

All at Sea

Crossing the pacific she was,
all at Sea. In a 7.7 metre boat.
A couple of sharks followed her progress.
For weeks they swam so close.
Large they were, too!

Some days the weather was against her,
some days it was favourable.
And some days the unexpected occurred.
Fifty baby sharks around her,
All at sea, enjoying the moment.
Or so it seemed
but how can one really know?

And the day,
a shark projected it self
from the swell
for pleasure, I guess.
Why not, see the planet
from a different perspective.
That wasn't what the shark expected
to land aboard the boat.

Through the air
like a guided missile,
only it wasn't guided.

Worse things happen at sea,
isn't that what they say?
Not in this case, not as far,
as the shark was concerned.
Its Jaws a snapping,
wriggling this way and that!
Trying to relocate.
Back to where it belonged.
In the blue.
The sea farer, couldn't help.
Sharks tend not to need a helping hand!

Fierce, they are when all at sea.
Of all the places to descend and land.

The sea-farer had to hide
and hide As soon as possible.
Not that food was on the shark's mind
at that moment.
It was for it a matter of survival.
And the sea was not at fin, so to speak!
Had to wait she did
until the banging ceased.
Sharks are heavy critters.
And she was kept awake.
Played her ukulele she did.
For some peace of mind.

She waited, in her cabin,
down under, no larger,
than the space under a table.
Just how large are tables down Under?
Kept awake throughout the night, she was,
before the banging stopped.
So tired she was, she fell asleep, again.
She awoke and dozed. Quietness all around.
Finally, it was time enough to check the shark.
The shark's condition, that is.
Hoping that it was alright
was not on her mind exactly.
She went on deck. And looked around.
The shark was motionless. It was dead,
It had expired. No doubt about it!
The sun had done its work alright.
The shark wasn't anymore a shark.
But the smell! How it lingered on.
In a playful mood the shark was, too.

Enjoying life until the end was nigh!
And the end is not a pretty sight!
Ever visited an abattoir?
Think of something else, woman!

There's a job to do.
And the task, to Cut the shark up
And throw its body parts into the blue,
the blueness of the Pacific.

Such a wretched job it was, too.
Into the blue,
would it not attract other sharks?
Don't drop the pieces,
with your hands over the sea.
You might end up like the shark.
Throw its body parts over the side.
I know, it takes a long time,
trying to stop from throwing up
before the job is done.
And there's another job to hand,
crossing the Pacific.
But you did it, Lee,
rowing all the way.
First woman to do so.
Congratulations.

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Seagull Sympathy.
Depanne, Belgium. April 23rd 2023.

Belgium, still trying to be famous
for someone or something.
A competition to end competitions
was held. The grand subject!
Squawking like a seagull
The competitors, all fifty of them,
had to dress like a seagull too.
And they had to move like one!
As if squawking like a seagull
wasn't good enough!

A jury of professionals awarded points.

Up to fifteen points
For sounding like a seagull.
Not to mention five points awarded
for the acting out, the movements
a seagull makes.

Jan Seys, of the
Flanders Marine Institute, said,
Seagulls are despised for their
intrusive behaviour,
dropping things
and for opening little bins.
for taking ice cream and sandwiches.
Let's give them a little more sympathy.
They're Part of coastal life after all.

Outside Belgium,
there's also a competition.
Name five famous Belgians.

I can, can you?

Lassus,
van Eyck,
Magritte,
James Ensor,
and Hercule Poirot.

And who did win
the competition of
competitions?

A Dutchman.

All Europe knows
just how enterprising
Hollanders are.

And they only have to
cross the border,
not like us Brits
after the oven ready
Brexit deal.

That's Boris for you,
always oven ready!

Typical Brit,
criticizing European nations,
yet again.

So, how about the full results!
A first timer, 21 years old,
Yarmo won the crown.
for the most authentic
seagull sounds.

Maren, was the runner-up
“So nice it was, so much fun.”

From Rob, in third place,
“I got to the podium this time.
I wasn’t just a runner up.”

And can you believe it!

News has reached Toronto.

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Missing Live.

Here they are taping, with broad tape, all together stage designers, with nothing to do. Making a statement for all to see. MISSING LIVE! It’s the world we liv in. Taping what it’s like to be on zero hours, working to live, for all it’s worth, nothing much if truth be told. Less than it takes to feed one’s family. And to the food banks. Missing Live! The stage designers, out of work, adrift at sea, with nothing to do but tape two words, LIVE MISSING! Two simple words in large letters so everyone can see. Missing live. And on the radio, a big statement, listening to two words. Or MISSING LIVE, whatever! Covid 19 lock down. Dark and silent squeezing the magic out of lives. Inside out! Moments of non-consumption. There’s nothing to see but television. Welcome to the real world. And dinner from the food bank. Whatever happened to humanity! Connecting with people takes a little more than that! A comedy, I ask you! The spiking of the drink, What is more than a live event? The telling of a yarn about comparisons, about today and

yesterday. One man's life against another. The crisis in the here and now. A pantomime rescue programme, Humanity is at stake. Tensions within! A sharper focus is required. A little guide review! Sub-texts abound. A willingness to change, the taking into account, a sociology that needs re-writing. Who tells your story? Someone else? Your story is your soul. You know that nothing is greater than the here and now. Whatever you're doing at the time. Serial killers abound around the symphony. Are you superstitious? A suspect in a murder that's just about to happen? Someone has gone missing. On a ship to sail the sea of distances. Are you aboard? It's been a long time. A sign of our times.

I wrote this prose poem as a protest was taking place when theatre people were being laid off due to the Covid 19 shutdown.

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Where Belgium leads Britain follows. Man Eagles.

Blackpool Zoo was in need
of a bird Man to shoo,
the hungry gulls
away from the Zoo.

The job, a seasonal one
was duly advertised,
for someone with
an outgoing personality.

And there was another task to do,
to teach the visiting public to stop
the dropping of uneaten food items.
Easy pickings for the hungry gulls.

Scarecrows don't work against the gulls.
They're not crows after all!
A role to play at £10.80 an hour.

for those successful applicants,

they had to dress up as eagles.
Man Eagles to coin a phrase.
Why? Why not indeed!
To frighten off the seagulls,
of course! All those,
traumatized feathered friends.
What can be done to stop the
misbehaviour? What!
of seagulls or human beings?

The press release,
was eagerly read,
by would be, Man Eagles.
Five Man Eagles were required
to stop the seagulls from
a swooping onto

holiday visitors
and stealing from
their bags of chips.

There were, 150 applicants
to fill the five vacancies.
Some were from Uganda,
India and Thailand.
Other places too,
but too many to mention here.

All after a hawk was tried!
Its mission was a failure.
The gulls conferred, regrouped
and dive bombed
the hapless hawks.
twenty of them, that is!
Doesn't that entail a degree
of strategic planning?

So, a larger bird was needed.
One that a man with little ado
could climb into. Just like that!

Not too much to ask, surely.

On the Internet, a bird costume
was sought.

It had already been designed
The pattern already drawn out.
The cutter's done his job, perfectly,
and the parts are sewn together
with wings and feathers,
ready to be dispatched
for whatever purpose.

There was so much interest.
The management of Blackpool Zoo
was urged to put a show on.
Publicity, after all, costs a bomb.
Only sometimes it's free.
And a zoo relies on visitors.

For the press.
It's like it was the silly season.
But it wasn't. Parliament was sitting, still!
But then who is to say when silliness
doth reign or not. Parliament of course!

And the Zoo?
They needed to attract the gulls again.
The only way was to arrange a spread!
Chips, were needed, and plenty of them!
On a table for a flock of gulls to view.

Great publicity they thought. But...
Wasn't it defeating the whole project?

The Blackpool Gazette reporter
was in on it too. First to try it on, he was.
Well, somebody had to do it!
Why not he? Benefits all around, you see.

He had to put the man eagle costume on

and run like an eagle.
As if it was about to seize a gull.
That was the intention that was.

Difficult the costume was to enter.
And lifting it, inside it, wasn't easy.
even with the cooling-down system,
inside the costume. A luxury item it was, too.

"Eagle Man, Eagle Man."
chanted the school children.
All managed for a press event.

As for the press reporter,
just before he was to flap away
the beak slid over his face obscuring his view.,
He had to judge how far he was
and flap away towards the grub grabbing gulls.
But he heard them take to flight,
and his assignment was over.
He did, a turn-around do,
opened his wings and took his bow.

Perhaps the seagulls will return
a little more brazen than before.
A harmless, man Egull to tease.

Read all about it. Breaking News!
Lift your glasses. Give a toast.
The world is taking note!
Now it's reached the Washington Post.

Is Moscow following the news?
What will Mr. Poo Tin do?
What are his actual views?
Anti this. Anti that. Only too true!

He'd send his soldiers forth
to a coastal holiday resort,
with outstretched arms,

holding sandwiches,
as a goodwill gesture!
And guided nets, as back up,
to capture the damn things.
Typical Nazi birds they are!
Are they not! Think about it.
Being gullible is not a virtue.

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Bog Find.
Saturday 29th April 2023.

Scoop of the day, it was.
Not a body of
a peat preserved
ancient Brit.

In a bog it was found,
A bog in Barrow,
Barrow in Furness,
sounds unlikely does it not?

But there we are,
in a bog in Barrow.
Or, at least, someone was,
someone who wasn't Russian.

Just going for a number 2, he was.
Desperate was he?
Turned around so fast, he did
and pulled his trousers down.
We don't want him to have an accident, do we?

That would be most undignified!
Let loose he did.
He didn't see it, at first,
the papers on the floor.
And afterwards, how he felt!

Sometimes, life is just
a little too mundane.
He wiped himself.
Sorry, sometimes there is just
a little, too much detail.
How relieved he was
he didn't disclose
or if he did it wasn't
stated in the Sun.
He was about to pull
his trousers up
and there it was,
on the tiled floor.
He belted up
before he glanced upon
the papers once more.
Almost forgot to flush, he did.
Whoosh! Picked it up, he did.
A blue print for the latest,
latest up to date, submarine,
Anson was its name.
The manual, should have had,
limited access,
and when I say limited,
I mean limited,
not in the company sense,
you understand!
No, in terms of National Security.
And at this time!
Was that the only time
the sub-mariner
had to read the classified document?
And the finder of the document!
Did he have a story there to sell?
The paper didn't say.

The Furness Railway pub
had a busy night that day,
Saturday, it was! A day off
with no arduous work

the following day.
Time to have a good time, it was.
Full of dock workers and military.
from the Royal Navy base.
And just a 5 minute walk
from the BAE systems shipyard.

For the Sub-mariners and ship builders,
it was a favourite place to meet,
whilst working for the Nation.

HMS Anson at 1.3 billion pounds
was the most expensive, up to date,
submarine there was.
Fifth of its class it was too.
The sub is 318 feet long
and weighs 7,800 tons.
That's a lot of tons to get into 318 feet.
How on earth, does it stay afloat?
It has a cutting-edge design. That's how!

It has Spearfish torpedoes.
It has Tomahawk land attack missiles.
and is the most advanced hunter killer in the world.
Its nuclear reactors can go
for 25 years without re-fuelling.
Useful in a twenty-five year war.
That is, if anyone is still alive on Earth by then.

It can go around the world
without resurfacing.
Air and water are made aboard,
useful when you want to stay
submerged, undetected.

The document, a reference manual,
contained instructions and maps of HMS Anson.
The inner workings of the torpedo loaded sub,
the key for the hydraulic controlling torpedo hatches
and the workings for steering and buoyancy.

Not to mention, everything else that was important
to keep the submarine in working order.

The document was classified,
one level below secret. In a bog!
What a place to study such a document!.
And what a place to leave it,
to forget it, for an enemy to find!

Once all is done, it's off
to the Clyde for its sea trials.

As for the Russian spies
they must by now, I guess,
be reading through the Sun.
And since 2015, they haven't
bare breasts on page three
to ogle over.

And sorry for the bog reference,
Northern expression, I guess.
Used a little more after the war,
the Second World War, that is
than it is today. Even earlier,
centuries earlier, as in,
Bottom of Garden. Get it! Doing it,
as far as possible from the house.

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