***Soft Erosion***

Blood on the streets up to my ankles. Folks carry burdens unseen while shooters rise up, fire away in towns, school districts, airports and another TSA agent making ten bucks an hour dies over shoes and belts while standing in for The Man.

Those that claim a shiny radiance, a business, a better-ness, a nose so turned up all it can smell is new car. Cadillacs signify you are better and would like me to know. US has a crack down the middle, a fissure in the ice caps dropping off into the sea to return to water.

I want to have hope. A streak of resolve as wide as a city block. The cars will drive past while we pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and step on the dead. Watch-words and vitriol, oil in the aquifer, our water becoming decayed and not at all like General Ripper’s ‘precious bodily

fluids’. Grandmas die of breast cancer medically (or not) aided by Cobras, lumps on lumps. The lump in my throat makes it hard to speak to you. No one really hates anymore, but dips into the reservoir of disdain leeching in and filling us with brackish blood.

Empathy melts away like dirty snow in April. Entrepreneurs have lots of acquaintances (they call them customers) but no true friends. Survival of the feckless. Today, another class on job skills will end and money will change hands but there is no one left

to disrupt the money handlers in the name of the father, son, and holy smoke. Speak softly, the big sticks are all bought and paid for. Blood on the streets will soon reach the knees.

***The Chronicle of Higher Education, Driftless Edition***

I am the way I am because I can. Try to keep resolutions, think of blue skies with wispy tendril clouds like lit cigarettes. Put a smiling face on work, tacky grease paint grin. Words in all caps signifying then dropping out like a string of X-mas lights missing bulbs.

High country, driftless, never touched or pulled or pressed down upon by glaciers. Days like this at 5:58 pm in a windowless basement room feeling my flat heart vibrate with but slight reverb. There’s a blond one in the back with permanent waves and a long board. Her friend from

FFA that’s smarter, but not nearly as smooth or likely to laugh at my jokes, sits at attention. On the other side is a guy named after a beer and three dudes that go by ‘Nick’. In this room, they all hold a quiet, ersatz stoicism. Sisyphus has yet to visit them.

In an hour we’ll shuffle and move out into the cold, still evening of Monday Night Football, grilled burgers and fries. Rest and hold quiet contemplation. Or if luck has it, delectable sex under covers of stars and heavy breath. The cycle moves within without.

If I do not participate, there is no one to mind. We find adverts for rides to share home, find our way half-blind. Everyone just makes it up as they go along. We will do it over and over, in some slight variation with similar results that end up with someone being slightly smarter. So they say.

***Eight Ball Heart***

That sign around your neck that reads ‘FRAUD’

can set you free. Expectations disintegrate

like HMO physician/patient interactions. The

boy with the copper head slithers away never

to be seen again. We are truly the audience

for ourselves.

Non-verbal expressions of power

and dominance. Make yourself big, stretch

out, take up space. Feeling power chronically

versus power in the moment. My sign indicates

I have none. All signs do not point to yes.

The eight ball is my heart.

Obsequious, weak-kneed mealy mouth left with

nothing but Leonard Cohen’s ‘Everybody Knows’.

Expectations would indicate that I should fold

inward, raise my hand half-high, simpering

whimper. Change my name to Peter and fall

right up to the principle.

Outlive usefulness. I told a friend my job put no

value on me. His take? We, me, he and I are

not value-less---we are a net neutral position

in the hierarchy of flacks and crazies that each

have found their echelon in our world of brains

and egos.

A body with X number of cells would fill my

role quite swimmingly, thank you. Thank you

very much. Take on the power poses; rise to

the glass ceiling that looks like a mirror. Gamble

on yourself to never be well-regarded. The house

always wins in spite of.

Sport your fraud round your neck like Flavor Flav

and the clock always striking twelve. Once a pumpkin,

always a pumpkin. Evaluative situations lose

their key function. The face made of stone.

Heckle me dammit. Make me feel one thing once

before the training video ceases.

End transmission\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Correspondent***

Corrupt and unwavering. You received mail

that contained information about those behind

the recent attack ads against you. Arms with tattoos

of oblong shapes and grotesque faces with multiple

eyes. Bins and buckets of documents with repeated

signatures until one is circled and decided

upon, satisfactory. A cypher or a

hieroglyphic. A statue with a bulbous and

engorged nose. Big sky, mermaids, and Shriners with their

askew hats. Feels like an Arby’s night, you say. We must

avoid interdependence, co-mingling cohorts.

If you contradict yourself or plagiarize from

a work of literature by *B* or *P*, a newswire

teletype regarding Watergate and Liddy’s goons

will reach your office mailbox wrapped around a dead fish.

A copied glance, an askance thought is 78% like

the ekg of a man with consumption. There is

no new thought. Sold out. Give your money to me instead.

There is new thought because the original is

dead. The magic words live on through libraries

and porn blogs. True citizens are for strength, security,

and social mobility meaning they all start with

an *S* and that be it. Hit up the Lucky U Motel

nee’ motor lodge. A safe house shaped like an octagon

with basements and compartments for secrets. There’s no

substitution for experience! Your life is

a barnburner, a Faulknerian mumble. Political

speeches are like moustaches, distasteful and

swarthy. Pink polos and smoothed blue jeans, stylish

yet rugged. Strategic actors are likely to be

shadows of their former selves, intractable and

unverified, phantoms in between words. Beatitudes

for gratitude. Cryptic and precise and full of meaning,

each one a topic. You journal your future in advance

for hope and steamed clams and enlightenment, forever more.

***Scavenger***

Remote viewing of sleepers in studies about slumber

disorders and re-order. Most people surveyed indicated

they preferred watching sleep over death in an airplane crash,

but real solid sack-time won out unanimously over using tweezers

upon random people around the world. Sometimes the

next best thing is not being able to stand the rain comin’

through my window on 110th Street near the art deco Catholic

Church and gay bear bars. Newton the virgin and Descartes the atheist

did not much care for each other and often found

themselves victims of lashing tongues and acridity

of language from acolytes of the searchers, birthers,

and flat-earthers. When one only aspires to being a hairdo

with a face and a pocket full of money, the bar is lower

than a dog turd. I would appreciate a review of the fundamentals

(of humanhood) when I am tired or even better, when I try to double

up Rip Van W. and land-of-nod-it for forty. Acres and a mule all the 3/5

man inherited from chains and whips. And I can hear

Fred Von D. telling me in his Minnesota radio man voice

to “quit fucking around for chrissakes.” He has a Bukowski soul

matched up with the wit of an Irishman with the clap. In Florida, no

one had leverage. We were all slow kids, doing it over

and over and under and down ‘til the money ran out and

no one much wanted to see us in the ivory Koch Brother towers

anymore. We were too lazy, like gibbons with a charge card rounding

off pennies. Jennifer Aniston was never girlfriend material-

her hair was too popular and as for us, we had railroad tracks

to cross and eggs to fry. We hoped for honor points and merit badges

and special considerations from strangers, if only in dreams. Awake and asleep.

***The Wilderness is Everywhere That’s Not Here***

Coinciding with time are incidents. Events like county fairs

and moments like the first twitchy spark of love. If you had

carte blanche in your life there would be more circumspection

and self-doubt popping like frying meat on hot metal. I never

believed in guillotines and Utah has reinstated the firing squad

for efficient death giving. The Great Salt Lake has a city with a

choir and white people with health club memberships and your

genealogy back through plantation owner X, seamen Y, settler Z.

Within the enclave is the fourth largest gay community in America

and they try to reconcile the ribbons and the flags and the brotherhood.

Autistic children see life as a parallelogram while the straights buy

in to the lion king circle motif. James Earl Jones is God’s voice when

I imagine Him talking to me. His son sounds more like rancor and

metrosexual hipsters. John the B is of course, Denis Leary. Old dead

Heston fills the role of Mo, and the great Satan must be the sneaky

drawl of Kevin Spacey. I finally finished with accumulating data and

my retirement plan had folded into thirty bucks a month, give or take

a handshake. Ascetic life appealed to young, earnest men in times when

bounty wasn’t abundant and consternation worn like a winter hat. Then

cable TV and cyber sex and the dumb kids, whose position in class was

made defunct. Obsolete as a service station or using good dishes at dinner.

New starts should be embarrassing or un-American today. What I do or don’t

know is an eyelash, a fart in a car, a glance that says, I get you. If she

could come with me, I’d leave now. Now. Now. For the new universes

we both know are out there. And we would never come back.

***Brown Poem***

Film of smoke in my mouth and nostrils, wispy and acrid, a veneer. She sat in a bean bag chair, a misshapen kidney, legs bent at the knee. A burner smoking chicory in the corner; Autumn

leaves like fluttering ballerinas reach the ground and crinkle when stepped on or blown away. Dvorak’s 7th from the sad years on the hi-fi, her glasses slide down to the tip of her nose. Smoke

rising up the curtains like a vine. Last laps of love, felt once, before we became boring, a *NY Times* crossword never finished on the table with rubber eggs and spit bacon fat. Newsprint,

news fit to print, print all dying. Easing into the water slow, a suicide or an accident like Whitney Houston. The greatest love of all would have been our children, but we never made it.

A ‘T’ in the road--- no goin’ down to the crossroads. No deals with Legba. The cat stretches at Her feet, looks distracted by sleep and missed opportunities. “Meow,” it says, but she wants to

say something else entirely, I can tell. Sorry for all this? Perhaps. She should be. Or maybe it is I. The smoke coming in thick makes it hard to see through. A veil of all that will be left unsaid. If I

were to come down from my perch, see this as life instead of a commercial for public television, We might really have something. I sip my scotch, lowland smoky, her face a portrait of grace.

She has no idea what I have come to do.

***Financial Aid Exit Interview***

Sculpt the beard to trim. White cement block walls, rubber rooms. No TV, wear ties. Bittersweet broken hearted saviors. See Vegas for what it is underneath the show and pretty lights. Own a dictionary. A one in three chance of success and Asian women will always be smarter than you.

*Alvarado, Cohn, Carson, Solis, Betik, De La Cruz, Barry*.

Alter the terms of tenure. Promote an agenda you believe in even when all others say you are wrong. It’s called being ‘unintimidated’ and ‘making hard choices’. It’s also called ‘being a dick’. Fix your hair. Close caption what I say for the hearing impaired and the monkeys.

*White, Steinberg, Chen, Serrano, Augustine, Kaplan, Wynne.*

Sign your documents with multiple pens. Leave yourself an exit strategy and get that golden parachute. Get paid like the Drake for typing. Enjoy the six figure paycheck for jackassery. Scratch your head, throw up your hands, then look at just one cod example.

*Sesei, Barajas, Washington, Mitchell, Cabrera, Horizaka, Morin.*

Regulate the state but let them conceal and carry and shoot drunk women in the face in Dearborn Heights because an old white man is afraid of losing his version of America. Dark assumptions. The #13, 666, 777, 1126. Waiting lists for all.

*Paige, Fatimata, Saphine, Parker, Laborio, Elasquez, Adams.*

1947 sound barrier, planes break apart. Pilots on the ground. Glamorous Glynnis. See through instead of look at. Re-tweak troubled neighborhoods. General call-out for more rapping teachers. Hook ‘em horns. Hook ‘em on phonics. Learn by melodies and harmony, disposable crutches.

Skeptics let the dogs out. Catchy works but it don’t mean nothing. Power knowledge with increased class time. Focused incisions and dissections. Collage a college with collision and collagen. Team always beats individual. Want the molds to be filled.

*Diallo, Jefferson, Calderon, Miller, Fregosi, Anthony, McQueary.*

Rub your hands together when you talk, it implies you’re thinking hard or have some type of wisdom. C is for cookie. C is for Crips. Comb your hair properly. Leave out for a farm. Winslow Homer rolling hills and alien trees. Pull the files for XYZ, perhaps they’ll get done tomorrow.

***Man of the People***

Was up at the Capitol observation deck, did my duty,

took a picture flipping off the empty suit, thought of

Anger and roil, the afternoon teas that joint has seen,

and a good chap by name of Brandon. He sings now.

Every day. Blows his horn and gets ticketed for being

a disruptive mutton-chopped bloke.

Most, I am sad that the money wins, but there’s always

Brandon out there. Fighting his good fights while I soak in

The system and keep the waves to a minimum. Brandon

wrote for me, crazed screeds with profanity and no dearth

Of heart. I wrote him a letter of recommendation. It was

the least I could do.

Godspeed to the pendulum to swing again, we can go

forward and perhaps there will be no need for daily singing

And prayers to Woody Guthrie anymore. I know

it is a fool’s wish. McCarthys and Walkers come and then go

To become footnotes leeching into granite and history. We shall

make better Beaux-arts attempts.

I wonder what Brandon will do when time passes. He will be

experienced in vitriol and able to shake waves with his horn,

His baritone. A new theater will rise to him, new tales to share,

write a bit more, learn a new trade, become better than all he

Stands against. He stands in for me every day and all I can come

forth with is, deep deep gratitude.

***Braised Ribs***

Contrast my faith with my few hours spent on Sundays watching

a sport of pigs, kin of all colors and creeds and constitutions. I want

to believe. The twilight mustiness of the Pacific Northwest, sharing

good pie and coffee. Dreaming of Laura Palmer love and the wacky

weirdness folded into starlight and conversations about snow tires.

LED lights have no place in the forest.

Laws should never be famous and police that have names are accepting

celebrity over the protect and the serve. The Nobel Peace Prize should

not be accepted until there is one day of no blood shed worldwide. Leave

the post vacant--- none of us have earned it in years and damn, if *Game of Thrones*

just doesn’t make me feel like a shitty human being only interested in blood,

forced sex, and overwhelming cruelty.

If it all went away my life would be more about sunlight and apples.

The cause of mountains is two parts geography, two parts hope, and one

part disbelief. The cold sparkle on the snows is like the falling on cedars

in January. The pointed firs point up and up, teasing God out like a cloud

and an idea that time has passed. Choose your evidence in skeptical ways.

Find your position of distrust.

Despite popularity and paradigm shifts there will always be one more idea

that has not been accounted for. My love is more than a yay or nay and my

brain has no letters of recommendation or degrees conferred. There is no final

problem to consider. Happiness remains the great paradoxical bearded man

living on wit alone. He exists despite and in spite. You can never stop him.

Never never.

***The Murky Past***

Lean into discomfort. Flip your connections. There are thirty-seven aspects

of you that are awesome and only a couple of “opportunities for growth.”

Unravel your connections until you understand shame. At what level we feel

worthiness leads to a binary state. Excruciating vulnerability. Spend a year.

Get change. Deconstruct anxiety. Borrow my time for use in other areas

that trend toward recreation over study. My red glass heart hanging by

the variable that at least someone out there likes me enough to love me

as I am. Manila folders and sharpies are on the shelves waiting to be filled

with stories and incidents and exploding painted designs. Curry favor with

the whole-hearted. Find kindness to yourself from yourself and let go who

you think you should be. Jack in the Minotaur’s maze finds too many paths

and Danny is a bit much when you really think about it. Really? Redrum?

Give me a break from the 1970s that exists in the minds of the few. So

nostalgic it doesn’t hold reality beyond cloudy Kodak prints evoked by

flash cubes. I cuss as a strategy and nod knowingly when I’m uncertain.

The brown shirts we remember show chests of power, cleavage that matters

because it doesn’t show, it hints. It is the opposite of numb. The adult cohort

is in debt to authenticity. We borrow, but we never pay. We make the uncertain

certain. You are right, I am wrong. I am right, you are mah-jong. Shut up and keep

your fat cells. The imperfect is perfectly flawed. Your parents made mistakes

and so will you, too.

***Deep Cut***

Connection is why we are here. Not social justice or another black kid

killed by a white cop. That is about anger and getting immeasurably

screwed over time and again like the runt of the litter. Institutional racism

is where we live. If you are white and don’t feel some guilt, you missed

the history teacher talking apple head rapping about Bull Connor and the

jaybird Oklahoma frat “dudes” singing songs about lynching in the back

of the bus that is 2015. Where these turds are grown is fallow, pissed on,

saturated dead ground. Or they were morons just doing it for a rise. See,

there are few taboos left and bored white boys will find them and rape them

after a slip of the roof. We have to let go our self-induced persona coma

before any connection can excruciatingly forge out of the bedrock of dead

white men. I am free to despise white people as a faceless entity because

I was born one and I don’t have to self-identify with whiteness. No more

family stuff to work through, enough with the childhood shit. Race therapy.

If we are individuals, we are not responsible for the sins of our racial fathers.

I want to say white shoots black doesn’t happen anymore, but that lies like a

rug and the answer is: be still. Don’t buy the narrative. Refuse to participate.

Tune in, turn on, and drop out like goddamned baby boomers that spent the

80s lying about truth. The American Dream is siphoned off fat from our round,

collective asses and grafted into the lips of supermodels with breasts like pyramids.

We should all leave each other with this: love your neighbor or don’t have one.

***Discrepancies of the Recollections of Various Principles***

Don’t call me a researcher, I been here for years. I see magic pixies

in the corners of my vision when I am engrossed in serious evaluative conversations.

 “Only the measured can exist” some believe to be sweet talk. Others believe it is

a fortune or a blurb. Falling slowly once into messy love topics that I had trouble

hacking or understanding or not making her nervous that my love was bigger than hers.

Certainty is scary. Unwavering clenched jaw stalwart conviction scares

the crap out of the young. The old know better; know it’s a lie, a pose, a yik-yak.

Victorians had no shame but were expert in hiding. Blending into the flora like a

walking stick and a whole mess of flies on walls. Belief is subjective and needs a context,

a struggle to overcome, a narrative to fit into the human conversation. Her

voice is amber, a flower in my eyes that makes me think she might be brilliant,

and that turns me on in every way you think I mean but in eleven ways you don’t.

Practice compassion with yourself it said on the flyer for the pancake breakfast

at the Hillel Foundation twenty three years ago. All proceeds go towards a love for

fellow man. It was a betrayal and failed like a broken egg. There is beauty in

breakdown was the motto of the best movie trailer of 2004. It made no money. It

lost its way in act two like his life and your life and my life. Being wrong openly is

a heroic act that redeems your spiritual frequent flyer points. Destination unknown,

but Dale Bozzio’s there. Select my characteristics like an eight-sided die. Coalesce to

a point of black on the horizon. Thorns make my skin numb and my brain freeze

until it cracks away, unknown.

***Brave New Academy***

I like to use an abacus when studying approximation of polynomial functions. It’s a ‘nice to have’. It’s kickin’ it old school. It is honoring my roots and heritage. People prefer me on Youtube rather than in person. Pause me. Repeat me. Repeat after me. Find me repetitive. Freeze frame my face in a pose in which I look especially:

 Wise, like an owl winking, or

 Contemplative, like Malcolm Gladwell’s hair and insoles, or

 Cheeky, like a monkey (see no, hear no, speak no evil), or

 Constipated, like Michael Bolton.

I see no reason to be private with my videos. My public is private and my privates are public. My user feedback has been exemplary withafewexceptionsnotwarrantingmentionhere. I make people smile, provide natural highs, and also teach Kung Fu through mind-meld and useful, strategic, fluid, low-impact arm and leg movements.

Let us discuss the theology of ‘The Matrix’ and search for archetypes in ‘The Wizard of Oz’ ‘cuz really it’s the same story, just a different Jesus. When things dawn on me, they come in a sunlit fury and an aching brainpan. My long term goals are to penetrate the online education market with an Anthony Perkins stabbing motion.

The philosophy of Polaroid cameras has been extinct for years--- dead like banana-shaped bicycle seats and the triceratops. My three-horned face needs no snapshot. The frozen moment holds no value if there is no patience for the mystery of the before and after. You see, if there is no rewind and no fast forward there is no existence. I fart, therefore I am.

All benefits that accrue for anything are nothing but a coincidence. The next step in our cultural ascendance is to expose rural students to Bollywood films and fastidiously measure the fun quotient for tenure-award purposes. Make sure to tell the students that Bruce Willis films are to be watched on their own time b/c they aintworthagoodgoddam anyways.

Silent lucidity left the building with Geoff Tate’s haircut. How things are understood has been gutted for a new fluid paradigm with tangible data points, color-coded, and equated to percentages/ratios with a standard deviation of +/- 3. My self-esteem is impacted by how many hits my blog gets for my latest article which may be titled:

 “The Owls Know More Than They Are Saying,” or

 “Tipping Point, Flipping Point” or

 “The Primate Lab Pub Crawl” or

 “When a Man Loves a Merkin”.

The global village will bury the white privileged dead man ass and put a bow on the headstone. Continue to motivate me with carrot-stick promises and subsidized healthcare (with a moderate co-pay) for my three month old son. Keep me sufficiently stuck. All that I allow will continue to occur. Glory Be to God and the U.S.A. I pledge to the academy forever and ever, amen.

***Gratitude***

Authentic alliteration is apt to be an anomaly. Lots and lots of pies. Only buy items off a menu that have subtext and a kicky story. The story of the food. Updike’s Sammy, *home again, home again, jiggety jig,* Red Sammy’s with the monkey tied to a stake in O’Connor’s world of hard to find good men. Smell the bakery air and take

unsanctioned naps. Take water for granted. Electricity too, and a roof with economical shingles. 2006 was a year in which the following occurred: I saw seals face to face, my head grew .013%, I felt slightly faster, 56 or 7 million people died- give or take. Some from natural causes. Some from loneliness, not to mention despair or parasites. Graduates

will work for food and jerk soda for nickel tips. Start a website. Build. Lift. Smile and flirt. There are often unannounced sales on Mondays. Hide your suit with the snappy pants in a rack for skinny men so the portly chef you know won’t find it and purchase hope (for a date) before you do. Step back a few steps and summarize what you see. Arrogance has

a price and a discount. Arrows arranged anywhere. There’s that alliteration again. Somebody hit me two times. A cousin lives in one of those Phoenix suburbs made of sandcastles and works as a landscaper without water. Rocks make good friends. They’re quiet and smooth and believe in global warming. See the world for the first time. Deacon Jones

invented the quarterback sack and had more than you ever will even if no one counted. My memories make the most sense in binary code as we can better distinguish between olives and cold cuts and those times when I cried. Say thank you to someone even if you have no reason. Just do it, swooshtm, and thank me later.

***Polyhedron Blues***

The wonderland has ended.

There are only unfilled shoes left behind and sanguine guitar thrums.

People always say, “Come on, use your head!” and really, I never do

but I am better than I used to be.

When I get emotional I count semi-trucks on the interstate down

from by neighbor’s house. I lay there and forget until songs come

to my mind that make me want to cry.

I thought of telling her I loved her much sooner than I said

and we became too old for it to mean anything. There were no

more new bursts of life.

After hurricanes we walked around our adopted neighborhood

without sidewalks, heard the massive growl of portable generators

and tree branches remembering

to crack before breaking. The little white dog with the round face,

always set up in the picture window of the split-level, yipping at us

in the rain. That dog

is likely dead now. Which I feel worse about- our death or the dog’s-

is a secret. So long, see you tomorrow. Changes need to be made in my

paragraph structure or the narrative

will fly off the rails. A passenger train in rural Myanmar threw the track

and 307 were killed or injured a day or a month ago. My burden is that I

remember too much. Details fill me

up like helium and I silently squee as my insides turn out. People always

say, “Suck it up, you’ll be all right.” And everything happens for a polyhedron.

The puzzle, the puzzle, the puzzle fits one size for all.

***Degrees of College***

An old man. Electric hair with no brow, a moustache like a broom head,

bright eyes, and a cheeky tongue faces me off today.

The drums tap their way into the soundtrack under a kicky bass line that

recalls youth and love and misery. The gals are no more

than fresh twenty with sloppy hair pulled into a bun. Perhaps there is a

pencil stuck inside. My task is to explain what this is

and why. Walking in a white boy gang of four down Damen and Division

to the Busy Bee for pancakes and the best quarter coffee

on the west side. Wicker Park Chicago felt just right and beat in 1991 before all

this and that. It was the dawning of the rest of our lives

peppered with lies and upcoming holidays. It is easier to be sincere when

you’re twenty. It’s before sex needs a predicate.

It’s when you don’t sweat the in-text citations and look for psychosis in your

lovers that matches your own. O2B ordinary or in a Prince

video circa “Under the Cherry Moon.” The current proposal in the departmental

meeting debated making an addition of the letter “K”

to the team of vowels. It was revolutionary, daring, and fought by the old

guard of white men similar in many characteristics to Einstein

minus intelligence. It took 3.5 hours on a wet Wednesday afternoon in April.

After multiple power points and Prezis about power

points, the discussion was tabled until the next academic year. We all breathed a sigh

of relief and the students were left gleefully unawares.

***American Exceptionalism***

Do not rent for the rest of your life. Own everything. Be worth $18 an hour plus benefits in 2006 dollars. Go door to door selling *Skin So Soft* products. Strive to live somewhere with a backyard swimming pool- above ground for the middle class, in-ground for the upwardly mobile. A curly water slide would lend value to the estate according to Zillow and the postman. Never lose the house. Never never never. Eat from the food bank, wear thrift store duds, discontinue your participation in the monopoly of the interwebs. But don’t lose the house. Real Americans do not allow themselves to be poor. Sell your baseball cards to help support your demented aging mother. Guilt is for suckers.

We need to get back to what we had before- when it was better- more like organ music in church than chicken pox. Old men waterproof basements to get by on less than ten bucks an hour. The Sherman Parks, the Bucktowns, the Buckheads. Where you live shows if you work hard enough. Real estate and sales jobs are pimping yourself out to sell a dream of a bigger car and fancier shoes equals success. Capitalism ate you a long time ago.

Keep the house even if you have no light or water. Mortgage lenders are institutional racists. If you have hands and feet, you can do yard work. You’re outside, making some bucks, but then the paycheck comes and there’s taxes and fees and garnishments for waking up on the wrong side of the tracks. The purpose for getting up in the morning is to imagine how much the day at work will slowly destroy your liver. I have more than enough work if I do it for free. Everything is a stop-gap, a band-aid, a kick of the road down the can. Check the syntax, fool. Meaning is as meaning does, M’am. For investors and billionaires, the good times always come roaring back like F.Scott. Working for commission

is like learning how to rape. The better the brains, the more dough. A lamp with a panther painted on the side equates good style and taste in certain neighborhoods. We’re together all the time as a family and sure, it looks good. It *looks* good. We keep up appearances for ourselves. My wife has to work full-time now and the truck drivers look at her with an eye. She drives a Brinks van and carries lots of keys,

looking all official. We get cash advances at 28% interest to tide us over ‘til the miracle comes and God lets this little light of mine shine. Robbing Peter to pay Paul and Barb and Steve and Claude and Tanisha. The word from the politician’s house is that we need more common sense reforms and modest cuts to positively impact our structural deficit. Articles in USA Today state that it takes a cool mill to retire at 66. I keep workin’ the night shift with Marvin and Jackie. There’s some sweet sounds comin’ down. Metal leaves and stalks of wheat above the couch stand in as art. Signify. Who digs family therapy? The therapist because they feel better about their own and get paid to boot.

America promises each generation will be better than the last. Perhaps it is in fortitude, it ain’t dollars. In the summers, I work for the city keepin’ the flowers on the boulevards, collect the trash and move snow around in the winters. And it is like death. There needs to be more hours

to work and one day, I will sleep like a thousand men surrounded by dirt.

***Public Secrets***

Trickle-down economics as the new divine right. Plutocracy.

Never go to Pluto, it’s a Mickey Mouse planet. There are

7625 men/women/children that own banks. I cannot write

a word of code; am more about luck and savvy than skill.

A high tolerance for risk.

In 1980, the bicentennial was four years dead, there were hostages

in the middle east and yellow ribbons around oak trees. Pat

Riley’s hairdo was president and we all watched network

television. Cronkite would say, “That’s the way it is. Time

was slower, daylight was saved.

The sky was bluer than blue and we were not sadder than sad.

The folks drove Fords or Chevys. Some Pontiacs. We thought

we tended towards equilibrium but were getting fatter, less health.

Abundances of rich food and bacon grease. Perhaps today

the problem solvers are sharper.

More *canis lupus* than dog star. The entrepreneurs are slicker,

ready to cut a throat like the prevailing minimum wage cuts

your life expectancy. Crop rotation in the 14th century was

considerably more widespread after John Lloyd invented the

patent crop rotator, said Rik and Neil.

Contravening evidence that a CEO is worth five thousand times

more than me per hour. You too. We are the great unwashed,

the masses, the jabberwocks, the heads without faces. Coastal

cities were going to slide into the ocean and we felt more scared

of the day after than missile command.

Blacks had good times and owned laundromats and junkyards

and were mostly happy according to the media. No one had earned

personhood yet. We were all dumber and dumb and it’s obvious

because if we weren’t fucked then, we certainly are now and we

can’t have now without

the idiot hamhands of then. It’s still birth, circumstance, and timing.

Discipline and punish, Michel. You were right. It’s all we know.

***My Starlight Bends***

Believe your scientists. Though they don’t believe in it because belief is based

on faith and faith is for other people. Pascal “clutched for the handrail of faith,”

wanted to believe just in case.

My method is scientific like a globe instead of a map. Hyperactive deductions

lead to consequences in the natural world regarding relativity, the fabric of

space-time and taco night at the local pub.

My starlight bends scrutiny around you, a myelin sheath over you, shielding flaws,

and chinks and fault lines. Your universe is Copernican while mine is Ptolemaic. We

will never have happy children.

June is a month while February is a sentence and we grow older older older

walking on oceans that won’t exist in a thousand years or forty days. I never found

my stellar parallax though Naomi was cogent, confident, and she cared about

my feelings when she spared me the criticism of my haircut like Darwin’s.

If the sight of blood made me sick, finches would be a bigger part of my life

and we would find scientific results that lead up to us together. Independently

verifiable with contraptions

Made of wires and levers and wood. Industrial smoothing is not as popular as in the 90s

and black lines have remained black lines and blurred lines was a copped song that really,

no one gave a shit about anyway.

The variables in the model will indicate replication in real life. Science will always

have its greenhouse gasses and electricity. There will be no inhibition aside from Kansas,

Texas, and Wisconsin.

They have all slid into the sea; a primordial ooze where thought is amorphous and distrustful. Humans are intrinsically conservative and selfish and against collective consensus. Your so-called knowledge will never rise above the belief of the chosen of which you are not one, ever will be. Smile more. It makes it all better like a vanilla milkshake instead of a dissected frog.

*Scientia ipsa potentia est*.

***Anything Goes***

The textbook method of avoiding depression is to get a lot of sunlight,

be cheery, look on the bright side and tell cynics to go to hell. I concede

perhaps that is a bit nomological and laws of nature are always true in all

places. The main problem is that your problems are more wrong than your

solutions and the metacommentary here is a bird in the hand is worth two

in a non-linear parallel of the star, Sirius, where the soundtrack is jam band

guitar string wanking. It’s better if there’s drugs. My reflex motion in the sky

will first reach someone in 750 light years and chances are it won’t be understood

and seen as induction rather than production. Beagles are dogs that will make you

feel better about yourself and natural selection. Sartre fucked therefore he was

and annoyance can emerge from unusual photos like an ekphrasis for the angry.

Viewing stupidity begets stupidity in measurable ratios within a few degrees

fahrenheit. My solar ozone is volcanic when I don’t eat. Fiery afternoon eyes

that flare into rage and inflame wrinkles on my face. Don’t press me to make

a decision because I will say anything goes. The Ferguson PD was assessed as

racist and most of us thought, this is not an anomaly. This is as normal as Popeye’s

chicken and white people living in gated communities. There is no consensus about

sadness. We have more than two choices. Too much might be true, but we are

intractable. My heart is a logical fallacy that speeds up ‘til it spins out of control, off

into space like Dr. Frank Poole in the space odyssey. Stanley, you had me at the first.