



Fiction – Issue 3

Oh the Buoyancy of the Unmoored Heirship!

by **George Constantin**

***WHY WE LIKE IT:** The obvious comedic opportunities are played to the hilt in this devilishly ribald serio-comic Joycean satire that wonders about familial strains of flatulence. And while there is plenty of hilarity here we know from emails that the author has a scrupulous concern for the tone, weight and heft of each word and there is a vast difference in nuance between say, 'feel' and 'feeling'. It is this alchemical, straight-faced prose that demands we take the content seriously—or at least pretend to. The tightly balanced contrast between subject and delivery accounts for the success of 'Heirship' which, without it, would just be so much hot air coming out of a...um...balloon. We 'see' a bit of Vonnegut here, but really, it's not the sense that predominates, if you get our drift...A masterfully written send-up by a consummate wordsmith of blazing talent.*

I have inherited my mother's anus.

I know it: I am A Man.

I lived at home a long time. You live around people and you become each other. You go around and maybe you get back to yourself. But you might lose yourself, too. You become a thing – no longer individualistic but a collective creature. It is as organic as mold. We compost heap together into the rotten slime of life.

Offspring meld a merge of their parents. Notice how the son often looks like the mother. The daughter frequently looks like the father. But there are other things. As a Hayvensmouth IV I know my ancestral line.

I know I have inherited my mother's rectum because of the way she passes gas when she is walking down the hall in our house – either in the assumption no one is listening or in the blissful blithe unmoored drift of being free in one's home.

The Sound.

The way she farts – her f-f-f-farts and my f-f-f-farts are akin.

They sound alike because our assholes are constructed the same.

I know it.

Wahhnnntt The Fart. Mommy and Me.

My Father's Fart: **Brohhpp**. Tuh-tuh. Low basso staccato.

My father's farts are blunt solid bursts normally one debowelling debarkation two to three in delivery. I imagine geometrically perfect tubes of toilet paper cardboard substructures. Rounded edged but firm and decisive. This is what he emits.

My mother: This is the sound. Sometimes high – impossibly brief. Clipped. A pitted peach studded with marbles. Pitched pinched decibels. Then there is the low: The *wahhnnntt*. The sphincter. Age-eroded opening of outage. The gas dispenser near stink-free.

I often heard these sounds and then not until on my own bed one day made the discovery. Leaning back on back reading *The Odes of Horace*, right leg propped up to provide crossed legs. Comfort.

The announcement: A herald to the *Blessed Day of Gas* and time to pay tribute unto the protectorate of the room air.

Ignition. Fire button. Launch!

Wahhnntt. The f-f-f-fart.

I laughed pleased with myself.

But the mind – it grasped.

It swung wildly. It wondered.

That sound.

That *sound*

That sound: My mother. And I was ashamed and alarmed – we inherit every little but of ourselves from our ancestry. Everything. From the Divine to the Base – all. Even the ephemeral soul and the mind's cast-off thoughts. Nothing is our own. It's on loan. We pass it on. We pass gas that was passed to us.

I could not let it go.

I thought of the family fart. I knew without hearing that my sister had my dad's ass.

Of course one has to make an exploration of the family when faced with such discoveries and predicaments. I knew that I would commit myself to this new found thing – thinking that in fact it would be an old rigidity that would fight its unearthed revilement in revealing. So be it.

To get it is to get to it. It must be gotten. I had to get at this thing. It meant more than a fart – a shared sound through a common passing of genetics. How do we pass on parts of ourselves? What is it that allows essences of us to be transmitted along the familial cables – where are the insulators? What is the terminus? Name the recipient.

I positioned a recording device in the washroom – near the toilet tank by the seat – and to debark on exploration. The findings were outstanding: One fart blast I was able to trace to sister. A dynamism that rattled the little digital talk recorder between porcelain rim and wooden seat.

Decree: She is so much like Our Father. Filial veneration.

We can understand the purpose of the anus and we are pretty in tune with our own examples.

I have this most utilitarian and exclamatory appurtenance and I know that it has really been the only thing I recall being in control of in moments of joy and exultation to fear and even in romance

The control in tender intimacy that makes the mind say:

Please God not now. Oh let me hold this in.

I thought back to the time as a youth when I was burgling the office at the flight school I worked at. The airport police circled the airfield in clockwise fashion about every half-hour. Three cars patrolling in the daylight and two at night. I opened up the thick-teeth-zippered vinyl bank-deposit envelope and pulled out that near-inch-thick pile of green paper and popped it into my right jeans pocket. I'd have a go at some boosted liquor that night and a delirious deluded dream of the hunt for beddy-broads the next day. But as I was sneaking out to the car parked behind a hangar, I tripped a red beam or a shielded cable or something and there were alarms sirens and bright white floodlights.

Out now!

I had already made the path to the bicycle leaned against an oil drum in my mind but the feet had not realized the same as it was still and then I saw the coned white beams of cop-car prowler headlights widening on one side while the building corner of corrugated metal wall stayed dark. I saw a sport plane that I knew could be opened by using a key or any flat-edge to open the silly lock on the cockpit canopy-door. I did so and slipped into the front pilot's seat and tried to duck down ditch and disappear towards the floor. They parked and entered the dispatch office.

Shit! Now the cruiser was between me and my bicycle.

I felt the body building gas inside from the hours-under-heat-lamp convenience store hot dogs and chimichangas, from biological backlog backup, from God laughing and wanting me to make a sound at a time of supplication-like silence. Torch-lit rays slitted through slatted shaded windows. The truncated murmurs of authoritarian black-hatted men of dubious education and bereft of proper elocution. Do they fart in jest and after they ingest donuts and hoagies and scrambled eggs and cheese enchiladas washed with black coffees and padded with pecan pies ? When they arrest a homeless perp and cuff him to the bumper do they each take a hit and plunge a knuckled-fist into the crumpling belly of the suspect, forcing a groan from the mouth and an assley-rippled wrinkley-haloed exhaust from the bungling bum's bungler?

I was about to find out as they exited the office and walked to the cruiser.

I was gripping the control stick and pushing both feet on the rudder pedals while pushing on the tops with toes applying brakes to try and stop this dirigible floating down my backside canal.

~ Wahhnntt.

'That sounds like Missus Hayvensmouth....' one fatty cop said.

'What?'

'Yeah: Ole Margie farted once during choir practice. It was It was a loud fart, man! *Wohnntt*. Even Father O'Flaherteagh was surprised.'

'Fingal or Fergus?'

'Who goes to practice with Father Fergus? Father Fingal of course. Anney-way, we were in the middle of *Hail Holy Queen Enthroned Above ... Salve Regina*. It was a holy moley salvo nearby her vagina! It was almost louder than the organ, and poor Mister Magourney lost his place on the sheet music.'

The pigs laughed, and I wanted to kill them.

Fuck these fuckers! This was personal! This was my mom! No one can talk about her like this! About her farting.

And my caboose aloosed and I farted again.

'That's it again!' the marginal cop said.

They stared out along the ramp. Other parked planes were around me, and they flashed lights on a Cessna 150 and then a Piper Cherokee and finally a Beechcraft Bonanza. Soon the lights would swing onto the canopied door of the aerobatic sport trainer I was hiding in.

And there it was:

The burgeoning billowing feeling bounding below about to unbind.

Oh God have mercy please don't let me fart. I promise And whatever else it was I attested my newfound faith to.

The exhaust vented aperture of buoyancy was bursting out.

~ **Wahhnntt.**

'Hey: Check this out!' Pig 2 said and lifted a leg and farted right when I let go.

His: Prattz.

I could feel the sound of what I released pass through the wing spars and the wing-rib lightening holes and against the doped Ceconite fabric on the control surfaces and the wooden floor boards. Wave dynamics.

But Pig 2 flew in Winged Victory. His fart won.

Marginal laughed and shut off his flashlight.

'Let's go. Hey: I gotta tell you about this flamer in the choir who colors the top of his head yellow and I think uses eyeliner, too. Can't raise the flag for a woman.'

'A frosted flake, huh?'

I entered home carefully that night, claspng rear flanks to oppress the possibility of anal expression and announce with late night landing at the family nest. Under the sheets, I could at last let pass all that I withheld from the world.

Wahhnntt met *wahhnntt*.

My mother farted in the breezeway. Dad laughed. **Brohhpp**. He punctuated her exertion.

Please God, don't let my sister fart tonight.

Now if I have a child I suspect that our family will be like a roadside rest stop on the long line of anuses from the little winking dust motes of ancient light that burst forth of an ignorant nothing into a universe or history and memory and uncountable farts past to those yet to be yet unmade but to be delivered and then all the way to the end of time as it all burns out with a last wheezy peep from the behind.

For now I can only go back to Horace.

Oh Young Offspring:

Who will have your anus?



Author's Note

The opening sentence was originally '*I've got my mom's @\$shole.*'

The sentence trailed me and invaded my brain like a non-evictable tenant. To kick out the lout I had to finally write the story.

I really was reading a copy of Horace poems (and possibly did oust vapor) as does Hayvensmouth IV, but the similarities end there.

I want the language to be original. I want readability and energy.

If not in this story then in my heart and head are crammed **James Joyce**, Aristophanes, W.B. Yeats, Frank O'Connor, Patrick Kavanagh, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, Langston Hughes, **August Wilson**, Gabriel García Márquez, Alice Walker, Raymond Carver (Lish-ful and Lish-less), Larry Brown, Steve Tesich. All writing is influential: Transcendent to mucky-sludge. This list is incomplete.

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Author's Bio

George Constantin is a California community college English professor.

Publications include short-stories and poetry in: *Fleas on the Dog* (Canada, Issue 3), *The Penny Dreadful* (Cork * Ireland), *Phoebe*, (Virginia * USA), *Lively-Arts* (online), *Flies, Cockroaches, & Poets* (Fresno * USA).