

THE FEEL-GOOD MOVIE OF THE YEAR

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 three verse plays. He is the winner of a Fringe First, a Stage Award and three Saboteur Awards. He lives in Suffolk with his two sons.

ALSO BY LUKE WRIGHT

POETRY

After Engine Trouble (Rough Trade Books, 2018)

The Toll (Penned in the Margins, 2017)

Mondeo Man (Penned in the Margins, 2013)

The Vile Ascent of Lucien Gore (Nasty Little Press, 2011)

High Performance (Nasty Little Press, 2009)

VERSE DRAMA

The Remains of Logan Dankworth (Penned in the Margins, 2020)

Frankie Vah (Penned in the Margins, 2018)

What I Learned from Johnny Bevan (Penned in the Margins, 2016)

NON-FICTION

Who Writes This Crap? (Penguin, 2007)

*The Feel-Good Movie
of the Year*

LUKE WRIGHT

Penned in the Margins

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CONTENTS

Ex	11
A Pub Gig in the Middle of Nowhere	12
Drawbridge	15
The Lay-bys and Bypasses	16
Spent	20
Lowestoft	21
After Engine Trouble	23
To Hail a Cab	24
Prayer	25
Status Update	28
Clocks	31
Sent Out, Aged Ten	34
Clouds	36
My Sadness	37
Sophie	39
Cast Photo	41
Friend Request	42
The Rack	43
A Piece of Quiet	45
Merch Stall	47
Tidal	48

O, the years they heap amendments on our instincts	50
Language	52
Monster	53
Autumn	56
Just Look at Us Now	57
The Other Poet	59
Now All That Shined is Shit	61
Fortieth	62
Akrasia	63
Will everybody leave me? Do I want them to?	64
Reading for Pleasure	65
And I Saw England	67
Bring Me My Devil	69
Portcullis	71
We're Back at the End Again	73
The Turning on the Halesworth Road	75

for KC

THE
Feel-Good
Movie
OF THE
Year

Ex

We don't touch each other anymore;
twelve years in a double bed

down to business-like deals
we can't bring ourselves to shake on,

not even an x at the end
of a text. I'm not saying

that I want to. I just wonder
where we went. But today

you sent a photo of our son.
It stopped me as it flashed

across my palm. We were there.
In his face. In each other's arms.

A Pub Gig in the Middle of Nowhere

The locals take a pride in it:
no commerce down these silted
lanes. A coaching inn that's still

a coaching inn, fermented, sheltered
under hops and shouldering its centuries
with all the calm of village cricket —

blokes in whites and wives in hats
on yeasty afternoons. And I am here
to spin them all some yarns,

to tell them things they've known
for years and hope the way I do it
does the trick — an entertainment

older than this horse-brassed hearth.
And later, in the garden, I meet Daniel.
He'd sat there with his parents, sweet

and still, all through my show.
Seven years old, he tells me —
cherub almost rendered down

to boyhood and so much
like my own son, Sam;
a milk-faced storm

of cleverness and cheek
who comes at me now
with questions like weapons.

His father picks him up, blows
raspberries on his stomach,
sits him at their table with some chips

and rips the ketchup sachet. Wholesome
chores of parenthood! It's three nights
since I made a meal for mine.

And from the car park the fields
of the High Weald are endless.
In this middle of everywhere

I know the enormity of my choices,
the wretched, minute realness
of being lost at sea. I drive

back down the sunken roads,
tunnelled by trees beneath
a cold moon, and keep my boys'

car seats in the rearview. Empty now
and soon enough they'll go.
But I'll still witness boys like Daniel

pulling at a hand in Sainsbury's,
thwacking teaspoons on formica
in different, strip-lit M4 chains.

Perhaps those boys will haunt me.
Remind me of a time which I, through work
and through divorce, have cleaved

in two. Have taken half of.
Dear God. Only half.

Drawbridge

My poor old heart, I left its drawbridge down
all summer long, encouraged in the strangers.
Let them finger all my prize antiques,

inspect the mossy fridge and play the xylophone
of empties on the side. I left my journals
on the coffee table, certain pages marked

with betting slips. And nobody's been holding back.
What's the word for an orgy where everyone's
too fucked to fuck? This whole place reeks

of cum and ash and shame. What adult
holds a party in their heart
and broadcasts the address?

I suppose it's time to tidy up.
Raise the drawbridge, fill the moat
and gather wood for winter. Unless —

listen,
there's another way in.
Come with me.