

*'These poems are a silver needle filled with the strangest sort of dope. The trip is both brutal and beautiful. The hallucinations are truth. And I'm laughing over the pain. Bradley Smith has done it again.'*

Charlie LeDuff,  
Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Sh\*tshow!*, *Detroit*, and *US Guys*

SUSAN BRADLEY SMITH

# THE POSTCULT HEART

LOVE POEMS FOR A LOST WORLD

**Interactive Press**

***The Postcult Heart***

*Susan Bradley Smith began her writing life as a rock journalist and cultural historian in Sydney and London. She is Professor of Poetry at John Cabot University in Rome, and teaches Creative Writing at Curtin University, Australia. An advocate for Arts and Health, she is the founder of the writing and wellbeing consultancy Milkwood Bibliotherapy.*



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# The Postcult Heart

Susan Bradley Smith



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*We must love one another or die.*

– ‘September 1, 1939’, *W H Auden*

*Just be glad you were in bed,  
where the cries of love drown out the dreams of the corpses.*

– ‘Hunters’, *Louise Glück*

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## Makepeace Family Tree

Booker Makepeace: Poet, Earth Laureate  
(orphan)

b. 1963, London—missing since 2000, declared legally  
dead 2007

Fleetwood Makepeace: Silversmith  
(father: unknown)

b. 1979, Nimbin—

Daisy Baby Girl Makepeace: Surfer  
(father: Wolfram von Drachenfels, Publisher)

b. 2000, London—

Wednesday Whitsun Makepeace  
(father: Blue-Blue Whitsun, Surf Photographer)

b. 2018, Lennox Head—

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## Prologue

### The Ballad of Baby Girl (a mother's song for her daughter)

*by Fleetwood Makepeace, for Daisy Baby Girl Makepeace, on the eve of  
her wedding*

*– sung to the tune of ‘Scarborough Fair’*

Are you going to London Town?  
Diamonds, gold and silver are there  
Don't forget your mother loves you  
While you dance and let down your hair

When you're sad look up at the sky  
Diamonds, gold and silver are there  
The clouds of Hackney know you so well  
Raining down, rinsing sins with care

If you're lost go talk to the Lea  
Diamonds, gold and silver are there  
The rivers know the secrets of old  
Here love floats, and swims with skin bare

Find yourself aloft with the birds  
Diamonds, gold and silver are there  
Walk barefoot and gaze upon spires  
For god will save you when men will not dare

Kiss who want, and kiss who must  
Diamonds, gold and silver are there  
Slit your life fish like, scales a-shining  
Swim through the mist, lay down with love rare

Watch for those highwaymen on your roads  
Diamonds, gold and silver are there  
When you're done roaming and your heart's all stardust  
Then shall you know, true love is my prayer.  
Then shall you know, true love is your fare.

# Love Poems for a Lost World

by Booker Makepeace  
*for my daughter; Fleetwood Makepeace*

## Crush

*after James Arlington Wright's 'Saint Judas'*

Any excuse will do, find  
me a clock to wind or a  
last supper to sweat through,  
I'll do anything to escape  
the too-soon specialness  
of you. I could perhaps run  
away, banish my bolter self,  
claim clam-tight innocence  
or form a rock band called  
'Cinderella's Motherfuckers'  
or 'Christmas on Steroids' but  
even then I'd no doubt ask  
you to play bass, mistaking you  
for a philippic poet with an  
instrument when we both  
know what you really are:  
someone I should have met  
before.

I would hold you for nothing in my arms.



## The knot I know

These are the things I  
will do to you: I will hold  
your hand beneath the  
table (this will begin  
our affair); afterwards,  
not too much later, I will  
make you lie upon me,  
catacomb sure, on a beach  
somewhere near Rome or  
on Mars, who cares.

Shortly thereafter  
you will drag me backwards  
by my hair to my sure  
drowning. Love has this  
condition, or none.

## Hotel

Her post-baby body (encasing an  
onanistic heart) was a lie built from  
money. She rose from the sunlounge by  
the resort pool, instructed the nanny,  
and walked past the reclining mass  
of the converted, a goddess who knew  
more than what a seashell kept

secret. She rode the lift wiping off the grime  
of those lascivious stares, trying not to  
choke on what lay ahead, feeling lonely but  
determined to wife properly. Sadly, her  
sexual treat never made it centre stage,  
for there in their suite was her husband  
masturbating

as though she did not exist, had never.  
He finished. He looked at her compendium  
of discontent, felt their doneness, but  
had no strength to imagine a different  
way. He worked so hard he was dead.  
Naked together now, they desperately  
began the calculating business of

cutting down life

to the scale of their inheritance.

## On not being eaten alive: one morning at the beach

*after Gwen Harwood's 'In the Dark'*

She sat there half-watching her children  
in the ocean, surfing waves on boards  
that cost more than her honeymoon,  
worrying about the cloudy mess of the day  
and the sharkiness of the water. Earlier,  
her misery had almost choked her:  
she'd walked into it like a spiderweb  
at dawn, an intruder in her own  
garden. She brushed it off and made a  
magnificent breakfast, flushing away her  
pain with green juices and long-limbed  
racing along the beach with her wildflower  
offspring. The sheer beauty of them,  
their touch on her back through  
sunscreen, their branding of her as  
they'd pressed hot-metalled car keys  
into her hand *Hurry up Mum it's  
pumping*, her bones are forever  
engraved with this love. But still,  
she sits, depression deepening  
within her like a coastal shelf. A  
sandbank collapses. A rip roars  
into the sudden gape, an ungodly  
rushing to fill with water what had  
been solid sand an instant before.  
It takes less than two minutes to

drown, but she can hold her breath  
for far, far longer than most, she tells  
the wind. The wind has heard this boast  
before. How else to explain the weather?  
Soon, her surfers will be starving. She  
checks the esky, satisfied that it is full  
enough with food aplenty, and pops  
some ice into her mouth. It's a beautiful,  
beautiful, day. *Wish you were here,*  
she whispers, then closes her eyes.

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