

O My Sweet and other poems by Marc Darnell

I feel dumb in skull  
and gut without you.  
I didn't know  
you had that pull,  
but now woe  
is me. Oh to slap you--  
assault has benefits.

I think I'll paint  
a picture of you,  
a loud one, it won't  
be hard, and dart it  
every now quiet  
appreciated hour,  
or I'll let the new  
pup pee on it--  
the one you craved  
then left with me  
for hairless Dave.

Were you that sour,  
fed up, enslaved  
or swept away  
to make a trollop's  
hop away from me?  
Mom will flip--  
she hoped for marriage,  
ignored your baggage,  
but screw the carriage.

Three times a week  
I feel I made you up--  
O a dream sweet;  
then I see my cheek,  
the crescent scar from your,  
my, engagement ring,  
a fading bling sting.  
Gag, or shit it out,  
the way you shitted me.  
Keep those antihistamine  
Enya DVDs.

autopsy

row row row your blade  
gently through the chest  
of my vessel sadly made  
of outer laugh and inner shade  
bronze the body's best

merrily merrily massively  
messily  
then throw out the rest

throw throw throw your coat  
on my patchwork corpse  
but first remove my walmart watch  
and cross my arms across my crotch  
press my belly for burps

rhythmically rhymingly hymningly  
heimlichly  
lest the body warps

## Groom's Vow

With this ring I thee wed till I  
am sick of you and need a separate bed,  
a separate house, because I will not try  
to take your shit, you'll leave my heart so dead

I'll have no love to give our future children  
that I'll see off to school and hope they find  
a life that is more solid and less broken,  
without a spouse who has an ax to grind.

With this ring I let my strong will bend  
till I snap, till I do not care  
when I die or if the world will end,  
if I'm in hell as long as you're not there.

Kill me now and trap another man,  
or smash your veiled face before I can.

the asshole orderly

get off me  
dusty fart  
I'll never be  
old like you  
just wheeze  
that crotchety  
way you do  
I came to clean  
you seizure  
not to carry you  
to the can  
your skin it rips  
like husks I had  
an iguana like  
you but I'm a  
rubber man  
with rubbers man  
bouncer of beds  
your call button  
jams the link  
the ice clink  
of my boo's  
cold texts  
you're deadbook  
friended when  
dumped here  
so play yahtzee  
it's real easy  
with parkinson's  
roll a die and die  
wheel this hell  
forever I'll never  
pickle here I'm a  
smooth-skinned  
suave stag  
going home to a  
squeeze on the  
vine every night  
this job's fluff  
my shift's up

God

I'm the cataract that made your mother a bit blind and crash her Malibu  
squint at word searches the rest of her life in the nursing home

I'm the cancer that ate your father's esophagus until they cut it out  
stretched his stomach up to his Adam's apple so he couldn't vomit

I'm the fungus gnats that swarm your plants the bugs you swallow  
accidentally since they love carbon dioxide and irritating lonely people  
whose only friends are weeping figs anemic ivies and philodendrons

I'm the mysterious lust in your pedophiliac uncle who only got probation  
for possessing kiddie porn oh it wasn't his whatever

I'm the amblyopic eye of the klepto hotel maid  
the one that didn't look at anyone when she walked out with amenities  
and other maids' tips in her butt crack till flatulence gave her away

I'm influenza sneaking around in hospitals and dreams thrown  
in Sara Lee-sweetened dumpsters and eaten by the homeless  
whose sorry asses you think of a little on that prophet's birthday  
no he's not my son why did he say that it got him nailed

I'm the deformity of the child who doesn't stand a chance  
yes that's me I can make anything that's how low I go even lower you'll see

I'm the anger in unmaintained bodies and hints of mortality  
in varicose veins and all black that comes from below defecating  
on hope and snuffing babies on their bellies as I laugh at the whim of heaven

I'm dancing that you think I was the Big Bang the sea-parter  
cruel bystander ruler of biology and you don't know me  
at all I'm not an explanation for anything to you bald animals

John Denver

Sunshine on my shoulder looks so lovely,  
more so than the tumor on the screen--  
an X-ray glyph, inoperable and caused by  
too many sunny days upon my skin.

Thank you, melanomic, bluest sky--  
clouds and rays angelic to my eyes,  
hard to take for one about to die--  
I'm glad the doctor's own eyes didn't lie.

Insurance paid one half of all the measures  
it took to tell I'd croak before my mother  
who now will have to watch my violent seizures.  
I'm way past middle-age and have no lover

and never will, I do not blame another  
nor myself, nor God, I blame the weather.

the cord of life

when I vacuum if I can't  
find any open outlets I  
unplug things but forget  
to plug them back in like  
phones charging or hotel  
alarm clocks televisions  
programmed for favorite  
channels or respirators  
O<sub>2</sub> tanks helping people  
live I remember before  
I leave work usually if it's  
a vital apparatus maybe  
I'll find another job that  
doesn't require a PhD  
in sucking why do I  
forget to plug things back  
in is my brain gelling  
it takes fourteen seconds  
to unplug a cord vacuum  
the carpet and plug it  
back in but somehow I  
forget and I wonder if  
Maury misses a crucial  
phone call in the morning  
or if Gene oversleeps  
has Esther suffocated  
gone coma since I cut her  
power if this is some  
bit of dementia and I'm  
soon surrounded by an  
electrical Stonehenge  
and my senile lungs quit  
their involuntary reflex  
will the dufus remember  
to plug the cord to my  
bag of a lung back in?

## Don't Let Me Die Here

Cold people and bad traffic-- that's all  
that comes to mind thinking of this hole--  
this Midwest town of ignorance and hell,  
a special hell of year-round potholes, souls

concerned with jaunts and frisbees in the park,  
with secret prostitution sought through apps.  
This grinding city grid destroyed my brakes--  
stoplights every hundred feet, perhaps

the full Missouri will now wholly flood  
the streets and wash away the idling men  
smoking in their Bobcats pushing mud  
from here to there, the malls are caving in

from emptiness, I yearn for taller times--  
mirrored towers, no Dip and Yield signs.

## Propane Tomatoes

I think my mother is trying to kill me. She's  
a sweet, brown, Bohemian lady, almost  
eighty-three. A year ago the river  
flooded her house, yard and garden, tipping  
over her massive propane tank, spilling  
into the garden soil, and yet she planted  
tomatoes and peppers I don't trust to eat.  
Contaminated? I know I'm not her favorite,  
more a problem than all her kids combined--  
I lived with her when I was poor, out  
of work more than once from uncontrolled  
sadness, and yet, have I been such a headache  
enough to kill? How do we know our loved ones,  
or if they're loved, or if they truly love?  
*Take a bite, so sweet* she says, I'll pass--  
she could be the Snow White hag, my mother,  
angry I returned to cause her grief,  
toting medical bills she paid with blood,  
as I eat tainted produce from her mud.

a hut with a plus sign

come ye goats  
I have hay for you  
it is my body eat it  
the trough is my  
blood drink shh  
goateed god Baah  
is watching

**Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes:** *Marc Darnell fascinates me. 'I feel dumb in skull / and gut without you.' Grooms can be jilted too, but rarely sue for breach of promise: I lost a love to heart balm. But the days are rare that I didn't think I made the right choice. Is there ever any consolation in lost love other than bitter ir-reconciliation? The constellation is forever star-crossed. "autopsy" may be the best verse I have read this issue. 'row row row your blade / gently through the chest...' "Grooms Vow" 'With this ring I thee wed till I / am sick of you and need a separate bed,' Maybe AimeeNicole (see ToC) and Darnell should get together, or in the least, be read juxtaposed for equal opportunity of gender hate misandry and misogyny colliding. Still their posies are delightful. "Propane Tomatoes" and a mother's love...Proof positive as much poetry is spun from hostility as felicity. Read each and every one—Darnell is fine art. Spacing is poet's own. HS*

**THE POET SPEAKS:** *I've been writing for 40 years now. I guess if I were going to be famous it would have happened by now. I started out a very gloomy poet hooked on Sylvia Plath, and I even had some professors wondering if I was okay in the head. Most poets are very sensitive, and their poetry is a reaction to their sensitivity. I write both free verse and formal. I recommend any poet trying to be good at both. I have a very serious side, and being bipolar and having OCD is rampant throughout my poetry, but I consider myself a very humorous person and have my special "lashing out" poetry. I don't think of it as "hate poetry", but it's my reaction to things that piss me off, like the ignorance religion seems to propagate in society, the cruelty of disease, and the jerks some people can be. I don't believe in heaven or hell, but it would be nice if there were a special little hell for people who make other people's lives crappier. I laugh at death and dumbness. I'm a quiet little janitor with a lot to say. I never earned a dime from my degrees. My influences are Roethke, Plath, and the god and goddess of poetry-- Wallace Stevens and Emily Dickinson.*

**BIO:** *Marc Darnell is a custodian and online tutor in Omaha NE, and has also been a phlebotomist, hotel supervisor, busboy, editorial assistant, farmhand, devout recluse, and incurable brooder. He received his MFA from the University of Iowa, and has published poems in The Lyric, Rue Scribe, Verse, Skidrow Penthouse, Shot Glass Journal, The HyperTexts, Candelabrum, The Road Not Taken, Aries, Ship of Fools, Open Minds Quarterly, The Fib Review, Verse-Virtual, Blue Unicorn, Ragazine, The Literary Nest, and The Pangolin Review among others.*

