

Dating App and other poems...

By Erric Emerson

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*Poetry editor Hezekiah writes: To review all of E. Emerson's ten poems would intrude on what time you have at hand (I'm given to understand, some people call it a wristwatch). "Dali's persistent pocket watch." The first few pieces read like the evolution of an online relationship beginning with **Dating App** "Blasé thumb" "Do you like the abs I once had?" Chaotic cantos in a romantic stream of semi-consciousness; and the aberrated structure of 2nd **Date** "I speculate your naked, / stark curvature." And so on. He consequently appears to abandon that plot and turns to a cavalcade of thoughts and ideas, themes and images. "The warmth of deli / counter conversations," **Having A Problem** deals with the struggles of addictions and is beautifully written. There is certainly an uncommon thread throughout Emerson's work. I'm not always quite sure what he is saying but I revel in his words and turns of phrase. "I am the muck / and you're the least / boot that's ever / foot stepped." HS (Spacing is poet's own.)*

Dating App

Blasé thumb

habitual swipe left

fuck-this-shit profiles

or commonplace attributes

Catdad to Dogmom

My beard is brawny

There's just something

in the way you hoist Bud Light

as a catch all

Do you like the abs I once had?

Let's discuss the deal breaker:

Are you allegiant to the Flyers

or the Sixers?

Are you FUN?

Please notice my solidly placed

Like

My embellishment of bells and whistles

How panoramic the scenery to exude

the safety of well off

Let's find a low-key joint

frequented en masse

discuss our sameness

and lose ourselves in

some Dave Matthews karaoke

2nd Date

We s w a y

to the sounds

of Indie.

Eyeballs stung

by
bar
balcony fog
and strobes
pulsing out
tertiary hues.

Engulfed falsetto man- disembodied croon.
Noise of tambourine spanking hi-hat. My
palms at the V of your hips, chin pit-
stopping shoulder. They play their signature-

Your tongue capers
where my tonsils
used to be.

Your retinas stand-down.
I embody coy,
till I don't-

I speculate your naked,
stark curvature.

We are all
giggles,

agency of

k n o w.

On the sub, we are
all over us.

I pretend we
haven't slipped

into

spect
acular.

That I don'tfuckup-

such subtle, decades-worth

of try.

XOXO

Hotels line boarded walkways
facing sea, fish-stink swirls
through famed thoroughfares.
Casinos vie for awed spectacle
at dusk, promising chance
or turn arounds. Jitneys wheel
about for meager tips,
mumble local histories.

I watch you watch me
through mess of hair,
Irish-flush of cheek,
wind goads a lazed
summer kiss where
bums piss off piers edge
into rollicking waves.

Turning 30

Stuck on the drudge of numerals
and the sneak of milestone.

How many times have I tried
to Nope the fuck out of here.

Bottles & botched plots
for turned leaf.

Quarter-life crises.

Observe occasions of note

the way my father done-

Quash brain cells

till mind's gloop.

Yet, there's been more

than lethargies,

Dali's persistent pocket watch.

The revolt of staggering

last stands.

There's been stanzas,

sudden-highs of Art.

The oft-sought erotic
slick pangs of love.

And what I've willed
into existence.

Kind acts-

affinity for trash
offsets dumpster fire,
plumed black smoke,
piled ash.

The warmth of deli
counter conversations,
the way elder generation
dialogue the weather
genially.

Do not forget how
the Lynx rogues the snows
on vacant stomach.

How light pillars
appear as skyward
appendages rarely.

The sheer lasting
of grave mounds
through ages.

The ever-present now-

How I came about

by accident.

By the time I discovered

the pleasantry

of Bob Ross videos,

the practical techniques

for tree lines, I was more

than happy

Before a New Annual

I cling to pages my own.

How smear, and bent upon

the *kidding me?* of fucked mental,

my quill: opening-closing of digits,

feathers plucked from own back,

wording of doppelganger,

this- the Back Slider ragged form

dangling scoffs and flitting smirk

over glass-eyed subsistence of ego,

must I remind you of stake?

Highest? Let's swagger across wire

taught between buildings and sway

with the knowledge of nets.

I've made resolution to

bucket-list worst tendency,

blurt sweetness at her,

are you ever not the screech

of owl playing the songbird

at standing water baths?

The impossible bottle ship

shaken to scrap in rage

of vaguely directed slight?

I'm reminded of tugboats
hauling tankers the size of
stadiums- the whole state
of New Jersey is a trigger.

The 4th- the way pastime
is blood ritual of mind these days,
how sparklers, snaps, snakes,
their infinity and glow can go snuff itself
into burnt smoke, how all ceremony
can go right ahead and
walk off nearest cliff, implode
into hilarious, utter meme-moment-

I can go back to middling on a Tuesday,
not be raptured by the idea of
warmth of palms enveloping fingers
with forever rings, a home we built
from derelict scaffolds that teetered
but held in torrents of downpour, found
ourselves- we're staring at walls expecting the paint
not to chip, our whole troop- spewing champagne
at ceiling as if mold doesn't gestate
the moment we collapse into couches,
the world over watches various, million dollar

balls drop slowly to effect, glasses with year

card-boarded over them, the essence of now,

I make good of it- I choose words over blackout,

I'm cagey, like a half-standing up guy asking for change,

I go into the new numeral quiet as a bank line,

I don't watch or know it's happening,

when I wake, sunlight will invade senses

and for once, it won't be the shuddering

and panic-laced doom of-

am I? where, what is, when.

Over-shoulder Looks

We are the mole at the highest level
of each other's governments,

I am the cyanide capsule you chomp
into if caught,

you are the briefcase I've sown
into a mattress, my secret document,

this line of work is erasure
in polaroid.

Having A Problem

Evidence: my esophagus a scorched field,
 my stomach drowned men by the dozen.

 my head a zeppelin flaring,
 my eyes that of a man with a month in the hole.

 my elbows prize fighters in their twilight years,
 my knees child-dirty, my words my own language.

I construct a mannequin from Vodka fifths
and used Nicorette gum. I make a bet with myself
as to who will fall first. I lose.

I promise myself I'll quit three and a half years ago. Make it four.

Deterrent

Woahh, there.

Stay back.

I am the muck
and you're the least
boot that's ever
foot stepped.

I'm a bit too air siren
and too air raid
and you're too flee
the cobblestones.

You don't need
these westerlies
swamping skiff
midafternoon.

I don't need
not to blow.

You are very sparrow.

This is communal web
of a thousand generation
spider tricks

I've been known
to grow the size
of dinner plates
and pounce
upon little flitting
vibrations.

Universe Ode

For The Bang

Thank you,
expanding existence.

And those who've/
who're historizing what
can never be fully named,
penetrated, sussed.

Whatever irks,
devastates,
is pacified by the musing
of vague dark matter,
the candor of physics,
and daunting luminosity
of quasars.

I am beholden to vastness
and the rarity of us
in it all.

The truest compass
in this patchwork realism.

Sometimes, I don't judge empty
slogans hanging in foyers
as harshly.

Every once and a while
I'm *better* for the sake of it.

Marilyn Manson Ode
For Brian

Much obliged
for the How-to-
Get-Through-High-School-
Guide-for-the-Confused-and-
Proselytized.

And ridiculousness.

Lay Reverend of
Controversy.

prophet of
between the lines.

purveyor of fuck all.

A generation scraped by
on you.

You were the birth
of my jesting
at a small stick
nailed to a tall stick,
horizontally.

THE POET SPEAKS: *This series of poems was inspired by my fallible twenties- failed romances, milestones, fuck ups, attempts at turned-leaf mentality. I wanted to convey finding oneself by taking the path of most resistance. I'm drawn mostly to poets who speak with a heavy dose of colloquialism- from Bukowski to the very talented Sam Sax.*

Poetry is, for me, the way I delve deeply within to find a little magic or witchcraft. It's therapy, it's Zen, it's a way to meld emotion and intellect into digestible snippets and present information more bizarrely than it initially appears. I read poetry to get glimpses of others inner worlds, admiring the craft and innovation of those continually pushing the genre in exciting and unexpected directions.

AUTHOR'S BIO: *Erric Emerson has published two collections of poetry, *Counting Days* by Reckless Heron Press (2017) and *Which Way Is Up?* by Coyote Blood Press (2019). He has published extensively in print and online zines, in anthologies, and as features. He served as Poetry Editor and as a founding member of Duende and currently reviews poetry for Aji . His collections and notable poems can be found at erricemerson.com*