



THE
LONG COLD



THE SHANG REVIEW

OUTSIDE IN SINCE '24

Ship's at port, all aboard. Sail away from where you are.
There's a calmer sea. Isn't there?
Here, on this sea, we all sail. All we do is sail.
We're sailing away, sailing somewhere else,
sailing out of THE LONG COLD...



Gloop Logic

Benjamin Lewis

I was walking with a friend who knows more about sculpture than I do. We were walking from a teahouse to a pub and along the way we found a statue.

‘That’s *The Burghers of Calais*,’ he said.

‘I didn’t know that was here.’

A bird shits on the statue. The shit runs over the metal. They are close to one another. An embrace, or closer. But they are not one, the metal and the shit. The shit dries. It takes the Burghers’ form—if partially—bears their grimaces. They’re not happy, I can tell by the frown lines. How does the shit feel? Are they one now? Did the shit have form before taking the statue’s?

Perhaps the metaphor is inexact. What is a metaphor? Is it a shape? When things take shape you can pick them apart. They chip and they shatter. But iron is stronger than stone, it’s true. The Burghers were made unhappy. Metal was made to frown and now it makes a point. Such was Rodin’s point that we put it by parliament—we scare politicians with it. The shape keeps them honest. Is this a worthwhile contortion?

I’m thinking about becoming a puddle. But I only want to be the water, not the bottom of the puddle or the sides of the puddle. What is a puddle with no water in it? An absence. Of what? What is water without a receptacle? Is it rain? I want to be bigger than rain. Is it better, I wonder, to be stepped on or fallen through? What I’m doing now is thinking and thinking isn’t always useful. If someone is stepping on someone else and you are a puddle suddenly a puddle does not seem a good thing to be.

I want to be malleable, a shapechanger, or abandon shape entirely. Being a statue is hard work. You stand there and get shat on and for what—everything crumbles. Form means an idea can be rained on. Elasticity is too tense. The snapping! I want to be gloopy, really. But I think that would make it easier to step on me. Rather, it would make being stepped on easier.

Not that it’s you who steps on me. If we pass through each other (eventually we will pass through each other), will there be a moment, however brief, when we are one? Permeability. I don’t know if it’s worth falling out of you.

Statues have merit. Of course they do. There is something romantic about standing a certain way for a very long time. Particularly when born down upon at such a rate of knots. Romance is a nice idea and ideas last. Romance given shape rarely lasts because people are clumsy.

I guess I’m scared I’ll break. And I want to be close to you—to the world. I want to spill out, in, and over everything—grace it all and last forever. Good idea. To stand or to pool? Good question. I guess we can’t all be puddles, though it’d be nice if we were. What if it were all fluid? No more time, hello ghosts. No more lines or walls or edges that tear, hello puddle. No here and no there, no us and no other, no then and no now, hello gloop. I think the gloop would be kinder (less pricking) but maybe less fun. There’s no rough around the edges without edges. Us statues must be kinder.

The longer something is something the more likely it is for it to be something else. This is the exponential tension of stasis. The snapping! It is also why statues are impressive. What is a thing if it changes?

Infinite is a big word. I live in the world and I know it’s smaller than I think it is. I know rules are real and if you break them it’s real. I know I am a statue, even if I want to be a puddle. I know, then, that I’m on my way out. Bash into me from time to time like an action figure, if you wouldn’t mind. See to the moss.

The gloop would be kinder.



Neptunbrunnen,
Berlin.
17.08.23



(Leon Russell)

Her Gift - Part I

Leon Russell

Mallaby had not spoken for three and a half years—it was a kind of vow he had made. Granted, he had occasionally spoken to himself: every other month, when in his own company, he might expel the faintest of mumbles, but this, he believed, did not truly count. So long as these expulsions fell on his ears alone, all was well. Though his life was by and large a solitary one, it was not without chance encounters and near brushes. That is to say, a certain degree of effort was required to prolong his silence—he had taken his vow, it had not been bestowed upon him. Indeed, Mallaby believed firmly that one should not mistake incompetence for abstinence.

This was one of the many unutterable mottos that he was carrying around with him that afternoon as he walked down Balfour Street. He had meant to hurry along the pavement, but his knees would no longer permit it. The elderly are rarely afforded the luxury of rushing, he thought to himself as he looked up at the towering town houses. He was in truth an old man, though nevertheless considerably younger than any onlooker might have guessed. Loose-fitting, his age seemed to sag from him, as though he had not quite grown into it yet. Mallaby was not wearing well.



At the end of the street, he passed The Tillman, a small pub that he was still in the habit of visiting from time to time. Oddly enough, the regulars seemed to take no offence at his silence. Perhaps because he had never tried to explain it. Caught staring at the gilded lettering above the pub door, Mallaby stubbed his toe on a raised paving stone and came to a halt. Taking out his handkerchief, he hastily coughed up a crimson ball of phlegm before pocketing it. They should really make all of these in red, he almost muttered to himself.

Now stationary, he began to shiver. And then it came back to him, like it always did—his dearest vision. He could only begin to anticipate it after it had already come to pass; he could only ever miss it. To call it a memory would have been misguided—the scene had only ever played out in his mind. And yet this only seemed to lend a greater value to it. He suspected it had once been a dream, but so many years had passed that he could no longer be certain. Truthfully, its origin was by now of little significance to Mallaby. He was already too far down the line. And so he opened up his arms, trembling as the embrace was instantly reciprocated.

A heavy rain was falling—had there been more light, the cobblestones would have been gleaming. The walls on either side of the cramped alleyway were full with people. Hunched over in doorways, or peering down from crowded windows, they sought refuge from the downpour. Some had squashed themselves like clay into whatever cracks or recesses they could find, and were now staring out from within the walls themselves. They all appeared to be awaiting an event of some kind, an event that was interesting enough to demand immediate attention, but not enough so as to warrant standing in the rain. It was possible, after all, that the people did not know what they were waiting for. Nothing about their appearance suggested that they had any authority over what was about to unfold—these people were only here to observe.

He could never recall her approach. All he had to cling to was the exact moment at which she passed him by. Led from behind by a single darkly uniformed figure, she moved over the cobbles with a clumsy dignity. Her steps were taken with confidence, but only halfheartedly left behind, as though she planned on returning later and retrieving them. With his left hand placed on her right shoulder, the uniformed figure guided her forwards with a grim patience. In the half-light, the figure seemed to take on the appearance of a single black wing growing directly out of her back. The people in the walls received her with perfect indifference. No hush fell over them—they were already silent. And so their waiting slipped seamlessly into watching. Such was her majesty, that even those on the balconies appeared to be looking up at her.

And still the rain came down, now in lurching waves. Her hair clung fiercely to her head, as though it were afraid of being washed away in the downpour; her eyes were downcast, making it impossible to tell whether she was using them or not. All this he knew, and yet he could never picture her face. Indeed, the same could be said of the entire scene: it was visual, and yet imageless. If asked, for instance, to try and sketch even one of the many details he treasured so dearly, Mallaby would have simply smiled and crossed his arms—there was no sense in soiling a fine piece of paper.

This general vagueness, or slipperiness, was, however, of no concern to Mallaby. He did not need an image to confirm that which he already knew so intimately. Only one aspect of the vision haunted him, namely his own place within it. No matter how many times he revisited the scene, he could not say with certainty whether he had been standing up against the wall with the other onlookers, or out in the rain with her. This was the one thing in his life that he desired to know most of all—it was the only piece of knowledge that could ever hold any value in his eyes. It was, to a greater extent, his life.



The Lamest Chronic Illness Going

Benjamin Lewis

Drive Your Plow headlined the Windmill last night. This isn't really the piece I wanted to write about Drive Your Plow—they're a wonderful band—but I don't know what I'd say in another piece about them besides that they're a wonderful band. Music and scents are difficult to describe, I've learned.



Gig photography.

(BJ)

Go, if you can, inside the image I captured for you above. A tall man has shaken a camera at you—he wants passage. He asks if you can still see. After the bridge you see him put his lens cap on. He doesn't move, but the music's good so you don't care. You will write about the injustice tomorrow. You're drinking and they're playing your favourite song. There's karaoke after the set, the violinist says. You'd planned to leave but you buy a half-pint. It's a journalistic half-pint. The karaoke is a joy—you buy a full pint. Another. And here it is—Paddy, the drummer, is performing a power ballad you don't recognise and you realise that you have the lamest chronic illness going. There is something wrong with you and you will sneeze through everything you love. You knew this already, of course, but there is something visceral about a sneeze (and the second sneeze, and the third sneeze) that sometimes when you're drunk you forget. You head to the bathroom and they're out of bog roll. You find—on a high, stickered shelf—a second roll, but this is a low triumph. You Uber home (already a defeat) and you're sneezing—sneezing and snorting over some poor man's car. You feel low, yes, but there is something pathetic about it all that makes you laugh.

Sadness is an aesthetic condition. Blue is a lovely colour. Solitude at least suggests a strength, a disregard, and when the solitary admit that they are lonely the corners of one's mouth curl down—but in pity or sorrow, not disgust. Sorrow is a lovely word. Snot is not. The deep caverns of depression entice, melancholy allures. Sickness is bone-ache and chunder. It's bogs and snot and pores, at least for me. For me it's blowing your nose in old t-shirts. I have chronic rhinosinusitis, at least that's what my ENT says. They told me it was hay fever for a time; I insisted that I come from the land of pollen and this couldn't be the case. After great distress a man called Irfan got some instruments up my nose and went to work. He rescued me from a great pit. During this time I learnt that humans have more than one sinus and that my condition has something to do with a meatus. See what I mean about optics? 'Meatus' does not inspire or move. My nose doesn't really work, that's essentially the problem. It's usually too busy on the fritz to do normal nose things like smelling or breathing. I get through a lot of Sudafed.



Not being able to breathe is one thing but one day you start to believe it, you can't breathe—in this city, on this island—and things get tricky. This is where Irfan found me and now I can breathe again, albeit with more steam-baths and mometasone furoate. I love breathing. My life is not hard. Of all the gruesome things about my condition perhaps the most gruesome is its label of chronic illness, which, while technically correct, does feel like stolen valour. Imagine you're drinking tea and you sneeze and you spill the tea and now there's a mess and you're angry but there's no one to be angry at and then you're either angry at a sneeze (ridiculous) or yourself (moreish) so you put it away and clean up the tea. Frustrating? Yes. Debilitating? No. Ridiculous? Immensely. The nose is a ridiculous organ and sneezing is a ridiculous action. The nasally, octave-higher voice of the significantly congested is a ridiculous one. The constant drip is disgusting, yes, but ridiculous to cite as a cause of agony. It is frustrating for all of one's perils to be so silly. I would imagine, however, that it is more frustrating to be debilitated.

The Chinese treated congestion with tea for thousands of years. Maybe in a roundabout manner this is where I got the idea. They brewed tea from Ephedra, which they called Ma Huang. The Americans later brewed tea from the same plant—they called it, amongst other Mormon names, whorehouse tea. Supposedly a rootless infusion of the plant could treat venereal diseases. Ma Huang might have been of use to the Chinese because it contained pseudoephedrine, now sold over the counter as Sudafed. Ma Huang and Sudafed are linked in the present day not just by their content but by their extortionate cost—the only ephedra tea I could find was £24.99. To my knowledge this is because many species of Ephedra contain ephedrine and ephedrine products were banned by regulatory bodies like the FDA over health concerns, including but not limited to bouts of psychosis (is this not the point of tea?). The particularly dear strain I found contained Ephedra vulgaris, which—due to a narrow mind—sent me right back to whorehouse tea. Had I studied Latin at any point I'd know that vulgaris simply means common or ordinary—the prudishness was our doing—but it is of course the root for vulgar, and vulgar for us means to make explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions. I am very much in the business of making explicit and offensive reference to bodily functions, just not the kind we're prudish about. Sneezing and snorting is vulgar business.

I started drinking tea properly after I lost my sense of smell. It was a way to take care of myself. I'm aware that I missed a boat there, it doesn't take a mormon to tell you tea isn't much to the nose-blind, but sometimes fate has it that my airways clear and I can experience it fully, aromas and all. Still, even when I can't, I take the time to arrange the leaves and prepare the pot. Warm tea was once taken to treat the penetration of low temperatures, curing sickness in an act of balance. Maybe there's long been cold inside me. Maybe it's a war, or maybe it is just an act of balance; man and sinus.

But sometimes it is just like shit lycanthropy or a terrible Cinderella story in which I'm whisked off at midnight to be disgusting for a while. That's kind of it, we're at the bottom of the issue. What can be done? What am I trying to do? I don't know if this is an explanation, or some kind of confession—I don't know what I'd have to confess. I think I am trying to accept—outloud—an ugly part of myself. But in accepting it acknowledge that it's not even that ugly—it lacks the spectacle to be—it's just kind of lame. Vulgarity is a lack of sophistication, after all. Perhaps that is what I'm grappling with—I miss superlatives, in the description of tea and otherwise. People suck at describing how teas smell. And I love to complain, I think it one of life's great joys. At least when something is difficult it's a story. Even the most aching heartbreaks make for great stories. I don't think the struggle of man and sinus makes for a great story. And the vocabulary of illness is too bodily and evocative, it's true—either too grim or too silly. But surely more have felt sick in the way I have—if temporarily—than have been sad the way some have? I suppose I'm not the arbiter of who's felt what. The vulgar is common. Ordinary. Everyone has their thing, mine is more mucous. I'm embracing the green.

'But I did not love the green, nor did I want to have to love it or pretend to love it', writes Maggie Nelson. She prefers blue. She says, at most, she 'abided by' green. Perhaps I'll discover the difference. Sorry Plowheads, I do really like the band.



THE INESCAPABLE GANG VIOLENCE BETWEEN CUSTOMER AND EMPLOYEE

Trip Liveras

The minimum wage, part-time job is almost unavoidable in the lives of the young and/or poor. It occupies the similar milestone position in one's maturation as losing your first tooth, starting high school or getting into a relationship. In fact, when I meet people who have never worked in the service industry, I'm quite jarred. How could you avoid something that was so ubiquitous? When I was sixteen it felt like all my friends were being conscripted into their mandatory KFC service. Since I turned eighteen, I've had a bunch of different service jobs—two times in Starbucks, once in Gails, I was a weird graduation ceremony helper for a while, I was a waiter in a pancake restaurant for about three shifts, and most recently a bartender in a hotel. The longest I've stayed in one place was five months before dramatically quitting (except I didn't know you had to send a formal letter of resignation, so they made me do like two more shifts after that). The cycle goes like this: you need the job, you get the job, you like the job for a while, the job makes you go crazy, you quit the job, you regret quitting the job because you're broke, rinse and repeat. Or maybe that's just me... In any case, we all need the money so most of us need the stupid minimum wage, part-time job. We're stuck here, surrounded by the enemy: the customer.

When I worked in the airport (one of my barista stints) I would seethe from jealousy every shift. Seeing the departure screen list off all these amazing destinations while I restocked the fridges, covered in milk I just spilled all over myself, surrounded by about a hundred people with neck pillows was a demoralising experience. Most public spaces are fundamentally different for those who enjoy them as intended and those who work to make them functional. To use my situation as an example, the airport is a gateway for international travel, most of which I would assume to be touristic. It's your holiday precursor, it can be fun, cute, exciting, etc. However, for me and my coworkers, the space loses that meaning completely: it's our workplace where we make coffee all day and take out the bins. Similarly, a bar for its customers can be a social environment, somewhere to cut loose after a long day. For the employees, it is their long day. This is physically manifested through the stark differences between the forward-facing areas of business versus the staff-only zones. The restaurant may be sleek and modern, but the staff room is sure to be the opposite. This incongruence of meaning between employees and the greater public is alienating and leads to great hostility.

If you've ever wondered if the workers somewhere talk shit about you when you do something stupid, the answer is a resounding yes! I've always experienced a strong 'us versus them' mentality with my coworkers and the customers; it helps build camaraderie in the team. At my first job there was this diva that would complain the second anybody came into the café—which was funny since most of the time the place was completely desolate. Moaning together about how we didn't want to be there was a fun respite from our boredom. The customers became the perfect target for our frustrations.

Terribly, the employee eventually clocks out and becomes the customer. In civilian life, I can be an annoying customer too. I ask for weird modifications on my food, I come into places right before closing, and I don't like tipping (I'm poor!!! I just want to pay the advertised price!!!). I was annoyed when the bar I was at closed earlier than it said on Google, but I'm always jumping for joy when my supervisor lets us close early. There is nothing inherently wrong with going out in your free time to the bar or café or cinema. There's nothing wrong with being a little annoying sometimes, if you're respectful about it. You could have purely innocent intentions but by your existence as a customer, you contribute to the anguish of the employee. Like my old coworker, you could be the first person to walk into the shop in hours, and the employee will still want you to go away. The employee is essentially being held hostage since they need the paycheck. They would not be standing there for nine hours straight of their own volition. By no fault of their own, the customer must take advantage of the employee's predicament to get whatever it is they want. This contradiction in desire further alienates the groups: the employees don't want to be there, but the customers do.



When I was out recently and my friend went home early, I decided to try and strike up conversation with the bartender. I was painfully aware of this unfair dynamic between us. Despite my best efforts, I could only manage to get the customer service responses out of him, and I felt guilty for imposing my conversation on him while he was cleaning (although he said it was completely fine). He couldn't exactly tell me to fuck off if he didn't want to talk since I was a paying customer. So, we were stuck in this weird, veiled situation where it's impossible for it to not be at least a little coercive. I soon decided to leave him alone and let him get on with his work.

Customers and employees seem to be irreparably opposed to each other. Through work, the employee is alienated from the rest of society, a contrast most strongly felt with the customers they work for. However, these roles are continuously changing as people go in and out of work. The employee is doomed to become the customer on their days off. Can these two sides somehow be joined in perfect harmony? Or is it impossible under the system we live in?

Who's Job Is It To Catch That Squirrel?

Benjamin Lewis

Have you ever felt like you're the only person in the world who cares about something?

What if you were? Some reckoning. Guernsey is a quiet corner of the world. More accurately it is a dot drawn onto maps because they missed us on the first pass. I feel as a son of this dot a certain duty to pencil us in. It is the great asterisk of my life and my charity dries up. Rock, field, sea, divorce, tax-but-not-much—I've got the t-shirt and that's what my t-shirt says. If you have a t-shirt you can burn mine. You have to paint it for people. Every time I try to paint the thing but a painting is a painting and a thing is a thing. Sometimes a thing is so remarkably itself you put down the paints and laugh.

I will paint my home for you. From the BBC, 'Non-native grey squirrel on the loose in Guernsey'. Later, 'Islanders told not to gather around squirrel'. Later, 'Mystery over grey squirrel in 'impossible location''. Later, 'No squirrel sightings since last week'. Some time later, "Elvis' the grey squirrel thought captured or dead'. Some portrait.

A squirrel buries a chestnut. He leaves the mound. He returns to see a great oak tree. He misses the chestnut.

In the Half Moon I'm painting Guernsey. I'm with Guerns and we're painting together, painting for drunks. We're drunk too which is why the paints are out. We present the arm of Gilly. Gilly needn't paint because he is a canvas—tattooed on his inner forearm is the island: a funny triangle. The drunks look at the forearm for a long time, at the ink and the space between.

"How many people live there?"

"On the island?"

"On the island."

"64,000—give or take. But they're all dying."

Their gaze doesn't leave the forearm.

"There's no way."

Their gaze doesn't leave the forearm.



“There’s no way that many people fit on that island.”

Scale. We’re hot with laughter and then we cool down. Nothing happens for very long. This can’t go on any longer, you think, and then it does or it doesn’t. Guernsey has little roads. Really they’re lanes and they’re very narrow. Often you find yourself driving down a road which is clearly only wide enough for one car and you just hope and pray that another car doesn’t come round the bend. Sometimes I think, wow, I really don’t know what I’d do if a car comes round that bend. And sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn’t.

‘An animal charity has said it is “highly likely that something has happened” to a squirrel thought to have arrived in Guernsey via a vehicle’. Clarity.

It gets so dark there. It’s so green and the water can be so still but it gets so dark. How to show you the darkness I know—how to stop you seeing. I talked to a man about his garden. He said he stopped watering. It’s just too dry, he said, too dry this year. Weather’s too coy.

Who’s job was it to catch that squirrel? I mean, really. I get that we don’t employ a literal squirrel-catcher but surely that falls under someone’s remit—some charity or agency or department. I’m not even a staunch squirrel-detainist—let that fucker run—you’d just think someone somewhere in some office would have an ecological concern. And then it’s not that big an island!

This is where I write from.

Night, and quiet. This nasal form. And then the waves.

Flowers Will Bloom: Revolution and Revival in the Wake of Catastrophe

Caroline Carter

A year ago, I started my year abroad in Washington, DC. With family in the area, I had a sort of home-court advantage, but it was still pretty nerve-wracking to move across the Atlantic with no friends nearby. Unless you count the guy who also came to DC from my home university, with whom I’d exchanged a few messages, largely unenthusiastic on his behalf, in the run up to the first day of class. I’d come to learn that that was just his clinical yet well-meaning style of texting and we’d come to be good friends. But that’s neither here nor there. I ended up absolutely loving my time in DC. Studying International Relations two blocks from the White House was surreal and the city itself is filled with such character. I’d rallied and mourned over elections and politics in the capital of democracy’s capitol. It had quickly become a home. One I’d hoped to return to—after a minimum of four years. I left the States in June, feeling like I was the last person to make it onto the life boat. A day or two after I flew out, the national guard was deployed in Los Angeles. It was surreal to watch over the news. At that stage, ICE had detained and deported thousands of people — thousands of Americans—and met those protesting with illegal, state-sanctioned violence. I’d become completely disenfranchised with the US and the fascistic autocracy it was barrelling towards. While I was grateful to get out of there, I regretted not being able to do more for the communities victimised by Trump’s ego boosting power plays. And now, each day seems to bring more horrifying headlines than the last.

But the state of affairs in the UK isn’t too much better. Parliament seems to be making any decision that will either get them money in the bank or favour with the one percent. Whether that be regressing on trans rights in the supreme court ruling on the definition of ‘woman’ or the recent online safety act which is so clearly internet censorship and personal data acquisition stacked on top of each other in a trench coat pretending to care about protecting the children.



And the most heinous governmental stance of the UK in recent history being its complicity in genocide. Facilitating arms sales and proscribing peaceful protestors as terrorists when the real terrorists, by Webster's definition, appear to be coming from inside Number 10. And the world? It seems to be filled with an unfathomable amount of hatred and evil. Bombs dropped on hospitals and a man-made famine and still no consequence to the perpetrators. The apocalypse is now.

During my time in the States, I was lucky enough to visit Maui, Hawai'i. As I drove through the breathtaking landscape, I caught a glimpse of Haleakalā, the world's largest dormant volcano, in the distance. The volcano is responsible for the creation of the eastern part of the island over two million years of lava deposits. For so much of its past, Maui has been covered in molten rock and ash, yet I would not describe it as desolate nor destitute. It thrives with nutrient-rich, fertile soil and a population that lives on the very land created by Haleakalā. There's a plant, the 'ōhi'a lehua, that is the first flora to grow on lava flow. Vibrant bundles of red emerge from a barren scene, stirring imagery not dissimilar to that of the poppies in Flanders field. Life not only persists through such trying conditions, but comes back stronger and more spectacular.

Right now, it feels like the world is going through multiple, concurrent volcanic eruptions. Yet there is some consolation in knowing that the world will not end. We will not go extinct. The people will spur on revolution on behalf of those who did not make it, just as activists and those speaking out are doing now. There will be a reckoning for what is happening and those responsible will be held to account. Institutions will crumble and, in their stead, better and stronger foundations will be built. Flowers will bloom again.

The greatest of the 'Big Five' extinctions was caused by a volcanic eruption and its aftermath. Life has and will continue to endure. Humanity, inevitably, will triumph.

Beyond the Garden Wall (For S.)

Leon Russell

Beyond the garden wall we walked,
And wondered why it was
That everything seemed doubly beautiful in the half-light:

The birds that lined the cherry trees
Sent out their songs as if to see
Who might complete the harmony
And return their gentle call.

And you and I, with youthful glee,
In gentle tones did both agree
Their dulcet song seemed twice as sweet
From beyond the garden wall.

The dimming world did seem to glow, we paused to wonder why,
Our feet afloat on evening dew, our heads turned to the sky;
The bright half-moon winked down at us, as if to make reply.

The petals in the evening air did dance before our eyes,
They came and went in winding breaths, falling only to rise;
And as we turned to head indoors, we saw a shadow crawl—
Our black-tailed friend slipped round the bend, beyond the garden wall.



The Long Cold

Benjamin Lewis

So maybe there's no blue.

Walls and oceans. Passing through things requires a degree of change. Sometimes you're ready to pass through a wall and it's still a wall. Sometimes you're ready to cross an ocean and it's still an ocean. Mr Wall thinks every wall is his. They're not. Mr Ocean says I Know Somewhere You Don't Know. He's right.

What's the difference between lifting the heavens and bearing them? Direction of travel. Endurance and strength—who can push harder?

I'm sorry there's no blue. Let's talk about keys. A man makes himself a key, the wall is not a door. It's still a wall. So much for keys. Reckoning with the having to leave. Reckoning with the having had to leave. Reckoning with the coming round again. How to acknowledge, thoroughly, intimately, without accepting. To know and to want.

No horizon. Or horizon, over and over, senselessly. How to reconcile the wanting. Wind, salt, grit, tide. The promise of a voyage. Light over water.

I know somewhere where the sea never ends. I sat on rocks before the light and water. I took one because I hold onto things. I sat in the small chair in the small cinema and used the small urinal. I didn't feel big. And if I was I didn't want to be. I used to think everything was small, too small for me.

Sorry rock. The rock doesn't say anything. It never did, to be fair.

There's an old story about Guernsey. We're adapting it—shooting in a walled garden. They're trying to make a tree look bigger than it is. Jules is talking about the classics, everything is something else. He looks at the garden. It's Homer really, he says. It's the Odyssey if Odysseus never left Ithaca.

So if nothing ever happened, I say.

“You know what I mean.”

I don't need a big urinal. But I did leave again. I'm sorry there's always something. I'm sorry there's no blue.

Infinity, but never quite. And then the stomping on.

—

Sailing away, sailing through. Winds high and waters cold.
Maybe you helped the crew. Maybe they needed the help.
And they offered you a ship.



shangreview.com



Editor's Note

Join the circle! We need the help.
Everybody's welcome, whatever your island.

'The archipelago is a passage, and not a wall'.

— BJ
(shangreview@gmail.com)

Art by Trip Liveras.
Summer, 2025.



