

RELINQUISHING GUILT

By Stephen Mead

Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes:

Well this reads like a lovely laundry list of a longing for lethargy. Mister Mead just might be my most favorite motivational speaker. "the room fill with / tuna cans." "Guilt is crabgrass. / Set goats loose." Note to self, Stephen Mead is a man after my own heart. HS

Relinquishing Guilt

Call in sick to work.
Ignore bills.
Leave the bed unmade.
Lounge around, eavesdropping
on neighbors.
Hear just music playing.
Top 40. Blue grass.
Put on jazz.
Harmonize.
Awed squirrels
sneak a peek.
This is luxury.
Pile laundry.
Let senses slip,
the room fill with
tuna cans.
Penalize anxiety.
Invite the cats in.
Guilt is crabgrass.
Set goats loose.

THE POET SPEAKS: *"Relinquishing Guilt" is, as they say, based on a true experience and written way before this current Covid-19 pandemic. Like many I was raised to religiously believe "sloth" was a sin, and a poor work ethic akin to a poor moral character. This of course resulted in a lot of overcompensating and a certain hypersensitivity in regards to "I did not do enough. I*

could have done better." *I might have these thoughts even in a toxic and unhealthy work environment, thus the poem is about kicking such self-flagellation to the curb and recognizing the importance of mental health days.*

My stylistic influences are actually more rooted in prose, from fantastical to memoirs/history. Reading especially is like life blood and oxygen to me, and the writing is more of a genetic mutation finding its outlet.

AUTHOR'S BIO: *Stephen Mead is an Outsider multi-media artist and writer. Since the 1990s he's been grateful to many editors for publishing his work in print zines and eventually online. He is also grateful to have managed to keep various day jobs for the Health Insurance. Currently he is resident artist/curator for The Chroma Museum, artistic renderings of LGBTQI historical figures, organizations and allies predominantly before Stonewall, <https://thestephenmeadchromamuseum.weebly.com/>*