

Screw Most, if Not **A!!!** MFA Programs

By pm FLYNN o o o

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... Patrick Flynn's verse courses like a secular canticle, a mantra in psalm. The repetition of words ebb and flow like waves reaching the shore and receding as the next recurs to take its place as if it were not another at all but a resetting of time played over and over in mesmerizing, monotone monotony: "between pages of emptiness" "You bathe the world in mediocre thoughts," and "microwaved time in the garbage-fed stream of evening news;" Flynn flams lento, adagio like the sound of an LP record once the needle has round the end: cha che-che—cha che-che—cha che-che... "...one second away / from white marble angels standing in the stone-cold moonlight."* (Spacing and font size is poet's own).

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"And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust." Matthew 21:44

I close my eyes to moonlight,
to days trained by suns setting,
after each day is traced by more suns,
as every shadow turns to stone,
where I am a stone of empty space,

as I become a sword again:

a white sword of empty space,
the bright white sword
between pages of emptiness,
between the empty lines of your emptiness,
the thin space of lines between empty books
filling your dusty, wooden shelves,
in books once flesh and blood.

You bathe the world in mediocre thoughts,
in the clean, running water of mediocre thinking;
in swirling,
draining water
falling into unclean holes,
mediocre thoughts running to unclean exams.

I rise in the yeast of heartbeats:

in heartbeats between your legs, behind each breast,
and in breasts beating with the illusion of time's full breasts,
time's broken breasts toasted in crisp moonlight;
microwaved time in the garbage-fed stream of evening news;
of evening fat chewed during the evening news;
of bacon fat chewed each morning, noon and night.

You chew and swallow heartbeats like breasts; like porn;

like chicken fingers swallowed whole; with porn-dipped sauce
licked from chicken fingers between sips of fine-ground coffee.

You chew imported eggs with instructions seated at a diner
in moonlight, where moonlit students serve bacon and eggs
in all-night diners until they close their eyes to mediocrity.

In closing my eyes to the moon I remember all moonlight
and forget the same moment of breath taught in school—
the living, breathing, dying breath of recess, of red rubber balls
bounced against wire-glass doors, steel inset
with giggling, wire-glass moonlight, of red balls kicked
into the outer space of wire-glass stars picked first in hallways
where death never runs and always walks single file;
red rubber balls sent to orbit just outside the rusted steel doors
of the last day before Christmas break.

Christmas starlight spins on frozen trees, on Christmas,
in Christmas tree darkness once I hit the ball, and run each base
from here to there with my dad chasing me; racing the moon
and back again.

Now, only black shadows of red mica dirt cling to my shoes,
to the bottom of my black, low-cut All Stars,
squeaking black tennis shoes squeaking on polished tile floors,
my impressions digging into the sparkling red clay like pollen,
like pollen filling the unglued bottom of gray soles,

like untenured, gray souls waiting for the free ride through time
and space, and every yard in between a gray and white sidewalk
of every afternoon alone.

Putting on new shoes I close my eyes to midnight
and walk the straight line back to school:

before midnight when I remember the short span of light years ahead
and leaving one second after midnight;
to have one second more to dance and spin
and leaving one second after midnight;
to have that one second back,
to have one second more to spend looking back at one second more,
looking back just one second more;
to have eternity looking back at one second after midnight;

to have exactly one second more before you say
the one second after midnight is the same as the one second
before a morning sun rises and any day becomes another,
at dawn,
and not before;
and not one second more;
and not one second before I stare into the white fire of the sun
and not look away;

and not look away from the bright white stone of eternity one second away,
and not look away from the bright white light of eternity one second away;

one second away from every wish you've ever made:

one second away from white marble angels,

one second away from white fire made from black flint;

from white light; from white light one second away,

one second away from white fallen angels, falling angels

made of white light falling into black holes at the end of every star;

of every eternity for black holes falling into themselves forever;

one second away from white fire exploding; one second away

from white marble angels standing in the stone-cold moonlight.

PM Flynn

THE POET SPEAKS: *Describing one specific image inspires most poems I write and, hopefully in the process, accurately capturing the inspiration. Sometimes I hear a line that will eventually find a place somewhere in the poem in one of the usual 10 drafts. Several years after I graduated from East Carolina University I journeyed to Edgar Allen Poe's home in Baltimore. While his drug inspiration was unnecessary his writing is clear, specific and impactful. Nothing earth shattering happened and I kept on writing weak poetry and stories.*

Living in a small town, I don't have access to much live poetry. So, I rely on social media when I get in the mood. I usually buy a printed copy of any journal that publishes one of my poems so I can read what's current, in relation to what I've just done. In reading other poetry (and in my own writing) I look for the elusive something underlying the surface images and literal meaning of the words, the eternal/spiritual; what speaks to my soul. Most poetry treats subjects like they are essays and not something transitional, living beyond the literal, with some spiritual/eternal context. I'm always looking for what is deeper than what can normally be explained away rationally.

This poem is an exception. I was irritated with writers with master degrees in English or teleporting somewhere across the literary gamma belt of MFAs; the people who normally write the magazine articles and publish the books. I have a "safe" B.S. English degree, which suits me perfectly. I took as many poetry courses as I could in college so I would read about great writers and their writing. For many years all I did was eat, drink and sleep poetry until it didn't suck anymore. Still, I didn't like my poetry for a long time, but knew something real was always there.

"Screw Most, If Not All MFA Programs" is emotionally charged, raw, which is not my usual subject matter. And I didn't use any cuss words. While some of the images are crude, the message should be clear, written between the lines; not something someone would read in church.

AUTHOR BIO: PM Flynn is a North Carolina writer. He holds a B.S. in English from East Carolina University. His writing interests extend to poetry, fiction novels and screenplays. He roasts organic coffee house with his wife, for their online store. He has self-published a book on Creativity and Reason: THE PURPOSE OF LIFE; and co-wrote and self-published ASSASSINATIONS: THE WORLD'S CLANDESTINE KILLER ELITE with Bob Chapman. Patrick has been published in many fine print and online anthologies, newsletters, and literary magazines and reviews including Helen