

Title: “(pre) possessed: an erasure sequence”

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(pre) possessed
an erasure sequence

Sonia Overall

'(pre)possessed' is a sequence of six erasure poems created using found text. The work explores the concept of hidden messages as a form of possession, where apparently unbiased newspaper coverage and banal magazine columns contain the seeds of other—darker—ideas exposed through erasure. Riffing on the urban legend of satanic messages buried in song lyrics using 'backmasking' and the practice of subliminal advertising, '(pre)possessed' demonstrates how creative erasure can 'uncover' the demonic apparently hiding in plain sight. The found text used in the work was drawn randomly from a collection of British print media gathered over five months.



i.

thoughts are poison
lives suspiciously haunted

daunting
a life that brings hundreds of messages
some vow to kill
everybody judges you

the grim truth is
violence comes from you
weak infected lunatic
lost
don't talk about it
say nothing
fear fear their fury
breaking

erratic and unexpected
the dark heart of you is a revelation

your enemy is you
the aggressive inward-looking one now allowed inside
you
is relentless dysfunction

ii.

wings to tail
angelic above a broken world
visceral hideous fierce
far away and vulnerable
you want to fight

ardent and devout
you felt a sign of divine luck
a God-fearing hope
the stirring of a first twitch of resistance
but to battle is always more
dangerous

iii.

start the rite
old games
one chance
draw against the hidden
against disaster

iv.

a charm
sometimes pliability and cunning inveigle
seep in

voices foist their plan on us
hold us back

we the imposed on
the people who don't get to make our own decisions
lived in

processed through
meaning left looted and full of holes
we risk living through flashes old records of thought
we remember so little

v.

an aberration
over taking all
causing mental damage
for all will experience hopelessness

the homely and innocent
tricked and made corrupt
a crooked ordeal
the fate of the girl who started telling:
a dark story emotional troubled
a final trial

vi.

hiding in dreams
seemingly soulless
cryptic
no escape

possessed
body and soul
left to make peace with pain

terror has finally come to an end
the conviction
of closure

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Sonia Overall is a writer, psychogeographer, and academic living in East Kent, UK. Her published work includes novels, poetry, short stories, academic articles, and features, many of which explore place, the nonhuman, aspects of the weird, and experimental forms. Her short fiction and poetry have appeared in *Streetcake*, *Neon*, *Lune*, *Shearsman Magazine*, and *Seaside Gothic*; her books include the poetry chapbook *The Art of Walking*, walking-writing manual *walk write (repeat)*, pilgrimage memoir *Heavy Time*, and her latest novel, *Eden*. Sonia is currently a Reader at Canterbury Christ Church University, where she runs the MA Creative & Critical Writing.