

**TREES
ON
BEAR
ROAD**

poems by

Brendan Cleary

Sunk Island Publishing

Trees On Bear Road © Brendan Cleary, 2008

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Trees on Bear Road

an 8/11 favourite obliges but not the next
stupid animal only had to jump a fence
so I'm on the barstool studying *The Post*
ordering pints on the slate & staring at her
the way her hips move & chasing the dogs
could have been my saviour but fucked it
in a scrimmage on the bend or photo finish
so high above the clouds I'll disappear
as if gas or the slightest blemish of dust
whirling in the sunbeams at the window
which should look out on the esplanade
but only on the graveyard & trees always
Sainsbury's bags draped on the branches
& the shapes of the hands of lost children

Wisdom

Consider this
he has a plum draw
& can grab the rail
is undefeated
& has Fallon up
who is determined
with the ground perfect
so how come then
I'm smokin' Ron's tabs
& I owe the bailiffs
some team in Northampton
nearly 2000 quid
& if I don't find regular work
my beautiful girlfriend is goin' to leave me

Gift

was it my dilated pupils
gave the game away
or the smell
of old Holborn
in my hair
& I'd worked hard
all of the morning
on the bar stool
with *The Racing Post*
just to bring you that flower
pink & incredibly rare

The Bar Girls

tell ye what lasses I'll leave my heart
pickled in a carafe above the optics
& you can watch it makin' toasties
as blood dries up & goes smeggy
but I'm 6 foot away from shaggin' you
but it's 6 foot under the beergarden
where you handed me little wraps
& moaned about your spotty boyfriend
his Scottish football fixation & porn
or of the sensitive type with the anorak
& the haircut you thought cute but later
to my heart admitted was really stupid

Brightonia

on your rooftop
smokin' weed
& you told me
I was the same
age as your Da
& he was bearing up
better than I was
so I looked over Brightonia
& decided there & then
not to pursue it
or you for that matter

Early Days

I'm about 12 on the lawn
gathering flowers
I give to Samantha
my cousin's friend
over from Hornsea
with her blond hair
& this is the start
of something I wish
would never disappear

Light Years

Sunday after the chaotic party
when you & some young fucker
disappeared out to the balcony
& I told you weeping on the stairs
I wanted to punch his lights out
& there I am sprawled on the sofa
watching Liverpool V Man City
as you wash your hair with Fairy
then weigh in in a tight blue dress
& start bouncing up on the futon
reminding me of Gabriel Venning
& how unobtainable you'd always be
in my alcohol haze & in the curry house
I told you I deeply feared your absence

May Afternoon

on the blue pillows
you bought
I lie back
under the shelf
with old cassettes
lucky stones
& a photo
of my dad
during the war
thinking of you
posing & smiling
at the mirror
& loads of other stuff
it won't do me
any good at all
to mention

Paul's Ex

you moved around in circles
making a complete twat of yourself
& Paul if he had any gumption
would drop you but he's soft
& even on the coach back home
through Chester Le Street
you were still holding court
exposing the top of your tits
to anyone without a brain
& there are plenty dearest
just read any crappy newspaper
just take a walk in the park

Poem For R

it was a sunny afternoon
probably a Tuesday
when I tied you up
because you wanted me to
& I had a silk scarf
I bought
in a charity shop
but it did for a blindfold
& later we had pizza
or I think it was pizza

Split

my suspicions are aroused
when she calls unannounced
on a wet Tuesday afternoon
as I smoke a one-skinner
staring down at mad traffic
thinking of her red hair
the time she touched my cheek
in a field in County Mayo
with only some cows watching
& now she wants her wonderbra
stashed away in my secret drawer
& she definitely needs it tonight
to go out with flakey Caroline
& whatever drama that entails

Tea

time I bought you
an apple pastry
so let's slip off
the turmoil of
Oxford Street
& take this cut
at the traffic lights
my hand round
your waist
down to Soho

En Route

I stand transfixed
at Victoria station
watching the boards
flickering again
& thinking about
the little moles you have
the shape of your neck
your blue tattoo

The New Century

some millennium it turned out
meeting Jeremy at opening time
in that grim bar up Shields Road
& he'd already had 5 whiskies
at home he said with his dad
& then proceeded to neck 6 pints
of some dodgy 8% gear
falling over on the kerb
flat on his face splitting his lip
on the bridge near Byker Farm
& back at mine I told him
'stop taking pills ye eejit'
but that just spun him away
into the tale of Christmas Eve
tipping backwards off the stool
up in The Trent & passing out
& then at some gaff in Spital Tongues
when his breathing stopped
they gave him a shot of coke
a Pulp Fiction job
& all this because the night before
in the jakes of The Tanners
this guy at the urinal
turned round & stared
vomited white bile
the insides of his stomach
then crashed on the tiles
& died there & then
right in front of him

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Hank Williams on acid is how Brendan Cleary was once described. Since 1985 he has been assailing the polite world of poetry with his bittersweet poems of hope and disappointment. His may be a talent 'going to waste' but it's fruitfully done and we are the richer for it. Bar-stools, beers, horses, girls and football ('some things hurt more, much more than cars and girls...' well, more than cars, but not girls): this is the territory of the not-so-lucky, the passion-wracked, the love-wrecked, the feckless, the unrecognised artists of the bedroom and the gutter, and the enemies of regular work.

Some of the poems in this collection are to appear in Brendan Cleary's next full-length book, *Some Turbulent Weather*, published by tall-lighthouse press: <http://www.tall-lighthouse.co.uk/>

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