

## Trevor at the Fountain

*Simon Peter Eggertsen*

Armed lightly with his dark English wit, and a shade of amber from Woodpecker Ale, Trevor's blue eyes glaze a smile as he reclines at the market fountain in Cambridge, just like a Roman soldier would resting in his rags after the long march from Colchester, Paxman's town. He inhales the musty air behind St. Mary's Church, where on wet days the gargoyles spit down on the market world below, wanting to wash it all away, restore it to the quiet of Evensong. The sight of him pushes hard against the rumour shuttling about the Commons that he was once a college don. Was it at Jesus, Christ's, King's or Queens'? Could be. Maybe not. Likely, though, it once dawned on him to feast at High Table. He sluffs against the font stones, looking for cover, like boulders do in the creek at Wildwood. With alcohol-twisted sentences, Trevor burbles now and then. His school-boy memory on full display, he peacock shrieks: "Stoppard, ahh marvelous, once wrote: 'The longest distance between two points is a trombone.' You should try to explain the geometry of that if you can!!" As Trevor professes, his tongue moves slower than the speed of the sounds. Red-faced and mussed, he waits for the fountain to cleanse him, the steeple's shadowed cross to bless him. "Only one request at a time please!" At noon, he rises to protest the twelve clangs of the chimes, sits himself on the stone fringe, smiles, and mumbles something about the noise. "Ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for me! Ha! Ha! I'm done." His laugh is as slurred as his speech. Four steps away in the market, vegetables try to sell themselves—green leathery cucs, paling, globey Belgian sprouts, gypsied,

romany lettuce. There are Williams pears, yellow-white, Valencia tangerines, full-moon orange, the scaly flesh smell of North Sea fish, the gym-sock odor of English cheese—Wilton or Chilton, Stilton or Hilton? Trevor’s mind is numb, alcohol warmed. As the west-leaning afternoon sun hits his mottled face, he wishes to sing. Why not something from Gilbert and Sullivan? “I am the Captain of the Pinafore! . . . And a right good Captain, too.” He might have been, had he ever gone near the Norfolk coast. Instead, he was content to spend most of his life, like those modeled ships, trying to find his way mast down, horizontal into a clear-glassed bottle made for Irish whiskey.