

Rabbit.

a journal for nonfiction poetry

THE LONG POEM (II)



Incendiary: A folio of George Sand smoking
poems, and one for Anne M

Anne M. Carson

158

Furniture Music

Mark O'Flynn

164

C (note)

Stuart Barnes

170

from The Pound Suite

John A. Scott

174

Chapter 6 from The Or Tree: An Autobiography

Toby Fitch

180

Loud in Browsers

Liam Ferney

186

diving

Ella Skilbeck-Porter

190

Pool Sweet, 2019. Ink on Paper.

Jarad Bruinstroop

194

Seventh seal

Ania Walwicz

198

Anne M. Carson

Incendiary:
A folio of
George Sand
smoking poems,
and one for
Anne M

Introducing George Sand

A turban covers wild locks.
Today it's harem pants &

beaded Turkish slippers.
She reclines on cushions

on the floor & puffs
a hookah. Addicted

to tobacco—this pipe,
cigars & cigarettes rolled

in specially ordered
pink papers. Nicotine

helps her think.
Scared of running out,

wherever she is, she
(or someone she dragoons

into the task) always
ensures supply.

On writing in the small hours

These hours I like so very much—
deep silence sonorous as a bell,
toll, toll, tolling me to my desk

and my hours of labour and delight.
Scrabble and scrape, hoot and screech.
Companioned by the industry of owls,

Cricri's chirp. Sounds I add to the night –
scratch of my quill, riffling of my
papers, *ppht* when I strike a match.

* *Cricri* was the name of George Sand's pet cricket

Smoking accoutrements: an inventory

1 x walnut pipe (bole warm in the hand). 2 x leather pouches filled with finest Egyptian. 1 x *coupe cigare*, cherished gift, love token. 10 x packets pink cigarette papers—bought by an *amie* in Paris. (She may sport men's clothes, but she co-ordinates her cigarette papers with her bouquets). For a smoker's comfort, scattered around the chateau—*cendriers*. Innumerable *bôte d'allumettes*—from bars, bistros. 6 x boxes Havana cigars. For sweetness of the breath—mints.

Moment d'amour: Heart-broken from their disastrous Italian sojourn, Alfred returns to their apartment. Desperate to feel his lips on hers, he smokes the stub of the half-smoked cigarette she left in an ashtray on the windowsill.

Introducing Anne M

I wish I hadn't had to give it up I wish I'd lived
 in her era unaware of emphysema
 moth-wing threat in the

lungs It horrifies me now foul stench on clothes
 breath furnishings pumicing yellow finger-taint
 It took my breath Shocked when a stranger

said I reeked What pleasure did it bring her? What did
 George Sand inhale? *Vivre la vie*
 according to her lights *mi-siècle* French

 woman transgressive cigar smoking
 titration Years into addiction working to keep levels stable
 in chemical terms I still feel the voracious

hunger dragging smoke deep down into the lungs let-go

At 15 like a breastfeeding woman's let-down reflex
 I stole Mum's Alpines blew smoke through

 the en suite window I inhaled all I wished I was
 like about myself exhaled the multitudes I didn't
 Ciggies

 anxious teenage hands allure Then rollies
 and dungarees Sacred ritual
 to indigenous people taken holy in part of

 praying and honouring O our capacity to profane
 Only one giving-up in me Trusted hypnotism
 not hypnotist Three-day bliss-state before

I wish cravings kicked in milder manageable
 I hadn't had to give it up no not really
I learnt to think found the sacred self

without nicotine We all go up in smoke
 What did George die of? Not that creeping shadow on
 the lung Nothing but mortality itself

When asked

‘What is your favourite long nonfiction poem?’

the following rabbits responded:

Adam Aitken: My favourite long poem is Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It’s a dream narrated by one of Coleridge’s avatars. It was the first poem I enjoyed learning about in high school.

Cassandra Atherton: Mariko Nagai’s *Body of Empire*.

Stuart Barnes: A favourite nonfiction long poem is Edward Hirsch’s ‘Gabriel: A Poem’, a book length elegy for Hirsch’s son Gabriel, who died from a GHB-related cardiac arrest. The

poem is unpunctuated and unrhymed, unsentimental and unselfish: ‘Look closely and you will see / Almost everyone carrying bags / Of cement on their shoulders // That’s why it takes courage / To get out of bed in the morning / And climb into the day.’

Marion Starling Boyer: Pattiann Rogers has an ear for highly musical language and a mind for creatively presenting concrete and highly detailed factual information in stunning poetry about the natural world and the universe. One of my

favourites of hers is ‘The Importance of the Whale in the Field of Iris’.

Henry Briffa: I love the sound of ‘Five Bells’ by Kenneth Slessor when I read it out loud. It’s so moving, so sad. It holds so much mystery. It’s so rich, so lyrical, so clever and so Australian. It’s a statement about a life and a death, a poem I always go back to.

Jarad Bruinstroop: Monica Youn’s ‘Study of Two Figures (Pasiphaë/Sado)’ expanded my understanding of what a poem can be and do.

Anne M Carson: Jordie Albiston’s *The Hanging of Jean Lee* because it was the first nonfiction long poem I read, it packed a mighty punch, and showed me what was possible with the form.

Spencer Chang: ‘Daily Bread’ by Ocean Vuong. The detachment the speaker feels between he and his father on both a cultural and linguistic level is something I relate to deeply.

Emilie Collyer: My favourite nonfiction long poem right now is

Citizen by Claudia Rankine. The words bang off the page. She shifts form like a boss. It paints a whole world that sidles up next to the world I know, taps it (and me) on the shoulder and demands that I look.

Stuart Cooke: My favourite nonfiction long poem is probably Deleuze & Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* because it enacts their ontology rhetorically, which is to say that it shows how ontology is also a thriving, dynamic poetics.

Amelia Dale: Daniel Defoe *A Journal of the Plague Year*.

Anne Elvey: While it contains fabulous elements, I consider Bonny Cassidy’s long poem ‘Final Theory’ a nonfiction poem. I love the way it grapples with climate change, a post-human future where love remains strong, and tender, all in the mode of a road trip through colonised spaces.

Joel Ephraims: ‘Howl’ by Allen Ginsberg because it sums up an epoch whose spiritual fragmentation and apocalyptic threats are still very much part of our own. It is powerfully

Consonata (no press and Cordite, 2019). Aj works at the Australian Studies Centre, SUIBE.

Anne M. Carson's poetry has been published internationally and widely in Australia. *Massaging Himmler: A Poetic Biography of Dr Felix Kersten* was published in 2019. She has initiated a number of poetry-led social justice projects and performs with Muse Poetica. She is undertaking a PhD at RMIT University.

Spencer Chang is a writer based in Taipei. He is also a dancer and freelance web designer in his free time.

Emilie Collyer lives in Naarm/Melbourne, where she writes poetry, plays and prose. Her writing has appeared most recently in *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Not Very Quiet*, *Plumwood Mountain*, *Slippage Lit*, *Australian Poetry Anthology*, *Cordite*, *Overland* and *The Lified Brow*. Award-winning plays include *Contest*, *Dream Home* and *The Good Girl*.

Stuart Cooke is a poet, critic, translator and lecturer in creative writing and literary studies at Griffith

University. *Lyre*, his latest collection of poems, was published by UWAP in 2019 and his translation of Gianni Siccardi's *The Blackbird* appeared in 2018 with Vagabond Press. Stuart has won the Gwen Harwood and Dorothy Porter poetry prizes, among others. In 2019 he was a fellow at Djerassi Resident Artists Program (USA) and Arteles Creative Center (Finland). He was awarded an Australia Council's BR Whiting Residency in Rome for 2020.

Amelia Dale is a retired poet and the Interviews Editor for *Rabbit*.

Anne Elvey lives on Boon Wurrung Country in Seaford, Victoria and pays her respects to elders past, present and emerging. Author of *On arrivals of breath* (2019), *White on White* (2018) and *Kin* (2014), Anne is managing editor of *Plumwood Mountain*. She is an adjunct research fellow at Monash University.

Joel Ephraims is a NSW South-coast poet. He has won two national awards and has been published in many Australian places including *Griffith Review*, *Cordite*, *Marrickville Pause*, *Australian Poetry*, *Verity La*