From Outside

A C Evans

Argotist Ebooks

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Argotist Ebooks

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A few of these poems have appeared in the following magazines:

4th Dimension, *Awen*, *Bard*, *Carillon*, *Curlew*, *Decanto*, *Fire*, *Handshake*, *Inclement*, *Neon Highway*, *The Penniless Press* and *Pulsar* .

From Outside

FLASHBACK PHANTOMS

Phantoms haunt my room
Remind me of past crimes
Standing without ease
Slight shades of the present
Fading from view

Molten streetlights
Outside, where grey figures
Are waiting …

STRAY SUNLIGHT

Because of our dreams we like to shine,
In our sparkly suits and velvet silence,

And yet, my friends, there is an understanding
That nothing is deeper than nothing:

Eye-popping skulls, poetry of the absurd,
Stray sunlight gleaming, diffuse halo.

Your true thoughts are so deadly,
I dare not write them here.

SUBTERRANEAN MUTANTS

If it's too fast, you're too old,
They say
Out here in the Unknown Zone,
In Zeroville, city on the edge of desolation,
City of… thank you, and goodnight.

I was in a low dive, on the East Side of town
Talking to a flirty *fashionista* in a skimpy top
And a pack of arrogant self-centred bastards;
Cool cat scavengers from the Selhurst Triangle
With nothing to report but jaw-dropping tales
Designed to fool the open-mouthed onlooker.
Distracted, I stared at a group of hot singles
Looking for a cold zap,
Flashing their whale tails and
Holiday snaps from Marbella.

Some news just in from the remote regions:
The secret of fusion power
Is coded in an unpronounceable name;
Remember my name, you'll be screaming it
Later – are you a screamer?

They looked at me as though I was
A real skank in a dodgy suit;
The assassin wore a comedy horse mask.
Remember my name, you subterranean mutants,
But then… thank you, and goodnight

BETWEEN ALIEN IMAGES

Between alien images
Slip strange feelings – fleeting
Intimations of unconscious desire.
Such quiet gestures glowing in the dark.

Yet the anomalous
Element of inner space is not a void of
Dark energy, or celestial visitors
From another bubble next door, nudging
The continuum, sending waves of charged
Particles into a vortex of seething hate,
But simply an echo of your distant pain.

THE SECRET MOUNTAIN

A place of mystery: a shattered crag
Towers over a ruined city, a forgotten land
So far beyond our understanding,

Yet, from here the muses venture forth
To stalk the world disguised in human form,
And (condescending to speak through dreams
Of otherworldly inspiration) cause
Desperate poets to abandon familiar hopes,
Cause them to make that dire journey,
Across the dusty plains of a wilderness
Where dread predators of the spirit
Hunt souls by day and haunt the ruins by night.

What do they seek in the hinterland?

This is where pale-faced Hypnos guards the lair
Of our glass-eyed muses: they whose presence
Is a source of terrible clarity – and of transformation

FAN DANCE

Blue light, empty hall and bare stage,
The music in her head, she stands alone
And, with such graceful gestures,
Gently makes her moves,
Gazing at an invisible audience.
They silently watch her indigo plumes,
Inscribe a formal pattern,
And, held briefly in a single spotlight,
She shyly turns around – too cute,
Like an angel,
This welcome visitor
To our sinful city.

CREPUSCULAR

Across this park mist floats
In the evening
When a fleeting presence
Haunts my thoughts lyrical
A pale coat blends with the light,
Fading in a crepuscular mood
Of strange nostalgia for another time
Of non-existent innocence when
You whispered to me in French
A phrase I can no longer repeat.
Even then you were unattainable;
A sensual image of the day,
So hot on the terrace mid-afternoon
Where you strolled, unconcerned
By the gloom descending,
Enveloping us all in a futile dream.

Do you remember that labyrinth?
There was no way out,
Or so you said,
But you didn't care about that,
And now, here, this evening
You seem so near again
But I, I am exhausted by the pain.

PRESENCE

Far too close to dreaming, your
Sultry presence
And nervous laugh
Haunt me still.
Like the ghost of a thought,
Or a distant tremor of desire,
You will always
Be this close – in my dreams.

ON SOME FAR AWAY PLANET

Funky Space at The Boogie Lounge

Amplify your visuals, get connected, go anywhere.
Hot metal, new leather, fishnet crop tops
Scalp electrodes connect us to fashion dreams
When, after a grey and misty start,
The future merges with yesterday's news
And mirror ball madness vamps up your eyes
All table dancing, flirting and catfights
At a burlesque cabaret in a downtown cellar
On some far away planet a long way from home
Where raffish grid girls wear suede retro hot pants
And alien entertainers swoop from the chandeliers
Yeah, it's love, lipgloss and show business
Out here on the Western Fringes, so it's
Another teen slasher bloodbath from Mr Pink
As Starfleet Command takes all the tables
Calling for posh totty, sentimental songs
And two pianos on wheels of steel,
Like this sex bomb in specs adds some oomph
To her scary cocktail shaker routine
Behind the bar on the seventh floor where
Snap happy space cadets preen in their frocks
Flicking ciggie stubs across the room
At some hick comedienne from The Big Squirm
Too boring darling I hear you say.
Where's that pause button?
No wet shirt moments here then, just armchair
Radicals, Mr White, some other geezer
And a crystal breeze chilling the action, while
Sporting a smarter class of clobber,
Mohair suits and electric boots,
We truffle shuffle to a plinky dinky soundtrack.
You lucky, lucky people!

LAST MINUTE FANTASY

Elsewhere, meanwhile

White gold, far out
    Centre
Wrought iron
        Stranded, where
Violet warning
    Notes
Fade away.

Talkative fellow travellers
Support
Our vanity parade
    Of memories.

Fast-talking
Last minute fantasy

Have you noticed?

FROM OUTSIDE

Standing outside
You can see the light of conscious thought:
A fitful flicker, illuminating human space
In the midst of darkness, the sphere of oblivion.
From outside The Mind, it seems, glimmers blue electric
In the night,
Yet fails to illuminate the footpath through this forest
Of tangled symbols.
No clearing for the wary traveller.
No easy path or guide.
No point of departure, no destination.

For this is how mankind appears,
Then disappears
As all energy drains away…

While outside
The thinker calmly observes
The fading traces
As they…
shiver… and
vanish.

THE FACE IS YOURS

The mind cannot defy the flesh.
Even now, when the magic happens,
In a strange place where glamour
Rules every aspect of daily life,
Your dreams look like oily rags.

Baby girls die every day, even here
On this beautiful planet adrift
In a hostile universe, and, yes,
The dictator rules by television.
Sedated and senseless every viewer

Sees only a reflection of a familiar face
On the flickering screen:
Dear reader, the face is yours.

CLOSE TO DREAMING

The mind floats free
Only to hear
Far drumbeats of deadly fate
Out there, somewhere.

No more wild constellations
Or spinning pulsar flashes
Of inspiration – so
Close to dreaming; but no nightmare
Haunts the vacant space of exhausted matter.

Out there, somehow,

Near collapsing giant stars
Remnants of a fading universe
Turn black on black.

Out there, sometime.

NEUTRINO SUBWAY

Champagne for pop star car crash horror night of tragedy
We all thought they were made for each other
Things may change at the last minute
Stubbornly independent young women love video
We have to catch up

Project details remain under wraps
Upper galleries include various self-portraits
An electronic supergroup
Known as Neutrino Subway, and
A range of artists and other practitioners
Celebrate this alternative world and
Visit sites associated with the next unplugged generation
We have to catch up

Next she appropriated pornographic images of herself
Making antennae from liquid metals and rubber-coated alloys
Whacked around in the chaos of war, blockbuster movies and video games
An impartial technical exercise with a limited number of storylines
By stacking five membranes each tuned to a specific touchscreen
You can
Watch your body glow in the dark while dreaming
Better aerodynamics or
A series of gestures some hovering types need remote control piloting
A chunk of ceramic from the borders of the future
We have to catch up

Typically they have big eyes, big hair and slender limbs
They look like aliens
Superimposing photos living beyond sunlight
Check the walls of your bedroom immediately
Chasing the dream tinkering and shaping an image
That quite often flies like a dragonfly
Bring me more toys

MISFIT STARS

Leather, zips and denim
Silk biker jackets
Glam Happenings and Lash Boosters
Super kooky accessories
Punky party lips
Themes, balloons and fancy dress:
Put aside your foxy feathers and bunny ears.
Take a
Deep tissue massage, clear of the edge
Now watch peculiar details surface
(Instant full volume
Get it before it goes
Electro-sensual experience)
Such misfit stars
Change lives as the world turns
On it's axis – a nervous laugh
With the voice of an actor
You may know
While a bloated sun sets over the bay
In eye-popping 3D with post-surreal
Peripheral vision – love my coral lips.

BOO GALAXY

We reached the Boo Galaxy
Via the Shrine of Roquepertuse
A gate mounted with severed heads.

We were blazing a path
Through an evaporating universe,
Escaping from an old film
Called *Chain Gang Charlie.*

Yes, we attain immortality through art
For divas never die, and
Even topless movie babes live forever.

Not just a playground love spat
The situation was much, much worse
– Apocalypse when?

As we approached the Boo Galaxy,
At just below the speed of light
Well within the law,
Edging into overkill, I said,

Oh, darling!
You're an icon of sleaze
I can forget my painkillers now!

As we waited for the lights to change
– Emergency road works – I thought
We're a pack of ragged ravers
A troupe of mad performers,

Heading for Seventh Heaven,
Not Arcturus – and the Boo Galaxy
Engulfed us in a violet glow.

DREAM OF ALDEBARAN

Blazing red star flaming eye
Taurus Alpha following
Images of opaque objects
From the Hyades to the Pleiades.

Nine bright stars that rule our sky, with
Nine ladies and three dark sisters,
Mystical figures who control our destiny:
Calliope, her epic screams create terror,
Clio, her revelations paralyse thought,
Euterpe, the sound of her flute chills the blood,
Thalia, her laughter is an antidote to death,
Melpomene, her tears flood the universe with pain,
Terpsechore, her ritual chanting is the dance of the stars,
Erato, Angel of Eros, her lyric passion excites the senses,
Polyhymnia, her devotions define the limits of the possible,
Urania, her science is the word of truth.

Just turn the lights out – this is a chapter from
The Book of Storms,
The Primal Dream of Three Uncanny Sisters
(Melete, Mneme, Aoide) – no Fates these,
Three Dark Stars in the shadows hidden
From the advance of Orion.
    As the galaxies expand,
Surreality is disclosed in moments of distraction.

And these are the Nine bright stars of the dream:
Aldebaran, the burning eye
Capella, so much brighter than the sun
Castor, twin star so far, far away
Pollux, hero of the hour but so far, far away
Procyon, you rise before the dog
Sirius, source of Sothic Mysteries
Rigel, you dominate the mirror world
Bellatrix goddess of war, you are deadly nightshade
Betelgeuse, you tower over all, but
The blazing red eye feasts on human flesh.

TOO MUCH LIKE REAL LIFE

Window-shopping can be too much like real life
When cold engines are stalled, when hope is frozen,

When the time for thinking is over and action
Is required. Where are they now, those distracted

Mannequins standing behind reflections, when the traffic
Crawls along the high street? Where are they now

Those undercover agents? Those emissaries from another
Dimension where naked bodies are crumpled in heaps

And no one cares about the cost of rural housing, or
Your Boho-Chic fashions, or the price of freedom.

NOTHING ELSE

Rainy streets so cold,
Leaden sky
A starving cat
Shivering in a doorway.
Nothing else moves.

World ended yesterday.

STILL SHE STANDS

Please remove the disc before switching off the machine…

Water drips from the ceiling
Light wavers across the room
Bare floorboards

Still she stands isolated from the world

Consider her strangeness
Embrace her cold body
Slowly an arm is raised

You ache with desire
And your heart stops, but
A distant tremor is a signal

Still she stands isolated from the future

And a faint glimmer of metal
This is a frozen memory
    This is a vanished age.

AT THE CROSSROADS

Exceptional distraction
End of reason now
    Delay (in glass)
    Chance objects cluster
Ahead at the crossroads
This our final moment
    Before (materialism
        Takes out
        the lights,

Incredible) eternal bride
Passage underground
    Misconception of fate
    Deranged reality
Incomprehensible
    Because
Incoherence warps
    Consciousness
    Dust breeding in grey
No, surface is all

Always more meanings
    To play the fool
    Across mountains
Of hopeless horror
As all belief dissolves
    Into imperfect
Nothingness.

THE SILVER GHOST

Not quite so far
Away this
Deserted dancehall
Just stop and
Listen – intimate
Lilting voice singing
Broken chairs
Lights flickering
Pale faces
In the small hours
A silver ghost, a
Sleek jazz singer
Dusty microphone
Smashed windows
Tattered flags, a
Huge crowded space.
Uniforms and
Up-tempo moves
Recall another
Risky era, but
Different doubts
Haunt us now.

LISTEN TO THE VOICE

In the ruined borderland

We cannot find ourselves
Any more
Else burning abstractions
Will never
Heal those wounds
Blue water
Tall buildings
Crimes
You cannot commit
But wish to describe
In vivid detail

This is a place of regrets
And we cannot see
Ourselves
In any disguise
Any new way of looking

Mystery of appearance

Sultry voice – listen to the voice.

OBJECT UNKNOWN

Distant lights
Hover
Over
Tree-line
A mirage
Might shimmer
Like
A silver
Spectral
Messenger
Of
Anticipation
Or
A diversion
Never
Here
Or
There

THAT UTOPIAN MOMENT

More than this summer sun
Reflections shimmer on calm water
A river-bank reverie
So much more than this, even
I think
As an empty, perfect sky
Extends pristine blue above
White or silver tower blocks
Where dreams of yesterday
Hover in a haze of memory
And The Skylon, perhaps
Clad in square mosaic mirrors,
Rises, ballpoint pen from a gulf
Of recollection
And I see again
Those flared white dresses of visiting crowds
Swirling across concrete terraces
Between metal chairs
Seeming nearer to us now
Than ever
That utopian moment, when atomic shapes
Were used to decorative effect,
And they danced after dark in outdoor clothes
Tracing contrapuntal patterns
In a pleasure garden
Where stood a curious pavilion.
No, the Fairway was our centre
But then
The moment was no more, and
I am here,
On the riverside,
Looking towards the northern bank
Clouds inexorably towering
High above where before
    The blue was infinite.

REMEMBRANCE

I find it impossible
To think of the future
Without the consolation of remembrance,
Picturing in my mind's eye
The old park bench where we sat that day
And an empty street – and the tree-line
Shedding yellow leaves.

NEXUS OF OBSCURITY

Old
house
neglected
grounds
mist
encroached
garden
birds
black
hunched
watching
me
you
faint
memories
distant
times
empty
rooms
my
pain
your
disdain

HEAVEN OR HELL

The celestial choir echoes among the clouds
Where all is peaceful.

The infernal pack skulks among fiery rocks
Where all is rage and hate.

The celestial choir drifts among crystal fountains
Where all is bright and glittering.

The infernal army advances across an ashen plain
Where twisted corpses lay in heaps.

The celestial choirs chant their songs of praise
Where all is transparent, all is still – yet

Those demons below sing the same words, and
Somehow, their laughter dissolves all difference.

NOW ETERNAL

Indeterminate
Relationship
Of energy and time
Where (before
This, a vacuum)
Displaced as a
Spontaneous
Swerve and
Deviation, but
Never
Imagined,
As no
External
Plane
Or
Wavelength
Exists, not
Even
Then erupts
To forward
Spurt
Out
Dark, swirling
Chains of force
Implacable
Reactions
And here
Multifarious
Worlds
Abound
Limited
Only
Ever by outward
Expansion, yet
Finally
Exhaustion
Denies
Energy
Passes
Away
No
Time, now.

PERFECT STORM

Made-up like Gorgona the Witch,
She was the perfect storm,
A road rage riot girl,
Exploring the limits of shadow.
Kick-start the rough-house:
Flash bang wallop!

Make out in a carnival of glass.

There are some objects visible before dawn,
But some objects are not visible at all.
Invisible objects haunt your tiny mind,
That's what she said
As, laughing at my caricature madness,
She dissolved in thin air and faded from view.

Indeterminate,
The pre-cosmic substrate seethes
In virtual space – a perfect storm.

SHADES IN DARKNESS

Shades in darkness haunt
This empty street
These old houses
Where no light ever shines.

Shades in darkness haunt
My empty mind
This abandoned ruin
Where no light ever shines.

THE ONLY WAY IS UP

The only way is up,
That's what she said.
We were on the top deck,
At the back.
This was the last bus,
Windows scratched
With slogans, obscenities
And declarations of
Amour fou
(Des 4 Shona)
It was getting late
But we were night owls
We were streetwise, and
We had it made.
Out on the town,
Out on the razzle,
Street light dazzle,
Rain earlier,
Celebrating what?
A lifetime of neurosis.

BYE BYE KITTY HELL BUNNY

Bye bye kitty hell bunny
In your Kooky Shop hobble-skirt
Gravity freestyle pop-punk
Experimental accelerator kit,
Paying lip service to my lips,
To my poison plants, and
My lo-fi visual scratching.

You can pick up your mobile, and
Walk, you kinky angel!
You Summer of Love Mad Love!
You underground stargazer!

Your hardcore, heart-beat
High-risk, high-kick rampant
Ensemble role play
Magnetic ritual
Psycho-dramas
With all the usual suspects
Don't fool me.

ERRONEOUS ZONES

Neural-biochemical
Drives, obsessions, compulsions
Displacement, condensation
The world, viscera and mind
The process – displacement
The Work – slight allusions
"But dreams come through stone walls,
Light up dark rooms,
Or darken light ones."
Introspection, individuation,
Singularity and Sensibility
Wake up and see
Freakish and off-centre
Freedom of thought
Chance – parapraxis
Imagination – the uncanny
Sit back down or fly me to the moon
Parody and pastiche flasher badges
Demonic and irrational
Dynamic and pre-verbal
Collage and (doom music) juxtaposition
Inadvertent intensities and investments
The Purple Haze/The Hellbound Heart
The dream-window (alien alias)
Leonardo's Wall and inner alchemy
Inspiration as shorthand (fetish)
Mutability and ambivalence
Freezers, teasers and shakes
Obscene underworld pain
In the distance
Twitchy psychopaths
Shocking secrets
Kinky elegance, erroneous zones:
Contradiction and incongruity
The absurd and burlesque
Crystal breeze garage sound-clash
Drag queens and mud wrestlers
Camp, that curious place
Where the angels wear Versace, this
Renegade city.

CINEMATIC MOMENTS

Little cinematic moments
STYLISTS PHOTOGRAPHERS WRITERS
THE WORLD WITHIN FASHION IMAGERY
Eternal stimuli call girls direct
ii iiiiiiiiiiii i
Crystal breeze
Underground garage soundtrack
Skimpy knickers
(Enough said
The light AT THE END of every single day
KINKY ELEGANCE)
NEW AGE OLD RAGE COOL SPEAK
LAURA KENYON AND ALEXANDRA CORNICHE
All worth it not just middle class HEE HEE HEE HA HA HA
You can be rich
Reality TV star has the looks has the X-Factor
It's not fair
Now she was a strange girl
With a knack for monologues not just looks-ism
Not just stand by for the moment
Let's recap
Spend the morning lying in bed then
pooter about in the lounge in nothing but a
Victorian-ish blouse
Illegal?
Perhaps the whole thing was a joke
She watched HER LONGSUFFERING GIRLFRIEND
Just so pissing stupid (stupid, stupid, stupid)
In her quasi-balaclava screaming flight
All pretty and French – neglect a beauteous boy
As one does
Relish those little cinematic moments
On Bling Street
Cheer up right AWAY away…?

HOT IS THE NEW COOL

Look hot stay cool
Babe you gave such good advice
Where are you now?

A NEW REALITY

It was time – although the end
Did not take place
The way she said.

Yesterday we went to the river
Watched wreckage float downstream
Just as our hopes and fears faded
Subliminal surreal in the gathering dusk,
And you turning to me laughing quiet
Saying *you are mine – but not forever.*

I looked down, thinking
Forever was a word I hated.

Time – all we have to clear
The way ahead, is time
A vital fluid drained from the body,
An iconography of displaced signs
We cannot decipher,
Images from films we have not seen.

This is not the end
It is the beginning of a new reality.

REACH FOR THE SKYLINE

Burnt out building used to be a fast food auto-centre
Drop in for a chat – it's a landscape from hell.
Reach for the skyline – but even the nostalgic topologist
Has better ideas – jigsaw takes shape.
Mechanical or fluid, it formed a loop in the dream-world,
Beyond an ancient desert where the command bunker
Was buried – flak batteries opened up all around us.
It was worse than the Dunkirk Pocket
Great dumps of ruined material, corpses everywhere.
Reach for the skyline – as time crashes onto the beach.
Stutter of gunfire – pixels splatter the wall.
My old flesh was unsuitable so I shed my skin,
Took another look, another identity.
No change – glowing lava streams – wrong name.

MEMORY IN THE MAKING

Time is but memory in the making – Nabokov

The labyrinth is the present, a shape-shifting world
Where we see ourselves reflected in a hall of mirrors
Distorting the space-time continuum.

Here you can see memory in the making
Now is the cumulative effect of when,
Then, everything was so much simpler

To understand, or was it?
Fearless silence of my beating heart
Intensive care is dark tonight

As I think of the emptiness of the present
Where a thousand mirrors reflect a thousand reasons
To restore that old world-order to zero.

EDGE OF NIGHTMARE

This must be a non-event horizon;
A grey place where nothing happens,
Where nothing is real;
A nightmare zone of absolute nothing,
Where nothing engenders nothing
And everything fades out, or away
Into a distant, anaemic sky,
Where no clouds (or light)
Can even exist – without suddenly
Dissolving into haze of darkening
    Space – this is the final destination.

About the Author

The work of A C Evans explores the subversive traditions of the bizarre and grotesque, yet the author describes both his art and poetry as Realistic. Influenced by the Gothic dark-side of Romanticism, *fin-de-siecle* Decadence, Aestheticism, the iconoclasm of Dada, revolutionary, anti-clerical Surrealism and the immediacy of Pop, he regards all these as points of departure, none as a destination—we live in a post avant-garde world.

Born in Hampton Court, Middlesex in 1949, A C Evans lived in South London until 1963 when he moved to Essex and co-founded the semi-legendary Neo-Surrealist Convulsionist Group in 1966 before moving back to London in 1973. His drawings, collages, reviews, articles, translations, poetry and stories have appeared in numerous small press magazines in the UK and abroad, and he is a regular contributor to *Stride*, *Monomyth* & *The Supplement*, *Midnight Street*, *Inclement* and *Neon Highway*.

He considers creativity to be the indirect effect of irrational drives and desires, a pre-verbal process of actualisation; an infinite quest and—inevitably—an indictment of both traditional dogma and contemporary *radical chic.* Fascinated by ambiguity, juxtaposition, exclusion, disengagement, irony and objective chance—the Absurd, negation, parody and black humour are constant preoccupations—his works often explore macabre themes, using eschatology, cosmology, urban imagery, symbolic figures and naturalistic detail to question our assumptions about convention, identity and reality.

Collaborative work has included several projects with *Stride*'s Rupert Loydell The poem sequence *Space Opera* was made into a digital video by Michelle Martin/OS2 and shown at the Onedotzero3 Festival, at the ICA, London, in May 1999.

Other Publications by A C Evans

Exosphere
Decaying Orbits
The Xantras
Chimaera Obscura
Neon Aeon
Not Deade But Chaynged
Space Opera
Dream Vortex
Angels of Rancid Glamour (non-fiction)
Colour of Dust
Omega Lightning
The Mutation Show Underscore
Swan of Yuggoth
The Stone Door
This Sepulchre
Fractured Muse
The Bards 1: A C Evans
Vespula Vanishes

As a contributor

The Luminous Boat (prose)
Landmass—Fragments from Somewhere Else
Chain Lightning (prose)
Icons
Emotional Geology
Ladder to the Next Floor
Angles of Incidence
Earth Ascending: An Anthology of Living Poetry
Slipping Into the Palace Unnoticed (prose)
Worlds Known and Not (interview)
A Ship to Nowhere and Other SF Poetry
My Kind of Angel
Fantasia
Memories of the Future: Tales of the Burning Man
Monomyth Yearbook 1998
Text Book: Writing Through Literature (prose)
Anthology 1: The Inclement Anthology
War is a Dangerous Place (prose)
The Dark Tower Volume Three: The Black Throne