

THE REMAINS OF LOGAN DANKWORTH

Luke Wright is a poet and theatre-maker. Flamboyant, political and riotously funny, Wright's inventive spoken word shows are enjoyed by thousands of people across the world every year. He is the author of two full poetry collections, three pamphlets and two previous verse plays. He is the winner of a Fringe First, a Stage Award and two Saboteur Awards. He lives in Suffolk with his two sons and a gnawing sense of inadequacy.

ALSO BY LUKE WRIGHT

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VERSE DRAMA

Frankie Vab (Penned in the Margins, 2018)

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NON-FICTION

Who Writes This Crap? (Penguin, 2007)

The Remains of Logan
Dankworth
Luke Wright

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for Q

THE Remains
OF Logan
Dankworth

AND SO I'm on The Green.
You'll know the place;
it's opposite The Houses of Parliament.
It's where reporters film their links
and drab fanatics make their year-round protests.

I love it here.
When I first moved to London, twenty-one and skint,
I took to tramping all across the city.
Westminster was like a real-life film set.
I'd stop and stare across the tops of taxis,
try to take it in —
the seat of British power.
In there, I thought,
in there, the lives of Britons everywhere
can change for ill or good.

There are people who will tell you
that the building's neo-Gothic trash,
Victorian and fake, a front
pretending it's much grander than it is.

But don't we all do that?

This building is a gaudy, gilt-rimmed mirror,
pocked with black spots —
reflecting us back at ourselves.

Imperfect like democracy,
in hock to charming devilry,
but underneath that ceremony
something human, something good,
where commoners can come from every corner,
represent their kin and fight for them —
to me this is the centre of the world.

So, I'm on The Green,
walking from a meeting to a meeting,
headphones on,
November 2015,
when I check my phone
and there it is —
the email I'd been waiting for.

I click it shut.
If it is a 'no'
I can carry on,

freelancing, chipping in,
sniping from the sidelines.

But if it is a 'yes'
it is my ticket to the frontline
and I can just feel the times
fizzing all around me:
Corbyn (Corbyn!) leading Labour,
Tories in for real this time,
an EU referendum on the way.

I used to watch the footage of the Berlin Wall,
the Soviets all marching with their bomb,
Spitting Image,
Tiananmen Square,
and I'd long for it.

I believed that Fukuyama line:
the end of history.
I'd lived through it,
unawares at after-school clubs,
gaga with my grandparents at Disneyland.

And when I came of age
the worst we had was Blair.
We made a show of hating him.
We walked the London streets that day in February
and gathered in the park,
but nothing had that sense of danger —
not for me.
I wanted to be part of history.

And history didn't end, did it?
It just passed out,
wasted on the eighties.
But history is stirring now,
slapping the alarm clock,
hacking up its lungs,
falling out of bed,
coffee on and ciggie on the back step,
plotting, scheming.

And I can be in the middle of it all —
a weekly column for *The Pugilist*,
that is what the email is about,
a weekly column

crying foul in prose that sings and scorches,
taking tyranny to task on Twitter,
being heard.

And I got the job.
I'd only gone and done it. Yes!

My instinct is to swipe then tap on Megan's number,
let it ring and ring and ring and ring,
imagining her squeals down the phone
and our daughter singing,
"Well done Daddy"...

§

I first met Megan at a Stop the War event,
my early days of stand-up,
March '04,
some village hall with flags and banners heavy on the walls,
a gathering of mustard-fingered comrades
who'd seen it all before
and earnest students types
converted to the cause by Tony's war.