

The Addams Family

Rob A. Mackenzie

You rang? I rang. I wish to express profound dismay at your report, which cancelled us after two measly series, sixty-four episodes, because we failed grievously to represent the American Dream to projected 21st century wholesome consensus. We know the meaning of morality, but that's plainly not true of you. You expect us to believe trains should reach their destinations before exploding in remote clockwork north of the Verkhoyansk circle; that poor Wednesday should study division at school and join the Brownies, casting aside her pet tarantula and thoughtfully child-size dynamite rods, as if limited education creates a balanced adult; that Lurch should transition from plus-size monster to where you imagine human boundaries lie; that Cleopatra the plant should drink only water and shake cold turkey her diet of flesh; that interest should be taken in Uncle Fester's sexuality and the use Pugsley may have made of the Thing; that I should stop speaking French to drive my husband's tongue up my arm, with off-camera action driven into your bilious imaginations. The day is coming when a screen kiss will last longer than three seconds and burn your pompous suburban house of boredom down. I rang because I am Morticia, mother of Carolyn Jones, Siouxsie Sioux, and Tim Burton: tadpole-eye-pie baking traditionalists. Your ways are truly grotesque.

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Fleabag

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Those moments when you follow your life through a third eye and what you feel feels like it's happening to someone else at the wrong end of a camera lens; you are an onlooker, not a participant, although you host the illusion of flesh and blood; the people you fuck leave you hollow and friendless; the people you love are dead; everyone says you have inherited the fun gene, and it's true you get drunk and smash glass and steal notes from a wallet, wine from a corner shop, artworks from your future stepmother; you watch yourself feeling fun, guilt, incomprehensible rage; you discover you possess an admirable right-hook; you try cutting grass with nail scissors, you try yoga, silence, religion, champagne, anal sex; you stand at a Quaker meeting and say, "I often wonder, would I be a feminist if my tits weren't so small?"; you make a Catholic priest laugh, and then fall in love with you; you turn towards the camera, turn away again, for the first time without a side-glance; you feel that love is sometimes selfish, sometimes suffering and sometimes makes mistakes; you let someone in; you love; you step away, crying, which feels, really feels, like hope, and you wave to the fourth wall one last time; this might sound tragic but it's comedy that walks you into the darkness.

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Rob A. Mackenzie is from Glasgow and lives in Leith. He is reviews editor for Magma Poetry magazine and runs literary publisher, Blue Diode Press. His poetry collections are *The Opposite of Cabbage* (2009), *The Good News* (2013) and *The Book of Revelation* (2020), all published by Salt.

Favourite poem: 'The Incognito Lounge' by Denis Johnson