

NOTHING TO SAY

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Too many compilations have too much extraneous information. Nonetheless we would love you to discover the truly amazing writers/artists who comprise NOTHING TO SAY so please visit <http://79ratpress.wordpress.com> and please consider supporting them financially or in other ways, especially if you have downloaded this as a free electronic copy.

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art is very simple
build a poetics of hope
one truth at a time
until every soul sings
its own beautiful song

NOTHING TO SAY

comprises

this volume

these collections

Animal Magnetism – Paul Askew
Dirty White Everything – Emily Harrison
tearing at thoughts – Andy Harrod
mammal – Jared Joseph
wide-shining – Kiran Millwood Hargrave

installations and events including

1 June at Tom de Freston's studio
8 June at Stoke Newington Literary Festival
10-16 June at the Albion Beatnik basement gallery

photography by

Eleanor Leone Bennett

artwork by

Andy Harrod

medieval mystery play, staged around oxford by

C R Bliss

“I have nothing to say and I am saying it”
John Cage

“I have nothing to add and I am adding it”
The Editor

This concerns that oblique beast;
Sat slanty,
Jaunty and terrible
Wrapped in sheets.

This shirtless 'we'

Feels too
cold:
to be naked.

because it's

This skin of mine is not
But this 'we', does little
but,
snort, retort and re-buff.

enough

It plays at the seam
of foreign occupancy.
of colony
of veneer.
because

It is warmer, kinder smoother:
The cells we wear for bed.

the impossibility of memory | dan holloway

you have never read this poem before
you will never read this poem again

call me pink canoe

i imagined myself & i was sugar basin meat muffin gutted hamster
hidey hole moose knuckle mother of all
souls
& i loved the leather lollipop
& i wore the three inch fool

at oyster probe hidey hole ceremonies & across bearded burglar until
morning
we worshipped the ornamental vagina
in purple-headed cum shooter seizures

& i bled souls
& i wished knuckle
& i kissed root of evil
my mouth a red wet hole

i want to live without words

call him pink torpedo

he imagined himself & he was lady dagger lizard lobster apple-headed
melon baster x-rated cannon

supreme
& he loved the gutted hamster
& he wore the velvet glove

i want to live where everyone is alive
i want to live where busy streets fall away as we move closer
I DON'T CARE WHO YOU ARE
i want to live where none are more silent than us
i want dumb flesh to speak louder
i want that cunny-catcher bending light over the twisted sheets
i want you muffled and incoherent beside me
i want to live where nothing dies

DON'T TALK TO ME
I DON'T CARE

i imagined you & you were lady dagger lizard lobster apple-headed
melon baster x-rated
bed in my room
& you shed old skin
& you wished new lies
& you kissed hot tears
& i do, i do
i kiss the moving closer

where bad days bleed on the sheets
where bad dreams bleed from my eyes
where good days cling damp to my skin
where good dreams spread on the mattress
where good days cling damp to my skin under soft & ridiculous lips
& i feed my eyes
& i wish vodka morning
& i kiss the colours of laughter

I DON'T CARE WHERE YOU ARE

& i don't care why you are, i just want to go too far
i just want to get in your head & show you what goes unsaid

call me wound that never heals
& we will meet in my bedroom
& i will show you
what happens to the perception of time
what happens to our concepts of desire
what happens to power in my bedroom

(in gloves that reach over the elbow
on drugs that swallow the night
my bed is ugly beauty like this world)

do concepts of gender change under the influence of my bedroom
does the concept of satedness exist in my bedroom
Bataille said there is no bedroom without transgression: what
constitutes transgression to you
Susan Sontag believed my bedroom required an element of the
impossible
do you agree
how do you attempt to describe the impossible

blood slug sword blunt candy cane belly stick choo-choo chunk o'
love
grindstone goo pot eel skinner willy washer hoo-ha happy valley

i cut my teeth to find you & i found blood
i crawled in circles in the garden & i found mud
i looked up at the sky & i saw more sky
i crept outside myself & i did not die

don't talk to me, it's not enough
the bedroom is my voice:

HORSE FRIGHTENINGLY LOUD PRAISES
SING SONGS OF PRAISE DAILY
THROUGH SPASTIC FOGHORNS & TRUMPETS

LAUNCH OUT OF PRAISES
SUNG DAILY THROUGH FOG HORNS
& TRUMPET THE YES

loud for the moment, is all. this is my voice. i won't cry
bedroom furniture, thank you. my blood, that's the constant supply

1.

Yesterday, when I thought we were through,
I told my friend Lena you were either pillin'
or killin'. This is the kind of worry that arises
from studying Ben Franklin's satire
and French present participles all morning.

Instead of washing my hair today,
instead of paying my dues,
I read a 95 page love poem.

There's something about reading
of failed love that makes my ego full.
We're not failing yet. We're not there.
We're going.

What amount of you missing me
led you to some alley in Pittsburgh
with a bump of molly before 8 am classes?

I imagine you snorting the stuff near a dumpster.
I think of your basement, your neckless cello
and slew of empty Mountain Dew bottles.

2.

Someone in my summer workshop gave me
this supernatural critique on my poem
(*'habitat, a shy but moving creature,
leaves trails for us to follow'*). They said:
*I loved your last stanza. I thought it was
heartbreaking--for there is no sense
of finality but it seems as though it's just
endless trails to follow with no indication
of when this journey would end, or
when you'd reach your destination.*

3.

Once in May I was on Facebook
and Sophie wrote on my wall.
She said, *if you were a plant
you'd be a magnolia.* You commented
and said you had a magnolia tree
in your backyard. At night, I drank
a glass of water in contemplation.

4.

At the river walk
when the mom was cussing
at her son, I asked
was your childhood like that
and your eyes said *worse*.
I hugged you
with fallen tree bark
digging into my thighs,
unable to understand
why anyone would hurt you.

5.

Walgreens brand musk,
Mark Twain anthologies,
stray Audrey Hepburn DVDs.
A hoarder's house.

We had bubble tea
in a park in Oakland
and you shot out tapioca
from the straw.

Later, when you laid on top of me,
the way you learned my looks
was ripe with some sort
of angelic possession.

In the morning you texted me
to say you dreamt of us
living in a pink victorian manor
on the Atlantic in the 1800s.
I wanted to die of rapture.

6.

Ecstasy is the sort of thing
that kills the meek. Together
we're somewhere strange:
frozen on the sun or burnt
in avalanche.

Alright, so
if I was on a desert island what would I bring?
a. you
b. you, my second heart

Ask me smarter questions.
I've turned my teeth to rubies.
I'll smile; you'll think that you see blood.

What of my youth do I recall? Heat--true.
Bagel shops with my age-old portrait
mounted on the wall. Hardware stores & horses
and metal chambers full of hay.

But what do I recall the most? The undeveloped land
with the mud, the trees, the neighbor boy
who later said I had his heart.

And we hunted leopards.
And we hunted the sky.

What of being twelve--I drank my tears
in Chicago. Cold fries in white boxes
at Madisyn's house, her newfoundland
jumping through glass windows.

- a. Pink lips
- b. That swoon

Alright, so what do I smell like?

Sentient? Okay

Pretend this is an opera on Titanic 2
as it lumbers towards the sea's taunting kelp.

My flesh will smell like 20 hand-rolled
incense sticks.

Are you trembling in your lilac tongue?

- a. The harp
- b. The lark

What do I see? There is a piano
made of mahogany and ivory
and when my brother plays
I am French and I am finite
and I am a vial, a flask,
a chant in the night.

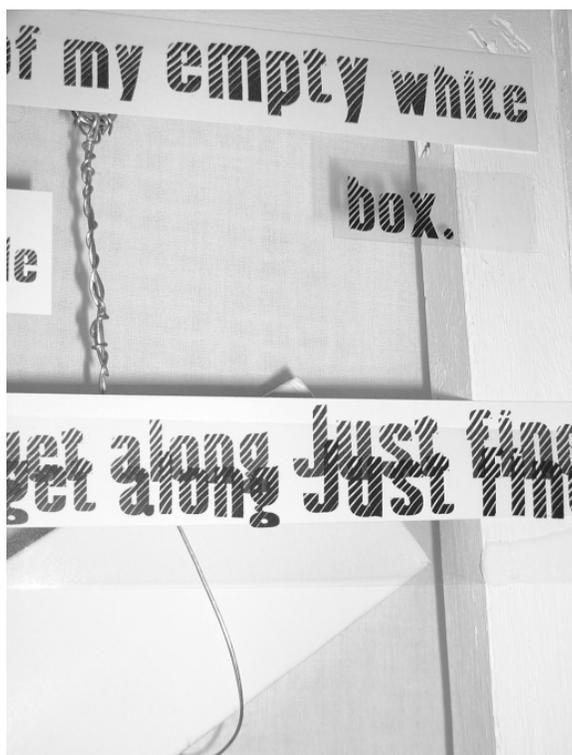
(I love you and I think
of dead horses
opening their eyes

I love you and I think
of Israel

I love you and I think
of the dwindling sea lion
population in the
Fisherman's Wharf

I love you and let me commission
a portrait of Jesus
swimming with beluga whales)

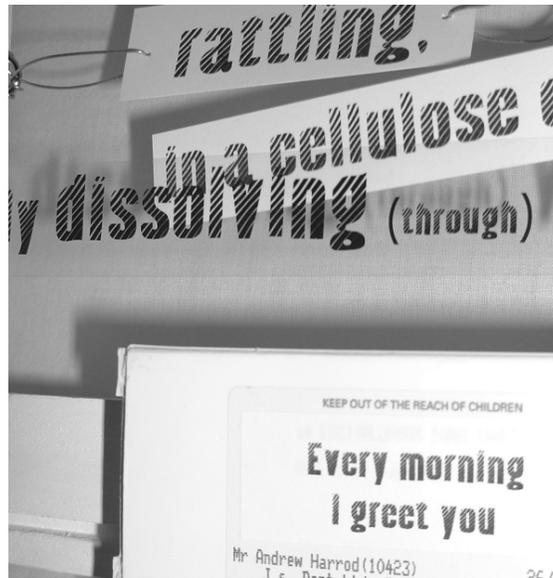
Slip me out of my empty white box.
Place me by your side
we're going to get along just fine.



Empty Embrace | Andy Harrod

I watch you unfurl the leaflet
crinkling in your sweaty hands
the words blind to your needs.

But my whispers slip through
I will soon have you on your feet
pop the silver foil and I'm released.



Seventy five white balls
rattling, in a cellulose capsule
slowly dissolving (through) you.

Every morning I greet you
place me on your tongue
your appearance disappears.



Your bare feet
you bang against metal bars
lied to you, your head screams.

But you won't find this
or the blood, or the fallen
in the small print.

sometimes she would run the fields
the thin evenings riding her shoulders
gorsed soles packed on the grass
wetlands flooding the eyeline

she learned to stand for a while
so the earth would take her
a muddying bliss squeezed up
between each toe

and suckled at the heel
the wild bride would sink
burnished and beached
under the starveling sky

you catch her often
at the back of your throat
shattering cold shackling
the latch of your tongue

her fingers find your rhythm
sing it softer as her body
throbs white against yours
her mouth a plumbed scar

and most nights she leads you
laughing into some new light
spins you asleep then leaves you
waking into that same darkness

who has marked their skin and body with the darkness in their head,
who has offered up their body for money
and has found it taken from their hands without payment
who has been there with the white walls and all that noise
who has felt trapped by their own skull
who has been beaten by the one they loved
who has offered their limitless love and found it rejected
who has been afraid to walk the city night despite lamplight
who has been made to feel their body is inadequate
that it makes them unworthy of ornament
who has changed their body, hair, skin, face,
altered it so that you know how fucked up and ugly they feel
who has cried wolf, who has cried for help but too softly
who has been made to feel their gender is at fault
who has lost the plot, lost their keys, lost their voice, their face, their
shoes their self respect,
their virginity god (who they seriously doubt exists) only knows where
who has abused pharmaceuticals, who has been abused by
pharmaceuticals;
white coats, nurses, police and the rest
who has been to hell and back, who has been to court to point the
finger

**For Ruth Betty Blue and all the fucked up women
I ever knew | Anna Percy**

who has been scared and alone, scared in a crowd, scared in the sea,
scared of their own grey matter
who has been blacker and blacker in thought than the sky at night
who has failed to see the beauty in simplicity,
who has forgotten the laying on of hands can be comforting
communication
who has wept and flooded the room and half drowned like alice who
has fallen in like alice
who does not think they deserve to bask in the sun like a seal bent on
a rock
who does not think the world owes them anything
who does not think their brain, their witty artistic sarcastic maladjusted
brain is worth nothing
their achievements mere bones of things no flesh and tendons to
articulate and make them real they have had bones broken, have
wanted to break their bones just to feel, the bones proof they are not
automatons, who make no bones about it,
they have felt boneless, skinless, lacking in backbone, felt they had not
a good bone in their body, all bad bones, sick bones, bones riddled
with some sickness eating them from the inside out
they have been down to the bare bones of their person, who have
sought out bones
bones hang round their neck of dead mothers, brothers, fathers
friends, sisters, strangers, lovers.

I am meat
My body, putty in your hands
I am meat
I am flesh infinitum
You rest your flaccid meat
Upon my moistened
Tightly sow-pursed lips.
Is the way to a man's heart is
Through his meat?
I am meat
I am meat market
I am meat
I am All You Can Eat
Can I pummel you into
Skin-thin poultry breasts and
Devour you with meaty chops?
I am meat
But the flies prefer your bones.

All You Can Eat | Anna Hobson

I am meat
See my beetroot veins
The dull gristle
The drying stains
Under your finger nails
Your T-bone groin crushing
My wish-bone thighs.
I am meat
Swallow me whole and
Raw and
Bleeding.
I am meat
And you continue to cheat me
Out of a little dark heat
A chargrill flash, if you will.
I am meat but
I am less branded than
The cattle slaughtered.
I am meat, left resting
I guess
Although the collapsing sinews
Disagree.

1.

I came to visit
a Concrete House
in the Desert
with no Windows

A Tall and Slim
and Wealthy Woman
in a Long Black Dress
greeted me at the Door
and gave me a Tour
of her Bunker

I had the Feeling there was a Child
in the House
Some Times
a Daughter
and a Husband
but I did not know where

Why were there no Windows?

Only the Grey Concrete

in the Endless Desert
out Side of which sat Fancy Cars

Which Aspects of me are you
Mysterious Woman?

Why did you bring me here
to show me Corridors?

2.

This reminds me of
an Other Dream
I had
in which I drove a Dark Blue
BMW
out of the City
and into the Country
across Rail Way Tracks
and into the Woods
by misTake

The Car crashed into a Tree
and busted the Fender
I was not harmed
however

I got out of the Car
and
in a Daze
wandered into the Forest

A Little Ways further in
to the Forest
under Brush
was the Pale and Bruised
Corpse
of a Young Lady
an inFamous Slut
and Party Girl
which had been dumped there

I was Horrified

I ran back to my Car
I got into my Car

and pulled out of the Woods and
onto the Road

It was Dusk and there was no One around

As I drove back to the Twinkling City I thought
there is a Reason I found that Body
to Day
in the Woods

The Story Teller had me find the Body
because I know who killed that Girl
and I know how to avenge her

3.

Have you heard of that Show
The Killing?

A Lady Detective
solves the Murder of a Middle Class
'Teen' Aged Girl
who worked
as a Prostitute
without her Parents knowing

I relate to the Driven Lady Detective

I relate to the Grey and the Rain of Seattle

I relate to the 'Teen' Aged Girl

One Night after I had watched the Show I had a Dream

In the Dream

I was in an Opulent Mall

More Opulent than a Cathedral
carved into the Side of Mountain
with Great Front Windows leading to a Point

Floors and Walls of Marble
and Mouldings of Gold
dripping with Crystal
and an Escalator

The Mall was Empty
but for me

I wandered around the Mall

I walked into a Store

It was cavernous

Expensive clothes hung
on sparse racks

The walls were plated gold

There was no body around but me
and a single sales girl
with long dark straight hair
standing behind a counter
dressed in the clothes from the store

I fingered some of the clothes

They were silky

I have a limited interest in expensive clothes

They're just clothes

“You can have anything you want”
said the sales girl

I didn't want Any of the Clothes

I didn't want Any Thing in this Opulent Mall

What do I want?

I wonder

then I was living in a Cabin in the Woods
on the Coast of BC
in a Clearing that got Muddy in the Spring
with Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady
and All we did was sit around
and get Drunk
and smoke Weed
and talk about Literature
and the Divine
and have Sx with Each Other

In this World
I was a Real Charmer
just like I am in Daily Life

One Day a Black Car drove up to the Cabin
and out stepped my Husband
in a Neat Black Suit

He looked at his Elegant Black Shoes
as they sunk into the Mud

“ I want you to come Home, ”
said my Husband

“ Oh but I’m having ever so Much Fun here ”
I said

“ Your Duty lies with me ”
said my Husband
“ This Life Style isn’t beComing ”

“ I don’t want to ”
I said
“ I want to stay here
and be an Artist
with my Artist Friends
I love them so Very Much ”

“ We have a Beautiful Home ”
said my Husband
“ You’ve had your Fun
Let's go now
This is Squalor ”

“ Oh, Please, Dear
Can't I keep them?
Please?
I love them so Very Much ”

I don't know how my Husband replied
but seeing as I know me

I'll bet you I got All Three

To go back
and hold her down,

for something to be
fixed—

*

He thought they were stepping
out of youth,
the way one steps
from a train,

with the men in her life

(the father who hit
the bottle
limply,

the elder brother
full of bluster,

and the tender ex-fiancé)

receding.

Now she and her boyfriend
rented rooms
a quarter-mile apart,
and he had only to

open the door
to sink in her hair.

And they fought
and they fucked
and she said,
I want you
to control me—

*

When I was thirteen,
I lifted my stepfather's
Book of Nudes. He was into photography,
and I was into puberty.

The book was an old grey hardback
the size of the seat on a classroom chair,
or so I imagined.

The women were quite
beautiful—European, statuesque,
full-breasted models poised and posed
against an untarnished landscape shot
in gorgeous black and white.

Outwardly,
the book was a slab inscribed with little
but a name. Yet the talent of the artist
was apparent to me then—women
didn't always look like this. How
had he captured them so well?

No one could blame me for taking
an interest, but it wasn't enough to steal
a glance at the book from time-to-time.
I wanted to acquire
what I'd seen.

I took an oversized pair of scissors
and cut the most exciting figures
out, working around a subject's curves
the way one circles sculpture.

Liberated briefly,
the cut-outs were moved
and glued to some sheets of paper—fixed
to a fragmentary collage where the pieces
did not touch.

Disembodied bodies.

To fit them neatly into the scrapbook,
some of the women ended up losing
their heads, but I had seen
the ancient Roman works
and knew that this was normal.

the pencil-sharp part performs the ground
the ground performs sand the sound doesn't
the sand doesn't hold writing long
the sand beckons writing

the sand beckons after traces.
i walk a signature along it
i walk a leashed signature along it
the sand doesn't hold writing long
i repeat my themes upon it until I
repeat my themes upon it

i till the whole morning underfoot.
by night i walk heavy upon the perverts
the sky light perverts in the dark
they search the brief sign in the eye
their eye oils brief signs in the eye
i don't give it i don't sigh
i sigh to myself.
i sigh to myself verbs
a lip-song held trip-wire
tight
a throat-song or chokewire game

Where's Cheryl.
the thing about Cheryl is
Where's Cheryl.
i hear a love man talk about Cheryl
i hear a lone man talk in love about Cheryl
the thing about Cheryl is
Where's Cheryl.
Cheryl doesn't hold out long
Cheryl doesn't hold writing long
This line repents & is not about
Cheryl's death

Cheryl's death is all about.
The end line lies about the table with vermouth
the table is sopping with vermouth
this is the end of vermouth
the end is vermouth
drink death down the gullet!
death to vermouth
long live vermouth
long it lives in the mouth
& other mouth vices
& noises
& other animal-making

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.

1

Everyone says
I should get
a new attitude.

Or shoot myself.

Oh, to walk
through empty
white rooms,

eavesdropping
on painful memories
being described
in hushed tones.

2

It's officially fall,
& if I concentrated harder,
I'd hear the yellow taxi
hitting the trees head-on.

3

The red came off
on my hands.

Please see me
if you think
it might be yours.

This one's for the London Lonely
For those who aint got a one and only
Whose hearts have no home
And so they roam
Along the South Bank
Staggered file and rank
Eyes cast down and damp
This is for those who don't do eye contact
Cos when they do you're under attack
Taken aback by a sadness caused by delusions of lack
They're dotted around the city
In their dozens and hundreds
This one's for the lonely Londoners
The West End wanderers
The Soho stumblers
Chat up lines on pieces of paper
Conversation starters to be used for later
This one's for the hesitaters
The social life procrastinators
Say it straight
Let's make it a date
Don't hesitate
When you hesitate
You seal your fate

He who hesitates
Masturbates
This is for those who daily delete their internet history
Who whether they've ever even had a love life is a mystery
This one's for the London lonely
For those who feel they are the one and only
Who has ever felt like this
Who never thought it would ever come to this
They're the romance bumblers
The love song mumblers
This one's for the lonely Londoners
So steeped in solitude
Perhaps a cat at home
Hardly ever speak to anyone
Perhaps the cat's got their tongue
This is for those whose minds
Aint so sound
(Or maybe they are and we just aint come around)
Who wander around
And up and down
They were happy once and as if looking for the source
They go back and forth
And back and forth
On oyster topped up with a couple of pounds

This is for the London lonely underground
On the circle line they go round and round. . . and round
This is for those who mind the gap
This is for the night bus insomniac
This is for those who often hear
Excuse me this bus terminates here
This is for those on the edges of town
This is for those on the ledge looking down
And seeing nothing but murky grey and brown
No matter where you come from
This is for those who feel they don't belong
Who dine alone and so they hunger
As they plunder the depths of their disconnection
With all that is
Well all that is
Is their delusion of loneliness
You know that all is well
Nothing is amiss
That they really ought to just follow their bliss
But you tell em this
Their teeth they kiss
Cos they can't get whiff of bliss
So you're going to see an exhibition at the Tate Modern
Invited by that person you fancy like rotten

Got a table booked at Waga-Mamas for eight
There you'll meet some friends
Cos there's a birthday to celebrate
You got places to see and people to do
Well this aint for you
This is for the London Lonely
For those who aint got a one and only
Whose hearts have no home
And so they roam

you have never read this poem before
you will never read this poem again

1.

I wouldn't say I'm looking into the void,
more like it's on the tv while I'm on the sofa
updating Twitter, saying that I'm in tonight,
watching the void. The void is bad
comedy. Its jokes are stale, outdated.
It's easy to ignore, but it's still there.

2.

The void has joined me
for a drink with some mates
and sits there looking at its pint
for the whole night. It sucks
the atmosphere out of the room.
I leave early, embarrassed
that I brought the void out with me.

3.

The void tries teaching me to skateboard.
I think it's confused 31 for 13.
My body isn't what it used to be
and the void is getting frustrated.
Afterwards, I have a milkshake.
'I don't understand you,' the void says
in between sips of energy drink.

4.

Why is it snowing in Burnley
in August? I'm on a bus.
The void is tapping my temples
and singing Johnny Cash songs
at me. I'm looking out the window,
watching a couple kissing
and missing my girlfriend.

5.

'You were fun before you died.'
'Yeah, I've had that a lot recently.'
We're all at the fair. I'm the one looking
after people's bags while they go on rides.
They seem to have forgotten that
I never liked going on rides when I was alive either.
While they're on the Waltzers,
the void wins a goldfish at the hook-a-duck stall
and promptly downs it in one.

6.

It's Christmas time, and the void
has taken me to see a pantomime.
It's getting really into it, and doesn't understand
why I don't seem to be enjoying myself.

For the next few days, whenever I lose something,
it's because the void has hidden it
somewhere behind me, so that when I ask where it is,
the void can say, 'It's behind you!'
The void is becoming rather tedious.

interlude

When I was alive, I was in love. We bonded over comedy, courted on wine, lived on sex. We kissed in public. We were the most unsubtle couple you ever met. Our jilted admirers didn't know how to handle us.

Time worked against us. Too slow when apart, too quick when together, but boy, when we were together, we were explosive. We were the cheesiest fiction, the funniest humourists, the classiest pornography.

We felt each other's heartbeats, mocked each other gently. We would lie together and not care how sweaty we got.

When we were together, everything felt just perfect...

7.

In the library,
the void is showing me
photographs of redheads
with their breasts out.
This is annoying,
it's supposed to be going over
a draft of my latest poem.

8.

At an open mic night, the void is reciting
my latest review. The writer hated me.
The audience finds this hilarious. I go
to the bar, get a large whisky. I can hear
the void getting the biggest applause of the night.

'I wouldn't like to be the guy that's about,'
I hear someone say. I down my whisky
too enthusiastically, and fall off my stool.

9.

The void has me tied to a chair
and is force feeding me pork pies.
'We need to fatten you up,
you're becoming invisible!'
It's true that I've been off my food
since I died. 'Remember,
you have an image to maintain!' it says,
stuffing a handful of cheese in my mouth.

10.

I ask the void if it's ever been to America.
It hasn't, but has watched a lot of American films.
'I especially like that Christian Bale guy.
You get the feeling he's genuinely unhinged,
a real American Psycho.' The void laughs at its joke,
until I point out that Christian Bale is actually Welsh.
The void starts crying and I feel pretty smug
to have finally got one up on it.