

The Gestaltbunker

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His poetry has appeared in magazines ranging from *New Worlds* to *Poetics Journal*, while he has appeared over the decades in pubs, clubs, colleges and festivals, sometimes collaborating with musician Vincent Crane or video artist Jeremy Welsh. Recordings have been broadcast on CBC, WFMU-FM, and Resonance-FM or disseminated online by culturecourt.com.

Plays performed include *The Dream Laboratory* (CBC Radio), *Ritual of the Stifling Air* (BBC Radio 3), *The Voice Collection* (RTE), *The Mouthpiece* (Resonance-FM), *Terminal Poet* (New Theatre Works) and *Babalon* (Travesty Theatre), a celebration of occultist/rocket scientist Jack Parsons. Recent short fiction includes *The Poets of Radial City* in *Unthology 2*, published by Unthank Books. His first novel *The Qliphoth* was published in 2007. A sequel awaits publication.

Also by Paul A. Green

Basement Mix

The Slow Ceremony

The Slow Learning

The Qliphoth

Paul A. Green

The Gestaltbunker
Selected Poems 1965–2010

Shearsman Books

First published in the United Kingdom in 2012 by
Shearsman Books
50 Westons Hill Drive
Emersons Green
Bristol
BS16 7DF

Shearsman Books Ltd Registered Office
30–31 St. James Place, Mangotsfield, Bristol BS16 9JB
(this address not for correspondence)

www.shearsman.com

ISBN 978-1-84861-193-1

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For Cathy

1

Directions to the Dead End

Aquarius

I'm speaking your fate; so watch the hot valves of this oracle glow. You've paid for these words with bent coins. Galileo arrived on your nativity, but several centuries early. You've often lacked his obstinacy in defiance of the priesthood. Even now in conciliatory moods, you fancy the smells of the confessional—yes, you'd like to admit that the pure inferno of quasars was inhabited by howling angels, who might focus the geometry of their rays, their whole strange benevolence, on your ball of earth, your body of clay, your most unofficial secrets...

But the planet's moved since the morning of your squirming and opening shouts. The bumpy spark-striking dodgems of history were merely Panzers then, are robot bombs now. Some worlds have collided, others haven't. You enjoy making notes but refuse to take part in such star-battles. This will probably kill you.

Moreover—will your cloudy Venus topple out of orbit and lurch into the rings of Saturn, to form yet another halo of debris? Although your lucky tinge is green, your future could be sharp, bloody and glittering as a looted shop front. Or as lumpy as your first baby-food. You try to divine a hard shivering future which is clasped by hot tickling fingers, but your lucky number is the square root of minus-one.

Your fate is as varicose as the Mississippi Delta. Carry that weight, Aquarius.

The House

These beetles rise up on the shiny oiled chain, over the cog on the landing, from the humming boiler room below. All the rooms are served by conveyors. Each beetle measures twelve inches in length.

My grandmother built a rococo altar in the hall. Each of us knelt alone on a narrow strip of carpet. Each strip of carpet was patterned in red. The aspiring Christian crashes upwards, splinters entering his body, as I discovered when the child Jesus intervened in my dreams.

Judas lived in the dining room; he was a waxwork but was capable of propelling himself to my bedside, and his greasy hair hung over me during the night. In the dining room he kept jars. Each jar was five feet in height, rounded at base, made of glazed earthenware.

In my sickbed I would plan flying machines while the snows outside melted or froze. I gazed at the long horizontal beam of the street lamp, yellow on white. I heard the trains, like big bands, in the distance, wailing. I dreamed of my father, floating, wrapped in towels, apparently only nine inches in length on that occasion.

The corridors were polished, although dark. I could not fly down them as I hoped. Their length was uncertain, probably hundreds of yards. Outside it rained or snowed incessantly but the house could only travel in one direction, towards the north.

The Time Ship

The time ship keeps shifting
on the surface of the glass curve
in an eternal parabola
through all strata

under the beds of the fossils
between the crushed artefacts
across the petrified marshes
past the sunken monuments
around the dull red core
(the inflamed red heart of all dreamers)

the bomb-shaped time ship keeps moving into the clay

The captain, permuting his log, a pastime,
sits naked in the control room; a glow
from the master panel; wet blank view ports;
What exists out there? Nobody knows, no

sounds; image scanners outline a grey sun.
Down below: a thickening layer of sand
in the engine room where a tree
has begun to branch. Twigs flex and claw the eggshell roof.

Strands of hair around the bronze terminals,
a scorched switch, bent pins, shattered sockets, dust
swims over relics of rape.
Seminal fluid evaporates,

the first mate's lust became myth
His blinded victim wanders between mirrors, crawls
on corroded catwalks towards the motor cage.
Under the rotors she lies and waits.

All the seeds are dead.

Silence.

Her thighs close.

Glimpses of white limbs (discs spin near her brow)

In the bowels of the ship, the time tree grows.

The warped geometry of dark cabins
contains passengers. Few can remember
their outlines. Some have lost senses.

The Captain crows in his nest.
He is the last member to remember.
He keeps the charts, the maps,
files, tables, crystals, cards, creates the logs...

Giant spools roll through his mind,
holes and gaps gape through his grainy dreams,
time travelogues

again and again
re-reading the book of gnomes
we searched for omens:
there were reports of huge cogs sinking on the horizon

again and again
to re-condition our reflexes
we dissected robots
some protested but tests succeeded

again and again
to revive the old pleasures
we destroyed wide-eyed girls in the smoky enamelled chapel
the soft ashes choked us

TO BEGIN AGAIN/TO FIND A LOST CONTINENT/TO
REFRESH THE SPECIES/TO DISCOVER THE THIRD EYE/TO
GO TO BED WITH ANGLES IN TREES

—was that the clean draft of the manifesto?

I cannot live it
you cannot live it
s/he cannot live it
we cannot live it
they cannot live it

The old terror catches us up in its paw,
the act is ruptured;
as the perpetual shit turns and tumbles on the screen
as the screaming alarms announce time
as the time ship slides and shudders down a rubberised vortex
time flips/over/blinds/my eyes/ are black spots

long gropes

where is the god

where is the man

where are the sibilant guides—our voices—

time drips inside the ship

hollows stone minds

(I am inside the ship)

the ship keeps moving

The Orange Room

The night had come back. The slow vessels were sliding along the distant aqueduct, just visible through the treetops. The waterlogged trees, that splash our windows. The rain is a bad drummer.

In the orange room, the dust had ceased to gather. The atmosphere had begun to glow, like a large cube of quartz. The fire screen concealed a long grey tunnel, paved with moist tiles. From it gusts of air drifted over the long bed. There were hordes of dark balloons hanging in the clouds and a drop of water entered the room. The windows became fragile, under pressure.

You were quite naked in the orange room. There was only a little darkness between our curved spaces. The arc-lamps of the slow vessels patterned our orange walls, while the bottles of the glass genitals began to soften and melt. A spark is discharged between the brass spheres at the foot of the bed. It is often very bright in the orange room.

The Sighting

1. Invisible Aliens Slip Through Our Northern Lights

I am glaring down from 10000 feet
through thin splintered strata of stone-green sky
through split laminations of the ice-green light
through slide after fractured slide of hard air into the snow drift
whiteness is all all light is glazed
light waves and ghosts move more slowly here
I burn with a dry white light I burn a green hole in the sky
I can sift and destroy any grain of snow
it will burn before it arrives at the snowdrift
but I cannot make out the grey mass of my dreams
the yolk that wobbles inside my shadow as my blur grows sharper
Soon I shall fly in my sleep like a floating stone

2. Breaking the Line of the Silence

Bearing down from 2000 feet
the snow has stopped crawling all over this secret wasteland
but even behind smoked lenses my eyes burn
the huge white ledge of the ice age horizon quivers
these motors cannot hold perfect pitch
one overtone can be lethal
over the snow drift
I do not know which machine will design my ghost

3. Beneath the Permafrost Their Entrails Become Artefacts

From here (at 1000 feet) the snow makes no move
under the crust (snow/stone) any deep shelters or caves must be ice-packed
their stalagmite horns point: inwards and downwards

perhaps someone claws through a seam of black blood
under the surface of the drift

perhaps some kind of inhabitant uses this snow
to preserve or compress his dead women

under the weight of the green stones
no one has ever existed perhaps—

a shape steps out of my shadow and moves

the snow makes no move
but this point keeps moving
my blurring dials waver like a single insect
white is the colour of cataract

in the blindness that flares up beneath me
something small and alive is moving

4. The Opal Lights of All Possible Deaths in Her Eyes

Between the vehicle's scorched rim
and a page of snow
there is less than one tenth of an inch

pause

I sit in the infra-red glow of my hot black cell
the starlight makes tiny holes in my hand
footprints are making a final spiral
around the blind side of the hull
towards this cramped blister of one-way glass

a girl's shape steps out of the shadow

between the time-warped plates of this craft
and the stance of her pelvis
sheathed in green leather
seven, eight, six footsteps...

her lips move as she stops
I cannot read her
her fingertips hesitate over her breasts

I am not he who knows
who knows what she is
this new untouchable animal found in the snow

no way I can open the scabbed hatch and go out
only this ship supports my life
my backbone is force-fed with black spinal fluid
as the needle retreats from my scalp one more time

no way she can stumble through the gasping airlock
this ship supports my life only
the young milk that climbs through her platinum spine

might change in this air charged with iron filings

this air filtered through tanks of crushed anthills
this air that changes each second
with the spores that drift from my mouth

between the filaments of her body and mine
between her taut network of atoms and mine
between the spasms between their fragments of light

arc-lights flashing on the high wire grid the high-tension fence that
 slowly sags
over the edge of our snowbound mass graves

the black thing that is nothing speaks again
as the knife edge of the galaxy turns

as she removes her dark glasses
the snow flares up
as I turn on the strobe in the cabin
her body twists

I look through her eyelids
how can I ask if she sees me watching
the opal lights of all possible deaths in her eyes

5. After the Blackout These Last Readings

I am flying stone-blind in slow orbit: 10,000 feet
the snow falls in shreds for the last time
I am drifting whiteness is all

She is somewhere beneath these heavy stiff sheets
when she sleepwalks into the maze of my cortex
she does not undress

for I unidentified flying observer
must grope out of flight trance
at random but frequent moments
to find the same pattern still fading on the screen
the lines of force that flow through her solar plexus
flex steadily towards the north

it is time to retreat through the tunnel of sub-space

to return to my home built black planet

to retire to my sinking black palace
to record this last rite

I play myself back into darkness

The Throne Room

The throne room can be found beneath the city surface, an octagonal chamber at the intersection of eight tunnels. The floor, walls and low flat ceiling are all plated in heavy sheet iron, patterned by a large but finite number of rivet heads.

The sources of light are outside the room, somewhere in the tubular tunnels diffused, diffracted, perhaps. A dusty glow, faint and red, intrudes from the mouth of each tunnel. Narrow slots traverse the floor. They run from the eight dim openings and cross at the throne room's centre on a small rusting turntable, which does not appear to move, yet slowly and noiselessly turns, clockwise. At the time of writing, this imperceptible movement is the only activity in the throne room.

In the mouth of the north-west tunnel, a throne is stationary. It is probably no longer in use, for the rich upholstery is stained and slashed, chrome has peeled from the bumper around its base, and the panels of the high hack are buckled and scratched. Yet cables still festoon the canopy and hang in clusters from the spiked skullcap. It is vacant. Few have glimpsed an occupied throne, either in motion or at rest

A smell of scorched rubber enters the air. The studded walls vibrate. From the north and east, a rumble of approaching thrones.