

## Stephen Palmer

William Hove – Milton Keynes

At first I meant to recycle them. They were just stacked up in the corner with the rest of the jars and newspapers. But after a while I just couldn't be bothered separating the green glass from the clear and remembering the right day to put it out. So I just threw it all into a big bin liner and put it out with the rest of the rubbish. I binned it all except the egg boxes. They just seemed to stack so nicely and take up so little space. I can't say I particularly like eggs. I mean it's not like I'm trying to say anything with it. They just stacked nicely. I've got to use a chair now to get up there but apart from that it's easy. Some people think it's really great. My mate Dave took a picture of it with his digital camera and he was talking about getting it into the Guinness Book. And when the newspaper called, that was weird. They said they were calling on a tip-off and I thought they were onto my plants, but then when they started asking how tall it was and how long I'd been collecting them I knew they were asking about the boxes (see *Northern Echo* November 12, 2003 'Feat of Eggceptional Heights'). But I told them it's not like a collection. My dad collects pint glasses. That to me's a collection. They go back maybe two hundred years and he never drinks out of any of them. But with the egg thing, I just keep buying the same brand. If they changed or if Sainsburys stopped going to that farm, then I'd have a different kind of stack I suppose. Well, I hope they'd stack. Otherwise I think I'd bin them.

Jamie Ferguson – Edinburgh

"The walk really isn't that far. Ten minutes max. But with the way it was bucketing, I knew I was going to get soaked. What I can't stand though are wet socks. When your feet are like sponges squishing with every step, I hate that. So I was waiting inside the office's front door to see if it was going to stop when the night porter, you know the new one with the ginger hair, called me over to his sign-in desk. He's so new they don't even have a name badge for him yet. It must have been like half five and I was pretty sure it was just the two of us left. Now I'm not saying that I thought he was going to hurt me or anything; I'm just saying there's been some office chitchat about things missing from the tops of desks and things like this. As I was coming over he reached into his bottom drawer and pulled out two stripey carrier bags. He must have read my mind, cause he starts out all keen – "Nah here's what you do son, pull these over your trainers, like so, see?" we locked eyes, "And tie the handles round your ankles." I nodded dumbly. "Step lightly son, wouldn't want 'em to rip." And just like that he made himself some wellies. I was looking at this sad cobbler with bags tied to his feet but somehow there was also a pride in his offer I couldn't refuse. He took them off and I laced up. The bags were oversized which was good since I've got big feet. Stepping lightly I went for it. He nodded his approval while holding the door for me. It was still bucketing. I wasn't even half way home when my left foot started to feel damp. The polythene seemed to drag rather than cling to my shoes and I lifted one up as you would inspect the tread for dog shit. The sole of my bag was riddled with holes even though I had been making an effort to 'step lightly.' I felt bad for thinking he was a thief. I ripped off the dirty wet bags and left them behind."

Bruce Porter – New Jersey

“You know usually I don’t bother with this type of shit. Let people do their business and leave them alone. That’s more or less been my philosophy. I hate it when people tell me what to do. But this asshole. I mean, he just leaves his doors wide open, the windows, you name it. In the morning, now it’s not like I’m looking but yeah, like in the morning you can see his bare ass just walking from room to room cause he ain’t got no curtains.

I mean I’ve got a young daughter. And she’s at that age, you know where if you say, “Stacey don’t look out the window” you know exactly what she’s gonna do first. It’s a nuisance really. And he’s always blaring his crap. It’s Top 40’s but from like 17 years ago. Just stuff you don’t want to hear. I mean like last night, was it last night? I don’t know, within the week anyway... it was that song you know... “Don’t Let Me

Down” or “Don’t Bring Me Down” and then when there’s that falsetto bit after the chorus, where the singer sings Bruce. At least I think that’s how the song goes. He sings Bruce there, cause this guy was singing it, and

I mean like screaming it. Over and over. Now it was probably completely coincidence about my name being Bruce and all, but when someone’s screaming your name you just hear it louder. And he just kept playing that fucking song and screaming Bruce. So, I just went over there, not to cause trouble really. I mean I’m a bit past my years to start that kind of trouble, but just to tell him to turn it the fuck down. I mean I never intended to go into his place, even with the goddamn door wide open and that fruity curtain he’s got for flies or whatever. But like as I was coming up his path the breeze just blew the strips, and I caught a glimpse and I just decided then and there that he can just keep himself to himself. And he can fucking blare his crap and croon his Bruce. And he won’t hear nothing from me.”

**Robert Blackson**

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