

Move ... ..

On +

Three

By

*John Grey*

**WHY I LIKE IT: Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...**

*John Grey tells stories in verse, and good ones at that. He almost makes me wonder why there are no Stand-up Dramatist or Tragedians. Still, the humour abides through the cracks in the surface of his routines (in spite of the absence of a live audience, spot-lit microphone and that old brick wall background). 'MOVING ON' cascades in a way that washes over you, to quote a line would damn the flow. Now, 'MY FELLOW TRAVELLERS' is a different story. Delightfully insightful observations made, antithetically singling out everyone else but the man on the Clapham omnibus. 'THE PIGMAN AT YOUR DOOR' is my personal favorite. If the rights to a poem were ever made into a screenplay, here it is. Oy, not a very original notion: Arabian Nights, Gunga Din, Hiawatha ...Casey at the Bat...(To maintain poet's spacing, each poem is on a separate page. Please scroll down.*

MOVE ON

Be serious.

Be happy.

How about anything you can imagine.

Because you

and you alone

decide.

Because.

Because you don't give a fuck.

And because you do.

If it's okay for others

then why not you.

Start out with a concept.

Or just act on a feeling.

Listen or don't listen.

Be warned

and take heed

or do it anyway.

Right? Right.

If it feels good,

be alive.

If it doesn't,

fall asleep.

If the moment is in

the form of a question,

answer it yourself.

I'm just the one taking notes.

Don't ask me.

## MY FELLOW TRAVELERS

All these people on a bus.  
I don't have to make any of them up.  
Not the woman in the MAGA cap.  
Not the boy with the nosebleed.  
Some look successful.  
A couple are so alike  
they must be brothers.  
An academic type  
has his head down in a crossword.  
The easily bored  
launch another round  
of writhing in their seats.  
Two young girls chatter.  
Two schoolkids  
punch each other in the arm.  
An old lady is so cold,  
she comes with blanket,  
wraps it around her knees.  
One oldster knits.  
Another glares.  
A third peeks at her blue hair  
in the tiny mirror.  
I swear the old guy  
with his eyes closed  
is muttering a prayer.  
The young man next to him  
is as solemn as a funeral director.  
Is that a tear in the blonde's right eye?  
One guy bounces in time  
to the music in his ear buds.  
He lacks my curiosity  
at the people around him.  
He doesn't care  
that one could be a bust of Caesar,  
another looks like  
he's coming down from a drug high,  
a third is picking his teeth.  
I too like nothing more

than to make the experience  
as all-encompassing  
as it is personal.  
But the bus is my ear buds.

## THE PIG MAN AT YOUR DOOR

The pig man is adamant  
it was your dog killed his piglets.  
And he's at your door,

demanding recompense.  
What can you say?  
You never could control that mutt

like you couldn't rein in  
your eldest boy.  
But he hasn't killed anyone.

At least, not so far.  
But he did knock up  
the waitress at the town diner.

And stole a car  
that he drove into a ditch.  
Now, as then,

you play this kind of raggedy defense,  
a sympathetic look  
combined with a straightening of the spine,

and a wobbly, "How do you know  
it was Buster that did it.  
It could have been any dog."

Like you once said,  
"How do you know it was Frank?"  
Even when the kid grew up

to look just like the boy.  
And he was still behind the wheel  
when the cops arrived.

Maybe this time you'll pay up  
and have the dog put down.

The way you sent Frank packing.

And you haven't heard from him in years.

So why does it all fall back on you.

You don't kill piglets,

get girls pregnant or steal cars.

You long to be the only one in your life.

That way, nobody comes to your door.

## OUR INVENTIONS

It's in the world already:  
    the thumb decoder,  
    the lemon-sponge hybrid,  
    the wall pixillater.  
If it's been invented, users will emerge.

Maybe not this month.  
Or even this year.  
But sometime,  
    the life of John Doe from Enid Oklahoma  
    will be turned around  
    by the presence of  
    a heavy water whistle in his life.  
And he'll owe it all to Jane Doe (not related)  
from Boise, Idaho.

That's how it happens.  
Suddenly, a spring-jammer  
knocks down a mole-seducer  
and replaces it with a pole-statue.  
    One life is changed irrevocably for the good.  
    And so are the lives that feed off that life.

It's how truth happens.  
Not just because of the absence of lies,  
    but when someone takes  
    a blunt enquirer to a pygmy mutilator  
and is willing to a swear on the Bible  
to the results.

What a surprise to darkness  
    when nothing more than  
    a cantaloupe translator  
shines light in such unexpected places.

Even nothingness,  
    that cradle of defeat,  
    is stunned into being something

by the application of a wall disrupter.

This stuff is out there.

The people will find it.

That's the law.

**THE POET SPEAKS:** *Why poetry? It's more a case of why not poetry? In my life, I've tried my hand at everything from music to painting to novel writing at least once but it was the poetry that proved the keeper, that provided the ideal medium for what I wanted to say. And it accommodated innumerable ways for me to say it.*

*I find myself beyond the point in my career where a/ sight of great blue heron in pond leads to b/poem about sight of great blue heron in pond or where broken heart requires immediate response in something approaching iambic pentameter.*

*These days I call on a combination of accumulated experiences and sheer imagination. And my writing is less a product of sporadic inspiration than incessant perspiration. Luckily, those droplets emerge in various styles, slants, concepts and tones. For example, "Pig Man At Your Door" is a concise/precise short story/fable in verse. "Move On", on the other hand, is just one of those poems that pops into the head and I go with, ending, as I often do, with a dig at myself. "Our Inventions," even more so than "Move On" is a work where, with some kind of through intent in my head, I just let the words flow. If I do it right, the results make sense despite myself. Finally, "My Fellow Travelers" is one of the byproducts of a lifetime of observation from someone who spent years as a train and bus commuter. Other people really can make an otherwise boring trip something special. I daresay they all weren't in the same car on the same trip at the very same time. But, for poetry's sake, they just had to be.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in Sheepshead Review, Stand, Poetry Salzburg Review and Hollins Critic. Latest books, "Covert" "Memory Outside The Head" and "Guest Of Myself" are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in Ellipsis, Blueline and International Poetry Review.

