

The Mud Fort

BILL GRIFFITHS was born in Middlesex in 1948. He began writing poetry and publishing in 1970, benefitting from the guidance of Eric Mottram, Bob Cobbing, and many others on the little press scene. He went on to study Old English at King's College, London, obtaining a PhD in 1987. He is Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Northern Studies, Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne and lives in Seaham, County Durham.

Also by Bill Griffiths

Poetry

Tyne Txts with Tom Pickard (Amra Imprint, Seaham, 2004)

Web sites

<http://www.billygriff.co.uk>

<http://www.opalcoast.co.uk>

<http://www.ochrecoast.co.uk>

<http://www.the-lollipop.co.uk>

<http://www.story-of-seaham.com>

<http://www.pitmatic.co.uk>

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BILL GRIFFITHS



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*for all the little presses
that fly with the phoenix in the sunshine*

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A Book of Spilt Cities with visuals by Robert Clark (Etruscan Books, Devon, 1999)

Our Winter Game (Writers Forum, London, 1999)

Nomad Sense (Talus Editions, London, 1998)

The Book of the Boat (Writers Forum, London, 1998)

Worlds of New Measure ed. Clive Bush (Talus Editions, London, 1997)

Conductors of Chaos ed. Iain Sinclair (Picador, 1996)

Rousseau and the Wicked (Invisible Books, Brighton, 1996)

The Secret Commonwealth (Oasis Books, London, 1995)

Liam's Song (RWC no.23, Caversham, 1995)

Future Exiles (Paladin, 1992)

A Book of Legends (Writers Forum, London / Amra Imprint, Seaham, 1991)

Materia Boethiana (Galloping Dog, Newcastle upon Tyne / Poetry Bookshop, Hay on Wye, 1984)

And in many small edition booklets issued by Bill's own Amra Imprint over the period 1984-2004.

The Mud Fort

In the mud fort under the colossal blood-line and clumsy curtain-wood
and frost-lemon helmets

gaping

waving

to defend

the gates jamming

ply-twist

with imminent rain

luckless

and the car'board injuns

shout orders . . .

convene, weave

waste the last electric

and the jigsaw-planes

serious

more sonic

cruise for the sign of assistance

Reflection

I turn round
to see her

it is a cheer-sweet she-seek / OK

in the flats
and the sides of the scenery
a hint?

I seem to rub my soap-stained arms

as, you never beat the gunman in the mirror

pencils of up-oak: fingers
(you guess at motives)

the champagne is spring-green open
and reactions

we listen to step-rhythms . . .

What makes—?
(She queries . . .)
What makes us this or—?

we draw an entry card
beasts of rainbow
dance at the club

Shim Gets His Apartment Back

I nestle my head
the settee
her arm is over her head
my ankles cross-crusade gently
curled so to swissroll
head in her arm
sleep-breath
make

The parquet is immaculate
it brills
light ash-effect simulate light oak . . .
bind (it) to your heart

Shim skids past

it shows
(the print was a gift)
a gem-almond moon (a slip of)
and the graded night

its echo blue and bluer water
Still tho' I see an oar
and pier-post— who is it?
it had out-merited the tenancy

The new locks are on
An episode as resolved
rings clean brass and strange paint
the skip-bone slight master has come to claim
(and a police howl rushes somewhere)
the laughter-praise
(I prose on and will likely seem pretty foolish)
a cachination since
The old locks are gone

Bagoom! bagoom!
Tang! t-tang, tan-t-t . . .
the ball-bearing gun aside 'tis laid
“from war is come”
a storm of plastic hail-drops have whelmed
“his faithfull harp”
with a bold yell of motiveless triumph
wakes the speaker,
the Swazi drummer doll man gives it
Bagoom! bagoom!

The Teddy Bear to Jay

There was an age when BEARS ruled
and in the silt of the cave you will find it
the tattered pickets (of)
bones split into
narrowed and charcoaled
man served the BEAR
meat and shells
and decorated his den
luminous soot

ochre cartoons
“hang on, there’s no black ball on the table”

they were my far sister-uncles

“does it matter”
“hell it does what are we playing”

you stamp 'n' beat 'n' dance like your master
(magic a long winter)

Awake

sentience
to prey on itself
like monsters of the deep jar

everything that is a word of your own
fantasies of thought of the outside
and the wild, alien temporal corpuscles
break loose in the scheme

the spin-grid

kneel to the Great China God
sez Liam
the casualty to vomit