

## BOLT FROM THE BLUE

JEREMY COOPER



Fitzcarraldo Editions



As it's your busy time at the pub you'll barely notice.

Love

Lynn

20 JAN 86

Mum

How are you? Was Christmas OK?

I've caught a cold, touch of flu perhaps. Never mind, it'll pass.

Full of ideas for work

Lynn xx

[Written on the classic Guerrilla Girls postcard of a billboard in New York showing the Mona Lisa with a green gag, the black and pink capital letters reading: *First they want to take away a woman's right to choose. Now they're censoring art.*]

—

Dear Lynn

Xmas was fine, thanks. Plenty of visitors, people dropping by. At the pub, mostly,

Bought myself a new radio in the sales. And fancy underwear.

Yeah, I'm in pretty good shape. Considering.

Didn't have to do Christmas turkey or anything. Don't know why I bothered all those years.

Love

Mother

P.S. The cat's fine too. No cat has ever missed anybody. Nor any other cat, as far as I can see. Food and warmth all they go for.

15 FEB 86

Mum

Thought it was Christmas at home which I find impossible. Bliss compared with Devon!

Safest, I'd say, to pretend the visit never happened. Except I've been trying to blank it out, and can't. So, need to get it off my chest. To you, of course!

One of my lists!

That fucking family. Frisky, freezing, freaky, fraudulent, frantic, foxy, foul, fossilised, formal, forlorn, footling, foolish, foetid, fly-blown, fleshy, flatulent, flash, flaky, filthy, fiendish, fidgety, feeble, faulty, fat, fatal, farcical, false.

Reverse alphabetical!

Jerk of a father made a pass at me.

They have an outdoor swimming pool. Heated, in winter!

On the way out, this breed. They must be. Surely?

I'm going to ignore Christmas completely from now on.

Love

Lynn

16 FEB 86

Dear Mum

There's a teacher at St Martin's who bangs on about contact-making, how important it is for our careers. Weird!

Since when did being an artist become a career?

If it is then I don't want to be an artist. I do stuff, that's all.

Stuff which may or may not mean anything to anybody else. To me, though, it really matters. That's the point.

Love

Lynn



P.S. St Martin's College of Art is now officially called the London Institute. Makes no difference.

28 FEB 86

Mum

You asked if I had somewhere to work at college.

I do, it's great: open long hours, seven days a week. First year students have individual studios on the lower ground floor. Cubicles, with eight-foot high wooden divides, open on the passage side, no doors.

Looking out of the window, below the level of the pavement, I can see passers-by up to the top of their thighs.

Fascinating. I could watch for hours. Who are they? Where've they come from, where are they going to?

I'm obsessed!

'Tell me another,' I hear you saying!

Out of the hundreds and hundreds of Polaroids I've taken, I've selected a hundred and thirty and mounted them flush-floated in a Perspex box frame, ten across by thirty down. Made the whole thing myself.

Spent days fiddling with patterns, direction of travel, coat colours, male/female, etc. One dog, placed near the bottom right of my grid, pissing against the railings. Can't see his willy.

My photographic grid echoes the old iron bars on the window. Sort of.

Enclosed is a Polaroid of the Polaroids.

What do you reckon?

Love

Lxx

Dear Lynn

*I like it when you ask my opinion.*

*What do I think of your ... what would you call it? A picture?*

*Don't think much of it, to be honest. Looks a bit of a mess.*

*You've always been so very tidy, and organised. I hope they don't ruin that for you at art school.*

*See how it goes. Keep K V.*

Love

Mother

26 JUNE 86

Mum

Last night I had an experience I'll never forget. Ever.

At the Almeida Music Festival I saw John Cage, the man himself, face of wrinkles and smiles. Plus his fat fellow-American pianist with a droopy moustache. In a performance of 4'33".

Do you know about this piece?

Cage wrote it soon after the war.

Mikhashoff, the pianist, sat down at the grand piano, closed the lid, set a stopwatch, folded his hands in his lap and rested in solemn and silent concentration for precisely four minutes and thirty-three seconds. After which he turned off the watch, opened the lid to expose the keys, stood up and bowed. To rapturous applause from the audience and a hug from Cage.

Creaks of the floor, a man in the third row clearing his throat, cups clinking in the café outside. Loads of music! The near-silent sound of my own breath, blood beating in my ears.

I've never seen anything like it. I mean, there's no-one like Cage, or his music, and I've never seen or heard either live before. Of course not. I'm twenty-one and until