

**A LONG AND HARD
NIGHT TROUBLED BY
VISIONS**

Sample pages

TOM JENKS

**A LONG AND HARD NIGHT
TROUBLED BY VISIONS**

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if p then q classics

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Published by if p then q

The cover image is a treatment of Richard Dadd's The Fairy
Feller's Master-Stroke by Tom Jenks

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ISBN 978-1-9999547-1-0

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the editors of *Ambit*, *Confingo Magazine*, *Disclaimer Magazine*, *The Café Irreal*, *Five:2:One*, *Paratext*, *Spelk*, *The Wild Hunt* and Peter Barlow's *Cigarette Sampler #27* in which some of these pieces first appeared.

The Strawberry Moshi Collection is assembled from text found in *Moshimoshikawaii: The Strawberry Moshi Collection* (Walker Books, 2011).

'strikes' documents every instance of smoking in season 2 of *Mad Men*.

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Shrinks

1984

After six days in the forest, I finally reached 1984. The tribe that lived there welcomed me. I sat on a mossy log, ate a toasted sandwich and drank American cream soda from a hollow stone. Later, as the stars wobbled above the tree line, we watched Torvill and Dean win gold at the Sarajevo Olympics on a primitive television set installed in an abandoned foxhole. The tribe's leader, a tall man with an asymmetric fringe and wearing a tight silk blouse, asked me if I had been here before. I said yes, a long time ago, and my bike got stolen.

chickens

I'd been down south too long. My hands were soft and white and I'd started to take off my shoes without first untying the laces. If people asked me what I did, I answered variously fisheries, online cosmetics or industrial espionage. I slept in budget hotels. I read Dickens and mastered the recorder, but spent longer and longer lying fully clothed on my bed, listlessly Googling myself or transcribing episodes of Kittens Make You Laugh Out Loud on headed paper, dropping these documents into confidential waste before breakfast the following morning. I slept little, pained by dreams of the north, its snowy mountains and superior drinking water. One day, I would return. I would sit in the supermarket café by the sea, the one with the salad bar and whole rotisserie chickens.

apples

A woozy summer gave way to a dismal autumn in the turret, painting ladybirds and copying out manuscripts by royal appointment. Ships came and went, laden with spice and bauxite. We watched her through our telescope, mixing the lampblack or chiding her spaniel. She is a goddess, Walter, but a mortal one, between the green tomatoes and failing cacti. Before the dawn of the age of steam we must make our own fun down in the orchard, with twenty-three different kinds of apple, most of them fit only for pigs.

plums

Up early picking plums, I spotted the mermaid perched on the edge of the pond. She slipped into the water as I approached, disappearing amongst the knotted weeds, leaving only a thin string of bubbles. At one time, we would sit together and discuss our future: the bungalow, the holidays to the Lakes, the matching sun visors. I consoled myself with what the wizard said, that all relationships had peaks and troughs. He himself was currently wandering the woods, living on moss and ditchwater. There's nothing wrong with being alone. You just have to stay strong and be yourself.

cockatiels

The blue cockatiel stares into the mirror. It pecks its reflection and rings a silver bell.

The blue cockatiel has mirror obsession, where the reflection becomes a mate substitute or a rival.

The yellow cockatiel contracted feather mites, which are small, hard to spot and can be mistaken for dappling. Feather mites can spread to human hosts if left unchecked.

The yellow cockatiel created an abundance of bird dust.

The yellow cockatiel died. It lay on the bottom of the cage and got stiff. It was buried at sea, which is the wish of all cockatiels. Unable to swim in life, they long for water in death. Cool blue water, salty water, their forever home.

The blue cockatiel whistles.

The blue cockatiel has natural vocal abilities that enable it to mimic sounds, such as rain rattling on corrugated iron, faraway thunder in a fictional forest or Eliza Doolittle with a mouth full of marbles.

The blue cockatiel greets its keeper with a cry of pleasure
and

when you leave the room it gives voice to disappointment.

The blue cockatiel's vocal mimicry was encouraged by saying
a word or phrase repeatedly whenever a certain situation
arose.

The blue cockatiel says good morning every day when you
enter the room where the blue cockatiel is kept.

The blue cockatiel says the supreme art of war is to subdue
the enemy without fighting when news reaches you that a
former colleague has been claimed by quicksand or has
become insolvent.

The yellow cockatiel whistled, but fell silent, as the blue one
will, in time.

The blue cockatiel watches television, endless television.

The blue cockatiel prefers factual programmes.

The blue cockatiel does not watch cookery shows or quizzes.

The blue cockatiel prefers programmes telling the story of western art, architecture and philosophy since the collapse of the western Roman empire.

The blue cockatiel watches Hitler's panzers tear across Europe as snow piles up in Moscow to thwart him.

The blue cockatiel watches luminous fish dart around the Great Barrier Reef, in and out of coral.

The yellow cockatiel believed that there are some places on earth where humans shouldn't go.

The yellow cockatiel preferred light entertainment.

The yellow cockatiel watched Bugs Bunny elude Yosemite Sam by hiding in a hollow stump.

The yellow cockatiel watched a famished Wile E. Coyote use a pulley, rope and rock-trap to try and squash the passing Road Runner, but instead himself get squashed by the rock as the Road Runner stopped and mocked him.

The yellow cockatiel required a consistent few hours of quality time per day with a person or in a person's company

and a good night's sleep in an area with very little noise or distractions.

The yellow cockatiel was equipped with noise cancelling baffles and blackout curtains in solar blue, oyster, duck-egg or aubergine in eyelet or pleat style.

The red cockatiel is another matter entirely.

The red cockatiel has deep symbolic significance.

The red cockatiel figures in scriptures, folklore, poetry and paintings.

The red cockatiel is glimpsed only in dreams, weaving in and out of the coral of the Great Barrier Reef, amongst the anemone fish, surgeon fish, parrotfish, butterfly fish, damselfish, coral trout, groupers, cods and the Maori wrasse.

The red cockatiel is soon to be a major motion picture.

The green cockatiel is never to be spoken of.

The blue cockatiel has the same name as the yellow cockatiel.

It tilts its head when you say it. Little blue, whistling bird. He is about seven months old.

The yellow cockatiel felt the way that you do.

The yellow cockatiel was an emotional warrior.

The yellow cockatiel spent a long time gazing at the landscape, knowing that the mountains were impassable.

The yellow cockatiel did not appear to be judging you, but the yellow cockatiel was always judging you.

The blue cockatiel is generally sunny side up.

The blue cockatiel believes that when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.

The yellow cockatiel dreamed of being fully actualised, of being

motivated by growth, not by the satisfaction of needs, of being grateful.

The yellow cockatiel died.

The yellow cockatiel ingested a harmful substance, e.g. aluminium foil, avocado, etc.

The blue cockatiel too will die, although such a prospect is at present unimaginable to the blue cockatiel.

Yellow cockatiel, blue cockatiel, red cockatiel, green cockatiel.

Green cockatiel, yellow cockatiel, blue cockatiel, red cockatiel.

Red cockatiel, green cockatiel, yellow cockatiel, blue cockatiel.

Blue cockatiel, red cockatiel, green cockatiel, yellow cockatiel.

We sing this song as we walk through the covered market,
amongst the tubs of cereal and birdseed, which we buy in
bulk, containing sunflower, wheat, kibbled maize, red millet,
white millet, canary seed,

naked oats and pinhead oats, which is a healthy and hearty
breakfast

choice.

We sing this song in the reference section as we research
night frights in cockatiels, where something in the darkness
spooks the bird,

a noise, lights or shadows, perhaps headlights shining
randomly.

It is summer, friends, and our cages are open, yet still we do
not fly.

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