The Wednesday Club

A collection of sonnets edited by esteemed professors J. Perry, M. Broady and A. J. Miller, with annotations from the authors.
To all our fans.

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Bred, Baked and Butchered at Hendon Cathedral.

- by -

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- with -

Birgitte Røeggen   Vocals on “Pure Holes”
Oli Robinson       Guitar
Andy Moore         Trumpet
Lisa Bouvier       Vocals, Harmonica
Amanda Nordin      Vocals
Fliss Webb         Vocals
WE SUCK

We got fat, we got old
We didn't get any better
We're still dancing along
To “Echoes Myron” and “Autumn Sweater”

We suck so hard

And time is pulling out your hair
And time is giving you Garfield-themed underwear

Explanatory Notes
“Time takes a cigarette, puts it in your mouth” so said David Jones, of Brixton, in 1972. It can be argued from a technical perspective that from the moment we are born we are dying, or more accurately, from conception our fate is sealed. This is a pessimistic view which doesn’t take into account the wonderful strides and improvements the glorious machines we choose to call our bodies take in the first 28 years of our lives. It is after then that malaise sets in.

A sad fact of modern life is that a band has but a short time to reach its peak. A collection of musicians must become successful whilst they are young, before the signs of aging begin to show. It does not matter if a player’s fluency is not matured until their 30th year or a person’s songwriting has not fully flowered until they are 35, for the stark fact remains and must be repeated: a band must become successful before they are 35. In fact, it is preferred that they have peaked and declined before the quasi-mystical age of 27.

Whilst the wisdom that is perceived to come with aging is generally felt to be a good thing, the physical signs of aging are to be avoided at all costs. To put a positive spin on one of maturation’s physical symptoms it is sometimes said that bald men have more testosterone and are, therefore, more virile than their more cranially hirsute counterparts. Sadly the august publication, The Fortean Times, showed this to be in error in its March 2013 edition. In fact, men with low testosterone will not keep their hair but men with high testosterone are no more likely to lose theirs.

Further Reading
BUCKINGHAM GUM

Textbook sacrifice, born once died twice
Rotting in the gutter with yr sister’s advice
We had a Rubaiyat fist fight, mix taped last night
Couldn’t stop chewin’ on Buckingham Gum, alright

Judging by the operator sipping from the broken cup,
I would say its getting better, I would say it never left us
Flags for fickle street, visible but incomplete
Flash flood alibis, question marks between the sheets
Orifice oracle: Another pointless offering
Rotting in the gutter with another future King
We had a Rubaiyat drink match, mix taped Rat Facts
Couldn’t stop chewin’ on Buckingham Gum, alright

Explanatory Notes
Booker Prize-winning author Hilary Mantel, in a speech given recently for a London Review of Books event at the British Museum concerning society’s perception of/relationship with The Royal Family, described everyone’s new favourite Princess, Kate Middleton, as being “designed by a committee and built by craftsmen, with a perfect plastic smile and the spindles of her limbs hand-turned and gloss-varnished.” Shortly afterwards, everyone’s new favourite Prime Minister, David Cameron, was quick to denounce Mantel’s opinion as “misguided” (whilst simultaneously giving her literary output two thumbs up, naturally). Of course, Cameron’s statement was not about Mantel’s actual argument, but instead a tweet-sized response to the Media’s tweet-sized coverage of the whole affair, Mantel’s argument being distilled down to a series of quotes taken so far out of their intended context that they meant something completely different. To add to the irony, (or is it just chaos now?) Mantel’s speech was a criticism of not Middleton herself, but the Media’s coverage of The Royal Family and how it shapes public perception.

This song doesn’t really have anything to do with that, specifically, and was in fact written a while ago in a different reality tunnel and for a band with a different name but the same people. Buckingham Gum represents the nonsense that we must constantly chew, and, when accidentally swallowed, will stick in yr throat ‘till ya choke. Omar Khayyám had some of the best advice for relieving the symptoms of this rather unpleasant and increasingly prevalent complaint, as he also did for relief from the various other anxieties touched upon herein.

Further Reading
Mantel, Hilary, Royal Bodies: http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n04/hilary-mantel/royal-bodies
BUZZ ALDRIN’S BLUES

I used to think that it was quite enough to be losing graciously
I used to think that if I gave my all I could leave with dignity
But no one wants to be the one who came in second place

I used to think if I let others first then they might say ‘thanks’ to me
But no one wants to be the one who came in second place

I’m not going to drink with the man in the Moon any more

Explanatory Notes

Maybe it’s just the name, but I’ve always been interested in Buzz Aldrin. There has been some debate as to how it was that Armstrong came to be the first man to walk on the Moon, but Aldrin made it clear to his NASA superiors that he wanted it to be him instead. Not long ago I read Aldrin’s version of the fateful final moments before he set foot on the Moon, although I’m not sure where I read it or if I’m remembering it at all correctly. Anyway... Aldrin claimed that just as they were getting ready to exit the lunar module Armstrong pushed passed him so that he was closest to the door and would therefore be the first to exit. Armstrong disputed this version of events - he was the mission commander so it would seem natural for him to lead the way, and his famous quip (“one small step for man...”) seems so carefully prepared that one would assume he was always meant to be the first.*

Either way, there’s no doubt that Aldrin found the comedown from the Moon tough going, and in the ‘70s he descended into alcoholism and depression. Not only has he had to respond to the question, “How does it feel to be the second guy?” for over forty years, he’s also had to contend with the small but vocal band of conspiracy theorists who persist to this day. A few years ago Aldrin was filmed as a member of the public repeatedly antagonized him: “You’re the one who said you walked on the Moon when you didn’t,” the man said. “You’re a coward and a liar!” Aldrin responded by punching him in the face. And who could blame him?

Further Reading

Aldrin, Buzz, Magnificent Desolation (2010, Three Rivers Press)
Buzz punching an idiot: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wcrkxOgzhU
Buzz rapping with Snoop: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcUeGRpPzgw
Buzz yelling at the Moon: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcWweblGjnU

* I love Nabakov’s response, when he was asked in 1969 what he would like an astronaut’s first words to be after landing on the Moon: “I want the lump in his throat to obscure the wisecrack.” I also love the words uttered by Pete Conrad, who was not a tall man, when he became the third person to walk on the Moon (a few months later, during Apollo 12): “Whooppee! Man, that may have been a small one for Neil, but that’s a long one for me.” He said it to win a bet with a journalist. In contrast to Armstrong and Aldrin’s painstakingly choreographed and almost pious performance as they were filmed on the Moon, in a transmission that was watched by millions, Conrad whistled to himself, swore and generally joked around like no one was watching.
ANA LUCIA

I'd like to take you out for a while
I'd like to look inside your brain
I'd like to tear out your heart as you smile
I'd like to fill you with shame

Anna Lucia in the rain

Anna, I don't often think of you
Anna, I swear that it's true

Explanatory Notes
In his book *Hallucinations* Oliver Sacks points out that hallucinations being seen as purely a sign of madness is a relatively modern phenomena. In past times they were more accepted as part and parcel of life, in fact there’s barely one amongst us that has never had a hallucination, even if it’s as relatively mild as a spot of tinnitus after a particularly loud rock’n’roll show.

The song “Ana Lucia” was itself a product of aural hallucination. Sacks writes of perfectly sane people who constantly hear music playing in their head. These unfortunate souls tend to hear the same piece of music over and over. Some find that they can change the tempo and lyrics of the song if they concentrate but never the melody or the timbre.

“Ana Lucia” was born from a far more benign form of this process. When extremely tired music would often play in one’s head and that is where the melody of this ditty was born. Lyrically it is merely an amalgam of The Kaiser Chiefs’ “Every Day I Love You Less and Less”, The Insect Guide’s “6 Feet in Love” and The Pixies’ “Debaser”. Make of this what you will.

Further Reading
Buñuel, Luis and Salvador Dali (dir.) *Un Chien Andalou* (1929): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aCTXFkY_Q0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aCTXFkY_Q0)
Sacks, Oliver, *Hallucinations* (2010, Picador)
HIT BY TEETH PT.3

Nothing much has happened for a while
Rat Lane’s darkest corners have been quiet for the past few weeks
And it’s true last night I almost cracked a smile
A few K Ciders later and the tears were rolling down my cheeks

We promise this time we are well rehearsed
Victors of Geography and everything you’ve heard is true
It’s not like things could really get much worse
The years of being hit by teeth have left their scars for all to see

These days we hold the future in our hands
Didn’t think that we’d outlive our five year plan

And the crosswords do themselves these days
And I have found a way to deal with
All the teeth that used to rain upon us all the time:
It looks like we’ve survived

Explanatory Notes
Pt 1. Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, there lived a Fairy Princess ...and a little while later, in a town in West Yorkshire, three innocent young upstarts left the safety of The Harolds to journey the once relatively safe short distance to the local Public House to see popular music combo, Sic Alps. This merry trio comprised your faithful author, his fellow Wednesday Clubber Max Broady, and LMS, original member of the mythical band This Many Boyfriends and now London Club Promoter Extraordinaire. They had not travelled far before they were confronted by a band of ruffians, equal in number, but with blazing red eyes, salivating, and apparently in need of a phone. Realising that their opponents did not actually want to make a call at that particular time, and unwilling to relinquish their precious communication devices, our heroes scattered, being chased asunder by the Hounds of Hell. To quit to the chase, our heroes somehow survived and although battered, bruised and, yes, bitten, were able to text their comrades of their close encounter with the other side.
Pt 2. Still further along Time’s Arrow, and with wounds still fresh, a renowned Artist of the locality and comrade of our heroes gallantly strode out upon the self same stretch of land betwixt the local Public House and the safety of The Harolds. Our hero this time came off somewhat worse and was forced to retire for some time to the field hospital to recover. These events, and those of a similar nature lead one comrade of our heroes, a wise old sage to proffer: “The best way to avoid being chased, is to look like you are already being.”

Further Reading
Eoin Shea: http://www.eoinshea.com/
Playhouse: http://clubplayhouse.tumblr.com/
Zeno’s Paradox: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-zeno/#Arr
I didn’t say so but I was ready to go before the flood
I knew it would come but I did not care to run before the flood
I’d seen water before
I was born by the lake praying the dam would break
I’d never been to the sea so it meant nothing to me
The clouds poured out of the skies as the water would rise
I never learned how to swim but I jumped right on in

Explanatory Notes

Take Shelter was one of those films that stayed with me. It’s about a simple, blue-collar guy, Curtis, who starts to become tormented by bad dreams and apocalyptic hallucinations. Deeply confused but unable to ignore these visions, Curtis builds an elaborate storm shelter in his back garden to protect him and his family when disaster comes. Curtis’s obsession with his shelter starts to affect his family, his job and his standing in the community as nobody, least of all Curtis, really understands his affliction.

The lead is played by Michael Shannon, who also appears in Boardwalk Empire as the straitlaced prohibition agent Nelson Van Alden, a self-flagellating Protestant who brings his puritanical zeal to bear on enforcing the Volstead Act. He’s every bit as fiery and volatile here, and there’s this amazingly powerful scene near the end when Curtis loses his temper in the local canteen. Besides many other reasons to recommend Take Shelter, it inspired the theme in “Antediluvianista” of indifference to an impending disaster.

Further Reading
Curtis losing it in Take Shelter: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDGb5T8pwbU
Nelson losing it in Boardwalk Empire: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhaOsF7F050
Time flies when you're having fun
But what to do when you're having none?
I spoke to a man about Robert Anton Wilson
He said “pills, son”
But I’m not that sure

I pulled out *Schrödinger’s Cat*
And he told me “I thought you’d be reading that”
And I realised all your friends are twats

Explanatory Notes
According to Malcolm Gladwell, decisions on whether a candidate gets a job are usually made within the first ten seconds of an interview; everything that is said or done within the interview merely reinforces the initial impression that the interviewer has of the interviewee. I kept this in mind when I once met a man at a social function I had no desire to be at. He was covered in tattoos, had stretched ear piercings and was wearing alternative clothing. I, ostensibly, was the norm in this encounter, wearing my “smart” clothes fresh from my job as an educator. I began to speak to him about his tattoos and he explained that the one on his left forearm represented the kabbalistic belief system. He continued that whilst he followed no single religion this was closest to his beliefs and that he continued to search for knowledge in whatever from it presented itself.

I realised, as he continued to expound on his beliefs, that this was not too far from my own interests and ideas. He eventually asked me if I had heard of Robert Anton Wilson. This was the time for my coup-de-grace, for I had Robert Anton Wilson’s *Schrödinger’s Cat Trilogy* in my bag. I brought it out with a flourish. He regarded it and said “Yeah, I thought you’d be reading that [Amazon Best Sellers Rank: 100,046 in Books] or *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* [Amazon Best Sellers Rank: 14,064 in Books].”

On reflection, I think it may have been I who was being judged. As a side note he then spent the rest of the evening recounting the seminal side-splitting humour of Leigh Francis’s Leodensian meisterwerk “Bo’ Selecta”.

Further Reading
Wilson, Robert Anton, *Schrödinger’s Cat Trilogy* (1998, Dell)
*The Complete Bo’ Selecta!* (2010, 4dv)
PURE HOLES

We’ve tried all summer long to keep the Wolves from our front door
They’ve got the taste of our blood on their tongues and they want more
So we dig Pure Holes as a way to pass the time
So we dig, and we dig, but we find the same thing every single time

We’ll spend the winter with the windows locked this year for sure
And we’ll remove the batteries from the clocks and watch the door
As we dig Pure Holes, it’s a way to pass the time
And we dig, and we dig, but we find the same thing every single time

Before we even know it yet another year will pass
But here in London it appears that nothing’s built to last
So we dig Pure Holes as a way to pass the time
And we dig, and we dig, but we find the same thing every single time

Explanatory Notes

"Tell me, what is that hole for?" I ask the Colonel.
"Nothing at all," he says, guiding a spoonful of soup to his mouth. "They dig for the sake of digging. So in that sense, it is a very pure hole."
"I don't understand."
"It is simple enough. They dig their hole because they want to dig. Nothing more or less."
I think about the pure hole and all it might mean.
"They dig holes from time to time," the Colonel explains. "It is probably for them what chess is for me. It has no special meaning, does not transport them anywhere. All of us dig at our activities, nowhere to get to. Is there not something marvellous about this? We hurt no one and no one gets hurt. No victory, no defeat."
(From Hard-Boiled Wonderland and The End Of The World by Haruki Murakami.)

For several years, “Pure Holes” existed as a rough instrumental idea that I had set aside for my experimental side-side-side-project, Art Fuck & Death Shit. It didn’t have any lyrics, although it was a direct response to the above passage of Murakami’s: if you believe that melodies can mean as much as words, which I do. I moved away from Leeds, where I had felt at home for the first time in my life, to London, not to seek my fortune but to escape the impure hole I had inadvertently found myself knee-deep in. And also to become a Librarian. And also to open my eyes a little wider. What more (or less) is there to say about this? Stop digging. Keep digging. Keep it real. Oh, and Birgitte sings this one because, well, we asked her to.

Further Reading
Art Fuck & Death Shit, Bang! Hacked, Stump Tunnel EP:
http://museumrecords.bandcamp.com/album/bang-hacked-stump-tunnel-ep
Manhattan Love Suicides, The, “Wolves”:
http://www.amazon.co.uk/Burnt-Landscapes-Manhattan-Love-Suicides/dp/B0019BC34U
Murakami, Haruki, Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World. Available at:
CHASING CROWS

If I keep a foot in both the doors you can keep my birthday cake
Leave it for the crows to save them picking on my bones
They pull at my sleeve and call me to leave

If they can’t offer me any security they can bring me severance pay
And I’ll buy a one-way ticket across the sea and get out of trouble’s way

If I keep an eye on both the shores you can keep my wedding cake
As the crows fly home I know my heart is wont to roam
The candle snuffed out, the crows headed south

Explanatory Notes
In 1835 a series of articles appeared in the New York Sun newspaper which described an array of fantastical animals that had allegedly been observed on the Moon using a special new kind of telescope. These included unicorns, beavers that walked on their hind legs and four-foot tall flying man-bats, all colourfully described in the minutest detail. The overwhelming majority of The Sun’s readers swallowed the story wholesale, and it was not revealed to be a hoax until several weeks later. But why would anyone believe it?

The articles were alleged to have been written by the fictitious Dr. Andrew Grant, supposedly the travelling companion and amanuensis of Sir John Herschel, the celebrated astronomer. Herschel was stationed at the Cape of Good Hope at the time, so news of the hoax wouldn’t reach him for weeks.

The hoax was in fact devised and written by The Sun’s editor, Richard Adams Locke, an erudite astronomy buff. Locke decided that he needed a stunt to give The Sun the edge in the viciously competitive New York newspaper market. He took inspiration from Edgar Allen Poe, whose recent short stories had described fantastical voyages powered by wonderful new types of machine. Ever the trickster, Poe bedded his tales in a wealth of technical detail in an attempt to fool his readers: if the science sounded plausible they might just believe the more fanciful elements of his entirely fictional stories.

Locke showed just how far this principle could be stretched. He spent the entire first instalment of the series describing the revolutionary telescope Herschel had supposedly devised, which was in fact a twist on the hydro-oxygen microscope, a recent invention that had wowed audiences at public exhibitions by revealing the workings of nature with an unprecedented level of magnification. Locke’s meticulous account was so convincing that even some professional astronomers were taken in.

The story took New York by storm, dramatically increasing The Sun’s circulation so that it briefly overtook The Times as the highest circulation newspaper in the world. Poe was angry at being upstaged and accused the paper of plagiarism. Bitter and penniless, he held a lifelong grudge, repeatedly berating The Sun in print for making tremendous profits from his innovation without giving him a cent.

Further Reading
ABRAXAS

We looked up
We fucked up
We sowed our seeds so wildly
We are so confused
And we'll find as time goes by
We've flayed ourselves alive

Junk flows through us and out us
With eyes closed we shiver and cry out
For something
You should never grow old

And I wanted it all
I was destined to fall

Explanatory Notes

“[Life] is a tale told by an idiot – full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

So said a character in a little play written by a person variously known in his life time as Willm Shakp, William Shakspere, Wm Shakspe, William Shaksper, Willm Shaksper, William Shakspeare. Life sometimes seems so overwhelming, powerful and huge that the only option is to retreat into bed. Other times it seems so ethereal as to be but the dream of a butterfly. Like the butterfly we tend to flit between these two interpretations. Nothing is real. Everything is real.

Separate to this internal debate is the existence of evil. David Foster Wallace claims David Lynch sees evil as a force that can permeate all things. In Abrahamic religions evil is seen to become incarnate in the character of the devil. In Dharmic religion we have the idea of karma. Others see the whole idea of good and evil as a category error. Again, debate continues.

What is known is that at times human beings have flayed other human beings alive. I personally find this almost incomprehensible.

Further Reading
INTERMEDIATE RAPIERS

Everything we’ve seen. All the things we’ve laughed about.
Every single time we didn’t say a word but wanted to.
Every broken bone. All the times we woke up late.
Every single time we let the phone ring out and talked about the places we have been.

Intermediate Rapiers: We are into things that we don’t know a thing about.

It’s hard not to absorb and commit to memory
The impressions that impress themselves upon you:
A book left on a train. A ‘Club logo in the snow and that time in Shipley
Drunk and stoned we played the best that we have ever played.

Intermediate Rapiers: We are into things that we don’t know a thing about.

Explanatory Notes
“The pen is mightier than the sword.”
“Many wearing rapiers are afraid of goosequills.”
“Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.”

However you wish to style this (in)famous metonymic adage (thanks, Wikipedia), here at WCHQ we’ll go with Kevin Cummins’ portrait of Northern Troubadour Morrissey where ‘pen is’ is written as ‘penis’. That’s just the way we roll.

We often get accused of being pretentious, inscrutable, alienating our audience with in-jokes and, well, a general exclusive aloofness. All of these accusations are invariably true to some extent, but they are more often than not the opinion of the humourless and ill-informed and, admittedly to a lesser extent, equalled by those who understand exactly where our tongues are firmly placed (and those that appreciate (can tolerate) the odder side of pop). Even the most casual of listeners to any of our output should inform you of our ethos that clever and stupid are equally valid methods of expression, however, we may not always succeed in making this obvious. But, we try! And, indeed, the very lyrical explanations you are reading now (yes, you, dear reader) are an olive branch, a peace offering, a glass of wine with a good friend after a long day at work, a pint of real ale and a good book on your own in a quiet pub after a long day at work.

Once, when I was in one such pub, an associate of mine, in the final throes of a good old drunk inexplicably spluttered the words “Intermediate Rapiers.” None of us assembled around the table had any idea where it came from or what it was in reference to and before we could press him for an explanation he fell off his stool. “I'm writing that down!” I said to myself. And then I did.

Further Reading
Abramovic, Marina, Rest Energy (1980)
Crowley, Aleister, The Book of Lies (1962, Red Wheel)
Shakespeare, William, Hamlet. Available at: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2265
ICARUS, DRUNK

Far away from the clouds, from the cities and crowds I work alone
Under desert night skies, where the telescope lies, I feel at home

Below the firmament, everything's beautifully still
Beneath the firmament, everything's eerily still

Entering the unknown, from the eyepiece I'm thrown into the deep
I find life on the Moon, day comes always too soon for me to sleep
Join the dots through the stars to the lights from the cars below the hill
Pack the rum in the trunk, I am Icarus, drunk behind the wheel

I can see what I want when I'm pointing my glass at the Sun
My mind wanders a lot when I’m sat waiting up on the Sun

Explanatory Notes

This was the second time a song came to me in a dream, when I woke with the melody more or less fully formed (the first being “Dream Councillor”, which can be found on our second album, SOAP). It’s a tribute to Percival Lowell, who in 1894 built his own observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona. Lowell became convinced that markings which he had seen on Mars’s surface were actually canals constructed by an intelligent civilisation. He conjectured that the planet was quickly drying out, so the desperate Martian race built canals to direct water from the melting polar caps to the populated equatorial regions. All this was deduced from seeing a few lines on the surface of Mars – that’s some pretty far-out speculation right there. It was not until 1965 that NASA’s Mariner Four spacecraft finally showed that no waterways existed on Mars. Nowadays the markings which Lowell interpreted as canals are thought to be no more than an optical illusion.

Lowell’s extravagant ideas led to him being ostracised by the scientific community but they were enthusiastically latched onto by the public, and his success as a populariser of astronomy ensured that his claims about life on Mars engendered a great deal of debate. His conception of Mars as inhabited by an ancient, dying civilization making a final, desperate bid for survival has dominated popular conceptions of the planet and has been particularly influential in science fiction. Lowell was responsible for everything from Mars Attacks! to Dan Quayle, the US Vice-President who still insisted there were water-filled canals when arguing in support of the Mars Observer space project in 1989.

There is no evidence that Lowell had a drinking problem, I just liked the idea of alcohol and loneliness driving a man to imagine life on other planets.

Further Reading