

henry chats into a microphone about his response to the [In-Flux]\*  
participant zoom conversation, from sunday the third of july, 2-4pm,\*\*  
on a beach on a monday morning at about 10am

a short story for postcards.

originally recorded for audio, now edited and transferred to paper.

written and designed by henry metherell

with thanks to the old lady who I didn't catch the name of and natasha parker-edwards for constantly getting me involved in projects even though I am a pain

\* this should be in italics.

\*\* i actually participated in this zoom call in the cab of my very warm 2009 ford transit in a lay-by, my phone got so hot at one point it fully switched off.

(muffled by wind) Ok so how about now, do we think this sounds clearer? [I imagine it probably does] (a bit softer) , but now I am (pause) actually not (with emphasis) enjoying the view and I'm just sat under my jumper on the beach.\* Which is uh (pause) quite a bleak prospect actually.

\* i can't really imagine what i looked like. because i'm already pretty tall and not inconspicuous anyway. so in hindsight maybe what happens next is probably reprehensible.

Now there's a woman walking by and I look like a fucking\* weirdo. (pause, but an apprehensive one) Maybe I'll just be quiet for a bit. (long pause with the ladies footsteps in the sand coming closer and closer) Morning you alright? (to note, I've said this really brightly)\*\* 'You're not on your computer are you?' (coming from the lady, very distant sounding but she's got quite a heavy scottish accent that's for sure)\*\*\* No its for business I'm doing something, it's normal (this is very flustered sounding).\*\*\*\* 'Ha is it?' (said in an almost scoffing tone) \*\*\*\*\* Yeah very normal (said in quite a resigned manner).

\* apologies in advance for the smattering of swear words that appear in this text, i have what you would call, a potty mouth.

\*\* such a powerful move from me, get on the front foot and try to avoid the disaster that's bound to come my way.

\*\*\* she's got me. Hook. Line. Sinker. i'm a creepy little boy who's on his laptop on the beach in what is the sunniest weather of the year, she must be pissing her pants with excitement on the inside. i'm almost jealous of her raw power, 1-0 to the old woman.

\*\*\*\* well i've not responded to that well have i. Business? what was i thinking??? i Should've just said i was recording something but no, now she thinks i'm a **Business Man**, ah yes a business man who is covering his head with a jumper to avoid the wind on the mic, probably 2-0 to the lady here.

\*\*\*\*\* superb from her, she's clearly very proficient in her craft of dominating any conversation she's in, this takes years of training and I can only admire her. 3-0.

[I'm already being heckled by members of the general public can you imagine this.]\* (long whirr of a boat in the background) Who does she think she is? I'm not on my computer, I AM (loud and proud, with vim) on my computer because I don't know how else to record, I've not got an outdoor microphone!\*\*

\* i've made this bigger because i've spoken so aggressively close to the mic it's actually uncomfortable to listen to.

\*\* an attempt at justification but in the end this is a battle i've lost. not how i was looking to start my day.

Any-who, um, (classic muffled wind noise) I've got fucking\* polarised glasses (what a strange humble brag, must be nice) on so I can't even see the screen, fantastic.\*\* Yeah so, what am I, oh yeah uh I'm meant to do um a response to that zoom call we had (quite a big intake of breath) um (pause).

\* so sorry again.

\*\* this is smothered in sarcasm.

Yeah I find conversations like that with other creative types very um, difficult. (big breath) Because (pause) I just, I, I guess I have a very different point of view to a lot of people and um, (medium size pause) its all just very pretentious really isn't it. Is it all just really not that deep? Like, (pause) I don't I don't, per, I personally, maybe I've got this all wrong (a bit close to the mic here) but it just seems a bit, absolutely ridiculous a lot of it. Like, (pause) just makes me laugh, and then when I say things I just think god they look at me and must just think I'm (pause) just in my own little world, what an absolute moron and maybe its like quite self perpetuating, I just, (pause) maybe I'm speaking these things into reality. Um, don't know, makes me laugh though. I do wonder what people think when I say things like 'Oh I write music because I like playing the piano.' [And that's it, that's it, its not really, there's no other deeper meaning you know] (very nasally), so I just think its quite funny, how people are just spouting all this and that, and I'm just like, is that really it? or is that just like fancier ulterior motive your putting to this, I dunno. Cause is it really all that? Don't know, not sure. Does anyone really care? I probably don't. Um, (long old pause) so yeah, I think (softly), that's all I really wanna say.

\* I don't want to be dismissive of anyone's work here, I just think that by using such unnecessarily confusing terminology and surrounding your work with just an image of elitism it creates such a division and puts the arts on such an unreachable pedestal. My main issue with the arts are that they're not reachable by anyone anymore. I've spent my whole life within a musical world and I still feel like I'm made to feel like I don't know anything which is just absolutely ridiculous. The arts already has enough barriers to entry without people adding more. I don't see the need, say things how they are, not what you want them to be.

It's low tide, um, which isn't ideal for this particular beach because it makes it quite unswimmable.\* I was meant to come yesterday on high tide but, the tennis was on so I didn't.\*\* Um, brought my cozzie\*\*\* down if I wanted to go for a swim now but, (pause) probably won't because as I said its low tide so its pretty bleak and sea-weedy.

\* tremendous change of pace here.

\*\* wimbledon gentlemen's final.

\*\*\* this is the correct term for swimming costume and i will take that to my grave.

Um, (long pause with a quite audible swallow) its pretty calm though, so maybe I'll come back at four o'clock when its high tide, or two o'clock I don't know which way the tides go, Is it an hour plus or minus everyday?\* Um, (really long pause) it is flat calm though, if I could just get out past the seaweed it would be a lovely little float. [But it is quite sea-weedy and the thought of seaweed touching my feet makes me feel like I'm being attacked underwater], (I've said this with real vigour) so you know, swings and roundabouts I guess.\*\*

\* i in fact did not come back.

\*\* i'm not entirely sure what swings and roundabouts means, its something i say a lot and no ones picked me up on it when i use it in this context so it must be right?

(hefty swallow) [Can't believe that old woman heckled me.\* She's walking back now as well. She can only see me like, under my jumper, talking into a microphone.] (there's a real change of pace to how I've said all of this) Who are ya babes? Yeah I AM doing admin work, so what? Its a monday morning!\*\*

\* the older lady is still very clearly in my head, whatever mind games she was playing earlier have worked a treat and i am still in fact, rattled.

\*\* clearly still trying to recreate and justify the conversation, in hindsight this is quite embarrassing.

Um, anyway that's probably (muffled wind) I feel like I probably rambled for long enough (sniff) (clumsy hit of the mic). Maybe I'll go and find some sea-glass or something.\* Um, (pause) there's a nice dog over there (pause) (woof woof)\*\*. The dog's trying to get on the paddle board, that's nice isn't it.\*\*\*

\* this is my one true hobby, scavenging through sand to find tiny pieces of coloured glass, if you haven't tried it before, i fully recommend, what a Thrill.

\*\* here i've imitated a dog's bark, for what reason i'm not quite sure, everybody's probably quite clear as to what a dog sounds like.

\*\*\* "that's nice isn't it" is one of my verbal ticks.

Yeah sorry so my overlying message is, does it, does it really matter? Like, just do something because it's nice and that that's probably enough isn't it? (pause) Probably.

Ah she's back, I'm not sure if the microphone picked that up, but she is back with vengeance. (really muffled quiet tones here) (long pause to survey the scene) Is she on the phone now, or is she talking to herself? Goh me and this old woman are going to have a falling out soon.\* I don't wanna make it seem like I'm staring at her but I definitely am.\*\* (pause) Um, I'm going to have to be quiet for a little bit again (pause).

\* to clarify this is a turn of phrase and i don't regularly, if at all fall out with old ladies.

\*\* not in a creepy way mind.

'I don't think you can get in the sea at that end'.\* No, its better on high tide that's the problem. (I'm speaking quite loudly here, its a bit off-putting) 'Yeah, usually when I come down, Yeah I'd go to the one over there underneath the beach huts its a lot nicer.\*\* 'I think I will.' There's no seaweed by the waters edge basically, so you can get in a lot easier. 'Yeah thanks.'\*\*\* No problem. Now maybe she was nice after all. (whispered) [She doesn't normally come down she doesn't know what she's talking about.] (I've said this quite pointedly) This is common knowledge! Any who now I'm just slating a woman in her sixties so, that makes me seem a bit (pause, with a little bit of regret) mean.\*\*\*\*

\* she's back and she's gone on the front foot and initiated contact, super powerful stuff from a veteran of the communication game.

\*\* i've interrupted her here, not my favourite thing to do, but i've just to get a word in to make it seem like i know what i'm talking about, its desperate but its all i've got.

\*\*\* this is a huge win for me, no snide comment about how much of a weird man i am with his laptop out on the beach, i've got her on the back foot with my surprisingly big knowledge of the tide patterns of this beach and its thrown her. i've got to give myself the win this time. time to throw an open top bus parade i think.

\*\*\*\* to clarify i am not a mean man.

Um, I've not put any sun cream on, my legs are burning so I think that's probably me done. (I've absolutely thrown those words out of my mouth at a tremendous speed)

(muffled by wind) How do I end this, I can't see the screen, its so dark. I'm just gunna cut the noisiness out I guess.\*

\* i in fact did not.

the end.

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