

HUMAN FORM

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Oliver Dixon

Penned in the Margins

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY PENNED IN THE MARGINS
Toynbee Studios, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6AB
www.pennedinthemargins.co.uk

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First published 2013

Printed in the United Kingdom by MPG Biddles Ltd.

ISBN
978-1-908058-12-6

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the editors of the following publications, in which versions of these poems previously appeared: *The Wolf*, *Gists & Piths*, *Nthposition*, *Blackbox Manifold*, *Eyewear*, *The BowWowShop*.

Thanks to Garth for the cover art, to Tom for robust editing, and to Laurence for unflagging support when I needed it most.

Human Form

To Rob, for many years *the onlie reader*

~

'That which they are formed from, things return to when they pass away, as is ordained: for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time.'

Anaximander, only surviving fragment

Skip

Yellow
rusting out-tray
crammed with gutted flats'
interiors – ripped fittings,
once-dear furniture
binned and inert
in the dusty, late winter
sun –

tiny
slip-of-a-thing
dancing past, lifts one
flipflop over the other
with that half-shifting
hop, loops the rope
sky-high and round
in the uncertain
insistent
parabola

of beginning

Human Form

Each morning we wake in a new
configuration: either
you've traded beds in a bumpy noctamble
and my first blink-cum-nuzzle
finds you shrunken, dream-morphed
from woman to boy;

or a nightmare's made him migrate
and upheave me,
and I come-to with feet exposed, arms
buckled in, Pluto and Tigger
my feral bedfellows,
Spiderman-lamp still on in the light.

Or even, he's somehow wriggled between
and spreadeagled,
entangling us in a cubist scrum:
we struggle into consciousness
like a many-limbed Lakshmi assuming
human form; or a ruffled, parodic

Trinity, momentarily conjoined.

Interruptus

Even removal of clothes they undertake
with more than habitual care, not to wake
the small interloper as he edges REM,
vocalising crises far inside his dream
but not surfacing. They inch in, engage
gingerly at first, with the stealth (the image
comes to them) of furtive adulterers
whose lust thrives on flouting what endangers
itself. Fearing the dark weather of his envy,
struggling to contain the avid frenzy
their bodies strain towards, climax gathers,
like a surge far out at sea; together
they swim towards it – but capsize, wash-up half-dead:

the boy stands watching, towering above the bed.

Cityscape with Floating Lover

After Chagall

I wonder you're still there, your prone body
bearing down on mine like a landslide I've no cause
to escape from: you're the sleep itself I can only
submit to piecemeal, like a local anaesthetic,
as you too welter towards sleep and lodge across me
your dense grace, your abstraction. Without duress

muffling as this — so unearthed am I, so attuned
to fine intervals of temperature and noise —

wouldn't that breeze that in the window ums and ahs
surely rifle through me like the intimate
papers jumbled across your desk — or like its glass
of hangdog tulips, dislodge and smash me to bits?

Wouldn't it waft me into the turbulent street
beyond your starfish-ballast and asylum
to where deals are being brokered in smoky
huddles, car-stereo breakbeats cut through — and day
degenerates into sirens, looting, the blue night
dawning across your unmade-up face?