

Bonjour Tetris

Simon Barraclough is originally from Yorkshire but has lived in London since 1997. He won the poetry section of the London Writers' Prize in 2000 and his debut *Los Alamos Mon Amour* was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection in 2008. His work has been published in *Poetry Review*, *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times* and *Magma*, and he is a regular contributor to BBC Radio 3 and 4.

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Penned in the Margins

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Bonjour Tetris contains poems commissioned between 2008 and 2010.

'Cinema Purgatorio', 'Flashbacks of a Fool', 'A Villanelle for Jules et Jim' and 'Gomorrah is Another Day' were written for BBC Radio 4's *Film Programme*. 'Incorrigibly Plural' was written for BBC Radio 4's *The Long View* and 'In Memoriam Tsutomu Yamaguchi' for BBC Radio 3's *The Verb*.

'Bounded in a Nutshell' and 'Kings Cross Sections' commemorate the official opening of Kings Place Concert Hall Number One and were performed as part of Poet in the City's *Touching the Sky* event in October 2008.

The four gaming-related poems, 'Bonjour Tetris', 'Bride of Pinbot', 'Examination at Doom's Door' and 'Brian Lara Calls Us to the Things of this World' were written for *Coin Opera* (Sidekick Books).

'WY' was written for the *50 States Project*, 'Bad Quarto' for *The 12 Days of Christmas* and 'Jurassic Coast' for a group sequence about the English ceremonial counties. 'Zabriskie Point' was written for a Pink Floyd themed event *On a Trip to Cirrus Minor* and 'Being a Woman You Will' is part of *Psycho Poetica*, devised by Simon Barraclough and performed at the British Film Institute and Whitechapel Gallery in 2010.

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For Roger and Julie, one of whom is not to be trusted with Tetris

Bonjour Tetris

Incorrigibly Plural

The network froze from the wrong kind of snow
so they carved up the sky and franchised the clouds
and tempests of tenders, flurries of offers,
brochures in blizzards descended upon us.

Heavenly companies, flocculent liveries:

Cumulo-Western-Coast

Capital-Nimbo-Link

Cirro-Southeastern-Star

gliding like bullet points into the stratosphere,
each with a strategy, mandate, philosophy,
swelling the market of snowflake delivery.

*Our cloud is committed to cutting-edge crystals.
The eye of our storm places **you** at the centre.
Our flakes have been voted the least identical;
from vapour to whiteout they were the most punctual
over the Christmas and New Year period.*

*In the last fiscal year we shifted a zillion
units of snow, including the state-of-the-art 'Bendilo':
dendrical with a hexagonal interlock,*

*leading to more compact drifts and an authentic
lacing around a bow window. And each metric tonne
of precipitate fun comes with a free scarf
and a kit for the kiddies of snowman accessories:
a carrot, some coal from a genuine steam train,
a pipe, a fedora, a handful of pebbles
for studding a smile into his blank face
like the one we're committed by charter to place
upon yours.*

In Memoriam Tsutomu Yamaguchi (1916-2010)

*A man whom both the waters and the wind,
In that vast tennis-court, have made the ball
For them to play upon...
- William Shakespeare, Pericles*

General Groves smacked balls around the court
to stop the thought recurring: *will it work?*
Tibbets badged his plane with his mother's name,
the superego's superfortress cradling its *Little Boy*
and Oppie's heart was plucked out by the God of Trinity
who battered it and burnished it and pinned it to his breast.

And all the while the hibakusha waited
for the flash of maths so erudite it passed
clean through their understanding, lodging in the marrow
where it ran down every body clock to nought.

But Yamaguchi-san, the luckiest of luckless men,
sidestepped it all despite the ticket in his hand
that took him from Ground Zero to Ground Zero,
moving through the crowds of citizens
who gathered up their skins and draped their limbs

like silent senators in togas of themselves,
and swaddled in twelve years of bandages,
he lived two times to tell the tale.