

DROP the CHALUPA & (n)ine (9) others...

By Robert Beveridge

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... Nor was Jesus a teetotaler, hence the quest for the Grail and just what with which to fill it? For now, let us sup from the chalice of Beveridge. That's right. I am paid quite handsomely for this tripe. Robert is each oblique, obtuse, acute, and askew; I hope you love him too. "...hailing Satan / for spare quarters." "The ocelots / have stolen your keys again," And man's best friend in 'IT'S A LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY' "Put the barbecued chicken / to bed, pull up the omelet / blanket." "BP normal, pulse normal, / but the oompah band / is so out of tune" I could go on and on, so why don't you? He's worth a long draw, but try not to gulp—(Spacing & format poet's own.)*

DROP THE CHALUPA

in the darkest corner
where even the roaches
have given up
on the discovery
of a single crumb

the legend of the meat hose
is told around 2AM campfryers
to disquiet the initiates

the new hires no one thinks
will last out the first week

for the ones who seem
as if they might have
a little more resolve
they break out the tales
of those franchises
that disappeared in banks
of seven-layer fog,

left nothing behind
but a faint scent
of guacamole still fresh
long after it has any right to be
but where the 1974 Gran

Torinos still line up,
day after day, wait
for someone, anyone
to recite the benediction

“may I take your order?”

and respond with a preference
for hard
or soft

I LOVE YOU, RANITIDINE

I dreamed you were in a black metal band called The Devil's Knickers and you kept showing up to gigs around the country and somehow they were always in the same venue. It wasn't all that big but bikers were between you and the stage and they couldn't hear when you asked them to move because they were made of stone. So instead of the headliner you found yourself in the lobby, a skull at your feet, hailing Satan for spare quarters.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE, YOU COULD HAVE SEEN *THE EMOJI MOVIE*

Your grandchildren call you from the local watering hole, too strapped for Uber and too drunk to walk. The ocelots have stolen your keys again, so you beg off, tell them you'll see if Violet across the hall is home. You hang up, watch that annoying back brace commercial for the fifty-seventh time today, wonder if Violet is, truly, home, if any of us are.

IT'S A LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY

You asked around for the best
price on doghouses, decided
the world would look down
on you less if you built your own

THE MOLAR FLIRTS

You can't help it that your
acting ability drowned
when you were four. A survivor
who witnessed the capsizing
reported to you that it
had in fact made contact
with its man in Macao
and that the deal was going well
before it went down. Now
you can't help but wonder
about the price of coffee in Berlin
and whether it would affect
the outcome.

Too many variables.
You have decided
to eliminate a number
of ocelots. Right-size.

PUN GOD

Ra, I would call
upon your holy name
if the lions hadn't devoured
it last June. So instead
I search dark tomes,
forbidden tracts, letters
to the editor for excised
phonemes, things we must
make right. This language
cannot die, cannot die,
saints and words preserve us.

SANDSTORM

Put the barbecued chicken
to bed, pull up the omelet
blanket. Lullabies of pickled
plum await as night washes
over the land. Now is the time
for rice to soak up its weight
in stock, mackerel to dance
a jig. The pistachios await their
turn in the spotlight. Tonight,
everyone is as important.

SOMETIMES I AM CERTAIN THE MUZAK IN HELL'S ELEVATORS IS HARSH NOISE WALL

BP normal, pulse normal,
but the oompah band
is so out of tune patients
prefer the cafeteria's chicken
a la king. There's snow
on the ground, but it's contained
in the maternity ward. Trash
day is here and you've
forgotten what procedure
you came in for. You wonder
how related these things are.

STONISH¹

birds on swings

shards of teeth
clutched
in your left hand

sunset clouds
like a burnt
tongue

train whistle
in the distance

crunch crunch
crunch fainter
and fainter

unconsciousness

1 The “a” is left off intentionally. When not Shunn-formatted, the title should be all lowercase.

YOU MAKE ME SICK

One of these days
I'll learn not to try
to match you drink
for drink anymore

'cause I'm the one
who always ends up
in the bathroom

THE POET SPEAKS: *I considered reusing the first one of these I did back in 2019. I also considered just asking “but what if the poet is mute?” over and over again for a page and a half before realizing someone’s probably already done that and it wouldn’t be nearly as funny the second time around. So instead, and with an eye towards rectifying the error of not doing this the first time round, I’m going to play raconteur with the genesis of each of these little nuggets.*

“Drop the Chalupa” was one of my shameless attempts to break into Taco Bell Quarterly. I know I’ll never be as cool as a televised chihuahua, but a boy can dream.

“I Love You, Ranitidine” is part of a very loose (to the point of being unconnected) series of pieces I’ve written over the last year or so—I tend to write when I’m in bed, that just being the kind of horrible person I am—that have arisen from the abject pain and horror I feel both on a personal and a societal level when I find myself subjected to ambulance-chasing-lawyer ads (I know they’re endemic, but in my case, I always see them sandwiched between terrible horror films).

“It Could Have Been Worse, You Could Have Seen The Emoji Movie” is, I am sorry to report, a true story. My friend Jay Gambit (of Crowhurst, Executioner’s Mask, etc.) was indeed sent to see The Emoji Movie by the blog Toilet ov Hell. It turns out the movie is much more bearable when you’re very, very stoned, at least. [<https://toiletovhell.com/we-sent-jay-gambit-of-crowhurst-to-see-the-emoji-movie/>]

“It’s a Long Way to Tipperary” was a riff on Snoopy’s long quest to take down the Red Baron combined with the weird double-sidedness of the respectability of DIY culture as it applies to creativity and the horrific use the rugged-individualist trope has been slotted into.

Like “Jornada”, which appeared here back in 2019, “The Molar Flirts” was part of an attempt I made in 1994 to take the titles of the poems in John M. Bennett’s chapbook “Was Ah” and write completely unrelated pieces with the same titles. (I never did finish the project.)

I am embarrassed to report that “Pun God” is about a nu-metal band. If you’re enough of a nerd to remember them, I’m sorry.

“Sandstorm” is a Japanese hangover cure—omurice, umeboshi, pistachios, chicken for protein. I highly recommend it.

“Sometimes I Am Certain the Muzak in Hell’s Elevators Is Harsh Noise Wall” is the beauty of chronic pain washed in a veneer of incipient dementia. (They keep telling me the incipient dementia is actually a side effect of severe ADHD, but I keep not believing them completely.) Harsh Noise Wall is far more comforting than chronic pain, though. Just one of thousands of examples here (it’s a playlist):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Wnl0mVMhww&list=PL7wzKS46RzQPTMyKg776sYcvdj_aCLdSH)

[Wnl0mVMhww&list=PL7wzKS46RzQPTMyKg776sYcvdj_aCLdSH](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Wnl0mVMhww&list=PL7wzKS46RzQPTMyKg776sYcvdj_aCLdSH)

“stonish” feels like a nightmare, but my nightmares are never quite that lucid. So I’m going to assert that it’s a nightmare where my subconscious filled in pieces minutes or hours later.

“You Make Me Sick” is a jumble of dozens of different memories of my college experience in the late eighties (and the two or three years of trying to be Charles Bukowski that followed it).

On the importance of both reading and writing poetry: I find it helps make sense of the world in a way that other types of writing don’t. Sure, there is much to be said for essays and articles and novels and all those other ways of conveying information. There is, however, something quite different about the lens we use to look at the world when we do this thing—something that uses both definitions of the

word “cleave” at the same time, allowing us to delve into areas of the truth that straight factual reportage cannot while veering off into weird symbolic realms in order to do so.

AUTHOR’S BIO: Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in Mawth, The Stray Branch, and Counterclock, among others.