The Dinosaurs Issue

Cover design: macawnivore.deviantart.com

Featuring

John Kitchen

Dwane Reads

Kirsten Tambling

Laurie Penny's Discordia Reviewed

Apeksha Harsh

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Tell us what you think of The Dinosaurs Issue on Facebook or Twitter using #dinosaurs!

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Editorial

It's odd to me that we start to dream into life creatures with which humanity as we know it has never even shared a stage – but perhaps that is the great appeal? Humans are fascinated by scale generally, and the sheer enormity of the dinosaurs, coupled with the fact that they once "ruled" the earth in their varying shapes and sizes casts a large shadow over the relatively short and recent period of modern homo-sapiens' time on earth.

As research continues, new discoveries are being made about the dinosaurs and that seems to give their natural history a sense of the 'undiscovered country' compared to easily accessible modern mammalians.

The esteem in which we hold the long-lost dinosaurs raises future questions about the protection and preservation of rare species currently threatened with extinction. Will children of the future gaze in wonder at the stuffed bodies of creatures that we curently take for granted?

It seems dinosaurs are the kind of fad that might never fade, but there remains the risk of eventual dinosaur fatigue, when all that there is to be known, will be discovered, analysed and recorded and perhaps without the mystery we might lose interest and look beyond the Earth to explore the natural universe – if such a thing exists.

It is worth noting that descendants of the dinosaurs still walk among us, such as the cassowarie in the South Pacific and Australia, albeit in slightly truncated form. And though the original reptile/bird mash-up creatures are long gone they continue to fire people's imagination.

The theme of Dinosaurs proved both controversial and challenging for the writers and artists who have submitted their work to The Dinosaurs Issue. The most interesting thing has been the different approaches to decoding our popular fascination with dinosaurs, a question as great and mysterious as the origin and extinction of the 'terrible lizards' themselves.

As we discovered from our interview with dinosaur-fan, Paul Thompson [p16- 17] the difficulty in writing about dinosaurs, let alone talking about them, is that there is still so much we don't know, and yet they continue to have a powerful hold on our popular culture, through cartoons, films and merchandise. Similarly, the delight shown by children in dinosaurs, explained in Ben Hayes's oddly dark story, [p.14] must be for more than their mere novelty factor.

We continue to recieve some truly stunning artworks. The bold, pop-art style of Kayleigh McDougal rovides a feast for the eyes [p.6 & 7], so credit to Jen and all of the artists who submitted to the Art Department.

A final note, pictured to the right is Brenda Anderson, winner of last issue's Colours Competition, modelling the much sought after SP t shirt. Congratulations again to her.

HCE welcomes John Kitchen, our new regular poetry columnist and to say simply:

'Long live the dinosaurs!'

Adam Steiner, HCE Deputy Editor.

Next Issue: you voted and chose the theme for issue 5 of HCE, Prophecy, deadline for submissions is 15/5/2013, please visit www.herecomeseveryone.me/submit for details.

Meet HCE

Gary, Editor

Adam, Deputy Editor

Jen, Art Editor

Ben, Sub-Editor

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In this edition *Everyone* was:

HCE Contributors:

Ben Nightingale

John Kitchen

Kaylie McDougal

Karolina Twardosz

Kirsten Tambling

Laura Huntley

Dwane Reads

Ian O'Neale

Chelsea Schuyler

Kiyasu Green

Apekesha Harsh

Sarah Richards

Andrea Mbarushimana

Douglas Maudlin

Ben Hayes

Adam Steiner

Special Thanks to:

Paul Thompson

Haydn Bailey

Laurie Penny

Molly Crabapple

Rabbit Bones in the Pre-Cambrian

by Ben Nightingale

What would it take for you to accept the theory of evolution is wrong? The geneticist J. B. S. Haldane famously offered the image of mammalian fossils in the pre-Cambrian layer. According to our understanding of evolution, this is impossible. That's why the phrase has since become a shorthand for falsifiability in theories; that things which cannot be tested therefore cannot be proven.

Evolution has been tested to destruction and we may confidently call it 'fact', but the concept of its falsifiability remains important: science accepts its own potential fallibility, that those answers we think we have may not be true. As the profile of the evidence changes, so too must our understanding change with it.

In the context of the religion/science conflict, which probably started with Galileo, this is regarded by believers as a weakness and scientists as a strength. Weakness, because it means we cannot trust it, that what is true today will be false tomorrow; strength, because we may always keep striving for what is true, ever honest, never resting. But there one spies a difference in temperament: where believers say 'we know the answer already' (that's God, by the way), scientists say that there are some things in this universe which it is just not possible to know and we were better off accepting that than pretending.

Appropriately, it was Darwin who best summed up something in the human condition which has long been observed: that ignorance more easily begets confidence than does knowledge. Through the ages, we were once certain the world was less than 10,000 years old, that the Sun orbited Earth and that man was created essentially as he is now and in God's image, because that's what the Bible tells us. The hammerblows of scientific discoveries have overturned each Biblical certainty and made it a falsehood (just as the believer fears about science itself), and yet with each strike, there has never been a religious equivalent of the pre-Cambrian rabbit: what would it take for you to accept the Bible is wrong? Take it apart piece by piece and the answer (as 40% of Americans will tell you) is 'I will not accept it is wrong.'

Ironically, those people who cling to the old certainties are sometimes called 'dinosaurs' — something which ought to have died out a long time ago, a museum piece, an anachronism. Take the flock of cardinals and their secret smoky election. A bit medieval, isn't it? Certainly, secret ballots are important but most of us don't pretend we're one finger on the hand of God as we put our X besides a name…

And yet — how effective! How many people waited with baited breath for the smoke to change colour? How many people can actually speak Latin who cried out on Twitter '*habemus papam*'? How many of those were actually Catholic? How many were atheist? It hardly matters, for all of them missed that it was an election, like any other, dressed up and smoked out to make it seem unlike an election, unlike any other.

So someone or something may be a dinosaur, but it still walks and it still roars, a testament the believer's faith in the idea of eternal truth: that if something be true today, it was true yesterday and will be true tomorrow, regardless what the revisionists, empiricists and relativists may say.

Don't imagine I am now only thinking of the Catholic Church, or even the religious. How often does the socialist call the Tory a dinosaur? Remember when David Cameron called Dennis Skinner a dinosaur? What makes a politician a dinosaur and who escapes the censure?

It comes back to the rabbit bones. Ask the question: what would it take for you to think again about socialism/capitalism, or accept their respective faults? Let's ask this of Owen Jones, or Laurie Penny, or Harry Cole, or some of the frat boys from the Young Britons Foundation. You might (possibly) get a response similar to this: 'What's wrong with having beliefs?' Substitute Karl Marx/Ayn Rand for Jesus and there you have Jesuits in different coloured robes; make either of them born to a virgin, there you have two churches. *Habemus papam*!

It was the American physicist Steven Weinberg who said that in the natural order of things, good men do good things and bad men do bad things; to get a good man to do a bad thing takes religion. I would amend that statement. Accepting religion as but a particular manifestation of ideology in general, it takes ideology to make good people blindly do, say or think wicked things; and the young ideologues of today are the dinosaurs of tomorrow, thinking to have found eternal truths which have eluded the rest of us as we ask ourselves honest questions about rabbit bones we hope we shall never find.


KISS
IT

The Point is...

by John Kitchen

I've put the teatime quiz show, Pointless, on to series record, Sarah Millican wrote in a recent article. "Is this bad ?" she asked.

Gym girl and me are also Pointless obsessives, noting how many Pointless answers we can come up with. Such fun ! Surprisingly Poets and Poetry come up as occasional categories. When It's a jackpot category we plead with the screen, "Pick poets." Boxing, Welsh bands or Australian actresses, yes. Poets, no way.

Poetry has always been a minority interest. People think it's obscure, difficult, intellectual or just odd. So, why do we write ? Why do we puzzle over John Ashbery, buy odd pamphlets, scan the shelves of charity shops for old copies of Ted Hughes ?
When I began writing there came that awkward moment when I told old friends I was writing poems; after a pause, a "really ?" or with a raised eyebrow, they'd ask " why ?"

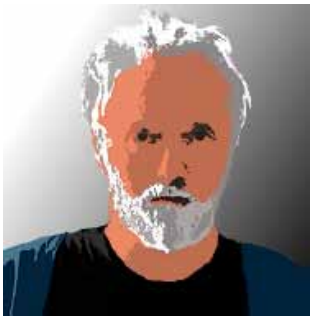
There's no money in it. Getting published is increasingly difficult. If you're lucky there may be a small but supportive social scene, but still we indulge in this demanding activity. Maybe, being such a minority interest is part of its appeal.
At first, I told people I like playing with words. Which is true, but if that were all I might as well play on-line scrabble or do cryptic crosswords.
It is, partly, that attraction of searching for the exact word, the precision of a haiku:-

wine cheese and chatter
chocolate rum and laughter
dour morning headache

It is also the challenge of finding the right word for the sense and rhythm even for something slight, with apologies to Spike Milligan -
A million meany microbes

swim through every vein
sniffle sniffle
cough cough
fuzzy in the brain

This question, of why I find sitting alone, puzzling over a computer keyboard so appealing bothered me for a while. Now, I have an answer.
As a regular contributor to HCE, Gary asked me if I would like to produce a short column for them. This is the first. The second will be mainly about the attraction of poetry for me. It would be great to hear why you write your poems or stories.
In the meantime I'm off to write a cheerful ode to Tesco nagburgers and the dangers of the bacon sandwich.



THE POET IN THE BOXROOM

Lizard King

by John Kitchen

this fetid world,
chaotic
over-heated
the domain of him
and his,
Lizard King, alpha male
roar and trample

acquire take corrupt
reduce
to the lowest common denominator
the crude view, myopia
it's all black and white

the thickened skull
the coarsened hide
do you see
a world that's changing,
leaving you
behind ?

Turqoise Tyrannosaur

by John Kitchen

You don't think colour do you ?
Dull, dark greys, browns,
I guess it's hard to tell
whether any were orange
purple, shades of pink or blue.
Were there stripes, spots ?
Does a tyrannosaur skin
have to be so lizard-like ?
It didn't need to hide,
could afford to be
conspicuous.

Paleontology

by John Kitchen

skeletons cannot reveal that
creation quake roar
the hard, unyielding hide, bone
crush, flesh tear
of the blood and guts jagged-
toothed carnivore

eyes protrude,
hooves pound,
ten ton of death grin
the paleantologist has no idea

Dinosaurs in Albertopolis

by Kirsten Tambling

In 1676, part of a bone was found in a quarry near Chipping Norton (*Oxfordshire, in the UK -Ed.)*. A strange object, a fragment of it was sent for examination to the incumbent Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University. Robert Plot – later to become the first curator of the Ashmolean Museum – correctly identified it as a femur, but he was puzzled by its size: it was much too large to have belonged to any human. He concluded that it must be the thigh bone of one of the giants Genesis describes living in the antediluvian earth – 'mighty men […] men of renown' – but men whose wickedness had incurred God's annihilative wrath; though destroyed by the flood, it seemed to Plot that their bones might still rest in the Oxfordshire ground. After all, Genesis says that in the days of Noah 'there were giants in the earth'.

When considered again by physician Richard Brookes in 1763, the bone was given a name, Scrotum humanum, which reflected its striking resemblance (not commented upon by Plot) to an enormous pair of human testicles. The drawings that survive of it have since encouraged some to identify it as the femur of a Megalosaurus – perhaps making this the first dinosaur to be described in print, though it was not the first time apparent dinosaur remains had been discovered and identified as human. Descriptions exist of ancient Greek 'Titan bones', remnants of bodies that seemingly proved the existence of giants, heroes or otherwise super-men – Deinotherium skulls, characterised by giant nasal cavity holes, are now considered by some mytho-scientists to have been the origin for the Greeks' one-eyed Cyclops.

But dinosaur discoveries were increasingly recorded as the nineteenth century got going: a spate of fossil finds (mostly Megalosauri) between 1815 and 1824 by the Reverend William Buckland, Gideon Mantell and Gideon Mantell's wife, Mary Ann, eventually led biologist Richard Owen to propose classifying these strange bones under a single category. In 1841, at a scientific gathering in Plymouth, he argued that: 'the combination of [… characteristics…] all manifested by creatures far surpassing in size the largest of existing reptiles [… are surely…] sufficient ground for establishing a distinct tribe or sub-order of Saurian Reptiles, for which I propose the name of Dinosauria.' A footnote glosses the Greek from which the term derives, giving saurus as 'a lizard', and deinos, an adjective, the sense 'fearfully great'. Owen's emphasis on these animals' all-surpassing size – much bigger than 'the largest of existing reptiles' – explains 'great', although deinos is also used in ancient Greek to mean 'terrible' and 'strange', suggesting, with Owen's 'fearfully', a perceived unsettling and unfamiliar quality about this new category of lizards.

The very need to categorise was one Owen was playing out elsewhere, notably with the rusty and disorganised 'British Museum (Natural History)', for whose collections he took charge as Superintendent in 1856. Determined to turn it around, Owen purchased land for a new museum building in 'Albertopolis', South Kensington – Victorian London's new hub for design, science and public education, pet project of the Prince Consort. Work began in 1863. Designed by Alfred Waterhouse from a competition entry by the recently deceased Francis Fowke, and conceived under Owen's scientific auspices, the new building was constructed of a succession of display alcoves designed to enforce a taxonomic division (and separation) of specimens that would soon include a significant collection of 'fearfully great lizards' within the Reptile Hall. Owen insisted that the decorative friezes constructed around the main hall should clearly split modern animals from extinct ones: the living to the west and the extinct to the east (reversed on the Piccadilly line at nearby South Kensington tube, whose eastbound platform holds the living). This was widely interpreted as a repudiation of Darwin's recent Origin of Species and the disruption of previously understood classifications that book represented.

Albertopolis was about as salubrious as London could get, but the nineteenth-century city was still beset by mud, grime, and the open cesspits that had set off the Great Stink over a particularly hot summer in 1858. And though they were no longer considered Biblical, something of the mud and water of the Flood still clung to those dinosaur bones Owen had so named: they were often described as 'antediluvian', or primal, as in In Memoriam, where Tennyson considers 'dragons of the prime / That tare each other in their slime' (significantly not using Owen's new classification, preferring to stick to the Medieval term 'dragon', which comes from the Greek for 'serpent' or 'giant sea-fish').

In 1852, a decade later, Charles Dickens evokes a different kind of primal 'slime', describing the London of Bleak House having 'as much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth'. It 'would not' he said, 'be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill'. The dirt that clings to this famous opening, with 'foot passengers […] adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud' – is primordial, with the 'elephantine lizard' (a taxonomic hybrid, both mammal and saurus, of which Owen would surely not have approved) a survivor from a flood 'but newly retired', although perhaps its location its intended to be Holborn Hill's riverside beginning by Temple Station. Though partly Biblical, Dickens' is also a strikingly modern vision of a London whose problems with dirt and pollution 'accumulating at compound interest' are presented as a metaphor for the filth and corruption of its financial and legal hubs, a very antediluvian world, complete with the zeitgeist Megalosaurus. When Owen's new museum was opened in the 1880s, though far from London's problematic river, its interior was characterised by use of terracotta tiles, a substance known to resist the all-pervasive London soot, and mirrored in the shiny wipe-clean ceramics of the Victoria & Albert Museum's restaurant just down the road.

The same year Dickens was imagining a Megalosaurus in High Holborn, Owen was beginning a more suburban public education collaboration with a natural history artist – another Waterhouse – named Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins. Hawkins had been commissioned to create a series of life-sized sculptures of these strange lizards to sit in Sydenham, South London, where the Great Exhibition had prompted the creation of a new 'Crystal Palace park'. This was to be a public education project, and one that complemented Owen's work transforming the British Museum's poorly-curated natural history collection into a publically-accessible 'cathedral of science'. As part of this new development, the Crystal Palace Company wanted to have a collection of splendid fountains and two man-made lakes built: these were originally tidal, meaning that Hawkins' dinosaur models, like their ancient originals, would sit subject to the rise and fall of the waters. They were built on-site, but apparently constructed from whatever could be found: restorers working on the dinosaurs in the late 1990s discovered they were made from 'a form of concrete, with tiles set in a very durable mortar' along with the Victorian industrial stalwart 'cast-iron drainpipes, wrought iron rods and bands, carved stonework and cast lead with sculpted detail', apparently built layer upon layer, accumulatively. Subsequently, repairs had introduced even more motley layers – 'scaffold poles, mortar repairs', even Plasticine and fibreglass, presenting significant challenges to the modern restoration project before it even began.

Hawkins celebrated the dinosaurs' launch with a dinner on New Year's Eve 1853, held inside the mould of one of the Iguanodon, and the project, formally unveiled in 1854, continued development until Hawkins' funding (always limited) was cut altogether in 1855. Unfortunately,

once established on-site and exposed to the elements, increasing scientific research revealed Hawkins' London models to be at least partially inaccurate – the horn of the Iguanadon in which Hawkins' dinner had been held was, devastatingly, pronounced to have been a thumb. But though almost before the project were complete the Crystal Palace dinosaurs were declared out of date, Hawkins made no alterations to their anatomy, or accurate additions to their number: they remained as evidence of a now-unfamiliar vision of Owen's 'fearfully great lizards', fell into disrepair, and were only restored to prominence with the rejuvenation of the Park as a whole over the last decade of the twentieth century.

But across the Atlantic, New York was in the process of acquiring a 'Central Park', on a grand scale, and city planner Andrew Haswell Green shared Hawkins' belief that public education, in particular about natural history, was an important social need. As the 1,700 African

American and immigrant residents of the Park's designated site were evicted in preparation for the building work, Green was working on plans for some form of public museum in the project's centre. He invited Hawkins over to New York to help him construct a 'dinosaur park' along similar lines to the one in Sydenham. Hawkins chose the Hadrosaurus as his subject – an appropriately North American dinosaur – and, beginning from the bones then held at the Academy of Natural Sciences, he constructed the world's first-ever mounted dinosaur skeleton. But as local politics intervened under the influence of the corrupt William M. Tweed, the Central Park museum project was shelved. In 1870, the several-tonne clay models Hawkins had already created were broken up and (according to several accounts) buried in the south part of Central Park; strange man-made industrial bones that lie under the city to this day.

In 1899, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, there was one final discovery, this time in Wyoming, where paleontologists working for Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish-American steel tycoon, uncovered what was swiftly billed as the most colossal animal ever on earth – a nearly-complete Diplodocus skeleton, so large that Carnegie's eponymous Museum of Natural History had to have a whole new hall built to hold it. This time it was compared not to the giants of Genesis but to the Behemoth of the Book of Job whose 'tail swings like a cedar; the sinews of [whose] thighs are knit together', though not, this time, with iron. Keen to capitalise on the public excitement, though partly as a favour to his friend Edward VII, Carnegie commissioned a crew of Italian plasterers to cast the 105-foot skeleton, at a cost of £2,000, for dispatch to England. It took eighteen months to create, and the replica was made up of 292 bone casts (70 vertebrae in the tail alone), which were then divided into 36 crates and sent over the Atlantic to London, where it was unveiled in May 1905. Here it was unpacked and exhibited in the Reptile Gallery of Owen's now-complete Natural History Museum in Albertopolis, moving to the Central Hall in 1979. By a strange twist, the world at large saw this replica before they saw the original, and further casts were subsequently made for museums all over Europe and South America: first for Berlin (1908), then France, Austria, Italy, Russia, Argentina and Spain (by 1913), in a kind of transatlantic dinosaur diplomacy that soon made Carnegie's the most viewed dinosaur bones in the world.

Today a life-sized fibreglass model of 'Dippy' stands in the grounds of the Carnegie Institute – body restored to the famous plaster bones – and the Natural History Museum, where its transatlantic cousin keeps watch, is one of London's educational stalwarts; though its friezes still sulkily defy Darwin, he has been sitting below them in marble since 1885. Indeed, Owen's 'cathedral of science' has come almost full circle: couples can now get married under the head of the Diplodocus, for a price. Meanwhile, there is an increasing body of evidence suggesting we must make our own thumb-horn shift in imagining dinosaurs, this time to incorporate feathers and a possible 'missing link' between reptiles and birds. In a way, though, these strange lizards have always been on the move – the London Diplodocus' posture has been changed twice since the 1960s (though we might not have noticed), both times to reflect new scientific understanding about how this 'double-beamed' creature would have held itself, a flexibility Hawkins' iron-boned creatures had to get by without. It is not inconceivable that it could move again. After all, the defining quality of dinosaurs, and perhaps the basis of their appeal, is their essential unfamiliarity. There is a strangeness about them that Owen acknowledged from the beginning, and which continually scuppers attempts to truly represent them.

HERE COMES... Kirsten
London-based, I draw, write and witter, ranging from feminism, eighteenth-century literature and costume to art history, museums and rakery. I also take photos a bit obsessively.

Attack of the Yankee War-Lizards

by Ben Hayes

Diary of Capt. Arakawa Tanaka – July 17th – Final Entry:

It is finished. My men were slaughtered, almost to the last man; only myself and three others survived the engagement. Our advance along the American flank was utterly routed. Although we quickly slew their sentries in silence, and seemed certain to surprise them, we were ourselves ambushed.

Chloe picked up one of the toy soldiers, a rifleman in tan plastic. "Bang, pow!" she said, pushing it along the floor. She moved an Allosaurus forward to meet it. "Rarr! Slash, slash, aieee!" The soldier fell over.

Gigantic lizards, seemingly tamed by the Americans, sprung upon us from hiding. Private Kazuhiro had only barely enough time to exclaim "It's Gojiraaaagghghkl!" before he was torn apart. His head flew ten meters. The rest of platoon A followed swiftly, their bullets useless against the enemy's hardened scales. We attempted to fall back and maintain an orderly line, but…

Reaching into her toybox, Chloe extracted a Pterodactyl. It swooped and dived towards another group of soldiers, knocking three of them down, including the man with a rocket launcher. "Argh, kablam, screeee!"

An aerial attack scattered our rear-guard. Corporal Minawa, the only man with armament that might have scratched these monsters, was instantly slain, and in the rout we were unable to recover his weapon. We made for the tree-line, and sought refuge under cover from the flying beast. Alas, we headed only further into the American trap.

Amidst a forest of papier-mâché trees, several Velociraptors lurked. Chloe moved the dozen remaining soldiers one-by-one into the edge of the woods. "Grrrr. Knargggh." The last soldier entered the cover of the branches. She moved one of the raptors towards them. "Blam! Bang-bangbang!"

Although private Iori noticed the lizards lurking among the branches, and was able to kill one of them with a lucky shot, it was not enough. Two more of the creatures dropped on him from above, filleting him like salmon. I can still see his viscera shining in the moonlight when I close my eyes. We fled deeper into the forest, hoping to outpace the devilish things.

Moving the three other raptors around between the soldiers and the edge of the forest, Chloe reached over into her toybox and fished out several more soldiers, these in a darker shade of green, with subtly different blobby features. These, she scattered around the other edge of the forest.

Three more of my men were set upon from behind as we ran, and their screams haunt me still. Eventually though, we came to the other side of the forest. An American squad was waiting to catch us in a crossfire.

"Ratatatatata! Argh, ugh, gah!" Chloe knocked several more of the tan-coloured soldiers over. Moving one of them forward slightly, she made a little jiggling gesture. "Kachink! Hah, boom!" She knocked the group of green soldiers over with a sweep of her hand.

I crippled the ambush squad with a grenade, and we overran their position, hoping that the fortifications would slow the lizards that pursued us. The boards were slippery with American blood, and private Hanamura fell, breaking his leg. He begged us not to abandon him to the monsters, and in mercy, I had no choice but to grant him a quick death. His eyes stare up at me from the bottom of my cup as I drink. We hurried south, towards our own lines, hoping we might encounter reinforcements. And then, we saw *him*.

Chloe picked up the Allosaurus that had earlier been used to knock over the first tan soldier, and moved it around ahead of the remaining handful. Digging around in a pile of figures, she extracted a slightly larger model, which wore a tall black hat. She balanced it precariously atop the Allosaurus' head. "Stomp stomp, raargh! Hahaha, surrender!"

The American president, Abraham Lincoln, riding on some kind of war-lizard! He demanded our surrender, then treacherously attacked. Only I and Sergeant Ota escaped. The nightmares leave me exhausted and sleepless, and even drink provides no respite from the horrors of my mind. I leave this diary to the sergeant to deliver to my superiors. I pray that in time we find a way to defeat the Americans' monsters; but I shall not see it. I can stand to live no longer.

Chloe looked at the last standing tan soldier, and reached out one finger-
"Chloe, lunch time!"
Looking up, she turned away and hurried off towards the kitchen.

Dino Daughter

by Laura Huntley

Smudged stained dress,
Disruption and mess.
Dolls ignored,
They leave her bored.
What she adores
Are dinosaurs.
Velociraptor, Stegosaurus,
Pterodactyl, Diplodocus.
Put Barbie in the bin,
Triceratops is moving in.
Her playtime is never dull.
Her small head is always full
Of a self-taught prehistoric education,
Fossils, facts and information.
Her tiny feet stomp around.
She likes to make a roaring sound.

Father

by Laura Huntley

Casual racism,
A homophobic joke,
There's nowt as queer as folk.

My mother's life
Holds no meaning.
Diazepam and half-arsed cleaning.

He hits the bottle
And corks his feelings
Blurred vision, spinning ceilings.

Children seen
But not heard.
Don't say a word.

Quick temper,
A slapped cheek.
When did I become so meek?

Cold eyes,
Cruel face,
I hate this place.

No love here.
No warm heart.
Time to depart.

Start anew,
Close the door
On my father, the dinosaur.

'Everybody loves Dinosaurs'

HCE's Adam Steiner talks to Paul Thompson, Keeper of Collections at The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum about last summer's Dinosaurs Uncovered Exhibition [Full recorded interview available on HCE website]

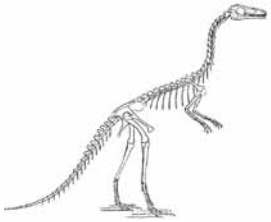
Adam Steiner: So Paul, why are dinosaurs so popular?

Paul Thompson: It's a fabulous subject. People link very clearly with strong subjects, for example Rome is another strong subject; War is another very strong subject, of course we've got *Caught in the Crossfire*, a fabulous exhibition, here at the Herbert at the moment and in the future we're going to have a very big exhibition on Rome in 2014. In a way these things are going to really pull visitors in. Equally, we want people to go away thinking 'oh, I never knew that...'. Children get quite a lot out of dinosaurs: it teaches them things about the past, because obviously there are no dinosaurs here now. It gives [dinosaurs] an element of creativity and exploration, because nobody knows what the dinosaurs looked like... the colour of their skin or how the skin looked. In fact, this is one of the areas that there has been enormous research and development. We've got information about archeaopteryx, the first feathered dinosaur, the first bird, if you will, and that the feathers it had were black. We have pigment from one of the fossils, which is absolutely amazing because we've never had this information before, this is brand new, cutting edge sort of stuff. I think people can connect with [dinosaurs] because it is a beast, something that's a creature they may have seen on film and something you can get an idea about straight away. The fact that people can put forward their own views about their extinction, for example, is one of the things that makes them exciting.

AS: How do you bring to life an extinct subject? How do you get them 'touchy-feely'?

PT: Creativity we wanted to have in the exhibition included: putting out representations, models (full size) of the dinosaurs, so that people got a sense of the scale and also what they looked like in a broad idea with colours. We don't know anything really about what dinosaurs were coloured like, but we can give a general idea from the environment: they're going to want to blend in a little, although some may have wanted bright colours. We had created by an external company these foam and latex creatures which we could then use with animatronics inside. The animatronics ensured that some of them were moveable, so we had three dinosaurs that could move. One of them breathed and moved it's head and it's tail and it's mouth; another one opened it's mouth and jaws and wagged its tail a little bit; another moved it's neck and shoulders in a quite lifelike way.

Pictures courtesy of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and Haydn Bailey



AS: Can you tell us about any local dinosaurs?

PT: We do actually have a dinosaur here from Warwickshire, there's only one, and it was leant to us by Warwick Museum. They very kindly leant us their dinosaur, which is actually one of the mega fauna [big ones! -Ed.] of the age. The dinosaur was probably washed up onto a small tropical island, which then became where we are now: Warwickshire and we have only a few bits of it, which is a bit of a shame. We're still doing research on it, in fact, it's only recently been worked out that it is a new type of dinosaur... with a horrible long name, but basically it's a bit like a megalosaurus, which was a large meat-eating dinosaur, a little smaller than a tyrannosaurus and was about four meters long, or about as long as a long wheel-based transit van.

AS: A tropical island?

PT: Here in Warwickshire there was in fact a tropical sea. We didn't really have dinosaurs, we had marine reptiles, that's the name used for things that are in the sea really. Strictly speaking 'dinosaurs' refers to things that walked on the land.

AS: Are these the kind of guys with crocodile-type mouths and fins?

PT: Yes, the most popular one that people may know is the Ichthyosaur and we have here in the Herbert a skull of an icthyosaur on display in our Elements Gallery [a permanent natural history gallery -Ed.]. They're very well knopwn. A little bit like a large dolphin, but with a long thin nose, sharp teeth and quite energetic.

AS: Do you yourself have a favourite dinosaur?

PT: Yes! The consognathus!

AS: So, a well-known one then...

PT: [Laughing] Yes, consognathus is a little tiny creature, a little dinosaur, probably about the size of a jack russel... not very big.

AS: Cuddly?

PT: No, not really. You wouldn't want to cuddle this one. It had sharp teeth, was a little bit of a thief. This one was a dinosaur that liked to steal other people's eggs or [hatchlings] from nests to feed it's own and to keep going, so it was a bit of an opportunist. I think the unsung dinosaurs have so much more to tell us and quite often they're not so famous, they don't have the good PR so they're sort of overlooked by a lot of people. I do know that the consognathus was brought to fame not long ago by a children's book called *Tyrannosaurus Drip,* so I'm rather pleased that it has made it into a publication somewhere, rather than an academic one, a children's one...

AS: Ah, so it has some PR behind it. What do you currently have on at the Herbert at the moment?

PT: At the moment we've got, as well as our permanent galleries, we've got *Caught in the Crossfire* which is a display of paintings, artworks and artists' reactions to war and conflict in various ways and various mediums. That's very well worth people looking in and seeing the results of workshops about anti-war issues as well. We also have a number of temporary galleries, we have Adie Blundell's wonderful art exhibition *His Dark Materials* which is very unusual displays and very creative artworks. We have all of our permanent galleries, including history galleries and natural histories, as well as many many other spaces. There's so much going on here actually...

For more information on activities at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum visit www.theherbert.org/, or email info@theherbert.org, or phone on 024 7683 2386

Dinosaurs. We like Dinosaurs

by Dwane Reads

Plastic moulded textured figure
How we practiced your name
Tri-o-ter-o-tops a-thingy
Like learning a language
A new language
Displaced jigsaw bones
Held by fine wire
Xylophone like
Don't touch fragile
Walk around under
Gaze in wonder
We like Dinosaurs

(Dinosaurs) Bought one yet?

by Dwane Reads

Humanized, made cuddly, informative
Twist head to learn more songs

The wheels on the bus…

Back then
There were neither wheels nor buses
No fossil evidence exist

Just money making
From child toy cottage industries
Dinosaurs
Bought one yet

HCE Artists

Jen Easley, Art Editor

Kaylie McDougal (p6 & 7, 20, 21)
Kaylie is an artist and illustrator based in Detroit. Her work has been featured in several periodicals and anthologies. Currently she is working on Dinogeddon, a webcomic she created about the misadventures of gangs of punk girls who ride Dinosaurs in a post-apocalyptic world (www.dinogeddon.com). You can e-mail her at: tigermassacre@gmail.com

Karolina Twardosz (p9, 12, 19)
Karonlina provided many images for the Dionsaurs Issue, and managed to convey some of the elements of dinosaurs that really attracts people, namely, their scale, their unfamiliarity and their fun, besides, everyone cried when they first watched *the Land Before Time.*
twarda8.deviantart.com

Joshua Dunlop (p15)
Joshua's unusual take on the Dinosaurs theme was too good to miss when we recieved Ben Hayes's short story. Juxtaposing the archaic, traditional Japanese motif with the quasi-futuristic dinosaur was an inspired move.
joshuadunlop.deviantart.com

Adam Mottershead (p. 18)
Adam is a photographer who lives and works in coventry. He believes in photography as a fuin and disposable medium that can allow anyone to share their perspective.

Kiyasu Green (p23, 26, 27)
Kiyasu's enthusiasm for colour and the obvious energy of her art style creates a deep atmosphere of reverance for the child-like glee that Dinosaurs can provide. It is impossible not to be enthused for the subject, when seeing so much vigour.

Andrea Mbarushimana (p28)
Andrea's picture is the perfect summary of why we wanted to do this issue in the first place!

Kirsten Tambling (p33)
Kirsten's depiction of thefigurative Starkey/Penny clash is as emotive as it is fun. Bold, granular letters and the contrast between Penny's red hair and Starkey's green flesh elegantly express the conflict.

To submit your own art to HCE, contact jen.e@herecomeseverone.me

Gentle Ripples on a Mountaintop

by Ian O'Neal

Gentle ripples on a mountaintop
Which say the sea was in the air
Do speak instead against God's own creation
And say that He was never there

Nimble feet besides the dinosaurs' prints
Say man and beast the Earth did share
As the Dane said of the cloud, much like a weasel,
Which well he knew was never there

My heart and memory of former time
Say you and I a bond did share,
I prized too much, which you did cut,
Which now I know was never there


DINOGEDDON
KISS IT

Stegasaurus, then and now: An embarrasing history

by Chelsea Schuyler

Our depiction of the Stegosaurus over time has been, like so many human trains of thought, somewhat humiliating. Upon discovering it in 1877, Othniel Marsh thought he had found a prehistoric turtle, imagining that those famous triangular plates lay flat upon its back like roof shingles. The word Stegosaurus even means "roof lizard." He also believed that it was bipedal and had two brains, mistaking a cavity in its hip for the location of a supplementary brain controlling the rear of the body.

Soon, however we worked out that the animal actually walked on all fours, had only one brain, and that the plates stood upright. This de-nerded the Stegosaurus substantially, but for decades to come we still thought of them, and indeed all dinosaurs, as portly, tail-dragging, dim-witted oafs. You can see the dominant conception reflected in early films like The Lost World (1925), King Kong (1933), and The Beast of Hollow Mountain (1956), all of which were brilliantly, if inaccurately, created by stop-motion animator Willis O'Brien.

Why were we so off? Well, at first we had so little evidence, so few fossils, that misinterpretations of form are quite understandable. Anatomist Sir Richard Owen categorized and named the group of ancient beasts 'Dinosauria' in 1842, and it was he who – ten years later – advised sculptor Waterhouse Hawkins in creating the first models of the three known dinosaurs, which still stand today. The world saw the dinosaurs for the first time as pachyderm-like, big-bellied, swamp beasts.

A fascination with dinosaurs gripped Victorian scientists. Paleontologists staked their careers in mad dog-fights for notoriety. There were fossil-hunting races, plagiarism, bribery, destruction of evidence, and open feuds explicit even in their publications. Confusing the matter, theories of evolution and its mechanisms were causing heated debates across the land, and there was much pressure from religious high society to explain the dinosaurs without rocking Noah's boat. With so much disagreement, no new ideas were strong enough to shake the public's impression of drab, slow-moving creatures for nearly a century.

Finally, in the late 1960s, paleontologist John Ostrom and his protégé Robert T. Bakker led the world into a new era of thinking. Looking at the evidence from the fossil record and comparing them with modern animals, they concluded that the dinosaurs had all the features of warm-blooded, agile creatures with complex social systems. In this "Dinosaur Renaissance" the public's fascination was rejuvenated and Stegosaurus was transformed.

Instead of lummoxy monsters melting in the swamp of their own claymation, we now portray the Stegosaurus as a dignified, agile creature, its tail held high off the ground. Large deltoid muscles in its front legs were likely useful in rearing up into a tripod stance to access food, and in pivoting on its back legs to swing a flexible, spiked tail in defense. The three-foot tail spikes, now known to face more outward than upward, were named the "thagomizer," a term coined by comic strip artist Gary Larson in a 1982 panel of Far Side. The strip shows a caveman professor pointing out the spikes in a diagram, and telling his students, "Now this end is called the thagomizer, after the late Thag Simmons." It stuck, and is now official paleontology slang.

The media has followed suit with the new and capable Stegosaurus. The documentary When Dinosaurs Roamed America (2001) shows the Stegosaurus according to modern theory. The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997) also portrays this newer version (though larger than they should be—it is Hollywood after all). Even my '80s action figures can't be found anymore, their shapes obsolete.

We're far from having it all figured out though. There is still much argument, for example, as to what those famous triangular plates were for. Scientific speculation offers a few theories:

1) Armor. Sure, they seem intimidating, but actually the armor theory has fallen somewhat out of favor. The back of a Stegosaurus didn't need the extra defense. They had incredibly long vertebrae sticking out from the spine, thought to provide purchase for muscle. In The Dinosaur Heresies, author Robert T. Bakker claims that "Any Allosaurus unwise enough to bite into that ridge would have

broken off its teeth without inflicting significant damage." Despite this, Bakker suggests that the plates could have been mobile to some extent, able to swing out to the sides a bit to better stave off a predator from its vulnerable flanks. This wouldn't work on, say, a crocodile, as their mini-plates are firmly lodged width-wise in the tough skin. A Stegosaurus' plates sit near the top of the skin, which could have left room for muscle manipulation.

2) Thermoregulation. The plates were filled with blood vessels which could have served to absorb heat from the sun or cool off from a breeze, affecting overall body temperature. But if this is the case, some stegosaur species got the short – or rather, thin – end of the stick, having only thin spines instead of wide plates.

3) Sexual attraction. This is a tough theory to investigate when dealing with an extinct species, alas. With all those blood vessels it is possible the Stegosaurus could have "flushed" the plates to a red color in some sort of display. Then again, if the boys are trying to impress the girls, why would females possess plates too?

4) ID tags. Different shapes for different species could have helped tell who's who in the Stegosaurian world. Stegosaurus Stenops is the commonly known species referred to in this article, but there are multiple species in the genus, all with differently shaped plates.

This last idea is the current favorite explanation for the evolution of those iconic dorsal plates, though the theories are not mutually exclusive in terms of functionality.

From prehistoric turtle to formidable defender, there is every chance our current ideas will provide plenty of fodder for future generations to make fun of us with. Who knows what another hundred years will bring?

After Man

by Apeksha Harsh

Ana listened to the droning voice telling her that the number she was trying to reach was currently unavailable. Ana tossed her mobile onto the desk and massaged the centre of her forehead.

"Couldn't get through?"

Silas was standing in the doorway, his grey shirt covered in flecks of paint. Even though all the lectures at the Evolutionary Science Centre had been cancelled, he seemed unfazed, busying himself by working on an oil canvas.

Ana ran her fingers through her tangled red hair, deep creases lining her forehead. "You told me the third time would be the charm. It wasn't. Neither was the eight, the ninth or the tenth."

"I'm sure she's alright," said Silas as he took lazy strides into the study. His relaxed movements set Ana's nerves on edge.

"How can she be alright? Can you really tell me she's alright?"

Silas examined the paint on his fingernails, and then adjusted the sleeves of his shirt. Of course, Silas would be painting now. He wasn't the sort to let anything get under his skin. Ana snatched up her mobile and dialled the number again. Currently unavailable repeated the robotic voice. It was a few minutes till Ana realised she had been grinding her teeth. Silas always pointed it out with open distaste but right now he was running his fingers over the books lining the shelves of his study. Ana held her head in her hands and watched. When she spoke, her voice was soft.

"What's happening, Silas? People are just vanishing."

"Not just vanishing. They're being wiped out. We're being wiped out." Silas held a slim hardback volume in his hand. "Meticulously." He traced the golden engravings on the rich brown cover.

"Wiped out," Ana said slowly. "But not Trina. Surely not Trina."

"For your sake, I hope not Trina. But even if you're left without friends, you still have me."

Tears had started to well up in Ana's eyes. "That's such a romantic bullshit thing to say."

"Why thank you." Silas' eyes were fixed on the book, while he did an automatic little wave with his other hand.

"No, it really is." Ana walked to one end of the room. "I can't imagine that Trina could have vanished."

Silas sighed. "Vanished, wiped out, dead… it's the same thing. They don't exist anymore."

"They don't exist!" Ana shouted angrily. "Exactly. But they exist in our hearts."

"And I'm the one who comes up with romantic bullshit?"

Ana was silent. She picked up the newspaper lying on the settee. 5,000,000 disappearances worldwide. Global Pandemic.

"You said it was a hoax when the reports first came in," said Silas.

Ana nodded.

"Then you said maybe it was something that was only happening on the other side of the world."

Ana knew what was coming.

"Now it's reached here. People you know are missing. Without a trace. As though they never existed. People shouldn't let things surprise them so easily. Especially you. You're doing your PhD on probability, aren't you? At least I thought you were."

Ana stared at the headline. She hated it when Silas spoke to her like a Professor.

"So it's reached here, Silas. What now?"

"Nothing. We wait."

Ana turned to look at Silas. He was wearing that smug smile that always drove Trina up the wall. Ana was beginning to see why. "You're going to wait. To die?"

Silas shook his head. "Don't get me wrong. All of us are waiting to die. Just that with this fortuitous event looming over our heads, the hour of death is imminent." The words rolled off his tongue as though he had rehearsed them in his head for an imaginary crowd clambering for his sage thoughts.

Ana chewed her lip and exhaled. "Have you heard anything else? You know people. What are they saying?"

Silas put the book he was holding back on its shelf. "They're saying it's the end of the world. It's finally happening."

"The end of the world was supposed to happen months ago. We're still here. Well, we were till people started disappearing."

Silas's eyes seemed to smile. "You know, I don't think it's the end of the world. I really don't."

Ana waited for him to go on. She knew once Silas started with something, he wouldn't be content until he had exhausted the subject.

"We've said for so long that man is a prime specimen of a highly evolved species. With our

knowledge, our discoveries, our inventions, we make the world about us."

"And it isn't about us."

"Don't be silly. Of course, it's about us. Man loves weaving stories around himself. He cannot fathom the world without placing himself in the scheme of things. But there may just be a point in time when man no longer fits into this schema."

Ana knitted her eyebrows. "And that time is now?"

Silas smiled. "See, you do understand things? Much better than when I first met you."

"About this point in time?" asked Ana ignoring Silas' remark.

"I believe there is a possibility that man no longer has a place on earth. Only temporarily, of course. But for now the age of man has reached its end."

"There have always been people who believed that we don't deserve to be in this world. That's where you get your crazy nutcases blowing up buildings and playing with guns."

Silas paced up and down the mahogany study. He had furnished it himself. Ana knew that he liked to take in every detail, beaming on the work he had put together. Ana also knew that he paced up and down whenever she was being what he termed as 'disagreeable'.

"Deserve is not a word I used. Whatever is happening now, don't think that I say we deserve it. We have got this far because we are resilient, sharp and enterprising."

"Yet we're disappearing. You could be next."

Silas stopped mid-step. His dark eyes glared at Ana. "I'm not going to disappear like your dear friend Trina. If you know anything about evolution, you would at least know that the most genetically advanced last the longest."

Ana's head pounded like a volcano about to erupt. "You never believed for once that Trina was alright!"

"You said it yourself… we're disappearing. I bet if you went to her house right now you wouldn't find her. Not a fingernail, not a hair, nothing." Silas' face took on an ugly sneer that Ana had never seen before. She thought of all the times he spoke to her like a child, glared at her with angry eyes. She wanted to get up and leave right then. But she couldn't will herself to walk out. She was scared. Scared of being alone. Scared of finding out what might happen if she was the one that disappeared next. Instead she sat down on the settee, the newspaper crumpling underneath her. Silas moved towards her and placed a hand on her shoulder. Ana did not flinch.

"We'll drive over to Trina's house and see if she's okay."

Ana didn't say a thing. They stayed like that for a long time, listening to the clock ticking on the study wall.

"You think something will take our place? Something new?" Ana's voice was faint.

Silas shrugged. "Maybe it's time for an extinct species to make a return. The way I'm sure we will."

It was Ana's turn to smile. "The rate we're disappearing at we won't even leave fossils behind. At least the dinosaurs made the headlines. Us? No one will know we existed. No one will ask questions. No one will be there to ask questions."

"That's a possibility. No theories of giant meteorites or climate change."

Ana curled her red hair round her fingertip. "You think dinosaurs might make a comeback?"

"Dinosaurs?" There was just the slightest hint of sarcasm in Silas' voice.

"You thought of extinct species making a return."

"I did," said Silas.

"A new one to reign the earth without any room for error…" Ana stopped short and almost laughed. "Look at me, I'm beginning to talk like you."

Silas tucked her hair behind her ear. "Come on. Let's look for Trina."

Ana nodded and wiped away the tears that were starting down her cheeks. "It might be like a whole circle of life thing, this disappearance."

She waited by the main door and watched as Silas turned off the lights in the study and picked up the car keys from the bowl in the living room.

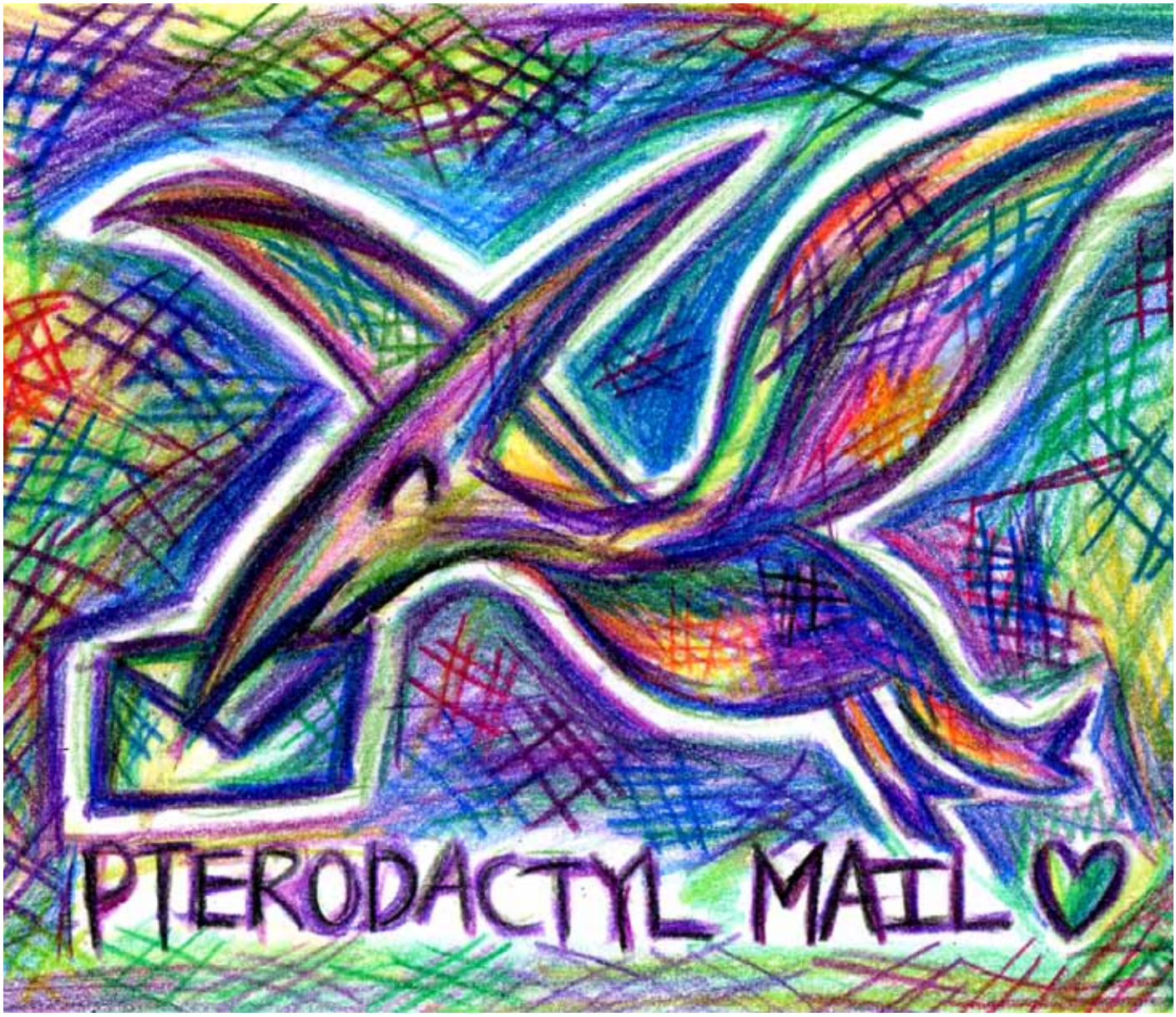
"A species to make a comeback," she said trying not to think about Trina. "It could be the great lizards."

Silas only raised his eyebrows.

"Yeah, dinosaurs. I'd like that," said Ana. She squeezed Silas's arm for the briefest moment as they walked out the door.

HERE COMES... Apeksha

Apeksha has an MA in Writing from the University of Warwick as well as an MA in English Literature from The English and Foreign Languages University. She has worked as a librettist, a content writer, an editor and has run writing workshops for children and young adults. Lately she finds herself reading a lot of Murakami. However, Terry Pratchett, Neil Gaiman and Andy Stanton would just as easily do. She enjoys collecting stones and chasing her big white dog Silly around the living room. Her story 'Night Watch' appears in Fusion, an anthology published by Fantastic Books Publishing.




www.kiyasugreen.com

The Extinction of the Dinosaurs

by Sarah Richards

I've always known how the dinosaurs came to be extinct. My mother told me when I was very young, and I have kept that secret ever since. It seems that the world is not ready to hear about how Grandma killed off the dinosaurs. She would probably prefer to maintain her anonymity as well.

I was seven years old when I first found out the truth, eating sour candies in the shape of dinosaurs. Grandma asked me what I had there, and was that a din-o-saur? I told her I was eating dinosaurs, and proceeded to educate her on the correct pronunciation. "You have to pronounce the i," I told her, "like in diner, rather than dinner." She laughed and went back to cleaning the barns. I wondered what was so funny, and resolved to ask my mother.

I had always liked spending my afternoons watching Grandma work. Some days I even tried to help, with my miniature shovel and wheelbarrow. Once, I managed to clean a whole stall in a day. I was very impressed with myself, and determined to grow up to be as strong as Grandma. She was easily a million years old, and she could clean thirty stalls in a day! I was reminded of the myth about Hercules, where he had to clean some impossible stables as part of a quest. With the help of my sister, I could sometimes get two whole stalls done in a day. My brother never helped, he preferred to fling shovel-loads of manure up in the air, and watch it "rain" on us. My sister and I occasionally had to ban him from the barn.

Over supper, I asked my mother why Grandma pronounced the word "dinosaur" wrong. Mum once told us that we were never to ask about Grandma's age, and we suspected this story would be related to that warning. Knowing that some deep, dark family secret was about to be revealed we all gathered close to Mum, breaths bated, for her answer. We knew deep down what this answer would be, but we were no less shocked when she told us the story.

As we already knew, Grandma was as old as the dinosaurs. This was not a surprise. When Grandma was young, there weren't any grocery stores and in those days people had to hunt for their food. Grandma was an exceptional huntress, and her family never went hungry. This, Mum said, was why everyone in our family was so tall. While other families often went hungry, our ancestors did not. They had Grandma to hunt for them and she always brought home some fresh dinosaur for dinner. This is why she pronounces the word din-o-saur, because for her, dinosaurs are dinner. Eventually, because Grandma was so good at her job, the dinosaurs went extinct! Mum settled back in her chair, satisfied that we now understood why Grandma was not to be trifled with.

Knowing that this was not enough information, I asked, on behalf of myself and my siblings, "How did she do it? How did she hunt the din-o-saurs?" Mum seemed startled – presumably she thought the topic too violent for us. She was not aware that whenever she was out of the house we watched all her grown up films, the ones with actors like Steven Segal, which she had forbidden us to see. My brother's avid little face stared at her, dying to know more about the hunting of dinosaurs. My sister and I watched warily, uncertain if we should actually pursue the issue. Grandma told anyone who asked that she was only 39 years old, usually

adding that it was none of their business. In our family, secrets were not to be discussed at all, and we were afraid Mum would refuse to tell us any more about it. As she stood up, we waited on tenterhooks. She wandered around the room and stopped behind a pillar. From there she began her story; "Well, Grandma was a great hunter. She was the best in her family, and far better than most of her neighbors. She was in great shape you know, because hunting dinosaurs is a lot of

exercise." She peered at us from behind the pillar as she spoke. "At first, Grandma would just come right out into the field, like the one where the horses graze. And she would chase them! They ran and ran, but in the end they ran out of energy and would keel over. Then she'd drag them back to her cave for supper." Our collective nod and wide eyed stare confirmed that she had our undivided attention. We were well aware that Grandma was a very fast runner, and she was very strong. She had once chased me through a field for some mischief I had caused – she would have caught me too, except someone else needed her help with a horse. We'd all seen Grandma in the field during hay season; she heaved bales around like they weighed nothing.

"After a while, the dinosaurs stopped hanging out in the fields, because they were afraid of your Grandmother coming after them," she continued, "so she had to change her hunting tactic. She would hide behind a tree like this," she crouched behind the pillar to demonstrate, "AND BAM! When a T-Rex lowered his head to eat some grass she'd bonk him on the head with her club!" She swung her notional club downward towards the imaginary dinosaur's head.

"NO!" my younger brother yelled. We all stared at him, my sister's glare threatened him, my own gaze implored him to shut up, and our mother looked concerned. "T-Rex doesn't eat grass, maybe it was a brachiosaurus," he added. My sister smacked his arm, for good measure, and because she did not appreciate his interruption. None of us cared what kind of dinosaur it was, Grandma had killed them all off; that much was clear, one way or another.

Mum sighed and resumed her story, "Right, well maybe it was a brachiosaurus then. So, after your Grandma clubbed the dinosaur over the head, she would heave him over her shoulder and drag him back to her cave for supper." She threw the imaginary dinosaur over her shoulder, and hauled him through the kitchen. "You mustn't tell anyone though, because Grandma doesn't want people to know that she's older than 39." We nodded understandingly. If I was a million years old, I suppose I wouldn't want anyone to know either.

The next day, while I was watching Grandma put the horses out from the safe side of the fence, I saw one turn around and kick her. I stood in awe, waiting for her to chase him down and club him over the head, like she would a dinosaur. This horse was new in the stable, recently returned from the race track – he obviously didn't know who he was kicking. She didn't chase him at all; she simply limped back towards the barn, mumbling something about stupid horses needing a swift kick in the pants. I giggled, imagining the offending creature wearing pants. I offered her a din-o-saur, and she smiled. I could tell she was remembering her days of hunting and chasing dinosaurs. I bet she missed chasing dinosaurs; I certainly wished I could've been there back then.

At school on Monday we learned about dinosaurs. The teacher told us no one knew why they were extinct or how that had come to be. She speculated about a big bang theory. I smirked in my seat. I knew. I saw my brother raise his hand to speak, and threw a pencil at him. He couldn't tell anyone that Grandma had caused the extinction of the dinosaurs – she didn't want people to know she was old.

HERE COMES... Sarah

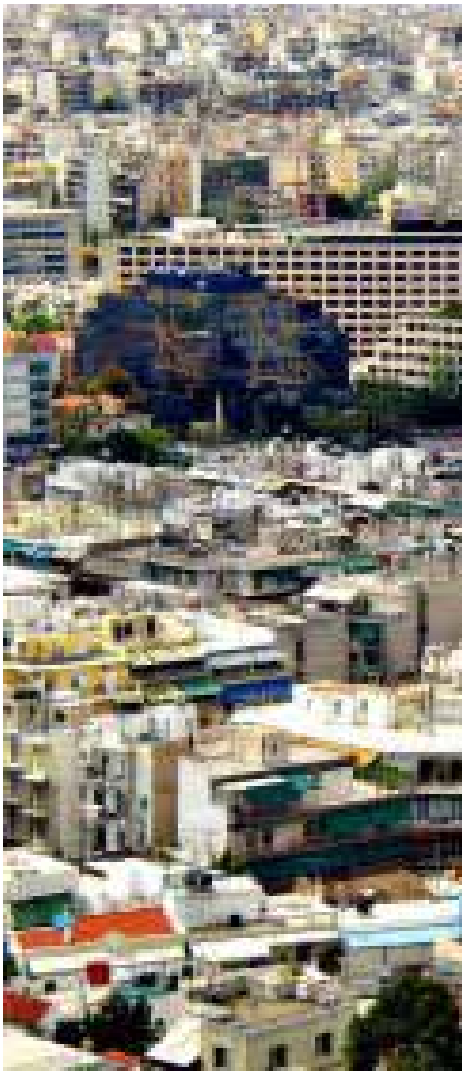
'I am Canadian, and I live in Montreal.I moved here almost 7 years ago to go to Concordia University. I'm still working on my degree in psychology as some time off here and there, and a couple years of mild debauchery and some time spent in the military seem to have derailed my academic standing somewhat. I have recently decided that I'm going to be a writer. I have little to no conventional writing experience and I have not yet fully decided where I want to go in the writing world. While I suspect fiction will figure in my future one way or another, I would also like to try ghostwriting. I have always been fascinated with other people's stories, and enjoy re-writing them in my own mind.'

Acropolis Now: A review of Discordia

by Adam Steiner

Discordia is a fast and free new journalism blow-out that examines the mass demonstrations and civil unrest that followed the Greece's financial meltdown of 2011.

Laurie Penny, freelance journalist and Lefty raconteur, arrived in Athens with her American friend, the politically-charged mural artist Molly Crabapple, in the summer of 2012 to find a country still reeling from the



chaos of the previous year with 20% of Greeks living below the poverty line. The aim of Discordia is to tell (and to sketch) the personal stories of people on the receiving end of a country undergoing drastic change and, in some cases, disintegration: from the young unemployed; overworked mental health professionals forced to juggle a short supply of anti-depressants against increasing demand (in turn, driving up street prices); to beleaguered newspapermen (and women) facing mass-redundancies and ruled over by tyrannical oligarchs, neatly articulated by the street art acronym: AJAB (All Journalists Are Bastards).

Discordia is equal parts anti-travel guide for die-hard young liberals and a fast and effervescent reflection of the grassroots mood of the individuals caught up in Greece's struggle against the massed economic force of Europe. Molly Crabapple's brilliantly grainy sketches, most of them jotted down in situ, in bars and mid-interview, flesh-out Laurie's character portraits as visual skeletons on which to hang her words. Many of the drawings are accompanied by slogans cribbed from walls throughout the city providing neat sound bite commentaries. One of the first that appears in the book, "Live your Greece in myth", perhaps stands as the best metaphor for the telling of the girls' story.

This leads towards the main fault of the book, the way in which the tale is told. As a relatively public figure, Laurie Penny often (willingly) incites controversy and personal criticism. Both she and her writing often come under fire for confusing and breaking the cardinal rule of journalism: do not become the story. A 'less is more' approach (more Greece, less Laurie) would perhaps strengthen the book's warning message. If Penny and Crabapple weren't so much the divining centre of almost every situation they encounter, they would give less ammunition to Laurie's critics. Instead, Laurie has a nearly Orwellian streak of masochism to often place herself at the centre of the action, but always at the centre of the attention.

One example of this is the book's frequent references to smoking. Naturally, nicotine addiction plays on the mind somewhat, but when Penny spent much of a 2012 Politics Show interview on the London mayoral election posing with an electronic cigarette, only to complain when it was commented upon. In the golden days of the TV intellectual, the cigarette was merely a conversational prop. In a similar fashion, Oscar Wilde would often take a puff on his opium-dipped smokes, just long enough to deliver a stinging epigram, as a device for comic timing, not as a distraction from the conversation at hand. In the modern world, however, where smoking on the air-waves is universally frowned upon, it becomes an unnecessary bitten thumb to the norms of society. That the young Greeks of Athens are both vociferous and generous in their consumption of cigarettes is only worth mentioning once, if at all. To put the author before the work is when journalism is made to suffer the most. The need for objective and accurate reportage is easily replaced by crusading egotism no matter how benevolent the goal. It's a fine line to tread, but an important one not to cross, because if readers are to engage with the real issues at hand and be allowed to make up their own mind, a reporter's narrative should drive the story along, not draw attention away from it.

Penny pre-empts this criticism with a nod to the frequent 'trolling attacks' (a form of 'cyber-bullying –Ed.) and psycho-sexual abuse she receives through online comments, emails and that most anti-social form of media: Twitter. She and Molly quickly agree that the reason they receive so much abuse is because they are girls out trying to change the world (for the better) and achieve something without hav-

ing to take their clothes off. This would be fine, except for the fact that while no one doubts Laurie Penny's obvious tenacity and fearless heart, the majority of her peers deeply question her political acumen beyond a working knowledge of the *People's History of America.*

As well as a few too many artfully-placed cigarette ends, Discordia is also littered with self-conscious nods to that most dynamic of journalistic duos, Hunter S. Thompson and his often unwilling accomplice, Ralph Steadman. To invoke the spirit of a famous team is to invite comparison, which is frustrating for two reasons: the first being it may have been better for the girls to let others make the contrast; and while the writing of HST lives on (delve into the brilliant collection, The Great Shark Hunt (1979), which is perhaps the best example of the New Journalism genre) his lifestyle, one of gargantuan appetites, abusive relationships and excess in all areas, displays all the behaviours of a sexist dinosaur, to be junked along with the "fingers-to-the-bone" days of Grub Street and the pub crawl solidarity of the Fleet Street set, not something to be aped or revered by a 21st century feminist-socialist.

It is annoying, because when Laurie Penny writes well (less about her personal history, more about someone else's situation) she evokes a compassioned interest in the reader, without feeling like they are being subjected to naïve propaganda. She talks about the (still unsolved) death of a 15-year-old boy, Alexis Grigoropoulos, shot through the heart in 2008 igniting several protests; "Riot Dog" a loyal street-hound present at many 2011 demos and looked after by locals until he is strangely "disappeared"; and the 77-year-old man who shot himself in Athens's main square in protest against the devaluation of his pension, which had taken him from a life of retired security to the brink of poverty. There are strange echoes between the boy that was killed, believed to be an "accidental" police shooting and the 1971 post-riot execution of Ruben Salazar in LA, from HST's article, Strange Rumblings In Aztlan (The Great Shark Hunt, 1979).

Early on in Discordia, Laurie notes that "history is speeding up all around us" and like many leftist commentators, she is keen to draw lines of inference between worldwide struggles, connecting her and Molly's memories of the Occupy Wall Street movement in the summer of 2011 with the UK situation. She highlights the fact that the current situation in Greece could easily have come about in any number of other European countries. A stark example of this is the way in which many Greeks are learning to live with an increased police presence in their daily lives, in what might be referred to as a climate of fear. She argues that worldwide complacency towards this universal threat, and the attendant lack of resistance, allows governments operate in an invasive "Big Government" fashion, while appear-

ing to be a "small state". These shifts of power, some more subtle than others, create an overall emphasis towards greed, corruption and ultimately self-interest. Such a decline in public interest for various marginal groups in society allow certain individuals to be crushed in the rush for survival; Laurie contrasts governments cuts to HIV medication hand-outs with tax cuts for Greece's wealthiest. The feverish resistance of a people squeezed by the IMF and their own government is palpable against the backdrop of Mediterranean summer city heat, reflected in fresh graffiti which attacks the government's ironic Baudelairian "Bash the Poor" attitude by countering with a highly immodest proposal to instead, "Eat the Rich". The cost of such actions is merely hinted at when Laurie notes that between 2011-2012, the Greek government, already in dire straits, had been forced to spend €1.1m on teargas as a means of supressing protestors. The situation in Greece is worsened by the rise of the Far Right party, Golden Dawn. Growing support for Fascism, and all forms of Far-Rightism generally, often occurs when a nation is at its most vulnerable, when unemployment is high and the economy is stagnant (half of all Greeks under-30 are unemployed). This creates ideal conditions for the recruitment of young males who are promised a better future and presented with social groups of "others" to hate and discriminate against, but in this Greece is something of an exception in Europe. The country is one of the main "holding areas" for people from the Middle East wishing to gain access to the European Union. As they wait for permission to live, work and travel freely throughout the continent they are effectively detained within Grecian borders, leading to what can appear to be a disproportionately high level of immigration compared to surrounding countries. This, Laurie argues, creates a perfect target for the Golden Dawn party, who count a large number of police officers among their membership, to attack and persecute immigrants in the street, as well as offering a catch-all ethnic scapegoat for Greece's economic vulnerability and stretched welfare system.

Discordia is an interesting and thought-provoking work of journalism with characterful sketches of the people caught up in the economic freefall of Greece, all set against the wider backdrop of international discord, and the accompanying resistance movements that are kicking off everywhere. The book goes deeper than any mainstream journalism on the social impacts of corruption, the censure of the press and Far Right violence, all of which may soon become (greater) problems in the UK. It is a pity that Miss Penny does not take a step back and let the story ride, then we would find less need to criticise her and focus more on the work instead.

Discordia: Six Nights in Crisis Athens
By Laurie Penny and Molly Crabapple (2012)
E-book available now through Amazon.

Last Man Standing: David Starkey

by Douglas Maudllin

David Starkey is in many ways the ultimate old Tory dinosaur, but not necessarily in the way that you might think. He tends to take a stronger stance ["further right"? -Ed.] than the Conservative Party officially ever would, when he speaks it is almost possible to hear the nodding of two hundred back bench old duffers, but Starkey, in many ways, represents the last of a generation: the conservatives who didn't go to Eton.

Starkey grew up in a relatively ordinary working class household in Cumbria, where his parents managed their means effectively and he attended a grammar school and subsequently won scholarships to Oxford. It is easy to write these 'credentials' off in the same way that it is easy to write off the credentials of those tiny minority of current Conservative cabinet members (although frequently trotted out to the media), who also attended a state school of some sort, but that's really not the point. The late Baroness Thatcher went to a state-funded school, which very few of the current front-line politicians can boast.

When he publicly clashed with self-appointed Feminist/Socialist messiah Laurie Penny [see *Acropalis Now* –Ed.] at the Sunday Times Festival of Education it was on the issue of education that they really drew their battle lines. Starkey, outspoken at the best of times, did not hesitate to jab his finger in the face of Penny and to accuse her of her own particular brand of reverse snobbery and hypocrisy. Attacking Penny's privately funded (albeit through a scholarship) elite education is an easy option, but it is fair to say that from Starkey's perspective, as a 'self-made man' the like of which are growing uncommon in Britain, her socialism rings as hollow contrarianism.

Starkey is often presented to the media as a kind of pantomime villain, someone we're all happy to boo and hiss at when he makes one of his well known rhetorical faux pas (the 'whites are now black' incident, for example, was never intended as a racial slur and in fact isn't, since it is the accepted nomenclature to refer to African or Caribbean people as 'black' and he was describing cultural aspirations rather than their racial type.)
At the same time as recoiling in horror in the face the seemingly anti-politically correct torrent, the literati of the UK eagerly lap up his intense and well-structured historical programming and books. Whilst it is fair to say that were Starkey an effacing, effete and elegant eccentric of the like of Simon Schama, or perhaps Dan Cruikshanks, he might be altogether more popular, the reality is that any number of softly spoken historians wait in the wings for the opportunity to walk around talking to camera and to 'go on a journey' (to make history documentaries, in short). Meanwhile, Starkey is entirely unconcerned that people think him racist, bigoted and overbearing.
The field of historical programming applauds novelty above all else (see Nial Ferguson's War of the World, Channel 4). Starkey bucks this trend with a ferocious invective which occasionally sees him carried away into ranting, but it is fair to say that it is desirable and necessary to have some sort of David Starkey figure in any society at large. Laurie Penny, waves her flag for an outdated ideology (it's hard to find true feminism these days, and even more so with socialism), but Starkey's 'working class conservatism' is at least founded on pragmatic reality. With the death of Thatcher, the final bastions of the Old Guard begin to fade, but it could equally be said that Laurie Penny stands for the 'Old Guard' in just the same way, the only difference is that Starkey is honest about it.

Next Issue:

Prophecy

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What is a self-fulfilling prophecy?

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