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BRUCE RICHARD WILSON

Born: Many times Died: Again and again

POET, MENTOR, SAGE FOR AN AGE

The unexpected and devastating passing of a great friend, a great mind and a greater visionary, has left all of us at Fleas stunned and saddened. Bruce was a champion talent! A poet with brilliant vision whose special genius was recognized by his great teachers Leonard Cohen, Irving Layton and Milton Acorn, all three cornerstones of Canadian poetry. Bruce was always an inspiration to fledglings like us: we were his flock, he our shepherd-sage. He is neither lost nor gone but a journeyman on his journey. Onward bright spirit. Burn bright star. We will see you again in every flower. We will hear you again every time the phoenix sings. This issue is dedicated, with our abiding love, to you, Bruce. *Magnitudo numquam moritur.* Horace.

A thunderous roar was heard from the crowd in Times Square in New York, Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto, the Place Vendome in Paris and the Piazza San Marco in Venice when news of the 10th issue of FOTD was released. Whole populations had been camping out for three days awaiting this news! The earth was said to shake slightly off it's axis of rotation and when the issue went live humanity breathed a sigh of relief. (With apologies to Joey Scarfone. Thanks, dude!)

Hey writers, lefters and readers! This is Larry Lit Bug, your host for this milestone issue of the 'little zine that could…and did!' Yes, we're here to welcome in BIG Issue 10! Yay! Yahoo! Google! Ooops…And because this is a special event in FOTD's literary life, we have graciously agreed to your requests about 'what the heck are you dogs (and one fox) all about? So get ready, folks, because here are:

The TEN Questions You Never Wanted to Ask and the Answers You Really Don't Want to Listen to.

Voice over (whispering into the mic) *We're seated inside the nerve centre of FOTD, somewhere in Canada-the true north strong and flea. Across from me is Cofounder Tom Ball. He dressed casually, in his at home clothes—a pair of fetish black rubber diapers, a Viking helmet (he* does *have a degree in archeology, you know)and because he's Canuk, on his clodhoppers he's wears a pair of snowshoes (even though Toronto is hotter in the summer than Florida at any time of the year). Beside—well, actually quite far apart from him—(Did you move your chair?) sits the other half of this lionized lit rag, fanning the air with his hand and holding a scent flacon under his nose. Why it's none other than Cofounder Charles Pinch. He's come to interview smartly turned out in a* 'fatto in Italia' *(because he* does *speak Italian, you know) Armani suit as black as a*

medieval plague. In his lapel he sports a buttoner of fresh hemlock in memory of Socrates(because he does have a degree in philosophy degree, you know). Wait a minute. Charles, you tricky licky you…c'mon, what's written on your T-shirt. Don't be shy. Show us! In true flasher fashion he stands up, legs apart, and rips open his jacket. Emblazoned on the T—wait, the glare is hurting my eyes—hold on—yes, I see it: Kublai Khan but Immanuel Kant*. Oh hee-hee- Too funny. Stop it! I'll crack a rib! All right. Time to get down to business here. Tom, have the drugs kicked in? Yepper! Charles, is your libido on a leash? When isn't it? Okay here we go.*

Larry:

1. This first question is from Iva Bigone in Saint Lupus, Crimea: *"Where did the name 'Fleas on the Dog' come from?*

Tom and Charles speaking together. *"We think it was Charles but maybe it was Tom. It was either Tom or Charles. Actually, it probably was Tom unless it happened* to be *Charles. Other names for the rag-mag we tossed around were: The Sinkhole. Expansive Shrink Wrap. Expensive Shrink Wrap. Scabies is Your Friend. Puppies Galore, Pass the Sick Bag and our second runner up fave 'Cut yourself and See What Colour Your Blood Is.'*

Charles: *Wait a minute! I remember now. It was the day Tom was diagnosed with mange. Fleas on the Dog just seemed the right fit.*

Larry: *Oh, yeah? How's your mange, Tom?*

Tom: *It's cleared up now but for two weeks I couldn't wear rubber.*

Charles: *Keep him away from fire hydrants!*

Larry: Ha! Ha!. The second question is from a student at Sherwood College called Robin Hoodie. He wants to know why you publish so many genres.

Tom: Because the other zines don't.

Charles: It's tuff to get published no matter what you write but a lot of the journals and zines out there make it even harder. There are very few venues serving writers of mainstream fiction, genre fiction—sci/fi, splatter lit or even some forms of experimental literature. Mandates are often discouragingly narrow—too narrow—and their interest seems to solicit a lot of socially marginalized writers. But what about the ones who aren't marginalized? And playwrights who want to publish their plays? And good creative nonfiction? Where do you go?

Tom: Well, here.

Larry: Good point. Okay, number 3 comes from an inmate in *Prison of Sex*---

Tom (to himself) Didn't I write that?

Who asks…"How can you tell if you don't have any talent as a writer?"

Charles: "When Grammarly writes better than you do."

Larry: "Number 4". From Leach Thugbutts in Cracker Jack, Nova Scotia. He asks: "What makes a writer unique?"

Tom: Voice. It's the first thing we look for when we read a submission. It's your literary DNA—unique to you and no other writer. It's the one absolute that must be there. I say 'must' because you can't pretend or fake it and it can't be learned. It's just part of who you are—your footprint as a writer. Give it time and nourishment and it will emerge. That's the good news. The bad news is it can be suffocated or even extinguished in places like MFA Creative Writing classeooms.

Larry: Oh-oh! Wanna be careful there. Our fifth question was sent in by a guy on a Barca lounger who signs himself H.R.H. (Nevada). Whoops! I wasn't supposed to mention that! Anyway, he asks: 'What's a good way to learn to write dialogue?"

Charles: It's one of the biggest challenges a writer has to master. Good dialogue is not a literal transcription of speech which is often dead sounding when written down. It has to meld with the descriptive writing in the story/novel/play. The best way to learn it is by reading the best authors. And don't just think Nobel Prize here. Read dialogue in a variety of genres. You won't always find it at its best in uppity, tight ass fiction. Some of the best dialogue from the 2nd half of the 20th C was written by Elmore Leonard. This isn't just me talking—it's general critical consensus. And this guy wrote crime novels. But read *The Big Bounce*, and watch a master at work.

Larry: For our sixth question reader Trudy Justin asks: FOTD is a Canadian site. But we don't see a lot, if any, Can Lit being published. Why?

Tom: First, we don't get a lot of submissions that would fall under that specific heading. Second, the ones we do don't make the grade (ours, anyway). Can Lit, by definition, is necessarily regional. The writing we publish is global, not excepting American regionalism, and its relevance is universal. Now, how about some maple syrup with your Tim Horton's coffee?

Charles: Is that two poutines to go?

Larry: Uh-oh. A heavy coming your way here. A follower who prefers to remain anonymous asks: "Do you guys believe in God?"

Tom and Charles in unison: "Who…?"

Larry: Rufus Redpup in Massacre, Australia asks: "What makes FOTD different from other lit zines?"

Tom: The Author's Note. Quality Quotables. Why We Like It. And our editors.

Charles: *Especially* our editors. We scored, dude.

Larry: Question number 9. Myles Long asks: "Does it bother you to reject a submission? And what's your advice to writers you reject?

Charles: Actually, it does. Here at FOTD we don't use **REJECTION (!),** but the kinder, gentler '*declined*'. Rejected raises memories of junior high when people snubbed us for stupid reasons like we didn't shower regularly or use deodorant and had green stuff growing on our teeth. Oh, the pain! But back to your question. The fact that someone has the spleen to submit to us in the first place is an act of courage and we respect that because 99 out of 100 submissions get mowed down like Hannibal's infantry. All of us our published writers and all of us have had work rejected by idiots who should know better. It's not personal, it just comes with the territory. Our advice? Cap the pill bottle, put the razor back in the box, say fuck'em and go back to your writing.

Larry: Tom?

Tom: Ditto.

Larry: And this final question from someone at 'Loans 4 Losers'---hmm, they sound familiar. When are you guys going to monetize FOTD?"

Tom: We aren't. Ever.

Charles: Because once you start worrying about a bottom line, you're no longer worrying about the quality of the writing you publish.

Larry: Bulls eye! Okay, it's a rap, Kanye. Off the record, I got a question of my own. For each of you. What's the most insulting thing you've ever said to someone?

Charles: My dog had sex with your mother and he told me she was just so so.

Larry: OUCH! Good one! Mom, are you okay? Tom?

Tom: You remind me of Charles.

Larry: WOWZA!!! Off the charts, dude! Luv it! Just don't accept any drink he gives you tonight!

This Larry the Lit Bug signing off until next time! B there or B aquare!

WELCOME to FOTD featuring……The Fabtastics!—selections of some of the best stories published in past issues. We were harder on fiction submissions this time around because we wanted to leave room for these stellar examples of the writing craft and the art of literature. We hope you enjoy reading them.

We're a no frills brown bag online lit rag with only one focus: GOOD WRITING. Our style is 'HOTS!'—hands off the submissions! We publish every submission exactly as received, so there might be arbitrary spacing, pagination and files containing more than one font. What you won't find are pretty pictures and fancy layouts. We like this 'broadsheet' deconstructionist approach—the printed page as its own aesthetic—inspired by the 'Beat' presses and journals because it visually footprints the individual in a way a uniform format does not. We hope you like it too. (In some cases with poetry, Hezekiah's intro will be found at the bottom, not the top of the page.)

Wade Springer, who designed the amazing titles in Issue 9 didn't want to do them for # 10 (some lame excuse about a warrant out there for his arrest) but he owed Charles drug money, so there! Maybe it's the pressure of being a hunted animal, but we think his designs for this number are even better! Thanks, bruh, for staing under the radar!

We're just six rad dudes and one moxy fox who love the language and fall on our knees at the sound of beautiful words in all their glorious reach and transformative power. At FOTD we share that with each submission we publish, each different from the other, some miles and styles apart, but always burning. *Nisi optimum et clarissimum.*

And now with great pride and pleasure we give you our milestone **Issue 10**. As bright as the face of Beauty, as dark as the Nightingale's song. And until we meet again in Issue 11, always remember to spread the LOVE and STAY SAFE, or, as we say here in rockin' Canada, the true north strong and Flea, "Stay safe, ***eh!***"

Tom, Charles, Joey, Hezekiah, Janet, Richard and Rob