THE BLOKE FROM ROOM
I first met Robinson at Mole Jazz Records.

He was wearing a stick-on beard and thick fake tortoiseshell glasses.

I waited as he thumbed the 2nd hand world music bin.

Annoyingly he fished out a record I had been looking for - a nice record, priced way too low.

I waited as he thumbed the 2nd hand world music bin.

As he paid, a flicker of recognition passed over the face of the woman behind the till.

Robinson?
MY NAME IS WALKER.

I WORKED IN AN OFFICE.

I OFTEN VOLUNTEERED TO DELIVER PACKAGES.

IT WAS A GOOD DODGE.

I RENTED A FLAT AROUND THE CORNER.

A SMALL ROOM—LARGE ENOUGH FOR MY BED, RECORDS AND MAPS.
Deliveries were a laugh for playing games.

One day I walked in a straight line down Oxford Street.

Stopping when something got in my way.*

One morning I crossed Soho only in the sunlit parts of the street.

If only I had more verve.

Once I navigated my way to Piccadilly Circus by steering only with reflections.

Puddles and car windows.
The city is a thousand people on a thousand paths.

Watch how, when and where you bump into an old friend.

I saw my 'ex' drive past with a man in a Porsche.

It was 6pm - I was outside my local, gazing at an unusual cloud.

It had been a flash-in-the-pan romance.

All this could be divined in this more recent 'meeting' too.
Another great game I learnt in the Third World. William Burroughs used it to avoid being sold things in bazaars and souks.

“See people before they see you.” The theory is that this enables you to be invisible. I guess it’s a magic trick.

Play it long enough and you soon meet others playing it — in Soho, often paranoid commercials directors.

Once I saw Robinson using it to put up stickers.
THE STICKERS HAD DISQUIETING SLOGANS ON THEM.

Jesus Copyrights Afterlife

The body is an empty house

One just had a mobile number on it. I thought the graphics on them were groovy— and I remembered Robinson from Mole Jazz.

6ft Underground

That night at home I rang the number but there was no answer.

Then I got a message.
A confused wizard; surely a self-portrait of Robinson.

I replied the next day from the office loo.

A corporate guy with a sense of humour, me.

The next day an unlabelled parcel of stickers was delivered to the office.

So he knew where I worked.
That night I derm I was walking across Hampstead Heath.

There I met Robinson who was resting in a hammock attached to one tree.

I told Robinson I was frustrated with my job.

He told me to wear sunglasses, to pretend to forget other people's names, to talk quietly and to eat peanuts.

I awoke with a heavy head.

My boss always ate peanuts.
I had to deliver a package to our accountants in the afternoon, so I took some stickers with me.

Whilst putting some up, I noticed area in which Robinson had affixed his.

It was even possible to gauge general trajectories he had been on.

North from Piccadilly Circus, up Lexington Street, Poland Street, and Cleveland Street, towards Camden.

Another path lead east along Oxford Street, past Holborn towards the Clerkenwell Road.

I was so busy following these trails I didn't return to work that afternoon.
That night I pored over some of Robinson's slogans. They seemed to be fragments of a comprehensive ideology. A few were quotes.

"The idea of life and afterlife in works of art should be regarded with unmetaphorical objectivity."

"There exist autonomous World 3 objects which have not taken up World 1 shape or World 2 shape, but which nevertheless interact with our thought processes."

"Ancient metempsychosis imagined a plethora of intelligences in search of undifferentiated matter."
My aunt lived in a ramshackle east-end house wedged between council estates. Liz read a lot.

After tea I left her some of Robinson's stickers.

She called me that night.

The first was Walter Benjamin, the second Karl Popper, and my friend Dave thinks the third is by someone called Virilio. It's all quite hardcore theory and philosophy.

He's quite a rugged reader, but seems to seize on certain passages and sometimes the decontextualisation plays havoc with the author's intentions.

In other words you think he's psychotic.
At work I had apologies to make.

You've taken the 'delivery-boy-bit' too far.

Let dispatch do the courier work.

I'm sorry I've been distracted recently.

See Charlie and find out about the waterboard job.

I made a resolution to forget Robinson.
Franckly it was a relief to concentrate on work.

Someone had been sitting at my desk, and things had been shifted around.

Reception tried to put a call through for an "Adam."

The girl at the sandwich bar looked imploringly at me: "Take me away from here."

That evening I had a beer and listened to an old punk record.

Life once again seemed randomised. "Go with the flow," as they say.
A FEW WEEKS LATER I WAS HAVING A SANDWICH IN A PARK AROUND THE CORNER.

ON AN ADJACENT BENCH, IN A SECOND-HAND OXFAM SUIT, WAS ROBINSON.

HE GOT UP TO LEAVE AND I TEXTED HIM, BCNU.

5 MINUTES LATER HE REPLIED, U TLKN 2 ME.

VERY "TAXI-DRIVER."

OUTSIDE HMV ON THE WAY HOME THE KRISHNAM HASTLED ME, THEN I KNEW I MUST BE LOOKING CONFUSED AND STRESSED.
Following the trail of stickers east I noticed a preponderance of them up the Hackney Road — and especially in York Street.

There was only one residential building there, a converted church, and on a hunch I rang a bell.

I wanted to talk to him, and who knows maybe I could find out where he lived.

A woman answered the intercom.

Apparently someone matching Robinson’s description lived on the top floor.

No one was in. I tried his door. It was unlocked.
An abandoned flat, knee-deep with unopened bills and mouldy food.

In the bedroom, a small shelf of books.

In the sitting-room, there was a chair with a large piece of paper under it scattered with pennies.

Each coin was circled in biro.

Against the wall was resting a stack of paper with these circled on them.
In Robinson's bathroom I found a copy of *The Vale of Health on Hamstead Heath.*

By his bed a pile of photographs and a stiff empty address book.

The photos were of familiar streets, many I'd followed in my curiosity.

However the majority were taken on Hamstead Heath. I took a few which were duplicates.

Leaving the flat I felt stunned at myself.

On the kerb I saw an unusual sight—a cat sitting beside a rusting iron.
THAT NIGHT MY MOTHER CALLED. MY LITTLE SISTER HAD BEEN CAUGHT SHOPLIFTING IN MISS SELFRIDGE.

I HAD A BLIM STASHED ON A DOOK LINTEL.

I ROLLED IT INTO A SPLIFF WITH A COUPLE OF RIPPED-UP PAG-ENDS I FOUND STUFFED DOWN THE SOFA.

I USED TO SMOKE A LOT—NOW IT MAKES ME PARANOID.

LYING IN BED MASHED—I HEARD A GHOSTLY CHORAL PHONY OF VOICES.

EACH WITH ITS OWN TONE SPIKALLING UP TO ME FROM A GREAT WELL.
I AWOKE WITH A START TO THE SOUND OF MY PHONE.

ROBINSON'S MOST MINIMAL AND OBLIQUE YET.

A MAN AT SEA, NOT WAVING BUT DROWNING.

THERE WOULD BE NO MORE MESSAGES.

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FIND HIM - THOUGH I HAD AN IDEA WHERE TO LOOK.
My boss was surprisingly cool about me wanting to take a week off at short notice.

After a hefty breakfast at a local cafe, I set off north.

I noticed some stickers on the way up towards Camden.

Many were peeling, some had been torn off, others obscured by newer postings or graffiti tags.

I stopped at a second-hand record store in Camden.

I found a nice old hardcore 12" for £3.
Camden was empty.

I wandered up Hamstock Hill.

Thinking about early hardcore jungle.

Powerful music; all those ectoplasmic synths and brittle polyrhythms.

Soon I was in the car park at Hampstead Heath.

I reckoned Robinson must be here.
ROBINSON HAD TAKEN SOME PHOTOS OF PEOPLE FLYING KITES HERE.

A RATHER POIGNANT ONE OF A GLOOMY ADOLESCENT, WITH A DARK VADER KITE.

THE HEATH IS A WEIRD PLACE.

IT LOOKS COMPACT ON A MAP BUT ENTER IT AND YOU’RE SOON ENGULFED IN ITS GOthic IRREGULARITY.

BY 3PM I WAS HUNGRY AND TIRED AND DECIDED TO RETURN HOME.

I’D SEEN NO EVIDENCE, BUT I STILL HAD A STRONG FEELING HE WAS THERE. A
Watching crap TV that night, I realised the only way I'd find him would be camp out there.

The idea filled me with dread.

Why bother?

I spread the photos out on the floor.

On closer inspection, one seemed much older than the others.

It was subtly faded and a little bent and frayed at the edges. A clue?
I packed a sleeping bag.

This time, remembering a book in Robinson's bathroom, I headed towards the part of the deer called the Vale of Health.

In fact if I walked a couple of metres north and one east I could line myself up with the men.

There, just off the road, I noticed a formation similar to that in the aged photo.

The photographer must have been slightly taller than me, perhaps with a stoop.

The bushes in the photo were smaller, and the trees less overgrown. This must have been 20 years ago.
This was a photo by Robinson's father, perhaps one which should have featured a young Robinson.

I was following him into a maze, and it now seemed he was heading towards his past.

Hungry, I wondered if I could get a pizza delivered here.

I checked my mobile, but the battery was dead.

It was only early evening, but I decided to set up camp discreetly.

It would be safer in the trees.
By the time I finished it was dark.

I lay gazing into the leaves above gently moving in the wind, and drifted to sleep.

In a dream Robinson greeted me on a huge open grass area, and whacked me over to a table.

He had tied three sticks together to the table forming a frame.

On the table were various objects - a piece of chalk, a stick and an apple.

Robinson moved each of the objects in a meaningful way and pointed through the frame into the distance.
I wore shivering wet.

A coughing and spluttering—someone was sheltering at the tree’s foot.

Robinson.

He was bent double and still.

I crept down the branches—not wanting to be heard.

Tip-toeing around the base of the tree I came closer to the static figure.
"Robinson" I whispered. There was no answer.

I reached out and gently touched his shoulder.

And was horrified as the body slumped, dead.

The horrific inevitability of it all dawning on me.

Robinson was always going to end up here.

I moved closer to see his face clearer.
WHAT GREETED ME WAS AN EVEN GREATER SHOCK:

THIS WASN'T ROBINSON.

GASPING LIFELESSLY UP AT ME WAS A YOUNG HOMELESS MAN, HIS UPS BLEEDING AND HIS FACE SUFFUSED IN SORIS.

I HURRIEDLY GATHERED MY THINGS.

AND UNDER THE COVER OF NIGHT FLED THE DEATH.

REELING FROM THIS GHOSCHLIY COINCIDENCE.

HAD ROBINSON KILLED THIS MAN? WAS THIS A SET-UP?
In the morning I plugged in my phone to charge it.

Trying to regain some order I tidied the flat.

The mobile beeped me with a text message.

I had expected Robinson would try and contact me.

I looked up her number and rang it.
Did you like my messages?

What messages?

You know, the Wizard and the Waving Swimmer?

I hunted through the stickers for Robinson's mobile number and called it.

HACL Creative Department.

Have you been putting up weird stickers?
THE DEPARTMENT WAS USING THIS LINE FOR A SPOJEWK PROMOTION. WE DID USE STICKERS FOR THAT....

I Turned across town to York Street.

I pressed the tarde buzzer and entered the building.

I ran upstairs and rang Robinson's bell.

The door opened.

It was a pretty young art student.
I could no longer deny what had happened. Anticipating her reply made it no less painful.

"Do you live here alone?"

Yes.

I ambled down to the Thames.

The gulls circled over dredgers on their way out to sea.

The End.
INSPIRATION: PROF. A. E. LEVER, KEN DOWNE, SACHA DIEU, SIMON REYNOLDS, PAUL ARDEN, LA MONTE YOUNG.
SUPPORT: BRAINCHILD (MURRAY, SIMON, CLEMENS)
LOVE: BEAR, TIGER.
DEDICATED TO: MY DAD.

"CART GRANT"
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