

UNSUSTAINABLE OATH (2002-2010)



ARCADIA

is an area of Greece,
traditionally associated
with an unspoilt
rural paradise.

In this print, Finlay
draws an iconic parallel
between this idea
of a natural paradise
and the camouflage patterns
on a tank.

There is also an echo
of the Latin phrase
'Et Arcadia', used
by the seventeenth-century French artist
Nicolas Poussin,
in a painting of a group of shepherds
discovering a tomb.

Like Pouissin,
Finlay reminds us
that death
is present everywhere, even
in paradise.

(Ian Hamilton Finlay, 1925, Arcadia Screenprint)

BEND

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ousa
bout
work
,ill
,and
abit
flut
tery
toda
ybut
sudd
enly
Isit
Down

Your
hips
hold
meUp
Easy
easy

Warm
bell

with
blue
eyes
that
sing
soft

Legs
join
laps
andI
heat
'til
Ican
come
down
cool

even
slow
wind
cant
rest
like
we
do

COMPENSATING

When I was a teacher,
I was sick. My then ex-girlfriend
wrote me a letter
of recommendation
for a job I dreamed I'd get.
Maybe it was an unfair thing to ask for.
I wanted to believe in myself,
If only by proxy.

I got the job.

I announced my ascendance
to the school secretary, the next day.
She said, You've had it?
Wishing for some
(sex)
righteous reversal,
I said, more like It's had me.

When traveling
we leave shining trails of ourselves,
sluggish memories.

FAMILIAR

When the only colors are cold
and the living dark,
I press hard

and my hand holds
a wet
stomach
back in.

Sweat gone cold
must be
reheated.
I hold a little closer
out of curiosity, and

we rotate
all over
each other.

Under my pants, I find
my notebook
and some strange,
expensive ballpoint.

I try to write before
sleep
the slices of blue dark
come through the shades. Then
we awaken, arms
smeared
with ink.
HAHA

Are we not young?
Do our fingers not bend and break
and heal without flaws?
We are free.

Here is a friend. He is old.
He will not go out.
He will not ask for more money.
He will not pollute without reason.

Isn't it sad?

He has declared his land.
He has invested in something else.
He has admitted that sprinting while hiking
is unpleasant. For children and pets.

Look at us!
LOOK AT US.
We are totally free.
We've got nothing going on!

I AM MINE

Everything moves lately.
Not in the drugged way.
So I sit in my room
facing strange things
that are not television.
There is a pile of mess here.
A glass of juice, with straw
growing flowers.

MOBY DICK

I refuse to write about the end of an era.
It is not exciting to me!
Why expand on ribbons
and wrapping
when the organs of the gift
are the gooey
delicious

What is this impotence!
I am angered
by the flatulence of the stars
in my presence.
What is this flaccid romance, this
slinky dance of brains

Outrage! The hands
of myself
are upon me!

NI

All red and white.
Taking it on good authority,
stubborn and strong
you know, you know, you know?

In your story, we all live
in seperate glasses of water
and you take sips from all of us.
You gather us,
give us colors
name us, help us out of our chairs and into
the spare bedroom.
Clearly there's quality, clearly
there is air
where you lead us
and where you allow yourself
to be taken.
On the way, conversations
roll quickly;
a bit like travel
by train.

There are strange cities
waiting for the curve of a line.
But you don't stop
for the ace of spades.

PINS

City streets:

A matrix of bowling alleys.

Scratch a match on the head
touch a sparking string, because

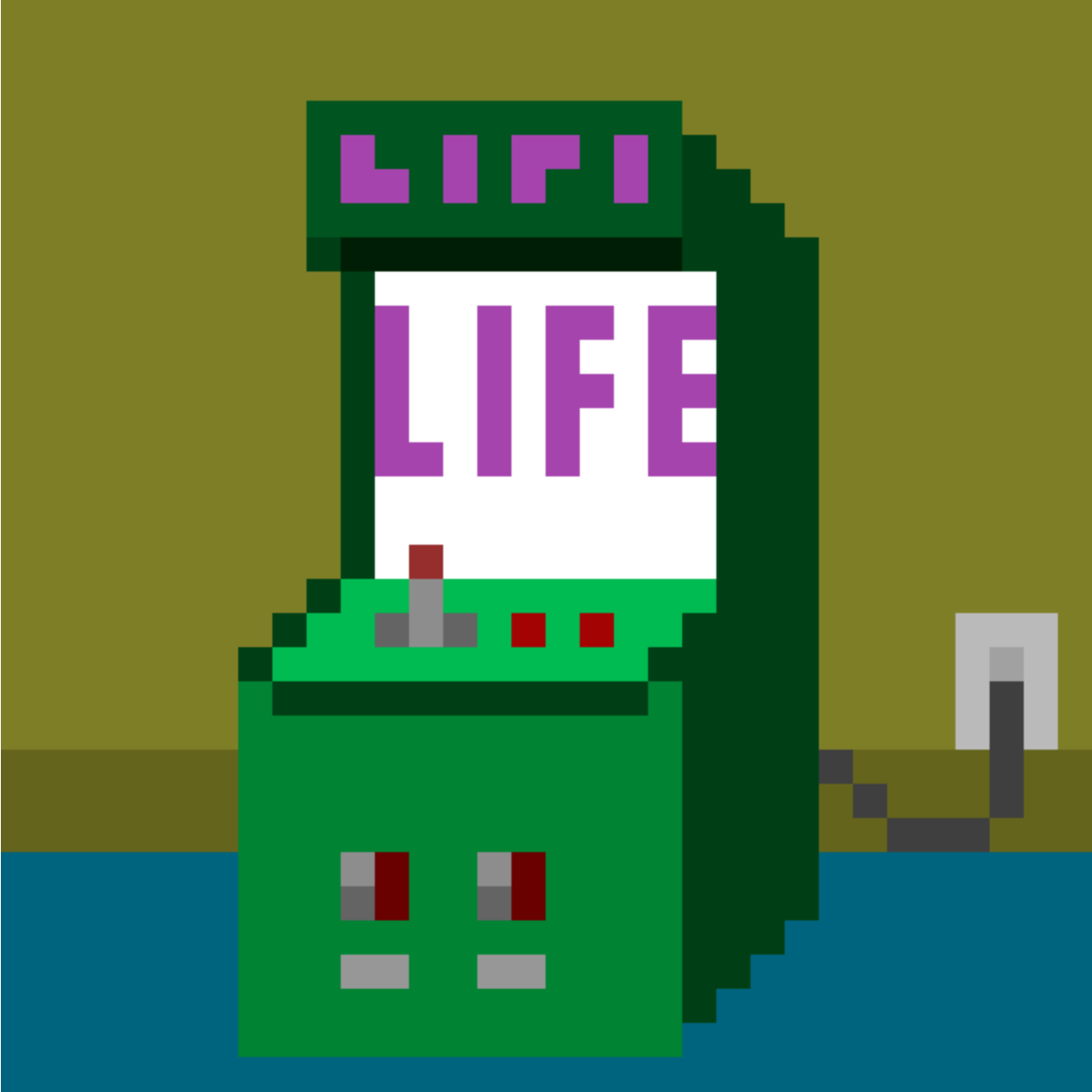
I have the attitude
Of a rolling explosive.

Your apartment
was a blast!

OLD PILLS

Queequeg and me
call me young man,
call me whaler
I am sleeping with strange pagans
I am writing boats and oceans
I am white as surf.

A colossal car
Christmas tree headlights
meteors for hubcaps
If I am to survive I must
Open the suitcase
for free re fills.



RED STRAP

Gleamin' white sneaks
and a coupla rings,
crackling an empty plastic bottle
inside her fist.

A bead
of wet,
magnified skin
shakes down
her brown nose, almost dripping
lookin' like jewelry.

Then those eyes.
Shaking and gleaming and glitterin',
trying to bend the tunnels on the metro map
so that she can barrel faster,
a heaving demon all the way home,
the stop can't come fast enough, so she just sits there, suckin'
in the air conditioning
and blowing out fumes, hot mutterances
thinking someone's a-gonna get it. Someone's spilled, someone's
smashed
something, and someone's gonna get it.

Power Ah Christ
AIN'T ROCKED YOU YET,
CHILD.

SMEARED INK

At night, when the only colors are cold
and the living dark, I am invited by
your hard back
your pale blue neck
the sweaty shirted stomach

to hold a little closer
out of curiosity.

We rotate
all over
each other.

I find my notebook
some strange expensive pen from the floor
and try to write in the slices of blue dark
coming in through the shades.
I can't really see anything, but I think
this page is empty.

We awake with hands and arms
smeared with ink

I wonder
if it was intentionally poetic.

THAT WEEKEND

When we broke up,
I made you a sandwich
for the trip out of town you wanted to take.
It was peanut butter and too much jelly, wrapped in foil.
there were carrots in one baggie
orange peppers in another
and a few shots of tequila.
That's what people do, when they love each other.
They mix up artifacts of childhood
and liquor in resealable containers.

When you were gone
I masturbated guiltily, and then took long showers.
I seperated out all our art supplies.
I put the markers in color order.
I selected every other one
and put them in a baggie,
because that's what people do
when they love each other.
They don't take all the markers.

When we broke up
I almost wrote you a sticky note that said,
"I don't like it when you drink
because you're sad, but here's some tequila anyway."
I almost put it on the resealable container.
But I didn't, because that's what people do
when they still love
each other, I think.