At Your Own Risk
Based on Jarman’s Writings and Cinematography

Beat 1

A screen is projecting Jarman’s film Blue, while the audience enters. They watch this for a while until the lights dim. Then we see the outline of a man seated behind the projection.

Man: My body was thrown into the struggle, bringing me into a spotlight in a way I never expected or wanted. On 22 December 1986, finding I was body positive I set myself a target: I would disclose my secret and survive Margaret Thatcher. I did. Now I have my sights set on the millennium and a world where we are all equal before the law.

A swelling sound from Blue. Man stands.

Man: I am a mannish
Muff diving
Size queen
With bad attitude
An arse licking
Psychofag
Molesting the flies of privacy
Balling lesbian boys
A perverted hetero-demon
Crossing purpose with death.

I am a cock sucking
Straight acting
Lesbian man
With ball crushing bad manners
Laddish nymphomaniac politics
Spunky sexist desires
Of incestuous inversion and
Incorrect terminology
I am a Not Gay.

Man walks out from behind the screen. Music dims. He looks at the projection.

Man: The great master of blue—The French painter Yves Klein. No other painter is commanded by blue, though Cezanne painted more blues than most.

Blue is Blue.

Blue is hotter than yellow.
Blue is cold. Icy blue.
Curacaeo with ice.

The earth is blue.
The virgin's mantle is the bright blue sky.

This is the living blue.
The blue of Divinity.

Blue Movies.
Blue language.
Bluebeard.

Blue gives other colors their vibration.

V/O (Caravaggio): Time stops for no man, not even the sun, said Pasqualone. My shadow passes. The flies spiral back. Pasqualone yawns. Time stops for no man, he says caressing himself. I watch the ripples in his trousers. ‘Can I put my hand in?’ The words fall over themselves with embarrassment.

Beat 2

Man: My first confrontation with oppression was in the cold dormitory of a British preparatory school. My crime was prosecuted by the headmaster with more violence than any other misdemeanor in the school.

I had crossed over the dormitory and climbed into the bed of another nine year old; the action was quite innocent, neither of us could have foreseen the consequences.

The headmaster's wife who descended on us like a thunderbolt from a clear blue sky. We were beaten, hauled up in front of the whole school, threatened with expulsion.

This public exposure gave me an incredible shock and opened wounds that will never heal. The violence of the attack drove my heart into the shadows, where it remained buried. I became detached and dreamy, spent hours alone painting or watching the flowers grow, had a physical aversion to chumminess and sexual innuendo.

I was set apart, a childhood observer who never joined in.

From thirteen to eighteen I had no form of sexual expression at all. All my energy was devoted to painting while the other boys learned their four-letter vocabulary on the rugger pitch.

V/O: British Medical Journal, 1965 Affected persons of sexual deviancy are commonly of late birth and commonly born to older mothers. No abnormal chromosomes have been detected. Studies have emphasized the defective parent: demanding over protective, seductive and inhibiting mothers and negative hostile fathers.
**Man:** What I would wish is for a generation that can come to terms with itself quickly, not have to go through the struggle my generation went thought to accept ourselves. We had a bravado that wasn't backed up by experience.

A shift in space and sound. An actor reading for the interviewer is illuminated. He is somewhat concealed further backstage. Scenes from the Angelic conversation are projected onto the screen.

**Interviewer:** The Angelic Conversation is a dream world, a world of magic and ritual, yet there are images; there of the burning cars and radar systems, which remind you there is a price to be paid in order to gain this dream in the face of a world of violence.

**Man:** Destruction hovers in the background of The Angelic Conversation; the radar, the surveillance, the feeling one is under psychic attack; of course we are under attack at the moment. In the background of The Angelic Conversation there is surveillance by Nobo-daddy.

However, another sequence deals with male dominance differently; the ritual washing of the tattooed man.

I was exploring a landscape I had never seen on film: areas of psyche that hadn't been projected before.

I have seen very few films on male love which are gentle, they usually have a violent subtext—the violence you have to traverse before you make peace with yourself.

The Angelic Conversation is gentle. There is that hovering, external violence, but at the end of the film it's cauterized by the blossom, which obliterates the radar. The blossom takes over.

**Interviewer:** I think that if you had made a violent film the British Film Industry would have been quite happy; by making a less aggressive film, it had quite a strong effect, particularly as you didn't let politics intrude.

**Man:** Making my films is not difficult, funding them is. How they are perceived is another matter, I get so tired of conventional film. It's a change of heart we're after, not a change of policy; centuries of disinformation don't go away at the stroke of a pen.

**Interviewer:** Another thing struck me. The quotation you start the film with, (Love is too young to know what conscience is, but who knows not conscience is born of love.) You plugged in to something that was very close to home on that.

**Man:** I think we should print that quote in capitals—it would be an antidote to all this madness.

*The opening of Angelic Conversation plays. Man watches for a moment.*

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**Beat 3**
Man: For the first twenty-five years of my life I lived as a criminal, and the next twenty-five were spent as a second-class citizen, deprived of equality and human rights. No right to adopt children; and if I had children, I could be declared an unfit parent; illegal in the military; and age of consent of twenty-one; no right of inheritance; no right of access to a loved one; no right to public affection; no right to an unbiased education; no legal sanction of my relationships and no right to marry. These restrictions subtly deprived me of my freedom. It seemed unthinkable it could be any other way, so we all accepted this.

In ancient Rome, I could have married; but in the way that ideals seem to become their shadows, love came only to be accepted within marriage. Since we could not be married, we could not fall in love. Since we could not fall in love, we were not loved.

I have lived for fifty years as an unequal in this country, enveloped by hate; to ignore it I insulated myself, subtly changed my life; each man created his own island to cope with the prejudice and censure. The time for politeness had to end.

I bubble with anger underneath

*Images of Jarman’s Jubilee play.*

Interviewer: *Really?*

Man: I don’t think anger is the best motivation, although it is essential if you’re going to change anything.

Interviewer: What would you do without your anger?

Man: Probably nothing.

Interviewer: Is there any element of madness to your anger?

Man: Yes, I am quite mad! All artists are—divine madness. Pasolini was as mad as a hatter. When I met him I recognized that part of myself.

*Images of Jubilee. We see/hear the character of Amyl Nitrate laughing and laughing.*

Man: The murder of Pier Paolo at Ostia—by a gang who’s movement were covered up by the Italian judiciary—was a light extinguished in the room of our minds. The death of our poet, our historian, our film-maker, murder by Heterosoc; Wilde, Marlowe, Caravaggio, Tchaikovsky and now Paolini all murdered. Break the circle of death.

In the forensic photo, Pasolini, dishevelled sacrifice, run over by a boy in a car again and again and again; to obliterate his identity.

I was waiting last night for a cab at 2:30 in the morning. There’s shouting and a car drives past with six young men. One winds the window down and shouts ‘fuckin’ puff’ and throws a piece of
concrete at me that crashes on teh pavement and bounces into the bushes. The car roars into the night. It’s silent again.

A shift. Music. The image of the angel from Carravagio is projected. Man picks up a book.

Beat 4

Man:
‘And if the vulgar and malignant crowd
Misunderstand the love with which we’re blessed,
It’s worth is not affected in the least,
Our faith and honest love can still feel proud’

From Michelango’s sonnets.

It may seem ludicrous now, but Marlowe’s outing speech from Edward II was once an eye-opener. His list of Queers included Socrates and Alcibiades. The Greeks knew how to live. Sappho and Plato were a revelation for me. Plato recommends that only young men who love each other are fit for public office.

In college I began to read between the lines of history. The hunt was on for forebears who validated my existence. Was Western civilization Queer? The Renaissance certainly was: Medici, Michaelangelo, Leonardo, Botticelli, Rosso, Pntormo, Caravaggio, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Bacon.

Music…less so. Unless it was British in which case it was absolutely Queer. The writers: Whitman, Wilde, Gide, Proust, and James. By the end of my first year at college I’d acquired some heavyweight soulmates.

My obsession with biography is to find the I: I feel this, this happened to me, I did this.

I wanted to read that. There’s huge self-censorship amongst our queer ancestors, because we’re terrified of betraying ourselves. We don’t want people to know. Now we look back at historical figures and wonder: were they gay?

There was a night when I clicked into the ghost of one of my heroes, Caravaggio. It was an odd moment in which the past actually flashed into the present, physically—fucking with the past if you like. I discovered my ancestry.

Caravaggio plays and plays and plays. Man watches.

Beat 5
Man: Most of the works on our Queer lives underestimate the effect of art in favour of political action; I think this is wrong. In 1962 we performed Genet’s *The Maids* at college. It caused as much fuss as a political action might today.

The sixties were to see major interventions by artists. David Hockney publicity acknowledging his sexuality from the beginning of his career. Kenneth anger and maya deren’s gift of the underground cinema.

What did that mean to me and my friends who had cock up our arses and cum splattering the ceilings? Well, we joined the underground. The underground like the bars was illicit.

The theater was of no interest to us. The theater reduced us to a load of laughable pantomime drag queens. Film was much more interesting. At the first showing of Anger’s *Scorpio Rising* in art school we expected a police raid.

Leap ahead 20 years to the mid-eighties and the scarcity of information had changed. For a twenty year old there were Jimmy Somerville and Andy Bell to fuck to, novels from the Gay Men’s Press, photos by Mapplethorpe and Weber

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**Beat 6**

*Images of Jarman’s The Garden begin to play.*

Man: By the early eighties two men having sex was no longer perceived as a transgression. HIV changed that. I wouldn’t wish the eighties on anyone, it was the time when all that was rotten bubbled to the surface.

I tested HIV + on 22 December 1986. I became frightened of myself, I was potentially lethal and all the advice I got was a muddle. All life became a problem, and I solved this by shutting my physical self like a clam. I was living in another land, no-man’s land. These were hard years.

Through good advice we stopped loving each other in the way we wished. Adopted safe, then safer sex and then no sex at all. The gay community adjusted itself. But still the vilification went on. By this time, it seemed that the world was literally taking leave of it’s senses the new right wallowed in the blood and unleashed Clause 28. Where do you think this will stop?

It has changed my perspective radically. I’d always been under the impression that Heterosoc was pretty dim. Now I know that I was right. Actively or through indifference they murdered us.

**Voice:**

1) A local authority shall not:
   
a) Intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intension of promoting homosexuality
b) Promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.
– Section 28, Local government act 1988

**Man:** As you celebrated Christmas 1987 we were under attack by the only western government in recent history to introduce legislation increasing prejudice. The Clause would have liked to have stamped us out, grind us down, the kiss of the death. The Clause became law-plays banned, exhibitions stopped, teachers silenced. But for what?

But up went a chorus, ‘enough is enough’. Thousands marched in the streets, protests in every city, riots, Sue lawley cowering whilst handcuffed lesbians scream STOP THE CLAUSE on the six o’clock news.

The kiss of death became the kiss of life– a new lesbian and gay movement emerged, stronger than ever more angry more focussed.

Four times in 1988 we broke the record for Europe’s largest Queer demo- 12,000; 15,000; 20,000; 25,000. We learnt who our true allies were and our fair-weather friends. The labour Party deserted us at the first hurdle; the guardian told us that Clause 28 was our own fault.

*We see the image of the two men from the Garden kissing and holding a child. We slowly fade back to Blue and the sounds of Blue.*

**Voice:**
Film director Derek Jarman will be cannonised as a saint by the gay order of nuns, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, at his famous garden in Dungeness, Kent. This is in recognition of his films and books for all he does for the lesbian and gay community, and because ‘he has a very sexy nose’.

The ceremony takes place on Sunday 22 September 1991. Derek Jarman will be crowned with a saint’s halo, appropriately woven of celluloid film. He will be titled ‘Saint Derek of Dungeness of the Order of Celluloid Knights’.

**Man:**
The sisters of perpetual indulgence are a worldwide order of gay nuns, whose mission to to expiate homosexual guilt from all and to replace it with universal joy. Their titles include Sister Jack Off all Trade, Sister Dominatrix, and Mother Care and Control.

*Beat. Laughter. Edward II starts to play*

It’s no small thing to be made a saint, especially when you’re alive and kicking and have to give your consent. In spite of the Sisters’ warning not to let it go to my head I had to take it seriously. I am, after all, the first kentish saint since Queer Thomas of Canterbury who was murdered by his boyfriend, Henry, in 1170.
I dithered about my costume like an old queen off to a ball. Should I be plain ordinary Joe Saint or something a little more glittering? I gave in to temptation and chose the sparkling golden robe that Steven had worn as Edward II in the film.

*HE PUTS ON ROBE*

*SHIFT (EXPAND)*

**Voice:**

LOVE
Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in Freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchard and dark-green fields; on-on- and out of sight.

Everyone’s voice was suddenly lifted;
And Beauty came like the setting sun:
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away… O, but Everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; and the singing will never be done

**Man:**

Siegfried Sassoon’s poem was written at the end of the First World War.

*beat*

I am tired tonight. My eyes are out of focus, my body droops under the weight of the day, but as I leave you Queer lads let me leave you singing. I had to speak of sad times as a witness—not to cloud your smiles—please take in the cares of the world that I have spoken of; and after; set them aside and love. May you, of a better future, love without a care and remember we loved too.

As the shadows closed in, the stars came out.

I am in love.

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