



On Malice

Ken Babstock

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"Ken Babstock is a wonderful and spirited poet, his work is full of musicality, syncopation, wit, and formal acuity, it's all good."—Peter Gizzi

"The flavor of this poetry is complex—it will have to be consumed in small amounts like a sipping tequila. It inebriates quickly. It imparts a convivial brilliance to life. And it is not without its sinister edge."—Ange Mlinko

With poems on perfect blue and a sonnet sequence situated on a derelict NSA surveillance station on a Berlin hill, *On Malice* assembles evacuated forms, polysemy, prayer, and perverse chatter into poems that enact our paranoia. Channeling Walter Benjamin's son, William Hazlitt, John Donne, and Dick Cheney, they are lyric in their sonic and affective register but coldly methodological in their invented structures and illusions.

*You finish reading it. You cannot
finish reading it. Ice caught
in the can, later, the well. What*

*shall I be worried about,
the coward well and the ice does
such a lot. They know nothing*

*of cantilevered blown-out shells
who feed their worry
like veal barns. The dome's aerial*

*my lodestar and icon, the squirrel
at dusk in the post-informational gloaming
can never not finish reading it as song*

Ken Babstock is the author of *Methodist Hatchet*, which won the Griffin Poetry Prize. His previous titles, *Mean*, *Days into Flatspin*, and *Airstream Land Yacht*, hold nominations for the Governor General's Award and the Winterset Prize. Poems from this book have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

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