

Shadow-w-w of a doubt?t ...

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By Lachlan J McDougall

WHY I LIKE IT: *Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes... Lachlan McDougall's, "Shadow of a Doubt," has read Beckett – in any number of the better ways possible. Philip Ó Ceallaigh's, Notes from a Turkish Whorehouse, would frolic on the hills with Mercier and Camier throughout this story. The repetition, the rotation, the juxtaposing patterns, all create a concerted effort to distort and, in the deconstruction, construct a connotative meaning.*

You can give as much time or as little as possible delving into this story. I would suggest you do both.

McDougall's style is a practice in the dervish. As you spin you lose control, and, in loss of yourself, you find control.

One of the first things that you'll learn is the iterations of silence, "The first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence – quiet all extraneous thoughts and live in primal instinct of sympatico vibration..." Vibrating with nature in silence doesn't negate the ability to express oneself, this piece acts like the poetics of a sestina – the form of repetition creates freedom through rhythm.

"Shadow of a Doubt" does exactly what it propose to create, doubt. As you read the lines of this story you will drift in and out of the simultaneous circles each paragraph, each line, each word, works on.

If you have a shadow of a doubt about what you've read, then know that it is a doubt well crafted. If the worst thing is silence, then the only thing to be done is to immerse yourself the hum of language – it will lull you to a point in which you know that you must sharpen your knife for the next audience.

McDougall, I think, works with a rich history of writers.

I'm not gonna be like "oh, he's Irish because of the last name and, thus, I referenced the Irish writers who've done the deed that I can spout off of the top of my head apart from Joyce because, to be honest, this doesn't touch Joyce because it's a different style of writing entirely but he, they, you know whatever it's not like we've met, but he sounds, you know accent-y..."

I'm not gonna be like that. He may not be Irish. He may be merely tapped into the spirit of a style, but I do know it's of quality.

Read.

Read and consider the implications of what these words mean and how much of a bomb this intro will be if this human, whose story I enjoy, is not, in fact, Irish.

Enjoy.

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

Wake up on crablike planet of green sky and heavy metallic gas filling the lungs with soupy liquid influenza (hard to get it all out). My partner blinks stupid and fishlike in strange alien resonance – grows a set of gills and leaps into miasmic green of nearby pond.

Traveller Philly cuts in on literature kick – directed word dust of the great masters taught in Salzburg art gallery, beginner's karate class New York-Chicago – “do this” “do that”. The Academy stresses random juxtaposition – on Thursdays we have movies at 25 frames per second – pull up on the viewscreen and hail EarthSphere frequencies – hail DE, Traveller Philly, the Architecture Kid.

Shadow of a Doubt

The first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence – the Academy permits no speech sound vocalisations for any reason whatsoever. All communication on the primal instinct of sympatico vibration – dry dust boys in bathing outhouse speaking through word dust on silent liminal frequency, girls in pigtails dressing in all connective tissue of the species. The Academy is organised on decentralised lines – never know when you might meet another student walking street in Salzburg, taking beginner's karate class in Chicago-New York City. Word dust silence in small, isolated pockets throughout EarthSphere operating on sympatico vibrations – liminal frequency pulsing out connective tissue of the species – heavy metallic shoulders shrugging off word dust in all manner of speech sounds. Of course, after three months tape recorders brought into effect – capture useful phrases in word dust silence of abandoned bathing outhouse for playback and use in appropriate circumstance – hear it cutting back and forth in hallways of word dust silent night – “would you look at that picture” – “pass the garbanzo beans” – all manner of speech

sounds clogging up the airwaves, pre-recorded for maximum efficacy, putting the kibosh on Control frequency incursion (Control frequency is directed message: “do this” “do that” – all manner of speech sounds pulsing through in word dust outhouse to sever connective pigtailed of the species). The Academy stresses individual thought programming and random juxtaposition – the first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence.

Second thing is self-defence – beginner's karate class in New York-Chicago, art gallery in Salzburg, all kinds of literature (the great masters, five books at a time, cut in and intersect at random). Cut the Control line at every level – the Academy teaches self-defence on the liminal wavelength – individual thought programming and random juxtaposition. On Thursdays we have movies – five at a time, cut in and intersect at any point– tape recorders cut back and forth “would you look at that picture” – “pass the garbanzo beans”. Dry dust boys in beginner's karate class New York City – pigtailed in art gallery Salzburg, cutting back and forth – “pass the garbanzo beans”. The Academy stresses random juxtaposition.

Director Massimo in crablike blue of forgotten nebula pulls up viewscreen and hails on EarthSphere frequency – hails DE, Traveller Philly, the Architecture Kid. Beasley and Bee leap up from their positions, sitting on the floor in panic and chaos – hails on EarthSphere frequency – hails DE, Traveller Philly, the Architecture Kid. Whole thing comes down on interplanetary kick – directed word on the liminal wavelength. The Academy stresses individual thought programming and random juxtaposition – directed thought coming down through viewscreen at 25 frames per second – cinema blue in word dust directed thought – shrugs heavy metallic shoulders in word dust, all manner of speech sounds “do this” “do that”. The first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence. All communication on sympathetic vibration – directed thought at 25 frames per second – breaks down the image and

reintegrates the word in directed juxtaposition – cuts back and forth “would you look at that picture” “pass the garbanzo beans”. Beginner's karate class, art gallery, all kinds of literature cutting back and forth on the viewscreen – Director Massimo hails EarthSphere frequency – hails DE, Traveller Philly, the Architecture Kid. Bee and Beasley leap up from their positions, sitting on the floor.

The craft glides liquid through black space – heavy metallic gas coming in through breathing tube, fills the lungs with soupy influenza – hard to get it all out sometimes, comes sliding down the throat and nestles in the inner tubes. Been out here for long time now – days and weeks in search for word dust ovens (burning blue in crablike forgotten nebula). Lights and dials in crystal array spark up in sequence on the control display – approaching liminal space – heavy metallic gas pumps through the craft and sedates the back brain – my partner shuts down in weighty emerald miasma, clinging skin of breathing apparatus slowly up and down. Message through on the hailing frequency – alien textual disease – where does such a thing come from? Dead space from here on out – days and weeks – not a word from EarthSphere or any of the colonies – just me and my partner in deep dead space taking readings and breathing heavy on metallic gas (green eyes light up at the sound of it – shuts down in slow up and down of breathing apparatus).

The Academy is self-defence on decentralised lines – get in on the liminal frequency – cut the Control line at all levels. The first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence – cut the word line at all levels. Of course, after three months, tape recorders brought into effect – cut back and forth between students walking street in Salzburg, taking beginner's karate class in Chicago-New York City. Isolated pockets of dry dust boys in bathing outhouse cutting back and forth literature of the great masters, girls in pigtails dressing in connective tissue at 25 frames per second. Director Massimo pulls up the viewscreen – cuts in on Control lines in word dust

falling at 25 frames per second. DE, Traveller Philly, the Architecture Kid, cut in on Salzburg art gallery, beginner's karate class in New York-Chicago, all kinds of literature – cut back and forth between faces “would you look at that picture” “pass the garbanzo beans”.

Traveller Philly pulls up at 25 frames per second – cuts in on fix at dry dust boys in bathing outhouse, girls in pigtails dressing in Salzburg art gallery (“would you look at that picture”) – cuts in on tape recorder in directed speech (word dust falling “do this” “do that”). The Academy stresses individual thought programming and random juxtaposition – Traveller Philly cuts in at 25 frames per second on the Control line (“pass the garbanzo beans”). Director Massimo in crablike nebula pulls up the viewscreen, shrugs heavy metallic shoulders in all manner of speech sounds, hails Traveller Philly on EarthSphere frequency (DE, the Architecture Kid). Bee and Beasley leap up from their positions, sitting on the floor. All manner of speech sounds coming down on interplanetary kick, clogging up the airwaves – cuts back and forth on the Control line.

The first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence – quiet all extraneous thoughts and live in primal instinct of sympatico vibration. Second thing is self-defence – cut the Control line at every level. Isolated pockets on decentralised lines – never know when you might meet another student – cut back and forth on the tape recorder, random juxtaposition. The whole thing comes down from forgotten nebula (Director Massimo pulls up the viewscreen, shrugs heavy metallic shoulders in word dust of all manner of speech sounds) – organise self-defence on decentralised lines. Dry dust boys in bathing outhouse cutting back and forth between girls in pigtails dressing in connective tissue – random juxtaposition of individual thought programming. Enlist services of Nick Hann, the Architecture Kid, cuts back and forth between faces and builds up the Academy on decentralised lines. Total Control

incursion on the directed speech lines “do this” “do that” – never know when you might meet another student – organise self-defence on the liminal wavelength – Director Massimo pulls up the viewscreen at 25 frames per second. The first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence.

Alien textual disease comes in on the hailing frequency – crystal red light shines through the control display and cuts through translucent skin of my partner shimmering in heavy metallic shutdown. Lose control of navigation systems and all automatic life support routines (shit in the bag on command, breathe miasmatic emerald gas when the pump tells us to) – the kick inside kept on sustainable wavelength, succumbs to external influence and pumps heavy metallic gas through the craft, sedating the back brain. Leads on through liquid space – cold light of stars pinpointing through the viewscreen and losing our position in vast sea of squid-ink shot out in panic and chaos. Where does such a thing come from? Leads on through liquid space to vast blue of crablike nebula surrounding translucent skin of heavy metallic gas and dials and lights sparking up in crystal succession. Alien textual disease in the navigation system – word dust falling on all hailing frequencies and leading down to inhabited space – not a thing for it, shut down in heavy metallic gas slowly up and down in clinging skin of the breathing apparatus.

Bee and Beasley leap up from their positions, shitting on the floor in panic and chaos – Director Massimo pulls up the viewscreen, hails EarthSphere frequency in directed speech sounds (“do this” “do that”). The Academy organises self-defence – cuts back and forth in word dust of tape recorder “would you look at that picture” “pass the garbanzo beans”. Traveller Philly cuts in at 25 frames per second, enlists services of Nick Hann, the Architecture Kid – builds up on directed speech line “do this” “do that”, cuts back and forth between faces and dry dust boys in bathing outhouse, girls in pigtails dressing in connective tissue. Traveller Philly cuts in on

literature kick – directed word dust of the great masters taught in Salzburg art gallery, beginner's karate class New York-Chicago – “do this” “do that”. The Academy stresses random juxtaposition – on Thursdays we have movies at 25 frames per second – pull up on the viewscreen and hail EarthSphere frequencies – hail DE, Traveller Philly, the Architecture Kid.

Word dust settles in dry dust bathing outhouse – hallway silence cutting back and forth on the tape recorder – never know when you might meet another student. The whole thing comes down from word dust on interplanetary kick – Bee and Beasley shitting on the floor – Director Massimo sending down the order on viewscreen cutting back and forth 25 frames per second (DE, Traveller Philly, the Architecture Kid). Beginner's karate class in Chicago-New York City shrugs heavy metallic shoulders, cuts back and forth in directed speech sounds – word dust falling on self-defence. Art gallery Salzburg, literature of the great masters, all cutting in at 25 frames per second on the Control line – Traveller Philly on interplanetary kick pulls up the viewscreen and sends report up the food chain – Director Massimo sending down the order from forgotten nebula (crablike and blue). Everything cuts back and forth in directed word dust – sympatico vibrations coming down on “do this” “do that”, connective tissue falling word dust and alien textual disease. Traveller Philly pulls up the viewscreen – on Thursdays we have movies – literature of the great masters cuts back and forth on the liminal wavelength.

The first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence – cutting back and forth at 25 frames per second – all manner of speech sounds clogging up the airwaves. Put the kibosh on Control frequency – isolated pockets, never know when you might meet another student. The Academy is organised on decentralised lines – stresses random juxtaposition. Art gallery Salzburg – “would you look at that picture” – beginner's karate class New York-Chicago – “pass the garbazno beans”.

Traveller Philly pulls up the viewscreen – isolated pockets in self-defence on the liminal wavelength – interplanetary self-defence cutting back and forth at 25 frames per second. Beasley and Bee sitting on the floor in panic and chaos – hail EarthSphere frequency on decentralised lines – cut back and forth between tape recorder in word dust silence. Shadow of a doubt? Cut up and rearrange. Traveller Philly pulls up the viewscreen and hails Director Massimo. Shadow of a doubt? Self-defence on the liminal wavelength. Cuts back and forth at 25 frames per second and eats up literature of the great masters – word dust falling on silent night – cut the Control line at every level.

Wake up on crablike planet of green sky and heavy metallic gas filling the lungs with soupy liquid influenza (hard to get it all out). My partner blinks stupid and fishlike in strange alien resonance – grows a set of gills and leaps into miasmic green of nearby pond. Clinging skin of breathing apparatus goes slowly up and down, eating up inert gas of atmosphere and feeding back into pressurised aqualung. Where does such a thing come from? Control lines on crablike planet of green sky and heavy metallic gas – hear the voice come through on the radio frequency, muttered and effluvious, comes knocking on the back brain and making all presence known. Word dust ovens burning blue in green sky of crablike planet – alien textual disease taking up the arrangement and burning bright fire with crystal array and all manner of speech sounds (comes knocking on the back brain). Have to find my way – gather samples and send report back to EarthSphere for reintegration and reprocessing – dead space from here on out.

The whole thing comes down on word dust at 25 frames per second – alien textual disease. Director Massimo pulls up the viewscreen and hails EarthSphere frequency, enlists services of Nick Hann, the Architecture Kid (cuts back and forth between faces – dry dust boys in bathing outhouse – girls in pigtails dressing in

connective tissue). Traveller Philly blows the word dust and speaks out on tape recorder, cutting back and forth between dry dust boys in bathing outhouse, girls in pigtails dressing in connective tissue – hear all manner of speech sounds in hallways of word dust silent night “would you look at that picture” “pass the garbanzo beans”. On Thursdays we have movies – cutting back and forth, blowing word dust at 25 frames per second. Traveller Philly pulls up the viewscreen, the Architecture Kid. DE hails EarthSphere on Control frequency “send down order from Director Massimo”.

Shadow of a doubt? Bee and Beasley leap up from their positions, shitting on the floor in panic and chaos – turn on the ovens, blue and crablike in forgotten nebula. All manner of speech sounds burned in oven blue – word dust falling back to EarthSphere in directed speech sounds “do this” “do that”. The Academy stresses self-defence – isolated pockets in random juxtaposition. Ovens burn all manner of literature – the great masters, five books at a time – word dust falling back to EarthSphere for reintegration into Control system. The Academy stresses individual thought programming – cut back and forth between all manner of speech sounds – the first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence. Shadow of a doubt? Traveller Philly cuts back and forth on the tape recorder “would you look at that picture” “pass the garbanzo beans”.

Ovens burning blue on Control frequency – Director Massimo sends down the order in one big interplanetary kick – the Academy organised on decentralised lines, never know when you might meet another student. The whole thing comes down on no-sympatico lines – word dust falling on silent hallway cuts all manner of speech sounds back and forth at 25 frames per second – clogs up the airwaves. Director Massimo sends down the order – ovens burning 25 frames per second on the liminal wavelength – on Thursdays we have movies. Shadow of a doubt? Traveller Philly cuts back and forth the Architecture Kid – Control frequency on the viewscreen pulls up

at 25 frames per second. Crablike nebula coming down on word line ovens – never know when you might meet another student. All manner of speech sounds burning on the word dust night – dry dust boys in no-sympatico, girls in pigtails dressing in absence of connective tissue – all textual disease, the great masters. Traveller Philly pulls up the viewscreen, shrugs heavy metallic shoulders in word dust and all manner of speech sounds, cuts in tape recorder at 25 frames per second. The Academy out on Salzburg street of silent night New York City-Chicago.

Green sky and heavy metallic atmosphere of crablike planet – I grow gills, purple in translucent skin, shed slow up and down clinging film of breathing apparatus – leads up to word dust ovens burning blue across a neon sky. Crystal array of lights and dials sparks into life and transmits across all known frequencies – alien textual disease. Shadow of a doubt – where does such a thing come from? What makes report back to EarthSphere on the hailing frequencies of alien textual disease? Crablike and blue the word ovens burn and float word dust down through heavy metallic atmosphere – burn the lungs in forceful weight of charred thought and alien textual disease – leap into the nearest pond, green and thick against my translucent shadow skin. Slowly up and down in heavy breathing green water of crab planet (blue ovens burning word dust in neon night) – meet my partner and meld into a single being, webbed fingers and gills flapping in translucent skin. Moist orifice merging into long webbed fingers – the crystal inside sparks up in heavy succession – become single fishlike, resonant creature shifting skin in neon green of crab planet waters. Word dust ovens burn all plant matter and boil the lakes, leaving only dry husk of planet, liquid through dark space and moving on down to EarthSphere – Director Massimo pulls up the viewscreen and sends down the order – everything dead space from here on out.

Shadow of a doubt? Can the dry dust boys and girls in pigtails avoid the word

dust ovens? Never know when you might meet another student. Shadow of a doubt? Director Massimo sends down the order at 25 frames per second, pulls up the viewscreen and hails DE, Traveller Philly, the Architecture Kid. The Academy stresses individual thought programming and random juxtaposition – self-defence on the liminal wavelength. Can the dry dust boys and girls in pigtails avoid the word dust ovens? Shadow of a doubt. Cut back and forth in random juxtaposition – never know when you might meet another student. Decentralised lines – cut the Control line at every level – pass the garbanzo beans. Shadow of a doubt. The first thing you have to learn is how to live in silence.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Shadow of a Doubt deals with issues of Control incursion into everyday affairs – attempts to subvert the Control mechanism wherever it appears. Wound into science fiction, the piece takes inspiration from William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, and the rest of the Beats – subvert the Control mechanism in narrative structure and literary device: fight the thing head on!*

AUTHOR BIO: *Lachlan J McDougall is an Australian prose technician working in cut-up and experimental literature. Their work deals with issues of Control and the attempts we all make to avoid it. Currently working on debut novel The Jagged Spiral as well as sporadic work on cut-up novel Terra Firma. His work can be found in Blue as an Orange Magazine.*