The state of the union

 *Twitters for a Lark: Poetry of the European Union of Imaginary Authors*, conducted and co-created by Robert Sheppard (120pp, Shearsman)

Rupert Loydell: *What's it all about Hermes?*
Hermes: I don't really know. Robert Sheppard and yourself just created this monster that turned out to be me. I don't seem to have much of a clue about poetry or myself, and people keep mocking my raindance rituals. It's not fair, it's a good way to solve the droughts.

*What do you think about the company you are keeping in this publication? I gather it's your first proper, or mainstream, publication?*
It's good isn't it? Though really I prefer a more laid back approach, you know just chilling and handing out the original drafts to passers-by. Or my improvisations on Bandcamp. Paperback volumes kind of pin you down, if you know what I mean. People expect too much of you, expectations rise. I mean it's like suddenly becoming President of the EUOIA, I mean what was that all about?

*Well, I was going to ask you...*
I think no-one else wanted to do it, you know? Everyone's too vibed out by Brexit, thinking bad things. I mean why initiate a project and then edit yourself out of it all? What's that Professor Sheppard playing at? I mean, he has all our lives in his hands. He invested a lot of time and energy and then suddenly I got a phone call (well, not that I answer the phone, it disturbs my energy levels), followed by an overwrought letter, telling me I had been elected President. I mean it was a joke. I had to oversee the whole anthology thing, do all the work. It's not right man, not right.

*What's the state of the Union now?*
Chaos, man. I deselected and de-elected myself and no-one else wants the job. Besides, it won't stop raining and there is something under my bed. I can't get it out with the hoover, and it smells. I'm worried man, it's like something's started and has just fizzled out. It's not just a lark, it's our careers on the line. Our whole existence. It's hard being an imaginary author. You don't dangle a carrot in front of us then eat it yourself and walk away. I promised myself a holiday on the royalties, and Bongos for Rain some money too. They need more funds, you know. I mean those workshops and rituals, they eat away the very fabric of your soul, consume your time and energy. Your flight plan becomes erratic, and the drumskins wear out too. Here, you can't lend us a few euros can you?

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Hermes Is the founder of Bongos for Rain, a charity which works with those in drought-stricken parts of the world to hand craft drums to invoke the Gods and provoke rainfall. Most of his poetry and word-songs circulate in handwritten fascicles or as sound files on Bandcamp, but his one print volume, *Working for the Healing Rain* is available from Lulu.com or the alternative bookshop on the edge of Zlatare. This volume was nominated for a To Hell in a Handcart Award in 2010. He was elected President of the EUOIA in 2016.