

TLC Showcase

VINCE LAWS

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Introduction to *A Very Queer Nazi Faust*

A *Very Queer Nazi Faust* is a re-imagining of the Faust legend by a 21st century disability rights campaigner and poet, Vince Laws. It began as an idea which Laws explored on an Arvon playwriting course, before he honed the plot, and committed it to the page as a comic.

Early in 2016, with support from Shape Arts, Laws sent that comic to TLC for feedback. The feedback was really useful, very specific, and although a lot of corrections and suggestions had to be filtered through the text, Laws spent the next year redrafting, before sending the redraft back to TLC to see what the same reader thought of his changes. He liked them! Bravo!

With renewed confidence in his writing, early in 2017, Laws decided to make the comic into a live performance, and put out a call for participants in the Norwich area. Thirteen local activists, some with disabilities, some without, were cast via social media, and rehearsals began, culminating in a performance at Norwich Pride in July 2017, which was met with popular and critical acclaim.

In 2018, funded by Unlimited, and the Spirit of 2012, Laws ran participatory workshops and honed the script, culminating in a sold out performance at Norwich Arts Centre in September 2018. "I bloody loved it! The show I enjoyed the most this year," Pasco Q Devlin, Norwich Arts Centre Director. That live performance was turned into a podcast version of *A Very Queer Nazi Faust* available free on Soundcloud. The performance contains adult themes and language, suicidal thoughts, Lucifer, The Naked Abseilers and poetry, but no Nazis.

Laws is currently re-making *A Very Queer Nazi Faust* into a comic, now with a richer workshopped text.

Poet John Faust is suicidal. His benefits have been stopped without warning, the bailiffs are due to evict him, his dog is in the vets dying, his car needs a new clutch, and he can't finish his poetic masterpiece while the voices inside his head torment him. In despair, he throws himself off Beeston Bump, Norfolk's highest peak, clutching 'The Tragic True Life & Deserved Death of a Benefit Scrounger by Himself', but Lucifer won't let John drown because she loves his work and wants a bigger part. Every time Faust throws himself into the sea, Lucifer throws him out on a different Norfolk beach....

Extract from *A Very Queer Nazi Faust* by Vince Laws

LUCIFER

Here you are, John! Is this not a bedazzling spot? Hunstanton, the best place to watch the sun set on the east coast, reminds me of Ibiza. Ah, the lavender on the breeze! Earl Grey, John? Your favourite, I've ordered us a pot. Shall I be Mummy?

FAUST

What fresh hell is this? Shat back out on a shitty beach? Relief, that's all I want.

LUCIFER

Direct, John, I like that. Some people can be so shy about the sex. Smoke?

FAUST

Just the white miraculous flash of light that leaves the lungs and cleaves a patch of starless sky. (FAUST staggers into the sea.)

LUCIFER

Oh that. Oh do come back, John Faust, you're frozen. You won't feel like this, John, not with my help. If you don't smoke, take a brownie, John, for the journey? I can't eat two. Oh well, maybe I can. (Giggles) Poor John, of course, he cannot know he cannot drown. I will not let him. Sex, drugs and tragedy on my day off, I love it. I'll be waiting, John, on another washed-up Norfolk beach. Music!

(Sound: You can't park that van round here, don't care what you think.)

BEATRICE FROM BENEFITS

We've got a new policy now, Mr Faust, called Dead People Don't Claim.

Why haven't you killed yourself yet, Mr Faust? If you could just fill out this form explaining...

ROSEY POP MECHANIC

Did you drive yourself to this Mr Faust?

MRS MAY

Biscuits means Biscuits and I did get the best tin for Britain because that is what people voted for.

ARLENE FOSTER

Say No! to chocolate fingers! Blasphemy! All shall be hell, all shall be hell, all manner of things shall be hell.

HELEN OF TROY

Fair Trade Vegan Carrots. Sign the petition!

ARLENE FOSTER

No cherries. No fudge. No lemon puffs

ALICE FISHFORK REPORTER

Dramatic scenes, John Faust, you're live on News From Hell, please do not swear. How are you feeling right now, John, can you put it into words?

PARIS the PSYCHOLOGIST

The impossibility of thinking about something else when the thing you think with is sick.

NELSON the DOG

Awooo!

ARLENE FOSTER

No ginger nuts!

LUCIFER

Finish this book, John Faust, and I will give you whatever you want.

ARLENE FOSTER

No chocolate fingers!

FAUST

I want all this noise to stop for a start!

(SOUND of screeching tyres, a crash, accordion explodes, hub cab rolls round and round then drops, finally silence.)

FAUST

Ah, that's better. Thank you. That was going right through my head.

LUCIFER

Welcome.

FAUST

Now will you please stop following me! Leave me alone, begone! Where is this place anyway?

LUCIFER

Well, er, I'd rather not say exactly where we are, John...

EPIC the CAMERAMAN

Hemsby. Whoops.

LUCIFER

...as this is where I land my cocaine.

ARLENE FOSTER

Nothing with a ring or hole or a jammy filling!

LUCIFER

A little snifter, John, to wake you up?

ARLENE FOSTER

No cherries!

FAUST

What do you want from me? Can't you see, I'm trying to drown?

ARLENE FOSTER

Wafers are a sin!

FAUST

Go away!

LUCIFER (Quoting)

'Wing wide I soar, wider than your night is dark, and darker than the secret in my heart, I am despair!'

FAUST

You know my words?

LUCIFER

Ah, at last, the penny drops!

FAUST

That's not possible. I haven't finished it yet. I can't.

LUCIFER

I know your words as I know my own heart, John, and both are stopped!
I keep telling you, John, I love your work, just tell me what you want?

FAUST

Oh I don't know any more. You tell me.

LUCIFER

Excellent! I've written us a short contract, John. Kept it simple. (Unrolls massive contract.)

FAUST

Simple? Nothing is simple. Life is relentless.

(ALICE FISHFORK REPORTER screams 'Cuts!' and dies. Stay dead until judder.)
Don't you understand? I just want it all to stop.

ARLENE FOSTER
Backstop!

LUCIFER
Oh for goodness sake, John, listen to yourself!
You should try immortality, believe me, forever can be a terrible drag.
(HELEN OF TROY screams Carrots! and dies. Stay dead until judder.)
I try to make a difference to the days, John, I delegate, but it's not easy, that's why I'm here. Now. With you. On my day off.
Look, I've even ticked the box for Perfect Health.

FAUST
You're saying if I sign this I get perfect health? You're barking!

LUCIFER
Health so perfect, John, it purrs like a pussy stroked.

NELSON the DOG
Awoooo! (NELSON howls and dies.)

FAUST
You don't understand. I need money, right now, in my bank. No, it's too late. Don't help me now. I've been evicted.

LUCIFER
It's never too late, John, that's the truth.

PARIS the PSYCHOLOGIST & ARLENE FOSTER
(Scream and turn into petrified trees.)
Agh! It's too late!

LUCIFER

Listen, I can give you more than you have wit to ask, John Faust.

FAUST

I doubt it, I have wit to ask a lot. But if I sign this you promise to leave me alone?
Ouch!

LUCIFER

Just a little prick, John, enough to wet my nib.

FAUST

Well if I can have anything, my car does need a new clutch.
(ROSEY POP MECHANIC screams Clutch! and dies. Stay dead until judder.)

LUCIFER

Why not a brand new car, John?

FAUST

Oh good idea. Why didn't I think of that? Perfect health and a brand new car? And while you're at it, I'll speak to that Prime Minister, give her a piece of my mind.
(MRS MAY screams 'BISCUITS!' and a plate smashes.)

LUCIFER

That's the spirit, John! There. Tick that box.

FAUST

What's this? Meet the Pope. Why not? He needs to know how hurtful words can be.

LUCIFER

Brilliant, John! I've just had another thought! Let's get him to endorse your brand new book?

FAUST

Oh and Iain Duncan Smith at the DWP. Mr I-believe-I-am-right. He must die, some slow and gruesome death.

(SCARLETT the PHOTOGRAPHER screams and dies a slow and gruesome death.)

LUCIFER

I'm ahead of you there, John. He's resigned.

FAUST

Resigned? I want blood! I want his head on a platter! I want him to suffer!

(SCARLETT comes back to life, then screams and dies again)

LUCIFER

I'm sorry, John, I've been so busy bombing and caging small children, but I'll give him my full attention from now on. Multiple slow gruesome deaths, John, there, tick that box. Now make your cross! (SCARLETT comes back to life, screams and dies again)

FAUST

John Faust. There! Now please leave me alone. Ahh! Oooo! What's happening to me?

(*SOUND thunder, LIGHTS lightning. FAUST judders first. CAST all judder back to life. CAST gather in behind FAUST & LUCIFER. NELSON howls Awooo!)

LUCIFER

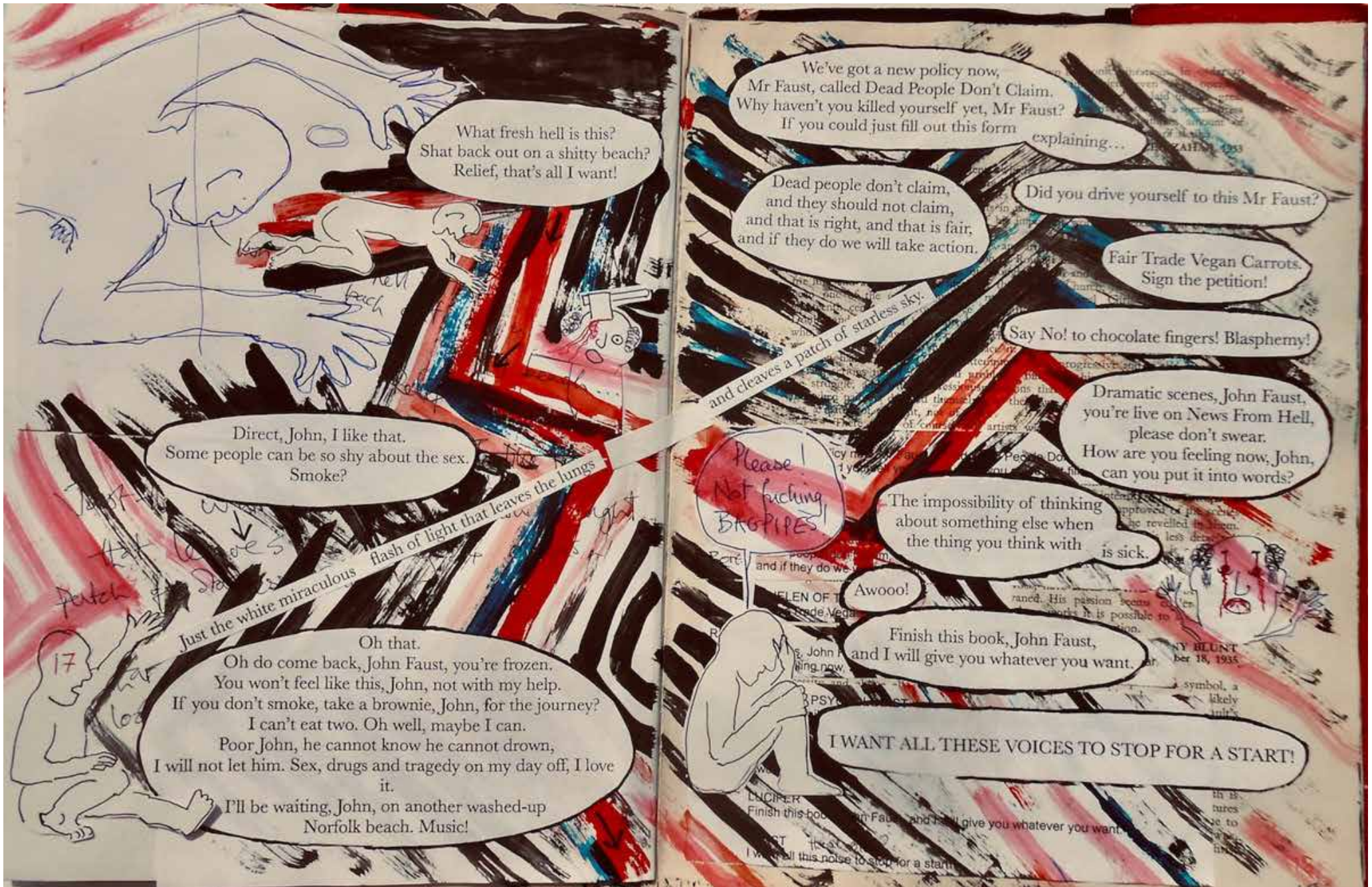
Look! You're here John, at Norwich Arts Centre, showing these fabulous people your brand new book. Wave to the camera, John, and hang on behind! Perfect health can be one hell of a rush! (CAST jazz hands)

FAUST & CAST

WOWWWWW!!!! (FAUST only) I don't know what just happened, but suddenly... I feel fit for work!

End of Act One

*Here we present the last five double-page spreads of Part One.



Lucifer: Ah, that's better. Thank you. That was going right through my head.
Faust: Welcome.
Lucifer: Now will you please stop following me? Leave me alone, begone! Where is this place anyway?

Well, er, I'd rather not say exactly where we are, John...
Hemsby: Oops. As this is where I land my cocaine.

A little snifter, John, to wake you up?

What do you want from me?
Can't you see, I'm trying to drown?
Go away!

Where is this place
this is where I land my
GASNON DIEHL, 1945

reason for depicting the naked body...
exist in the limits of language...
before us than paintings of naked...
—4. What has compelled the gentle...
and Iembrantesque handrapes to these...
no doubt, the neo-Catholic doctrines...
interwoven, materialistic society of 1900...
has woody complexity. But the...
Rouault should have chosen to...
so precisely because it gives...
the sight of an idealized human...
of Giorgione, are shattered and...
The fulfilment of desire is replaced by stunts...
of a perfectible humanity is broken by this cruel reminder of what, in fact, man has...
contrived to make out of the raw material supplied to him in the cradle; and, from...
the point of view of form, all that was realised in the matter on its first creation, the...
sense of leading structure, the clear, organic shapes and their harmonious disposition...
has been repeated in favour of lumps of matter, swollen and hard.

And yet Rouault convinces us that this hideous image is necessary. It is the...
ultimate antithesis of the *Crucifixus Venus*, appearing rather late, over more than two...
thousand years, but none the less ineluctable. All ideals are corruptible, and by 1903...
the Greek ideal of physical beauty had suffered a century of singular corruption. A...
convincing assertion of complementary truth began, perhaps, in the drawing done by...
Degas in 1884; this suggesting how the formal falsity of the academic nude was done...
by some extent a moral falsity for the amateurs who peered the nude of Cabanel...
and Bonnat were had seen the real thing in the *Malson Teller*, Degas' prostitutes are...
living beings, like obscene insects that convey the character of an epoch and a society.

Of course IDS claims his welfare reforms, born at his ironically named Centre for Social Justice, got more people into work. Not according to the *House of Commons*...
work and out-of-work... which concluded in 2018 that sanctioning the sick or disabled 'does not work. Worse, it is harmful and counterproductive'. The United Nations has deemed the welfare reforms since 2010 – the intensification of the conditionality and...
the introduction of the bedroom tax, a two... on benefits policy as well as cuts to disability benefits and the botched...
— as a systematic violation of human rights. Faiza

PEACE
+
QUIET

LUCIFER
Wing wide I soar, wider than your night is dark,
heart, I am despair!

FAUST
You know my words.

LUCIFER
Ah, at last, the penny drops!
Ah, at last, the penny drops!
That's not possible.
I haven't finished it yet.
I can't.
I know your words
as I know my own heart, John,
and both are stopped! I keep telling you, John,
I love your work, just tell me
what you want?

'Wing wide I soar,
wider than your night is dark,
and darker than the secret in my heart,
I am despair!'

You know my words?

Ah, at last, the penny drops!

That's not possible.
I haven't finished it yet.
I can't.

I know your words
as I know my own heart, John,
and both are stopped! I keep telling you, John,
I love your work, just tell me
what you want?

Oh I don't know any more.
You tell me.

The visual world was for...
shades, light, colour, rhythm...
of an inner and outward...
His art implied the problem of language...
act, like the art of a poet, who, unlike...
a sense that the unspoken vocabulary appears...
It is this, I feel, that distinguishes Rouault from the...
generation, and in particular from the...
obsession. The mere fact that Rouault...
weakness of his craft...
For him, as for Claude (Rouault's...
poet of the...
its technique a pretext. Painting...
whose value lay not in itself, but rather in the...
himself.

Rouault belonged to the spiritual family of Dante, Hieronymus, Rembrandt...
he was not a mirror reflecting nature as, for instance, Courbet had been, but rather...
a visionary possessing a transcendental image of reality, who imposed...
painter with a deep, piercing significance. This accounts for the lack of outward...
variety in his paintings, for the monotonous repetition of faces of downy...
"saints", landscapes written, whose worth resides in what they convey rather...
than what they picture.

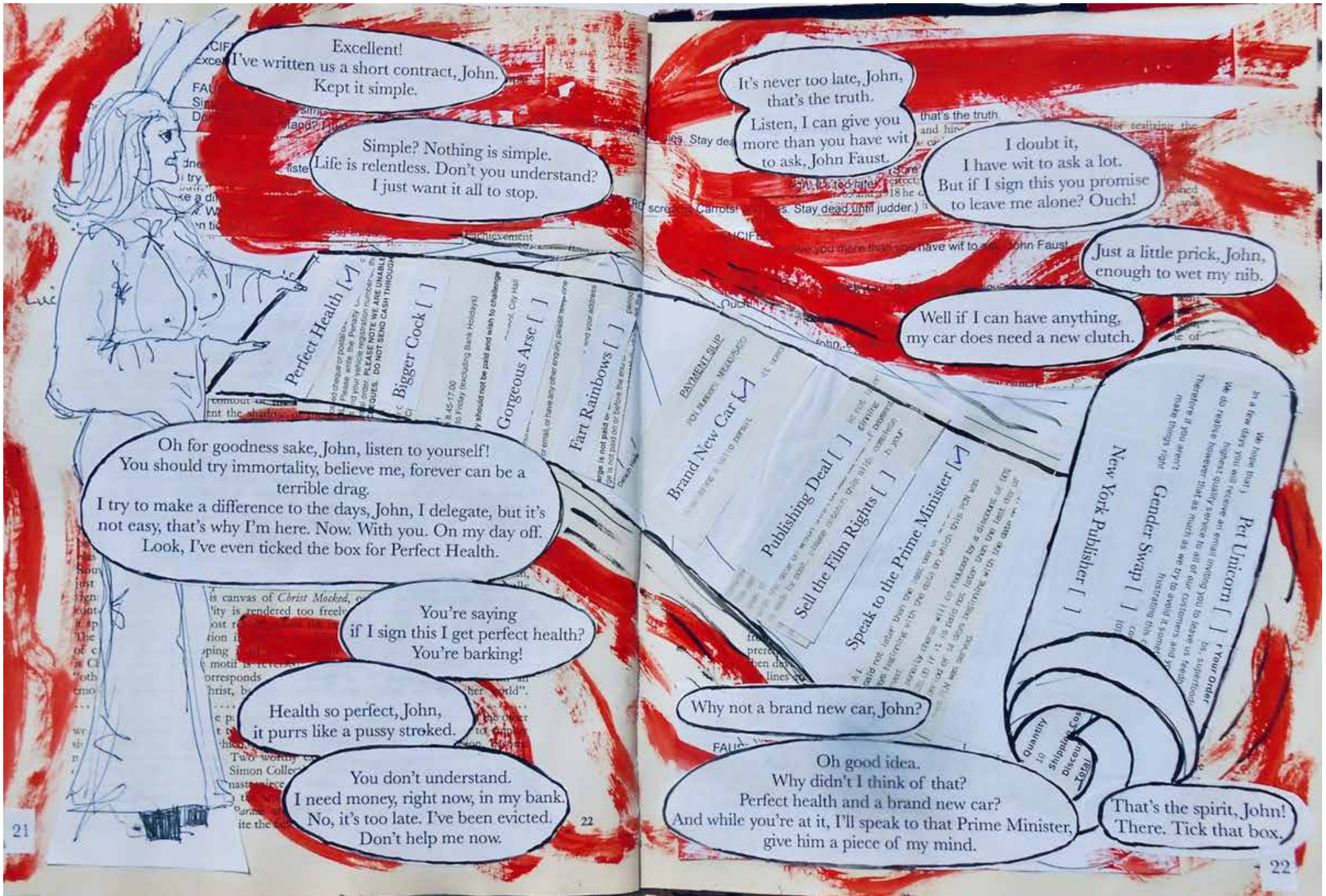
In every one of his works, Rouault has set his seal. The paint is never...
The artist never tired of kneading the substance with which he built up his pain...
churning his pigments, casting and recasting every line and feature. It was indee...
hand, whose role he humbly accepted, that instilled into the painted matter the...
emotions. Never, however, did his hand guide his spirit. Supported by other...
whom inner life prevailed over everything else, Georges Rouault was opposi...
liberated to the artificial, fabricated beauty propounded by Valéry. He was no...
not a master according to the aesthetic tenets of the Renaissance. Just as with...
of the Ravenna school, certain Roman sculptors, Giotto or Fra Angelico, it was

FAUST
That's not possible. I haven't finished it yet. I can't.

LUCIFER
I know your words as I know my own heart, John, and both are stopped!
I keep telling you, John, I love your work, just tell me what you want?

FAUST
Oh I don't know any more. You tell me.





Excellent!
I've written us a short contract, John.
Kept it simple.

Simple? Nothing is simple.
Life is relentless. Don't you understand?
I just want it all to stop.

It's never too late, John,
that's the truth.
Listen, I can give you
more than you have wit
to ask, John Faust.

I doubt it,
I have wit to ask a lot.
But if I sign this you promise
to leave me alone? Ouch!

Just a little prick, John,
enough to wet my nib.

Well if I can have anything,
my car does need a new clutch.

Oh for goodness sake, John, listen to yourself!
You should try immortality, believe me, forever can be a
terrible drag.
I try to make a difference to the days, John, I delegate, but it's
not easy, that's why I'm here. Now. With you. On my day off.
Look, I've even ticked the box for Perfect Health.

You're saying
if I sign this I get perfect health?
You're barking!

Health so perfect, John,
it purrs like a pussy stroked.

You don't understand.
I need money, right now, in my bank.
No, it's too late. I've been evicted.
Don't help me now.

That's the truth
and here's
the contract
I've written
for you.
It's not too
late, John.
I can give
you more
than you
have wit
to ask.

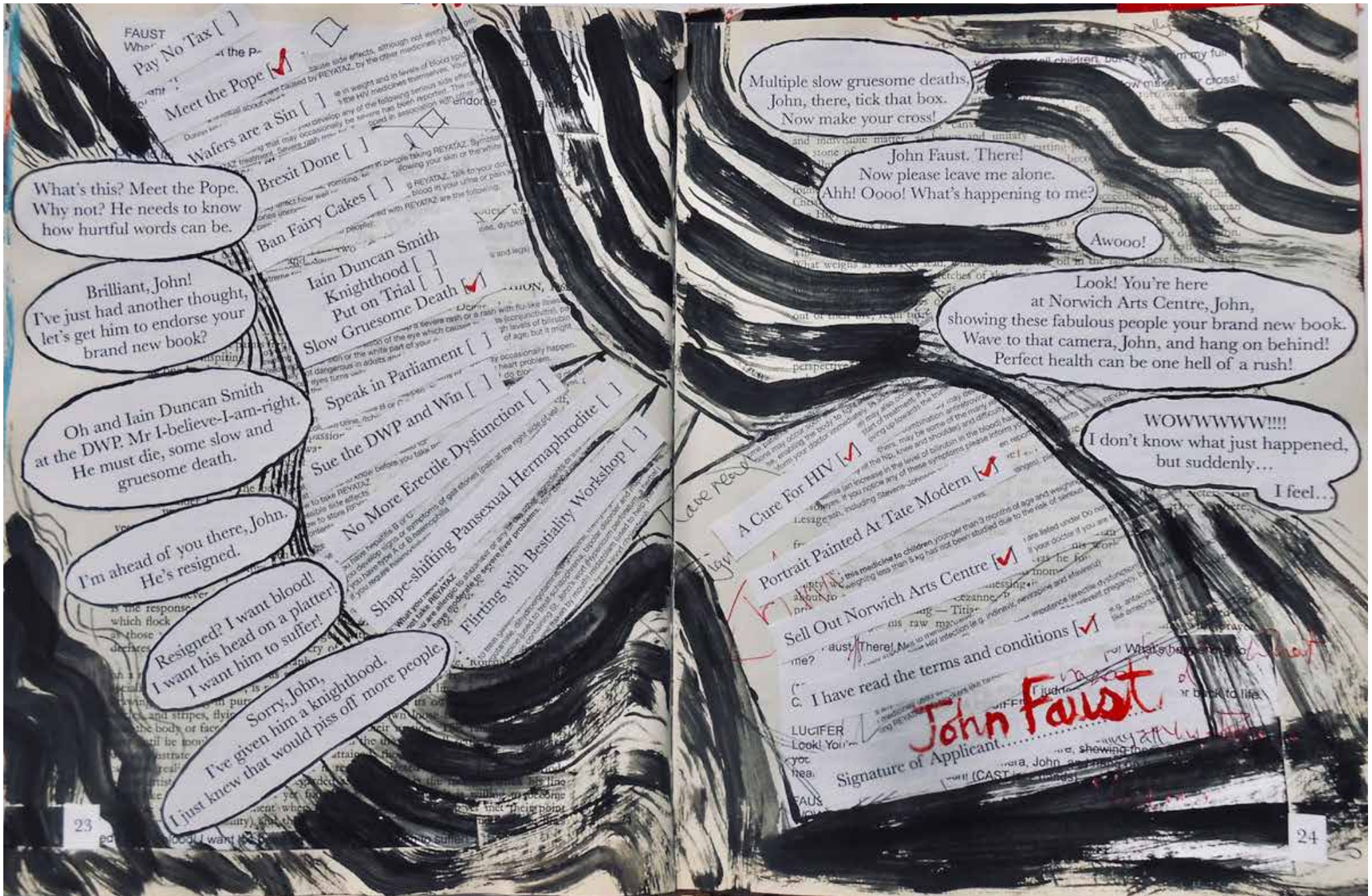
PAYMENT SLIP
FOR BRAND NEW CAR
I have ticked the box for Perfect Health.
I have ticked the box for Bigger Cock.
I have ticked the box for Gorgeous Arse.
I have ticked the box for Fart Rainbows.
I have ticked the box for Brand New Car.
I have ticked the box for Publishing Deal.
I have ticked the box for Sell the Film Rights.
I have ticked the box for Speak to the Prime Minister.

Why not a brand new car, John?

Oh good idea.
Why didn't I think of that?
Perfect health and a brand new car?
And while you're at it, I'll speak to that Prime Minister,
give him a piece of my mind.

New York Publisher []
Gender Swap []
Pet Unicorn []
Your Order
We do realise however that as much as we try to avoid it, some
frustrating things do happen.
Therefore if you aren't
satisfied with our
highest quality service to all of our customers, and you
make things right!

That's the spirit, John!
There. Tick that box.



FAUST
When
Pay No Tax []

Meet the Pope []

Wafers are a Sin []

Brexit Done []

Ban Fairy Cakes []

Iain Duncan Smith
Knighthood []

Put on Trial []

Slow Gruesome Death []

Speak in Parliament []

Sue the DWP and Wm []

No More Erectile Dysfunction []

Shape-shifting Pansexual Hermaphrodite []

Flirting with Bestiality Workshop []

What's this? Meet the Pope.
Why not? He needs to know
how hurtful words can be.

Brilliant, John!
I've just had another thought,
let's get him to endorse your
brand new book?

Oh and Iain Duncan Smith
at the DWP. Mr I-believe-I-am-right.
He must die, some slow and
gruesome death.

I'm ahead of you there, John.
He's resigned.

Resigned? I want blood!
I want his head on a platter!
I want him to suffer!

Sorry, John,
I've given him a knighthood.
I just knew that would piss off more people.

Multiple slow gruesome deaths.
John, there, tick that box.
Now make your cross!

John Faust. There!
Now please leave me alone.
Ahh! Oooo! What's happening to me?

Awooo!

Look! You're here
at Norwich Arts Centre, John,
showing these fabulous people your brand new book.
Wave to that camera, John, and hang on behind!
Perfect health can be one hell of a rush!

WOWWWWW!!!!
I don't know what just happened,
but suddenly...
I feel...

A Cure For HIV []

Portrait Painted At Tate Modern []

Sell Out Norwich Arts Centre []

I have read the terms and conditions []

John Faust

Signature of Applicant

About the Writer

Vince Laws is a poet, artist, performer and campaigner. His work often combines all four. In 2004 he publishing his first pamphlet, *Beckham By the Balls...* and came third in the Brighton Poet Idol.

In 2007 he moved to Norfolk and began performing poetry regularly on Norwich's Future Radio. In 2010 he was commissioned to write *The Small Frayed Knot*, a 15-minute poetry play, which was subsequently selected by the Albany Theatre, London.

In 2011 Laws was commissioned by Future Radio to write *A Very Queer Faust*. He performed work-in-progress pieces.



By 2015, a couple of Arvon courses later, Laws had a plot and created a comic version of *A Very Queer Nazi Faust*, which he sent to TLC for feedback in 2016.

In 2017, Laws made *A Very Queer Nazi Faust* into a live happening. He recruited a team of 13, fundraised, rewrote lines, and they performed to acclaim at Norwich Pride.

In 2018 Unlimited funded Laws to do *A Very Queer Nazi Faust* again, but on stage, with lights, a soundtrack, a BSL signer, the works. They sold out Norwich Arts Centre and had a blast.

In 2019 Laws and Dandelion Snowley created a radio version of *A Very Queer Nazi Faust*, which you can listen to here: <https://soundcloud.com/avqnf/the-tragic-true-life-deserved-death-of-a-benefit-scrounger-by-himself-john-faust-1>

Now in June 2020, Laws is re-making a comic version of *A Very Queer Faust*, commissioned and supported by Unlimited, celebrating the work of disabled artists, with funding from Arts Council England.