

Tanner

use

get your manager, the lady says.
why? I ask her.
just get me your manager, she says.
is it something I can help you with? I ask.
yes, she says, you can help me
by getting your manager!

I get my manager.

I've lost a bottle of water, she tells him.
has anybody handed it in?

and the manager glares at me
as if to say
you dragged me out the office for this?
he glares as if to say
you're gonna regret this

oh wait, the lady says
pulling a bottle of water out of her handbag.
it was here all along!
and she somehow walks away
with her head held high

as the manager
points at you
and then at
his office.

that means he wants you to go in there,
there's a good boy, there's a
good bad boy.

piece

Carla's mum likes me.
she keeps coming into the shop
and trying to set me up with her.

oh mummy: I'm a piece of shit.
I'm 35
I'm too old for your little girl
I just look younger because I'm a short arse
that's right: I'm a 35-year-old
of below average height
who works in a shop
and get this: I'm not a boss
I'm not even a supervisor
in fact, mummy, your little girl outranks me,
she gets paid more than me
to give me orders!

so to summarise:
I'm too short and old and poor and unambitious
for your little girl

I'm a piece of shit

but you know what
I'll bang her anyway

and tell you all this
tomorrow.

maybe then you'll get the message.

new tattooist

he'd just got out.
he was cheap.
trying to drum up business.

I sat in the chair and he said:
you wouldn't last inside, mate.
he sat down beside me.
little guy like you. you wouldn't last two minutes, mate.
he put on his rubber gloves.
what you'd have to do is, you'd have to be some top dog's bitch.
he took out his razor.
the biggest guy. you'd have to suck him off. take him up your little arse.
he shaved my arm.
he'd expect you to be shaved all over. maybe grow your hair. dress the part.
he picked up the needle.
nobody would respect you for it. but they'd leave you alone
because you're his bitch.
he dipped the needle in the ink.
he might pass you around his crew. let them have a go of you.
the buzzing started.
that's what you'd have to do, mate
and he began to draw on me.

when it was done I told him to keep the change.
he was a big guy.

I went back
and the place was boarded up.
he's gone on holiday, someone told me.
you know, on her majesty's pleasure?

not just hers, I thought.

their drive and yours

you ever notice
that your boss
is always the unhappiest person
in the workplace?

are they unhappy because they're the boss
or are they the boss because they're unhappy?

or is it because
no matter how much they demean you
it won't make
their dick
any bigger
or their cunt
any tighter?

is it because
you inevitably leave
to be demeaned by
other bosses,
bosses with
even tinier dicks,
even baggier cunts?

and maybe the jobcentre
is the least demeaning place
for you,
you
well-endowed
or tight-lipped
unemployable.

we all do it

watching the townsfolk pass, guessing their kinks:
that old lady likes piss.
that young bloke gets cut.
that old man pisses on young cut ladies.
and so on.

but sometimes when you're born
you're born broke
and you work at the supermarket
where the townsfolk
announce their kinks:

they scratch and say: I'M CHAFFING LIKE MAD
as you wheel a cage of stock onto the supermarket floor.
they wince and wink: I'M STILL SORE FROM LAST NIGHT
as you stack a supermarket shelf.
or they stroke their shiny thighs smiling:
CAN'T FIND MY WALLET IN THESE GIMP PANTS
as you scan their butter and pet food bowls.

sometimes when you die
you die broke
a kinky broke town folk
on the supermarket floor
loving the kicks
kicking you to sleep
because there's nothing else but
supermarket poverty kink
most
if not all
of the sometimes
when you die.