

The Land of Green Ginger

ANTHONY ROWLAND was born in Bradford in 1970. Since studying at Hull and Leeds he has taught literature and creative writing at The University of Salford. He has published poems in various journals and magazines, including *Critical Quarterly*, *Stand* and *P.N. Review*. A selection of his work appeared in *New Poetries III* (Carcanet, 2002). He received an Eric Gregory Award in 2000, and a Learning Northwest Award in 2001.

The Land of Green Ginger

ANTONY ROWLAND



CAMBRIDGE

PUBLISHED BY SALT PUBLISHING
PO Box 937, Great Wilbraham, Cambridge PDO CB21 5JX United Kingdom

All rights reserved

© Antony Rowland, 2008

The right of Antony Rowland to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Salt Publishing.

First published 2008

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by Biddles Ltd, King's Lynn, Norfolk

Typeset in Swift 9.5 / 13

This book is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

ISBN 978 1 84471 400 1 hardback

Salt Publishing Ltd gratefully acknowledges
the financial assistance of Arts Council England



1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

for Alan and Emma

Contents

Engrish	1
Pie	2
A History of the Beard	4
The Italian Bob	6
Engrish	8
Kwak	11
Lekke-Bekke	13
Damrak	14
Croky	16
Vienna	17
Scallops	18
The Cake	21
Charlie and Sassoon	23
The Long Cyclops	25
Cucumber	26
Cwm	28
Ox	29
Rain-pie	30
The Flies' Cemetery	32
1926	34
Ganton Mount	35
Mistle from 1900	36
Pomfret	37
Cromwell's Toothbrush	38
Primigravida	40
Polly	42
The Land of Green Ginger	43
Cech Speaks	44
Golem	45

Terezín	46
Rowland on the Hair	47
Lésvos	49
Skála Eressou	50
Bogue	51
Io	53
Gently Michael	55
Chestnut Avenue	56
Tongue and Udder	57
Moose	59
Press-ganged	60
R.A.F. Mapless	61
I.M. Deltics, 1977–81	62
London Particular	63
Suffrage	65

Acknowledgements

Some of the poems first appeared in the following magazines and anthologies: *Citizen 32*, *Critical Quarterly*, *Leviathan Quarterly*, *New Poetries III* (Carcanet, 2002), *P.N. Review*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Psychopoetica*, *Stand*, *Staple* and *Yorkshire Journal*. I would like to thank the staff at Chetham's Library and the John Ryland's Library (Deansgate) in Manchester, Sue Powell for her books, and Scott Thurston, for all those ginger adventures.

English

Beard papa pursues handmade deliciousness
The deliciousness of handmade cooking
Is not in proportion to the good point of the tool
It is in proportion to affection of the person who cooks
Happiness if help of the handmade cooking which
Affection was put into can be done at all, marinate retard.
The small pigs which carry happiness convey a feeling to everybody.
Give your friends your wonderful feeling recollections
That it travelled this ground with this chocolate.
I shall enjoy your space combining various items
Since it seems that the sun is wrong. After all, dream is a fair wind.
There are some nice goods nearby: beam happily; pray for a miracle.
A selection of gentlemen: from now on I want no more time competition.
Please purchase goods after affirmation: shopping is always taking care of
me;
I shall recompense it before long. So many alligators, so many dreams:
All are glittering, aren't they? You lady will push this button before leaving.
Let's go out in a poetry mood, since I like you in the recent days.
Do you like bowling? Breaking down the pins and get hot communication?
I am absorbed in a naughty act of nature, jyu-jyu:
Let's enjoy smoking and keep manner, produce a young party exceedingly
(we support your socks).
I depart with my full bag of time
I wish to sing a duet with transparent time
I'm glad to know you're fine
This is about all I want to tell you this time
Time seems to return to the turn of its beautiful melody
Please listen to the dream flow a fresh heart discloses
Please look at my fresh face
Please receive it just when you open your heart
A bouquet to all of you all over the world.
Listen, do you believe when I say?

Pie

'Will you go to the pie-feast?'

— DODSLEY, 1550

Singing herb singe roast vapours Fray: Saturday
pie-floater in Rawson market; waxy peas island
gelatine-coated pink flush before comic stall.
Passionate friendship wanted with a Bentos,
good sense of meat to gravy ratio. Slim,
attractive suet looking for pudding love
with like-minded crust: no tin wasters;
Swiss-slapped pâté on the brawn of pigley
-pie, ridged with needle precision and oh,
so delicately browned at the knobs, bow-tie
at the centre hot-puddled, pie *de pundio*,
fayre buttys of Porke smyte with Vele welcome.
Mint-chopped sausage baguette found abandoned:
police are savouring bent *expenditum*
at Bolton Priory in pyis et pastellis. Pie-purrs
undercut by cholesterol scam: police support nut diet.
Sought in attractive wastes of Uppermill: chips just so,
clay-coloured dish Delia-thick in hot top-slick
— 'That's not a pie, it's boo-gloop with a bin lid' —
pastry chocked round oval but peels off faced with fork.
'Hote pies, hote! Goode gees and grys, Gowe dyne, Gowe!'
Bramble for afters? No, two would be spoiling us.
Policy wonks hit pies with fat tax, fatties
who puttis fast at their vly pyiss, headlines
Yorkshire chippies' favourite rag, *The Fryer*.
Finger buffet threat to national health:
Blair's babes weaned on focaccia and lamb's lettuce
forced into Mowbray tour of the bow-walled pie,
northern one-portion growlers and stand-pies
that stand-pipe Robert's pie-house in Bradford:
Jerry bombs cobweb the glass but daily displays
defiantly steam. 'Every puff', puffed Priestley,

'was defying Hitler. Keep your pie level
to avoid ungelled gravy dribble incident.'
The Fryer pastes the government's attempt
to ration meat dripping—'Animal fat
for the dominant race. Animal fat
for the dominant county within that race.'
Cold balls lovingly brisked with milk yolk: Sunday chow
brought family together not gristle niblets
in bad butchers' pork cast-offs. Bison pies
go missing in Salford posse mix up. Small shops'
warmers in sausage roll chaffage scandal:
police inspect gluten levels, mustard lovers,
cuckoo mayonnaise run off with sheer pie.

A History of the Beard

'The master of the barber shop practised surgery and could breathe a vein as well as mow a beard'

— *Antiquarian Repertory*

That's blood in my window, yes. Forget it. Let me cover you with the suds of a laver,
curlleth you with a Crisping Iron and (on the side) cutteth you with a
Knife

so that the Blood spitteth. You say you only came in for a mullet, not phlebotomy? Sit still. Prepare to be frounst with my irons while you strum on the gittern. I see your ambrosial locks are an old cast.

Do not worry. With this camphor soap I shall tweak your inamorato's peak

and trim it as tight as your subercles. (That's sidies.) Your mowchatows will wither their tendrils: I shall trim you like a cheese.

Would you like a gentleman's cut? I see not.

A common cut? County cut? Court cut? Shall I fix a wig with the doup of a candle,

cannikin and dredging box? A periwig on the pow, weel-heeled, sansy and as decent as that of my friend Sir Thomas Browne, so large it loaded a camel?

A bag-wig with sausage curls? A campaign-wig with knobs, bobs or dildos?

Are you are a Puritan? Do you want a commode on your head? If so, there shall be no tricking, trimming, rubbing, scratching, combing, clawing, trickling,

toying to tawe out tuppence. Instead, I shall boss your mouth with the lather

of my balls (sweet sope balls) and ferret your molars as in Gay's fable, 'The Goat Without a Beard', in which 'Black, rotten teeth' are strung to dry in the window by the cups of blood. No? God save you, then, from the women barbers of Scarborough. As my friend St Jerome said, 'The woman who wears a wig commits a moral sin', as if it were the barnet of Pepys, made with the hair of the plague.

Go and comb your peruke in an opera box, beaux-face.
Make haste and shave on a Sunday, be fined like that naughty Patrick
Brontë in Thornton. On the Lord's Day, indeed, sir, espied by Dissenters.
No, sir, I shall hear nothing against Sir Thomas More,
who cast his beard aside from the chopping block with his last words :
'It hath done no treason'. So the ballad goes : 'It is very hard to handle a
beard'
whether dagger-like or stiletto, that might eyes outpike.
I can see this is all irrelevant natter. Sir, you have a chin like a nutmeg.
You would fair well in the Hum-hums of Afghanistan, where the
humble being
yanks at the sovereign's bush, to heap complaints on the shame of the
beard.
No, I do not keep spares. Never demand a beard of another,
pull the devil by the beard, make anyone's beard, beard someone,
or wipe the beard of the sister of King Henry the Eighth. Starch it
instead. Ah, I see : you
have no head. Well, God speed you, my love, and remember this advice :
to protect the beard from disarrangement, always wear a cardboard box
at night.

The Italian Bob

‘Poorer people would go to a travelling barber, who set down a stool beneath a tree.’

— JANE ASSER

The wimples of my mind begin. The syntax of the haircut must unfold as you spill me your desires and I give you leaves in a teacup. I could perm you like the stories of the crispines of the rich, the polled bobs, swallow-tail beards and pompadour pads, or cork to plump old cheeks; lappets of mouse skin skinned for eyebrows.

For you, a basin under chestnuts that swell like heads, the negatives of leaves imprinted on your seat. You sniff at my pestilence, tales of square beards worn by Egyptian queens at court, but if barbers have sunk as low as this bower today, then why did the Egyptian gods hire a barber god? You drone about your job when I have clipped among the frescoes of seaweed, then baited bulls in ancient Crete, heavy with unguents. Us sibyls bached and diademed ourselves with carats chignon crinoline-kisses ear-scoops until my lovers faded into the Sumerian curls in the graves at Ur: I cried over the mussel shells of eye shadow and rouge.

Would you *wish* to know that Stuart women rarely wear a hat? But oh, those melon

heads of the Restoration, small cauls restored by the bun at the back. Your snores make me feel like a firework on the sixth: you won't get that, and I am aghast by my foreknowledge of your bouffant to be. I shall slake your knots with pomatum, tonsure or flocculate until you wake. No, I am not the daughter of Samos, Claros, Delos or Delphi. And leave my sheep alone.

This stool is the stone I used to mount when the portents flowed time after time. My words stitch it, like the nine prophecies for Tarquinius Superbus. Apollo gave me years, the same number of grains I could salve in my palms, but forgot to ask for youth; he bartered for my cherry in exchange.

Each week I wizen. My breasts crumple to a cicada. When my knuckles crumble in these scissor-holes

I shall be hung in a cage at Cumae, a bore on the history
and future of the follicle. The gods will jibe, 'Sibyl, what do you want?'
I throw them a broken teacup then squeak, 'I want to die.'

English

I will eat this and will become fortunate all together
the thing eat delicious is happy
therefore it will make a living happily
its colour and texture make a room of peace.
We, tasty place, choose very carefully to bring you
what you haven't appreciated ever, braised dork.
This is the most comfortable meal you have ever run into,
beard papa freshness and deliciousness :
everybody, even a family, will be continued every day ;
future voices need to be heard—eyebrows are always.
Don't take out a hand! You could sleep very comfortably.
We cheer everybody who communicates with all the heart,
that's why our products are always alive. This
portable food becomes automatically portable when carried.
Ah, hamburger friend: I feel happiness when I eat him.

Put on one's thinking cap—being delicious is not everything.
Because now only happens once,
wear the scent of freshly pickled roses :
refreshing fragrance sends you a comfortable time,
wraps you in excellent function and the refined touch quality.
Anticipation of a wonderful encounter! Hopes are at my side,
my dream that has begun to move.
I smell the smelly smell of something that smells smell :
happiness since you were in me—I am the fortunate!
But a man's oath are wafers : he ploughs in sand and sows
against the wind who hopes for constant. Changeable.
Man is changeable. Weathercock. Men wind and fire
are ever changing. Slack and bitter, the game of life.
You found a treasure at last—I have only a faint memory
of that affair. The scene still comes to mind
now and then. I have a vividly remember seeing you here.
Let's walk to the next town in the night :

warmth of a tree is told as it is, to favourite you of wooden goods.
Love—no surfing! Here is dangerous area—sharks get charmed you.
Why shouldn't we kill the people?

Still—hello, my friend. Friendship makes a happiness double :
let's divide sadness half and make us remove our unhappiness fears.
We think it will always be with smile. Then, a pleasant thing comes.
There is something going on deep in the forest,
so get ready for infinity, enchanted freak.
We'll advise you about your stickiness about your daily life :
our brand makes a thing which a consumer is satisfied.
All around us, our own world of wonder! Can't you see how chic we are?
For the sake of irreplaceable persons, we'll dramatise an extravagance :
under the sea all fishes are romantic vagabonds, travel the fantastic
world.

Two new conditions to live—harmony and mildness. My shop is your
friend,
but carrying out to other floors and carrying in should be withheld.
The life in the world of value is done, the point of view of the thing
which was different from the general person and the way of thinking.
Humanity are fighting against tired :
avoid seniority dribble, make a garden an insignificant stage,
a dream catcher. Beware, I'm armed and have tension.
And particular about the material
And particular about the material
and addition things such as an antiseptic never used for health
which creates a healing time and space beyond reality for you.
Very few people cannot know this by now ;
however, we are informing you again to be sure.
The reason why is that products can be very active in a variety of scene
such as a site of construction, party and something like that.
Please, no conversation, no saliva

Please pull a string when you swell manually
Pleasure is born here, unintentionally with individuality,
nonchalantly with sensibility. Take a pause; have a rest—then
look back yourself and reconsider. My flowers in recollection
sing a poem in sepia color. Swarms of winter gnats
are still around here, gently warbling and chittering.
Pleasant things . . . I really love them! I'm in a very fine mood.
All are new. Glory be to God for dappled things,
for skies of couple-color and a brindled cow.
You are available at the ticket office. Thank you.

Kwak

I am supping from a Bunsen burner,
your eyes that go on forever,
the frisson of always being about to eat.
Ushered into a Winstub, where the munster
will not be served until the cheese walks
on the tarte flambée, the minster
melts in your background, the kwak
beer yeasts, you supper me.

I stand at the painting you were two days ago:
these chocolate hearts laced in tiroirs are
the thoughts of small lovers. An orphan
made your face then snaffled your confiture
with the mint finger of the statue
parked in the Barrage Vauban,
about to rouge her lips, too engorged
and separated from the clutch.

I could have strangled that giraffe
as you gave me the gist of your eyes,
Frisk mints, and my stomach bloomed,
knotted at your recognition of a scene.
Please do not stand next to anybody
in a gallery. I cannot stand it.
'Monsieur, vous cherchez une idée?'
'Voulez-vous une giraffe?'

We breakfast on the thumb, Au Coin du Feu,
as I regard you en coin, from a corner,
the corner of your eyes, you have cornered
my heart, 'Have I seen you in a corner?',
l'épicerie du coin, the local grocer,
certainly, yes, dans the coin, but you will never
be round about, I'm not pas du coin,
from here, nor are . . . if only I could jam you.

Fifteen minutes with you, the bones
of your cheeks conker my thoughts
as the snail shells bicker around us.
I am crocked, monsieur. You lean in:
'Are you permanent?'; 'Would you enjoy
a bloc of goose?' You rule. The raindrops
are coming down like stair-rods. Mint.
The gargoyles are streaming. Look at you.

Lekke-Bekke

We reflect on pouting windows
in the slippery dawn: ice wrinkles
the seamy pavements. Flesh for hire
on the Velvet Canal: enticing taps
near cold Vondel's house, Aesthetic Nails
and Computer Winkel. Sending mints
was an act of betrayal. We're hours
from your lips in the Nijmegen winter.

There, the kwak girl's lekke-bekke
beaks steaming creamy frothy coffee:
we kiss by the frozen fish gobs,
and the kussen-sloop of sloping desire.
'Have you any odd-sized packages?'
Yesterday's shoes one foot from yours,
sated by the tong stall and market pinks.
The coley soils our fingers like wet coal.

Welcome to the sleep seats, Schiphol airport,
facing budget planes, our absent future.
Precarious pears of unknown nationality
ripple the carts' tiers, my rapid eyes.
Minding the gap between my bags
and your city, you declare a marriage.
Polders lower like mood, estimation
of security throwing my pack, a bouquet.

Damrak

White rabbits greet the eve of September
on Rokin, a street which leaves a hole
in Amsterdam. Our temporary home
is shabby as the fubs in *The Flying Dutchman*;
our carpets are the texture of droog brood.
In our rucksack, a nibble of cracker packets.
Autumn comes with a creeping hush.

This city is a giddy kipper.
This bridge is lekker in an icing of stream.
Crepuscular roads of water are
dreamed by seekers of skunk;
fingers twitch in bottomless pockets.
Dante's waterways concentricised Hell;
the lidless eyes of tourists pass.

Your face as grey as an absent tulip,
we grace Damrak, stationed by a rusp of canals.
A heron freezes the obelisk of a barge.
Pigeons boozle loose air in Singel.
ECUs rise like metaphysical bees
from these thin roofs atop with hooks.
The single sun is a Gogh, ocherous.

The waiters are as elusive as ciscos
in the brown bar, *The Three Quarks*, marking
the discos of Dam Square. Round the Vondelpark:
flesh, sand and guitars, all bad.
The fat porks glisten in the Indian heat.
In the *Twin Pigs*, banana bunches peek
like yellow spiders over the bowls.

We have forgotten your mother for a night
but the hotel is still the edge of a nightmare.
Our nostrils pickle with Damrak's sough
as, reflecting neon, mushrooms and windows,
our owner gnomes on Warmoesstraat
with Sunday smiles and hosepipes.
An aubade of dealers flushes the cobbles.