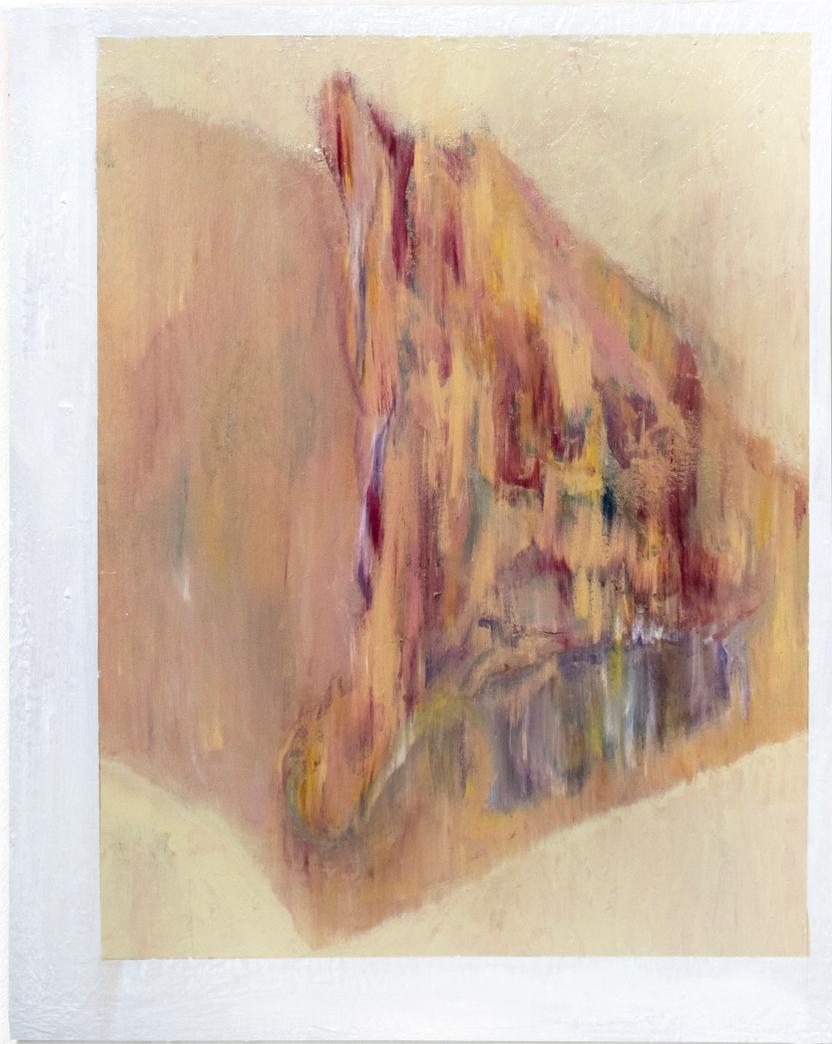


**AHREN WARNER**

**PREVIOUS WORK**



**pastoral thing (i)**

dove is bone-white smudge      rictus-winged  
tree bark is bone grey      tree leaves hang

with testicular weight      sky: blue-grey  
– predictably –      but tender veined

with cobalt ash      simmering pink  
foot-flesh on moss      and heels sunk

in burnt verdigris      an underlay  
of peat      clouds are much the same

as doves      same ossein fuzz      same  
shared conspiracy      to drift

beyond the trees      the hills are cleft  
by chalk      a path of dust      the spume

of stream and lake      the lake does little  
lake is almost      wholly still

poem: unpublished, 2026  
painting: oil on aluminium, 50 x 40cm, 2026



*prosper, despite a sense of crisis*  
Tube Gallery, Palma de Majorca, 2025)



[*L'avocat*, 1866]

As, between Delphi and Thebes, where *ramus*  
turns to *ramuli*, old Oedipus shafts Laius

good and proper, batters him with his staff  
then finishes the King (and his coterie) off ...

And as, leaving the codger dead at the road's crotch,  
he never looks back or gives it a second thought

but, instead, makes his way to Thebes, to years  
of plenty, to night after night of shafting his mother

(that is, until she tops herself, until he digs  
his own eyes out) ...

So, you happen upon your leg  
or arm, and your flesh is *unhomely*: a waxed rind,

a terrine of silt and scud.

poem: from *Pretty* (Bloodaxe, 2013).  
painting: oil on aluminium, with redwood subframe, 150 x 120cm.  
[a line from this poem was reworked during its painting  
and inscribed within the painting itself]



*prosper, despite a sense of crisis*  
Tube Gallery, Palma de Majorca, 2025)



[*Sitzender männlicher Akt*, 1910]

'... the stain of blood makes shipwreck of our state'  
slips drowsily into 'shipwrecked in this sea is sweet

to me'. The night presses through the shutters' slats.  
Parasomnic, one finger skims the sternum's flat

then draws an ellipse from plexus to armpit  
and back; arcs off and up to circle my upper lip.

So many nights I wake to find myself like this,  
tracing the contours of my self – near catatonic –

one hand puppeteered and seeking the spots  
where nerves hustle or a coarse down bristles;

where, beneath the glaze of *cogitans*, touch  
can trigger surety – flesh and bone assurance –

beyond this party trick of intellect.

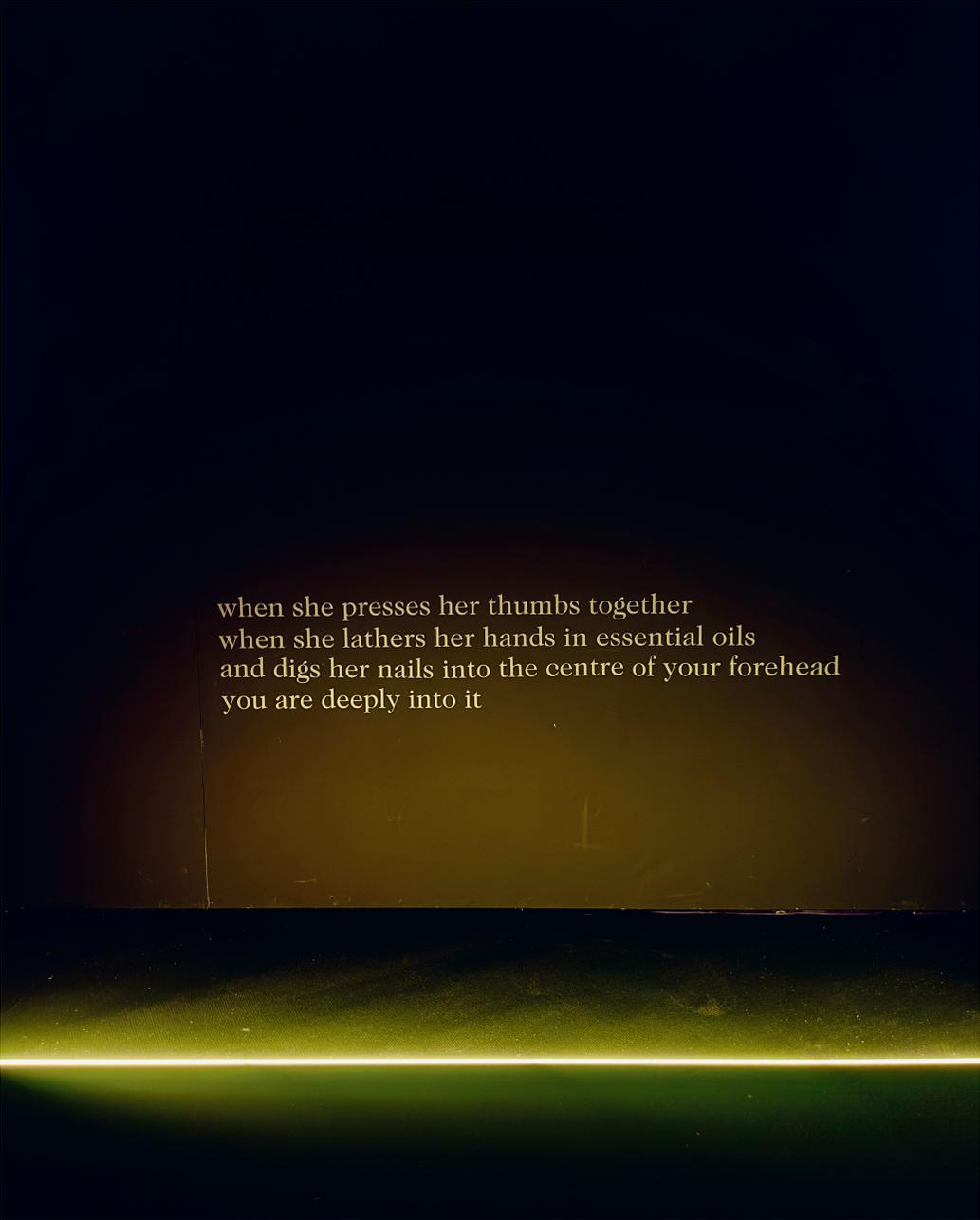
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*prosper, despite a sense of crisis*  
Tube Gallery, Palma de Majorca, 2025)



*you want to come, and to leave richer*  
four-channel, installed UHD film, 11:58, looped.  
(installation view: Return of the Repressed, London, 2025)



when she presses her thumbs together  
when she lathers her hands in essential oils  
and digs her nails into the centre of your forehead  
you are deeply into it

*you want to come, and to leave richer* was first exhibited in 'Return of the Repressed' (2025), an independent project curated by Toby Ziegler, presented over three floors of a vacant office block in Mayfair, London. The text included is from an unpublished series of poems.

The exhibition staged a sequence of conversations between art objects, videos and non-art objects in a series of specially constructed triangular rooms. Exhibiting artists included: Gillian Carnegie, Ella Fleck, Katrin Hanusch, Hannah Levy, Tatsuo Miyajima, Francois Morellet, Frida Orupabo and Ahren Warner.



you want to come, and to leave richer  
<https://vimeo.com/1129520785?fl=ip&fe=ec>



we have a space for your every mood  
TJ Boulting, London, 2022  
Installation: four-channel film, lighting, kentya palms, velvet pouffes.



we have a space for your every mood  
TJ Boulting, London, 2022



## I'M TOTALLY KILLING YOUR VIBES

Bloodaxe Books, 2022

*'A messy, disturbing triumph in the traditions of Arthur Rimbaud and John Berryman: how Le Bateau ivre or The Dream Songs would read if they'd been written today. It too could be the anthem of a generation.'*

– Fiona Sampson, *The Guardian*

*I'm totally killing your vibes* is one-part phantasmagoria, one-part brutal document, with equal measures of irony and sincerity.

It is a book compulsively drawn to a world in which identity and performance have become indistinguishable, where the squelch and seep of feelings frustrate our safety nets of logic and ethics, and violence and inadequacy are so often the corollaries of love.

*I'm totally killing your vibes* is a book of poems concerning the exuberant performance, and the manic dissolution, of the self. It moves through the slow, fragmented dissolve of a relationship, via a tableaux vivant of assorted, itinerant characters, and an extended, darkly comic dialogue with the feedback of literary, academic, and everyday life.

A final, long-form prose poem extends the book's interrogation of consumption as our contemporary mode of self-construction, of masculinity, and of desire.

Are you happy, she asks. i'm happier, i say, and then: if you had to be an animal, which animal would you be.

She cannot fit her mouth around the English for the animal she means. Have you ever been happy, she asks.

She means a swan. She likes the way it wraps the long elegance of its neck around its lover until, like, forever.

i don't think i've ever been happy, i say. And then: if i had to be an animal, i'd be a zebra.

A zebra is just a horse with stripes, i say. i can tell she was hoping for something more profound.

I was hoping for something more profound, she says. In front of us, two cats are rolling on what used to be the grass.

The cats are rolling in the heat. Beyond, the ground gives to cliffs, it gives to the Tyrrhenian sea.

HELLO.  
YOUR  
PROMISE  
HAS  
BEEN  
EXTRACTED



AHREN WARNER

**HELLO. YOUR PROMISE HAS BEEN EXTRACTED**

**Bloodaxe Books, 2016**

Poetry Book Society Recommendation  
Shortlisted for the Roehampton Poetry Prize 2018

*'Witty and wide-ranging... Ahren Warner has a claim to be the "poet's poet" of his generation. Even in apparently domestic and personal guise, he's a writer whose work conveys voluptuous but intelligent delight in language and technique.'*

– Carol Rumens, *The Guardian*

*Hello. Your promise has been extracted* is Ahren Warner's third collection of poems, a book in which the lyric runs in parallel with a series of photographs made by the author across Europe. From Paris, Berlin and Budapest, to Athens during the height of the Greek debt crisis and Kiev in the wake of the Maidan Revolution, the poems and images of this book form what Immanuel Kant might have called a cosmopolitan dialogue: a conversation between two speakers in two utterly different languages.

Though the poems here often begin in conversation with writers and thinkers – from Celan and Plato to David Foster Wallace and Emmanuel Levinas – they are also profoundly and emotionally engaged with the realities of the contemporary world. *Hello. Your promise has been extracted* is not a polemic. It is neither witness nor reportage. Rather, it is a book that offers an insistent performance of poetic dialogue with the visual, philosophical and human experience it confronts.

THE SKY IS SHUT PURPLE. Snow stains their hands. Adam and Eve get hot, noisy in the snow, on the lawn, all that is so often quiet. They are in their own coral mist, in too much light. God is righteous snow.

The artist studies the screen, jumps at the hand on his shoulder. It will snow. His face is infinite, his hands countless, these thousands of snowflakes sharper. Everything is snow: his brush, the smoke, trees.

Sometimes I see only my shoes drilling the whitewash. Blue lace, bright ochre, fine fabric, brown leaves of snow. The artist works in morning snow. The sky is a child running, laughing at me, pulling a large woollen scarf. No?

## PRETTY

Bloodaxe Books, 2013

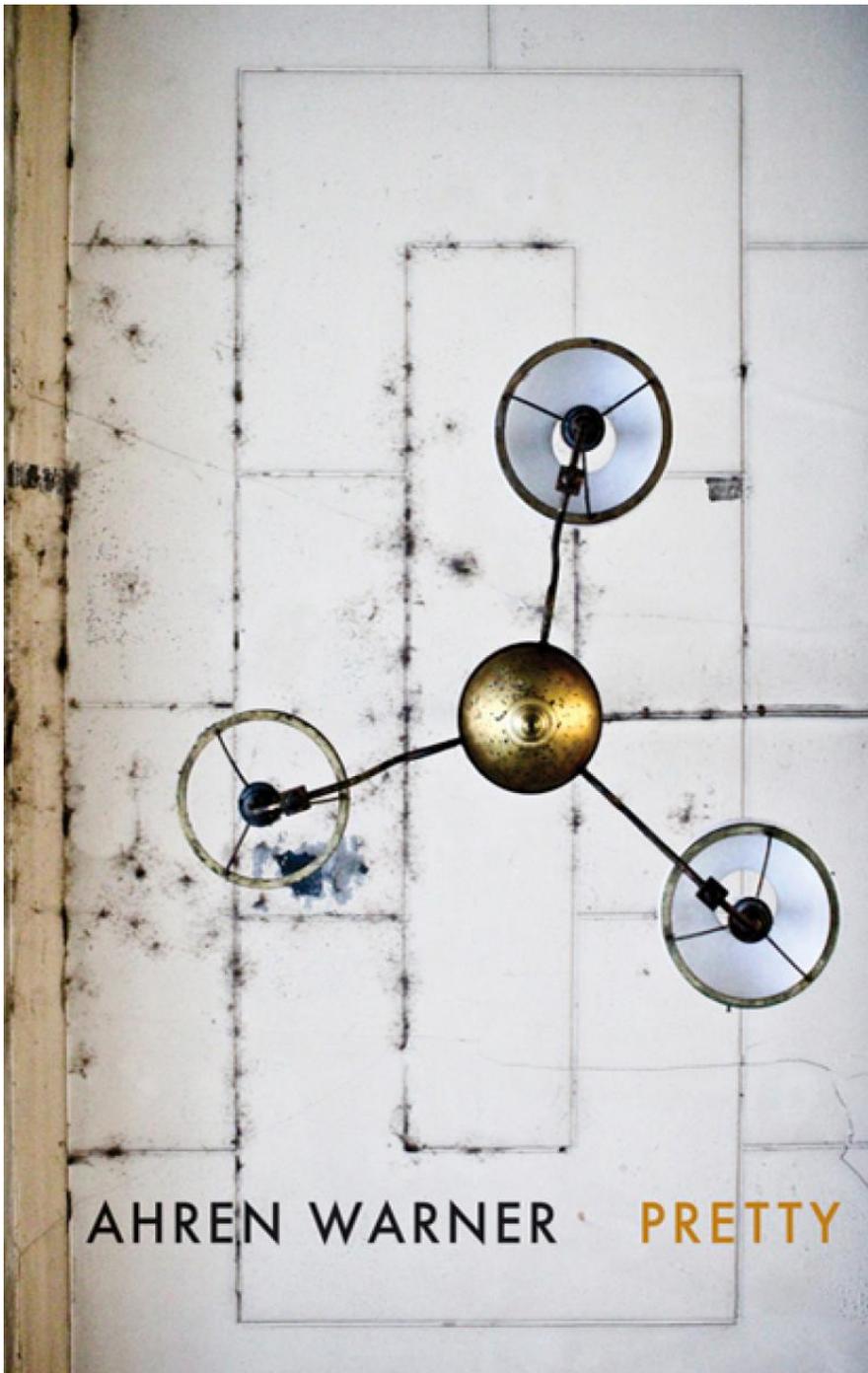
Poetry Book Society Recommendation

*'Theatrical, toxic and oddly gorgeous... Warner moves from playful social observation, through reflections on memory and artifice, to a near-Baudelairean spleen, his games with language and ideas as serious in their investigations of the given world'*

– John Burnside, *Poetry Book Society Bulletin*

Ahren Warner's second collection of poems opens with the sequence *Lutèce, te amo*: a raw paean to the Paris it inhabits that flits between past and present and offers both adoration and horror in equal measure. Elsewhere, London 'licks and laps'; an anonymous man 'works his bones with a micro-plane' and translations of Baudelaire and Kojève rub shoulders with Kurt Cobain and 'Little Lord Tory-Tit'.

More capricious, fleshly and darker than Warner's previous work, *Pretty* culminates in *Nervometer*: thirteen poems hovering between a collage, translation and performance of Antonin Artaud's *Le Pèse-nerfs*, which bring *Pretty* to a beautifully ugly end.



### Hello London

Just as, shifting the Double-Gauss a notch, the clarity attained is not  
what appears, but how what appears does,

so *l'étranger* is not this man in the window just off the Euston Road,  
but rather a shifting in this me that is.

And, what held for Louis holds true for me. In my teens, you were  
'foreign names over winking doors';

marred, perhaps, but only by the Thames' mean gust, slate-stolid *réveil*,  
that bite I came to need.

Still, it's been years since I came to you, a little less since you began  
to nibble, then gnaw, then masticate.

I don't know if I got out, or was spat. But, somehow, I'm back: transient,  
for now; a fleeting whiff;

*amuse-gueule*; faint stirring of your parotid. Soon, I promise to be  
here – at your leisure, to lick and lap –

your spittle shiver now blain, now numb dread.

# CONFER



AHREN WARNER

POETRY BOOK SOCIETY RECOMMENDATION

## CONFER

Bloodaxe Books, 2011

Poetry Book Society Recommendation

Shortlisted for both the Forward Prize for Best First Collection and the Michael Murphy Memorial Prize 2013

*'Even before this first collection, Ahren Warner has become an influential poet, with his trademark tabulations and his unlikely mix of youthful humour and academic nous. Confer confers upon him the status of a central figure in a new generation of British poets'*

*– Roddy Lumsden*

Confer is a book between two cities – London and Paris – with detours via rural and small-town England, drunkenness and death camps in Bavaria, the American absurd and the lost libraries of the Roman Empire. It contains love and lust poems, variations on Baudelaire and conversations with Nietzsche and Auden.

This impressive debut collection by a young poet already well-known for his innovative, highly musical poetry draws its energy from an interplay between melody and intellect. Ahren Warner's poems seek to amplify the effect of our common experiences and to attenuate the everyday within a matrix of philosophy and art, language and its intervals.

*La brisure*

each toll sustains itself            as if expecting  
its own next sounding            or another's

to which it will defer    by default    falling  
to its own lack    its spacing from the other

each space comes            tactile    as a relief  
or            as the rough joint-lines of a bronze

the repetition    of a hollowed    motif  
the becoming sound            of the bronze

so each bell seems            to long  
for an end    less partition    than party

a silence on which    each sound    hangs  
for its self-sameness            its being *partie*

you listen            to the last toll    draining  
retained only    in the space    it becomes

you're unsure            if you're still waiting  
or hearing            what has come