

The Delicious Taste of Your Own Mouth

Spasm of joy. Eruption. Avalanche. Every guy's been there.

There's something dirty to wanking. Yet there's also something very, very clean.

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"I'm labouring over a sonnet." Who's it to?

"Aphrodite." Who's she?

"She's an overloved lover." Don't write to her. Play hard to get.

"Nobody plays hard to get with Aphrodite." Why not?

"They'd get nothing." So you try harder and harder?

"Harder and harder, for love." Why are you talking to yourself?

"Dialogue. It's the bones of prose." You're writing a sonnet.

"No, I'm not, I'm on a bench, eating my mouth." Loving it.

"Gah. I've got to do something with my life." Get up.

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There were two things Adam had prospectively denied himself for the year. One, no more 5:1 wanks:days ratios. Two, no more biting his own mouth. They had been his new year's resolutions, but it was the end of January, belated snow was easing down from the clouds, and Adam was sitting on a bench in a park, drinking vodka from a Ribena carton. His cavernous mouth was lined with shredded flesh – grey, pink, sparkly

wet – and his jumbled brain was calculating that all-important ratio. 6:1. Trounced.

It was one of his favourite pastimes to sit by the children's playground, sipping disguised vodka through a straw. Today the snow had come and the children had left. Two remaining children were frolicking, ignoring pleas of their mother to go home, their heads pointed up to the heavens, their tongues outstretched and their thirsts quenched.

“You don't need mittens, just be brave, it's not cold!”

“It's cold enough for the rain to want to be snow!”

Adam smiled to his feet. Private, personal, secret appreciation – the flirting between Adam and the silent spirits of the world. The children ran off into the whiteness.

Adam came to the bench to spy, to remember, and to smile. His friend, Alec, came to the bench every Saturday afternoon for the company and the vodka.

“We going to get wasted again?” Alec said, greeting his best friend.

“Yeah. This time, with extra Vitamin C!”

Alec couldn't settle on the bench because it was so cold, so he put his gloved hands between the wood and his buttocks.

“What are you doing with your life, Adam?” Cheeky smile.

“Don't start.”

“It's been too long.”

“Don't.”

“I can't talk to you the same as I used to. None of it's the same.”

“I still remember, Alec”

“We didn't even know each other when we played as kids in the park, Adam.

You know I'd call you a loser for doing this every week."

The frost seized Adam's throat and he stared at the empty swings, swaying gently in the icy wind.

"It's hard."

"You've got so much going for you. You ruin it all."

"What am I supposed to do, Alec?"

"Stop this."

"Goodbye, Alec."

Then Alec faded away. Alec had faded away.

The dotted gale circled Adam on his lonely, lonely bench.

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We were young and we were in my room. Alec was helping me with my writing by telling me what was good and what was shit. We were listening to Jamiroquai. It was happy music – *too* happy for me, I always said – and we both wanted to play Mario 64, but I needed to get my writing done.

Then Alec decided to cry.

Maybe it wasn't his decision.

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"What's there to *do* in life?" So many things.

“What am I meant to do?” Bite your mouth.

“And wank?”

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Adam took another sip of the grim liquid. Why did he drink it? He much preferred straight Ribena. It was because he was old now; he didn't want to seem an anachronism. He was the new cool.

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“Why did Alec cry?” He was depressed.

“Why was he depressed?” I don't know.

“Why isn't he here now?” Because he's depressed, Adam.

“So?” You know he's so depressed that he never comes out.

“He's in hospital.” Yeah.

“We had loads of ideas, didn't we? For films?” Yeah.

“We were going to be screenwriters, or just writers.” Yeah.

“So why did he get depressed?”

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Some things didn't matter to Adam. The snow didn't matter, the ratio didn't

matter, the tortured epithelial cells didn't matter, the dialogue didn't matter – or maybe the dialogue did matter. Alec wouldn't criticise him, not now, not for sitting on a bench and lavishing in reflection, not for living a frantic, strained (ultimately futile) life.

And before Alec started crying everyday he would've felt the fun and the love and he would've shared the hopes.

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"I'll visit the hospital." Why?

"It'll tear me up." Is that good?

"Maybe I'll see the funny side." It'll make you sad again.

"Maybe *he*'ll see the funny side." He won't.

"Every Saturday we'd meet here and get wasted." Yep.

"And every Saturday I mourn." Yep.

"Well, I come to watch the kids too, they're pretty good." Yeah.

"Do you think I'll get like him?" Only when you think like this, in this style, here, and commit yourself to these things. You need a woman.

"I need a friend." You've got friends.

"It's never the same."

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Adam rose slowly from his seat and headed for the whiteness. He chewed

assiduously at the insides of his cheeks. Life would resume but it wouldn't change.

Adam was pleased with his thoughts.

When he was back home: Spasm of joy. Eruption. Avalanche.

At the end of the day, you've got to love your own thoughts.

