

*S*nterview *S*ssue 11 (Fiction)

Fiction Editor Joey Cruse with Lachlan McDougall

Hey Lachlan! Welcome to Fleas on the Dog. I want to thank you for participating. Since we're literally just talking in a WORD document, I try to make it as conversational as possible, but there are some small limitations – i.e., my idiot ass may come off in a way I did not intend to. Usually, I have a pretty good grasp of tone though, so I hope nothing is lost in translation – as in the stupid jokes I try to drop in. Lachlan's story "A Long Red Carpet Back to 1910" appears in this issue—Fiction # 2

JC: I actually have to know, because we published your previous story "Shadow of a Doubt" in Issue 10 and, because I may have made wild assumptions about where you are from and it has haunted me since, where are you from and how does your environment/history play into your writing?

LM: I'm actually Australian with a Scottish background (some German thrown in too, I'm told), so Irish was pretty close. I think there is something about the Australian temperament that finds its way into my work, but overall I wouldn't say I'm much interested in my particular environment. My work tends towards the outside of experience and I try not to root it down too much in my own background and sense of place.

JC: In "A Long Red Carpet Back to 1910," you play with what I would/could best describe as Burrough's "cut-up" method, and, honestly, I may like your style better (may...). How do you keep the lines so clean as to be followed?

LM: Working with the cut-up is a tricky business, there is a tension and play between the wonderful inherent randomness and the desire to actually get some content across. In my case I have tried to achieve some balance by smoothing over the lines and allowing the wash of noise to offer up a story. There is a weaving here of straight prose and smoothed over cut-ups, good luck telling what is what.

JC: *I read your work and have like PTSD flashes of my Beckett and Joyce course, how do you feel the repetition and cyclical nature of your language works on the reader?*

LM: Repetition and cyclic systems are the nature of the world and universe. The planet is in a strict orbit and we all repeat our actions daily. It is the minor deviations from routine that interest me. A reader can be shaped, moulded like clay, through a careful turning of the potter's wheel—throw in a sharp finger or some implement or other and the shape and form changes radically. It is my intention to throw a spanner in the works and alter the sequence of events.

JC: *Stylistically, you're pretty modern it seems – you have more noticeable control over the line than other contemporary writers, who are probably more scared to write as such, and certainly more than any other beginning writer who is trying to practice through the same method. What would be your favorite decade of writing - as in from 1910 on (call it Sherwood Anderson) on – and/or who are those authors that influenced you the most?*

LM: Firstly, thank you very much for the compliment. Secondly, I think the fifties and sixties yielded some of the most interesting writing of the modern era. The emergence of the beats and a new system of experimentation is thrilling to see pouring out in books and poems. Personally, as you guessed, I'm a pretty big Burroughs fan and his writing and philosophy of word has probably had the greatest effect on my craft, but I also look outside of fiction to writers like Aleister Crowley and Austin Osman Spare for inspiration as to how to proceed. Writing, especially cut-up writing, is a magical craft like no other.

JC: *When you want to get good and tight, what is your favorite drink? If you have a favorite dinosaur, what is it? And, if you were to purposefully cast off your identity and drift off into nowhere what country would you go to and why?*

LM: I actually don't drink—I'm a pretty straight laced person when it comes to things like that—but when the career of youth was in full swing I liked good beer and cold gin. I don't have a favorite dinosaur per se, but what I do like are those plastic dinosaurs for children you see in shops that resemble no possible earthly creature—that's the plastic nightmare of the future. Third question: I would like to drift off anywhere and everywhere, really explore the place. A return to the good ol' US of A would be nice, just wandering through New York and New Orleans, but I think overall I'm content to be a general drifter.

Lachlan,

*I want to say that I very dig your work and I cannot thank you enough for your joyfully insightful answers and for just taking the time out of your day to indulge me and my couple-of-beers-deep curiosities for **Fleas on the Dog** – they thank you too.*

Sincerely,

Joey Cruse