



[Adropiean Galactic Lego Set Blues](#) by [Fat Roland](#)

Pages: 84, available from [Italic Eyeball Shop](#)

Reviewed by [Denis Joe](#) July 2012

There is only one difference between a madman and me. I am not mad.
[Salvador Dali]

There is a long tradition of surrealism in Britain, the works of Lewis Carroll or Edward Lear being prime examples. One could also include the last two novels of James Joyce. In the twentieth century, surrealism gained a wider audience through radio and TV shows such as *The Goon Show* and *Monty Python's Flying Circus*

. Whereas one can detect an element of snobbery, knowingness, in much of this type of entertainment, in later years a more Absurdist take would develop, with the popularity of Vic Reeves or

The League of Gentlemen

and a near rejection of rationalism, where we respond because we are made to feel unsure about what it is we are experiencing.

Yet in such an approach, as Albert Camus suggests in *The Myth of Sisyphus*: "my appetite for the absolute and for unity" meets "the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle". In other words it is not the human mind or even the world that is absurd when reason meets with unreasonableness. In our times when even those charged with the management of the state can see nothing absurd about treating the Olympic games as a trigger

to put the country on war alert, one can appreciate the attractiveness of absurd entertainment or even the philosophy itself.

Fat Roland's collection of 20 short stories fits well with these times. One could almost read them as believably biographical. The opening story, ***Friction***, is an excellent example of absurdity. On the one hand we can laugh at the story: it is comic because it arises out of our inability to make sense of what is actually happening. It is an anecdote, yet one that has no connotation nor moral to it. Neither is there a punch line to anchor to. It is the sort of humour that we either sink or swim in. As such our approach confuses us because there is something rather supernaturally dangerous in its presumption: a character ('Creepy Geoff') who could be a family pet (as it rubs itself on objects) or a poltergeist. But it is nothing of the sort and our inability to label 'Creepy Geoff' is at once frightening and comical - though we wonder whether it is our inability to make sense of it that makes it comical.

In his ***Essay On The Meaning of The Comic***, Henri Bergson makes a similar point when discussing ***Don Quixote***: where Quixote sees dragons instead of windmills Bergson points to:

□ . . . a very special inversion of common sense. It consists in seeking to mould things on an idea of one's own, instead of moulding one's ideas on things – in seeing before us what we are thinking of, instead of thinking of what we see.

[pub: Arc Manor , 2008. p. 87]

