

**TALES FROM THE  
CUTLERY DRAWER  
BY ASH COOKE**

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# 1 Further tales from the datanet

Larkin died in 85.  
But what would he have made.  
Of our revolution in computing.

Of words processed.

Thoughts manipulated by  
Digital devices

Seemingly replacing the pen.  
As weapon of choice.  
On the literary battlefield.

Using software to engage the enemy.  
In a dogfight of peril.  
In pursuit of grammatical perfection.

Spell checking and sorting.  
Justifying and positioning.

Transferred poetry by wireless connection.  
To distant recipients.

Or perhaps on reflection.  
He would observe no change.

Instinctively look beyond the  
High definition screens.  
And auto saving memories.

For the mind is a process impervious.  
To mans physical inventions.

No machine can.  
Deter the spirt.  
Or convert the soul.  
To a mortal exchange.  
Of ones and zeros.

## 2. Safe at home

The other morning I lifted my head before daylight

Twitched toed so early in the day  
As anxious blood pumped heavy

Hating each minute  
in the coldness of the new  
I drew the curtains

So lonely was the darkness  
In the corners of my life  
That I closed my eyes again  
In case I was still asleep

The cross of my fingers  
Signalled hope,  
Hope that someone would come  
And draw me out

Shine freshness into the hole of my soul

Sleep sits heavy as we drive hard into the day  
And  
My gut tells me that something shit  
Will happen today

### 3. Crippled Winds

Crippled winds are  
Stalking streets  
Dumping umbrellas in bins.  
Drawing out urban heels inside

I hate poets you know  
I hate fake poetry but  
Love the poetic in life  
formed raw from the real

I hate hollow poems  
Written by academic minds  
Too busy writing to actually write  
- Punch face -

All weather systems  
Seem settled now  
But we are still  
Walking on eggshells

I was happy that day -

That day they found me  
Naked and content  
Amongst the Brie  
At Lidl in Horesham

'Age' someone said to me  
Is a Wolf among the Sheep

'Too true' I replied

I tapped him  
On the shoulder and said  
'You are a great musician'  
Then he knew he was  
A great musician

It's true isn't it  
But just in case you didn't know  
We thought we'd  
Better spell it out

LIFE LIFE LIFE LIFE

When it comes to flirting with it  
Who dares wins!

After the incident it was clear  
That what happened wasn't rare.  
It wasn't rare at all.

Perhaps it had been secret and defensive  
But the background was there

Scandal paid by tax payers  
Nothing is going according to plan

Ease up on plan A  
Hang low on plan B and  
Call upon the international think tank

Now the shoe didn't appear  
To hit the president  
Fit the resident

So

How are we gonna cope?  
And how long have we got before they notice

Some things you can't afford to miss  
But you sit and conform instead

Zero casualties

A hungover man is  
In the water looking  
For golf balls

He keeps himself to himself  
But is still walking on eggshells  
All the same

Life spills into this book  
These words shout  
"The rodeo clown"

We thought he might  
Have been busy that day  
But no

The spill continued  
Long after the sun went down

Drinking and success  
Do not mix my friend  
They leave you in a dry hole

Distant lives of  
The ones that raised you  
Hurt and complicate

I miss you  
Miss me

In order to break the habit  
It's important to define yourself  
By the things you hate

Everything seems twisted  
As only these things can be

## 4. A gulf of understanding

Monday night  
In North Wales

We sit here  
Safe within walls  
Having lives, moments,  
Situations

Existing in bubbles  
Of self preservation  
That blanket our  
Barred window bodies

We heave with relief  
When we survive another day  
Making a deal  
Out of the trivial  
In domestic routine

Coloured and whites in the basket

Tomorrows football boots cleaned before school

But how weird is  
this world of reasonable fortune  
Which blinkered as we are  
Forms the gulf of our understanding  
Our context

When at that exact same moment  
The cake bakes,  
The kettle clicks as it boils  
Or Eastenders starts

At that exact same moment  
On the other side of the world  
Or the opposite side of the road

Someone else dies

## 5. Did you expect this?

That's one in the eye for agent Ajax  
And a testimony for the application of cruelty

## 6. Hello Vicar

Hello old black book  
Where are we?

What have we done

Dreams of white horses  
Heckle me  
Amid travels around  
Ancient islands

We are complete  
If only the egg shells  
Remain intact  
- Shhhhh keep calm

Prepare your show  
The public demands it

I draw like a child  
Wouldn't you agree

I'm my very own partridge  
Stalking the stage

But this music slips down a treat

Stirring stuff I think  
With virtually no weight

It's nice to help others out  
Eco boost.  
Technology at the bottom of the glass

I sit listening and writing  
Hoping the shutters  
Won't come down and ruin me

Got to make something of this

When the old man was a boy  
He blamed himself  
For the fire  
But he never spoke of it

Wouldn't let others inside

Just cried on his own  
Late at night  
Out by the old barn

The spill continued  
And we couldn't stop it  
We couldn't get back  
In time from Basra

To examine the case

But there must be  
A perfectly reasonable explanation  
For all this

'You have no idea of the trouble you have caused me'

'Leave a set of keys behind the desk at reception'

Lobster empathy

Maybe it is because I am nearer the equator

I'm so tired now

Is it magic?

Well I believe it is  
Ah! The cash register  
And rocket ship are yours

The wind blows  
And the snow stops cars with slicks  
Terrible mistakes

Well, you'd be a fool not to take it  
Said the block of wood

Believe in yourself  
And you could be your own block of wood

## 7. The village

Don't sweat it doctor

Shouts an old man

There is anger in the room

The kids were hidden in the kitchen  
Fraught, with fear in their eyes  
From fathers morbid beatings

An ink moon is risen  
And guilt lays over  
Like toffee claws  
On a Monday morning

A twisted corporate punishment  
Waits for those who say  
The wrong thing  
Or who are unable to be still

Did the moustache cause such violence?

Those were days of a certain repression  
Of stunted personalities  
Behind the ink wells

## 8. Historical Meanings

History, History, History

Time to get back to the van

First into the bowl gets a prize  
So crack a good one  
And mix it all up  
Then tell me how it tastes

The captain says  
The letter S under  
The water spout  
Stands for 'Sanctus'

4 notes in the shape  
Of a cross -  
Cross symbolism

The old house has  
Hidden views and  
Fancy  
Dark secrets  
Among families  
With money

## 9. Hospital poem

Cultural issues  
Caused medical trauma  
The woman collapsed  
In the lift  
She bled

Then the alarm sounded  
And A+E was cleared  
Tension got tense  
For an alchy on the bog  
Set the switches off

In the toilet cubicle  
Listening to the race  
The alchy Caused problems  
On the ward

If we don't get  
The baby out now  
She'll die

Find the phone and  
Pass my gloves

## 10. Raising the game

If I could just hold out my hand  
And reach this soul

I would

I do

I try

Smart young mind just needs the chance  
To step up from the floor  
And Take control

Form a solid plan and  
Up his game

We sequence time  
To encourage triumph  
Seizing the day in bounding  
Chunks of glory

But at his age  
He stands alone  
On a busy stage

Waiting for comfort cues

When leading lines are needed

## 11. Dr Doom

Agreed with glee at first  
To revisit old pastures of life chapters gone

Blanked by ancient memories of glory  
I felt it rise in the gut

I took the lead to engage

Bit by bit though  
Reality crept in  
And old niggles granted themselves  
Victorious returns

A Heavy weights hangs heavy  
On shoulders older now  
Giving me reason to remember  
Why I dug a different hole to die in

For that is surely where I will reside  
When the dust settles  
And lays me bare

## 12. In defence of booze

In regard to this:

By taking in to account all the evidence

Weighing up the pros and cons

And adding all the pieces together

In an attempt to

Make a solid a case for the positive

I still can only reach the simple conclusion

That there is no excuse at all

### 13. Egg shells

It's only a matter of time  
Before the truth  
Catches up with me

Spearing my vulnerable soul  
Like a limp eyed fish

You should face facts  
Acts  
For an act is what it appears to be

This thing that  
sometimes Generates love  
When the moment suits

Keeps you living  
But more often  
Than not  
It reads like a guessing game

Performed on egg shells

## 14. A world in which you cannot win

When the choices  
Are too many  
And recipients few

The market gets thinner  
For this man of lists

Faithful messages  
Sent out with good intentions

Hit hard against  
Hollow hearts

The desire to live hermit like  
Looms large

And actions grow faster

But some faithful souls gather  
And beat the gong

Sound the alarm with genuine force  
To bowl back the hollow hearted ones  
That have no place here

Inside our cell

## 15. All these things

How can you say you love me  
When there are all these things

Reasons

Statements

Objections

Irritations

Resentments

And me somehow powerless  
To change

A flip side situation

One day what I am is wrong  
And I am scolded for the breath  
That squeezes through my  
Panic ridden lungs

Then by turns I place a foot right  
And become some kind  
Of bloody cherished hero  
Deserving of affection

This hollow heart can be rebuilt

If only I am loved for what I am

## 16. In the morning

In the morning

In the car

You can smell the spores

In the evening

In the house

Air moves slow

Bodies smell weird

At anytime

Of the day

## 17. Charity bags

When we are bored  
Of our ageing  
Material  
Things

And we suffer  
Domestic mental clutter  
Caused by fuddled surroundings

Then we crave order

And

Warm days bring on  
Thoughts of charity bags

Cleaning our lives out it seems  
May some how  
Helping starving mouths feed

Popping old things  
In a bin bag

Contributing to a weird notion  
That these things will  
Help solve the problems of the world

When possibly

They are just things in bags

Sat unused in the back rooms  
Of semi derelict  
Shops

## 18. 60% Less

The decision making process  
Is a secret pleasure  
On a Saturday night

He paints a picture  
Of Monkeys on walls  
Always up to 60% less

I can make it fly  
I can make it fly

Why did you run  
Away when you saw us?

Is that your parcel?  
Bought with stolen bank cards

Can you pop in there  
And give Lee a message?

"Eddie was fine when he left"

## 19. Stan and the bike

It's Monday morning in Bristol. The rain is falling and the day is uncommonly dark.

Out in the streets the ghostly figures of commuters in the early morning light shuffle past the large glass display windows of local shops making their way to school and work or where ever it is they need to go.

Inside Fowler Motorcycles on Bath Street Stan is signing a deal on a new Triumph Thunderbird. He is 52 and overweight. Never an active man his legs hurt him more often than not these days and he's not sure why.

The salesman eyes Stan with curiosity from over the top of his glasses and wonders exactly what a guy like Stan is going to do with a machine as powerful as the Speedmaster T-16

In Stan's mind today is a landmark! A day that signifies a new chapter in his life. In reality, buying the bike is yet another attempt to get over the messy divorce that crippled him emotionally just over six months ago.

During the disintegration of his marriage the kids gradually took their mothers side and when it came to the crunch Stan found himself stood on the doorstep with an over night bag one muggy night in October facing the world as only a man thrown out of his own home could.

He won't admit it but the emptiness he feels inside scares him half to death. Stan doesn't sleep too well these days and he is always awake before the alarm sounds each morning, lying in the dark wishing the world would go away.

The sky is beginning to clear a little by the time Stan is standing on the forecourt of the bike dealers garage, trying to tie the strap of his new helmet. It takes him a little while to do as its years since Stan rode a bike and he is quietly aware that eyes are watching him from inside.

The salesman has pulled open the office Venetian blinds with one hand and is looking directly at Stan through the stats waiting for him to start the bike and leave but there is something about Stan that worries him. It's almost as if he doesn't want the bike but needs it for some greater plan. He has a curious feeling that he'll never see Stan again.

Finally a lonely figure mounts the bike and pulls away from the forecourt into the mid morning traffic. Inside his helmet Stan is

wearing a curious grin. His legs no longer hurt and the pain inside his head is gone. He opens the throttle and heads out of the city.

The next morning local newspapers ran with a lead story reporting the death of a lone motorcyclist who seemingly rode a brand new Triumph Thunderbird into the Avon Gorge...