

## DARLING, IT'S ME

Alison Winch's debut pamphlet, *Trouble* (The Emma Press, 2016), was one of The Poetry School's Books of the Year. She has received a Hawthornden Fellowship and has been published in *The Poetry Review*, *The Rialto*, *Long Poem Magazine*, *Magma*, *Poetry Wales* and *Oxford Poetry*. She lives in Norwich, where she is a Lecturer in Media Studies at the University of East Anglia. She has published two books of criticism, *Girlfriends and Postfeminist Sisterhood* (Palgrave, 2013) and the anthology *Encountering Buddhism in Twentieth-Century British and American Literature* (Bloomsbury, 2013).



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This book is for B and J, with a deep, fierce love.



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Darling,  
It's Me



## Hobbes Asks Locke to Read *Leviathan*

I wrote this little thing. It's nothing really.  
Just a little thing that I wrote a little while ago.  
Well it took a while—to write I mean—but anyway.  
Maybe you would have a little look at it.  
Maybe if you've got a little time? It's no big deal.

# Marriage

Marriage sets off egg tagliatelle and shame,  
insists it is the solution  
and not the problem

or maybe that's the marriage of my husband.  
*I don't understand what I'm supposed to understand,*  
he beefs at 3 a.m.

It takes stamina going on and on as it does.  
His is a solid handshake.  
Neighbours and exes covet it.

Mine is routine harassment; hung up  
on uteruses  
and training monogamy,

it salves my skin with sweet grease  
then thrums  
to the slow loneliness of a mooning belly.

The inner child of my marriage  
is oral schizoid, masochistic,  
prays for a defrocked rake

on a white horse  
in all possible worlds.  
It has the vertiginous pout of a Lazio gargoyle

and needs Reichian pulsation,  
emotional release, rebirth.  
But so much is unresolved.

I nurse marriage  
at wayside shrines in suburban shopping centres,  
sweat holy tears and lettuces.

It breaks my spirit  
on stacks of face-embossed confetti  
and plastic cocks.

Planets, desks and thumbs  
go slack in a twinning mind.  
Baguettes and nightingales lament.

I stake marriage  
on the North Circular under the slaked candelabra  
of horse chestnut flowers in June,

straining for a kiss  
over the colossal exhaust.

## Disciple

In spring the clouds were the sunlit backs of lazy otters.  
White irises bent  
against the rain and lemons rotting on the trees.

The guru was my truth across the cold afternoons.  
To him I was as clear as a glass of raki,  
its lippy prints and finger stains.

My spite was a wasp slipping the rim.  
He repositioned my thoughts till they were other people's  
and in the olive grove nets dipped like funeral veils.

I sat at the feet of the guru all summer,  
as my ego flashed in and out of the world like a firefly.  
Figs were the bruised balls of Greek statues coming

alive all over the British Museum;  
green leaves were three fat thumbs.  
I sent a postcard of peninsulas to thank a woman for  
birthing me.

When he left on his path as *bodhisattva*  
with my phone number and a punnet of peaches,  
I bawled, *But I need you.*

Then I removed the flint from my core  
and drew it across his throat—  
every thing has an aura: cows the sea artichokes.

# Baps

to whom do these chesticles belong  
lodged as they are upon this hot bod?

it's at them sucked  
the male

too many to remember  
too drunk too stoned too

in absolute and committed despair  
and now this one

\*

killing it in a Mamalatte sleeveless vest  
we feed modestly in the glam-  
smell of West London  
its artisan cafés and smashed avo

I unclasp my bra and son latches  
a man stares hard  
stares nasty  
twat! I try to yell / I want to watch back

\*

we're blissed out on these baps  
their makeover  
into elastic skin bullets  
as each afternoon yells into pillows soggily and stuffed

baby is milk-wracked / whacks butter hands  
it sling-wriggles  
and spring throws up in nettles  
on towpaths: lamblit salad to bitches' green

\*

afternoons we plank-cry to The Smiths  
sexy boredom of the suckle / furious flesh jug  
line up tea books phone breasts  
hooters jugs tits boobs melons bazookas  
feed is him is me is him  
braeburn curves / little bellow packet