

BEAST!

There's a beast a black beast
a big bounding black beast
that runs with the wind on the moor
eyes that gleam a green gleam
a green glimmering gleam
and she's spattered in red tooth and claw

there's a stream a swift stream
a moonsilver swift stream
that runs through the vale to the Taw
in the silt the soft silt
the soft slathering silt
is the pad of a velvet clad paw

there's a bleat a brief bleat
a brief blathering bleat
and gobful of fleece fills her jaw
then a crack and crunch
as she grabs a late lunch
and a sheep stills the pang in her maw

BILL Had a full grown ewe killed last night

GILL We've lost four in the same way but we've never seen the animal

BILL Just footprints down by the stream

GILL I've lost stock worth more than a thousand pounds already

There's a beast a black beast
a big bounding black beast
That's killing our sheep by the score
At the end of each night
we area met with the sight
Of our livelihood covered in gore

BILL Know what I reckon? Poachers' dogs... lurchers

GILL If it was a dog or a fox ..all the sheep'd be in one corner

Let the valley resound
to the cry of the hound
Let slip the dogs of war
Never mind foxes
this killers of flocks is
The quarry we're now hunting for

There's a beast a black beast
a big bounding black beast

that runs with the wind on the moor
eyes that gleam a green gleam
a green glimmering gleam
and she's spattered in red tooth and claw

HER You seen anything?

HIM Sorry Madam?

HER Anything there?

HIM And you are?

HER We heard you were here.

HIM We?

HER Mr Ley tells me there was another kill last night.

HIM You're not a farmer.

HER Much of the moor is mine.

HIM Is that so

HER How many men

HIM I'm really not at liberty. If you'll excuse me Miss.

HER Not Miss

HIM Mrs.

HER Ms.

HIM Sorry?

HER Ms.

HIM Of course.

HER Where are you accommodated?

HIM I'm sorry Miss, Ms, that's an operational matter.

HER It's not a dog is it?

HIM I've nothing to say.

HER Mr Ley says no dog kills like that.

HIM You know Mr Ley well?

HER Breaking the neck. Tearing out the throat

HIM Quite so

HER Eric has suffered terrible losses.

HIM Eric?

HER Mr Ley

HIM Of course

HER 90 sheep and climbing.

HIM Indeed

HER Could ruin him

HIM We're here to make sure it doesn't

HER So the Beast – the so-called Beast. Have you seen it?

HIM I really couldn't say.

HER Or any of your men?

HIM Are you a journo?

HER A what?

HIM Journalist. Are you?

HER No. No I'm not.

HIM Poking noses. Gloating.

HER I'm not a journalist.

HIM You ask a lot of questions.

HER I care about what happens on the moor.

HIM You don't sound like you're from round here.

HER And yet I am. Born and bred. Appearances can be deceptive.

HIM I must ask you to leave.

HER Must you?

HIM Yes

HER Leave where?

HIM The farm. The area. My men are out there waiting. Their guns are loaded. This is a dangerous place to be.

HER Waiting for what?

HIM Officially it's a dog.

HER And unofficially?

HIM Madam. I don't know who you are. I'm trying not to be rude. But you must leave.

HER These are my moors.

HIM And we're making them safe for you.

HER How dull. How very dull.

HIM Madam...

HER I could be of use. I've seen it.

HIM So have a lot of people apparently.

HER But I have. I know where you'll find it.

HIM This isn't the first hunt I've been on.

HER Let me show you.

HIM We've been thoroughly briefed.

HER Have you now?

 You come with me, I'll show you its path.

HIM I'm on duty.

HER Meet me tomorrow.

HIM No Madam.

HER The Hilltop there. Above the woods. You'll see all you need to see.

HIM No madam.

HER 13 hundred hours.

JOHNNY I knew it had been round Exmoor.

 I listened to the people round Bratton reckoned some people had actually seen it from a distance.

 I was talking to a chap named Jimmy Lockwood... he reckons they've seen it out Muddiford way but he said ... he don't breathe a word about where he walks like cos Jimmy a real country boy walks around all these woods ... and he said he's seen all these animal droppings, says he's never seen droppings like it

and Jed Wilson real old friend of mine he was out top of Shirwell and he heard these things and all of a sudden these animals they just took off and he could hear them smacking through the wood he never heard anything like it

and of course you take these tales with a pinch of salt...
anyway it were about June 15th three year ago
I was out top of Roborough near Shirwell going across the fields and I come to the short field and I look to me left and I see this animal going along the side of the hedge... what is that...

come right in front of me - it was only about 200 yards away and Christ I tell you what I could feel the back of me neck standing up...

it stared at me and I had this stick in my hand and I thought what am I going to do - you know it was really scary

I had this stick and I smacked it on this branch as hard as I could to make the loudest noise I could.. and he just took off and it was like lightening.. gone..

I couldn't believe it but it's the honest to god's truth

It had a long tail right to the ground
and its belly went up n the middle like a dog
but its head
its head was like a cat
it was a big animal no doubt

people say there's more than one
I reckon there's gotta be

MA it's time

BOY reading

MA what?

BOY reading

MA reading?

BOY reading

MA what

BOY Beowulf beast-slayer
mother-monster killer

MA it's time

there's cows need milked

BOY It's back
MA back?
BOY gert-great blood-bolt beast is back
MA never
BOY seen it
MA seen it?
BOY on the news
MA you're not to watch no news
BOY father did
MA right enough your father did
 looked what happened to him
 he got ideas
 it's time
BOY soldiers
MA soldiers?
BOY seen 'em
MA on the news?
BOY on the moor
MA the moor?
BOY the moor
MA you're not to go near no moor
BOY father did
 it's time
MA time?
BOY time
MA you're not to go
BOY it's time
MA there's sheep need sheared
BOY it's time

HIM I wasn't going to come.

HER But you did. With impressive precision.

HIM Nothing last night. Knew we were there. So if you can help.

HER It comes in off the moor.

HIM You reckon?

HER I know.

From up here you can see how it operates.

Look. You see Drewstone. Eric's farm - Mr Ley. It's the roof catching the sunlight, down the valley, got it?

HIM I know Drewstone. It's where we're billeted.

HER All of you? A tight fit.

HIM In the barn.

HER See those deer look.

HIM Sure

HER All kinds of cover... copses, woodland, hedgerows.

HIM We've crawled through most of it.

HER Now this way, look. These five valleys coming down into this main one from off the moor - all wooded. They all come from right off the moor and they link up down here... the old railway track runs along the bottom.

Up there that's Two Barrows, way up over is Sportsman's Inn.

There's my deer again.

HIM Your deer are they?

HER In a manner of speaking.

Early morning you might see 30, 40 of them out in the open but during the day they keep mostly out of sight - see they're moving off into the woodland. Now this, across the land we're looking at, this is their main track from the moor.

And it's the same for this creature. It's easy to keep hidden and come down off the moorall the way to Drewstone...

HIM You've seen it.

HER I have.

HIM So what is it we're hunting.

HER I don't know.

HIM But you've seen it.

HER I know what I've seen but I don't know what you're hunting.

HIM Are you wasting my time.

HER You seem to know what you're hunting.

HIM We're not going to feed the rumour-mill. So it's a dog. A wild-dog.

HER But you've hunted.

HIM I've hunted.

HER All over the world. Big cats. In Africa.

HIM That's right.

HER South America.

HIM Yes in fact.

HER The Falklands.

HIM Not funny.

HER You've seen dead sheep.

HIM I've seen a lot of dead things.

HER But sheep. Dead sheep.

HIM I know how a big cat kills. It's very different from a dog. So far the sheep I've seen, they weren't killed by a dog. There's not all the bite marks, mouthfuls of flesh. No, it's clean. It's gone for the throat. And then the flesh has been stripped away. Rasped off the bone, I'd say.

HER Tracks?

HIM Nothing definite. That I don't understand. There's mud enough. It's rained enough. Haven't seen anything I can identify.

HER She's a fine creature.

HIM She?

HER She. Powerful.

HIM Gotta be.

HER With a paw that goes this way and one that goes that.

HIM You're taking the piss.

HER No, that's part of a story. I'm not taking the piss.

HIM I'm not interested in stories. I want this thing dead.

HER Why?

HIM So where did you see it?

HER Why kill her?

HIM Are you going to tell me?

HER Not here. I've heard her here. I've never seen her here.

HIM Heard her, go on.

HER Calling. Howling. Like a banshee.

HIM What kind of a howl.

HER A wailing. A bit like a baby. Who's she calling to?

HIM Recently?

HER Over the years.

HIM You're playing with me.

HER Certainly not.

HIM I know when I'm being played with.

You said you would show me all I need to see.

HER How much more do you want?

HIM What I want is some clarity. I want to know what this thing is, where this thing is. And who you are.

HER I'm not really part of the picture am I. You don't need to know about me. You have a job to do.

HIM And I won't be distracted.

HER You'd better get back to your barn. To your men.

HIM You say that's the track this thing follows?

HER The same path as the deer.

HIM All the way down to Drewstone.

HER All the way.

HIM Then that's the path I'll take.

I thank you for what you've shown me.

HER There's more.

HIM I have no doubt.

PERCE We met on market day.

KAT Friday.

PERCE Her name was...

KAT His name was...

PERCE Katherine

KAT Percy

KAT Oh scuse...

PERCE no excuse me

KAT oh... you go this way and I'll go that..

PERCE Yes...

The very next Friday.

KAT Hello... I'll go...

PERCE This way and I'll go

KAT That...

PERCE Yes.

KAT In my morning break I used to take my tea flask to watch the auctions... it was noisy exciting...

PERCE In those days the livestock market was in town. You could hardly move on Fridays for trucks in all shapes and sizes, the smell of animals and groups of old boys catchin' up...

Alright Jim?
Alright Jack.

KAT Oh hello again.

PERCE Buying or selling?

KAT Sorry.

PERCE Buying or...

KAT Oh selling. Plants on the pannier market....my Dad's....just veg really. Brassicas mostly...you?

PERCE Ah. No. I don't grow much in the way of brass... ooh I see. No, no I'm selling – sheep and buying a few bits and pieces for myself...

KAT Cup of tea? You look cold.

PERCE Thanks. That's kind of you...
After that we'd meet every Friday.

KATE Share some soup and sandwiches.

PERCE I told her about my life right up there on the moor...

KAT I told him about life down here near the river...

PERCE I didn't tell her everything.
Then one Friday
Katherine

KAT Kat. Mmm Cheese and Pickle

PERCE Kat. ..

KAT Do you fancy some parkin?

PERCE Will you marry me?

KAT I made it myself.

PERCE Yes?

KAT Yes. Here you are.

PERCE So will you?

KAT Yes.

PERCE Marry me.

KAT Yes

PERCE And come and live up on the moors

KAT Yes.

PERCE I should have told her then.
Katherine - Kat?

KAT Yes?

PERCE But I didn't

Ma : It's time

Boy: Dreaming

Ma: What?

Boy: What?

Ma; Dreaming?

Boy: Beast

Ma: Beast?

Boy: gert great blood-bolt beast

Ma There's fences need fixed

Boy soldiers

Ma: soldiers?

Boy: gonna kill it. I know. Cos I seen 'em. Down the pub (hold and look)

Ma: You're not to go near no pub

Boy: Father did

Ma Edgar

Boy [as Dad:] I'm going down the pub.
I want my dinner on the table when I get back.
I want the books sorted, the floor scrubbed and my bath ready...and stop that
little tacker crying or you know what's coming to you..

Ma: You're not to go near no pub....

Boy: Father did.....a lot

with the light of life dancing in her eyes
how can he resist

with the light of life playing in her eyes
how can he resist

holds her in his arms
captive to her charms
how can he
how can he resist

to say goodnight almost breaks his heart
but he's a farmer boy he's got an early start

walking through the starlit night
across the moor to home
hears a sound a footfall on the ground
he doesn't walk alone

a big black cat with a gleam in her eyes
how can he resist
a big black cat with a demon in her eyes

holds her in his arms
captive to her charms
how can
how can he resist

and when the weekend comes again
another dance
another chance
how can he resist

and when he's walking home again
the night is late
the black cat waits
how can he
how can he
how can he resist

it isn't long before the pair are wed
they bless the happy day
their bliss is sealed in the bridal bed
their love is here to stay

the big black cat is gone
either dead or flown
but she won't
on no she won't be missed

on the moor they make their home
loves young dream just them alone
how can they resist
how can they resist
how can they desist

then seven years on from the look in her eye

there's something that she's missed
seven years on he sees in her eyes
something she can't resist

as he holds her in his arms
he knows his faded charms
are all too easy
easy to resist

and when the weekend comes around
she can't be found
she's gone to town
how can she resist

and as he's lying there alone
he hears a moan
a feline groan
the cat is back
the cat is back
the cat is back
but no

It's his wife who's back with never a word
and she does the same each week
whenever she's gone it's the cat who's heard
and it's just the same each week

at last he can't ignore
the groaning at the door
is it the cat who's back
is it his wife who's back
is it the cat who's back
is it his wife's who's back
is it the cat who's back
is it his wife who's back
is it the cat who's back
is it his wife's who's back

he sees a velvet paw
creeping through the door

afraid for his life he grabs a knife
and he hacks at the paw he fears
with a howl and a moan the cat is gone
a cat is what he hears

but when his wife comes home that night
her hand's bound tight
in red and white

and then he knows that in his fear
he hacked the hand
that he holds dear

the light has gone
where's it gone
the life has gone
where's it gone

how's it come to this

HER You found me.

HIM I wasn't looking.

HER Through your night-sights. Most impressive.

HIM Better than what we had in the Falklands.

HER Why are you here?

HIM Stake out.

HER It's not your watch.

HIM How do you know?

HER Is it.

HIM A bit of private hunting.

HER Most irregular.

HIM All gone quiet.
It's like it's playing with us.
We're the best. You could trip over us on the moor still wouldn't know we were
there. The Argies never knew.
But this thing does. This thing knows. Keeping away.

HER So why here?

HIM The men are watching the farm. I'm just following my nose.

HER She's getting to you.

HIM Stretching my legs. Gets a bit claustrophobic hunkered down all day all night.

Want to know where it's watching us from.

HER How did you know I'd be here?

HIM I'm a hunter.

HER And I'm the prey?

HIM Of course not. But perhaps you know where I might find it.

HER The beast's lair.

HIM Do you know?

HER Follow the path.

HIM Where does it lead?

HER We'll find out

HIM Is it far?

HER Are you fit?

HIM Try me.

 [SHE PUTS ON HER DARK GLASSES]

 Don't be daft you won't see a thing

HER Night-sights.

HIM For real?

 [THEY RUN. SHE LEADS THE WAY]

HIM Yeah all right, slow it down. I 'm long distance, not a sprinter.

 How do you run so quiet?

 Hey where are you?

 Where you gone?

 Is this is it then?

 Are we there?

 Hey you.

 Your name

 I don't even know your name

 why's it so dark

 where's the moon

 it's here isn't

 it's somewhere here

 and it's not a dog

 I know it's not a dog

 it's a cat

 where is it?

is that you?

woman
whatever you name is
is that you?

listen
I have a phobia
I'm not joking

I have a phobia
galeophobia
gatophobia
ailurophobia
they're all the same thing

I'm afraid of cats

you're not to laugh

any cats

big cats
little cats

I can't breathe
I can hear my heart
can you hear my heart

where are you
it's here isn't it

there's a cat here
and it knows I'm afraid

To all you farmers of the moor
who would crave one more acre
From pinkery pond there comes a lady
Dressed in black and ochre
Eyes of green and hair of weed
It waves and falls behind her
The liquid strength within her flows
as she rises from the water
she cries
Who calls me from my sleep
who tramples on my quilt of green
so wild and free and dear to me
who threatens it creator

she stops atop of yarbury coombe
queen of all she sees
but the forest she'd made so wild and free
is fenced and furrowed bound and
for mans own wealth and greed

far below the foxhounds run
she hears the hunters horn
the hare it hides the deer run far
and the foxes throat is torn

now I know who breaks my sleep
I know what stains my quilt of green
The creatures call in pain and fear
in a land that once was clean

So on hoar oak hill she gathers strength
Her arms reach to the sky
And when she brings them to the ground
through the darkness gleam her eyes
dark slits of yellow green her puma length she arches
And as she coils herself to spring you heart a wild cat scream
Coursing over moor and over marsh along the midnight stream
You will see the spirit as she runs a path across your dreams

BILL I've had a butcher's shop in Barnstaple 5 and 40 year. Never had no trouble 'cept once..about 10 year ago...spring April time..Monday morning I goes to check me stock in cold store out back opens the door brrr full of girt great haunches of beef big as big strong men sought and bought from Bideford to Braunton. Now I've always prided meself on me stock keeping so I starts checking me meat...2 haunches missing...someone had been meddling with me stock..now there was plenty of competition about in those days and plenty jealous of my success but none more so than my neighbour Jack Chitterling...one week later same thing happened Monday Morning checking me stock out back..brrr darn me if there weren't 2 more haunches pinched I was jumping..now I'd had me eye on Jack Chitterling..but I couldn't go a-pointing the finger so what t' do...well I had something of a reputation in these parts as a spinner of yarns..I could right spook folk if I had a mind. I had to stop telling of the Ilfracombe werewolf for when I got down on all fours rolled me eyes in the sockets clawed the ground all me listeners would run away in terror...so that evening after I'd scrubbed me block with sawdust sharpened up me knives I was shutting up shop when

GILL Evening Jim

BILL Evening Jack

GILL Ows business

BILL Yourn

GILL Prosperin

BILL Ere Jack ..have you seen my big black puma?

GILL What big black puma..didn know 'e had a puma

BILL Oh I just got him from a lepidopterist up in London....someone had been meddling with me meat so I got meself protection...very fierce pumas...big as a wolf and twice as wild...you can see him prowling out back around the yard with his glittering teeth and pricked up ears see him?

GILL Where's e too then?

BILL Surely you can see him...swinging his bell rope tale swift as a shadow, black as night...eyes like red hot poker..

GILL I don' see him no puma

BILL E's got a paw as goes this way and one as goes that

GILL Yes yes I see im..with a paw as goes this way and one as that ees walkin' by the coal store wall

BILL I had him seein' a puma as wasn't there

GILL Be careful Jim take care he don get loose

BILL He's safe enough in the yard Jack but woe betide the man as lays a hand on me haunches.

 After that all went well for a while nothing went missing I thought the problem was solved. Then one morning in early May...

GILL Ere, you wanna watch that beast of yourn I jest seen him bounding along Butchers Row with paw as goes this way and one that goes that

BILL When was this?

GILL Jess now

BILL But there he is in cold store in the yard out back

GILL So he is..he must run like lightning to get back here so fast

BILL Well I can't understand how ee got out Jack

GILL I've told folk about your big black puma and us is a-feared that he might get loose and go for we

BILL Couldn't believe it e'd seen the puma even when I wasn't there and that wan't the end of it.

 Morning Mrs Shapland

GILL I've seen it

BILL Whats that then

GILL Disgusting it is 'S not right letting out in public

BILL I donno what you're on about Mrs Shapland

GILL You knows what I mean... up on the Gorrall estate swift as a shadow black as night with a paw as goes this was and one as goes that

BILL I'll chain 'im up this instant Mrs Shapland

GILL T'ain't good enough...I want compensation now

BILL Couple pound of sausages to see ee right - this was getting ridiculous

GILL Ere you the one with that cat then
BILL What the one with a paw as goes this way

GILL ...and one that goes that...well I seed him jumpin on a wall down on Rolle Quay
you let that thing out again me and my boyz is gonna come and sort ee out

BILL suddenly everybody's seein it

GILL swift as ashadow...
filleigh viaduct...
out by Molland
black as night ..
shouldn't be allowed
saw it as Whistlandpound
and me
me too
with eyes like red hot pokers
nearly run im down at North Molton
Black Cat pub..
Drewstone..
Lynton..
Minehead..
Dulverton..
my aunty lives up Brayford she's seen it...
we've all seen it with a paw as goes this way and one that goes that...
somma'st gotta be done

BILL Perhaps the time had come to get rid of me big black puma. So the next
morning, with all me neighbours looking on: come on girl in the back with ee...
it's off to Paignton Zoo with ee... purr to the people..

GILL It purred I heard it

BILL You heard it Wayne?

GILL I heard it

BILL Oh good.

Had a lovely day out...Paignton .. dinner.. paddle in the sea.. wander round the
zoo...at last I got rid of me big black puma for good and for all...so back to
Barnstaple I goes

Evening Jack

GILL Evening Jim

BILL Business good today

GILL You got a nerve Jimmy Brown

BILL What you on about Jack Chitterling?

GILL Hers back! Beat thee by an hour ..tis that long since I seen her running down
Boutport street heading for the open country..swift as a shadow, black as night,
with a paw as goes this way and one as goes that..

BILL Damn you Jack Chitterling..for a liar and a scrud I left her in a cage in Paington
Zoo

GILL A scrud is it? We'll soon see who's the scrud..

BILL I tell you I wish I shot him a the first and had done with it..

GILL He's been savaging sheep up Drewstone, 35 lambs in one sitting..
Took half a flock in Brayford 5 thousand pounds worth of flesh you'll be the ruin
of us Jimmy Brown we want compensation...we want compensation.. we want
compensation

 Ahhh it bit me?

BILL What bit ee Jack

GILL A big black puma..

BILL Looks like your chopper slipped to me

GILL Don't you deny it, it came in my shop , leapt on my block and sank it's cruel
fangs right into thumb

BILL A gasp of horror came form every throat

 Alright... I think its time I came clean about my big black puma.. the truth of the
matter is..I have no big black puma...I never had no big black puma.. I never
wanted to 'ave no big black puma...it was all a joke - a story..

GILL Too late for that it'll take more than a few herb sausages t save ee this time

BILL It never existed

GILL But we'd all seed her an't we with a paw as goes this way and one that goes that
..and what about my sheep and what about my hand

BILL Right....hand me my revolver..it's under the till...

GILL What are ee gonna do Jim?

BILL Just give me my gun ...stand back..back

GILL You wouldn't be thinking of turning it loose on us would ee?

BILL There's a good boy there's a good maid sit sit....[MIMES SHOOTING THE
BEAST]...and so I shot my big black puma. Satisfied..?

GILL Her's still now..her paws don' go this way nor that way no more

BILL Get your shovel Jack us'll bury him together

GILL Mr Brown?

BILL Yes Wayne

GILL I'm sorry about your beast

BILL Yeah so am I Wayne so am I..

GILL But when we see'd him up Molland way....

BILL Yes Wayne?.

GILL There were two.....

There's a beast a black beast
a big bounding black beast
that runs with the wind on the moor

HER Unfortunate

HIM Disaster

HER While the cat's away...

HIM But it wasn't was it? It was very much not away. It was very much here. And I wasn't.

35 pounds of meat. That's a lot of mutton.

HER That's a family meal.

HIM Meaning?

HER Perhaps she's hunting for more than one.

HIM Don't start.

HER Unfortunate.

HIM Is that what it was?

HER Don't you think?

HIM Just unfortunate that I wasn't there.

I was led astray.

HER Oh I see. My fault.

HIM You led me to the middle of the moors. You left me there.

HER You couldn't keep up. You got lost.

HIM And that's the moment the beast chooses. Waits till I'm gone.

HER Aren't you getting a bit personal?

HIM It is personal. Hunting is very personal.
It's watching. It's out there and it's watching.
It's watching me.

HER You think you're the centre of her universe? I'm sure she's got more important things to think about. Like how to feed her family.

HIM That's fanciful.

HER No more fanciful than your fantasies of one-on-one with the beast.

HIM I don't have fantasies. My world is entirely real.

HER And what am I?

HIM What are you?

HER How could I possibly outrun you?. You who yomped the Falklands. Yomped your way into Port Stanley.

HIM Yes in fact.

HER What kind of fantasy Amazon am I?

HIM What are you talking about? You're talking rubbish. What is this? Where does it come from?

HER Leading you astray, out on the moors.

HIM You left me.

HER I was never there. Mills and Boon or soft porn? Pure fantasy.

HIM I know what's what. And I know who you are. Don't think I don't. I remember.

HER I don't think so.

HIM I saw you before. In the flash of a shell.

HER I'm not one for war.

HIM You were there.

HER Fantasy

HIM Ammunition and a packet of fags. I thanked you. You smiled. Then you drove off into the darkness.

You left me in the darkness.

And the cat crept in.

HER

So now what?

HIM

Stake out. Do what I'm best at. No more following you.

HER

Where's your spirit of adventure?

HIM

I've had more adventure than most.
No I'm waiting here. I'm not going to her. I'm waiting here for her to come to me.

HER

Her?

HIM

I'll be ready.

GILL

You see Diane was a huntress ...pure and virginal...stealthy and smart....at one with her terrain, her ground...grounded...She was by nature nurtured , nurtured by nature , succoured by the very act of hunting...no quarry too quick, no creature too cunning, no beast too bold...

..able to become as one with the act of hunting itself: flying with the fletches of her arrows, bending with the arch of her bow ...hunting not for mere pleasure or to demonstrate her prowess but as one of the beasts herself....to feed herself and her maidens without need for men and their vain displays of manhood cruelty and conquering glory..

Her virginity an emblem of a world that has no need for the domination of man or tribe...a world where the earth itself is balanced and nurtured by women's touch that takes no more nor less than their corporeal needs...

What need for men in such an Eden? Where girls can squeal and laugh and play without preening for men's lascivious eyes... where every female form is beautiful and being unclothed a state of grace not confused by men's demands...

OK and we have Acteon..., son of Aurideus, taught by Chiron ...one the greatest hunters known to man...note , known to man...no mention that it was, in fact his grandmother who bequeathed to him his hunting skills...YES Acteon, told from his very earliest youth what a clever little hunter he was, what a bold little boy, what a brave little man, ..Practising for hours to shoot his catapult at the village cats, to draw back with dead-eyed accuracy the string of his bow. The leader of his pack, born with a silver arrow in his quiver...no surprise that he thought no quarry too quick for him, no creature too cunning....no beast too bold....no girl not game ...no woman too wild...but let's not get ahead of ourselves...

Acteon..out with his boys hunting...across moor and mountain, through stream and spinney, combe and copse...and what a day they'd had - dogs barking, his boys baying or was it the other way round? No matter...the chase had left them elated and exhausted but for once the beast had eluded them....the pack of boys and hounds content to fling themselves on such food as they had to hand and rest their flagging feet...

But Acteon was not content; his gorge was up, the scent of beast was in his blood, his manhood stakes raised by expectation of the kill... Acteon wanders in the woods his staff at hand ready to discharge his pent up man-power: he will not return empty handed...and lo he hears ...

..Diane has that self same day as a cat crept through woods and wasteland, moved mirage-like across rill and rocky outcrop and swarmed shadow-like through field and forest...to no avail ...twice she'd had the deer in her deadly sights and twice the beastly baying of Acteon and his boys had spoilt her poise and startled her prey... At the third and last attempt her heart relented...and she let the hart go free...tired as it was from the chase and the stench of mannish sweat pervading the sweetness of the evening air...and flinging her a last forgiving glance of gratitude, the stag leapt towards the lengthening shadows of encroaching night....

The moon crept over the edge of the world and Diane and her girlfriends used the last rays of warming sunshine to bathe away the souring scent of the days hotfooted chase...

Yes, there he saw her...surrounded in her watery bower by us swarming sylphs and nymphs....Diane the huntress inviolate, steady in her virgin purpose and standing there in front of him stunning, supreme, sensual ...and naked. He smiled. She didn't.

...was it that she had no need of him, was unimpressed by his rippling form, his youthful confidence, his staff quivering in his hand as he gazed where no man was allowed toor ever had...and she gazed back and in that second of stillness, pregnant with possibilities,... what was it passed between them ..what conception or misconception of the moment interrupted the purpose of their thoughts...What? What? Oh how a moment can be misread ...for this was no meeting of minds.

The moons silvery rays filtered through the tree-tops canopy and the final colours of the day died to sepia tonesHe moved his mouth to speak – for here before him was a quarry, a creature, a beauty so exquisite that, darling of his parents that he was, he thought it must be possible, nay probable, he could possess her, win her, have her for when before had his wants ever been gainsaid?

But a Goddess is more than match for any mortal man no matter what fine lineage, manly form, how ever well bestowed....and lets make no mistake here, no bones about it, Acteon was pretty well perfect as far as eye candy goes...there were few I can recall sweeter or tastier for passing contemplation...mmm ...

He opened his mouth and knew, or in fact divined - for her lips did not move, perhaps her eyes narrowed a fraction, glinted almost I'd say in that dangerous way that Gods can work... and he knew, divined, he must not speak, not utter words in case the tale he were to tell, should boast of what he'd seen ..and become a boys bragging tale of how he'd nearly copped a Goddess. A virgin Goddess. And even then he could not comprehend the awful danger he was in...still hoped perhaps she might relent, might let him go back to be amongst his boys....

But the maidens knew, we knew but would not warn him further. When a girl says no that's what she means, when a Goddess says no (intake of breath)

And then the playful sounding of his boys hunting horns, the baying of his hounds as they sought him out...he turned to answer to their call, shrugging his shoulders half apologetically for their course and uncouth interruption...Here, he said,

BILL Here

GILL Over here...

BILL Over here.

GILL Aagghh.

White Out ...

She shook her mane of hair, and water droplets from her new washed tresses spinning forward as shards of crystal cutting through the clear night air and showered down across his manly shape and changed it there in front of us. He who once was, was now a stag –no, literally a stag... and no less lovely to us in many ways...but it was Acteon, or he who had been Acteon was now a stag that night and what a stag night it was ..his boys freshened by their ale and fodder heard not Acteon but a stags full throated cry...the dogs scenting at last a tasty ending to their wearing day pursued the sound with hearts and stomachs determined for a prize...

We watched from the shadows, followed fleetly in their wake moving with all the stealth we could muster to witness the beast's final and inevitable end. We watched dispassionately, yes, without a glimmer of remorse as they tore him man and hound so they could feast upon his flesh... And at what moment did they know what they had done...far too late, of that at least you can be sure. I think I saw, to this day I believe I saw ...just before the final coup de grace was given, just before the hounds teeth tore out his heart that moment again that suspended second when Diane peering down from a trees top-most branch allowed a droplet to fall upon the ravaged form below her – and it was water I'm sure - for Goddesses do not cry.. just one drop and in that moment they knew the stag was Acteon...but it was too late and the blood lust was heavy on them and they did not , could not stop.

KAT It's so peaceful up here Perc

PERC You like it?

KAT Of course I like it

PERC Not too lonely.

KAT No – I've got you...and all that space. We could go wild up here and no-one would ever know.

PERC No.

KAT I was only joking.

PERC I know.

Kat. I ..I have to go out tonight...stay out on the moor...something worrying the sheep...Better keep watch.

KAT Of course. Dogs d'you think?

PERC Don't know. Probably nothing. Better safe than sorry. You'll be alright?

KAT Course I will.

PERC Lock and bolt the door. Pull the blinds down

KAT Yes, yes...don't worry, I'm not afraid of the dark.

PERC No. See you tomorrow.

SHE CARRIES ON HUMMING. WITH HIS BACK TO THE AUDIENCE HE HINTS AT CHANGING INTO A WEREWOLF

KAT Your hair's grows so fast... If I didn't cut it at least once a month...I swear it'd soon be as long as mine..

PERC Kat. I have to stay out on the moor again tonight.

KAT The dog again? What is it – farm dog gone wild?

PERC Likely.

KAT You should ask around next time we're at the market –

PERC Yeah Good idea.

Lock and bolt the door... Pull the blind ..

KAT yes yes. Don't worry.

AGAIN WITH HIS BACK TO THE AUDIENCE HE HINTS AT CHANGING INTO A WEREWOLF

PERC Kat..

KAT I know. You have to stay out..

PERC You know?

KAT Full moon

PERC Lock and bolt the door

KAT Pull down the blinds ..Yes I know

PERC I should have told you

KAT you better go

THIS TIME FACING THE AUDIENCE HE BECOMES A WEREWOLF. SHE HEARS WHAT IS HAPPENING AND GRABS A KNIFE. HE MOVES AS THOUGH TO ATTACK HER AND SHE RAISES THE KNIFE.

THIS MORPHS INTO THE NEXT SCENE BEFORE IT IS RESOLVED.

BOY: Where's my dinner

Ma: Where you been?

Boy It's time

Ma Where you been?

Boy: Out

Ma: Out?

Boy: Hunting!

Ma: Hunting?

Boy: Beast

Ma No

Boy Father

Ma Edgar

 There's meadows need mown

Boy: Reward

Ma: Reward?

Boy: £1,000

Ma: £1,000

Boy: I want to go on holiday ...to America.

Ma: sheep need sheared
 fences need fixed
 meadows need mown
 hay need hauled
 drains need dug
 dung needs dumped
 straw needs stacked
 slurry needs spraying

Boy America

 Time

MA Time

BOY Hunting

MA No....

BOY Blood axe

MA Claw hacks

BOY Blood axe

MA Claw hacks

BOY Blood axe

MA Claw hacks

BOY Blade bites neck bone

MA Up chuck of blood gut

BOY Blade bites neck bones

MA Up chuck of blood guts

BOY Blade bites neck bones

MA Up chuck of blood guts

BOY Head of hell hag hoist rejoicing

 Beowulf beast slayer boy kid of Edgarthor
 watcher of ewes on edges of Exmoor
 hastes with head to hall of lording
 Fit to feast and sing his feat
 Beowulf bold mad mother has beat

MA Sheep need sheared
 Fences need fixed
 Meadows need mown
 Hay need hauled
 Drains need dug
 Ding need dumped
 Straw needs stacked
 slurry needs spread

BILL nooooooooo

HIM I could have killed you.

HER I could have killed you.

HIM What are you doing? What the hell do you think you're doing?
 I'd have had her.

Instead of which I nearly had you.

HER I don't think so.

HIM She was in my sights.

HER So was I.

HIM Yes you bloody were. Which is why I couldn't bloody shoot.

HER You didn't shoot.

HIM I couldn't shoot.

HER You didn't shoot.
You couldn't shoot.
You couldn't shoot her.

HIM Because of you.

HER Because of you.

HIM Don't come it.

HER Could you.

HIM Just don't come it.

HER Galeophobia
Gatophobia
or something else?

HIM She's beautiful

HER Of course she is

HIM Hardly saw her

HER She's fast

HIM Want to see her again

Before I kill her
I want to see her again

HER You've looked in her eyes

HIM I have

HER Then she's won
you'll never kill her now

HIM Of course I will

HER you've looked in her eyes

HIM There's been plenty of eyes I've looked in
kids' eyes some of them
little kids sent to fight

but it doesn't signify

I was aiming right between the eyes
clear as you like through the night-sights

and she looked

she was ready to take me

I was ready for her

then you

how did you get in?

how did you know?

cos you did know
didn't you
knew she was there

you knew she was there

HER Of course I knew. How did I know.....

HIM I've seen you before. I remember

HER Who am I?

HIM Another moor .A Falklands moor

HER You know who I am

HIM What's a woman doing on a bloody battle field

HER I've come for you

HIM Get her out of here

HEWR There's no escape

HIM Ammunition and a packet of fags....

HER You've looked in my eyes. You've seen more than is good for you

HIM Can't breathe ... get her out of here ... there's a cat ... can't breathe ... can't
breathe

HE BREAKS DOWN

GILL how different the beginning

with a beast on the loose
who best to turn to
but Hercules
the hero

BILL and what a hero
 the very type of hero

GILL this was the lad
 who at ten months old
 had strangled the life from a pair of pythons
 clutched in his tiny fists
 his baby smile lighting his lips

BILL this was the lad
 whose body and mind were honed
 through his infancy
 honed through his teens
 honed in early manhood
 into a sleek mean killing machine
 that longed for action

GILL so when the message came

 Thespis is under attack
 The Thespians fear for their livelihood
 fear for their lives

 a monster
 a beast
 some say a cat
 some a dog
 in truth a lion of monstrous stature
 roams the land

BILL I'm ready

GILL Hercules few of words
 in need of little persuading

 the messenger prepared
 with offers of gold
 and the lure of King Thespis' fifty daughters

 but Hercules

BILL I'm ready

GILL the adventure was all

BILL where's the lion?

GILL and where indeed the lion?

 like many an enemy before and after

the lion makes a tactical retreat

BILL disappears into the fastness of the thicket
biding his time

GILL with an occasional foray
BILL a flurry of fleece

GILL To remind them he's there

BILL I'm here to fight and kill

I hate the wait

I hate the waste of my life

I'm away

GILL Thespius
King of the Thesps
has other ideas

fifty daughters the old man has
Hercules will surely sire sons
fifty grandsons to do the old man proud
guard him in troubled times to come

take your ease
enjoy your leisure
with my daughters
seek your pleasure

BILL if I can't kill
I might as well procreate
so after 50 days wait
and 50 nights sweat
the 50 wombs of
Thespius' 50 daughters
spring with life to come

GILL while outside the city
the deaths continue

he tears the life from the throats of our cattle
rips the fleece off our flocks
he ate a goatherd last night
bit him in two
and swallowed him down

BILL these daughters of yours
a deadly distraction
women have no place in war

GILL and this is war
war to the death

BILL bring it on
spear in hand
bow over shoulder
club at the ready
he leaves the city

GILL Thespian cheers
ringing in his ears
as the hero leaves the city

BILL as a hero
he leaves the city
deep in the thicket
can't see a thing

GILL bleary eyed
from fifty wearisome nights

BILL can't hear a thing

GILL in his ears the ring
of Thespian cheers

BILL is he the hunter or the hunted
here in the beast's terrain?

GILL he's the hunter all right

BILL a huge paddy-paw in the mud
gives the game away

GILL a paw going this way and one going that

BILL and blood
fresh blood
the beast has a kill

GILL the thrill of the hunt is up

BILL the beast knows

GILL of course he knows

BILL he knows the hunter's on his track

GILL but there's no going back
the game is on
take your partners for the dance
a dance as old as time
a dance danced
since man first felt the hunger
gnawing in his belly

BILL the track leads on

GILL then doubles back

BILL hunter and prey

GILL one going this way

BILL one going that

GILL here the beast waits
worried lest the hunter's left behind

BILL but Hercules has his second wind
 he's on the case
 the chase is on

GILL a glimpse through the thicket
 of a tawny pelt
 a shaggy mane

BILL he's closing on the beast

 he grasps his bow
 arrow at the ready
 looking for the moment
 looking for one clear shot

GILL all he'll need to dispatch the beast

BILL and it's there

GILL the lion turns
 to face his pursuer
 the beast vaunts his body
 braves the immensity of his chest
 inviting the marksman to take aim

BILL which he does
 Hercules' aim is true

GILL the shaft takes flight

BILL and should by right pierce him to the heart

GILL but right doesn't prevail

BILL the barb of the arrow fails
 even to mark the skin

GILL bouncing harmless to the ground

BILL Hercules lets loose another dart

GILL but still to no avail

BILL and others soon lie spent
 at the feet of the beast

GILL enraged the lion snarls
 anger blazes in his eyes

BILL Hercules grips his spear

GILL the lion fixes his tormentor
 with a glare
 holds him steady in his gaze
 as he crouches
 coils tight the spring
 then leaps

BILL Hercules thrusts his spear
 at the underbelly of the flying beast

GILL the lion lands with all his weight
 on top of the shaft

BILL but the stock of oak
 the blade of iron
 meant to pierce the heart
 they bend as though of softest lead

GILL such a mighty weapon
 wielded with such strength
 should have left the lion dead

BILL but that which should have pierced
 wilts like a fragile flower stem

GILL leaving the beast unharmed

BILL and now the beast has slipped away
 into a cave before unseen

GILL the lion's lair

BILL now I have him

 one weapon left

GILL the club that only Hercules can lift

BILL a club fit to dash the brains of a beast

 bide my time
 wait outside the mouth of the cave
 until at last hunger drives the beast
 from the safety of the dark

GILL hunger drives us all

BILL not even the beast can endure

GILL and wait

BILL and wait

GILL and wait he did

BILL sun rise sun set

GILL sun rise sun set

 and still not a whimper from the beast

BILL surely hunger will drive him soon
 from the darkness of the cave

GILL then in the evening gloom
 Hercules hears a scuffle behind him
 turns in time to see the beast
 with a goat slung over his back
 through the thicket behind

BILL two mouths
 the cave has two mouths

GILL doesn't take long to confirm

BILL soon rocks and boulders wrenched from the cliff side
 stop up one entrance firm
 from there no escape

GILL and Hercules not prepared to wait
 any longer

BILL grasps his club
 and enters the cave
 penetrates the gloom
 deep into the unknown

GILL the warm sweet stench of rotting flesh

BILL strains his ears to hear
 listens for the purring or the panting

GILL the lion holds his breath

BILL Hercules hears the beating of a heart
 in a mighty breast
 his heart?
 his breast?

GILL the lion's heart?
 the lion's breast?

BOTH two hearts beating as one

BILL he swings his club in the darkness
 an unerring blow
 crashing into the skull of the beast

GILL but the skull is the stronger
 the club bounces back

BILL bounces back with such force
 as to fly from the hands of the hero
 to flee to a distant corner of the cave

GILL uninclined to play further part in this battle

BILL so now man and beast together in the dark

BOTH two hearts beating as one

BILL nowhere to hide

GILL nothing to separate them

BILL time to get physical
 a fistful of mane

GILL hugging hard

BILL a close embrace

GILL crushing the beast to him

BILL the warmth and comfort of his skin

GILL the taste of his sweat

BILL the struggle of his muscles

GILL the pull and the push

BILL the to and the fro

GILL the flailing on the floor

BILL on top and underneath

GILL the desperate raking of claws on his back

BILL till finally the moment comes

GILL with one last squeeze of the mighty bicep

BILL and life his choked

GILL extinguished

BILL the light put out

GILL the beast will breathe no more

BILL Hercules drags the beast from darkness
into the glare of daylight
and sits in a moment's contemplation
with the body of his foe

GILL the birds sing

BILL the lambs bleat

GILL the world is as it was
with one difference

BILL the beast is dead
the lambs bleat uninterrupted

GILL until the next time

BILL and now to claim his trophy
to wear the skin of the beast
take on the strength of the enemy he vanquished

GILL with a hide no arrow can pierce
a hide that turns away the blade of the spear
there's only one answer

BILL the claws of the beast itself

GILL and so he skins the beast
tears the pelt from the flesh

BILL wraps himself in the hide of the monster

 and makes his way to the city
 weary
 wounded
 victorious

GILL the beast
the beast approaches
he's nearing the city
shut the gates

BILL no it's I
Hercules
the beast-slayer
Hercules your hero
it's I
let me enter your city

GILL No Hercules
you're a killer
there's no place for you here
this is a city of civilized men and women

who seek to live their lives in peace

BILL I freed you from your fear
you owe me
let me enter

GILL we're grateful
and especially grateful
if you'd be gone without fuss
we have our lives to lead

BILL I demand you open the city gates
do you want me to break them down

GILL just as we feared
you're out of control
you're a liability
a berserk
as dangerous as the monster you killed
you have no place in a civilised society
now be gone

BILL And so the city gates slammed in his face
slammed tight shut in his face

GILL the lion-killer wasn't welcome anymore

BILL Can't breathe ... can't breathe...

BACK TO THE SOLDIER'S BREAKDOWN.

SHE PUTS A GUITAR AROUND HIS NECK

when a hero has had his day in the sun
when the battle is truly lost and won
where do the heroes go
to fight the demon armies of their mind
where do the heroes go to let the tangled web unwind

we tell you disappear
you're no longer welcome here
thanks to you the danger's gone
now we must all move on
but where do the heroes go
with blood and guts still spooling through their mind
where do the heroes go
how do they move on when the pictures in their mind
rewind
rewind
remind
where do they go

untidy huddle of a blanket in the street
unholy muddle from victory comes defeat

it's here the heroes lie
to fight the demon armies of their mind
it's here the heroes lie
to let the tangled web unwind

we hoped you'd disappear
instead you're lying here
where you lie you're in our way
as we try to lead our lives
it's here the hero lies
what life has he to lead when in part he died
where a hero lies –
a hero from the other side who died
he died
he died
he survived –
but in truth he died

we tell you disappear
you're no longer welcome here
thanks to you the danger's gone
now we must all move on
but where do the heroes go
with blood and guts still spooling through their mind
where do the heroes go
how do they move on when the pictures in their mind
rewind
rewind
remind
where do they go

HIM They're pulling us out
HER What a shame
HIM It's not over
HER It is for you
HIM Want to see her again
HER You had your chance
HIM One more night
HER It's over. The war is over... You're still alive
HIM And so are you

There's a Beast a Black Beast
A big bounding black beast
That runs with the wind on the moor

Walking through a moonlit night
Across the moor to home
Hears a sound a footfall on the ground
He doesn't walk alone
A big black cat with a gleam in her eyes
How can he resist
A big black cat with a demon in her eyes

Coursing over moor and over marsh along the midnight stream
You will see the spirit as she runs a path across your dreams

Spattered with red tooth and claw