



Sound and Bundy

Amelia Walker



Interactive Press

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*Amelia Walker has published two previous poetry collections: **Fat Streets and Lots of Squares** and **Just Your Everyday Apocalypse**. She has also written three books of poems, worksheets, games and lesson plans for the primary school classroom. These are part of Macmillan's **All You Need To Teach** series. Amelia is currently working on a fictocritical thesis about poetry for her PhD studies at the University of South Australia. **Sound and Bundy** was written as the artefact component of her Honours thesis.*



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*For Elliott Mundy.
Thank you for being an amazing friend...
and for taking me to the Malley exhibition at Heide.*

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Foreword

Three years ago I set out, quite innocently, to research a biography of recently deceased Australian poet, Jason Silver. I never suspected my actions would uncover perhaps the biggest scandal in Australian literature since the Ern Malley affair of 1944. The tale has, of course, been told to death by the tabloids so I shall here relate only the briefest possible version.

Like Malley, Silver never existed in the flesh but was the creation of three other poets, Pete Lind, Shannon Woodford and Angie Rawkins. The trio met at the Red Lion Readings, a monthly poetry open mike that ran from 1998 to 2006 at the Red Lion Hotel in Elizabeth, one of Adelaide's outer suburbs. Lind established the readings as well as the Red Lion Press, which published chapbooks by group members, Silver included.

Silver supposedly suffered Bipolar Disorder and committed suicide in December 2005, aged 34. His collected works, released early 2006, received resounding praise until the deception – for I disagree with the term hoax – came to light. Afterwards, Silver's poetry was dismissed as meaningless ramblings with too many quotes from other writers and musicians. The Red Lions were denigrated for their lax ethics, their lack of formal education and the performance-based nature of their writings. The attacks only ceased in the wake of another, unrelated scandal – the debates surrounding Friendly Street's so-called "Porno Poet".

Three years on, the publication of this anthology may seem odd. Surely everybody has moved on? Yet this is precisely why it is time to re-examine Silver and the other Red Lions. Now the initial outrage no longer skews judgment it is possi-

ble to view these poems objectively and recognise their merits. Regretfully, this recognition may come too late for Lind, who ended his life in December 2007, aged 38.

Before his death, Lind, along with the other Red Lions, adamantly rejected the comparisons between Jason Silver and Ern Malley. In his journal he wrote, “Jason was never meant to be uncovered. We weren’t out to make a fool of anybody, we just wanted to explore.”

Whatever the poems were, whatever they were not, they are here. The decision now rests in the hands of readers.

– Harrison Lomax, June 2009

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Sound and Bundy

Pete Lind

1969 – 2007

Lind initiated and ran the Red Lion Readings and chapbook press. His mother and father were English migrants who moved to Australia because of work opportunities in the newly opened Holden car manufacturing plant. Lind also worked in the plant for several years, but became unemployed in 2003. He lived in a defacto marriage with fellow Red Lion Shannon Woodford from 1999 to 2005, during which time the couple had two children. Lind committed suicide in December 2007 and is deeply missed.

Bloody Poets, 1994

I am not a poet.
I'm just a guy who writes poetry, got it?
I can't stand poets,
the way they stare
out of books, yellow and sour.
As people they might have been okay,
good for a drink and a laugh.
Poor sods, getting turned into poets.
And thank God I am not one!
If I were I'd have to wear black
and speak strange unto thee
and shove my head in ovens
because I would hate myself
for being a poet,
a lie.
Lucky, then, I'm just a guy,
a guy who works,
who comes home
and goes out,
good for a drink and a laugh,
a guy who eats and shits
and sometimes can't shit,
who watches too much TV and doesn't care,
a guy
just like any guy
who, it just happens, writes poetry.

Girl Friday, 1994

She keeps leaving me.
Or I send her away.
Whichever, I always know she'll be back.
Two castaways, we can't help but drift
together. On Friday nights,
beneath the dim globes of our favourite bar,
she's sitting, waiting
for me to find her.

A master of disguise,
sometimes blonde, sometimes dark,
skin pale or tanned.
One week she is tall, the next short,
but I always know her
by her eyes.

She wears little grey ribbons in her eyes.

Above the chatter of pokies in the next room,
she plays her latest lucky name.
Sometimes Sonia, others Michelle
or Rona or Lisa or Kristy.
And what the heck,
I become different people for her too.
Keeps things interesting
for both of us.

I buy her a tequila sunrise
or a bourbon and coke or a gin and tonic
or a beer. She gives me a smile
or a snarl or a kiss on the cheek
or the neck or the mouth.

We go back to my place. Always my place.
I've thought about asking her why,
but then maybe it's me who insists,
who doesn't want to know
the colours of her walls her sheets the books on her shelves.

Inside all this civilised clothing
we are both savages,
our bodies foreign languages
we learn through points and gestures,
stutters and gasps.
Lisping children, we invent new games,
new words for only us and only now.

Next week we will have forgotten
on purpose,
will learn to speak all over,
discover ourselves savages again – and again –

This is why she leaves me.
This is why I send her away.

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