

Shad Thames, Broken Wharf

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Broken Wharf
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Shad Thames, Broken Wharf was commissioned by London Word Festival and first performed at Jamboree, Cable Street Studios, London on 18th March 2010. The cast was as follows:

Blaise Luke McEwan

Echo Tracey Wilkinson

The Landlord Chris McCabe

The Voice of **The Restructure** Paul Henderson

Original musical score by Bleeding Heart Narrative

Original film by Jack Wake-Walker

Directed & produced by Tom Chivers for London Word Festival

Shad Thames,
Broken Wharf

SETTING

A pub at Shad Thames, overlooking the river

CHARACTERS

Echo, a middle-aged woman from the area

Blaise, a Northerner

The Landlord, a Londoner with 'the knowledge'

Chorus, The Restructure

Prologue

Enter The Landlord

The Landlord Consider the Gherkin: a suppository for the arse they made of things. Somewhere between a warehouse & a backstreet, between the Thames & the City... did you see the squatters on the way in? Bodyartists of necessity who don't dig deep for their beer. Start, she said, by talking to yourself - then people will pay to be around you. So I built on that to become a Landlord, which is somewhere between a bookmaker & a doorman, an undertaker & a prophet, a pharmacist & a cab driver; somewhere between an historian & a Griffin, a minute-taker & an anarchist; somewhere between *you* & the need you have for the golden, the amber, the black stuff, the clear... (somewhere between every emotion you ever caught & the scapula of tomorrow)... a Landlord is somewhere between a semaphorist & a poet...In each glass : the white strobe from the tower : also reflects across the river. This forever-time position of making the moment happen on canned-repeat - each time new, each time the same - for people I know more or less vaguely as anyone else, scripting a space loose enough to write their own legend in.

I'll serve anyone who asks tonight : I have to. Just cut the jokes because I've heard them. I know you're thinking I'm somewhere between a jaded author & a failure, but here's a draught of context : what she said at Shad Thames echoes, at 5:43 I bunked up the crate to look over the wall & into the wharf : the tides percolating sea-saliva, clawing the bladderwrack beach for a clear drop to drench & to quench, metamorphosing its evening sequins to the dawn's polluted shakes of herring scales; at 6:54 binbags hunched as done-in men, polystyrene boxes stripped to white pips, charred wood, adobe bricks, paper-weighting the sea's post-mortem table for its stomach-surf of plastics & consumables – somewhere between Deadman's Dock & a shop called *Joy* – there's a pile of chains where the waves suck at timber, a pile of chains caked in ginger, each chain slumped in links like the DNA of something yet to find its structure, a dumped tapeworm rusted to fossil, etching its erosion into the quay, its battery-acid ooze too rich to touch, or to return to the river-bed. At 7:04 I counted all the place names like notches into a stick : St Hilda's Wharf, Isambard Place, Blyth's Wharf, Nelson House, Winkley's Wharf, Brunswick Quay, Burrell's Wharf, Marlow Landings, Hutching's Wharf, Redriff Estate, Butler's Wharf, Byron House, Corbett's Wharf, Cotton's Landing, Laurence Wharf, Hythe Point, Clarence Wharf, Vogan Mill... You're never going to get this, you're not a Londoner, it's

not in your bones... somewhere between the dead fish & fresh bread,
the bunker & the turret, between the commerce and the cormorant,
the greed & the grebe... somewhere between tonight's first shout &
what she said at Shad Thames

Exit The Landlord