

Re: Unmarked Graves



admin@whiskyandbeards.co.uk
to Alexander ▾

2 Jan



Hi Alex,

Have you had a chance to collect the poems that didn't make it into
Everything is Terrible

Regards



Alexander Vellis
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6 Jan



Funny story about that...



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Whisky & Beards Publishing

*Unmarked
Graves*

by

Alex Vellis

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Introduction

Unmarked Graves is a collection of work that didn't fit into any of the books I am writing or have written. I didn't want to just leave them on the cutting room floor, so to speak, I am quite fond of them. Poetry is, to me anyway, a little part of yourself that you put out into the world every time you write something. These poems need air to breathe and life to live, so, I could never just throw them away. Unmarked graves are the poems that don't have a home, so, please, take them, look after them, and appreciate them. They are my gift to you.

All poems presented as at their time of death

(Notes in the Margin)

No one told me there would be days like this.

But I suppose I have always known,

fully grown at five years old.

I just hadn't learned very much,

not one for academia or common sense.

Just dead ends,

Just broken bookshelves,

pages slipping and words spilling onto the floor,

like family album crime scene photos.

Another police report waiting to happen,

taking its time to write out murders and motives.

"He was so unhappy"

(Notes in the margin)

"He hid it well."

The king of hide and seek,

he couldn't hide from himself.

But he knew to walk away,

and when to lock himself under the stairs.

He locked himself under the stairs.

He locked himself under the stairs.

No one told me there would be days like this.

When ceasing to exist is just one cupboard under the stairs
away.

No one told me there would be days like this.

A Letter to All My Ex-Girlfriends

Dear you.

It's me, me again. I know we haven't seen eye to eye in a long time.

I know we haven't spoken since one of us may have broken up with the other one.

Not naming any names you/me.

But I wanted to say thank you.

I want to say thank you for those long nights when we would sit and talk for hours.

I learned a lot about what the human spirit can withstand when the possibility of getting laid lay right around the corner.

I learned a lot about myself, specifically, how vague I was willing to be to come across as mysterious as opposed to boring.

I learned a lot about a lot of things.

The best one being how to deal with women when you say something that you think is really funny but is actually, in any sane (apparently) head incredibly offensive.

“Does this make me look fat?”

“No, your fat makes you look fat.”

Not funny, no matter how long you have been together, gotcha.

But listen you, we did have some good times as well.

At least until you or me would give up that relationship to try and make it with us.

You or me wasn't ready for that relationship.

You or me was still too happy being you or me with brief respites of me being in you.

Or, as that one time you supposedly slipped, you being in me.

You knew what you were doing.

I am sure of this.

But I don't want to bring I into this, this is about you and me.

Or at least, it was.

Back to the point of the letter, I wanted to thank you for preparing me.

Without you, the relationship I am in would have fallen at the first hurdle had I not fallen at it with you.

Granted with you (ex-girlfriend two) I overcame it with you but stumbled and pulled a muscle in the lead up to the next hurdle.

So, when it came to hurdle three, I almost lost a part of myself trying to volley it.

But ex-girlfriend three and me soared past the first two, limped over the next one and was stopped by four.

I am sure you can see the way this going.

Had it not been for you women giving me the exercise of life.

I (here he goes again, always me, me, me with old I.) I would not have gained my running legs.

Or jumping legs... Sports legs, I wouldn't have gained my sports legs.

I would have been falling at the first hurdle whereas now, I am winning the race.

I am sure that I helped you with your sports legs too.

And I am glad to have been of service.

I, me, we, us, all wish you the best in your endeavours, you.

You were good.

Me, I will always remember that.

But I still have one hurdle left to make.

Maybe see you at the finish line.

Sincerely,

Me.

Clay

We are two halves of a clay mould.

Now that we have found each other,
we can be made whole.

Dear John,

You asked me if I knew whether there is a heaven and a hell.

I said that I didn't know but if there were, I would find them both with you.

You didn't like that very much to begin with.

But then like me, it grew on you.

The idea was that together, we could accomplish anything, you Batman, me Robin.

You Tarzan, me Jane. You words, me page. We grow, we change.

But that was the problem, we do change, you know?

At least, I think we do.

See?

I used to dream that I was going to be a dancer.

Clichéd, I know.

But I would be a dancer that would dance in front of kings,
have queens quietly applaud and wish there were more
princesses like me.

In the land for their sons to marry. There wouldn't be and they
would all ask me if my hand could be given to a prince.

I would decline, of course. I was not born to this world to just
bear pretty children, I was born to dance.

I am more than just my component parts.

I am the orbit of planets, the whisper from tree to tree, the pond
that accepts the rain wants to help it grow.

I could never just be a queen.

The soles of my feet would never allow it. I am a dancer, I
carry the world's weight in my ankles, I use it to move the
world beneath me.

The world would always move for me, dance with me. And the
people would just have to watch whilst it happened.

At least, that was the dream.

Do you remember when you used to dream?

You were going to be in constant flight, not a pilot or an astronaut, just always in flight. Like a swift or a swallow or a starling or Robin.

But back then, neither of us were the sidekick, back then, in our eyes, we were all Batmen. Back then, there was no second place or saving face, there was just laugh it off, retreating, not being defeated just a setback, next time, we will win.

But next time makes a strange banner man.

There is always next time apart from when it counts.

That's when next time vacates.

And it's gotta be this time, homes in on hind legs the size of horses.

For a long time, I supposed that it was better to have anyone behind me than no one at all.

That was my mistake.

And I don't want to try and validate.

Myself, not to you.

If you ask me now if there is a heaven and a hell.

I would tell you yes, like it's the only certainty in this world.

Yes, a thousand times yes, like you just got down on one knee to me.

Yes.

I have been through hell with you.

I think I might still be there, almost, just on the edge, still trying to pull you out of it.

It's pretty hard when you are trying to pull me back in.

But I don't want these weaponised mouths touching lips any more.

These better not need hazmat suit hands to hold each other any more.

Those curl your toes when you come close moments.

I want a whole new set of me and you emotions.

I want to take you, John, I want to take you out of your skin, and I want to ask you to come and huddle for warmth in mine like two broken bodies in the same sleeping bag, middle winter.

As standard.

I want your hands to reach into my chest, grab my ribs, and shake me when I am unreasonable.

I want your eyes to meet mine- stop time. Raise an eyebrow and make excuses to go separate ways just so we can lay back to back on my mattress, reading different books later in the night.

I want you to want this too.

The next level.

This does all mean that we need to say goodbye to the current John, though.

Say goodbye to late night arguments about whose turn it is to take the rubbish out.

(Just so you know, it's your turn. It's always your turn.)

I just need to know that this next step, I won't take alone.

I mean the newer version of me.

Jane 2.0

Jane who walks through hell.

She says it's time for change, she says it's time to go.

Which means saying goodbye to me as well.

I will love you always, John.

Love,

Jane Doe.

Medicine

And even when you feel,
you have been used of all your beauty.
You're still beautiful,
even under all your bruises.

Midnight Journal Entries

Sometimes I forget who I am,
then I remember,
And it makes me smile,
then it makes me sad,
so I go back to sleep.

Multi-Faceted

There are two types of people.

And to break it down further,

There are two halves of each person.

One-half of is in abject fear of the other

And the other half is so liberal it nearly fears itself

Trying to accept the first halves views.

Those halves can be broken down again.

Equating to two-quarters that define why the halves are like
that

In the first place.

The first quarter of the first half,

Is greed.

It is the biggest “quarter”

In fact, it is so big that giving it the name “Quarter” is a ridiculous notion

Encouraged because Greed wanted what the other quarter had.

Greed could never be content with just what it had

And would have crushed

the other quarter to coal, if it could

Which it would have then taken as well, given the chance.

The second quarter of the first half is a small fountain pen,
light weight,

Sometimes seen as fingers typing or a pencil inscribing
papyrus or paper

Or etching hieroglyphs into pottery because the roots of these
quarters are old.

More recently it has been seen in the scar marked arms of
teenagers,

The bruised hips and split lips of disparaged lovers,

The alcohol cleansed gun-shot wounds of the dead.

The continuous loss.

There is nothing there but despair given form.

The first quarter of the second half

is acceptance.

Now, on the surface, this is a good thing but really

It is pandering to accept every point.

Accepting the first thing suggested, in complete nonchalance.

It will contradict itself to not seem offensive.

It's only defensive capabilities are:

“Yeah man, I totally get what you mean.”

Or

“I have never seen it like that before, cheers for setting me head straight.”

This is acceptance without education.

First page Google results.

That first quarter is no more than a robot set on pleasant mode,

Milling around in your kitchen, explaining why it is vegan
while simultaneously

Smelling of cigarette smoke.

The second quarter of the second half is unbridled rage.

Equally as uneducated,

It plays high stake games with already volatile players.

And unlike its cousin, despair, it is so vocal.

It wants you to know that though we are “all” proletariats

It is scary that we don't see the truth of human rights abuse
around us.

We are surrounded by lizard men,

“Err, she is called E-LIZARD-BETH.”

They are spraying mirrors out of planes.

“To combat the global warming myth”

The moon landing was fake.

And it's a hologram...

These quarters can be broken down even more,
In fact, these quarters can be broken down by almost
 $2^{32.785}$

That's down about 7.4 billion times.

Each time it is split in half,

It just explains another bit of what humans are.

These sections are all different parts

Of the same broken car refusing to start.

But like I said, there are two types of people,

The ones who are facets of this poem.

And the ones who are not.

The Old Empire, and How it Gets

Divided

I would see them both hide pockmarked arms
and skin that hadn't seen kindness in years.

Fingertips that worn away back to
clandestine days of happiness, that had
long since been solicited as illicit love affairs
and should never be spoken of.

The diasporic nature of love is that it leaves the home it had in
you.

if you're lucky, it will take root in the oak tree rib cage of your
lover.

It will collapse boundaries, break common sense constructs,
destroy dysmorphic disbelief that you,
you are worth less than the piece of shit that you have kept
locked away in your chest.

Never forget it is going to leave you, sometimes for good.

I would see the dissolution of marriage play across belt bruised hands,

just waiting to be healed enough to hold a pen again.

Cracked teeth spat back at kitchen floors or smeared off of cupboards and bedroom doors.

Picked from windowsills as electric bills fall harder than the bad decisions that put them there.

They would wear a necklace of each other's teeth, figuratively.

The Staircase at the Bottom of the World

You know I save her every day.

I save the way she walks away not speaking to those that would oppress her.

I try to impress her, I try to be the words of power, spoken in her silence

While I sit on the bottom step of a flight of stairs that look like they will go on for the next ten years, just like they did the last five after the first five had too much weight to bear.

And I watch her walk her walk I save for her.

And I save it every day.

I try to be the sense of the situation, to make sense of the situation, the pretence obliterated

As she starts the stairs.

The first four steps before the first four steps onto the wooden climbing frame to adulthood.

She finds the hardest to take.

But she wants to be captain of her ship. The master of her fate.

She wants the fair weather friends off of her “It’s only fair” weather stairs.

As fair weather boats set sail into fair-weather weather.

Whether or not they like it.

Fair weather is only fair weather until it’s unfair weather.

And while she battles against herself on the bottom steps.

I sit and stare.

I save her every day.

After her badly battered boat is a shipwreck in the sand,

I save her.

From her own “I can’t get up and go” ghosts,

I save her.

When she feels belittled in her shark tooth skin,

I save her.

But I only sit at the bottom of the stairs,

And she lives at the top.

I have to make her talk sometimes,

I have to make her stop.

And if she doesn't pause to talk

Her body begins to rot.

And I am left with empty stairs,

As empty is all I've got.

I told you that I save her,

I save her every day, I save the way she looks at me,

I save the way she picks males and mail off of her hallway
floor.

Each one falling harder than the one that fell before.

I save the fact she talks in rhyme

And I respond in riddle,

“When was the last time you fell in love?”

She asks.

I am always in love, my love, it blooms in me like springtime
butterflies,

It devours me like the gaping maw of every first time angry
mother,

It stitches each one of my atoms together, stitch by stitch, by
stitch.

It is what throws me out of bed when otherwise the world
would tie me down.

This is all I say to her, each and every day.

This is all I say to her each and every day,

I save the way she walks her walk as she walks away,

I will save her from herself, each and every day.

War-Forged Art-Forms

To me, poetry is an art form.

At least it was.

Now it's not.

Now it's the pop pop from the top of hip hop tower blocks,

Gunshots that punctuate the evening.

Trading commas for comas.

Sun downed kids with no lives to live, they just tick tock time
away till

One day the clock pauses and doesn't restart for them.

To me, poetry has gone far past an art form.

There is no more artistry, only parts of me, injecting ink into
my arteries,

Written weapons in my armoury I want the world to see

That when written down, they make a bit more sense

That when written down, help me take one more breath,

That when written down, give me a new freedom with every
flick of my wrist.

To me poetry is passion,

Passion to tell stories,

Passion to be the “I knew you could do it!” Dads.

And “You were my first miracle” Mums.

Passion to be the boy bellowing “Brother, you better believe
that I believe in you.”

Brother, you better believe that I believe in you.

You better believe that I believe in you.

To me, poetry is a power that we put forward,

When we the writer, and we the worker, and we the weak, the
wasted, and the wish makers.

We the fighter, we the people, we the humble, the
downtrodden, the risk takers.

When we put our pens in the air and shout “I HAVE AN
IDEA!”

Take this piece of me and take the paper too, take anything you
want from me,

Come up with something new that breaks down these concrete cages, batters back the storms of “You can’t do it” and “I told you so” suffocations.

Make reparations.

Poetry is the power of the masses.

The non-political power of the people.

The un-P.C power to cut the puppet strings.

Set the puppets free,

They’re just you and me held to wooden crosses.

To me, poetry is stamp your feet.

To me, poetry is questioning.

To me, poetry is bettering.

To me, poetry is no longer an art form.

It far surpasses that.

And in my darkest, I take heart in that.

I am enlarged, in that

No man will move me whilst I remain a mountain.

Poetry gives me stony soil and gnarled rock roots.

And I'll take my hard shockproof

And run with it.

See, poetry was never about the art.

It's never been about the art.

It's about giving credence to beauty,

When only the ugly stands in front of you.

But believe me,

Belief is a difficult beast to beat

Especially when better men have battened down

The hatches before and bore witness to the storms

That come with trying to argue against what constitutes as art

Or art forms.

To me, poetry is that argument.

To me, poetry is a part of me.

To me, poetry is pleasantries spent under pleasant trees,

With pleasant people promoting different peasantries

But presently,

Poetry is standing on a stage

And having someone to talk to.

To me, poetry isn't an art form.

At least, it wasn't.

Now, I'm not so sure.