that your eyes are  
a deer in head lights  
Bambi anxiety  
  
and I like boyish fear.

Your victim brows  
feign shock,  
but I am exhausted by your innocence.

We are so disgustingly young.

You just don't know where I've been, Paul.

I cannot relate to your music.

Everything bad you do is accidental,  
you only cry over milk spilt

whereas I am face to the floor,  
spread-eagled  
tights ripped at the knee  
hotel room whore,

and you're still smiling  
black and white on the telly  
as I suck puddles  
from saturated nylon carpet.

## **Making John Lennon Come**

You write all the naughty lyrics, John  
and I am finally calling your bluff.  
It's been months of silent  
sexual attraction,  
months of licking lips  
to find no taste,  
months of pornography on mute.

I am ready for the crucifixion  
of your matter  
and mass of vulnerable hair,  
your arms outstretched  
bigger than Jesus.  
I already know you'll spend the entire time  
with your eyes closed  
either in prayer or boredom.

Oh, you'll make me consider both.  
Giving me that cynical stare  
as if the world was always  
asking you stupid questions  
then yanking that sardonic tongue.

But I know you are just  
the birthday boy forced to play  
somebody else's party games,  
the child sat squirming  
in the hairdressers' chair.  
A boy refusing to rose-tint dirt.

I don't fancy you, John.  
But if I can't make you laugh  
then I want to make you come.

I want to see that look  
of infatuated terror  
somewhere in the back of your eyes,  
the one Paul wears  
so incredibly well.

## The Jukebox Cries Out For Its Mother

Something as small  
as an ear bone shifts  
and the result  
    is tectonic

First you lose  
contact with an old friend  
    and time sits disappointed

You'd promise  
    you'd keep  
        in touch

Sleep throttles you  
in a fit of jealousy

Afternoon resuscitates

Toothpaste dribble  
Avoid reflection  
    like plague

Alphabetise everything

Deserted spoon  
sits disappointed

Knife and fork  
talk behind  
your back

Time won't return  
your phone calls

Leave answer phone message

Sit until legs  
go blue

Cry hollow  
Start again

## **The Anxiety Corridor**

*after Anis Mojibani's The Grieving Room*

When it comes  
and the wolves are next  
lie face down eyes open  
hammer molars and wait.

Anxiety is a corridor  
stretched longer than you've lived for.

Sweat your heart to powder.

Inhale through cavities over and over again  
until you're sneezing and coughing and weeping and  
weeping.

The weeping always comes first.

Anxiety is a corridor  
stretched longer than you've lived for.

At one end is a man  
whose heart is grain and whose  
heartbeat survives in his jugular.

Force feed him sugar on sandpaper  
and close his mouth.

When you are done  
his hiccups will stop.

There is nothing else

nothing but the hollowed aching world  
surveillance camera the two of you  
and he stares at you from the seven terraces of purgatory  
his eyes

like blue china plates creaking under the strain  
like falling down a flight of stairs knees first

like permanent bad news.

Look around you  
when you reach the anteroom.

Fear is a mouthful of dust.

## **Instantly Your Biggest Fan**

I want to hear you describe my look  
as blood in the sugar bowl  
my attitude as the paddling pool  
blown onto the M4 causing a pile up  
you don't  
love me  
you should  
when we go to the seaside  
I won't even moan when I drop my ice cream  
and when you offer me yours I won't accept  
I'll make your tongue ache  
until it's like you've been sucking on fudge  
you'll have dreams  
where you save me from wreckages  
burning freak accidents  
the one you love  
and the one who loves you  
are never ever the same person  
now fall in love with me  
as if I were a French girl  
on a postcard

## **go home and stop grinning at everyone**

it's not you  
it's the  
weak diluted smiles  
and the  
dreams that turn my eyes veteran

but to you  
it's all adorable melancholy  
when all i want is someone  
to supervise unsafe sleep  
to stay  
until the water goes away

and you all want something from me;  
attention to warm your eyelashes  
face down laughter  
molars grinding into carpets  
a broken jaw  
the last rolo