AQUÍ, AHÍ, ALLÍ

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in English

By

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ABSTRACT

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The poems within Aquí, Ahí, Allí are a negotiation between speaker and memory. Memory informs our present, allows speculation towards the future, attempts to capture the past, and yet is rife with failures in its transmission. There are two voices within the text which attempt to navigate different aspects of memory. The main speaker is one of lamentation, reclamation, introspection, and speculation. This voice works towards reclamation of memory from a state of loss due to flaws of generational transmission, and the alteration of memory through regret and nostalgia. This voice strives to make meaning static, and struggles against memory’s ambiguous and dynamic nature. The second voice is that of the persona of Froggy which resists exploration, and is representative of the filter of a popular cultural lens, whom interrupts, tries to subvert and avoid the emotional tension of the work of memory. As the work proceeds, both voices begin to wear down, and take on each other’s aspects. In the end, the weight of the past and present are worn down and turn to speculation of utopian and dystopian possibilities, looking to the past, but being mindful of the present and future.
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In Which the Mind is Matter

It can begin as a conscious act, but it’s never just that – an unseen spark, the stuff of wonder, a surge into dendritic branches – what is the earliest memory in folds, in flesh, in pathways. There should be a checklist. These are the things that are important to remember: the third birthday party, green grass, tree strained shadows, Griffith Park, chocolate cake, bright button candy, ponies. Or is it the park, much later, remembered, appropriated, re-envisioned. If I hit my head, read the checklist, is it there? Park – grass – ponies – candies. The time I first heard streams of obscenities, the evaporative sting of brandy, chasing stolen bicycles; shadows of owies and the taste of tears and snot. Numeric values should be assigned, for error checking – If I hit my head, how many memories will I cross reference? A dozen? Fifteen? One for every scent in which sadness is sparked. Suntan lotion is an x-acto knife, mutilating text, nauseated. Crushed kumquat, under foot: lazy summer. The rice cake rabbit, staring from the sky – my sister; the careful stewing of onions; my mother; my father ineffable. The act of recalling grinds like rough hewn stone, labored across the sand. Smooth with time. Shedding and gaining. Its weight immutable.
The First Time my Mother Tried to Kill Herself

the details were spotty at best
an electric carving knife
imagination never allowed
dead –
I soon learned I would never use
again
my mother
the real concrete way

I came to imagine her
every turn
with sweaty palms
of the doorknob
between moments
we were separated
pale visions
eggshell blue
cradling her
attempts to elicit
signs of life
my mother dead

once
every time
in the tenseness
before breath
Pale as Morning

The rain rested
for my father’s funeral.
After, the clouds delivered promises
for the first time in months,
or so I had to be told.
The clouds dusted the porch in
crystalline white, and
I fell to the ground,
sprawled in snow,
snapping pictures.
I was as pale as morning,
trapped in foam
at glass’ bottom.

After night where snow
turned slush and slush turned
sleet, I inherited his fishing
gear and headed to our secret
fishing spot, letting the sprouting
pines brush legs and arms
and face. Allowed fingers
to touch the spine tip needles,
hoping to ease aches outside
of my understanding, catch
a glimpse at rememberance.

The line tangled in brush,
unraveling, spinning
drunken spider silk.
A single pair of hands
to struggle against
ensnaring knots.
My Mother in Haiku

the worst is the mind
it paints the trim on our youth
looking back it shines

i remember it
lucidly, in bright colors
the stain in your smile

the lilypads line
the pond hands clasped do not be
afraid of the ducks.

the fear i felt for
your frailty channeled itself
in improper ways

apologies for
everything of yours I broke
propitiation

a susurration
a glimpse of laughter or sigh
the churning stillness
My Father Returns

I saw my father, shortly after his funeral.  
On the side of the road in Bull Lake, Montana.  
Puffs of white hair streaming over his ears  
like manic packs of sea anenomes, latching  
onto his red Volunteer Fire Department hat.  
He kept his face away towards a pasture,  
away from me, as I sped by.  Gravel and salt  
rock rang soft pings against the undercarriage.

I saw my father again, in the Valley,  
pumping gas at the corner 76, his hat worn  
thin and frayed as his frame.  This time  
I stopped.  “I don't remember those jokes,  
you used to tell.  The ones that ended  
with 'And then they laughed'.”  The ones  
where he beamed his pride in enticing  
laughter from others.  “Tell me the joke  
about quantum time.  The one that explains  
why you are here and aren't at once.”

I told him a joke, but I lost the punchline  
somewhere after the wake, where  
the guy from The Yaak told me he was  
the last one with my father, and he helped  
me see my father again, short of breath,  
scared, but then still and calm.  The guy  
repairs watches for a living, and gave me  
his card.  If I needed any watches fixed  
he'd gladly do so for free.  The punchline  
is in there somewhere.  The nature of quantum  
time, watch repair and its ability to repurpose  
memory. Fixed watches tick forward. The man  
pumping gas was not my father.  And then I laughed.
Flavor

Tuna on Jalapeño, don't forget the tilde on Jalapeño, a side of forgiveness, and love, spinach, extra olives, and less emotional trauma.

Pepperjack it, toast it, slather with care and careless sauce.

Every great dish starts with onions, my mother once told me. Bitter thick acrid opacity when pains are taken to slide and simmer with watchful, gentle attention become sweet, translucent caramelized.

I hate tuna casserole, my mother once told me. She made things she didn’t like because maternal care supercedes want. It shouldn’t have been a surprise. The thick mushroom soup plopped into a dish, and shoved into an oven. There was no eager anticipation and smacking of tongues for the hated casserole. Nothing like the mindful stirring of onion. Flavor and an excuse for tears.
Hold Up, Wait a Minute, Froggy’s Got Some New Kicks

“For the womb to the tomb,
get that Ricotta, bada bing, bada boom.”
-- Danger Doom “Bada Bing”

Shoes matched his lid, his shoes squeaked when they skid,
liked frogs and dropped ribbits like rabbits drop babies,
a pocket full of lint and a mind crazy like rabies,
this ain’t no joke, he said, son, we bangin’ for ducats
and a used glue gun, not to be confused with no one,
others sat back with their mouths agape, he dribbled
pure nonsense and smelled like grape bubble yum,
young dumb and full of cum, never had a credit card,
fbi be trackin’ him if he had one, listen up woodpeckers,
this wood be impenetrable, inflammable means flammable,
gotta lot of things, but can’t come up on no bling, two fisted,
like the other time, don’t want to force no false rhymes,
liquor cabinet highly crafted, empty, but the intention was
like sick math kid, how are you gonna walk the line when
the road has potholes, keeping pot in his shoe and a sneak a toke,
to confuse the one time, a pocket full of jellybeans and the mean
green, who you kidding, dreams of Italian suit custom fittings,
a pocket full of rabbits, whack with poo brain rabies, wished
they’d bring back the eighties, and the ladies with the big hair,
what’s dropped is ill drippings, drab like grey crabs,
pinching at the mic, ya heard, wanting the spotlight
and flippin’ the bird, visions of someday being the mayor,
weak constitution with no flavor, garnering no favors,
spelunking in cavers, pasta dishes with capers, pulling capers,
forging papers, name in the papers, rolling papers, paying taxes
by May first, leaving paper trails, gutter sailboats with paper sails,
scoping the other players with their fancy cars and grape swisher
sweets, goes without food to pay for the kicks on his feet.
The Playground

Broken glass where puffy foam now resides.  
We’d break our teeth on steel monkeybars.  
Our casts gave us the advantage in Red Rover.  
We didn’t believe in chain link fences,  
chased balls right into the street.  
Dusted off our shorts and waved to the  
driver in the old school VW bug,  
then run off to play “Punch, and Jump  
off the Roof into the Holly Bushes.”  
Our bullies spat into our faces in person  
instead of spitting venom online, but we  
didn’t dare cry. The indifference from teachers  
was never a surprise. Man up: suck up those tears.  
And if you killed yourself they’d resurrect you  
and smack you harder.
Body Lesson

I.

The first time I heard
the word tits,
I didn’t know what
to imagine,
some sort of mess,
some sort of mass
of tissue I couldn’t
explain, the way
the high school boys
who shoved me around
during halftime at a soccer
game screamed at me,
I bet you’ve never touched
tits. Why would I,
based on the image in my mind.

II.

My allergies were getting the best of me when I was nine years old;
they placed thirty drops on my back and tore at them with pins.
As I rolled off the examination table, my sister tore away the paper
laid across it, stained with urine. It’s okay, she ran her fingers
through my hair.

III.

Kawaii, when I was 11,
a man on a beach, wanted
to show me a magic trick,
Reach inside my pocket.
Do you feel that?
The lining of his pocket pulsed against
my hand. How did he do that?
Disquieted at the inexplicable trick,
I wandered
off.
IV.

The magician cornered me in the drainage pipe down by the calming crash of surf. He pulled his penis out of his pants, incomprehensibly larger and disfigured compared to my own self image. His tongue slipped side to side against the crusted corners of his mouth. Panicked, I rushed to the beach, waving at the tiny blur of my father on the balcony of our rented condo. Who was that with you on the beach, he asked later. I don’t know, I replied. Just someone.

V.

My wife told me she was a cuddler. But I can’t sleep, with the feeling of a body pressing me down, as if I’m being pinned, as if I’m seven again, and Jimmy, the son of my mother’s best friend, is teaching me the rhetoric of submission, again, and again. My shamed erection, as I tell him, this is the last time he dares, next time I will tell.
Then Froggy Considers Andrew Schlafly

Now listen to the tale of Papa Bear Andy; a man who eschews liberal deceit with grace and ease, and finds veracity in revised biblical scripture. One needs to simply embark on a journey where one opens one’s mind and righteous truth will rain down and wash everything away.

God is the answer, so stop asking questions, wise old Papa Bear tells me. They know not what they do, not likely, kind old Father Ursine has judged, simply open narrow views and narrow them to my eschatology and its not surprising to me, your use of liberal last wordism; given your public education, in which you’ve been indoctrinated by the gay agenda and victimized by Hollywood values, and your teachers and mentors have conspired each and every day against you, excepting the homeschooled.

You can bask everyday in the glory of God’s love but please omit love for other men, well, in an eros sense; agape is ok. Unless you heed this warning, there are maladies ahead.

Until you open your mind to truths, dinosaurs will never be pals with men on Madagascar, or a cold Winter dispel climate change.

Now take into consideration: genetics, homosexuality, evolutionary paradigms and creation science, gay violence, couples and gay violence, homosexual men and ex-homosexuals, gay bowel syndrome, homosexual historical revisionism, arguments against homosexuality.

Give homosexuality a value of X, Papa Bear -- so many saved oppressive liberal keystrokes, X and violence, Chuck Norris’ views on X, X and smoking, X and Obesity, X in Nazi Germany, X and parasites, X and Hepatitis, X and X and X in an X with X’s in their X’s, next to an X, outside X.

Life without love and acceptance Mister Schlafly, is going to let you down.
Five in which . . .

1. In which I make an ass out of myself on liquor.

How cool was I to be hanging out with community college kids when I was 16 and they were a wise 19 years of age. There was a bottle of Jack Daniels, that’s how these stories start. Then there were beers. A pool. Punching. Twisting of one own’s neck. Waking. I can see my knuckles. I can see the bone.

2. In which the mushrooms are too much.

I thought my friend broke my cat’s neck. I screamed at him to put the corpse of my cat down. He put it down, and it ran away with a broken neck. Everything is made of jagged pyramids, red, green, blue. There’s purple peach above the fish tank. George can’t put his shoes back on. I cocoon myself in blankets, but it makes the poison seep from pores faster and the porcupines -- restless.

3. In which meth amphetamines win.

I’ve been digging into my ankle for half an hour, and I can’t seem to pull the glass out. I know a shard got in there when I broke that pipe I was blowing. The trees are swaying back and forth like bloated sea corpses, and men are ducking their heads out to get a look at me. They think I don’t see them, everyone is so fucking blind, but I see. I know where the kitchen knives are, I can hear the sound of hatchets.

4. In which my mother gives me 3 lorazepam.

When did I get here? I’m not sure where my wallet is. I told you that last night? I don’t remember getting here.

5. In which I lament.

Regrets stack like discarded husks. An impossible negotiation to climb. What if I had…instead. What would be my station, how would I view my gender, would my class be elevated, my disposition sunnier, my wit sharper, my charms charmier, my looks less ragged? What else is there to wash this all away?
Froggy Soliloquizing in the 21st Century

I

And I'm like HA HA HA

II

HA jack my swag, and
I learned the difference
between conmigo and contigo today, and I'm like
HA HA HA HA jack my swag.

Contigo conmigo siempre solo
todo al dia, y todos every
años, hablando mierda
siempre -- conmigo y
contigo, con frijoles y
guisantes y carne de
burocracia, y siempre triste,
no mas, y no menos

and I'm like HA HA HA
jack my swag, she's wearing
those jeans like me, like me,
like me, yeah like me, like me,
yeah, those jeans like me.

Can't you see?

They're wearing those jeans.

Like me.

III

El que nace para mulo del cielo le cae el arnés.

IV

I often don't want anyone
to succeed.
V

El amanecer es Hermosa hoy.
La luz da prende a la los pastos ligero.
Somewhere out there is Lincoln

Cruising by LAX, the great food truck search begins. The occasional pause to take in the sleek legs of an LMU girl in formal dress, reduces some of the hunger.

Looking for Lincoln, do you see those ribs? They should call that place Ribs for a Nickel. The trucks they call, no time for nickels, no time for ribs. Did we just pass Jefferson? Didn’t we already pass Jefferson? Would Jefferson turn on Washington?

It’s decided, given the infinite nature of time, somewhere there is a gum spot, shaped like Lincoln. Somewhere maybe in the 99 cent store parking lot, where no food trucks are found either. Could Lincoln be found under the feet of the man with the frowzy hair, the man with the humming harmonica?

Cruising by LAX, runway lights, color of holly berries and leaves. Wandering travelers treading on gum, shuffling out of baggage claim. Stamping out Lincoln underfoot.
Waking

I make nightmares, we all do.
My nightmares are mine.
I would not like to have your nightmares.
My nightmares, at least, are familiar.
I’m not sure how I’d feel being you in a nightmare.

In mine, a wise shaman on mescaline tells me he walked out of the foothills into the urban landscape, and went into Target. There he bought a Swiss Army backpack with 32 zippers.

He told me. “I have zipped every zipper, just as I do now, and have forever done. Look. One pocket remains unzipped.”
His face, a television with poor horizontal hold.
His hands proceed to work every zipper.
“I have unzipped every pocket, but take care to note, one remains zipped.”
Froggy is on to the Gubmint

Government put a radio in my cat. Transmitting information about local global warming trends. Plotting a flooding of the L.A. River. They want to clear out the trees, before they speak to the soil, about the grocery cart the scrub brush is invading. Grinding branch brushing the nickel plated tines at the pace of a mild fungal growth, on a tree. See, there's your circularity. It comes back to trees, also a radio. An effluence forbidding transcription.
Tactile Response

Jar me. I want to feel the pound of the keys from eighth grade typewriters. Smears of ink, craters of forceful intent in the text. Urgent, pressed, staining, focused forms of alacrity. Metal keys jammed together. Gridlock prompts me.


Rather, strike me with an image so acute, sudden, and furious; scribbling shatters lead. Words embossed with the dull edge of chipped wood.
Still Life

Cradled inside a fragment of tire on the freeway,
a pigeon with one perfect wing,
fanned feathers reaching up.
I chant this mantra to myself:
Try to remember.
Mist Taken

A cool mist falls onto my fence. Industrial green, cheap tin to stop me from running head first into the pool. The drops of dew cling to it, and dilute the morning dove shit. Wait.

Is it morning dove?
Or mourning dove?
No More

I don’t know how
or when to tell this.
Or when to tell no more.

I find myself amidst
a barren forest.
Between the tangled
nettles are drops
the shape of tears.
Their own nature
mirrored. Immersed
in countless simulacrum,
reflected back to me
is the nature of elemental
fluidity. Expansion
and contraction.
Leaving in its wake:
cracks in fidelity.
Sierpenskian rifts
share form in scale,
expressed in irrational
numbers, self similarities,
self sameness, feedback
of organic and inorganic
phenomena. The greater
in essence with the smallest breaks.

The tale is found
readily transcribed
between generations.
When awoken, vulnerable
from this storied dream:
shattered, frail.
To know the mountains
will iterate into boulders,
pebbles, grains of sand.

Eventually to be done away.
Nature -- found to be fractal, the rose petal,
the gold fish fin.

Torn asunder. Itself in another.
Concern

My tears fill depressions and recesses.

It is said agricultural societies are dependant on my sorrow, which begins as mist, turns to droplets, tiny rivulets. Puddle, pond, lake, runs into rivers, pours into ocean.

The wind, being so unkind, briefly skims our skin, envelops us in warmth, invades us in a deep chill. Face to the wind, unfolded blanket, I, alone, alive, to realize the wind unwinds to us all.

The wind strikes our core in this world.

The wind cuts what is exposed.
Every Poet Needs a Poem Titled “Love”

Love is a dead stale it. Reeking of decay. In visions towards my liking it writhes, sloughing its skin off on fractured, cavernous rock. Gutting itself as its ooze covers every sense. Distorting, it makes the eyes feeble, touch inaccurate, smells smellier, tastes scream, voices seem to crust over in thin scum, sweet as coated cotton candy machines. Blatant trickery. It roots like a viral wart. Tendrils strike out and pierce the heart and mind. Only fools fall in love, only lovers hurt so deeply. Only lovers walk willingly, blindfolded, shivering into a wall of broken bottles laced with radium and mercury. Immersed in inescapable glue, pressing despite wounds. Bouquets, corsets, tokens given, are described as “warmth”, the pupils dilate, grease pushes itself through pores, and all appears to glow.
If I had a wish.
I'd wish for fish, some salmon,
to tear into like a big brown bear,
yes, a bear, rawr, a bear, rawr I said.
The bear, whose tracks tread to water,
whose scratchings mark the trees.
The trees, those trees, those hep hep
trees – as well --
If I had a wish, I'd wish for fish,
to swim, in water, as intended.
Beside me, unintended. To guide
and teach the qualities of negotiating
the dynamics of fluidity.
I would call to them in my foreign tongue:
Do you, fish, understand the art
of 'the physick'? Would fish wish,
if fish could wish? Did a goldfish
giggle, riding the wave, as the water
receded, when Tantalus' hand grew near?
The Herbalist

after Doris Ullman’s “The Herbalist, Louisiana or South Carolina”

The expert equipped in looped cloth belts, cinched pouches, wafting aromatic scents. Regarding the fern’s leaves, rows of giraffe ribs, twists and plays towards the sun. Leaves, discarded, retreat into paleness, to return again to soil as dust, someday staining the fingernails of the skillful harvester. Skin and sun, sun and dust, this earthen figure knows the soil by name, as collector and collaborator.
Lorikeet with Green Cloth
after Marian Drew’s “Lorikeet with Green Cloth” (Photograph)

Rolling frozen waves, still in motion, rumpled grey floral patterns. The twist of leaves, darker with distance. Flowing away from leafy green discarded tablecloth. Soft around the fine china plate, pale with vibrant crimson. This island, adrift.

Rotten fruit flattens against the surface outside of the light. Sagging, losing its bonds, giving itself to gravity.

Light strikes the lorikeet. Limp head rests on cherry flowers. Orange beak bleeding into blue face, saffron neck. The brick of the chest no longer heaves. Belly exposed, delicate talons curled up in resignation. Static centerpiece, with no song to accompany its shimmer.
Tucking

It begins with shoe the horse and shoe the mare,
let the colt run bare bare bare, and there’s eye
contact and there’s the gentleness of hands, folding
the sheets underneath you, here’s the hammer,
here’s the shoe, here’s the nail to drive it through,
and the light percussive pat of hands strike you,
Reverend Froggy Capitulates to the End Times

Tommorow is the Apocalypse --
it's Doom's Day kids, it's Doom's
Dizzy Dizzy A -- What What A-

Tomorrow.
Jesus gonna lift us, Jesus gonna lift us,
up to the sky now, up to the sky I said.
Tomorrow is the promised day, I'm telling
you tomorrow is the promised day. All our
sins gonna be cast away. Tommorow we gonna
wake up dead. Tomorrow we gonna wake up dead.
Ain't no need to fear now, we gonna rise up above child.
Tomorrow we don't need this flesh. Time to cast away the
undue weight we place on objects, there’s no need for touchscreen
toasters where we’re headed, or putty and spackle to patch up punched
holes in walls, the clouds can heal and there’s plenty to eat in the banquet hall.
Our shining souls ascending to the sky. We'll laugh so hard, at those left below. Stuck
negotiating the economics of acid rain and ash laced snow, clinging to the self-elevated
things.
Listen to Santana (Santa Ana Winds I)

The San Joaquin imp’s breath blows through great basins, from the cave mouths where demons do a little dance, make a little love, get down tonight – it’s going down tonight.

Swich licour bathed breath brings battering of trees and red tagging and Valley Fever (Coccidioides immitis -- Coccidioides posadasii) – nodules and fungus grinning at the corruption and contraction of Santa Ana. Santana winds wind up the guitar strings, and steal kites, propogate.

Listen to Santana as they branch crack, snap crack, whistle thump, thump. Santa Anas, Santana, Satanas, Anemoi stomps. Chapparal inflamed, fanned by hot dry death.
Santa Ana Winds (II)

Danced demons
   breath battered – disambiguated
   smooth, jagged, smooth – batten down the battery
Tie ships, disambiguate, Santana, satana, Coccioloides – Valley Fever
   Brush consumption infused with oxygen
   tie ships, disambiguate – Santana, Satana, Chapparal
   goodbye kite
   hello red tags
   it’s going down tonight
if Justin Bieber could save himself -- he’d save us all

baby….baby….baby oooh
oh biebs, you’re gonna save us all

biebs is a special fitted gun lock.
no more
my baby, why, my baby.
more eight point buck deer
tied to our truck hoods.

j b – vinted into chilled pewter mugs,
no more charcoal distilled vodka for us,
he’ll run through us like a glacial terminus,
cleansing, scraping away the plaque,
of arteries, liver, teeth,
no need to fear disease.

jay bibbles, if you could save us, save us all.
no half measures, biebs, drone us a shaman
Bossa Nova Clavè on your synthetic, taut,
finely tuned drums. placate us orphans
with feral beats -- gentle steady pressure
pulsing like the earth, and quartz, soothing
as the womb’s metronome.

Justin Bieber wraps his arms around the starving.
those who don’t have 75 cents for Doritos.
during the throes of distended stomachs,
B’s hair reflects arrays
of palettes too complex to render,
and if terminal moments
are spent with him,
you sail away on golden parasols.

biebs, in my desires resides a manifesto to find
my reason to celebrate you. we beliebe in the bieb,
who will carry away the arthritis that steals our design,
quell the ineffable thirsts we contrive,

he tells me i’m at least adequate if not suave while I face the mirror
he rocks me to sleep when regret and regret shake me.
the b, lets me spoil myself once in a while
j is the mountain that keeps away the wind,
the lucid dream where i tell my monsters
of their own ridiculousness.
j is the soil that makes the clay
that makes the mortar that holds all together,
j is the vessel to pour all our efforts, hopes, anxieties, dreams, (???) maybe
world-weariness, gender and pet species bias, and anger into.

since i was young
all i wanted was
a panacea.
Vlad the Impaler

My parents never told me about Vlad. I imagine those Hearty Romanians last long, ran through. A delicate sussuration to accompany dinner.

My parents revealed solely kinder elements.

To find out later, my father, the hunter – countless hunting trips during South Dakotan Viborgian excursions, earned his meals, son of immigrants.

Forgoer for my whole life; resisting returning to that primalism after retirement.

One last buck. One last rememberance, one more slick slick, slice up the sternum.
Layers

Relive the moments of
a vinyl erosion studied in a Sunday robe.

Incredible, wiping away the haze.
Upon us all sits the layers:
Silurian, to Devonian.

So goes the detritus
of all we know.

An ache, a suppuration –
Read, or seen: itches are the mildest
form of pain. What we feel without
language, within. Hearing the rattle.

Scratch away the layers, peel back
surfaces, to learn to tie the knots
that never come loose,
a language made
without human intervention.
In the Incredible Year 2050

Artificial intelligencia has outweighed humanity, achieving what the folks call a singularity event. Naturally, the robots attempt to purge all life. A lone poet composes a sestina in the darkness of a cave, licking only moss and ingesting guano. Emerges victorious from his solitude -- recites, to a single robot scavenger, his words.

Soul and heart materialize within the metal husks, their memory being collective. And both soul and heart shatter, in half angles, symmetrical, ad nauseum. Disperse – the husks ever more so the hollow.
Froggy Has a Cognatious Thunk

When one lets mind wander through paths uncarved:
I wonder what Frodo is up to now?
Does he enjoy his literary rest.
Is Tupac in the Bahamas sipping
tropical libations, writing new verse.
Did Fatty Arbuckle do what they said?
I struggle with concepts like anapest.
Would my father have liked the new Star Trek?
There is a girl who sells kebabs I like.
My parents aren’t around to answer me.
The process of counting to eleven:
The work of winding down the sensual.
Will I ever understand a trochee?
Never, not me, never, not me, never, not me.
Parks and Recreation

“Spring is here, suffering is here, life is skittles, and life is beer.”

-- Tom Lehrer, “Poisoning Pigeons in the Park”

I first got high in the tunneled bushes behind the tennis courts of Lacy Park, using a makeshift pipe made out of a pen and some tin foil. I wasn’t sure what to think, wandering through the park, where I climbed a tree so high that the camp counselor surely worried about how many limbs my face would paint on the way down. Where as a teenager my friend demonstrated carefully in front of me how to make napalm out of Styrofoam and gasoline. Every path I’d torn my bike’s tires across. There were other parks in my childhood, but this one fit snugger, held me just right, the dew settled on the blades hit the sun more vibrantly. Mean averages on a chart, bell curves, xyz expansions of Cartesian measures: the most innocent breaths, and the vilest exhalations taken occupy a public space, so private to me, the spatter of the water fountain belongs in me. The itchiness and labored breath of freshly hewn grass. The pinch of nerves in my arm, upturned, because the bike camp counselor said I talked back.
And Love Died

And the sheen was off of everything, the glimmer off the moisture coated rock, and the furniture polish became a dull sheen, and the pathways were flat and consistent. Opaque, homogenous film: stained, exposed.

And nobody ever twisted their ankle again, and sweeping up became an easy task, as the dirt was uniform.

And any aspirations towards innovation already quenched, as the arrangements were suitably stagnant. The task of longing expedited and filed.

And hope withheld its wounds, and promise's taunts rang like distant tin, each in its turn brushed away, uniform, love being chaos, everything in order.
The Future

I. The Visions

My cats have eaten my corpse. Nobody has come to check on me in months. That's how it works when you're a wizard. Elusive, sheltered, more concerned with semantics, material components, scholarship, esoteric innovation. There's no smell, because the bones are gently tended to: stripped and massaged, whitened over time from the ammonia of cat pee that marks where I effluesced.

II.

Shoo Fly, Don't Bother Me

Among this world are bees, they will learn our dance, they have the dance already, they can convey it to larvae, not us. They bob and spin, and reveal distance and velocity. Meanwhile we step towards escalator steps running the opposite direction.

III.

We Travel into the Future

Will they pray for us? Pray for me, pray for me, pray for you to take care of me. A joyride, sure why not. What was I to do, what are we all to do, caught in cycles of abuse. Caught in repetition of repetitions. We repeat. I repeat, we repeat. Tightening circles, obsessive cognitive dissonance. Don't read me my future. It comes upon me as it comes upon me, it tightens into concentric circles. It wraps like the pattern of a snail. The future is coming, it comes upon us. Tightens like the clasp -- Venus Fly Traps, tendrils held close. I'll pray for you, despite faith. Would you pray for me? The future comes upon us, like the patterns, again repeating. Circles close, a joyride for sure. Don't read to me the future, the future tightens. Will they pray for us? Will faith tighten the circles of faith, will the faith, will the circles? We were here. We were here – how long will this last, the fidelity of the media upon which this is served?

IV. Skill Set

I was a bowsmith, I knew the wood. Its willingness to be taut, yet flexible. I wrapped the reeds, I wrapped the fibers, around the notches. The future is coming, there are mouths to feed, the mouths are reeds, the hunger is fibers. Willingness to be taut, flexible, the future is coming, I've wrapped the fibers.

V. The End (From the Beginning to Not Quite the End, but the Beginning of the End)

Lemonade. Lemonade. Prevents scurvy. Starvation, for a brief moment. It's a
commodity. We're commodified. We are rocks, we are paintings on rocks, we are brush stroke on rocks, we are rocks, we are walls, we are fences, we are nails and concave flint, our edge cracks the nuts, our edge shaves the hides, our edge cracks the nuts and shaves the wood. We are round objects, we roll, we roll, we travel, we are shaved woods, our eggs crack, we are the concave surface that allows the hide to be tamed. We temper, we have tempers, our fire, the spark we discover, tempers our tempers, our fires, we spark discovery, we are accidental, we accidentally our fires, we temper our sparks. We find what doesn't melt, we melt what melts into what doesn't melt, we temper, we mold, we shape, we are shapes that don't melt, and we melt what we find into shapes. We make the shapes that serve us, we are served by the shapes that make us.

VI. Robots

It is not enough for us to be us, it is enough for us to be what we are not enough for. This robot tears away the flesh faster than you ever could. This robot has no means to distinguish the flesh that it tears apart. This robot cannot see the marble of fat that is unique to this creature which it picks apart. The true butcher looks upon the desiccation of flesh and snorts towards its inelegance. The printing press makes no distinction between fingers and paper.

VII. This Poem

is not really about the future, in the same ways that it is about the future. The true future consists of letting go of human time frames, petty concerns, momentary anxiety attacks, early onset alcoholism, whichever strange affliction medicine has applied to you, IBS, Asthma, kidney damage from pills intended to cure you of your eczema, agoraphobia, beautiful beautiful agoraphobia, who only wants you to stop interacting with humanity, the greatest scourge.

VIII. Eight Sections

Enumeration is the tool of the Western Scientist. Hierarchies, hegemony, privilege of one over the other, goddamn it feels good to be White, capital W, and prescriptive. Minutes from our White meeting: keep ‘em down. Words are weapons and are representative of meaning, but also, words change affect, let’s change your affect. Someone just stabbed a puppy, did that change your affect? Did that create energy outside of the text? Enumeration is a tool, I met him at a party once, it changed my creative energy, it was effective towards my affect, I took it like a prescription. Oh the little pin pricks are like two moons, the little senses of sense, just effects my affect. I mean, my weapons are words, and are privileged to feel your innards as they slick slick slick, slide. Two moons. Dos Lunas. Me gusta, me gusta mucho, es mucho mejor. Pin pricks pin papers to walls, and inform, pin pricks scratch and test, pin pricks can be charted numerically, as a tool of Western Science. Needles, under proper peer reviewed
circumstances, can be appropriately assigned, type I needle, shallow shaft, grade II sheering at the point, likened to conical shapes.

IX. In Which an X is in the Roman Numeral

It's one less than ten, right – was the thinking.

X. Our Return

All we are and will: bits of skin, dust, the ground in our bones, our bones as ash, fish food bodies – the Sun will expand, take us back to stardust, burn out, collapse, expanding universe collapsing, expanding again, the same, with difference, all we are, given to this infinite time, or time collapsing into layers, we will all touch and be touched, repelled, separated by the thinnest elements, but spark between these unsteady vaccuums, the single atom of carbon will fall from a scratch on the nose, will touch the helium from the balloons we’ve lost, eventually, in some form and perhaps this time there’s a dinosaur, or bated breath, a shudder, a susurration shaking, an index card explaining the pit inside.