

PRO-LEAVE by MARK REEVE

THE SPOOK PRESS

<https://nonothingggg.blogspot.com>

nonothing321@gmail.com

Fringe elements of the British No Audience Underground have long believed that Mark 'Spaceman' Reeve might one day get his act together and realise the talent that has lurked beneath the jarring juxtapositions and toddler tantrum rebellions that he has foisted upon the world in lieu of proper art since achieving what many people would consider to be the age of reason.

Long-waiting can give way to despair. And we have been waiting for 17 years, sustained by flashes, recognising the Man Who Fell to Earth's skills as an organiser and distributor, occasionally encouraged by the abandonment of the useless ciphers he insists have such significance to produce heartfelt and insightful appreciations of his associate and fellow traveller Simon Morris of The Ceramic Hobs (for example), and offering encouragement on the road to realisation through meaningful communication that might penetrate the commitment to the idiocy of wilful eccentricity that has been his stock in trade up to now.

Some people take a long time to grow up. Everyone has to grow up in time or die... The Norfolk Icarus has been around for more than half a century and he is inching towards this realisation.

The epigram that introduces *Pro-Leave* is powerful and true:

For all those who have stuck their fingers up and broken the hourly chain.

That's us. We appreciate the astute recognition of the tribe that did not realise it was a tribe through our solipsistic immersion in dreams of absolute self-sufficiency. What does the author have to tell us?

Pro-Leave is a collection of 25 untitled poems, the sixth volume of an ongoing series of poetry published by the Spook Press. The title relates to the misguided reactionary movement that duped the British public into deciding that it was a good idea to abandon international co-operation in favour of a ludicrous notion of self-determination born of establishment endorsed nostalgia and an exceptionalism that never existed. The sun never sets on the British Empire, which currently consists of the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, and the Isle of Wight. But the words in this collection are not the ravings of a witless Brexiteer. Reeve doesn't just want to leave Europe; he wants to leave *everything*.

*What is the everything surrounding you?
Where are you (not in a geographical sense)?
A spell. You are under a spell.
That is the meat of it.*

The poems explore themes of otherness, expanded consciousness and societal critique from the perspective of a willing outsider. Reeve revels in being disconnected from the norm, and it is this response to alienation that forms the cornerstone of his identity. The boundaries of perception and reality are not as fixed as they appear to be and the author is intent on transcending the societal dictates that seek to keep them in place. Power structures and the oppressive technology that is deployed to maintain the status quo are subjected to critical thinking and Reeve's fantastical encounters with the mysterious and unexplained are presented as a means of transforming everyday life by adding depth and meaning to quotidian experience. Reeve's existential pondering takes place in the shadows, which sometimes coalesce to form vague outlines of an eerie and melancholy beauty.

*I have all Keys.
I control all Keepers.
I am not me.
I turn around
the spanner thrown in the road,
edging nearer,
bone dice in sea salt
taking me further...*

Reeve is edging nearer to something, and for once we are able to travel with him, even if we remain unclear about where it is we are going.

CHIEF PATROLLER WEIR
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