



THE POOR PRINT



A Parallel Oriel

Christy Callaway-Gale

It's Sunday. Last Sunday. My entire bedroom is in our car, there's a bike wheel next to my head and I have that unsettled, excited feeling as spires emerge overhead. Oriel helpers with their colourful t-shirts offer to carry my bags, both my parents cry as they say goodbye to me and one of the porters tells me to register in the hall. But I'm not a fresher; I'm a fourth year - the phrase that has quickly become the broken record soundtrack to my final year.

Coming back after a year abroad is like finding a letter you wrote but never sent and not quite believing it was written by you. Everything is fresh but familiar and somehow more foreign than the foreign place you made home last year. A lot of your friends are no longer around but some of their younger sisters are, making for daily Tom Hanks in "Forever Young" moments (think frozen bodies and time capsules), which ironically makes you feel ancient. And I am. Almost 23. As I said, ancient.

Sitting in staircase 33 listening to excited first-year chat in the tunnel (yes, we can hear all of your not-so-private conversations) I can almost see staircase 26 round the corner, where I started. But I'm also next to the MCR, where I am a fresher this year, a sort of "Freshers: Round 2: ft. delicious free coffee and alcohol that you can battel".

And in the MCR I'm a child in a college family again, with a sibling in common from my first fresher's one; my son is in the same year as me now (which somehow seems incestuous), my husband has moved to the city (am I a widow or a divorcee now?), and my parents are ghosts of a finalist's past.

Other things have moved on too. You don't have to play slot machines with the washers and dryers anymore and fobs for gates no longer exist (cue daily Michael J. Fox in "Back to the Future" moment). Just about the only thing that hasn't changed in this renewal of mine, is the actual library renewal system - sorry, I couldn't resist that.

Things are different, then. But maybe that's a good thing. I'm also different from before. I no longer wear make-up everyday and I now like porridge. It's only fitting that such life-altering switches are reflected in college life. But I'm also aware that this re-birth is my last, here, at least. This freshers' week is nostalgic, as well as hopeful; it's an end and not just a beginning. I am Benjamin Button.

Later, I walk out of the library having finished organising my MT timetable, which no doubt will change multiple times before term actually starts. I look up at the window of the room where I stayed at interview - staircase 14, before the re-furb - and see my nineteen-year-old face looking out at what's to come. ■

Talking Revolution Over Coffee

Amanda Higgin

Xanda and I sit in armchairs, chatting across a café table as the rain drizzles down the window beside us.

The café is humid from drying coats, but we have been here long enough to have warmed up.

"I've finally gotten into Hamilton," I offer in a momentary quiet.

"Congratulations!" Xanda smiles.

"Took you a while."

For those not aware, the Broadway phenomenon Hamilton presents the life of US founding father Alexander Hamilton - who worked up from destitution in the Caribbean to becoming the first Secretary of the Treasury - as a hip-hop musical. The brainchild of Lin-Manuel Miranda, it opened in February 2015 and was recently nominated for a record 16 Tony awards, winning 11.

"Yeah, it did. I'm a bit behind the times!"

"It makes a change from the usual revolutionary spiel, don't you think?"

"Yeah - you'd never see Marius and Cosette rapping!"

She laughs. "True, but that's not really what I meant."

"Oh?"

"I meant that it actually shows the

hard work that you have to put in

to make change happen. Everywhere else, revolution is a

quick fix - think of The Hunger

Games or Divergent. It's not

realistic, but it is addictive. It's the same problem in Everyone wants to think they can change the world just like that. Manuel tries to emphasise But in Hamilton, Lin-Manuel presents all the hours Hamilton puts in - there's even a song for it!" She starts singing 'Non-Stop', one of my favourite pieces from the show, drawing a look from the next table: "How do you write like you're running out of time?"

"I agree that Hamilton shows the work needed for a revolution," I say, "but you can't really say that's unusual. Suzanne Collins deliberately shows the sacrifices

that Katniss has to make, and the PTSD she suffers."

"It's true that Katniss has a hard time of revolution," Xanda considers, "but the change is still ridiculously fast. She just walks in, becomes the Mockingjay and saves the world. Every action is dramatic. In Hamilton, you get a

sense of the mundane effort put in by writing essays into the night, negotiating with his rivals, whatever. It isn't exciting, but it's

all necessary to make the revolution a success."

"If Hamilton is really so different, why didn't I notice it?"

"The perils of montage!" Xanda says. "It's like in sports movies: everyone knows that to succeed in sport you have to train until it

burns and then repeat the next day, but films condense those months of tough training into a

montage no longer than Eye of the Tiger. The viewer leaves with the impression that the team's success was a quick fix, when really the

montage conceals the hard work.

"No," she concedes, "but that's the point. If you want to see real change it's not entertaining; it's hard work. You don't get quick fixes in everyday life. The change is in the seemingly pointless moments that nobody sees: the persistence and training. How's your training going, by the way?"

"Brilliantly..." I say sheepishly. Xanda raised an eyebrow. "I'll have you know I did three press-ups last week."

"Was that one monumental effort, three days of training or an almost daily achievement of half a press-up?"

"Whatever," I sigh. "I need a montage!" ■



A Way of Doing Things

Charlie Willis

*M*ichael

McManus had a way of doing things. He would get up at six minutes past eight o'clock no matter whether it were a Sunday

or his birthday or a cold day in the depths of January. Sometimes, depending on the time of year of course, this meant that he was up before the dawn broke and sometimes he was up long after the summer sun had floated up in the sky. He knew when it was winter because he had to turn on the lamp beside his bed in order to find his glasses after the alarm clock had sounded. He washed before breakfast, in the shower, with one fifteen millilitre measurement of shower cream. At breakfast he ate the rare branded cereal that had been



Alex Waygood

since childhood. This brand of cereal was difficult to come by, but Michael was prepared to undertake the monthly trip out to the suburbs to purchase the cereal at an alternative foods shop run by a group of young people with long hair and piercings in unusual places. The cereal was not particularly expensive, which was just as well because Michael didn't have a lot of money. In fact, he didn't have much money at all. The coins for the monthly cereal trip were placed in a separate jar to the Michael's nature to change his coins for the weekly trip to the way of doing things. ■

supermarket. These little jars seldom sparkled in anything more than a slightly dull copper colour. There was a third jar, smaller than the first two, into which Michael placed the coins for his weekly lottery ticket. The lottery tickets from the previous weeks of Michael's life were stacked up in boxes under the kitchen table. The lottery had never swung in Michael's favour but he wouldn't have considered for a moment not purchasing his weekly ticket. It was not in Michael's nature to change his

Continue reading *A Way of Doing Things* by Charlie Willis on our website, thepoorprint.com, which also features all of the articles in our print editions and is regularly updated with online-only content.

Also available exclusively online this week, Oriel's very own *Slow Travel* series by Tobias Thornes continues into the new academic year with a reflection of journeys travelled so far and a pondering of what is to come. The perfect companion to your lazy Sunday morning.

'Ceramic'

Tom Davy

To the first term's autumnal fog. Tears tumble off marooned cheeks That peek into new rooms, new curtains, Parted like families. Then there's the names that fizz Like molecules around the hall, A mahogany pit of reaction After reaction After reaction.

We're all playing potters, Clay bridges between ourselves Form like the celestial lines above. The Oxford sky observes quietly Then mutters something And it pours down.

And the realisation gains momentum: Three short years from now, Beneath these muttering clouds, New stuttering students Will stutter staircase After subject After name,

And share newly in the rain.

Auld Acquaintance

Aidan Chivers

*A*s the heat of our idyllic nineteen summer draws to its close, and gives out its final surge of warmth in a late September burst, it is inevitable that we should gather at the bar which featured so prominently in our last few years of school.

Full of excitable, childish memories and coated with hundreds of

tiny snippets of youth, it presents itself to us from across the street as a huge and cumbersome, but overwhelmingly familiar silhouette.

Yet as we approach, the stained, beer-soaked outdoor tables are gone; the battered, worn-out sign has been replaced by new, sleek, shining letters which announce a change in ownership; the newly gleaming floor no longer tells stories of years of spilt pints and the former landlord's notoriously stin-

gy attitude towards running his pub.

Washed out of grime, stickiness, and all its warm, happy memories, the new establishment gleams from the light fittings, the beer pumps and the smiles of the newly-appointed staff behind the bar.

We manage to enjoy a final drink together without too much distress. As we leave, and head back off to our respective universities and our slowly diverging lives, a little group of four pass us on their way in.

They're school-age, like we used to be. Two guys, two girls: a couple holding hands and another that

will be by the end of the evening. They chat away excitedly about their plans for the night, delighted by their discovery of this smart new bar on the edge of town.

I watch them go in, and I smile as I recognise ourselves from not so long before. They're on their first of a series of evenings from which they'll attach great personal significance to the pub. They'll make their own memories and stories, which they'll tell and relive and exaggerate and make up.

They'll drink and laugh and fall in love with the spot, and consider themselves part of it. And one day

they'll lament the tiniest changes to a place they don't even really know.■

Contribute to The Poor Print

We warmly welcome your contributions for our upcoming Michelmars 2016 editions:

Issue 14—Design

Issue 15—Utopia

Issue 16—Dusk

Contact us at:

thepoorprint@oriel.ox.ac.uk

'Light'

Emma Gilpin

Light
Everything about you was light
And I felt relief
As you reached through the night
Your smile so easy
Your spirit so blithe
You carried me to heaven
As my paperweight body
Turned suddenly,
Joyously light

Like a Rolling Stone

Lucy Mellor

"Looked in the mirror, I don't know who I am anymore;

The face is familiar, but the eyes,

The eyes give it all away"

-James, Out to Get You

*E*verything I see touches me, and changes me in a million minute ways and refuses to let me be the same. No matter how subconscious or brief, it leaves the ghost of itself behind, and from this I create who I am, formed from every aspect of life I've seen or heard or tasted.

I clamour for more of the things that tasted nice on my tongue, which in itself changes over time as

I ever so carefully evolve into someone new: ongoing, always. Like eating a bowl of Tesco own-brand granola, I cherry-pick my way through, keeping the bits I like and holding them close to my chest, letting the rest fall behind.

In time come things that are shiny and new, and what I once held dear is put down gently on the ground, for I loved it but I'm ready to leave it behind. Resistance is futile, and why would I try it, when every day I could wake up and experience the world slightly differently, as the previous day leaves its unique impression on my mind while I softly sleep.

I'm excited to see the person I will be tomorrow, and how she will approach the world and the problems it presents. I'm constantly changing, and renewing myself until the slow, gradual process of time turns

me into someone new. Some things speed up my transformation more than others: major life events that leave a mark like no other and after which I could never be the same.

I barely recognise myself from a few years ago, such has been the impact of university and an eager jump at a chance to completely reinvent who I am. I don't regret it, and I don't look back wistfully, for even if I were sad that I'm not the person I used to be, I can't be her again, and so cannot bring myself to live in a state of mourning for a girl who died at some point along the journey.

But, however unfortunately, and it is unfortunate, living this disconnected double life of home and university constantly forces me to confront the person I used to be, as for six months of the year I wake up in her bed and look at her things and use her toothbrush.

I've long since moved on, but have no choice other than to live a pretence when at home I find myself

surrounded by people who I have less and less in common with, and understandably so, for they didn't bear witness to the transformation I went through when challenged by a newly rich atmosphere, one arguably better suited to who I am now.

At home I regress, and whilst it may be comforting for some to be faced with the familiar, I find myself growing regrettably impatient at being forced to go backwards. One could argue the importance of looking back and taking notes from the past, even if only in order to prevent a repeat of past mistakes, of accidentally becoming someone you used to be rather than going forwards, but I've come to realise that life is invariably too intoxicating for me to waste careful seconds on scrutiny and analysis of times gone by.

Far more worth my minutes to focus on the here and now, lest something slip by that may have unforgettingly changed me for the better.■

After the Rain: Album Review

Jenny Potter

It's 5:15pm and we're standing amongst rows of records, reeling in the late-summer-evening humidity and pretending to browse through DVDs. There are perhaps a dozen people scattered throughout the shop in the same state of pretence.

Approximately twenty minutes later, Leftwich appears and we form a misshapen semi-circle around the corner where he's positioned himself with his guitar. He begins to sing, opening fittingly with the foremost track from his new album, *After the Rain*. As he plays, a warm silence envelops the crowd; the sound pervading from After the Rain cushions your soul in a distinctly human way, awakening a sense of communal experience.

Halfway through the set, Leftwich pauses to adjust his guitar clamp. 'This is very intense, isn't it?' he jokes, but with the themes of the music, how could it not be?

It seems Leftwich has discovered a much more refined sound, a gentler sound that's been honed and perfected during a five year break: the sound of healing. The opening track and first single, 'Tilikum', his anguished reflection on the inability to protect those you love from your pain, sets the tone for the rest of the album. As it progresses, we are taken on a journey through the grieving and healing process, through regret-

ful self-destruction and the seeking of salvation in others that precedes a return to normality.

When we reach 'Summer', a more constructive, positive sentiment emerges. Things seem to be improving – Leftwich has probed his past and can now move on from it. 'Summer' is a wash of relief carrying with it the certainty that the worst has passed.

Finally, in 'Groves', the root of the pain felt throughout the album is revealed. A touching tribute to his late father, the song displays helplessness at the loss of a parent. The chorus,

'Don't go
I need you to be waiting for me
Every time I'm home
Don't go
I'll be right beside you when you
rest your broken bones'

contains a childish selfishness, a denial of the futility that we face in death. It is a haunting sound that colours the tail end of the album. In 'Immortal' and 'Mayflies', we feel the anxiety of starting again, a timid foray into new love and an intense confusion of emotion. The album ends with 'Frozen Moor', in which Leftwich questions the stability of the relationships that remain, a physical and emotional leap of faith in a return to the world.

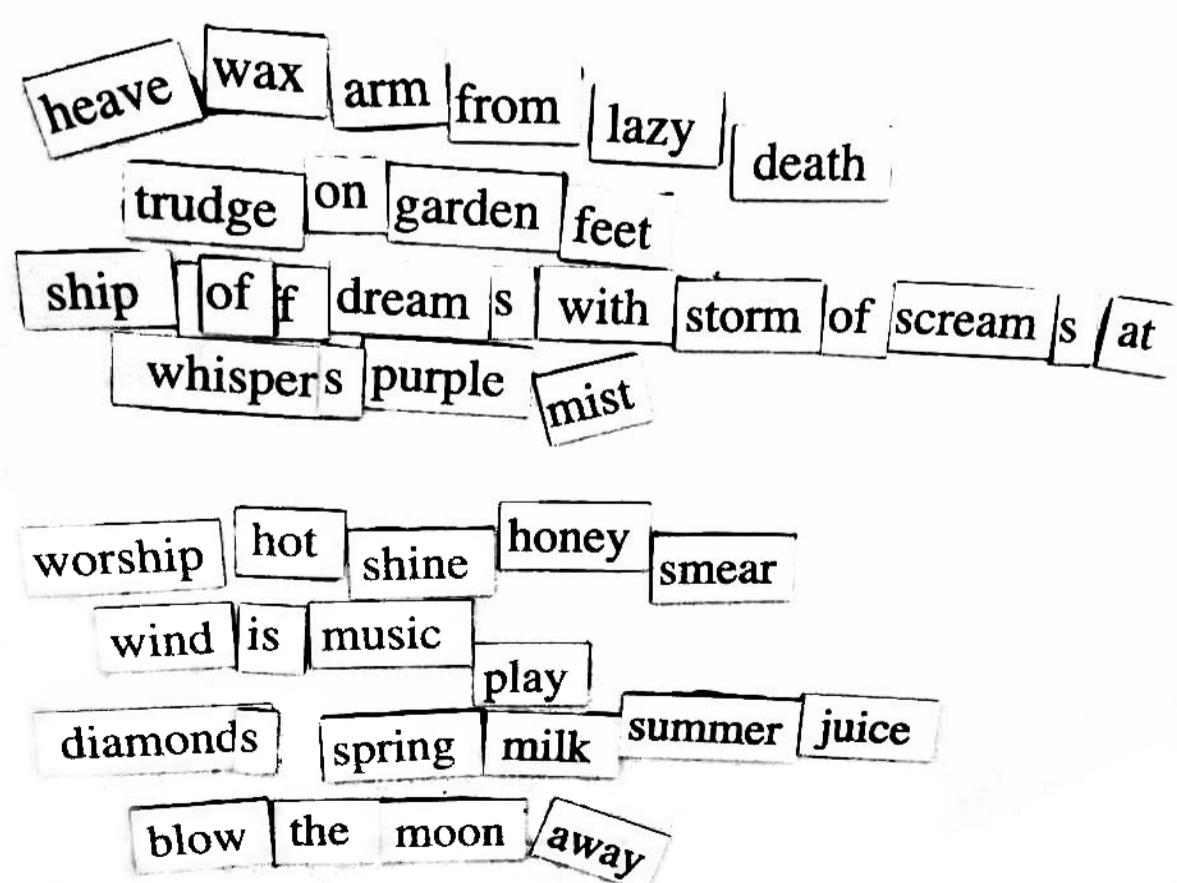
It's not just the music that has been so intensely perfected – every part

stein that Leftwich himself recognises the profundity of: 'I'll sign the back – it's too beautiful to write over, don't you think?'

Lately, Leftwich appears undaunted by any venue: playing to large crowds on tour, to small groups in record shops, even to Facebook Live and its stark lack of intimacy. His charming charisma enables him

to tame and captivate any crowd, of which he always seems grateful.

Having been absent for five years, Leftwich's return to music has been eagerly awaited and with the quality of his latest work, I doubt anyone would begrudge him the time.■



Callista McLaughlin