





Martijn Benders

What can I buy for your darkwilde  
powers, Willem?



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If you happen to enjoy my poetry, please consider  
buying my collected works or buying one of my  
artworks. Anything will be really appreciated,  
thank you, dear reader for taking your time  
to read this.

Martijn Benders, Mierlo, The Netherlands

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Let me

Be able to believe in wanderlust,  
something that buoyes me out.

Let me fly overconfidently  
like an old bumblebee  
unto the forget-me-nots.

Bassing the refrain of death  
in the golden stash of my flight,

please mistake me for the sun,  
chrysanthemums,  
domestic daisies,  
unfurled dandelions.

This bloated dream  
hums into your long-winded heart.



What do you mean, lilacs?

Today,  
one of the few wikipedia entries without a discussion page,  
I surf through profiles of composers and writers  
in particular the entry Debussy.

His life features  
'eight-year affairs' and 'exciting nine-year relationships'.  
'Debussy's life was quite turbulent' it says.  
'At the age of 18, he began an eight-year affair  
with Madame Blanche.'

My god, how glad I am  
I never had to call you a beautiful lily.  
Lilacs, now that would arouse suspicion.  
What do you mean, lilacs? Beware of plural.

I would never say passion flower or holy lotus.  
These are those words.  
Those are those words that don't come around.

I would never say anemone, acacia  
or peony. My god, what would I have been  
without a modicum of presence.  
Take cover.  
Words want to come around in all singularity.

A neighbour to all. A city in ashes

My tongue is the American flag.  
The homeless newspaper is made in a homeless tower.  
I have a sense of humour but am vulnerable to lyricism.  
My best seduction trick is the anecdote.  
My plaque glows in the dark.

Who gets pity on a lonely cafe.  
Friendman doesn't. Christmas lights!

Homer was quite talented.  
Why does Homer seem like a longer word than Homerun?  
'I'll skip this one too, if that's OK with you'

That's what I'm good at: saying "Well, well, well!"  
In a badinating tone. And then falling off my stool.



Gnomon

Don't be afraid. It won't hurt you.  
It's just lightning, baby. Pubic light.

Look I  
dream of another when  
I light up this night.

Burning swallow

Heisenberg was a lonely man.  
'Here lies Werner Heisenberg... somewhere'

On the note of his skull  
I would draw your face, as a police portrait.

Would have no trouble pointing out you as the culprit.  
Would pick you right out of the incomprehensible mass.

I would split you in two  
to sip paraffin with my mouth from  
the coconut-white wreckage of your body.

End of line

The blinds glare.

Crisp white Christ in Braille.

A neighbour to all. A city in ashes. An egg.

Whether metaphorical language can still be used after Nine Eleven.

Democracy needs a wheel clamp, freedom

is but a concoction of armchair thinkers. Wheels

spin around. Is war a continuation of the soul with different wheels?

By the way, why am I afraid of my keyboard?|

I went to Bommel to see the skyscraper.

The Thing approached. I kicked with all my might in triplicate

but someone had built a bridge between civilisations.

Just a note in between for literary criticism.

Get a job, asshole.|

Happiness presents itself between the lines. End of line!

## Stars

If everyone is a star  
brown dwarfs are in the majority.  
And they hardly give out light.

White dwarfs  
are even worse,  
brightly lit canteens.

What beautiful gardens we would have  
if there were only red giants.

Consider also how this  
would be a beautiful love poem  
if your little green star  
dissolved in my glass.

## Treasure Map

Marx says history repeats itself  
as tragedy and later as parody.

Marx should keep his nose  
out of my family life.

Brel says childhood is  
is a geographical phenomenon.

Look at your grandmother, says Karl,  
when you were little: a miracle worker  
later you see that this childhood friend  
had no life of her own. Tragedy.

Time thins out fate.  
Cheap pungent soap smell  
displaces everything: granny becomes a farce.  
Granny is a form of post-capitalism.

Says the communist whose  
access to my family life  
should be firmly denied.

Where is Jacques,  
where is Jacques when you need him  
with his geographical phenomena.

Magic lantern

Sterile as an operating theatre  
she looks at me, asks for papers,  
worn out like an old passport photo,  
stains on the window. If you look closely

you can see the girl she used to be,  
white dress she got with her communion,  
the grass, the swing, her first kiss  
in the car park of the Nieuwkoop lakes.

Arrogant she was, could have been a model, got engaged  
didn't amount to much in the end,  
children, supermarket checkout and part-time  
at an administrative office.

Years passed. Now she sits here.  
Only modelling for surveillance cameras.

On miles of film  
that no one will ever play you may catch  
the turquoise dwarf of her friendship.

## Northern Lights

An atmosphere is a good place to stay.

Pick people with an atmosphere, preferably around Christmas.

Make an effort. Think of the Christmas tree.

Rigged and unrigged. Unrigged and rigged again.

Make a damned effort.

Think about the vapour of the Christmas tree.

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## RECAPITULATION

An air of long summer twilights.  
Nancy soft and dreamy as a G.  
Nancy with fence.  
Nancy without fence.  
Nancy.

Caught in the uproar of long kites,  
singular enough for a childhood.

And the snowberries  
still hulking in their rosy blush,  
between groin bust and clipped almonds.

Nancy swimbed of marzipan.  
Nancy with fence.  
Nancy without fence.  
Nancy.

Bee

She would have loved to live  
at the fairground with a trunk of gold.

Day in day out in the name of procreation.  
Day in day out in the name of procreation,  
in thugs' suits,  
in sweetheart stories.

Bulldozers thrust coins,  
she hands out headbutts to flowers,  
slides her greenish light under  
my letter-white infant skin.

## Visiting the ward of miracles

I wait in the sterile room for my turn.

The buzzer rings and I walk through an aluminium gate  
into the brightly lit room where I am undressed and groped  
until they figure out which angel I was  
and which miracle belongs to it.

An hour later I am outside again: spotless  
as if the first lesson at grammar school starts like this,  
I have a bag in my hand and the snow is sparking  
on my bare feet. Visitors are waiting for me at home.  
It's mighty cold between my ears.

Crack

I meet with imaginary friends.  
I am lonelier than a ladies' choir.

Bibles are written like this.  
Manuals for love.  
Success stories. Snacks.  
Impeccable as iceberg lettuce.

I am a pretzel of the zeitgeist.  
I chase wanderers.  
I live in an ivory tower.  
I piss on birds' nests when I get the chance.

## Crinum

With her tiny, winter-hardy sponge  
she soaks me in, never did I see  
fairer paper. Amant, it's half past four  
children come in, soaked  
with unchaffed books. Come here,

soap my unprinted skin,  
no one may ever occupy your eyes,  
besiege your mouth even a moment.

Intransigence besieges the cheeks.  
Besieges the botched benches.

## Balloon

It's only colour, says the doctor.  
You shouldn't be fussing. It's only colour.  
You don't deflate slowly, you're not a balloon after all.  
Don't look at me like that with those blue eyes.

I'm your doctor. You don't believe me.  
Let me knock at you, get undressed,  
is anybody home? Open up.  
Hello, open up, anybody home here?

Don't stare at me like that  
with those bluish eyes of yours.

Snow

The world is frosted  
into paper darkness.



## Banishment

How beautiful was your name  
when we no longer knew what to make of it.  
you disappeared into the mass of your rebellious body  
like the chiselled, a long-lost  
weight upon itself, sunlight.

How lithely  
does light probe itself.

You are a flower's yield.  
The enumerated light of your name.

Seraphine

She sparkles like benzene,  
my tongue still thick with wasp venom,  
come, she says bored,  
come, you've earned your shot  
of codeine. She grabs my wrist

like a grabbing machine at the fun fair  
a ragged bear, I feel my heart  
fill up with cheap nail polish.

Then we dance. I bat an eyelash.  
We sway and become dust.  
We sway.

Resistance

Paranoia is an icy star  
but a start nonetheless.

I always have mot with eternity.  
I can't cope  
with finitude,

if only I were made of sperm,  
if only I were white rice  
and you my falling star.

I always have mot with eternity.  
I always have mot with finitude.

Papercut

There you have my neighbour  
and his wife with her clicker ass.

I want to walk my dog.  
I want to think up an exhaust pipe.

Give me the fanfare  
of the et cetera  
of the et cetera  
of the et cetera.

Girls on film

She looks  
like she's doing complicated math  
in her head.

She looks  
like she's cheating on her face  
with another face.

She wants to be the cramp  
of new dimension.

Curmudgeon into  
young, carefree loekies.

Wavelengths, we don't do.

All worlds  
want to thunder down the stairs.

Suddenly you have one of those crests  
making phone calls to girls.

A languid look  
too famous, too disinterested  
to get to the point.

Good riddance

I come to your birthday party  
dressed as World War II.

Don't kiss you directly on the mouth,  
neatly light the candles first.

You are a fun girl.  
I a man who chases himself in films.

*You sell whatever you want, but don't sell it here tonight.*

People live for themselves.  
I like the storage of girls.  
I grant everyone everything.

Is the answer 'without',  
Is the answer 'without you'.

The candles are burning.  
I do grant everyone anything.

Porn

It's a warky little word. Porn.  
Bald old men poke each other.  
It's wafty. Porn.

Angry dwarfs in miniature houses  
experiment in tailors' seats  
with my neighbor's daughter.

Who takes everything  
from the discarded items section?  
Who still desires to be attractive? Not I.



## Money Helps

Always five o'clock. I think of death,  
plants, buzzers that go with five o'clock,

I think of curtains  
that die in forests. Deadlier  
than dusk that dies this way in November.

Brambles.  
A hundred words for money.  
A quiet moment in the fuss of Great Criticism.

The whole family browses. Publishing houses are cleared.  
Weblogs have long ceased to be about poetry.  
Now for a stanza of aphorisms about money. No. 1: Money Helps!

Locker room

My heart is an extinct species.  
My dick's on the monument list.

I'm a world war in a suit.  
Girls are going to pile up everywhere.

## Informer

You need to put on good trousers in the morning.  
Button up your shirt.  
Look at yourself. Not skittishly, not obliquely.  
A razor shines on the glass top.  
The soap dispenser does a swan song.

With a suitably powerful motion, pump  
out a glistening string. Rub it  
delicately into your palms. Watch out for sweat.  
Too much and the soap won't pick up. Blend it.  
Wash off. 'Rinse' the Americans would say.

Your skin like new, an indeterminate odour,  
a whiff of lilacs on a fledgling day.

No dummy

Rather the fjords of a real face  
than such an outstretched future face.

Something you can still descend into,  
With little light. With politics in the nose.

A thunderhead I want to see.  
A canis that can't be broken.

Not a slacker with a star on his head.

Father

Hanging on the jukebox of time,  
his crest creaking with ultimate crestiness.

His sallow leather jacket just not wide  
enough for his eternal youth.  
His eyes bombers.

The apocalypse itself  
shyly asking him for pocket money.

## Lunar journey

On a lonely volcano, billy goats rammed  
white-hot cockies into a full-fat fattening cheese.

## Junk

Someone plastered your face on a cloud.  
You became a toleration zone of the world.  
Outlet for confessors and writers.

Your body became an industrial site  
where you had to be unloaded and loaded.  
You didn't need to breathe.

You still wanted to protest,  
but that cloud  
so exemplary  
cloud.

## Corpse

A forgotten observatory  
in the posture that last deprived it.  
A building everyone has abandoned.  
Landscape no one ever saw.

In the feverish woods  
of planology, he sees the greatest happiness  
a human being can grasp  
Attending symphonic music.

With beautiful politics in the crowd.  
With confidential temperature.



Hmmmelkop

You pretend to be a person but you are a clique.  
What else can I say about such a head.

That it has hair on it.  
Gravedigger hair.

Eraser

You're a yummy thing.  
I'm going to give you an eraser for your birthday.  
Then you'll look at me in despair  
with those creamy little eyes of yours.

The biggest eraser in the shop  
I had it wrapped for you.

I hold out my hand.  
You would want to swoon,  
you'd like to erase it.

But you look at me in despair  
with those creamy eyes of yours.

For all ages

That's not a pooping bird at all,  
I object, that's Mr Owl.  
Poo bird! Poo bird!" she shouts,  
pointing at the television.

I look again.  
Very well cut he is not.  
And he does talk very posh.  
But poop bird goes too far.  
Poo is far too common.

Mr. Owl has nothing to do with  
the illuminati, I try.  
Poo bird! she shouts.

Please

No balding men in folding chairs  
in Godard jackets from the thrift store.  
As anonymous as possible, please.

Not that rusty voice again of decency.  
Not the shiny crest of forgiveness.

Figure

Do you know the goosebumps of death,  
the static of homecoming?

The foretold,  
lights living on the back of the tongue?

Broom cars, friend,  
that pull endlessly around the moon?

If not  
then you may memorise my number plate.

If not  
then you may sometimes wave off my family.

Rooster

In his black eyes flicker  
the chip towns of the future.

At night the reign of terror swings  
through the grab bag of the run,  
a quizmaster without prizes  
with always the right answer:

Kukeleku. The world perishes.  
The world is going down. Kukeleku.

## Distance

What they can make of that, these days.  
World cities are built from distance,  
relationships maintained from distance.

Oppressive are worlds of ideology without distance.  
Annoying are the distance-killing glasses of love.

New life, I yearn for. Life against sameness.  
Give me the terraced houses of the stars  
far away in their glass conservatories  
stand winking thanks to distance!

And you are reading this, thanks to, right, repetition  
the most distant form of love.

Heavens of profit

Look Irma, there's a reading light in the desert.  
If it wasn't a war I would definitely call in sick!

Castles are always fucked on holidays.  
Hunger pauses in sandwiches.

Icing sugar is like fallout but on sandwiches.  
Billiard sheets tear loose from wet wood.

Elfstedentocht through the department. My name is Roepworst!  
Wonderful. The numbers have no cadence. They are restless,  
horses run backwards, cynical, menacing herons,

tough customers, everything comes off the ground.  
Donkey-stretch, table-top,  
bat-out-of-the-pocket. The project sociability!

Chat up a famous writer.  
A ghost climbing up the chimney. I put carrots  
in shoes. But none of it was a trade at all, it was  
a compost heap in my garden, Femke.



Hunger

The sun is bored.

People have jobs.

The street is long.

The moon roams like a lamp.

Anointed is the admonished sweetheart of hunger.

Half-human

A 16-year-old klutz.  
I wanted artworks and slats.  
But I was far too minimal,  
far too minimal sir.

Sixteen-year-old klutz, that's  
the story of my life.  
That's the story of all life.  
That is the story.

## Poetry

The mouth is a cynical sense  
because it has to eat. Other senses  
don't grind it, but the mouth  
became breadwinner. Miles of

intestines ending in the lure of lips  
with which the mouth recounts  
food and words to the cliffs of teeth.

The eye is always on holiday.  
The nose only snobbing wind  
and coquetry. And the ear, ah,

useless shell that lies yearning  
for the sea that is our blood without  
any sense of what is bad or good.

In disgust, the mouth  
grew a tongue. Life's work  
Of the mouth: poetry.

It burps out unfamiliar sounds  
to embarrass the ear.

And to the eyes, two spoilt brats  
it conjures up inconceivable images.  
Even breath is not safe to him.

But soon, how vile,  
the other senses invented television  
That's where we are now.

The borepudding of the brain  
plots the final battle: chips. Democracy.  
Anything to finally be word-off.

You have to do it

Lucky the world  
has been  
my main hobby.

You have to do it with me.  
You are a world of a world.

For you, I learnt to walk.  
For you, I learned what title compulsion is....

Hi

Hi work. Hi beautiful chair full of work. Hi lampshade.  
Hi memo notes, hi typemonster. Hi.

Hi boss. Hi nice boss full of work. Hi copy  
of the boss, hi copy of the copy. Hi.

Hi internet. Hi nice internet full of money.  
Hi search engine, hi Martin.  
Hi.  
Hi.

Hi break. Hi nice break full of heroes.  
Hi pause men, hi P from Parking,  
Hi porn, Hi joke. Hi stump.

Hi Benders. Hi pause. Hi spit. Hi clock. Hi biscuit.  
Hi bum. Hi ass. Hi comma. Hi comma ass.

Hi happy ass. Hi boss of the ass.  
Hi hero. Hi beautiful hero full of work.

Hi.

Diva

Walking out from behind a window,  
with pent-up dreams.

The latest  
kamikaze attack of her genes,

the poltergeists of her lashes,  
hunting the light.

Beauty

I am a poet.

From me, exceptions are allowed.

From me, not everyone has to join right away.

I am good.

I don't suffer from the kind of jealousy  
with which people pull each other over.

I don't let beauty stand in line.

I don't make her write lines of punishment.

With me, she has come to the right place.

Here is my business card.



Leaves falling from the trees

Anyone who claims that leaves  
routinely fall from the trees will be thought insane.  
But it's graceful like a cup of coffee.  
The same ritual every day. How can you be graceful  
with a trunk. Another round of birding,  
again that old geezer on that bench  
ogling at far too young girls.

An average office day  
is more erratic than the life of the tree.

But people don't want to hear that.  
And I keep saying it, over and over again.  
In every poem I write it again.  
And they keep calling it poetry.

They just don't want anything else, sir.

Deceit

I love you  
but you're just not finished enough.

See how your cheeks look,  
they just flush and blush.

For now  
I think you're beautiful.  
So beautiful. But not finished.

Especially in the dark  
you are not complete.

Incomprehensible

Girls don't understand. Nick Cave polishes my shoes.  
Lou Reed whistles all day long sharpening my billiard cues.  
Bono scours the skirting boards of my studio and David Bowie  
has been sleeping under my shoulder pads for years.

Guys don't get it. Madonna whitewashes my walls  
Nena blows me through the letterbox every morning  
in the early hours. Neunundneunzig, that is.

How do you do it, Benders?  
How do you improve the world?  
Just blow, blow more?

Chores for chores.  
That's the whole eating eggs thing.

Paws under sleep

Hooded forests  
in wide-open girls' eyes.  
Virtuous as the father forest and the mother forest.

We play chess on the shirt of the wind  
With an egg.

## Armchair

It smells like figs after a rainstorm.  
A long time ago it gave up, but I didn't listen  
to its croaky song. It has a broad back,  
a territory, and heartbreak, of course.

It is the last of an ancient lineage  
and so not very adventurous  
but so cosy, caress it and it sighs  
or clatters like an old letterbox,  
heartfelt fatty, warm air octopus.

Old sorcerer's dog who only barks  
when the moon manages  
to beat the voodoo  
tangle into skeins.

Unrelenting

Purple people occupy ATMs.

Grey people push the buttons of alarm systems.

Pink people draw gallows on the walls everywhere.

White people grit their teeth in traffic jams.

O daisy o freesia, o jasmine.

We are no longer singers of the Old World.

Freakshow

Tombstone, baby, I'm ready to go.

Hear how the fat slave sings  
from the jungle between Krommenie and Uitgeest.

What worthless people you were.  
You'd make a saint work from home.

## Cemetary Gates

A dreaded sunny day  
so I meet you at the cemetry gates.  
Bilderdijk and Beets are on your side.

A dreaded sunny day  
so I meet you at the cemetry gates.  
Bilderdijk and Beets are on your side  
While Herman Gorter is on mine.

So we go inside and we gravely read the stones  
all those people, all those lives, where are they now?  
With-a loves and hates and passions just like mine  
They were born, and then they lived, and then they died  
Seems so unfair, I want to cry

You say: "There the light reflects in the blue crystalline  
and you pretend to have thought it up yourself.  
But I have a library subscription, sir,  
and I know whose version I prefer!



You say: "Ere long done do does did"  
words which could only be your own  
and then produce the text from whence was ripped  
some dizzy whore, 1804.

A dreaded sunny day, so let's go where we're happy  
and I meet you at the cemetery gates.  
Oh, Bilderdijk and Beets are on your side.

A dreaded sunny day, so let's go where we're wanted  
And I meet you at the cemetery gates  
Bilderdijk and Beets are on your side, but you lose  
cause Herman Gorter is on mine.

Lily of the Valley

Bells sputter against the wind  
Behind the graceful borg of bracts.

Please take us with you.  
Beautiful wind sail, take us with you.

From Knokke-le-Zoete to Alphen-Chaam  
where the cradles still ring  
and maypoles are in demand.

From Loon-op-Zand to Zwammerdam  
unfortunately, of place names  
we have no understanding.

Hear our pleas,  
music that brings children's names.  
Clear the delivery rooms.

Lotte or Nancy, Ludwig or Daan.  
Listen to your field's hold.



