

PoGO

serotonIn

no to
the Nazis
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BUZZARD



A Poetic Celebration of
Pete Shelley

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I just want this to last or my future is past and all gone

Pete Shelley's quixotic, romantic and ambiguous contribution to the world has been hugely missed – and mourned – since his passing in Estonia on 6 December 2018. As a testimonial to his endowment to the world, this small poetry collection, *Pogo Serotonin*, has been created on behalf of Buzzcocks.

Since editing this collection began, I learned that my dog walker is Pete's cousin. Something, or someone, was clearly drawing me to begin this project. Without any personal connection to his hometown of Leigh, my aim was to invite the musicians and poets who I believed to know Pete best; who were inspired by his song-writing and lyrics; and who basked in his genius from within the crowd. It was Buzzcocks, above all other punk bands, who had their hoards smiling back at them, mid-pogo. Serotonin for the soul.

With sincere thanks, I wish to offer my appreciation to Buzzcocks for making this collection available to readers, to Eddie and JP for stunning photography and editing/design contributions, to Pete's widow Greta for giving her approval for the collection to proceed, and to the scintillating verse delivered by our invited guests.

Stephen Watt, October 2020

POGO SEROTONIN

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Vic Godard

Subway Sect

Song for Pete

The first time we met
we tried to help you
get Garth up the stairs
in the Roxy I think.

Garth was out cold. He'd had too much to drink
by the look on your faces.

You knew you'd just made it.
That debut had made you a singer

Then '77 the rum year,
Baden-Powell to Baudelaire
in just one year?

The next time we met we were
both on the bill in another Roxy;
an old cinema opposite Woolies in Harlesden.
You gave me hand-written scrawls in
I'm not sure whose hand
but such titles! Times Up, Boredom, Breakdown,
Fast Cars! Who's Ralph Nader?

You explained it so quietly. Quite unlike a man.

And in musical terms we were stuck on three chords
but had love for Ravel and Debussy and schmaltz

so the first time we heard you play Sixteen we mused
how Maurice would've loved your Bolero-Punk fused.
The next thing we learned from you was a sensation
That major's for power; in-yer-face confrontation
while minor's for sadness; reflects introspection.

Among myriad things you ingrained in my brain
I should've thanked you for that
on that packed Subway Train!

Genevieve L.

Walsh

Art of Action

This won't be done in increments,
in spots of pomp and circumstance,
no poses struck in yearning
for a morsel of attention.

This is unfettered, restless noise,
a simple art of action.

Untouchable disasters
and unreachable embraces
can't be expressed
in apathetic semaphore
and glassy glances. This is music;
undressed, dishevelled, sore.

A kiss within a key-change.
This is blood too sweet to mention,
a lush, discordant spider-bite,
the kind that shouldn't happen.

This is fervour in your presence.
This is anarchy in your absence.
This is love,
this is an art of action.

Tom Hingley

Inspirational Carpets

In Ideas Silence

One of the first in line to pick up the cudgel cut in Soho
and NYC and join the fight
You beat us rabble into
A band of brothers of sisters or aunts and uncles
drenched in woven emotions volume
To take row after row of industrial brick in the eye
yet to break conformity
Manchester history thru and thru
Peterloo death fields, to lesser Free Trade Hall,
to bastard corporate hotel horror
You prove the best ideas in life are both simplest
and most difficult to originate
Creating Loves as yet undescribed
in repetition of colour
Love was a loss, coveted like a boil wash shrunk jumper
guitar loud Diggle's hand shapes feedback between
amplifier and pickup
you always beauty rejection refinement
in idea's silence
within broad-brush strokes
a miniaturist's attention
generations couldn't avoid living their imagined life
for the first time
through your voice and songs

then make career by not being as original sad or funny
as you were easily.
As an eleven-year-old listening 1976
I never dreamt that we would ever meet
But was consumed with pleasure later to see you present,
or enter a room
to share a drink and a bitch
Yet somehow it didn't surprise me how down to earth,
funny and open you were
versus your exceptional art.

Toria

Garbutt

Johnny Green and The Electric Circus

9th of December 1976, denim jeans stuck to legs
Hair short n slick
Green Glasses, rims thick
Enter Johnny to The Electric Circus

This Dark, damp, dank hive
A fifty-mile Train ride
With Big Boned Lisa, fluorescent spikes
Woolworths voddy, bat wing eyes

Flying through the night-time, baby
Speeding out their minds
Staccato matchsticks lit lit lit
Alive! Alive! Alive!

Pete plays guitar with the top sawn off
Four hundred bobbing barnets
Bounce to Boredom on the spot
While transit vans wait outside, a pack of hungry cops

1234, hot and sweaty,
More! More! More!
The crowd erupts a battle roar
This ain't just music, this is war

They fight over the voddy
Through the Pistols and The Clash
Lisa throws a humdinger
So Johnny throws one back

Six coppers pounce on Johnny
Pin him to the floor
Kick the shit out of his ribcage
And dislocate his jaw

Crush his glasses into pieces
Now Johnny's blind drunk
"These belong to you, son?
Dirty stinking punk"

Next day he's fined a tenner
For committing D and D
Enter Big Boned Lisa
Exit Johnny Green

God bless this memory
God bless Pete Shelley's soul
God bless Big Boned Lisa
And God bless Rock n Roll

Luke Jenner

The Rapture

What Do I Get?

What do I get?

A lot of songs
about nothing
and love
and guts.

Why can't I touch it?

What is a person anyway?

Does it mean something more than that?

A voice I heard in a bar,
high and whiny,
dancing in LA

with my old man meeting the Irish A&R guy
who said I would be just fine.

A girl with dyed blond hair.

A dude whose glasses don't connect to his head.

Ever fallen in love with someone you shouldn't have
fallen in love with?

What makes a good writer?

A poet.

Simplicity I would say

and blowing up your so-called faults.

Stephen

Watt

Inside the Devil's Playground

**In the 1920's, Webster Hall in New York was referred to as 'The Devil's Playground' and was owned by known gangster, Al Capone.*

Blind drunk on our New York honeymoon,
we floundered on East Village sidewalks
past drag clubs and pop up shops
to the Dolls Gem Spa to drink egg creams
watched by unstable neighbourhood thieves
then visited Johnny Thunders final apartment
before he overdosed in New Orleans.

Pete Townsend's guitar is embodied in a lamppost
near The Who's psychedelic shows at Fillmore East
and Charlie Parker's Birdhouse
and Iggy Pop's condo
and the Joe Strummer mural
(but not the Imagine mosaic in Strawberry Fields).

We couch surf in this bohemia, impounding its aroma
in our lungs when we breathe.

Madonna arrived with 30 dollars and a winter coat,
neighbour to where CBGB's candleflames eternally glow;
adored as the gardens in Joey Ramone Place.

And crowds gather at the Chelsea Hotel
hostess of Patti Smith and Richard Hell.
Where Janis Joplin stirred Leonard Cohen.

Where Sid Vicious ceased Nancy Spungen.
Its boarded doors have no bell.

Then Webster Hall, Buzzcocks name is lit in red neon
to become our Devil's Playground tonight
and you personify
Led Zep's *Physical Graffiti* building,
The Clash's *London Calling* at the Palladium,
Lou Reed's Apollo memorial in Harlem,
Blondie posturing in front of *Parallel Lines*.
This will be the only time I'll ever see you perform
and how you belong, Pete. How you belong.

Saffron

Republica

Love Is Never Vain

'Ever fallen in love with someone
you shouldn't have fallen in love with?
Well of course I have! Haven't YOU?!
But was it love? Or lust?
Or a mixture of natural chemical pheromones
and a sexual chemistry that drew me to you?

Cos The Killing Moon comes too soon...
And YEAH YEAH He's Drop Dead Gorgeous...

23 years took you to say the words 'I Love You'
and the one that got away..
It's true when they say
"You'll know when the time is right"
Well the time is NOW!
No more betrayals from the one
you felt was your best friend
who never knew all you did
was out of protection for HIM...

It's healthy to always have a crush?
The Cutter once told me
before I learnt to say 'NO' and walk away...

selfless not selfish.

'You are not here to live up to anyone else's expectations'

My Master and Sifú of the Ancient Shaolin Martial Art

Female form WingChunKungFu

accepted me, trained me, believed in me, saved me....

stopped me saying 'Sorry' all the time.

So that nxt time when the time is right,

don't tell me that my loves in vain...

cos I'm a homosapien too and what you allow will

continue...?'

Marshalling My Thoughts

I stopped in at a pub on my way back from work. Buzzcocks were on. Ordered my pint, the song finished. Everyone in the pub unconsciously sang the last line, the song is stamped in the collective mind of humanity. "Do you like them, mate?", said a fella at the bar. Ten years on me. Old soak. "Yes, mate."

"I used to know Pete Shelley. Back in the day. Me and my mate saw him on the street. In Gorton. Is it him, is it not him? We couldn't decide. I was starstruck you'd call it. Quiet as a mouse. Like a schoolgirl. We were just kids. Young punks. Shy. Not Charlie. "Oi, Shelley!" He shouted. Pete turned round. "C'mon", said Charlie, "it's him". Charlie did all the talking. New music, last album, favourite songs. Other bands. I just stood staring. Then it was "see you lads," A week later we bumped into him again and he invited us round. I've never seen so many records. A wall full. He was playing us electronica, European, this was 79, at the cusp of a new scene. It was a beautiful place, but punk as well. Empty milk bottles in the corner."

He sniffed. "They were fucking disgusting".

"Then, we used to go round often, sniffing glue, not Pete Shelley. That was what we used to do, what we were into."

I remember there was a knock at the door, I just taken in a deep breath; did you ever do glue? You should've. Transported you into a different space. Cosmic mind explosions, probably brain cells dying like poppers does. Anyway, I come round in this big chair, and the Chief Inspector of police is stood by me, "Evening" he says, all suited and braid, stiff cap.

I was seventeen and shrinking in the chair, literally trying to shrink to invisible, I slid the glue bag down the chair side whilst holding his eyes with my I've just shit-my-pants stare, but the copper was there to say hello to Pete.

"His place was a catch all, a mixed bag of the great n good, and lowlifes like me who otherwise would be up to no good. A bit like punk. Or new wave.

"One-night, full house, Tony Wilson, sat in the corner, made a spliff and passed it round, then was saying cunt, cunt, cunt to himself over and over, and my mate, been puffin on this spliff, just kicked him in the face. Took a run up and hoof, straight on the hooter, then passed him back the joint.

Do you know what? Nothing happened. Everything was ok. They were different days."

He smiled in his reverie,
Nostalgia for an age gone,
"Oh mate. Pete Shelley. One of the best."

Michael Bradley

The Undertones

In A Transit, June 1978

**The Undertones were in the back of a van going to play in Belfast – or somewhere – and someone with us said how great the Clash were. John O'Neill very quietly said that he thought The Buzzcocks (we always said 'The' before their name. It's a habit I am still trying to get out of) were better than The Clash. Not a big statement or anything, but he'd been first in the queue to buy Another Music and that record really did affect us. John probably doesn't remember saying it (I've never asked him if he does) but I think it's still true. Three of the band (Feargal, Billy and me) went to St Peter's Secondary school in Derry and the band's first show was at St Joseph's Secondary School in March 1976. None of us went to the school but John's brother knew the teacher who was putting on a variety show.*

'I think The Buzzcocks are better than The Clash'
said in the back of a white borrowed van
on the back of us hearing a silver LP.
He may have been honest, he may have been thran,
testing our tastes, to see who'd agree.
No argument.
We'd played at St Joe's
but we learned at St Pete's.

Jim

Higo

Blue Anorak at The Electric Circus

I was banged up in a lonely room on a never-never estate.
You gate-crashed a party that hadn't started
while I sat in the kitchen waiting for a song that sang for
me.

I got off the bus at a different stop to see what was there.
I wrote I love you on a used betting slip
and stood outside the bookies for hours trying to catch
your eye.

I knew we were meant to be together
because we hated the same bands.
I ripped down the posters of all the dead heroes,
queued up at Sheffield Top Rank, lit a fuse and danced
between the fireworks.

I stood in a navy anorak amongst the safety pins and
bondage pants, dreaming of lipstick,
love bites and a girl from Boots
while the King's Road disciples
searched for meaning in their t-shirts.

Couldn't they see there was nothing beyond relieving the
boredom?
Didn't they know we were making it up?

Didn't they realise we were an accident in progress?

Don't let them smooth down the edges.

Don't let them give you some bland rationale.

Don't let them make you a museum piece.

Give me dreams, give me thoughts, give me hope, give me
a gap in the fence.

Give me three more minutes

and we'll cram the whole world into a tiny bedsit

and look for that awkward something one more time.

Billy Lunn

The Subways

To Speak With Pete

A poor fresh problem from the boughs of Herts,
pulled up in a near-windowless white Ford,
rolled from the council house we dared to part,
and finally, onto the stage of Reading Uni Union, 2004.

I can't recall the email, the call
the text that asked if we would like to play,
supporting The Buzzcocks. Memory's wall
has since blocked off that synapse from its way.

Before the show, I wandered round the quad:
a young uneducated imposter.
no university for me, just rock
'n' roll – and anxious, uneven tempers.

I'd never really spoken to Legend
'til then. Just fellow tryers; just fellow
dreamers – but then... our set had reached its end...
and there you sat. What did you want to know?

You could have simply weaved away the yarns
of all that's been and gone - but, no. This kid,
who sang your songs when he was set apart
from all the other boys at school, your wit

and patience, and your charm, they welcomed home
his confidence to talk as a familiar
friend. years later, walking through Camden,
the kid grown up then heard his name declared...

To talk again as if no time has passed
is something to which friends of old hold claim.
Two meetings, never left back in the past,
but given forwards: that's how you remain.

Jamie

Thrasivoulou

Love Formed On Sticky Dance Floors

A poet's first experience of Shelly
Is often Percy Bysshe
But me- I thank my Dad-
For introducing me, to Pete
On my first punk compiled cassette-tape
Buzzcocks were on repeat
The catchy tunes,
The storytelling lyrics –
Sound-tracks to terraced streets

Whenever I fell in love with someone –
There was a *harmony in my head*
Whenever I faced rejection –
It was always soothed
With a snarling- *what do I get?*
Songs filled with promises
That could never let me down
Singles going steady antidoted
Every thorn-filled crown

My old pals Elaine and Pip
Were fully-fledged orgasm addicts.
They chose it for their wedding song
First dance was a mass pogo-a-thon.
Whenever I fell in love with someone –

There was a *harmony in my head*
Whenever I faced rejection –
It was always soothed
With a snarling- *what do I get?*

Songs filled with promises
That could never let me down
Singles going steady antidoted
Every thorn-filled crown
Many loves were formed
On sticky dance-floors to Buzzcocks' records
And just like love formed
On sticky dance floors to Buzzcocks' records

Music will never lose
Its tune
Because
It always stick to you

Music will never lose
Its tune
Because
It always sticks to you.

Ken McCluskey

The Bluebells

Anyone Could Be A Buzzcock

Anyone could be a buzzcock.
It wasn't hard to try and be a buzzcock.

A washed-out jumper and a badge or tie,
Mum's Mondrian blouse and a Fathers sigh,
plooks, an attitude, a vision and a stare,
a coat cos its cold and a taken-in flare.

On the train from the suburbs on the way to the gig,
each stop brought more buzzcocks up
for a lig, a jig and a pogo, a jump up and down
to the Glasgow Apollo; the jewel in the crown

Vic's Subway Sect opened up and onside,
always the bridesmaid never the bride.

On came the Buzzcocks, buck toothed and grinning,
four cheeky blokes made us feel we were winning

with the thrash, the conviction, guitar slingers all
as the drums beat a mighty tattoo in the hall.

Fire Engine Red, the drumkit, the pulsebeat
we danced as one with the floor and the seats.
Playing cat and mouse with the bouncers was fun

as they tried to stop us standing, another battle won.

We felt we could change things, find relief from the pain,
in two-minute spurts, it was alright to be in Love again.

Joelle

Taylor

Homosapien

angerland. deep north. the year of the zip.

the school disco erupts into nothing/ boys shuffle their
faces/ & girls pick one/ curl an edge/ I cut my face/ from
a pattern in NME/ but the seams still show/ white lines in
the school disco/ I was a girl who had grabbed her body/
from the wrong coat hook/ laughter followed me like a
skinny dog/ one that I learned to tame/ with hands that
knew my father.

i am a shy boy. You are a coy boy.

bad girls gather like cigarette smoke/ their night talk/
swarming above the heads of binary dancers/ the lit ends
of their cigarettes/ winking/ tinker taylor hello sailor/ an
insolence of leather jackets/ the warm outrage of
indifference/ kiss me until my mouth becomes a grave.
Hard girl. Jack.

we are all loners/ wearing each other's faces/ dressing as
our greatest fears/we dress as ourselves.

but you with your face of bad grammar/ shark fin
Mohican / swim across the dance floor to me/ tinker

taylor hello sailor

my tongue jumps/ a needle with a penny sellotaped on
top/ and you steady me/ with a look in a different
language/ & my heart an uprising/a riot / that I don't
report on/ so when you say/ that Kevin got sent down/
for that brief holiday at the cottage in town/ we know each
other/ have inherited the same tradition of longing/ a
language of silences/ & full stops/ we speak most clearly/
when we are not speaking/ how bad girls/ have always
found each other/ bin detritus/ underage thinker/ wrong
walking woman/ you must be homosapien too.

We say nothing/ and walk like enemies/ into the single
bed of a rough brick wall

Into love.

Johnny Britton

Subway Sect

Heliumdrum

**Love Bites tour '78*

I loved Pete back then
We were all there getting high on helium
the night he wrote
Everybody's Happy Nowadays
Crammed into his room like in A Night at the Opera
Singing along to the chorus
Like a chorus of fairies
Getting higher and higher
Hookline and sinker
Just for a lark
Me, Vic, Diggle, Francis, Eric Random, Rob Gretton,
Richard Boon, a Sect and assorted Cocks,
The girlfriend, the boyfriend, the girlfriend's girlfriend,
The bandmate, the soulmate,
The American groupie (her own job description)
And
Sat quietly in the corner
In a state of perpetual slow motion
One man joint rolling machine
Future Professor
Doctor John Cooper Clark.

Jim
Monaghan

Always In Love With Love – A Sonnet for Pete Shelley

He was our Shelley
Romantic poet of the blank generation
A Manc Frank O'Hara
Always in love with flirtation

Defeating hate with love
Standing up to racism with pop
Our three-minute hero
Then another three minutes non-stop

What did we get?
Stories of people we know and meet
Ever fallen in step?
While moving away from the pulsebeat

It's a different kitchen, but no other sound,
Will fill the gap left with him no longer around.

Manda Rin

Bis

Come With Me

What can you see?
A lesson in the mist

What can you feel?
Twas a gentle fist

A heart still believes
A heart still talks

Just a soft breeze
With its back to the chaos

A smile tastes sweet
Beauty inside and out

Fast and alive
The unknown comes around

Do what you want to do
No game of dot-to-dot

A warm, kindred spirit
Rewriting boredom with chalk

Try to find the right words
A new tree planted here

Kickstart the future
Unphased - come with me

Anna

Secret Poet

The Genius of 'Boredom'

The genius of 'Boredom' is that it's never a bore
Every time I hear it, I love it more
Those urgent drums – that insistent voice
The pounding bass – the excitement of noise!
Above all my favourite is Pete Shelley's guitar
Especially those glorious sixteen bars
Where boredom is summed up in a two-note refrain
Repeating again and again and again
And then there's that last note like a punch line it drops
Signals the end and the song suddenly stops
That's the genius of 'Boredom' subtle as a crowbar
It's there in the satire of Pete Shelley's guitar.

Jim

Mackintosh

Love Bites 2020

almost everyone here
has *fallen in love* with someone
no-one here has fallen down alone
fallen down drunk, reached out
without something for the pain
without the chords
holding them back at the edge,
year after year, getting older
together, sweating for acceptance
sleeping on the cold fret
but if you know how to function through it
to make sense of it
on seven keyboards spinning
at the same time or holding the pencil
like a loaded gun:
it's beyond comedy
almost an acceptable way
of being a poet, a musician
in this *real world* full of *nostalgia*
where if you've ever fallen
in love, the *operator's manual*
tells you what to do
tells you being *sixteen again*
is beyond *nostalgia*, is probably *just lust*
is definitely creepy

and just when
I'm *late for the train*
within *walking distance*
of the end: one hangover
from understanding, I find the truth -
love is lies.

I've *nothing left*
but one keyboard, a blunt pencil
and *E.S.P.* on the rocks.

The *real world* is ours: isolation
is temporary - so stand up
so we can fall down
again – together.

By the way, what's your name?