The Glamour Poet Versus……
Selected Publications by Jeremy Reed

Poetry
Isthmus of Samuel Greenberg (1976)
Bleecker Street (1980)
By The Fisheries (1984)
Nero (1985)
Selected Poems (1987)
Engaging Form (1988)
Nineties (1990)
Red Haired Android (1992)
Kicks (1994)
Pop Stars, with Mick Rock (1995)
Sweet Sister Lyric (1996)
Saint Billie (2000)
Patron Saint of Eyeliner (2000)
Heartbreak Hotel (2002)
Duck and Sally Inside (2006)
Orange Sunshine (2006)
This Is How You Disappear (2007)
West End Survival Kit (2009)
Bona Drag (2009)
Piccadilly Bongo (with Marc Almond) (2010)
Bona Vada (2011)
Whitehall Jackals (with Chris McCabe) (2013)

Novels
The Lipstick Boys (1984)
Blue Rock (1987)
Red Eclipse (1989)
Inhabiting Shadows (1990)
Isidore (1991)
When The Whip Comes Down (1992)
Chasing Black Rainbows (1994)
The Pleasure Chateau (1994)
Diamond Nebula (1995)
Red Hot Lipstick (1996)
Sister Midnight (1997)
Dorian (1998)
Boy Caesar (2004)
The Grid (2008)
Here Comes the Nice (2011)
The Glamour Poet
Versus Francis Bacon,
Rent
and Eyelinered
Pussycat Dolls

Jeremy Reed

Shearsman Books
Waiting for the Man
80mm

My palm’s mapped like the London underground, a network into which I crushed the blues, an 80mm clenched left hand pocketed, dusty with Diazepam I’d lick off, panicked when the tube went dead between two stops, 50 metres below

street level on jumpy Northern Line track 630 VDC traction voltage the line colour coded corporate black.

Submerged in panic I’d fry in neurons, cold sweat collecting like white grapes, my tongue furred by the blue food colouring extract (FDXC Blue No2)

coating the granules licked to residue feeding a habit I was pulled inside like a pressurized cabin door. I’d cook down there, reading the dot-matrix display, pilled-up accelerated by the rush under the city and projecting hard into a stranger’s eyes to hold and keep their fascination—a skinny poet with pop star looks selling sex and a mix of spiked-up glittered personality and hot neural poetry—I could write a poem directly in someone’s face like sci-fi owning to reality, the imagery metabolised like pills, the fast impacted energies a cosh
to mainstream greys—I switched to the blue line,
got off at Piccadilly, back to air
and busy abstract figures of sunshine.
The man’s eyes at the top of the steps were grey.
I didn’t know how many eyes he’d looked
into that way
today or any other. They turned blue
close up. ‘The Regent Palace’ what he said,
‘I’ll pay you twice over you know
to blow
your looks, I get so lonely see so low
below
the city, it’s not sex it’s you honey
I
need to fill that space money can’t buy,
I try not to keep hanging round this place
I’ll look
after you if you need, a hundred right?
Don’t go
I need
you so, the money’s for a start
I’m Joe

Diazepam
Systematic (IUPAC) name
7—chloro —1—methyl—
5—phenyl—1, 3—dihydro—2H—
1—4 benzodiazepin—2—one

data shaped like the metaphysically articulated construct
of a stanza pattern tooled by John
Donne—

length-to-width ratio
like a blue diamond’s angles
the white light inside
like earth seen from the moon
‘Do you?’
he said [Joe]
‘give head, blow?’
The room at the Regent Palace Hotel—white clinical walls, refrigerator white, alienating as the International Space Station, the insulated hotel noise like brain-chatter when you’re aware of resistance to sleep. The room was on the 9th floor, the windows nailed down, black duct tape on the floor holding the edges of a no-colour carpet flat. 91 bedrooms and each of them a foreign space, like Trojan asteroids densely clustering in Jupiter’s orbit or a mapping of grey matter across the brain. It was how I imagined death to be if there was a post-biological precinct for individual consciousness, with Sherwood Street outside facing down the full-on grainy West End day.
Rent Boy Blues

Your metzás smell
of Dilly loot
there’s semen polished
on your boot
the things you do
to me aren’t cute
and leave me blue

I’m bona vada
bona drag
bona riah
with a handbag
the things you do
to me aren’t cute
and leave me blue

I’m spotty mean
and dressed in black
a runaway teen
on the meat rack
the things you do
to me aren’t cute
and leave me blue

I buy a pizza
feed my habit
burn a hole
inside my pocket
the things you do
to me aren’t cute
and leave me blue

I’m outside Boots
I speak polari
but to your taste
I’m just salami
The things you do
to me aren’t cute
and leave me blue

You want me daddy
I’m rough trade
broken damaged
and afraid
the things you do
to me aren’t cute
and leave me blue

I’ve got no option
and maybe three years
a Dilly boy
age in arrears
The things you do
to me aren’t cute
and leave me blue

I can’t go home
they tell me Johnny
you’re drugs and rent
and messed up honey
The things you do
to me aren’t cute
and leave me blue
Bowie Looks

The similarities in looks
helium-lifted cheek bones pointing
right to the eyes, the alien gene
provoking ambiguity
the Thin White Duke instructing a Gitanes
and me strung out at Piccadilly

the analogies always there
Bowie circa 1976
both of us projecting close encounter
contact, a lateral shift
wide of human, up on sex,
two-tone eyes and two tone hair

re-modified human appeal
tripping up gay and straight.
Bowie’s Weimar aesthetic burnt
a bullet hole through style, white shirt,
black waistcoat, size zero, a hat
so Gatsby angled that it hurt

by oversubscribed panache.
I was the head-turner who pulled
one out of three into my face
as tricky big-city curious
looking like I’d dropped in from space
with attitude—my stage the street—

a Bowie soundtrack in my head
for aural company
when making tracks on poetry
there in the crowd, I wrote for speed
of strangers moving through my words
like shooting a movie
before writing the bits down
in a café on Glasshouse Street
to mix the imagery hot,
immediate, ‘Sound and Vision’
fading in and out my mind
as a blue-themed backup to what I’d got.

Chemical Data

Formula C - - H, CIN, O
Mol. mass  284.7 g/mol
Pharmacokinetic data
Bioavailability  93%
Metabolism  Hepatic
Half life  20-100 hours
Cocksucker Blues

‘You’re smack’ Joe said
115 lbs
correction by the drug,
his body’s angular pretzel
territorializing the bed

his one concession to colour
hexagonal patterned Burlington socks
in diamond charcoal pink and red
extraneous as puppets,
his crumpled Saks 5th Avenue suit bled

over a chair, satin lining
the colour of an oyster shell.
‘Use H baby and you’ll be dead’
Joe gestured to the wall,
first-pass effect if it’s oral,

injected it goes rapid-fire
through the blood-brain barrier
launch-padding histamine.
His desperation attracted
my sense of being family

to every outsider whose edge
gravitated to my looks
corner of Shaftesbury Avenue
the sky aerospace silver—
I told him the real me wrote books

the sort nobody ever reads:
poetry, and I’d use him too
as protein to my imagery.
Loneliness sucked him into a black hole,
his Hardy Amies tie a blue
I’d only seen in hydrangeas,
Joe paying for my company
to be himself and every week
Wednesday 3pm at the hotel
his confessional intimacy

comes up as an acute need,
his presents jumpers, shirts, cologne
filling in a space for me
both of us nurturing dependencies,
damaged, afraid, frightened to be alone.

Eye—Count

I gave up my eye-count—300 contacts a day as
hits. I couldn’t save them in memory, and wondered if
I was still on replay in someone’s virtual recall, a boy or
girls I’d got into through the eyes that were variants of
blue, green, grey, brown, hazel. Was somebody still
doing neural photoshops on manipulating my image, hours,
days after we’d met, like a hologram?

And you

the face I always wanted slipped away
dissolved into anonymity

‘Blue blue electric blue
that’s the colour of the room
where I will live’

‘You’re gay’

the punter said, ‘that thin
it’s hero
in
it’s such a give away
you stick a spike into a vein.’

The rain
opened up like China,
I saw him washed
into the underground, white Burberry saturated grey.
‘The encounters between queer urban culture and the law ensured that public knowledge of homosexuality was framed by an overarching narrative of sexual danger. If that danger was located in different qualities and influences, these were all, nonetheless, underpinned by a common assumption: the queer threatened British society.’

Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London*
Microgeography

The Dilly as a microgeography. An addict to its groove I knew complemented his obsession with the place by circulating a hand-drawn map of rent locale from the north side of Piccadilly circus, under the arches, extending to Leicester Square, a ventricular imaging of its underground resources. The conversion of [John’s ] physical body into place, like buying real estate on the moon, was the attempt to broker power over fetishised geography. He’s say to me that when he died he’d need to shift the virtual equivalent of the place with him, almost as a death-kit instruction manual, as his identity was so compactly built into the place. You can cross a continent exploring the subway exits and each time encounter a different reality: Regent Street isn’t Shaftesbury Avenue or Glasshouse Street the Haymarket, then north side might be tilted into shadow the south confected with hazy arcs of turquoise and lipstick pink sky fuzzed by CO2 emissions over the Haymarket and St James’, while north-east over the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain there’s an anthology of nitrogen dioxide (No2) particles, carbon monoxide from vehicular exhaust and West along Piccadilly a sky smudged by hydrocarbon fuel vapours but pistachio-blue slung over with clouds like the marks left by a cat’s paws on the white enamel top of a washing machine. The map measured 4x4 and was printed dark blue on white with red dots indicating places for rent and the existence of a constantly reinvented gay subculture. I saw the place through poetry and pills, a neurochemical interaction that ramped-up my perceptions of the precinct into private mythology. Nobody hangs out there long right in the city’s heartbeat—you’re an outlaw, an urban folklore drop out, a missing person in missing time, a fact gone offline with no credible ID.
North Side Lament

The sunlight turns gold on my skin—
I live on wine and Valium
it leaves me thin
I never knew I’d do
the things I do to you
as anyone, I’m blue

I sell to write my books
I tell them that, my looks
are wasted, if you’re sensitive
you see through me
my neural network maps
amazing poetry

I never have contempt
for clients, they’re events
who pay for company
I fine-tune a line
it sometimes makes me feel
real as orange sunshine

north side of the Circus
targeting my brain.
I never lose my cool
I write above it all
I’m dissociated
eyes blue as a swimming pool

saturated with imagery
like pop video
I’m waiting for the change
you’ll re-arrange in me
of course the things I do
are always poetry

they make the speed of light
into reality
dreaming with my eyes open
by the subway steps
you’ll pick me up as token
of my poetry
White Bear and Francis Bacon
You got in from the Piccadilly exit stairs, a subterranean bar in the underground, compact lowlight, red shaded lamps, impersonal ambience, the updraft of the tube’s accelerated whine as feedback into the place like shock waves from urban catastrophe. I used to hang out in there writing myself into poetry, my laser-directed focused concentration distressing the solitary men in the room as unbreakable. It was there that I’d meet him, every two or three weeks by arrangement, as a distraction to our work—

Francis Bacon who’d entered my life through reading my student novel The Lipstick Boys, an imploded, hallucinated account of confused shook up youth on white beaches under thundery pine-green skies, his eyes blued into mine foggier pigment in their mix, their shine glittered with neuro-endocrine chemistry (what tone did we give each other’s eyes imaginatively!)

and always the envelope of money for me to write £800 cash ‘sweetheart to help you write, poets need luxuries not necessities’—

he brought his own bottles in a carrier Dom Perignon, Cristal, Château Pétrus, the barman never looked we didn’t care, down there under the street, he told me every ventricle in his heart was blocked, asthma locked into his chest, his bronchia like the unventilated underground, the wheeze inflected with camp. When you write to retrieve bits it’s sometimes because you missed their significance first time round and later they come back as how it really was and happened. Bacon’s cratered face was a map of Soho’s alleys and yards. Where he’d been was compounded into a flaky Max Factor foundation patched tissue regolith. The painter lived in the amino acids—the chemical signals from the 100 billion neurons in the brain. How I saw the painter was in his neural
energies and the light ups in his eyes. His personality glittered intermittently in impulse surges like a Van Cleef & Arpels window.

‘Death eats you like a snake’
he’d say
his way, the camp an ermine drawl,
‘and I’m three quarters down its throat’
a rainbow boa iridescent
as a glitter ball,
blue diamonds was how I imagined it
blue as his Jermyn Street
Turnbull & Asser Viagra blue shirts
Egyptian cotton with Purl buttonholes
3 button cuffs or sapphire YSL:
‘Age is the venom we metabolise
the toxic squirt
like poisonous toothpaste in the arteries
that green
it’s like asparagus—poison colours
are a subtext to my palette

a depth tone, what’s inside the paint,
behind the texture that you see
managed by pigment. Look for black in black
and you find grey,
the blond boy slung on the railings today
he’s who? he’s playing gay,
too fidgety, he attaches to skirts,
I want a pink that’s Campari,
(you always find them out that way),
a hot cerise, a cup cake icing pink—
something like crushed strawberry
or the pit of a cherry stone, a pink
that mixes carbons in a red window
over West London 6pm
February, a cherry blossom storm
of egg-whisked cumulus, carnation pink
or pouty shocking pink camellia,
I’ll never get it right
against my blue, not quite ultramarine
but never copied, more a blue that you
call imaginary blue, the best colours
    are always make up, like peacock,
or night clubbing, a smear of smudgy green
that’s almost charcoal, impacted glitter
bringing up density, you don’t find paint
    with the attention to detail
you get in Mac, their Russian Red Lipstick’s
the intense glamour red I’ve never got,
a Hollywood tempo, but mixed down to
a tissue residue—you’re skinnier
    than Mick Jagger, I painted him
imagining his cock was in my throat
    the snake again you see; the loop
I said that’s hardwired to neurology.
    It’s burning nerve that keeps me thin,
I try to write like a Jimmy Page chord
a stratospheric climb out piloted
by fuel-injected adrenalin, loud rock,
    the radar set on altered state
activities, brainwave patterns spiked up
to clip the signals, I want something new
that mixes glucose with wonk energies
and shape-shifts words into guitar figures
that rock—I’d spike a vein
rather than write into normality,
Brit lit is coloured brainfade grey, the grey
of heavy industry or river rain
pixelating the South Bank on Sunday
a grainy grey on grey on grey on grey.
    I’d like to teleport
my writing neurology to a receiving gate
somewhere out there in the blue galaxy
my data compressed into space travel,
    that’s me the alien
working as a Dilly escort. ‘Marty’s
clean disappeared’, he said,’ he had the look
as natural, a mean teen on the run,
hair as I like it straight from Jimmy Dean
the gold earring a rent boy’s hollow sun,
I keep on thinking he’s the one
who’s fused in me as the obsessive look
I live with like addiction, it’s a drug
so acute it still fires me up to paint
like someone reversed back to seventeen
and looking out for the one face, my own?—
as I imagined it, tissue
morphed angular cheeks lifted on the bone
like Elvis, John Stephen or Jimmy Dean,
the best looking men in my life, you know
the difference between blue, pink and green,
nobody ever gets it right
except below the stairs, sometimes the rain
is all we’ve got out looking for a boy,
a slow impacting moody density
like swallowing a soluble aspirin
or ibuprofen, the effervescent plume
is like chemical orgasm,
but Marty, Kenny, Johnny won’t be back
the same again, they’re like my afternoons
empty of meaning, but the pain
I rub like broken glass in a pocket,
won’t ever let up. Mostly Soho’s dead,
the yards, the alleys, and I need a red
to hang in up of blue and pink, so volatile
it’s a traffic light red or raspberry tart
as a dessert, I use vermilion
on the side of geranium
or ruby, someone told me Johnny’s dead
at seventeen, he overdosed at Kennington
in a friend’s flat, 30 heroin jacks,
I’d like to paint him, I’ve got a photo
and stand the study against the meat rack’s
infamous sarcophagus.’ I’m the same
I’d blue tack poems to the railings there
rather than publish them, immediate, hot,
like downloads, give poetry to the street
as something poppy that connects
with psychoactive molecules, a beat
that puts a hook in imagery, the line’s
turned in on itself as too literary
we need to free it up
with dialect, song lyric, palare,
graffiti to bash its fuckedness quotient
into a new flavour, give it a name
as something that’s moved on from poetry
but still attaches to
its ambience. It’s like our pink and blue
the mix never comes right. Before he died
Johnny read bits of your gift, the Sonnets
gummed with KY, maybe he took a phrase
as energy into his suicide,
you never know where a line ends or why
it means something they’re hung up on inside
as a cell frequency. I only write
because nobody uses things I do
in poetry in getting into weird
or breaking with taboo,
I’m born to lose and happier that way
and started here like you on the railings
looking out at the world to meet the man
perfect for me as doing purple piss
into a rainbow coloured stream.

Your money helps to keep me clean
of strangers and liberate what I write
into the instant death of poetry,
a starburst of words into a condom.

At least I’ve thrown some shapes
to those who care, like the first time I heard
Marc Almond’s voice and found inside its tone
a correlative suffering, a blue
inflection touching me so deep down I
could use his voice as a stairway to rainy Soho,
St Anne’s Court, Green Court, Brewer, Wardour Street,
networking arteries for broken hearts
and eyes full of blue and ruby sequins.
It lives in me as resources, a pull
into its vocal gravity
that opens gateways in my poetry,
‘Sleaze’, ‘You Have’, ‘Stories of Johnny’, a pop
integrated into a time and place
relocated to a memory zone
that shifts like stars leaving the galaxy.

I haven’t any place
for history, only what’s in my face
when optimal surges of energy
excite the need to write. Marc’s voice textures
some find in me like the smart accidents
firing up poetry—sci-fi makeup,
a donut’s wobble,
the nylon tag escaped a cerise string,
a bar mat stating I’m out with a Fag,
a raisin’s downturned eye in a pancake
the weird in almost everything
that comes up laterally. ‘Marty’ he said,
‘did me like Peter Lacy, chained me up
and walked me round the room and thrashed me hard
like I was locked into a yard
at Shad Thames, nothing personal, just hate
conditioned to a fetish, a complex
of cold energies up for shattering,

I took it all the way obsessed
by finding inspiration in the pain
like a freak diamond bigger than the sun
exploding as the visionary contents
of what I’d done. I’d sometimes mix the blood
into my paint as a texturing thing

to make red sing to olive green
and sink a deeper contemplative mood
in black lapsed into charcoal grey, a tone
nobody ever quite achieves,
too grey, too black, the sexual undertones
tucked in. The market never knows my blood,
my haemoglobins soak in the pigment
from being bashed across the floor
in a paint-detonated mews. I drink
not to forget but to remember pain
with alcohol’s subjective clarity
and never sleep. I’ve come to fit that space
so deeply I’m the contents poured
into the glass. I’m into TRTs
(tattooed rough trade) pulled from the London docks
and used to take a chrome-buffed hearse
a friend drove as a fetish to Wapping
and lick the sweat like diamond dust
off pectorals, I like to taste physique
as a signature on my tongue,
an epidermal groove that feeds my art,
and sometimes love comes up in violent sex
the twisted moment of a head thrown back,
a liquid incandescence that breaks down
resistant energies, it’s what
I’ve only known with trade, a shattering
emotional cyclone condensed into eyes
letting go of their sex at orgasm,
the masculine exploding like a flower
a popped morning glory
the blue concealing pink, something like that,
a transient recognition same sex stuff
by dissolving opposites makes it new
each time, reinvents the moment
that makes straights curious, a foggy day
back of a yard at Shad Thames, a docker’s
grey eyes reflected in the green water,
I knew for ten minutes the only love
I’ve ever known, a pitched intensity
in which a lifetime came up like a drug
with someone accidental off a crane,
the rain starting with the meltdown into
coming, both knowing we’d never again
relive the scorched hurting intensity
of what we shared, the river’s lick
increasing with the tide, a pearl-grey pool
frothing ten metres away, London grey,
flat, chemical, and Ray now linked to me
indomitably, I held him from behind
with a velocity
like steering a car, his eyes glittering
with stars and optimal testosterone,
the city’s towers leaning in
like yogic concrete, I was in so deep
separation brought immediate hate,
a dangerous, twitchy, psycho, B-side flip
to guilt, self-hatred and a level shame
compounded into menace, when he split
my lip I tasted blood back of my throat
like the river had forced on in
out of the city’s networked undertow
and congealed there. He hit me once again
so hard I didn’t feel a thing, then wrapped
his T-shirt round the wound before
disappearing back into a warehouse
a light on there like an abandoned sun
an orange planet from which he’d evolved
to rip my face. I washed up and cabbed back
one eye the red and indigo
of an exploded magenta tulip
and got the colour studying a mirror
to paint the lesion and the scar tissue
that beat out navy blue, a wound response
that kept the docker near
each time I consulted the raw crater
as the impacted site his knuckles bled,
I never suffer shock, the alcohol
cushions me like a wall. ‘I write’ I said
for sheer compression, it’s a quantum thing
the attraction of images
that pull in different space-times, but co-exist
through imagination as dominant
long-range correlation of particles.
Literature’s for civil servants, the grey
de facto heteros narrowing
experience to a blocked artery,