

Nikki Franklin

Ecstasies

Poet

Accordion

Voice

Tap Dancer

List of Works

- i. Afterlife @ Aftershock¹
- ii. Buzzing Affy²
- iii. Connoisseur at a Fetish Club³
- iv. Fruit⁴
- v. Vada That⁵

Duration: ca. 30 minutes

1 Lowe, Adam. 'Afterlife @ Aftershock', Ten: The New Wave, ed Karen McCathy Woolf Bloodaxe Books, 2014

2 Lowe, Adam, 'Buzzing Affy', *ibid*

3 Lowe, Adam 'Connoisseur in a Fetish Club' is from the stage show Ecstasies (director: Gerry Potter, 2014), first performed at Contact, Leeds, 2014

4 Lowe, Adam, 'Fruit', Precocious (Batley: Fruit Bruise Press, 2012)

5 Lowe, Adam. 'Vada That', Ten: The New Wave, ed Karen McCathy Woolf Bloodaxe Books, 2014

AFTERLIFE @ AFTERSHOCK

Pass the dry-ice strobe-stare of the
three-headed bouncer there, pass
the hellhound with six black shoulders.
Descend with me into a bruise-lit underworld.
Anna Phylactic, our Queen Ishtar, rules
with eye-patch, hoop-skirt, wig.
Cyclopean giver of asphodel foams
at his grinning mouth, collects payment from
all to lift them, high spirits, to heaven;
and the DJ, hand cutting tunes like
a scythe, ferries us to the shore of the next
blue dawn. Bass rumbles, the displeasure
of life against ecstasy; then the drop comes
and we're wing-swept to rapture as one.

BUZZING AFFY

A translation of Sappho's 'A Hymn to Aphrodite'

I.

Sister, on your precious throne of metal bling,
funking daughter of jagged skies and lightning,
domme* of odes, listen close now, come on. Sister,
I'm woman calling.

Listen how you listen, catch my morning buzz,
my voice carried over wire and horizon,
just come, as you came before. Sister, leave your
strobe-light happening.

II.

Your arrival is the tide-ripple of doves,
ecstasy's muscle-rhythm through the club.
You lift high over skies, glow stick bright, throw down
heavens to hip-wind.

The haters still come. And you—my avatar,
cover girl, superstar—wait while I sulk! Quick,
blow kisses when you text back. Spit me a rap, girl,
I need your reply.

III.

You will say: *Who has dissed you this time, sister?*
Who stole your pissed off heart? Can you take it back?
They'll soon give all that you gave, then give you more.
They always return.

Tell me who to petition, who to burn out,
who to placard—you promised me this, sister.
Come now. Keep your vow. This world could soon be ours.
Be my damn lover.

*a dominant female in a BDSM relationship

CONNOISSEUR IN A FETISH CLUB

He strides over as I take a leak.
He reaches out a plastic cup
and catches my yellow streak.

With a wink and a nod, he toasts me,
and gulps down golden rain:
Mmm! Sweet homemade lemonade!

And as I turn to get lost,
among the leather and vinyl,
among the bears and the dross,

I think: Next time, I should offer him
a champagne flute. Serve it sparkling
like Veuve reserve 42, by the bottle

rather than by the glass. And I would ask
if it quenches his thirst, or if he's testing me for diabetes.
But it's good to know there's value

even in piss, so casually discarded.
It's like water to sluicing wine:
in the right hands, it changes—become sublime.

FRUIT

You call me a fruit,
and I agree,
say

a fruit is ripe,
promising seeds,
bursting with juice.

You call me a fruit,
as though a vegetable
while I recite a litany
of fresh attributes:

a fruit is rich,
remembers its roots,
nourishes, quenches,
makes a display of any table.

I say,
I am the apple
that announces the gravity
of a given situation;
I am the pomegranate
whose gemstones teach
of the burden of possession;
I am the fig
our ancestors couldn't resist.

You call me a fruit
and I agree:
soft, round and sweet.
Peel back my layers,
take a look at my pips.
Full as a melon,
sharp as a lime,
come over here
and bite me.

VADA THAT

Aunt nell the patter flash and gardy loo!
Bijou, she trolls, bold, on lallies
slick as stripes down the Dilly.

She minces past the brandy latch
to vada dolly dish for trade, silly
with oomph and taste to park.

She'll reef you on her vagaries—
should you be so lucky. She plans
to gam a steamer and tip the brandy,

but give her starters and she'll be happy
to give up for the harva. Mais oui,
she's got your number, duckie.

She'll cruise an omi with fabulosa bod,
regard the scotches, the thews, the rod—
charpering a carsey for the trick.

Slick, she bamboozles the ogles
of old Lilly Law. She swishes
through town, 'alf meshigener, and blows

lamors through the oxy at all
the passing trade. She'll sass a drink
of aqua da vida, wallop with vera in claw.

Nellyarda her voche's chant till the nochy
with panache becomes journo, till
the sparkle laus the munge out of guard.

But sharda she's got nada, she aches
for an affaire, and dreams of pogeey
through years of nix. The game nanti works

—not for her. She prefers a head
or back slum to the meat rack. Fact is,
she'll end up in the charpering carsey

of Jennifer Justice. What is this
queer ken she's in? Give her an auntie
or a mama. The bones isn't needed just yet.

Though she's a bimbo bit of hard,
she's royal and tart. And girl, you know
vadaing her eek is always bona.

VADA THAT – GLOSSARY

Aunt nell – ear, listen (also: nellyarda)

Patter flash – gossip, chat, ostentatious or pretentious speech

Gardy loo – 'Look out!'

Troll – walk, provoke (as in online)

Lallies – legs

The Dilly – Piccadilly (London, but perhaps also Manchester), a high street or similar

Brandy – bottom (from Cockney rhyming slang: 'brandy and rum')

Brandy latch – toilet

Vada – see, spy, look

Dolly – pretty

Trade, trick – a sexual partner, not always but usually a prostitute's 'john'

Reef – to feel, to grope (especially the bulge or crotch)

Harva – anal sex

Omi – man

Scotches – legs

Thews – thighs, sinews

Charpering – finding

Vera – gin

Nochy – night

Journo – day

Laus – chases

Munge – darkness

Sharda – though

Affaire – a lover, a serious partner as opposed to a fling

Pogey – money

Head – bed

Back slum – public lavatory

Meat rack – brothel, a parade of rent boys lined up for punters

Charpering carsey – police cell

Auntie – older gay man, role model

Mama – mentor

The bones – a boyfriend or husband

Eek – face

Bona – good