



WordSmyth

Welcome to *WordSmyth!*

Welcome back to the third, thrilling (*hopefully*) edition of *Wordsmyth*. (This should help to entertain you over the holiday; or whenever or wherever you choose to read this!) Poems, descriptions, narrative, prose...

Amongst other things, we present deceptive dystopia, explore various villages, reflect on belief and capitalism, and...

Contemplate chocolate cake?

We hope you enjoy reading the following, so let the creativity commence!

Paul Cooley, Editor

2120- Utopia

I stepped forwards into the busy street, glancing around myself at the many vehicles dashing through the sky. The orange glow of the morning sky was intensified by the light reflected from many of the glass surfaces that composed buildings, and played patches of light on the tall skyscrapers stretching into the clouds above. A hover-car approached me, light gleaming from the polished silver metal, and I climbed aboard, scanning my wrist first on the dark glass by the door of the car. I climbed into the vessel, settling down amongst the cushions, and pulling open the velvet curtains that hung from the silver bar embedded in the ceiling. I gave my destination, and the car pulled off into the air, spiralling upwards to the top of the crowd of cars queued mid-air. I glanced out of the window at the city, gazing at the metal and glass structures that came level with me, although I was many hundreds of metres up in the sky. The engine vibrated slightly, propelling the vehicle through the morning air, leaving a slight trace of a trail behind.

I gazed below at the few pedestrians crawling across the earth below, through the patches of grass and trees that dominated the ground. Wind rushed past, funnelled and filtered into the small motors that powered the machine. It began a controlled fall towards the ground, and I could see my destination rushing towards me. The building stood nearly a mile high, spirals of concrete rising in curves upwards, with spots of paint strewn across the building. The car settled onto the synthetic grass below on the ground. The door slid silently open, and I abandoned the vehicle, and stepped through the glass doors into the lobby. A humanoid robot stepped up to greet me, but I waved it away. I had never much liked the machines, even though they existed to help.

I strode across the floor towards the lifts that stood silently to the side of the building. They were made completely of transparent glass, so that it was possible to enjoy the view while they took you up. I stepped into one, and pressed a button right at the top of the lift, to floor 101. No one quite knew why there had been an extra floor added to the building meant to take only 100 levels, but it had been passed

over as modern art design. As the lift cautiously ascended, I sank onto the seat that was positioned in the corner, and proceeded to watch the shrinking ground below.

On stepping out of the lift, I headed towards a door at the end of the corridor, and waved my wrist in front of it, to release the lock and open the door. I paced into the room and walked straight to the window. The idyllic view that I had seen everywhere else vanished. In its place, I could see the buildings towering over the city, throwing shadows over the concrete paths sprawled below, and the people hurrying through the fog of pollution. The only reason that there had been a floor 101 was for there to be one window of reality left out of all the windows left in the world. Only one real view remained.

Sighing, I turned away from the one vision of reality, and returned to gazing hopefully at the vision of a fake utopia that fooled so many. I turned my head to the window again, unable to resist the urge to check that it was still real. I stared at the lines of gas spewed from the wheezing exhaust pipes, and the

tarnished vehicles that swarmed like insects through the air, spreading trails of pollution into the morning sun.

By Paul Cooley

The Questioning Candle

In one huge chapel, tall and mighty
Sat hundreds of candles burning brightly
All their flames are just the same
Their voices hollow, they cast no blame

But one candle in the corner
Burns brighter, taller, stronger

In one huge chapel, tall and mighty,
Sat hundreds of candles burning brightly
All their flames are just the same
Their voices hollow, they cast no blame

That one candle in the corner
Simply asks, why

Why, why do we build chapels tall and proud
When people die together, in one huge crowd
Why, why do we let the rich's money flow
When people, starving, unable to grow

The other candles all gasped
But their flames grew dimmer

Why, why do we celebrate a birth
When people's lives are in pure mirth
Why, why are your minds so weak
When there are things to question and answers to seek

Candles all muttered, mumbled and cursed
But then the wind came and they dispersed

But that one candle stood there tall and proud
Knowing he was right when he looked all around
When it is better to question than leave thoughts unsound

By Michael Taylor

The Diary of a War Artist

Today marks a year since I enlisted. I can still remember the strong pulse of pride and honour I felt when I signed my name on the piece of paper that would shape my life. If only I had known what was to come. In the few days following the trip to the military office we were heroes. After all we were the first class in our year to enlist, even the Headmaster had congratulated us personally: “Boys, you are a prime example of the youth the Kaiser requires.”

In the following weeks of training our student world was torn apart; mathematics, German and philosophy were replaced with “more useful skills”, that the sergeant prescribed. We were taught to never question a superior, to never falter in the face of danger and most importantly do what is best for the empire.

In those few weeks we were blinded of our youth; we acted as a unit, not individuals.

As far as the general was concerned, we were going to fill a vital gap in the war effort. He would often say how important we would be in the grand scheme of the Western front. He was constantly attiring the true hell to which we were set on course with the grand robes of speeches of honour and service. During the training my dear Mother forced me to apply to the position of the war artist of my regiment; she always knew best. Had it not been for her recommendation, I would be dead; the regiment to which I was going to be deployed had been caught in shell fire and only seven out of one-hundred and fifty people lived to report the attack.

Looking back, the general was a rotten pig of a man. It was him who nearly stopped me from being commissioned as a war artist just because I did not tell him about the form I sent to the major. He is probably still sitting in his dark brown leather armchair “supervising” the training of the men through his window. How can hundreds of men be dying whilst such a horrid man can be warm and safe?

I am being sent back to the front. I am lucky though, I have been on leave to finish off my latest piece. Alas the officers are not stupid; I knew they would run out of patience as I added “finishing touches” for several days.

Tonight, I have been tasked with sketching the land mass of no man’s land. In the distance the monotonous moan of mortar fire rumbled on. I checked the time. Eleven o'clock: I should be going over about now. I barely made it to the observation tree before the flares went up. Those engineers don’t seem to care whether you can even see out of the slits let alone if the door even opens; they don’t even have to use their make-shift rugged creations. How are we supposed to get accurate drawings of an area without being able to see half of it?

As more flares flew up into the sky the newly formed upturned landscape was revealed. I felt my lip tremble. Every time I am issued to draw the landscape, I am always horrified by the sheer destruction that is created every day, no scrap of land is ever left untouched by either side.

After what seemed like years, the last of the flares went up, I packed up my pencils and paper and commenced the arduous journey back to the trenches.

It has been months since I last wrote in this book. Words cannot describe what we have been through, just attacks followed by counter attacks. I am due for my annual leave soon.

As I stepped on the cowardly train which would take me home, I felt a weird sensation of guilt: why am I now free from the fighting? why am I on this train whilst my comrades lie desperately in the mud for their life? I tried to block out these thoughts for the whole journey. Time seems to tick much slower when in deep thought.

At last the train pulled to a stop at my home city. As I gazed throughout the stage of my childhood, I felt nothing, nothing but a meaningless sensation of guilt. I thought that visiting the art gallery would help but it only made it worse. I paced up and down the corridors trying to revive the admiration I felt when I was young, yet I still felt nothing. How could man still paint such harmonious landscapes of

trees and lush fields? How could any man see the world in the same light ever again? No words can describe what us soldiers felt. The world has changed, and so have we.

By James Knight



Retreat

“We need reinforcements!” I screamed. My voice was hoarse with shouting and there were tears in my eyes. The vicious sound of war raged on around me. A once beautiful beach had been turned into a battlefield. Thick smoke engulfed us, blinding us, choking us. I could just about make out dead soldiers through the confusion: People who were once my friends. Huge flames of orange and white danced through the madness, mercilessly singing and burning anything in their path. Missing me by inches, a bullet violently charged into the ground, causing sand to fly up at my feet. I looked around in despair: we were going to lose the battle. We had to retreat. Somewhere above me, I could hear the deadly drone of an enemy plane, and a bomb tumbling towards the ground. It exploded in a blinding flash of light, briefly illuminating the coast in a bright orange glow. The impact knocked me off my feet, sending me flying backwards into a rock. My face bruised and my body battered, I tried to stand, my arm hanging limply at my side. The roar of a boat engine started: I had to make it to the sea before...

Another blast sent pieces of shrapnel spraying through the air, blowing me towards the ocean. Spitting the salty taste out of my mouth, I looked up. The boats were leaving! Stumbling frantically, I swam as hard as I could, splashing through the icy water, ignoring the agonizing pain in my arm. Gasping for air, I glanced towards the ships: I wasn't going to make it. Ready to give up, I stopped and allowed the sea to take me. The water closed around me, consuming me as I sunk into darkness, leaving the chaos of the war behind.

Suddenly, a hand plunged into the water and grabbed me firmly by the wrist. I was dragged up onto the cold, hard, metallic surface of a boat, coughing and spluttering. The last boat, hidden behind the rocks so that no one could see it from the shore. Overcome with relief, I closed my eyes: I was saved, and I was going home. Lying down, I looked up at the blue sky as the clouds began to clear, and the sound of guns fell behind. We had made it.

By Ekam Hothi

Looking Down

It was dark now. The stars could not be seen, and the lights of the city emitted light like a rainbow of suns. Cold air hit my face, and the wind swirled round my ears. Down below, at street level, everyone was busy. Harsh lighting from the streetlamp-illuminated cars coming to and fro, blasted fumes into the sky, meandering, sending a scent of smoke through me. Bin men were on their round, collecting rubbish from the multitude of green bins scattered along the pavement. They were like servants, the workers. The bees of the queen.

Looking ahead, the great, daunting masses of skyscrapers loomed over the city. It was as if they were watching the street, and the lower end of the city; surveying the business going on and documenting everything. The cars were beeping and revving, impatient from a hard day of work. The people inside the cars looked worn and tired, their eyes sunken and the contours on their faces engraved in their skin, almost like wounds from a hard-fought battle.

In the sky, planes came hurtling overhead landing on the nearby runway. Their engines were struggling masses of metal, screaming all the way, until the crashing tube landed and ground to a halt. One plane then sighed, a low airy sound, and it heaved to the left or right, getting ready for another long escapade of work.

To my right, the great swirling mass of the sea grumbled, and the tide was a continuous cycle – coming in, going out, coming in, going out. There was no rest for the tide. The waves, too, added to the sadness of it all, down below; the waves were like a row of cavalry coming into attack; their thumping hooves drilling into the grey liquid, and arriving at the shore. Boats bobbed on top of the water, scratched and their colour fading.

Everything, still, worked in unison, and everything was perfect from up here. Yet, one would still get a sense of an artificial reality, like a plastic city. Such a stark contrast from real nature, the people all followed one never ending search. Obtaining money. This one invention had instantly thrown the world into a frenzy for success and

achieving greatness. Throughout one's life that is all someone does, work and work, wasting their short life away. The poor would inevitably stay poor, as the corrupt elite maintain greatness and fame.

Below, the trees rustled and swathed, they were like a glimpse of reality, a real living moving organism, stuck and enclosed in a dome that was created by

humans. One might call the city nature; created by a clever, elite organism, yet, it was a scar in nature's purity.

Soon, I was bored; I kicked off my shoes, and retracted from the balcony into the dark depths of my penthouse.

By William Cherry



The Little Village

The salty sea breeze rustled my hair, it danced around, playing with the dripping clothes hung out to dry. From my position, on top of the grassy green hill, I had a perfect view of the whole of the bay. From the sparkling turquoise sea, pushing the boats in the bay gently back and forth, to the old grizzly fishermen, with their yellow rain macs and long grey whiskers, inspecting their knotted nets for tears and rips.

The lambs were playing in the meadows just outside of the small fishing village; frolicking around and prancing wildly all around the meadow, then skipping around chasing each other. The thatched roofs of the tiny cottages were serenely still but, every so often, a loose straw would drift down on the breeze and nestle on the cobblestones.

The pebbles on the beach cackled in protest as an ancient, weather worn, fisherman stamped along the shoreline. A vintage car came chugging along the twisting, winding road that led down to the beach. I could hear the seagulls

squawking and screeching as they whirled above my head, smell the sweet pollen of the multi-coloured flowers as they twirled freely in the breeze and taste the salty sea air that I was inhaling gratefully. Everything was just perfect. I knew, at that moment, that this is what paradise should feel like.

By Anthony Hargett

The Fishing Village

My boat rocked on the horizon. Seagulls wheeled over my head magnificent boat, screeching like a lost baby. Boats powered past my boat, loaded with the fresh catch of Herring, to feed their demanding offspring. Red boats, green boats, blue boats - all with a name that reflected their personality. The Voyager. The Explorer. BoatyMcBoatface. All powerful boats that sped past my boat.

A village stood on the horizon: nestled into the foothills of the mountains. Men unloaded the daily catch, grunting and panting with strain; seagulls screeched excitedly, hoping to catch a

fish for their hungry babies. Waves crashed onto the pebble beach, the foam draining through. The village was in a hustle, waiting for the next boat to come in. I powered up my engines to take a closer look.

The acrid stench of dead fish caught my nostrils like a punch, making me gag. The sharp tang of sea salt made my tongue tingle and nose twitch. A church stood proudly on a jutting outcrop from the cliff, overlooking the village as it did its chores. The small harbour protected six fishing boats from the powerful waves. The boats rocked gently, swaying to the breeze. Houses stood proudly either side of the harbour, with their red chimneys and whitewashed walls. Smoke arose from the chimneys, mingling with the air and lazily drifting off until it was nothing. A place of tranquility.

My boat had reached shallow water, and I clambered out. The smooth metal, cold beneath my warm hands. The water parted for my feet, and then resumed its natural position. It swirled

around my bare foot, making it tingle. I scrunched up my foot; sand drifting beneath my toes. Stepping onto the pebbles, my foot flared out in pain. The sharp edges dug into my soft feet. A path wound its way up the mountainside, standing out against its dull green backdrop. I ran my hand along a crumbling wall, the old sandstone dropping off as my hand went over it. The rough cement held strong, standing stubbornly. I took one last glance at the church, a lost soldier in a sea of dead bodies. Strong, safe and stubborn.

I stood on the bow of my boat as it powered away, the world filled with sound from the two engines behind me. It spoiled the peace and quietness of the solitary fishing village, away from the hustle and bustle of the city. It took from the sea, and paid back in love and respect for it. I then realised I hadn't eaten for the whole day and went to check on the food supplies.

By Alex Bosworth



The House on the Hill

The air was filled with the frothy taste of salt and the sky was full of clouds of the best sort. The type of clouds which took the form of one's desire and they were anything you wanted them to be. All of the old, cobbled houses were facing towards the sea as if they were waiting for something to arrive. The sea was light as it reflected the sky like a gleaming mirror of diamonds and the occasional fish broke the flat expanse, as if to say hello.

Many boats were trying to find their last catch of the day and each one gleamed; all of them trying to catch the most fish and look the best along the horizon. The sun was barely touching the sea but it was as if the ocean didn't want the sun to go, saying "Don't go, don't leave me to waste at night." As each fisherman hauled in their load of fish up the beach, every one of them had sweat across their forehead and looked like they were about to collapse. The hills were as fresh as a fruit and on one side a group of majestic, auburn

horse galloped along them. The sea still frolicked like it always did early in the morning, like a dolphin needed to breath and let itself plough through the waves. The air was still warm and just like midday and the sand felt moist like the tide had just gone in on itself. The dazzling dandelions and the raging roses were all reaching towards the last specks of light before they would have to survive another night.

There was one house on the hill which had a rustic look and like it was an outcast from the town and it had been treated hatred and jealousy. Instead of looking towards the sea, the house looked upon the town with all of its windows sealed tightly and all of the curtains were closed. Whoever lived there, was a person of privacy and solitude.

The house had a large oak door which looked to be rotting and moulding like an infection. The house sat in the gloom of the hills, where the sunlight couldn't even see it. The house was uncared, unloved and alone with its owner, its master until the end of time. The house was forever doomed to never hear the ever-drawing song of the

sea or to see the gleaming, energetic sea as it danced on the horizon. But to watch the town like clockwork. Alone forever as an outcast.

By George McLintock

The Surprise

Everyone was busy. Decorations were being passed across the room, treats were being placed on star-covered tables and there was a general panicky feeling hovering around. There were only five minutes left before Bob came through those doors. And some things were still not in place. I was worried I was going to let him down. At least everyone was helping, I thought. If it was just me in the huge hall propping chunky tables up, and standing on thin ladders, there would be tears everywhere. But as I helped Aunt Molly prop some mini chairs up, I remembered something. Something that would be a disaster if it was missed out.

A nice sweet chocolate cake.

My mind went into panic mode as I ran out the double doors and down the street. Luckily, there was a tiny Tesco on the same street as the Community Hall, so I had to rush in, get a cake and rush out. I yanked a basket out of the basket tray and speed-walked past the aisles. Some other shoppers gave me

funny looks as I frantically searched the cake section. There were millions to choose from!

Eventually, I spied a nice-looking, if a little small, cake and rushed to the self-service machine. I prodded each screen like I was a video game speedrunner. The computer's cheery voice kept stopping mid-sentence to give the next audio prompt. "No, I don't need a bag," I mumbled as I fumbled with my wallet to find some cash. Soon, I was bolting out the door before the computer could even say 'thank you'.

Rushing to the Community Hall kitchen, I grabbed a knife and sliced the Sellotape off the packaging and reached into the cupboard to find four little candles to put on the cake. I strolled through the door, exhausted, as everyone took their positions and 'shhshhed' each other. There were whispers of 'here he comes' and 'get ready!'. I positioned myself by the door.

The hall fell silent.

Everyone was eager to shout. Someone farted. The big doors of the hall creaked open as little Bob toddled in. He was a toddler, after all. His mother led him in as a little smile sprouted on his face.

Then everyone shouted, 'Happy Birthday!'.
By Danji Ward

TWISTED FAIRY TALE POEM



The little pigs had flown the nest,
The challenge was to do their best,
Build a house, their mother said,
Build it wisely, use your head.

The first pig built his house of straw,
Little did he know this was a fatal flaw.
The wolf approached with quite a din,
“Little pig, little pig let me in!”
“Not by the hairs of my chinny-chin chin!”
“Then I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house in!”
The straw could not withstand the gale,
the little pig began to wail.

The second pig made a great start,
But using sticks was not very smart.
The wolf approached making quite a din,
“Little pig, little pig let me in!”
“Not by the hairs of my chinny-chin chin!”
“The I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house in!”
Sticks were scattered everywhere,
The second pig’s house was stripped bare.

The third pig build his house of bricks,
Not with straw and not with sticks!
The wolf approached making quite a din,
“Little pig, little pig let me come in!”
“Not by the hairs of my chinny-chin chin!”
“Then I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house in!”
The house was strong, the bricks didn’t budge,
But the wolf was persistent and held a grudge.

The pig was wise, but not so clever,
The wolf approached and tried the lever,
The door flew open with such ease,
“Mr wolf, Mr wolf! Don’t kill me please!”

The ending of the pig was very gory,
And this is the end of a very sad story!

By Euan Black



Twisted Ugly Duck

Once upon a time,
there was a little duckling.
He always got beaten around
for his ugly, ugly looks.
He thought 'I'll never look like all the other ducklings'
When he came to the pond,
and met his friend the frog.
He offered him a special offer
on a cosmetic procedure,
to make him look good.
Then the duck excitedly
put hundreds, thousands of gold money,
in the hands of the frog.
He was handsome now
but he wanted more.
He hastily decided to have
some more 'magic' appear.
His botox beak,
his fillers-webbed feet,
and even tail-feather extensions complete!
But alas, he looked in the pond,
for of what he saw he wasn't fond.
He went back to his old
friend the frog,
and said 'This all looks wrong!'

'You've made me look like Frankenstein
or maybe Lady Wildenstein'.
'I think I want my money back,
before you launch one more attack'
Then the frog said:
'No I am a frog, you took no urgin'
Do I look like a licensed plastic surgeon?'

By Alexander Scott

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