

Then I woke up

I don't want to wake up

Right in the middle of a horrible dream

Because the nightmare was anything but.

I have never encountered anything

I've wanted so badly to drown in

Until this moment, until I

Delved into this.

this is nowhere

I am nowhere and everywhere all at once.

This dreams to gods and werewolves alike, this hearkens to Shakespeare and myths, this is aware of its limitations and revels in its boundaries. This is sublime.

this is nothing

This is *everything*.

Yes, I woke up

Let me fall asleep again.

I dreamt I was

I was just getting to the good part.

Are you lost, little girl?

Hopelessly lost, Mr Wolf.

I don't know where I am.

I don't know where I'm going.

I don't know where this will lead me.

There are moments of such breathtaking beauty it seems somehow impossible; the declaration that there are *Molten universes in your eyes* and it's so resonant it aches somewhere in my sternum, niggles its way in and refuses to leave.

Poor Tom's a cold. He shivers, raw, in the rain.

I've seen this trope more often than I want to.

And even here, it caused a brief groan of

Annoyance, that yet again it's turning

Up to prove a point and yet, and

yet.

(a note: I'm trying to keep your gorgeous typography because honestly, that's the joy of this piece for me. Call me biased, call me whatever the hell you like, but I love that this piece has no obedient strictures, and Poor Tom's a-cold but at least he's indented)

I couldn't see the poem for the words

Tom said it wasn't there and pointed:

It prowls the

spaces between!

But there was

nothing

there

just

white

And what you see here is a pale imitation.

What you see here is me trying to do justice

To something that has no justice, that doesn't

Need nor ask for any.

I couldn't see the poem for the words either, not at first. I wasn't even sure what I was up against: poem, hybrid, prose, something in between.

I think this is made of the space in between.

And I cannot express in a limited vocabulary how gorgeous that really is.

[Exit apathetic android / Exit speechless / Exit little girl lost / Exit in pursuit of beer]

I've exited with a glass of red wine to await the next stage of this process.

And I inhale.

Exhale.

and he led me

down into the poem

You led me down into a poem, into a nightmare I cannot escape, a dream I have no interest in waking up from. This poem, this T S Eliot referenced and Bad Wolf considered and Shakespeare orientated hallucinogenic experience is one I shall never, ever forget with the clear light of day.

Dear God,

Your sky is as blue as a gunshot wound

The colours kaleidoscope outwards.

Then a wolffish grin / in the dark / and claws on my shoulders

The big bad wolf

Stalks this collection.

It is clear in the printed images

And the edges of mechanic black-and-white

That I don't understand.

(I'm not an art critic

I'll never pretend to be.

The artwork sails right over

My head and to be honest, I'm

Happy to let it, given that the piece

Stands alone without it)

Are you lost, little girl?

at which point he fell awake

... ..

Oh the audible ellipsis, the question that chases.

The idea that traces my thoughts and does

Not let go, not for anything, not for

A single moment, even when

I'm contending with a

Broken land

Broken thoughts

Broken poem

I am broken.

I had always been led to believe

that poems induced nightmares

epilepsy narcolepsy

hallucinations psychosis paranoia

erotomania

delusions suicidal

Thoughts

(forgive me, I can't mimic your typography

But I nod in its direction, because I love it so)

I have the *hallucinations psychosis paranoia delusions suicidal thoughts* and I am touched somewhere in my soul and forced to tilt further and back and forward once again, topple inexorably down into the poem where nobody can find me.

Now:

this is

making me

realise

something

important.

That the graphic doesn't have to be crass, to be effective.

This is something I've been wondering about recently.

This is a mystery that follows so many collections.

This is not an inevitability, to make me squirm.

This is not necessary, to provoke disgust.

This is how to do it with true finesse.

This is how to entrap, to dance.

This is a graphic masterclass.

Because:

S&M is fabulous, those who partake in it will know.

And it is so nice to have

*They're all there,
in the white tower,
the stony men and women.
My mouth twitches
when I'm around them.*

Everyone who indulges
Permitted to do so
In the company of others
Who love the feeling of
Cock when it suits the moment.

Orgasms are described with an oddly gentle deference:

*Glancing but thighs passionately and at trail my my he?
my don't body over knees gently
Please...*

And god, don't we know that feeling?
my my he you me we glances traces
trails of fingers and bodies consuming
and pleading for everything and nothing
in the body of somebody else you barely
recognise.

*gathering sheds shoulders
clit slipping to slightly glances so
Wrapping up my in me wrapped and bed his look tingling outside in
and the my hair myself through I...*

And god, don't we know that feeling?
gathering sheets shedding bare shoulders touch
glancing over clit sheets wrapping tangling in hair and taste

*lips and face the mouth move hard steady
hold round towards
he firmly slams*

Yes, yes yes yes yes yes.

*I swooned as though to die,
and fell to Hell's floor as a body, dead, falls.*

Oh, I am all yours.

Blood holds no terrors for me, but the word blood flips my off switch.

If this had mentioned the word sex, this whole experience wouldn't have worked.

But it didn't.

I could be here forever detailing the nuance; I can only briefly glance over the various element of this that made my body contract and my tongue feel somehow leaden. The moments of unbelievable alliteration, bouncing off every 'b' and hissing off every 's'. The political inanities that somehow found a sense of relevance. Whoever the hell 'Tom' actually is, in all of this. The strange subliminal 'green and black' that seems a motif that I don't understand (I'm not an art critic, I told you I wasn't, I'm sorry but I don't understand) and I taste chocolate and blood and it somehow makes sense.

but the zero opens deliciously

I can never tell which category a memory belongs to. Probably doesn't matter.

Memories are stories or disconnected parts of stories, and we all need stories, whether they are true or not.

With my memory a disjointed collection of idiosyncrasies,

I assume that this is something I can understand.

Or something of me understands.

The poem is best described as a series of concentric circles.

Yes. It is.

Do not use abbreviations, contractions, acronyms, pseudonyms, palindromes, acrostics, sonnets, haiku, tanka, heroic couplets, villanelles, blank verse, free verse, concrete verse, neologisms, portmanteau words, unkind words, proscribed words, euphonic words, cacophonous words, living words or dead words.

Well, I'm fucked, ladies and gents.

My entire arsenal of words and ideas

Has been well and truly fucked in that

Single paragraph and I have no possible

redemption.

AND WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU??????????

Good point.

Prick your fingers it is done

The moon has now eclipsed the sun

Even the gentlest of poetic couplets gains

Momentum in a piece that

Defies convention.

A text - any text - is an act of violence against reality.

This is an act of undeniable

Unapologetic

And absolute

Cruelty.

For the straightforward pathway had been lost

And I, weary traveller,

Try to trace it regardless.