



# BLACK RIDER PRESENTS... THE DIAMOND & THE THIEF

...and now to the first edition of our monthly minizine.

Here comes the kind of Australian and international stories and poetry you should be reading, written by hepcats you need to be following. Bundled together like we were thieves publishing in the night. Think of Black Rider as your literary DJ, dropping words like beats.

In this issue Graham Nunn gets down with the soil, Robert Lort questions the state of our souls, Marcus Roloff has a Faustian experience of sorts, Kirk Marshall kicks it with Obama and Eric Dando buys a '71 Kingswood and goes pirate hunting.

Beware - in the words of Old Man Hesse: this is "only for the mad".

Look homeward, angels!

Jeremy  
The Black Rider

## **Grounded**

By Graham Nunn

Coming back, the land didn't know him.  
Not the soft air, peaks and skittering leaves  
or blurred faces rising out of the fog  
along Kingsford-Smith Drive, not the river  
haze of the city  
opening into his eyes  
through trickle of morning sun  
or the aging pier at Breakfast Creek  
he half-imagined had been built for him -

the land under his feet and brooding  
in shadows cast by the sheer rise of the city  
had forgotten him. The odour of the river  
drummed into shifting rock  
was familiar, but wafted the frail taint  
of foreign ghosts. He thought he knew  
the sounds: low hum of ferry coming into dock  
with passengers murmuring  
home home

but it was not. The clouds  
had grown heavy, the radio  
in hard accents, promised more  
rain continuing through the night.  
In a crowded bar on Merthyr Street  
he trembled like a sailor or fisherman  
having seen the slope of the world and its infinite  
smallness, having returned  
with the illusion he had not changed, but friends  
had grown old and disappeared  
into home and heartbreak.

## Wie oft stellst du dir die Frage über deinen Geisteszustand?

By Robert Lort

Soft white bones, can they still think? She unties the ribbons  
and runs her plump fingers along the blunt teeth.

According to my calculations... cutlery draws came crashing to  
the ground following the 2nd primordial mirror stage  
Thereafter, the cluttered ratio of conduits fogged the playing  
cards of the pinafores circus lads.

galactic shadows severed the inter-organic mirrors  
parching the breath of fairground elephants and  
toothless children began playing with scissors

Alice stood there shaking her head,  
"who's counting the dead?"

windup accordion opticians puckered their queasiness  
rusty fingers scratched the itchy fur  
yesterday's rainbow fell crumpled around my legs  
gentrified delicacies were left vanquished, ambushed in misery  
walrus feathers neatly brushed into manicured madness  
all the slip-static of invaginated emissions  
teem in heat wrinkles of insect grease euphoria  
the dead groans of the universe, spat-out on your plate  
you crawl back into your skin and set your cloths alight

primal and flickering, depraved once more  
sinking between elephant toes, awash with awe  
the residual labyrinth creaks in my eyes  
discreetly wrenching the golden entrails  
vanishing obscurity to deprivation tanks  
swelling thresholds of vomit puddles stretched over a quivering  
sky

Have you not been told? LOVE spelt backwards is EVOL!

### **faust-sequence**

By Marcus Roloff

Translated by Marcus Roloff and Jeremy Balius

rewinding the film  
until the fade-in shows  
how I feed the poodle  
with graphic symbols with word-  
karst (I FEEL IMPELLED TO OPEN  
THE ORIGINAL TEXT ...) howl-  
ing he runs (in the beginning was  
the projector ...) through the frame

the reel rattles & reflects  
the flickering light till I  
turn & say into the 8-mm-  
camera: I have missed  
the devil in the house  
& the producers  
in the credits

### **faustsequenz**

By Marcus Roloff

den film zurückspulen  
bis die aufblende zeigt  
wie ich den pudel füttere  
mit sonderzeichen mit wort-  
karst (MICH DRÄNGTS DEN GRUND-  
TEXT AUFZUSCHLAGEN ...) auf-  
heulend läuft er (im anfang war  
der projektor ...) durchs bild

wie die spule rattert & sprung-  
haftes licht wirft bis ich  
mich drehe & in die 8-mm-  
kamera sage ich hab  
den teufel im haus ver-  
passt & die produzenten  
im abspann

## Hangin' with Barack Obama

By Kirk AC Marshall

I didn't entertain a lick of lingering doubt that he'd extend me vocal plaudits of appreciation and mock envy at the quality of my naval-blue gabardine coat.

As long as I could claim to know him, Barack Obama was some tireless, winning form of friend. In a league entirely unto himself, equipped with a heart of triumph and rhapsody, he'd only ever corrupt the warm, amniotic saccule of silence which nourished us by exchanging sentiments of true, pious affirmation about how grateful he was to have me as a confidant, in confidence.

He was some heroic breed of guy. One might even dispense with word-smithy etiquette, divorce themselves of an aura of personally-cultivated cool, and risk saying that Barack Obama constituted the most generous, measured and memorable friend a fortunate man might call his own. Yup. He was starry and lionhearted, backstroking before me through millennia of fire and storm, with rivers in his eyes, and crocodiles in his laughter, able to brave the scorn and scrutiny of detractors and imitators alike in a suit as sharp as a blade whetted on the axis of evil.

Oh, we had our goofball moments, Barack Obama and I. It's not like we were fashioned from the cloth of saints and seraphim. We made our stupid dashes, we plied our piratical trades, we gambled our broken hands. You'd have to be a blind Cyclops screaming for sight through a visor of glaucous white, not to have seen us run like candles through the night. Barack Obama and I were swift to shake off the mothballs and shed the trail of space-junk on our weekends. I tell you, he was some phosphorous prince, offering to buy me a burger with the works on the wharf at the fringes of the city, where coyotes stalked the stars.

'You don't have to do that,' I'd fence, ribbing old Barack Obama in the shoulder. 'I've been working the whole week; if you buy me a sandwich I'll feel like I'm witnessing a crime. I've got a brace of the folding stuff in my possession,' I'd declare, suddenly frantic, suddenly frisking myself, suddenly aware of the conspicuous wallet-shaped absence punched out of my soul. 'Oh fuck,' I'd exclaim, my night of party evaporating like the promise of lust and karaoke upon encountering a pack of mad dogs.

Barack Obama would never betray his conspiracy of élan and glamour. Man, even now, seduced by the romance of the bright-eyed reminiscence, I can still square him up, see him flourish that smile like a Christmas toupé and laugh like a discotheque about to vomit out its riot of patrons.

He roped me around my shoulders with arms to rival a black bear. Then his eyes would waltz beneath that mottled, tessellating dance of moonlight. He'd furnish a small, sweat-bound oblong of leather beneath my nose, and draw his chin to his chest like no stately motherfucker I can make to remember.

Back and forth, Barack Obama would be shaking in a fit of laughter so tiny you'd have to squint to see it. And then flames would telescope his amusement, leaping from the cavern of his toothily handsome mouth. 'I can't believe you fell for it,' he'd roar, my love retreating from the mountains to hug the walls of the night. 'You should keep a better eye on your assets,' he'd instruct, clapping his hands together to applaud himself.

'You're a special piece of work, Barack Obama,' I'd banter, like a songwriter attempting to reclaim his dignity after emerging from a cocaine-induced coma. 'Yeah, alright. You can buy me that burger with the works.' and then it would rain, unprecedented, descending in sheets of melodrama and malice before invading the holes in my gabardine coat and Barack Obama's newly-cut power-suit. Our design to kick out, lash the water like fly-fishermen, bark at the windows of restaurants and drink all night would be erased beneath a cannonade of gossamer rain. We'd titter like snowflakes in spring, and race to the threshold of Joe's garage, our collars up and our fists plundering the lining of our swish fabric.

The red tigers on my feet would carry the stain of wine on a tablecloth. Our hair would drip in a trespass of stray kinks down our wet, glistening foreheads. 'I'm not a meteorologist,' Barack Obama would tell me. 'Surprise, surprise. Still, I'd hazard that it'll clear in a deuce.'

We'd congregate under a tarpaulin of water-resistant green canvas, shuffling on our heels, kicking and scuffing at the grille to the storm-drain, experiencing the night as it bristled with electricity.

After exchanging cigarettes and acknowledging the appetitive advances of the howling beach, we'd shoulder our way into the late-night diner, and unfurl our funny money. Barack Obama and I would drink ornate, three-layered milkshakes the colours of the American flag.

After our monstrous ballet through the rain, with alcohol making its rogue passage through my veins, a few forgotten dollars would all seem so puny and unkempt in contrast to another weekend of blood and flowers with my best friend.

On my way home, once my train had disembarked the station, I'd realise that Barack Obama had stiffed me fifteen bucks.

## Tiny Little Pirates

By Eric Dando

I found it in The Trading Post: '71 Kingswood, \$1600. A two tone brown one. I ring the guy, he says I'd better come and have a look. I have my money folded up in a little plastic sandwich bag but it sounds too good to be true, that's what my dad says and he knows about cars.

I have to crawl through the gutted skeletons of other Kingswoods in the frontyard. He's growing tomatoes down the side, cherry tomatoes. Tiny little ones. He comes out of the back door and grunts at me, opens up the shed. We listen to the engine for a while. The interior is very clean.

We look over the roadworthy papers, drinking instant coffee in his tiny little kitchen, but I am only going through the motions because I do not really know anything about cars or buying cars.

He has made all these sailing ships out of matchsticks, hung them in the windows. He likes the look on my face. I tell him that I think his little boats are amazing and he glows and swells there for a moment on his brown Celtic linoleum. He is fingering the keys, swinging the little golden lion badge on its chain. 'They really float.' He says, 'I've tested them. Down Wanambool, ever get down to Wanambool? Know a beaut little place down there. A beaut little place.'

We take the Kingswood for a test drive. He tells me he built the car from bits and pieces he had lying around, he just likes fixing them. He says he builds the boats from special Indonesian matches. Indonesian matches are the cheapest.

I keep asking him about the car but he keeps talking about sunken pirate treasure at Wanambool. Checking tide charts, fumbling with underwater maps. He has a model of the wreck in a fishtank. The treasure is two thousand years old, submerged for twenty-two and a half hours a day. He wants to show it to me. I think his timeline is hilarious and I tell him, there were no pirates here then, surely.

We test drive the Kingswood all the way to Wanambool. Bushbash through the scrub to a little block by the sea. The block is fenced, the grass is kept clipped by a herd of miniature palomino horses. 'Pirates were much smaller two thousand years ago,' he says.

We get out and walk over to this tiny little hole in the ground. 'It's down there,' he says, peering into the hole 'it's down there. Go down there and get it and the Kingswood is yours.' He keeps pointing down there with his finger. He wants me to go down into this tiny little hole. He promises me a handful of golden doubloons.

'Is that a pirate handful?' I say, 'or a regular handful?'

See, it is just like that movie The Goonies, only much smaller. I am a Goonie and so is he. We are searching for pirates! Tiny little pirates.

It looks like a hole he has dug himself, I'm not sure if the sides are going to cave in, it's crazy and deep and dark. I climb down there. He throws me a box of those Indonesian matches and I light one up. It doesn't take me long to find the treasure. I mean he probably put it