

# Terra Incognita

by Tim Goldstone

Flaming torches turned the root and vine-filled scene explicit—febrile with obscenely gyrating shadows pulsating and wavering; the scurrying humans spectral, quivering against strained and crumbling stockade walls, outside which dreams of fabulous plunder morphed to enticing maps: wishful thinking engraved on copper and gauze—exotic unknown lands hammered flat, where empire makers (conquerors, colonizers, soldiers, explorers, swaggering adventurers, engineers, priests, cartographers) rotted and died yearning with accelerating frenzy for cities of gold—smashing down jungle that sprang back up behind them in swirling, shaman-induced miasmas that sucked at their rapidly rusting cannon, their armour, their crosses, their bones, their frantic prayers—dissolving them all to froth, bubble, algae.

Today, what's left of the jungle beckons paying tourists with shiny brochures, corrals them seductively into luxury compounds for their own safety, liquefies every one of them in all-inclusive succour.

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TIM GOLDSTONE has roamed widely and currently lives in Wales between the mountains and the sea. Fiction published internationally in numerous print journals and anthologies, both online and in print. Prose sequence read on stage at The Hay Festival. Scriptwriting credits for TV, radio, theatre. His writing has also appeared on websites including The Royal Court Theatre, Sherman Cymru Theatre, BBC, and Waterstones. Twitter [@muddygold](https://twitter.com/muddygold)