

A Long RED Carpet Back to 1910 000

By

Lachlan McDougall

WHY I LIKE IT: *Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes... I don't think I've read anyone else pull off Burrough's "cut up" method like Lachlan McDougall does in "The Long Red Carpet back to 1910."*

This story will probably fuck up your day.

I mean that in the best way possible, it has also fucked up my day.

How do you write about something that you can only describe as, "akin to Naked Lunch but contextually situated better?"

This is why I am a garbage critic, when words fail me, I simply say fuck a lot.

The plot, as I see it, is a man lighting a cigarette, finishing said cigarette, and then lighting another – with each breath there is an explosion of connection back to where we trace our lines as modern writers.

Somewhere in this son of a bitch is the history of writing: some F. Scott, some Beckett, McDougall mentions Sarte and Kafka, I may throw in Celine, like one and a half chapters of Joyce, a touch of gonzo, and more.

I think what works with this piece the most is the way in which the repetition and cyclical nature of the lines transcends the concept of the plot. We are supposed to get lost in the bombardment of memory, taught lessons, multiple readings, terrifying visions, or simply just reading trying to figure out one line from the next. Studying can come later, this is meant to be read, felt, as if the language was washing over you to the point in which you have no meaning but what you can pull.

McDougall is by far a smarter motherfucker than me.

Even in the hypnosis, his language has almost no flaws.

There is purpose here.

There is intent.

There is an author who knows what he is doing, and creating this story, probably having to read it multiple times themselves, is a feat.

The lines connect; the imagery proliferates throughout time and space and memory; he even references the references one would think about towards the end as if to give the reader a little recognizable middle finger – like you spent six pages thinking about Burroughs, yeah, I know.

Pretty fucking classy.

This is a good one folks.

This is one people should read and remember.

Five Stars.

QUALITY QUOTABLE *(for the love of language...)*

Newman and I bundle inside like insect legs folded vertiginous, assume position in front of the control display lighting up like dead fisheye in glinting sunlight of a failing dawn – the Academy always comes calling, no two ways about it – comes rolling down thick highways of stale fixes, dead time, and frozen flesh strung out across all known coordinate points, launch liquid into space.

I slide a cigarette smoothly from a fresh pack and sit tight in heavy gas pouring down soupy liquid influenza – set the great work in motion with flare of match and gentle arcing caress of spent wood through cold compartment air. Bert Brecht cuts down across the viewscreen with Sartre, Burroughs, Kafka, and all manner of literature...

The Long Red Carpet Back to 1910

I light a slow cigarette in featherlight touch of zero gravity – arc the empty packet in graceful curve towards vacuum trash receptacle wafts gentle smell of soiled linen, gasoline, and compost, green vegetable smell like forgotten underdrawers steaming in thawed flesh of the human fix – blue smoke curls up around me in wandering rays of light refracting from control unit hunkered down in corner of the compartment like an overbearing matron stiff in hospital whites – drift out to blue ether, I remember 1910:

Mix a bicarbonate of soda in featherlight touch of zero gravity – 'automatic' programming winds word/image track around stale flesh in jury box – shrug heavy metallic... *urp...* excuse me, truly sorry, when the wind comes calling, can't hold it back... turn briskly to face speech sounds in “do this” “do that” winding around stale flesh – all available images prove fatal with introduction of the man on cellular level, fade out to the human fix waiting on streetcorners in dead frozen time. I am travelling with Newman wiggled out on some sort of premature death kick and the old doctor trailing blue fingers along every boy we meet, stop for coffee in downtown automat with dry dust

torture film beaming out 25 frames per second – economic boom on cracked pavement and temple of the image: “we all got our tracks buddy – make your scars stand up just to see it...” – green telephone wire on interplanetary oven blows Nagasaki blues out to space, vegetable smell of gasoline and compost rotting the place all around us and thawing flesh strictly from travel and neglect.

The old doctor returns from the john waving a pistol in the air, fixes around with cold undersea eyes, claims he got new connection with the almighty we make a mad run out to uptown liquor store in and out quick as shit in your eye – Newman shuts down in heavy gas of stale overcoat draped over thin shoulders dunking coffee slow and steady – all manner of speech sounds cut through the establishment, the Architecture Kid cutting Holy Lands on Calvin frequency – I got a nose for these sorts of things – the mythology con selling student of Chicago-New York City, catholic preaching into dry dust – leads you down to random juxtaposition in weedflower and bicarbonate of soda, leaves you sick on city streets leaking vitreous humour and looking for the old doctor.

We got this car burning heat outside – '28 Buick, all yellow with whitewalled tyres – green sky of crab planet, Holy larval pin erected and demolished – interstellar larvae up on some local statute or other. Avoid the bulls running through the place like blue nightmares swinging nightstick onto anything that moves, scuttle insect legs out to the vehicle and burst out of town like a rotten old cocoon smelling of dead flesh thawing room temperature after quick fix in the back – brings you to life and kicking stale overcoat from thin frame breathing heavy, puffs out flesh pink and fat.

We buried Faber in oven blue invasion lines downtown in big blue bunker – put the squeeze on us good and proper and the old doc waving his pistol around like it's Halloween night – well that motherfucker had it coming swift and fast and he won't be

grassing out no more on the wire. Various types come cruising through the district typing slow reports in planetary relief, tension and inspiration cuts back and forth like a knife across all three of us burning sick in death chucks. We lose the Buick quick and heavy, make plans to cut out to England – rosy skin and fair weather – whole district in panic and chaos and Newman hustling round in slow up and down of low-rise office buildings up on the viewscreen. Trained exclusively for this kind of operation – we got crab people coming in through the whole affair and the heat closing in on every level – word/image track beaming down across all grey buildings and neon streetscapes wising up the establishment to everything that's going on. Word population triples across all wavelengths beaming down to subcortex of every wild young thing leaning on lamppost and spitting jelly at the moon – scurry slow writing out on the liminal wavelength, stale newspaper in forgotten class of New York-Chicago – the Architecture kick.

The Advocate speaks: “silence”. We cut out good and fast, wake up sick on London streets in crablike position of University Rector. Newman sniffs the wind regal like London queer sips tea with picture postcard of the queen, fades out into blue ether and wakes up walking streets of Salzburg with deep animosity towards his fellow man – the doctor starts a clinic in Podunk, New Jersey, hauled into court on a malpractice charge runs insect cargo back and forth across state lines – and here I am filling space study literature in Academy tutelage Oxford, got a real knack for it, read five books at a time and spit out criticisms on the automatic typing machine back and forth over good taste and general knowledge. Petroleum jelly and penetrated design on the Architecture school running all along the pathways, launch liquid into space – shimmering translucent skin runs cold in the wires – cut with vorpal blade soft reports of clinging skin breathing apparatus, got to get in on the action on way or another.

I meet up with this sharkish young man all blond hair and California tan studies entomology on weekends and has good connection on the inside track – I know his type, run image track through the processor and end up huddling stale overcoat over sandstone cloisters University Square looking for fix in between conference calls with the dean of mouldy old bugs. Heavy fix for it, introduce him to the doctor running back and forth across the medical records – we move into the department broom closet, brushing aside deathly crush of moths, butterfly, and cicada, take fix then and there, schlupping up the dean of social studies and feel human for a minute or two in slowly thawing minutes of dead time. Tired old politicians on the academic wavelength beam out bullshit of desiccated planet dying on the vine like some burning fig makes you sick just to see it – take aim the camera gun! – we rush out of the place burning down wheat fields and hedge mazes, dance dance of our kind on rooftop skyscrapers, whisper deeds in Turkish bathhouse rolling petroleum jelly between sticky fingers and breathing deep mouth kisses all around the place. I fade out to 1910 running back a long red carpet to Podunk, New Jersey looking for the old doctor sick in the green dawn.

Tired old Traveller writing salacious diaries to Bee and Beasley inhabiting music hall of 1920 – belches bright and neon across a darkening night: littered streets of dry husk office buildings soft and pungent, corpse of salacious business running soft fingers down vertiginous fin of interstellar travel – fishboys dance a jig of pliable skin, weave in and out of the dermal layer, tear down statues of Grassy Nelly and erect an enormous guillotine slapping erogenous appendage down like butcher's meat. Newman appears like clockwork smoke and hazes long fingers around the doc and I looking for a fix before fade out into city streets of dead frozen time, spent the weekend goosing boys around the European track and now he's wet with rank slime comes off like tepid jelly

and stinks green vegetable smell like a compost heap. The doctor takes a long cool look around the room and quiets down the image tracks – standard operating procedure, get in on the Academy wavelength and fight the good fight – feel crab people running heavy metallic pincers up and down my spine, got insect kicks waiting for me back home in rich St Louis family – books of the great masters, five at a time until death in Panic – sharkish young blonde withers down to dry husk in Oxford town, grey flesh around his ankles like dead time running out.

KK likes it back and forth across time and space, leads the whole gang down to dusty apartment where we make to score for one last time before business comes calling. Puff out pink and fat, got a job to do – get instructions in on the audible line and fold ourselves into stale overcoat come thick and meaty like skin of breathing apparatus: the *Terminus* sits dead silent on soft ground of skyscraper rubble where the old timers come and spit their jelly like faded grey flesh around the ankles. Newman and I bundle inside like insect legs folded vertiginous, assume position in front of the control display lighting up like dead fisheye in glinting sunlight of a failing dawn – the Academy always comes calling, no two ways about it – comes rolling down thick highways of stale fixes, dead time, and frozen flesh strung out across all known coordinate points, launch liquid into space.

Cut back to present time: fade in on dead city countertop dunking coffee in low-rise buildings of primal weedflower – civil war corpse on rusty benchseat munches stale rubber sandwich and scurries out of tired confederate soldier writing cold letters on automatic typing machine. I finish my cigarette and float gently over to the waste receptacle through twisting clouds of blue smoke – the Kid shrugs heavy metallic shoulders and distributes intentions amongst the fishboys, belches into the electric

distance – I ease the *Terminus* out through bleeding asteroids and damaged rings of cold revolving planets lost to undulating waves of dead, frozen time. Newman and I have our orders, lost in dead space sick and floating like stale overcoat in yellow Buick of 1928. The Academy has its hold on me just like any other insect comes running down the line – you must understand that this planet was not my first choice, arrived entirely by accident through no fault of my own.

We freeze out language and speak only on subliminal device flickering antennae and subroutine vocalisations – this is how you do it: run all vocalisations out silently in your head like you was speaking without move your mouth, next you uncoil the antennae in direction of your intended target and make this low hum like you was a buddhist monk getting on satori kick, speak your thoughts through the hum and think clear images of what it is you communicate, do it right you melt down into jelly right where you stand and the other party makes with total understanding all over the carpet. Newman and I do this back and forth like clockwork: back and forth the Holy Lands – pull in formation through random assembly of green sky planet of forgotten nebula – write it down, take control, who are you an agent for? Take down in directed sound of hallways burning bright redacted presence on the Control line – all stars look the same to me now, all planets burn the same disease when crab people come calling – operate on wavelength of Total Control, insinuate themselves into all functioning aspects of regular life and break down sympatico vibrations until they no longer function. Got a regular sex connection? Not for much longer... two unhappy nation-states got the bomb and work the tape back and forth between themselves to oblivion... got it tired on streetcorners waiting to make connection? Well buddy, we all got our tracks... makes your scars stand up just to see it... Happened back on my planet, I suppose, until I was

hurled out into ether and forced into this soft fleshy body baby-born of mother kicking and screaming and shitting in the shimmering dawn – you must understand, this was not my first choice.

Traveller Philly pulls up the Kid in coffee sprinkled over literature of Director disease: converts women and children into shutdown of all basic functions, listen only to the machine growing fungus like black mould between the eyes and in the lungs and all down the insides of the apparatus until everything comes running down to total destruction – burn all plant matter and boil the lakes – there will be nothing left at the rate they're going, just dead and desiccated planet revolving slowly round a fading sun. You may think at 25 frames per second, eyes blinking out erogenous rays of Venusian calm, but the whole thing comes through clogging up the airwaves. Blue orgone in isolated pockets: I run a long red carpet back to 1910 fixing stale overcoat with Newman faded in encrusted bathtub drowning bourbon and green vegetable compost smells. Never know the scent of literature, cuts back and forth across the wavelength and dissects Control message in perfunctory tones of wild fishmonger selling questionable goods on docks and warehouse: “fresh fish, fresh I say! Caught it only last month and put it on ice good and quick...”.

Heavy metallic gas floods the compartment, organises discipline – Age of DE – speaking through tired old politicians on the crab people wavelength, burn all plant matter and boil the lakes. I slip into my things like an eel and stalk out into streets of Academy training – art gallery reversal technique formed around dead pictures blink across my eyes like Halloween candy. Specific way about humans, they do the pictures nice and good and blink back to 1910 where hang stale overcoat across a nice young boy we pick up in Chicago bar on his way to Dallas you dig? I hunt for the old doctor on city

streets spitting sick and waiting for the whole thing come crashing down – uncomplicated mode of living in pink flesh writhing about exposed exoskeletal underpinnings – “pass the garbanzo beans” in dead establishment of fifty-cent dinners and cold coffee drunk down dead time frozen time. All alien races swirling about me in wondrous neon array: humanity now in on the gimmick – where does such a thing come from?

Lead in to surrounding nebula of blazing gaseous extract looked on through University telescope and recorded in a big black ledger with unknown symbols extolling arcane knowledge to a dead and forgotten god. Surround the dials with long insect fingers and eject the trash receptacle out into space – vegetable smell of faded flesh wafts out to cold rings of dead planets and mingles in the dust of ages. Beasley in shitting disease lights up along crab planet latrines and lavatories and hails Control frequency: everything proceeds on tape recorder cutting back and forth across all wavelengths – shutdown, erratic programming, shutdown the human kick, shutdown all resistance. DE wins on contested politico debate raging back in EarthSphere radio-play – burn all plant matter and boil the lakes – Beasley eats up literature and shits sequence in blue ocean of grey crab night – “do this” “do that” back and forth across radio static, advertisement billboard, and fading memories of 1910. Return sequence back to Nagasaki, back to oven burning blue.

I slide a cigarette smoothly from a fresh pack and sit tight in heavy gas pouring down soupy liquid influenza – set the great work in motion with flare of match and gentle arcing caress of spent wood through cold compartment air. Bert Brecht cuts down across the viewscreen with Sartre, Burroughs, Kafka, and all manner of literature dredged up from the pus-filled sewer of EarthSphere mindscreens: viewed from all

fishlike angles, dead time frozen time – the Architecture Kid across all liminal networks and into literary prize, cuts back everything and everybody into whole planet breathing apparatus. Newman and I have our orders, glide the *Terminus* liquid through dark space: only a matter of time before the whole thing comes crashing down. I roll a long red carpet back to 1910 swaying in the evening breeze with Newman thin in stale overcoat and the old doctor swinging his pistol like Halloween night, and all of us standing dead frozen just waiting for the fix.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: “A Long Red Carpet Back to 1910” *comes from need to live in dying embers of a planet we do nothing to save. Whisk down from beneath a potted plant and run the fix out from here to oblivion. Take material from larger work (novel: Nagasaki Blues – blow the popsicle stand out to space), cut up and rearrange, find yourself in new territory exploring new modes of living, find yourself running a long red carpet back to 1910. Where does such a thing come from? We look to the beats, to Burroughs, to Gysin, also to Kafka, Genet, Sartre, and the rest – we look to space arcing a gentle word across the automatic typing machine spilling language out for readers across the dying planet. I hope you like it, and I hope it likes you – be gentle, kind reader, and look out for Nagasaki Blues when the publication comes calling.*

AUTHOR BIO: Lachlan J McDougall is a prose technician working in cut-up and experimental literature. Currently putting the finishing touches on dark political satire *The Jagged Spiral* as well as composing new cut-up novel *Nagasaki Blues*. His main interests are the imminent threat of Control and the ongoing spiral of our planet towards doom and desiccation - a churlish optimist at heart, he hopes his writing might make some small difference to this apparently inevitable path. His work can be found in *Blue* as an Orange magazine and **Fleas on the Dog**.