

## Andrew Nightingale

### ALIEN PROPULSION SYSTEMS

Alien propulsion, a blue sky hovering  
where there's capital. Money markets leveraging  
time zones. The fronts pass over and hell money  
prints itself. Jet streams open idle satellite links.  
Pre-emptive information flows. The structures  
feed on the inert foreign body. Getting nowhere  
helps an alien to move. Aimlessness  
fuses arrival and departure. Capital fills  
the troposphere. Travel isn't always goal oriented.

Unknown forces, buoyant but akin to  
a false consciousness. Foreign subjects  
make apt purchases. Unleash forces that propel  
uninhabitable bodies to mutilated excess.  
Humiliation brings the spent home.  
Back into exile. Limits on repetition  
are patrolled by unprofitable deaths.  
Autoasphyxiation is not possible in the mall.  
Not among the plastic shadows.  
Subjects late night shopping. Warranties  
weeping with opalescent speed.

Reverse engineered, power becomes a network  
of differentiated vectors. Advanced methods  
made available discretely. The seat  
where the traveller sits has been converted.  
The vessels have been tested. The craft analysed.  
Failure relies on gravity and a glass ceiling.  
To rise is to decline fixed expression.  
Craft cannot easily be replicated. The power  
breaks down. No one position sources contacts.

Impossibly hard, yet weightless and bendy  
like kitchen foil. A gaze that can transport.  
A flash of white light picks up each passenger.

Takes them places far away. Gives them life.  
Wishful thinking cannot penetrate  
their chic shiny solitude. Every movement  
is a kind of transmission. An articulation  
of irreconcilable differences. Following  
is not allowed. And kicking leaves no dent.

An autopsy, taking place on all these  
broken machines. With propellant leaking  
copiously everywhere. Broken vessels  
are still vessels though they carry nothing.  
Function defines them by exclusion. Dissection  
recreates usefulness. New interfaces  
are assembled between blade and cut.  
New machines being proven by borderline leaks.  
Playing proper part in society.  
Autopsies are fully functional.  
Successors driven by precise intrusion.

Death erotics, built on an attraction  
to dizzying heights. The possibilities of  
chief executives. Borne up by the chariots  
of sharp pecuniary gods. Perhaps they have  
good hearts. Suffer oversized livers. Perhaps  
they bring us closer to the stars. We should  
continue to sacrifice our children. They  
still need gainful employment. Something  
to aim for. A seat in business class.

Carbon wants, flowing freely into a void  
of disambiguation. The triangulated void  
is unrecognisable. It's been called  
many different things in its time.  
Acceleration tries to fill it. Failure  
embodies it. It has given birth to  
Structured Design Methodologies.  
Complexity past the point of no return.  
The void sees its reflection. Only  
its own reflection. Can't be far enough away.

The others, tasting the physics of ready cash  
grow lazy. They court the corporate classes. It's like  
earning interest on someone else's current account.  
Who would give that up. Someone else's chips.  
Stolen chips taste better and trigger  
powerful responses. Stealing time from  
alien labour enriches. You can stay  
healthy longer. Avoid bringing death closer.  
Conspiracy theories excuse your morality.

Being here, as everyday users of  
the anthropic principle. A self-consciousness  
that's never superseded. Meritocracy is one way  
of concealing an illegal propellant. Giving  
the others a chance. Letting them fail.  
The top of the ladder requires snake handling.  
Moves not listed in the book. The torque  
twists the mechanism. Right out of shape.  
There is no going back.

Spotted youth, the guidance locks on  
to something new. A First Course  
in Marketing. Travel and otherness rolled  
into techniques to shift product. A unit  
powered by precession. A manufactured freshness.  
The sense of newness leaves resemblance  
as exhaust. Vapour trails of misplaced simulation  
fading. These young men occupy themselves.  
It can't be healthy. Discharging into  
a discovered space.

Paradoxical hope, the acquirement  
of alien systems for self-development.  
Instantly something else becomes alien.  
Perhaps acquirement is not the thing perhaps  
it's wonder. How natural processes are distorted.  
Used and manipulated. And yet  
the manipulation is itself quite natural.  
As banknotes are part of nature. Always going  
to manifest themselves. Work the same schemes.  
We give birth to aliens.

Your pocket, they say it lives in your pocket.  
Dark matter in the fluff. A ten quid black hole  
been through the wash. Now you can go shopping.  
And become someone. Chaos chemicals interfere  
with a good quiet runner. Nothing  
is left on the outside. No epiphany  
or unexplained event. The synchronicity  
of shopping. At least that is left.

Blue-y whiteness, a white that is loveable  
and blinding. Very hygienic quite unlike blood.  
The user is washed to a place where nothing sticks.  
Damage is a dead idea. Everything is ok.  
Soon if a gelid mind can be uploaded.  
Its scarred dangling limbs rinsed away.  
Nothing will get dirty forever. Everything  
is never touched. No blame in outer space.

Although unimportant, the exact procedure is nevertheless quite simple.

An alien text is selected. Not an arbitrary text but one that's esoterically propelled. A text to motor speculation. Otherwise I'm immobile.

Travel is controlled by those infiltrating the Academy. Country roads are lined with us hitchhikers. One remove from rocket fuel. Close enough for me. Aliens make my accelerant unstable.

At last, a shore is visible in the distance. An empty platform sliding up. What happens next belongs to another species with special lubricant. A way to move smoothly. Like they're frictionless. Say a soap bubble or a dandelion parachute. They carry themselves gracefully through time. Softly and without any explanation. Setting down in silence. Must be made in Germany.

Incomprehensible mechanics, no less now than they were before. It has all been said. At least an episode of the X files is entertainment. Broadcasts radiating in perfect spheres. Inflected radio light. Only this ends in a mess of obligations. Too many payments send out tentacles. Those lists of quantifiable transactions. They move at will. Outlive all my aimless speculation.

The sky, a disguise for winds that display fearful resilience. Looking up must be enough. Look up but don't try to harness the wind. The wind says pointless things. Filling any sail. It's movement and rest signal and carrier. Beyond the ken of arbitrary constraints. It bloweth where it listeth. Beats at my window. I should not have listened.