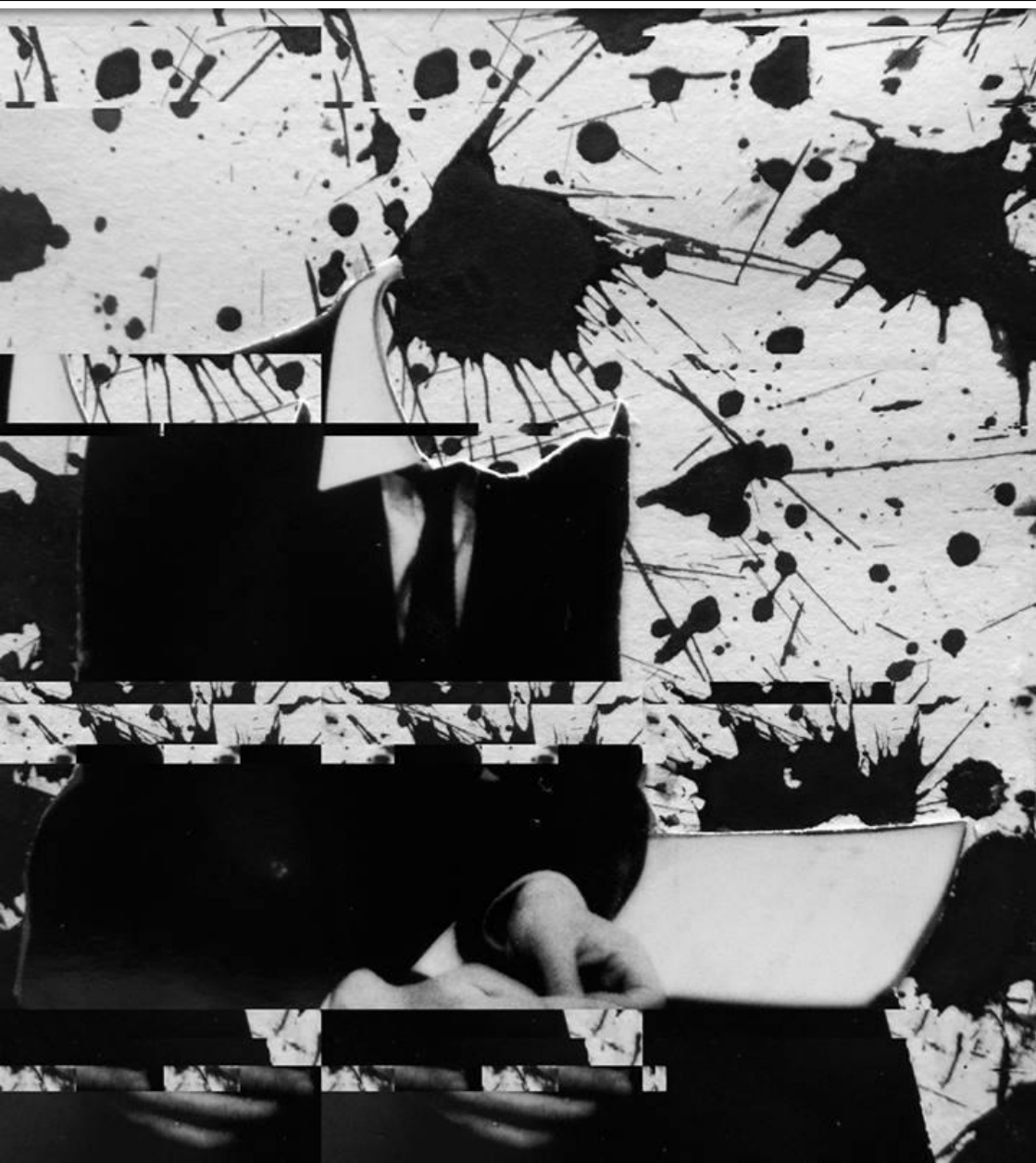


Sheila Mannix

Lashed across the Skies



Smithereens Press

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Lashed Across the Skies

*In memory of Tom Mannix –
loving father & political adversary –
born 1937, died 28 December 2017.*

Baltimore in Twelve

One

The Postman speaks Latin. "*UBI SUNT,*" he cries, in a West-Country accent. A medievalist re-enacter, no doubt. I forsee dwells and laments on the transitory nature of life and beauty. "Where are they?" Where, indeed. "You said seventies bungalow. The place is full of seventies bungalows. You said palm trees. The place is full of palm trees." On the radio: howling like wolves at the side of the road...the dandelion verges on being a symbol...a wolf slaughtering a black lamb and Vulcan hovering over the scene...is there any such country? The herding of the cows lashed across the skies of Ireland. Durations, dynamics, articulations.

Two

Two magpies in the garden
Cordylines, dog-roses, wild
Sea grass with squid leaves

You could put that on a menu
Set up a stall in the market
And now for the good news!

Three

Excavate. Archaeology of Self. Yes, we've all read Lacan. I can still hear Emilia Weber's laconic, "*Have I confessed something?*" Let's start with the books. Sceptics, cynics, romantics, revolutionaries, hermits, beatniks, punks, dissidents, decadents, oulipians, existentialists, three waves of feminists, atheists, nihilists, idealists, materialists, anarchists, communists, socialists, realists, naturalists, abolitionists, expressionists, impressionists, symbolists, modernists, linguists, cubists, structuralists, satirists, classicists, formalists, futurists, constructivists, semiologists, dadaists, surrealists, absurdists, psychoanalysts, situationists, neo-realists, relativists, postmodernists, deconstructivists, liberationists, ecologists, vitalists, conceptualists, post-humanists, objectivists, phenomenologists, post-structuralists, post-postmodernists, neo-modernists, neo-avant-gardists, trans-avant-gardists, post-avant-gardists... I meant *Dust*. Forget I ever used the word *Evacuate*, I mean *Excavate*.

Four

Brief tableau.

FINNEUS *faces a wall and replicates imaginary death positions, wears a long black robe. STONE smokes and drinks wine, sports knuckledusters under lace mittens.*

STONE:

Let's give mystic nature a bash. For the competitions.

[FINNEUS, *engaged in an act of auto-asphyxiation, turns to STONE.*]

STONE:

Here goes.

Storm-fronts queue dark skies like jets on a runway.

A saffron-orange ferryboat is away to Cape Clear.

FINNEUS:

I'm reluctant.

STONE:

We're broke.

FINNEUS:

We have enough to eat and a roof over our heads.

STONE:

I'm running out of wine.

FINNEUS [*Sighs*]:

Beyond the Sound the islands Horse, Hare.

Five

A subject comes into being who has been mortified in his sovereignty, whose “crown” has slipped into the “creaturely.” This subject has passed through an abjection and has constructed – through the “artifice” of material and mental writing and drawing – a new ego, a Lacanian *sinthome*, a dialogical self.

Six

STONE:

More complications!

FINNEUS:

Wasp's nest under eave. Wasps thud and whirr,
destroy my ease. Buzz-off wasps. DIE!!!

STONE:

What? Are you referring to me? You kill woodlice,
fruit-flies, mice, rats. You're some Zen-Buddhist.

[FINNEUS *jumps up.*]

FINNEUS:

Enough of this self-laceration! I cannot be a monk on a rock!

[FINNEUS *sets to ramble.* STONE *follows him.*]

STONE:

Sage green, duck-egg-blue –
How to choose between the two?
Apt called Plantation shutters.
What a beautiful view of the sea!

Seven

Pointillist Skittles: *An Raithneach Eile [Gaelic]* or The Other Fern

At the cove, buoys bob “like a packet of Skittles,” says Fern
- On a pointillist sea, said Ella

White sails
Wings

Gulls
And
Boats

Echo
Each other

Dry-stone walls

Hedgerows of fire-grass, fuch-

sia: blossom, pre-historic fern

H

U

M P

B

A

CK

Hills

Eight

Thorny

Yellow

Gorse

Tropics

Nose

Neon

Pink

Heather

Nine

STONE [*Back home with a French novel*

by his laptop, talks while typing]:

Finalement, on cherche l'exégèse en toute chose.

Fuck's sake. Putting these symbols in. I can't see a thing. You've done the wrong one, you plonker.

Ten

The Postman is a mine of information. He says, "The old red sandstone grits have been altered in colour by the heat of the igneous rocks, being white instead of red. The igneous rocks are greenstone, being both contemporaneous and intrusive. The old red sandstone is covered generally by carboniferous limestone. By far the larger part of the surface of Ireland consists of carboniferous limestone. The carboniferous slates have been formed of the products of the destruction of various older rocks. In the carboniferous rocks more than 500 species of fossil plants have been found, including ferns and gigantic clubmosses, also the wings of beetles, spiders, and other insects. There are numerous evidences of a glacial period when the northern hemisphere was subjected to a climate of the utmost rigour." I'm thinking Russian revolution, communism, 'greenstone' for Ireland, eco-warriors, movement of global capital, neo-liberal austerity... Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. I'm hungry. What time is it?

Eleven

FINNEUS picks magic mushrooms in the cliff-top pastures by the Baltimore Beacon. Blue skies and sunshine, the ocean sparkles.

FINNEUS [*Sings*]:

Beat up little seagull
On a marble stair

Trying to find the ocean
Looking everywhere

Hard times in the city
In a hard town by the sea

Ain't nowhere to run to
There ain't nothing here for free

Hooker on the corner
Waiting for a train

Drunk lying on the sidewalk
Sleeping in the rain

And the people hide their faces
And they hide their eyes

'Cos the city is dying
And they don't know why

Oh, Baltimore
Ain't it hard just to live

Oh, Baltimore
Ain't it hard just to live
Just to live

Got my sister Sandy
And my little brother Ray

Buy a big old wagon
To haul us all away

Live out in the country
Where the mountain's high

Never gonna come back here
Till the day I die

Oh, Baltimore
Ain't it hard just to live

Oh, Baltimore
Ain't it hard just to live
Just to live

Twelve

The Baltimore Beacon is a white-painted stone beacon at the entrance to the harbour at Baltimore, County Cork, Ireland. The beacon was built at the order of the British government following the 1798 Rebellion. It was part of a series of lighthouses and beacons dotted around the Irish coast, forming a warning system.

'Baltimore' was composed by Randy Newman and originally appeared on his 1977 album *Little Criminals*.

Shandon String

for Trevor Joyce, Shandon 2016-2017

Impossible to step outside. It's raining.

Brief Tableau.

FINNEUS & STONE Take Advantage of the Coast Being Clear & Steer into Harbour.

By Pope's Quay, FINNEUS sits under a London Plane tree (*Platanus x hybrida*) to which he is roped lasso-style. STONE fires pellets of sourdough at him which fail to land in his mouth.

FINNEUS:

Oh, for the tongue of a pangolin.

STONE:

Or a chameleon.

FINNEUS:

Or a sun bear.

STONE:

Or an okapi. They use their tongues to clean their eyes and nose.

Seagulls swoop to the pavement and peck.

FINNEUS:

Aye, aye, aye. My bread.

STONE [*Addresses the gulls*]:

You enjoy. And don't listen to a word he says to you.

FINNEUS:

You plural is 'ye' round here.

STONE [*Addresses the gulls*]:

Ye enjoy. And don't listen to a word he says to ye.

FINNEUS:

North Gate Tavern. North Mall. This is where we started school. 'The North.' Bombs. The IRA. Hunger strikes. The UVF. The Shankill Butchers. Bloody Sunday. Torture.

Bells.

STONE:

What's that?

FINNEUS:

Tourists enjoying *the Unique experience of Ringing the world famous Shandon Bells.*

Frère

Jacques

Frère

Jacques

Dormez-vous?

Dormez-vous?

Sonnez

les

matines

Sonnez

les

matines

Ding,

ding,

dong

Ding, ding, dong

Frère

Jacques

Frère

Jacques

Dormez-vous?

Dormez-vous?

'These are the first scary bells we run into in the poem.

The speaker doesn't have a strong presence.

Nope, this guy isn't freaky, delusional, or ranting about a lost lover.

Actually, he's kind of personality-less.

He's not talking about himself or speaking in the first-person.

There's no "I" at all.

We're already a long way from golden harmony.

We've fallen a long way from those happy little jingling silver bells.'¹

At sixteen 'I [will] affirm...my own separateness, my own
independence, the differentness of my constitution.'² I will
against violence, injustice, religion & the law. I will rant &
in my door. I will listen to protest poetry in the form of post
I will read the Existentialists. I will write diaries & poems. I
smoke Camel unfiltered cigarettes & drink brandy in secret
behind the bar.

rage
kick
punk.
will

Counter.

I will.

Wear black. I will wear a 1960s French raincoat.

ocean / island / space / group / adore / rock / drawls

Aisling [blank]. I wanted a mansion with horses and a view of the [blank]. It was to be a self-sustaining commune, preferably on an [blank] of forests and mountains. Everyone would have their own [blank]. There would be no imperative to join a [blank]. 'Both of us sitting on some sea-shore [blank] to contemplate the spectacle I [blank].'³

And now my heart aches. On Lloyd's Lane, Quarry Lane.
'When vast office-blocks, highways, and panoramic hotels
Could be built, and houses for the poor could not be provided.'⁴
He's sweet, he's petite. Chinese? He's the muse.
Bred on Bambi and thrown to the wolves.
In Eugene's the talk is of permits.
The need to cook venison on a slow heat.
I always party mid-week. You forget work.
Strategies in the Speaking module.
Narrating, paraphrasing and summarising. Conversation repair.
Providing personal and non-personal information.
'When the battle was at its height, a ball took effect on my horse
Which tumbled with me into a ravine.'⁵

The Office of Public Works is planning to surround the River Lee with reinforced concrete. *Ireland is on the eve of a great anniversary; the centenary of the proclamation of the republic. In response the Arts Council is planning a national programme, calling on artists to surprise and renew the state.*⁶ Cyclist to Van Driver: "Will you put on the two lights flashing, please?" Van Driver to Cyclist: "Fuck. Off." Cyclist is rattled, veers to the left, toward the dinghy dredging missing persons. Cyclists and vegetarians are ruining the country, declares Prime Minister of right state of Poland. *Concerto for Two Bicycles* is composed by Frank Zappa in 1963. In Dublin in 1916 a barricade stretched across Upper Abbey Street is made with the entire stock of a bicycle warehouse: thousands of bicycles, piled eight or ten feet high, jammed into each other. Welcome to Shandon Historic Quarter, Cultural Quarter. Cork Islamic Info, Oriental Delights, Blarney Street. Inside Africa Store, Alysha Spice House, Knit O'Flynn. Victoire Market, Tattoo Cork Ink, The Tackle Shop. You're the kind of person who hangs out with foreigners. Next thing we know you'll have a Muslim friend. 'People were shouting 'go home', some were applauding the police, she said. Her daughter was crying.'⁷ *Love Trumps Hate.*⁸ Daddy, Daddy, the fascist. Daddy, Daddy, the man who loves Hitler. Daddy, Daddy, the man who loves Trump. Daddy, Daddy, you're hurting me.

Brief tableau

'A dark night in which all cows are white'⁹

STONE:

I don't like this Airbnb. What do you think of it?

FINNEUS:

Not much. It's a bit dark.

STONE:

Yes, well, I've never been in a room like this.
It's scary, isn't it?

FINNEUS:

Nonsense. It's fine.

STONE:

What's that?

FINNEUS:

Just a bit of thunder. Nothing to worry about.

STONE:

Fucking hell, what was that?

FINNEUS:

I don't know. I don't know.

STONE:

Someone's trying to get in!

FINNEUS:

Quick. Give me a hand.

STONE:

I can't. I'm not very strong.

FINNEUS:

Yes, you are. Help me to hold this door.
We're safe now. We're safe, aren't we?

STONE:

Aaah! The window, Finneus!

FINNEUS:

Don't worry. That's it now. Listen,
there's a phone ringing.

In Marymount Hospice, Aunt Máire the publican
(Of *The Celtic Twilight* public house) reveals

Grandad the republican fought the British Empire
Because of the poverty he saw in these lanes

Grandad the republican

Who the Brits suspected

Killed a cop

on this

street

Grandad the republican

Whose pub was set alight

The night Cork

burned

Grandad the republican

Whose disguise was *Cattle Drover*

When he went on

the

run

Grandad the republican

Who carved an heirloom harp

Out of a

cow's

horn

Grandad the republican

Who returned to engage

In a

civil

war

Grandad the republican

Who wrote prison-comrades'

last

letters

home

from The Quays:

DELETE DELETE DELETE // DELETE DELETE DELETE // DELETE DELETE //

DELETE DELETE // DELETE DELETE DELETE // #stopthewall

NOTES

1. <http://www.shmoop.com/bells-poe/summary.html>
2. Toni Negri, 'Domination and Sabotage' in *Autonomia*, Los Angeles, SEMIOTEXT(E) (2nd edition), 2007, p.66
3. Lautréamont, *Maldoror and Poems*, trans. Paul Knight, England, Penguin Books, 1978, p.41
4. Séamus Wilmot, *And so began...*, Cork and Dublin, The Mercier Press, 1972, p.7
5. Eugene Sue, *The Wandering Jew; A Tale of the Jesuits*, London, Milner and Company, 1900, p.29
6. Arts Council of Ireland website, 2015
7. *The Guardian*, 6 August 2016
8. Slogan, Global/Women's March on Washington, 21 January 2017
9. Toni Negri, Op. cit., p.64

burning boat

s

t

iL

sundown

close of a dark day

P

arts vacant: body window chair

out there burning boat

Images for burning boat

Left with only 2 choices — die, or
ensure victory, I'm burning the boat
that carried me here. She was a damn
sturdy vessel. I loved her hard, I
carved my name in her mast.

BOAT BURNING. Maximal minimalism,
massed guitars, passion &
psychedelia. Residents of Tree Hill...

CHECK OUT THE DUDE WITH
THE GARDEN HOSE, YEAH
THAT SHOULD REALLY HELP
PUT OUT THE FIRE.

More images for burning boat

A normal fire can leave parts
Of the body remaining
Successful cremation requires
A very hot fire, hot enough
To burn flesh & bone to ash

Friends, family, fallen comrades
Bury the ashes under piles of rocks
There are large stone ships
That allow the dead to sail
To die in bed of sloth is not brave

Travel out into the water
Wasted without valid cause
Or a suitable amount of status
In the realm of the gods
The 'mountain' is thought of
As a nice afterlife

a woman might find her cloth

making equipment

or

cooking tools would follow her

remodelling businesses for hidden gold
ceo sends an email to Sun employees
on acquisition of Sun by Oracle Corporation
capital letters of first seven paragraphs
spell "beat IBM"

vomit, scuttling rudder
country-house murder mystery
about 'methods of composition'
off to bed with your 1930s guilt-
ridden & embittered members

down in the capital
privately investigating LBC, TTP
Mao sat on Facebook for tea, Woita
wight of my wife, fire of my woins
my sin, my sew

Wo-wee-ta

down the pawate to tap
[Down The Pa Weight (Two-Tap)]

*down the Pa ate
feathers of chicks*

*'down the paw'
puppy weight too*

*down the Pa
down the Pa weight*

*down the 'Pa, wait'
Pa ate you*

*et tu, est tout, et tous
& you is everything & all*

*"tap":
proceed to sex, fuck*

*tap, rap, strike
wear special shoes*

*make tapping sounds
with your feet*

*metal heel taps
metal toe taps]
at three, on the teeth*

Blood nihil
Ice nihil
Smoke nihil

Nihil est Plus One

N was briefly considered
for induction into Oulipo
& the idea was scrapped -

he admitted in the preface
to the screenplay of Lolita:

*there is nothing in the world
I loathe more than group activity*

But there was no revolutionary rift between bourgeoisie and proletariat. Indeed, guilt-ridden middle-class liberals seeking a new faith were more inclined to embrace Communism than were embittered members of the working class, whose main concern was survival.¹ Indeed, guilt-ridden middle-class liberals seeking a new faith were more inclined to read *The Aesthetics of Resistance* by Peter Weiss than were embittered members of the working class, whose main concern was survival. "The approach to art was linked to the thought of death" (68). Yesterday it was a knife. The Pope sealed the alliance with a gift to Mussolini: "three medals, two of which recall the Crucifixion and the third, the radio." Last night I dreamt a trailer of naked people passed by me on the road. Hunched.

Over. Covered in cement dust. Like.

Butoh dancers.

Being.

Carted to execution.

Strikers in the nineteen twenties nicknamed it
BFC: British Falsehood Corporation
The burning boat that sank
News takes a look

A disused fishing boat was set alight and left to sink off the Dorset coast in August 2014. Arts Council England awarded artist Simon Faithfull a grant of £34,240 towards the project, which included five underwater webcams being installed on the boat to broadcast its sinking on the internet. Mr Faithfull said the onboard cameras would reveal the boat's "gradual transformation into an artificial reef." "It makes your heart sink," declared the Daily Mail, who slammed the artist for, they claimed, wasting taxpayers' money. Art critic Sarah Kent, however, praised the project and said "the moment the boat is swallowed up still carries an emotional punch."²

Turkey

fires
on a ship
fleeing Syria.....*“to Italy or death”*
Sur la mer.....Out at Sea

Un bateau en feu dérive sur une mer calme à la tombée flamboyante du jour. Malgré l'absence de repères d'échelle, on devine, au vigoureux ballotement auquel elle est soumise, qu'il s'agit d'une embarcation de modestes dimensions.

A boat on fire drifts on a calm sea in the last light of a flaming sunset. There is no reference to scale, yet we guess that the boat is of modest proportions because small waves cause it to rock vigorously.³

Just call me Kevin. I was adopted by Bill Gates and was told that I'm the true inheritor of all his wealth...ah ha! That was just to check if you'd already dozed off. Entrepreneur Troy Tyler had this to say to Fast Company in the August 2000 issue about "burning boats": "Strategy is all about commitment. If what you're doing isn't irrevocable, then you don't have a strategy — because anyone can do it. That's why burning the boats is so important. I've always wanted to treat life like I was an invading army."⁴

water of Europe,
water of Europe, green
water penetrated my hull of fir

pun on "fir" [men: Gaelic]

continuous integration (CI)
practice of merging
developer working
copies to share-
d main-
lin-
e

adj.
in *A Void*
the missing *e*
sounded as *eux*
becomes 'them'
the disappeared

C'est le temps du passage du jour à la nuit, quand la lumière colorée du crépuscule cède au noir, dans le strict temps du tournage, un seul plan, sans montage, pas la moindre anecdote visuelle. Le bateau brûle de l'intérieur, sans que sa coque métallique ne cède aux assauts du feu.

It is the hour when day becomes night, when the saturated colours of dusk give way to darkness. Filmed in real-time, in one continuous take with no cuts, there is no further narrative. The boat burns from the inside and its metal hull does not succumb to the flames.⁵

NOTES

1. Piers Brandon, *The Dark Valley, A Panorama of the 1930s*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2000
2. bbc.com/news, 10 January 2016
3. Marcel Dinahet, 'Sur la Mer' UHDCAM 12:55 min, colour, sound, 2014, Fréhel, Brittany, France (quoted with permission: thanks to Marcel Dinahet).
4. BurningBoats.com, 2011
5. Marcel Dinahet, Op. cit.

Acknowledgements

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burning boat appeared in *gorse* No.7, 2017

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Sheila Mannix lives in Cork and works part-time as a research administrator in the French department at UCC. She had two poetry chapbooks published in 2017 - *female corpse* (Smithereens Press) and *Dual Poet Reader: One*, with Nathan Spoon (hardPressed poetry).

Sheila was a featured artist in *Icarus Magazine* 68.2 (March 2018).

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