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By Howie Good

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...* “Now that an estimated 150 species go extinct every day, I try not to rush through my days.” I just love hyperbolic humor—when macrocosms collide with the micro-cosmic. Ash ram [unintended, punning, p-honic typo] Horton, now portrayed as a pink elephant, who swipes that clover in his trunk and a world at large unfolds, my tiny, little, diminutive mind expands to near walnut proportions; all my hopes and dreams and tropes and schemes are awash with awe. Don’t the best poets just cause you to reflect and all criticisms be damned? Steely dan’s have made my ears bleed too, their beat has spoiled a many naked lunch. “...a farmer sang about his favorite crop...” “...a nice, dark nothingness, which felt kind of cozy...” Hears Howie—you’d need a pushcart to manage Good’s genius... (Spacing is poet’s own.)

HOWIE GOOD’S latest collection of poetry, *Gun Metal Sky*, was published in February by Thirty West Publishing. Congrats dude!

The View from Here

I’m watering the indoor plants when the doorbell rings. It’s you, and you’re bleeding from an ear. “What happened to your ear?” I ask. You touch it. Your fingers come away with blood. “Steely Dan on the headphones,” you say. I don’t move, don’t even nod. Now that an estimated 150 species go extinct every day, I try not to rush through my days. And if, as sometimes happens, it feels like everything is speeding up, I’ll lie down on the floor and stare at the ceiling or out the window, my view a small thing but all my own.

A Poverty of Love

The guests looked on in complete bewilderment as my future parents exchanged what sounded like foreign wedding vows. Afterwards at the reception, a farmer sang about his favorite crop and then it was the best man's turn to speak. He had barely begun when my father interjected, "Spare us your life philosophy." The wailing that arose might have been especially invented for the end of the world. Everything was burning. People, drapes, carpets, tablecloths – everything. In years to come, my brothers and I would pick through the blackened ruins. Haven't you ever noticed that only the poor have dirty hands?

Lamentations

The faded label on the year-old bottle of painkillers warned that alcohol would intensify the effect, so I washed the pills down with vodka. Within half an hour, I drifted off and saw elite shock troops in the street, rubble everywhere, a trolley car burning. I saw a soldier smash Rosa Luxemburg to the ground with a rifle butt, saw him shoot her in the head and fling her body into the canal. There was a family of refugees as well, desperately working the oars of an unwieldy rowboat, while bullets splashed around them and the waterbirds tiresomely complained. Even in the dark, I could still see with my eye that didn't have blood in it.

Death Be Not Proud

They told me I was dead for three minutes. I got hit by a car.
There was a nice, dark nothingness, which felt kind of cozy,

but I also knew it was the end, so I'd better not. Like, I wasn't
supposed to be enjoying it, because if I embraced it too much,

I would die. I looked up, and there was a bright light with a hand
poking out making the “come here” gesture. I walked toward it

and woke up in the hospital. They told me I almost died. I said,
“Oh yeah?” Then they offered me a grilled cheese. Doritos, too.

N.B.: This poem was collaged from accounts of near death experiences posted at
<https://www.buzzfeed.com/stephenlaconte/pronounced-dead-then-resuscitated-stories>

THE POET SPEAKS: *The prose poem is a scorned and marginal literary form, which makes it rather ideal for my purposes. I'm a kind of anti-realist. What actually happened is of less interest and importance in my writing than how whatever happened felt. It's for this reason that I try not to realistically re-create or record experience, but to make each prose poem an experience in and of itself. Prose poems are maps to areas untraceable by other means.*

AUTHOR'S BIO: Howie Good is the author most recently of *Stick Figure Opera*: 99 100-word Prose Poems from *Cajun Mutt Press*. He co-edits the online journals *Unbroken* and *UnLost*. Two versions of his story **Eve of Destruction** were published in **Issue 6**.