

milk to drink and no other trees have gained a footing. If we were to bring some seedlings from our island and if they escaped the seabirds' claws and grew up, and dropped seeds and grew some more trees like them, wouldn't that be pushing Oyster Cay forward through the centuries at a faster rate than it ought naturally to go?

ENDNOTES:

¹ First published *Argus*, 3 December 1932, p.11.



RON PRETTY

HALF LIFER

Looking out, he could see half the screen and hear
none of the sound track. Figures disappeared
off the edge – cowboys in search of Prestor John

or lovers falling off the edge of their world.
Night after night from his balcony he watched
the silent half world reveal itself: kings guillotined,

lemmings crowding into the silent dark of evening.
He never asked what films were showing, preferring
his own truncated narratives, the demi-monde

of his own imaginings. He watched the one-legged spy
half falling into a trap and found a way to ensure
the double agent won. He found a way to love

the Amazon with half a breast as her fiery arrows
disappeared off the screen and on to his balcony.
So he built his fantasies, living his half life all night.

When the screen went dark, he watched
the constellations spinning their destinies
out to the edge of space and the life beyond.