

NOT SO FAST and other poems

By Chris Bullard

Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes: *There is something extraordinary about this poetry—I can't quite put my finger on it. The greatest rewards come from embracing that which is just out of reach. Having Bullard within your grasp is like discovering handles to/on doors you never knew were closed. I am in the habit of quoting excerpts from entries in order to entice you. It is not necessary here. He's like learning new words that describe feelings you have felt forever. Fernweh: A nostalgic longing for places you have never been...Who wouldn't want to know this guy? HS*

Not so Fast

You may have sent me packing,
but I'm not moving on to the next waiting area.
It takes more than a blanching cold front
to see me off with the Monarch multitudes.
Tucked in among the mixed perennials,
I've taken sanctuary with the garden gnomes.
My little bros are as resolute as legionnaires.
I've grown a plaster beard in solidarity.
The dogs are on my side in this business
of sniffing around your door for scraps.
I've learned to lift a paw. I beg with the best of them.
There's a good boy.
My stubbornness has the monumentality
of some natural feature in an Ansel Adams print.
I look so good in your backyard

they're talking about making me into a national park.

The Jersey Boy hybrids have inflated to the size

of world-circling dirigibles. Uhm, tasty.

Mafiosa stop to have selfies taken with them.

The kukes show up like ICBMs on Google Maps.

You've got to stop thinking inside is paradise.

Out here, baby, it's all herbs and flowers karma.

You threw me out;

time to throw yourself out, too.

Memo to the Voice Actor

I wanted a voice-over for "My Life" that was positive and uplifting.

The voice-over you provided is snickering and disdainful.

I specified a dignified, plummy British accent,

but your delivery is American, urban and sarcastic.

I wanted a voice-over that would brand my story as one of high importance.

Instead, you have delivered your line readings in mocking tones.

For example, where I enter a room and pick up a book,

you go off script and say, "Like the dick head read anything more than comics."

I must conclude that we no longer share the same aesthetic vision,

just as we no longer share a positive physical and emotional relationship.

Your insistence on imposing your own ideas upon my inner voice

is becoming destructive to this production as well as to my sense of self-respect.

Please perform your voice-over in a manner consistent with the story board I wrote.

Also, I am tired of hearing the laughter of your girlfriends in the audio background.

Fourteen Shades of Dark

- 1) It was so dark you could set your watch by it
- 2) It was so dark that you couldn't see where you were in your dreams.
- 3) It was so dark that the white bishop and the black bishop kept traveling on the same diagonal.
- 4) It was so dark that it was impossible to read each other's thought balloons.
- 5) It was so dark that if you held your hand in front of your face you could only make out your face.
- 6) It was so dark that we kept tripping over the furniture even though we were standing still.
- 7) It was so dark that we gave all the awards to dead people.
- 8) It was so dark that when we stumbled off the cliff we didn't fall.
- 9) It was so dark that the police stopped shooting people because they figured they were probably just shooting other police.
- 10) It was so dark that our language only had one adjective left which was "dark."
- 11) It was so dark that when you tried to imagine what it would be like if things got darker you could only imagine things getting lighter though it would still be dark.
- 12) It was so dark that when our eye offended and we plucked it out we got bored and put it back in, again.
- 13) It was so dark that the government agents couldn't redact any of their memoranda, so all the secrets got released except we couldn't read any of them.
- 14) It was so dark we didn't notice how blind we were.

Angels

flit through the aether like anxious light beams.

God's product design flaw

has left their radiant, sculpted faces without eyelids.

They can't grab forty winks.

To escape eternal consciousness they use their halos

for nooses or batter their skulls

against Heaven's border wall. Only china white

offers them a momentary nod.

Slip a bag between their feathers; they pay

in redemption whatever its street price.

Don't turn up begging for miracles empty-handed.

They might kick you to hell

and watch you go up in flames just as a distraction

from the pain of always seeing glory.

THE POET SPEAKS: *I started writing poetry in school, but gave it up after college only to go back to it after a series of unfortunate events. Writing poetry is a way of organizing and recording my thoughts, but in such a way, I hope, that is not simply a recitation of instances that I find to be either beautiful or ugly. What is literal is usually boring and I try to write poems that do not bore the reader. It's hard to tell who and what has influenced me. Writers you hate may be more of an influence than writers you love. I have not consciously tried to write in the style of anyone else, but there are many writers I have tried my best to avoid imitating. If you are looking for someone to read, I would suggest Russell Edson, Ted Berrigan and James Tate.*

BIO: *Chris Bullard lives in Philadelphia, PA. He received his B.A. in English from the University of Pennsylvania and his M.F.A. from Wilkes University. Finishing Line Press published his poetry chapbook, Leviathan, in 2016 and Kattywompus Press published High Pulp, a collection of his flash fiction, in 2017. His work has appeared in recent issues of Nimrod, Muse/A Journal, The Woven Tale, Red Coyote, Cutthroat and The Offbeat.*