

Flash Bang Boom and other poems

By Howie Good

***Poetry editor Hezekiah writes:** Howie Good has an affinity for the absurd and an affection for the macabre. If you're a fan of poetry disguised as flash fiction, he's your man. "We know that something is very wrong and we are living it." "Now I often catch the dog lying on the couch studying me with cold, squinty eyes as if calculating exactly how much a person can bear." Now that I have alerted you too, and spoiled, the first two last lines, the readers who are fondly drawn to Good will know exactly who they are and they are precisely the ones I long to meet. Thinking outside-the-box is one thing, here is a view beyond all horizons. READ '**Chaos Theory**' word for word and don't MISS '**Alienation Nation**'... "nuts" loosely." (Spacing and font size are poet's own.) HS*

Flash Bang Boom

With the encouragement of family and friends, I adopted a retired bomb-sniffing dog. I called him "Flash" – after the flashing lights of a migraine, I would joke to anyone who asked. One day he discovered under the couch the severed head of a doll I didn't even know I had. Next the piano stopped making sounds when I sat down to play it. Then the tree outside my window appeared suspended like an astronaut in space. Now I often catch the dog lying on the couch studying me with cold, squinty eyes as if calculating exactly how much a person can bear.

The Gray Man

A man covered in gray dust was walking. He was very far away, but he never stopped walking. He was walking to find me. No matter how long it took, he would find his way up the steps to my door. My family was sitting on the couch in front of the TV. I was in the other room. They couldn't hear me. It was as if I was pressed between glass. I felt so lonely, and the gray man was walking up the steps to the door and then knocking on the door and then pounding and then trying to push the door in. It's an old story, told over and over and over again. I'm just telling it one more time. We know that something is very wrong and we are living it.

Sources: [http://idiommag.com/2012/10/the-handmade-luther-price;](http://idiommag.com/2012/10/the-handmade-luther-price/) <https://hyperallergic.com/578463/beer-with-a-painter-roger-herman>

Alienation Nation

America was once a nest of singing birds. Now the pigeons nesting on the window ledges carry lethal diseases. It's as if the eccentric architecture inside me is turning into the architecture outside me. We need a plan, an intervention, something. I try to be invisible when I see someone walking toward me on the street. You never know the kind of threat they may pose. A tech exec was just found in his luxury apartment decapitated, limbless, with an electric chainsaw nearby. I swear, if this keeps on much longer, even psychologists will be using the word "nuts" loosely.

Chaos Theory

I like naps. As it wasn't too late, I wanted to enjoy a nap under a tree. I started for the door, but a short stocky man with an uncanny resemblance to Stalin, the dictator who put the "p" in paranoia, caught me by the arm. Of all those present, only he had a distinct shadow, and he projected it onto walls, ceilings, furniture, anything. "Fishing," he said, "is a metaphor for Alzheimer's." He sounded pissed about it, too. I promised myself right then that when this was over, I would resolve the things eating away at me.

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By the time I was 22, I'd already had all sorts of shitty jobs – washed dishes, unloaded auto parts from semi-trailers, alphabetized files in an insurance office, drove a cab. I once even cleared a field for an old farmer who was skeptical at first because of my shoulder-length hair. These days, farmers sing to their favorite crop, and the bearded lady gives serious consideration to shaving her face. One must have some chaos in oneself, like Sartre when he thought he was being followed down a street in Paris by a pair of rare blue lobsters.

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Some days I walk to think, some days to actually get somewhere. I've been thinking about death a lot lately, whether there are flickering emojis at the end or steel bars on all the windows, whether Jesus appears with the hateful look on his face that my father would give me whenever he sneered, "What are you, stupid?" It's perplexing how much darkness a person can swallow and still function. Even after Hitler was dead, the screams from the gas chambers went on.

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I was anxious about what might happen next now that transvestite vampire biker nuns from outer space were shooting death rays from their fingertips. So I dove into a visceral beautiful turbulent place. I was soon wishing I hadn't. There were people there who could recite by heart the four rules for the perfect selfie: hold your phone high; know your angle; know your lighting; and no duckface!

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The beach is deserted this time of year, but the light is particularly beautiful, as if infused with the tenderest feelings for all the bleakness it touches. She gets out her phone to take a picture. I'm standing a slight distance off, the sparkling ocean at my back, waiting for her to tell me when to smile.

THE POET SPEAKS: *I believe a poem shouldn't just be about our experience, but be an experience itself. This is the reaction I at least have had to poems by some of my favorite writers: Charles Simic, Robert Bly, Donald Justice, William Carlos Williams, Donald Hall, Margaret Atwood, Carolyn Forché, Sharon Olds, and even Charles Bukowski.*

AUTHOR'S BIO: Howie Good is the author of *THE DEATH ROW SHUFFLE*, a poetry collection forthcoming from Finishing Line Press.