

The background of the entire image is a stylized American flag. The top-left quadrant features a blue field with white stars, while the rest of the image is composed of vertical stripes in red, white, and blue. The text is overlaid on this background.

AMERICANA

HAIBUN

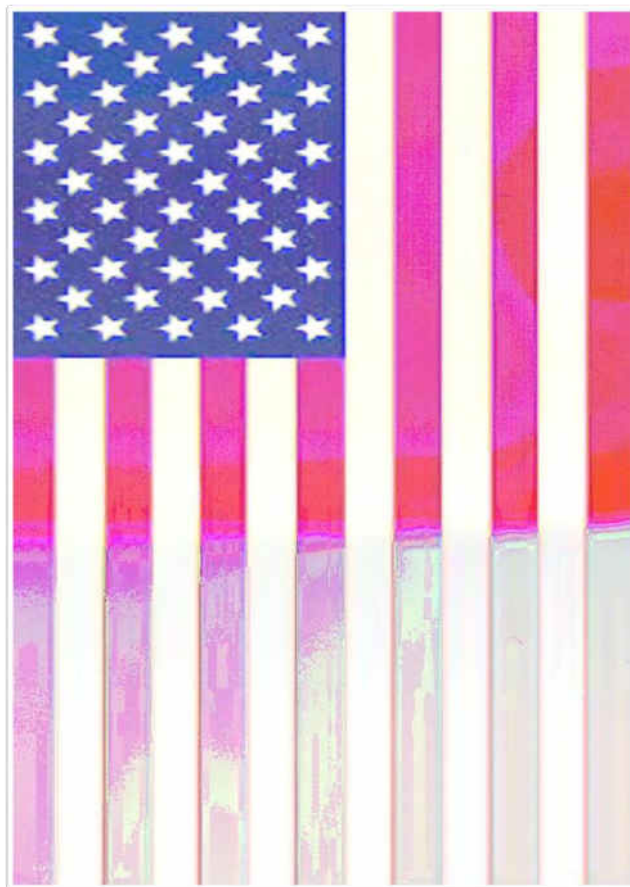
ED MARKOWSKI

AMERICANA

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Haibun by

Ed Markowski



Edited by

Colin Stewart Jones

Gean Tree Press

Aberdeen, Scotland, 2013.

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Gean Tree Press

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Aberdeen, Scotland.
2013

Dedication

To my wife Laurice, daughter Becky, grandsons Matthew and Nick,
sisters Laura & Carol, and to my trinity of eternal gutter brothers
Marty Herman, Chuck Hayes, and Jim Stocks.

Foreword

Welcome to the outer limits of American haibun. Ed Markowski has struck out for new territory and, in so doing, has taken both haiku and haibun to unexpected regions on the Map Lyrical.

Welcome to *American Haibun*.

It is time to go for a ride, in a time before seatbelts, a time equipped with ashtrays and dashboard lighters. It is time to light out for that alien déjà vu landscape where the exterior meets the interior, a scintillating no man's land where you'll pop the clutch of your brain and forget what the brakes are for.

Yes, welcome, welcome, welcome to a relentless, unblinking, strung-out trip, in a glistening, sizzling prose, punctuated with haiku second to none being written today.

Welcome to *American Haibun*.

Markowski has had to invent a new form, or, perhaps, he has reinvented an old one. Or maybe, just maybe it is American consciousness itself that has forged this reinventing in its own haunting, ghost-ridden image. This is American haibun like none you've seen before, cranked out in an Aztec two-step style that challenges the reader to keep up with a mercurial mind hell bent on getting where it's going and unwilling to compromise on the ever diminishing vanishing point that is its destination.

Make no mistake: Ed Markowski is one of the finest purveyors of the haiku form writing in English today and, about all this, he couldn't care less.

He's heading somewhere else and he's taking you with him, fuelled on a far flinging, flash fiction-like, phantasmagorical prose that will leave the staid, stay-at-home in a swirl of dust and remorse. The haiku that are hitched to this prose are given the ever-loving ride of their lives. One might even hesitate to call their jointing haibun, and one would be very wrong, indeed. In the pedal-to-the-metal prose accompanying these razor sharp haiku, there is a subtle, seemingly tangential relationship that resounds deeply in the modern, profoundly lost American soul.

So, if you're hitching a ride, climb on in, screw the seatbelts, light another cigarette and ride, ride, ride. *American Haibun* is driving fast, driving reckless, driving assuredly ever onward into the American landscape of a gorgeous, forever setting sun that will never go down.

And will never rise again.

Welcome to *American Haibun*.

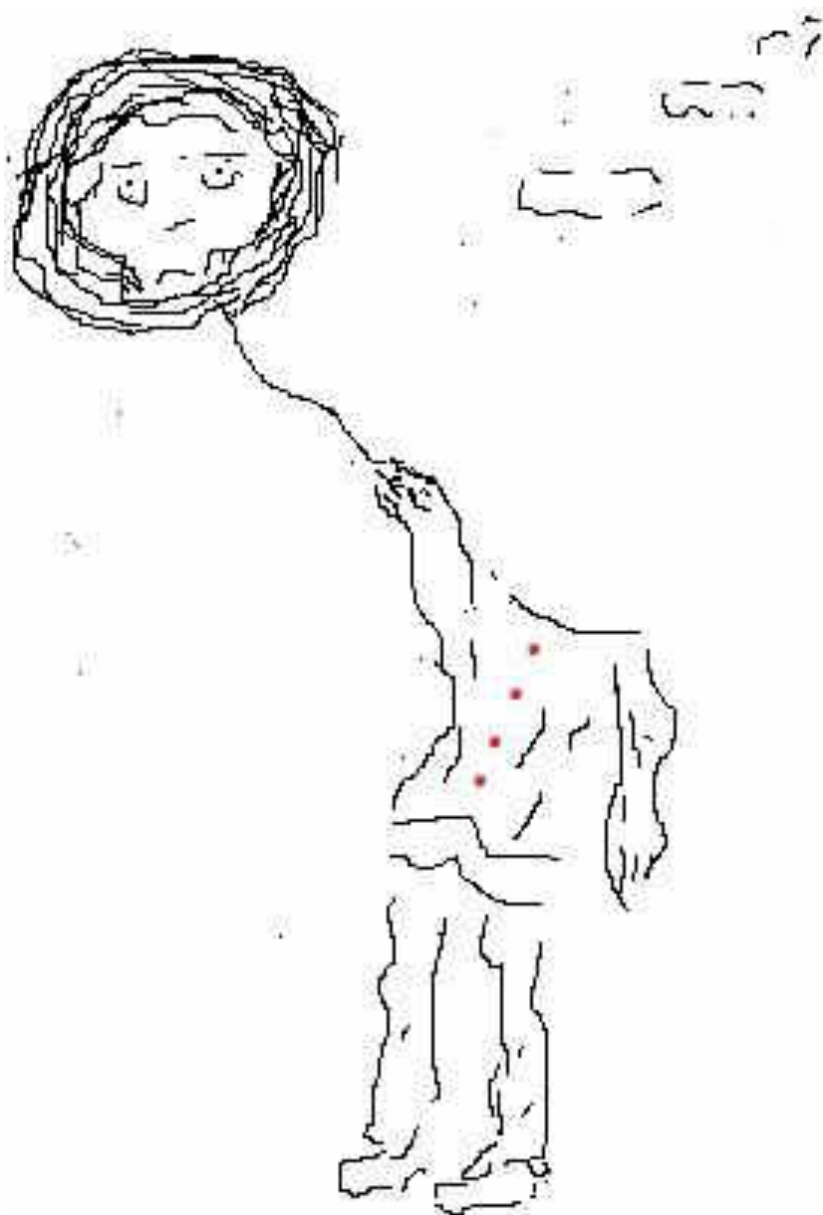
- Don Wentworth

Lilliput Review

Commencement Ceremony

At the podium, our conservative prince and principle Doctor Jack Henry Holliday squeezed and shook my left hand as he stammered, “Congratulations, if it was up to me, I’d send every one of you ponytailed punks on a one way senior trip up and down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.” When Doc’s silly putty lips, teeth, fillings, gums, tongue, nose, eyes, and smile burst, dripped, and bounced off of my red, white, and blue suede Fidel Guevara Cuban Heels, I swallowed another one of Bon-Bon’s strawberry bon-bons that split me into two shiny beads of Mercury skittering across the stage and into the darkness that caressed, kissed, and cuddled our America Beyond.

hitchhiking
an orange moth fills
the emptiness of Texas



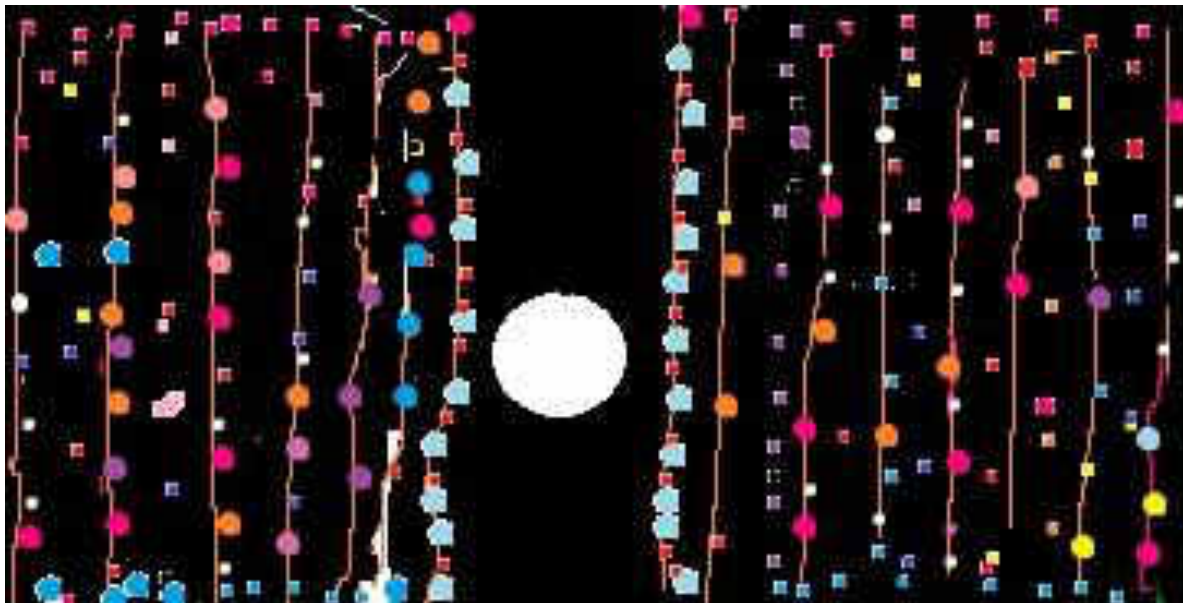
Palm Predictions

Madame Beatitude lit a cigarette from her Conjuring Candle then pointed to a blizzard of dust drops twisting and tumbling on a blade of sunlight slashing through a frosted window that overlooked the alley.

She shrugged her shoulders and blew a smoke ring that hovered above two soggy tea bags. Well there it is she said. Your future my future the future of everyone on Earth right now, and the future of those who have yet to be born. Riding a sunbeam. That's what we all have to look forward to.

Madame Beatitude wagged her hook hand. Sunlight shrapnel bounced off of her stainless steel pincer. That'll be eighty – five American, ninety five Canadian. I don't accept pesos or euros. I prefer cash but I do accept checks money orders Visa and American Express.

Detroit 67 Miles
The Green And White Road Sign
Predominantly Rust



On A Cold Day In Hokkaido



I dream early fifties
I dream Route Sixty – Six
I dream Rocket 88
I dream driving Southwest
I dream Goodnight, Texas
I dream Buddy Holly
I dream just past dusk
I dream well before Lubbock
I dream sultry breeze
I dream drive in movie
I dream of her kisses
I dream Pure Americana . . .

Prairie Stars
Bogie & Bacall
Embrace On The Horizon



On The Road To Reno

The cop pulled me over in Muleshoe Texas.
The cop and me stood in the parking lot at the Rodeo Motel.

The cop was doused malaria yellow under the arc of the golden arches.
The cop was tinted scarlet by a neon Texaco star thirty feet above him.

The cop lit a cigarette.
The cop said you were doing sixty, sixty's thirty – five over the limit.

The cop sipped a bottle of Squirt.
The cop found it under the spare tire.

The cop held it up to the arch light.
The cop held it up to my eyes.

The cop held calipers.
The cop measured it.

The cop tasted it.
The cop shook it.

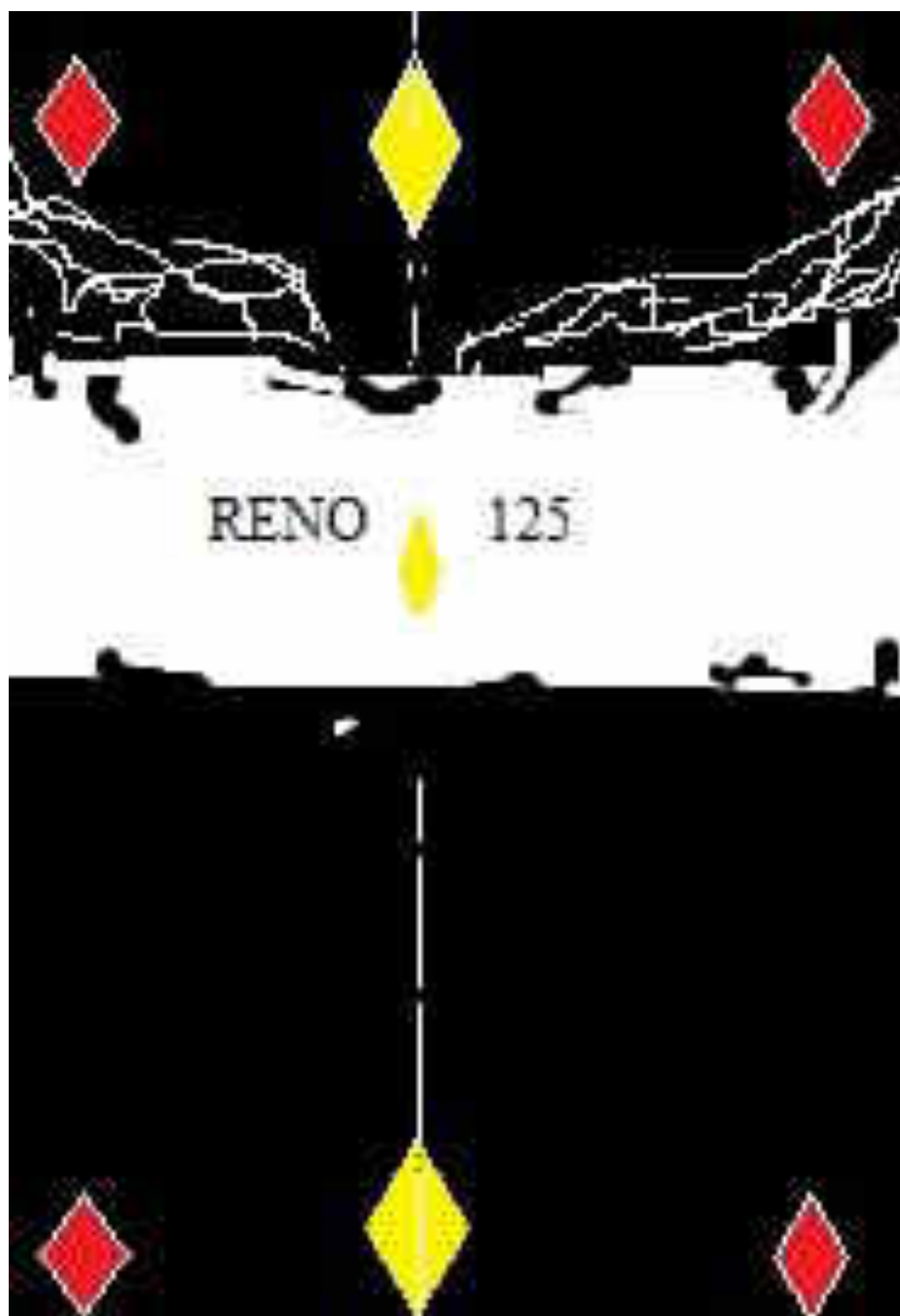
The cop sniffed it.
The cop squeezed it.

The cop said I said dusk.
The cop said You're a fuckin' hour early.

I said Two – thousand dollars take it or leave it.
The cop said, Ok, I'll take it.

Then we watched the sunset.

funeral mass
the mime's stained glass
eulogy



Rabbit Hatch

They's a little town called Rabbit Hatch
Honey that's no lie
Sits south of the Ohio
Down the road to the sweet by and by

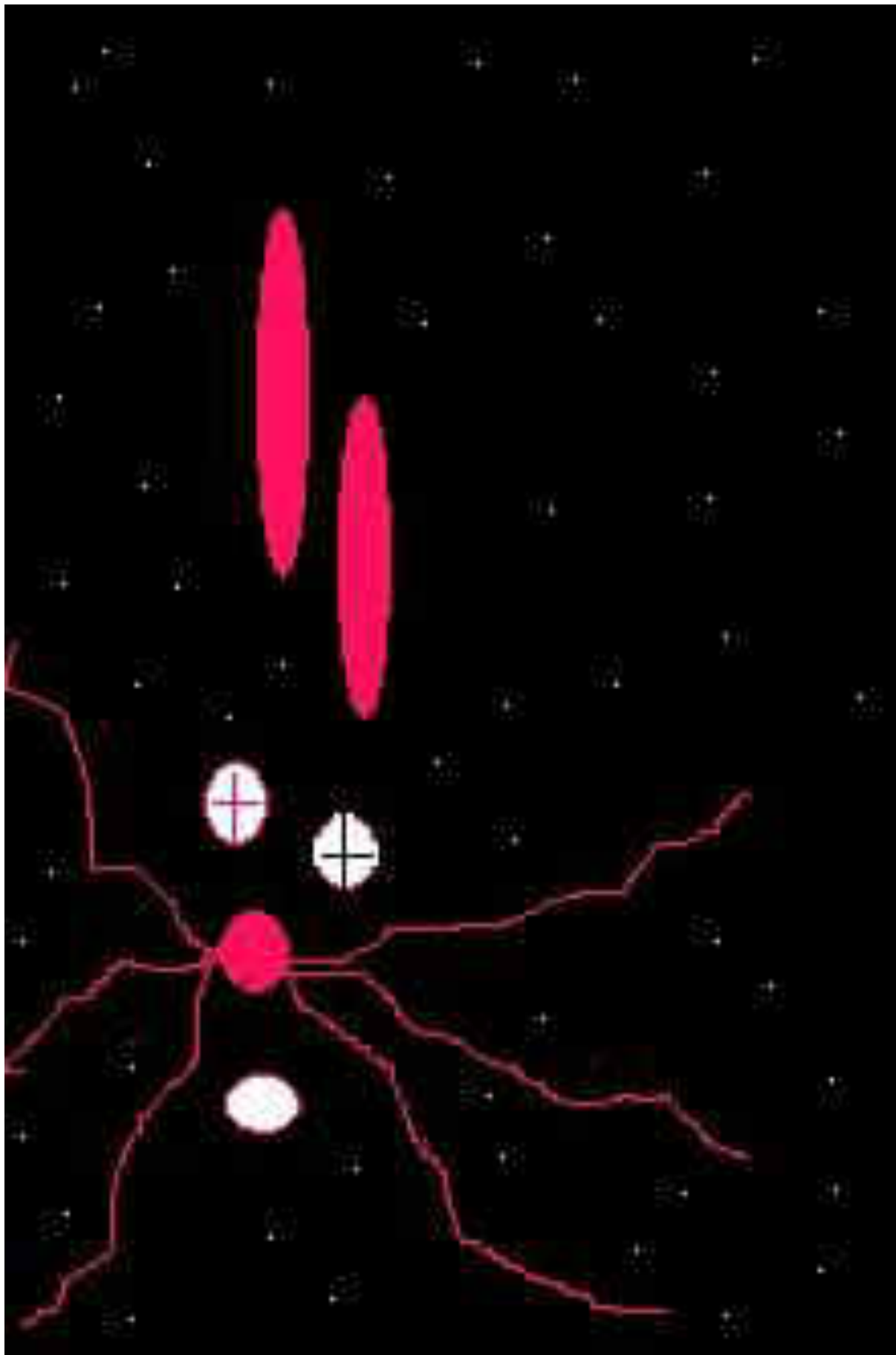
The folks in town don't do much
But they ain't no lazy dogs
they's waitin' for the Son Of God
To show and spell the fog

Come now honey fetch your shoes
I wanna take you there
Pack your prayers in a burlap sack
Salvation's in the air

They's got a creek of water pure
She flows from west to east
turns waterfalls of grief and rage
to pearls of perfect peace

So come on honey fix your hair
Take off your meetin' dress
We'll sin sweet 'neath the wild moon
on the way to bein' blessed

Nude Beach
Every piece of driftwood
Worn Smooth



Fare Thee Well

When I reached the promised land
The Lord happened to ask
I laid my cards on the table
I didn't hold nothin' back

I told him that I didn't believe
In nothin' but the Bluesman's song
I mentioned I loved whiskey
Though I never did my women wrong

I let him know I washed the clothes
Chopped wood and fed the cat
I said I prayed the gambler's prayer
Every time I placed a bet

I said, Good Lord I did my best
My children turned up true
Got five down in the Quincey Mine
And another five teachin' school

He asked about that man I killed
Down in Jerusalem's Lot
I told him I was mighty thankful
That I never did get caught

The Lord he laughed and slapped his knee
Then he rang old Satan's Bell
I made a bow I tipped my hat
Then I muttered fare thee well.

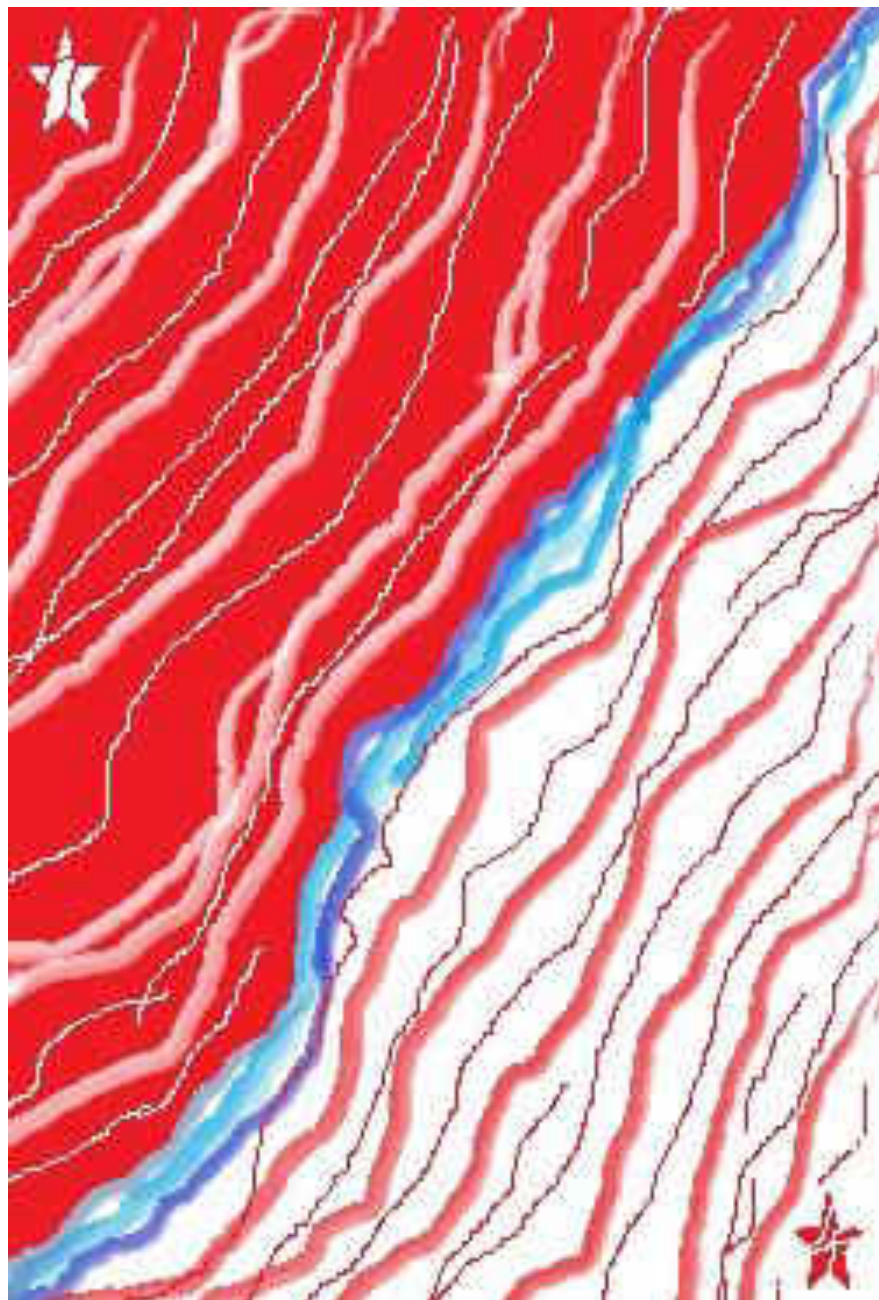
Blossom Viewing
The Dictator's Jet Black
Sun Glasses



Like It Or Not

At the back of an otherwise empty cross town bus bound for
the other side of the other side of the tracks a Walmart Santa
by the name of Call me Hank hands back the flask, faces the window
shakes his head and points to the darkness that lights our lives whispering
You know what buddy Hey pal, you know what Well like it or not I'm gonna
Fucking tell you what. Ok, so here's the what about the what... It's a fuckin' shame
and a goddamned grand slam disgrace that the trinket trap Santa's of this world are more
real than the fuckin' Hanks like you and me who get paid five bucks an hour to be them.

State Of The Union
We Work Through A Bag
Of Stale Potato Chips



A Letter From Then To Tomorrow

Bob,

Laurie's Aunt Honey passed on last week down in La Grange, Indiana. Honey was kind, bright, giving, forgiving, 93, a hell of a cook, and the only registered Democrat in the county. Laurie suggested we take our 1970 Malibu convertible to the funeral despite a weather forecast that could've killed a team of Iditarod dogs.

We picked Becky up at three post meridian. Said goodbye our son in law Dan. Said love you, and look after your daddy to our grandsons Matthew and Nick. Then, we began traveling through the first twelve inches of a thirty–six inch lake effect snow explosion.

As badly as I wanted to mash the gas pedal into the floorboard and let those horses freak freely from the barren wombs of Detroit's abandoned factories to the upraised arms of Touchdown Jesus, I managed to keep my internal eighteen year old spirit guide tethered to a tree.

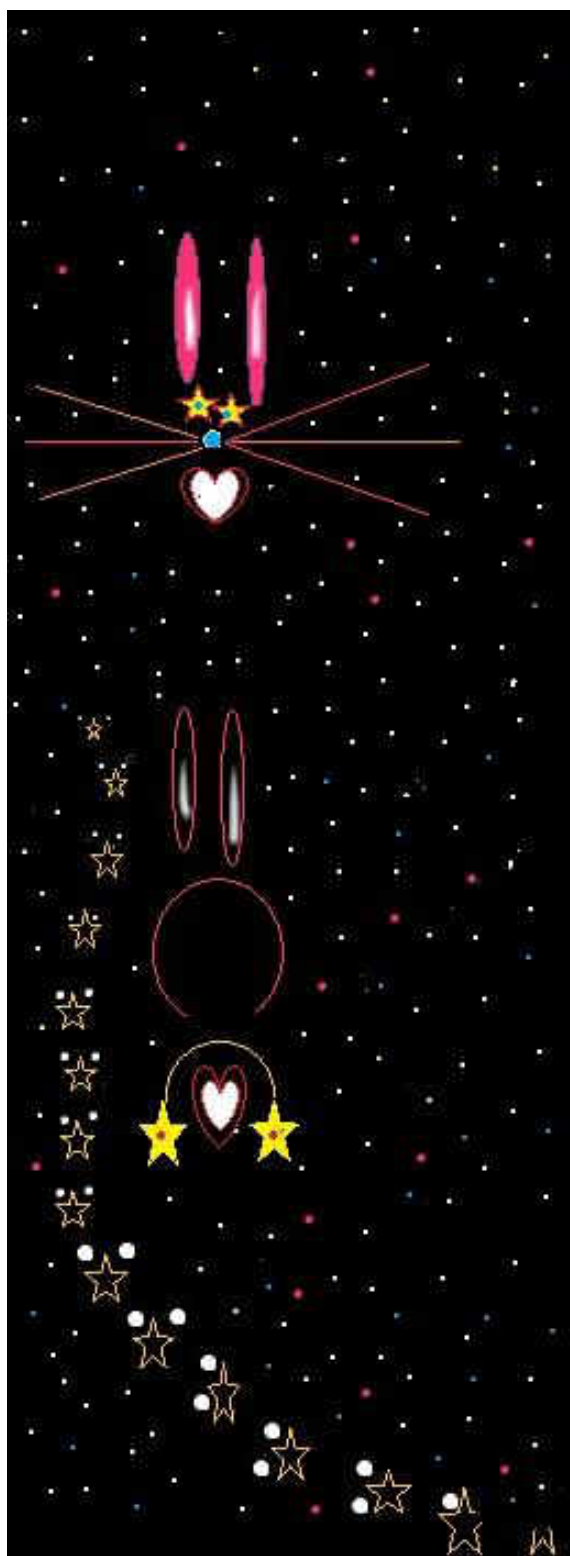
Our three hour drive was multiplied by three. At midnight the three of us walked out of the present and into the black and white presence of a 1955 Zenith 3–D Flashmatic television in room five at the Pendulum Motel .

We watched The Honeymooners. We ate Mary Janes. Becky said, Mom and dad, I love you, and I love being with you again. We watched Route 66. We ate black licorice wheels. Laurie said, I can't believe our beautiful baby girl is three years past thirty. That's not possible. We watched Mork and Mindy. We ate Moon Pies.

I said, When my container's empty, wrap me in frayed faded denim, and launch me on my voyage to hell with my hands double clutching a bottle of Red Ripple, The White Album, and Tangled Up In Blue. We watched the second foot of snow fall until its drifting dance of silence summoned the Sandman, who summoned the Rooster, who summoned us at eight ante meridian.

After a breakfast of ham and cheese omelets, bacon, rye toast, tomatoes fresh from the garden, waffles, Alphabets, and Trix, we thanked Honey for everything, packed our new old car, belted Becky into her car seat, waved goodbye, and followed the clop, clop, clop, of Amish Horses over a hill, and into the twenty first century, the day after our Becky's third birthday.

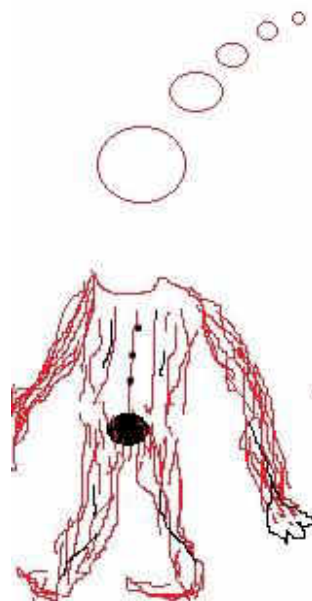
Flatbush Avenue
Buddha appears in
a thicket of Brooklyn Accent



The Show Must Go On

Through the years there's been so much doubt, resentment, disbelief, turmoil, and death associated with the events of that first weekend, I've often wondered why I did what I did. How could I have known that my Vaudeville act would be taken and twisted into a spiritual lie. People tell me all the time, 'You should have known because you are who you are.' If I had even a slight suspicion that my slapstick would be forged into a philosophical jack hammer used to beat and bludgeon the fear of man into mankind, I would have sent the actors and actresses home, kept the costumes locked up in my old steamer trunk, and booked myself a dunk tank gig at a Dixie county fair somewhere down in that swamp of creation we call the Bible Belt. I realize it's much too late for an apology. I also know that saying I'm sorry after eons of total silence is a pathetically inadequate balm for those who lost their lives, and for their loved ones who have suffered for far too many generations. My sorrow, suffering, and self loathing will continue until I convince every Ruben Inaje in the Philippines and others like him around the world that there's no need to be nailed to a Volkswagen, telephone pole, white picket fence, or the asphalt at the crossroads in order to reap the benefits of spiritual love based on faith and devotion. As I said a few minutes ago it's much too late for apologies, so on behalf of The Mount Serman Carnival Company everyone will receive free tickets to next year's show which will occur on April, 20, 2014. Hopefully, the show will be enough to coax Mister Inaje and everyone around the world down from the crosses you've nailed yourselves to.

BIRD WATCHING
MY FIELD GLASSES FILLED
WITH BARFLIES



HAM & EGGS & A SIDE OF RITA?

I WAS THIRTY-TWO YEARS FROM HOME WHEN OUR EYES COLLIDED AT DOC HOLOGRAM'S GHOST COAST DINER ON LAKE SUPERIOR'S SOUTH SHORE I WINKED BACON SIZZLED SHE SMILED I BLINKED SHE BALANCED I WOBBLED SHE SHIMMERED I SQUINTED SHE SHIMMERED I DROOLED SHE VIBRATED I BUZZED SHE BOUNCED I ROSE & FELL ROSE & FELL ROSE & FELL ROSE FELL & FOLLOWED SHE JUGGLED MY BROWN EYES FOUR DENVER OMELETS FIVE FULL CUPS OF LUCY'S LOVE POTION LATTE' SIX DRIPPING CUSTARD STICKS GARY POWERS THE CARPENTER JACK JAMES THE ELECTRICIAN DRUMSTICK DONNIE THE PLUMBER ESSA MAKI THE MAYOR & TWO POWDER SUGAR COATED COPS BADGE NUMBERS 12354 & 41454 I WINKED AGAIN SHE LICKED HER LIPS THE SUNLIT PINK TIP OF HER TONGUE WAVING GUIDING CHAINING & LOCKING ME TO THE RED DELICIOUS APPLE SOFT RED WALLS OF HER VELVET VAULT COFFEE GEYSERS ERUPTED ON EVERY TABLE AROUND THE ROOM TWO COKE GLASSES FELL OFF CARLITO THE BUS BOY'S OVER LOADED ALUMINUM TRAY SHATTERING AS ONE IN AUDIBLE SOUND TWO PATS OF DIXIE BELLE BUTTER SLID SINKING INTO A RAFT OF HASH BROWNS FIVE NAUTICAL SECONDS PAST THAT MISTER MIKE MOON THE PHARMACIST TARGETED TRINA THE TELLER WITH HIS VERY BEST VODOO ZOMBIE XANAX GAZE TRINA THE TELLER BLEW A TABASCO & TOBACCO SOAKED & SCENTED KISS TO CONNIE WILSON'S KID BROTHER DIAMOND EYE DUKE THE FASTEST BURGER FLIPPING ONION SLICING DEEP FRIED DANDY SOUTH OF MARS AVENUE ACCORDING TO THE WORDS OF DROP DEAD GORGEOUS MOLLY ANNE PICKET SWIVELING FIVE STOOLS WEST OF TWO PERFECTLY COOKED FARM FRESH EGGS OOZING YOLK LAYING SIDE BY SIDE & OVER INCREDIBLY EASY WITH THREE THICK SLICES OF LEE'S REBEL ROAR COUNTRY HAM & A SIDE OF DUST DRY RYE PLACED BEFORE ME SIX HOURS & SIX & A HALF MINUTES BEFORE WE CALLED ROOM SERVICE ORDERED EACH OTHER RAW RARE RAWER & RARER THEN SEASONED LICKED BIT NIBBLED SUCKED SIPPED DEVoured & DIGESTED EACH OTHER IN ROOM TWENTY-TWO AT THE PAIR-A-DICE CASINO HOTEL ON THE INSKIRTS OF HER OUTSKIRTS IN THE CENTER OF CHRISTMAS MICHIGAN & I WOULDN'T BET ON IT BUT I THINK MY WHITE HOT BLUE EYED SOUR MASH SCENTED WIFE FOR A NIGHT'S NAME WAS JUST GIMME A MINUTE IT'LL COME TO ME.

Heat Wave
I Melt
In Her Mouth



Denominations

Me and Laurie was watching the Rockford Files and getting ready to watch Wheel Of Fortune in room number nine at the Pelican Motel down in Biloxi Mississippi when we decided we was gonna shack, snack, and suckle legit in the eyes and shackles of society, our families, and the Invisible Man up where? I cut the TV. Laurie blood hounds the Yellow Pages. I shaved. She shouted, “ I found the place Wild Bill ,so slap on some skin bracer, and strap your ass in the saddle. ”

We drives up highway forty – nine and stopped at The Paramount Mission Baptist Church in a no horse dust drop named Wiggins, Population seven hundred and twelve counting me, Laurie, and one on the way any day now as the grand finale of that night last May, when me and she was howlin’ in the galley of Bee Landry’s shrimp boat down in Happy Jack, Louisiana.

She and me sits down with this hard shell Baptist preacher, and we tells him we’s traveling down the right route these days. We tells him that the right route started in the yellow pages and ended at the door of his church. We tells him that we no doubt is gonna ride that road, surf that wave, and fly that sky across every cloud and seam of blue, till we reaches the sanctified shores of that sun lit nation called Holy Matrimony right here, right now, if you’ll marry us Mister Minister.

The hard sell Baptist looks us over, scribbles something on a desk calendar, and says, “ Three – hundred dollars, and that includes a bouquet of beautiful Snapdragons for the bride, and a boutonniere of Tiger Lilies for the groom from our congregation’s Glory Garden. Our organist’s fifty - five dollar fee is also included. Fifty - five dollars might sound steep, but one night way back, and long before she was saved, our Miss Sally Duncan played piano at Spooks Roadhouse in Jackson for the Troubadour from Tupelo when his regular key man mixed the wrong pills with some sour mash. Well, there aren’t a whole lot of us walking around who can tell our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren that a celebrity who played for the King, played the organ at our wedding. Now, we must always walk with humility in the eyes of our Lord, but the fact of the matter is, having Sally play automatically grants you two at the very least, a lifetime of undeniable bragging rights that will never be topped. Now, before we go to the Chapel, there’s one question you must answer. If either of you answer

incorrectly, you'll both be free to continue living in sin while reserving your eternal seats inside the pit at B.L. Zeebub's Original Old South Bar-B-Que. "

The hard shell Crabtist aims his left index between my eyes. " You first," he says.

I says, " Deal the cards and pull the trigger Doctor Holliday. "

" Do you believe in God ? "

" Kinda, Mister Minister. "

" Kinda ? What's kinda ? "

" Kinda's a type of intelligence that no man or woman can pin down. "

" Go on. "

" Educated people calls it a incomprehensible and nonsensical intelligence that makes, moves, and removes galaxies, planets, mountains, men, mice, and microscopic beings. "

" Is that all you have to say about your Divine Father ? "

" Is that all ? I said too much. "

" Too much ? "

" I keep family secrets secret Rev. "

Mister Minister sticks a fresh plug of Kodiak in his mouth. He looks me over again, then he says, " You're on the road to hell son. " So, I says, " Rev, I will be waiting for ya, and when you shows Rev, the ale's on my Anthony the whiskey's on my Washington, and the hooch's on my Hamilton. "

The hard sell Zaptist points a black ink pen at Laurie. " Are you prepared to marry a man who you'll be separated from for eternity ? Do you believe in God young lady, or are you also a member of the Kinda Congregation ? "

Laurie aims a tube of Cherry Burst lip gloss, and her cherry red lips at the Soul Bleacher. " I'm a member of the I don't wanna know congregation, and I'm a member of the I don't give a shit congregation. But I'll tell you this Reverend, when I prance into hell, I'll ride you and Wild Bill for free for ever, and ever, and ever, and ever, forever amen. "

With two new splinters sprouting in his eyes, the Diamond Back Asptist says to us, " Since the beginning of time, everyone who shows up at my gate, and I mean everyone, forgets to add the R in my name. No matter how hard I try, I can't figure it out. I guess I'm not as all

knowing as everyone thinks I am. So please do me a small favor. After the ceremony, if you decide to pay the three – hundred dollar fee with a check, please make it out to G O R D . ”

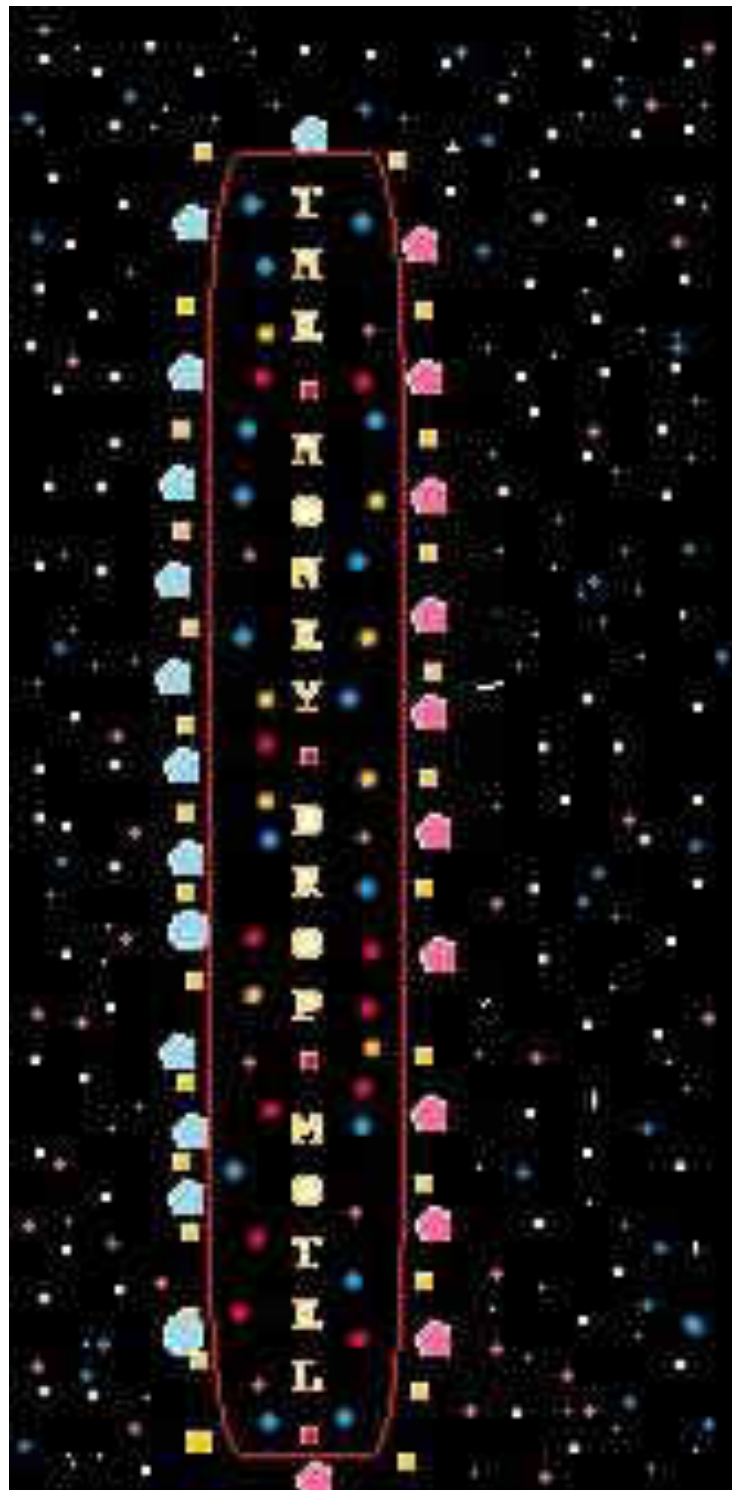
Unemployed
I Trip On The Shadow
Of A Scarecrow



Death Bed

In room #7 at the Lighthouse Motel our blazing
sweat slicked bodies glistened in the glow of a
sixty watt light bulb and covered the corpses of
her husband and my wife.

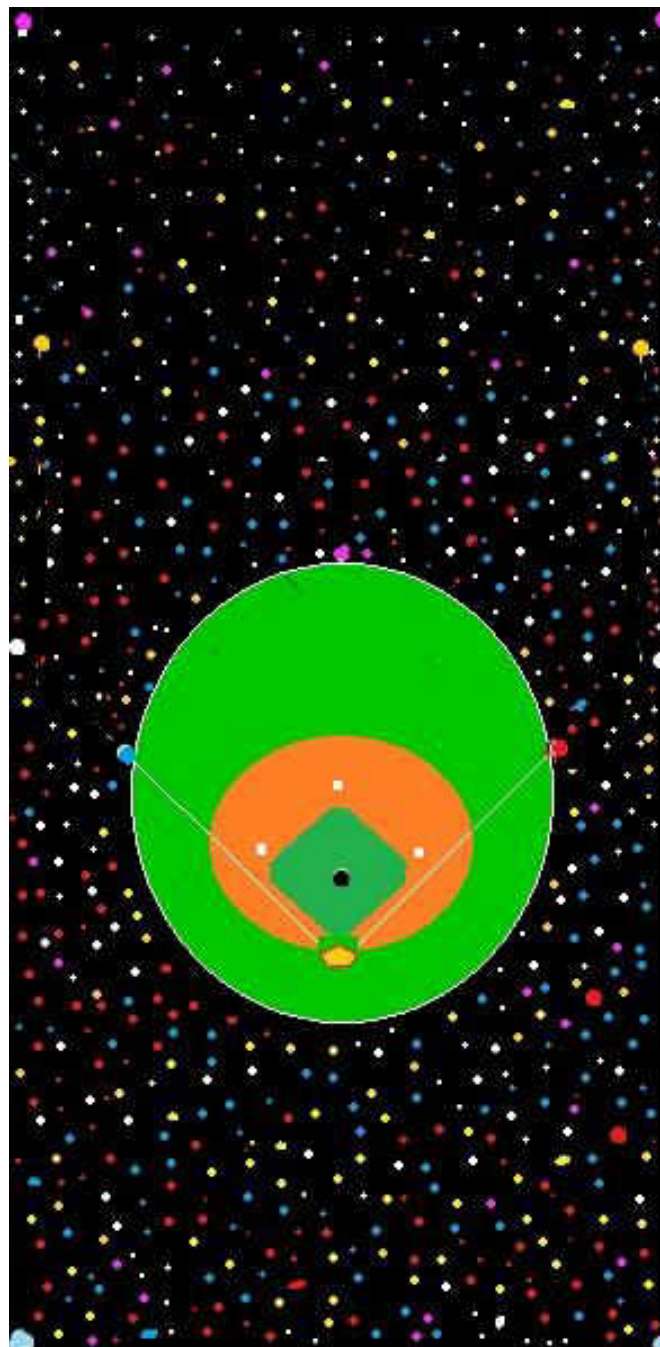
Thirty – Five Years Of Peace
Sunlight & Silence Fill
A Defoliated Jungle



Seventh Inning Stretch

I told the mind numbing eye blinding ginger scented mouth watering woman sitting next to me Top of my class Harvard Med School, Cardiologist, six – hundred grand take home in a bad year, a yacht in Aruba a sea sculpted condo in Cabo two antique Corvettes a Mercedes a 1930 Packard Deluxe Eight Roadster that John Dillinger willed to Pretty Boy Floyd a stealth black 2010 Cadillac El Dorado my gardeners drive to the grocery store during the winter, when I offered to buy her a bag of roasted peanuts and thirty - five thousand people stood to stretch one stood up and walked away.

Half Moon
I Lie To Right
A Wrong



Dear Mister Taylor

Dear Mister Taylor the verdict's come in
the jury absolves you of treason and sin

you're free to move on down the road to your home
to harvest the weeds that rose up through the loam

We're sorry to have caused you such grief and disgrace
forgive us for having forgotten your face

Dear Mister Taylor we've spared you the rod
please keep us in mind when you stand before God

You've stood strong and tall sir you've done your time
to not march in rhythm's not always a crime

Jane will be waiting with a buttermilk pie
she'll no longer suffer a river run dry

Dear Mister Taylor we wish you the best
and we won't say you told us when we torture the rest

Night Wind
I Chant & Conjure
The Dead Poet's Face



Zion

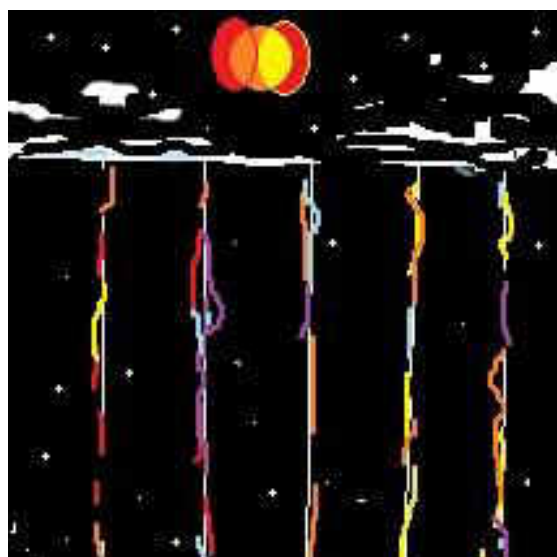
Fourth of July weekend I came down from Angels Landing barely breathing because the sheer beauty I swam in at the peak and epicenter of God's pastel genius ripped off and ran off with my breath.

An hour later I'm hitchhiking out of Zion when my eyes are swept away by a Latter Day Saint's flashing bubble lights. The officer tells me I'm a vagrant. The officer tells me why I'm a vagrant. The officer tells me I'm under arrest, then the handcuff clicks echo through the canyon.

On the way to the Washington County Jail in Hurricane, Utah we're both glorifying and sanctifying the beauty that surrounds us. The whole thing mimics a Sunday drive. He's Andy. I'm Opie. And we're just two cherry cordials in a steel chocolate box.

I tell Brigham's boy, " No doubt about it, this is God's Manifest. " He keeps his eyes on the road. Two miles north of Hurricane he asked me if I knew anything about the Angel Moroni. I said, " Yeah, I know for a fact that our beloved Angel Moroni is the illegitimate son of a woman named Bony Moroni, and everyone knows that Little Richard is his Daddy. "

Meditation Hall
Every Monk Is
Nothing In Disguise



The Abominable Noman Of Blackduck Minnesota

At ten after ten that night, Gabriel Fahrenheit's old alcohol thermometer was stuck on zero, eight inches of fresh powder hid the scars on the face of the Iron Range, six feet of permafrost separated Lana and I from our mother. Our old man wobbled an inch above the bottom of his second fifth of Crow, and his eyes floated on his face like two bloodshot inner tubes on a wavering lake designed by Salvador Dali. We were playing Hangman in the living room when the old man bumped, stumbled, and slurred his way to the couch. " Lishen here you two little pricksh, I'm gonna forgesh for a minute that chure the cursh, and chure the chain, your god damned mother tied me to when the bish breathed her lasht breash. Get chure hash, coash, and boosh. I'm gonna show you sumthin', yule never forgesh. "

Lana and I always did whatever he asked, " Because if you don't " Because if we didn't, there were five open hand slaps on the cheek, five whacks on the back with his barbed oak paddle, and ten whacks on the ass with a razor strop for good measure " Because that bitch who bred ya didn't teach ya no manners, and she turned you two against me from the moment she spit you out goddammit. "

When Lana looked him square in his snake eyes and said, " Daddy, we don't have no boots because you spent our boot money on that nice lady Miss Dixie Belle when you went down to Minneapolis on Thanksgiving , " I figured our father who will never get close to heaven was going to give Lana the full treatment and then some, and then some more, and then the bonus. He shrugged his shoulders, steadied himself against the wall and said, " Then wear yoursh slippersh or tennish shoesh, and hurry up or we'll mish it. "

We put on three pairs of sox. We wrapped our feet with plastic grocery bags. Lana jammed her feet into the old man's boots. Before I tied them up, I wrote Ma's name in the dust on the black wingtips he wore to her funeral. Lana said, " Daddy, I'll get your slippers. " The old man said, " Thash right miss blue eyed bish junior, you'll fesh my slippers, and you'll put 'em on my fuckin' feet. " Lana took off his socks. Lana put on his slippers. The fraud who played our father grabbed Lana's sweater and pulled her close. " If we mish it little girlsh, shu ain't never gonna forgesh thish whippins thash waiting for yoush. " Lana gave me a wink. " Don't worry daddy, we're not going to miss a thing, and neither will you. " I checked my Popeye pocket watch. At ten thirty - five our Daddy - O as in Zer - O kicked the door open with his

bare feet. Lana and I followed the Abominable Noman of Black Duck, Minnesota through a snow shrouded looking glass and into the incandescent white darkness of his junkyard. Step after step, his bare feet plowed through a foot of snow, and the old man rattled and wheezed, “ If we mish it I'll crush both of yoush little bish bugs. ”

After passing the ringer washing machine he bought Ma and broke two days later because she didn't make any gravy for the mashed potatoes, and the swing set he built from solid Maple and Oak then chopped into fire wood when Lana said she was cold two weeks ago, and the shed he locked me in on a hundred degree day after I hit a walk off homerun that beat the Church League team he bet on, and the Hickory Tree that supplied the switches for our whppings, and the creek where he shot St John the water dog for not fetching a Canadian Goose he shot at from a distance of ten feet and missed by fifty yards, we came to the wreckage of the red 1961 Pontiac Tempest Ma was driving when the brakes the old man said he shoed that morning, gave out at the intersection of Main Street and the Great Northern tracks two blocks west of the Riverbank Bar where he deposited what was left of his check after investing in Jack's Liquor Locker on Highway 46, he pointed to the North. “ Keep bowsh eyesh out there. Thash the direction. Thash whersh she'll be coming from. ”

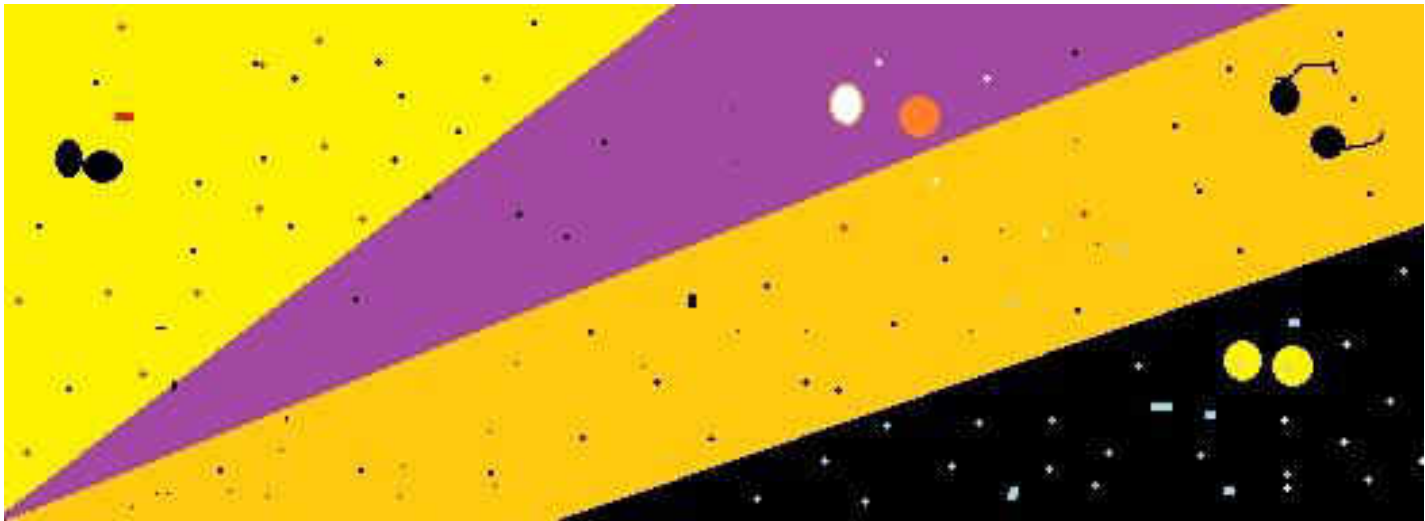
Lana and I were praying beside ma's mangled metal death Limo when the words erupted lava like from the depths of Daddy Delirium's volcanic mouth

“ LooklookGoddamishthereheishyoufuckinbitchbaubleshthereheishtherehegoeshthatmotherfucker. ”

In a narrow seam between the snow flakes a nugget of starlight flashed and faded. I kept my mouth shut and visualized Lana's teeth flying out of her mouth when she said, “ You shouldn't drink so much daddy. That wasn't him, that was just a falling star. ” Lana pulled a plastic flask out of her coat pocket. She offered Daddy Woe the flask. He chugged it, sat down in the snow, and rested his back against a wooden fence post. (he made me sink during a lightning storm last June, “ Becaush you got more girl in you than a fuckin' dress, because you're a fuckin' Barbie Doll. ”) When the old man's head dropped down to his perfectly still chest, Lana looked into the Tempest of snow. She nodded her head yes. A smile bridged her dimples. When Lana asked, “ Really, is this present really your all time best and favorite present ? ” Our Mother said , “ Yes Lana, now don't forget to call 911 tomorrow morning

after you two open your gifts, ” as we followed her HO HO HO'S all the way back to the house.

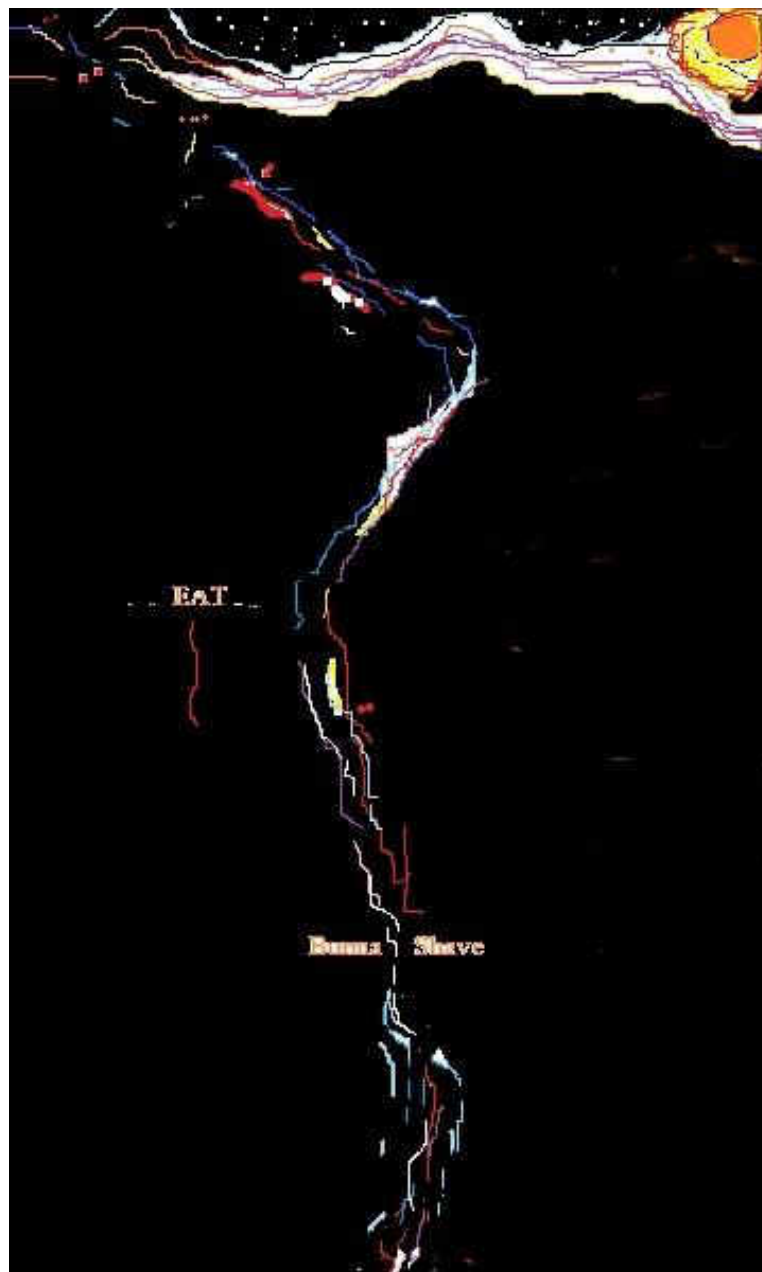
nude beach
at the dawn of dusk
she finally lets me see her eyes



Retirement Speech UAW Local 22 5/8/2012

Twelve hours a day six days a week for thirty – six years I twisted and tortured my body this way and that to install seat belts, shoulder harnesses, air bags, and throughout those thirty six years Highland Mist, hash filled hookahs, and a thousand hookers named Hannah kept me glued together.

orchard twilight
apples segue into
fireflies



Roy's Place

She lights another Marlboro. She snaps a swizzle stick in half. She throws down Mister Johnny Walker Black like a first team all pro, All American Bar Fly. She scans me from North to South and from East to West. " He wrecked me. That miserable prick wrecked me. He took the kids. He took the car. He took the credit cards. And, he took Cheryl, the fucking bitch three doors down who shined his shoes and kissed his royal ass every time I sent him out to Luke's Market for a gallon of milk. If I never see that skirt chasing son of a bitch again, it'll be too soon. So what about you Mister Handsome Wrapped In Faded Denim, how many women did you fuck over after you fucked 'em and promised them the world? "

She says all of this to me like we've been best friends dating all the way back to the days of teddy bears, tricycles, jump rope, jacks, and tooth fairies. It seems to me like we do know each other, and have known each other on intimate terms for years. I don't say a word. I turn my back to her, and to my mid morning face hanging on a crucifix between two fifths of bad whiskey on Roy's long dark cherry wood bar , still searching for the reason I did what I did with our neighbor Sheryl for three months before and after Laura had the twins when we lived happily ever after on Eureka Avenue in Grand Rapids.

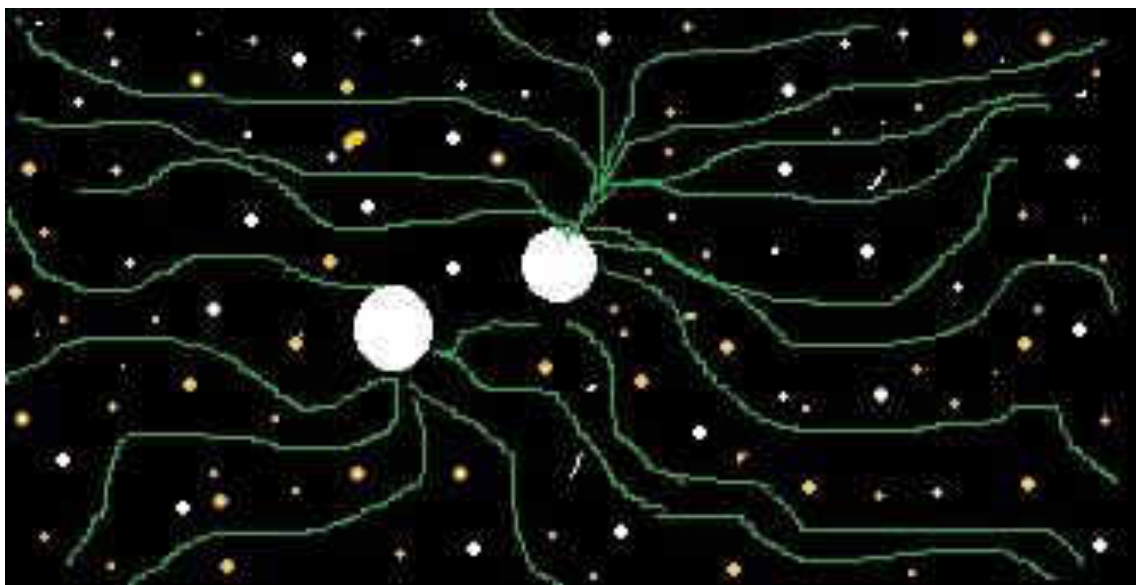
Polishing The Mirror
Three Old Scars
Good As New



Connecting The Doubts

She said I love you so much almost too much.
She said I can't wait to see you.
She said I can't wait to sleep with you.
She said I'll make breakfast.
She said I'll make English muffins.
She said Bacon eggs hash browns and fruit.
She said After we eat we'll go back to bed.
She said And we'll make love all day.
She said I'll fill an ice bucket with Absolut.
She said I won't forget the olives.
She said You're beautiful.
She said I'm beautiful.
She said Our children will be beautiful.
She gave me the right directions.
She emailed a Map Quest map.
She taught me how to use a GPS.
Still I got lost and when I called
She said I can't wait.

Magnolia Blossoms
The Kindness Of A Stranger
In The Mississippi Rain



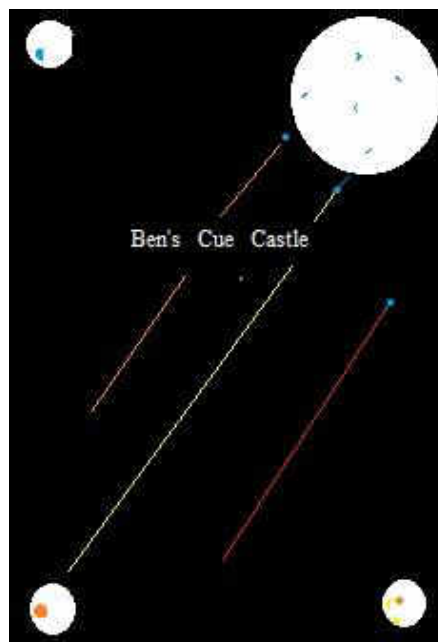
Language Lab

I shook the man's hand, then I said, "Chao mai fun moo goo gong dung kam loo shu mai sum la ting ma tong king tung har chee bao chow loo ping tzu foo char mu cha fa ma nee wing sung gong dong chu ching ka yu fu goo ling, and that's all I can say about my time at the language lab in Shanghai. I was taught by the best. "

The man asked if I could teach him how to speak Chinese. I said, "Chop chee foo yoo yu foo dum. That means sure, two-thousand dollars for the five week course to be paid in full prior to the first lesson. "

He wrote the check. I scanned it. I asked Mr. Alfred Willows who resides at 3176 Carriage Circle in Davenport, Iowa if I could trust him. He said, "Dr. Wu, this is Davenport, Iowa, not Chicago. " Three hours beyond the Hilltop Diner and a man named Alfred Willows, I walked into a pool hall in Toronto, slathered the Q ball with some right hand English and walked out of there four-hundred Canadian to the good.

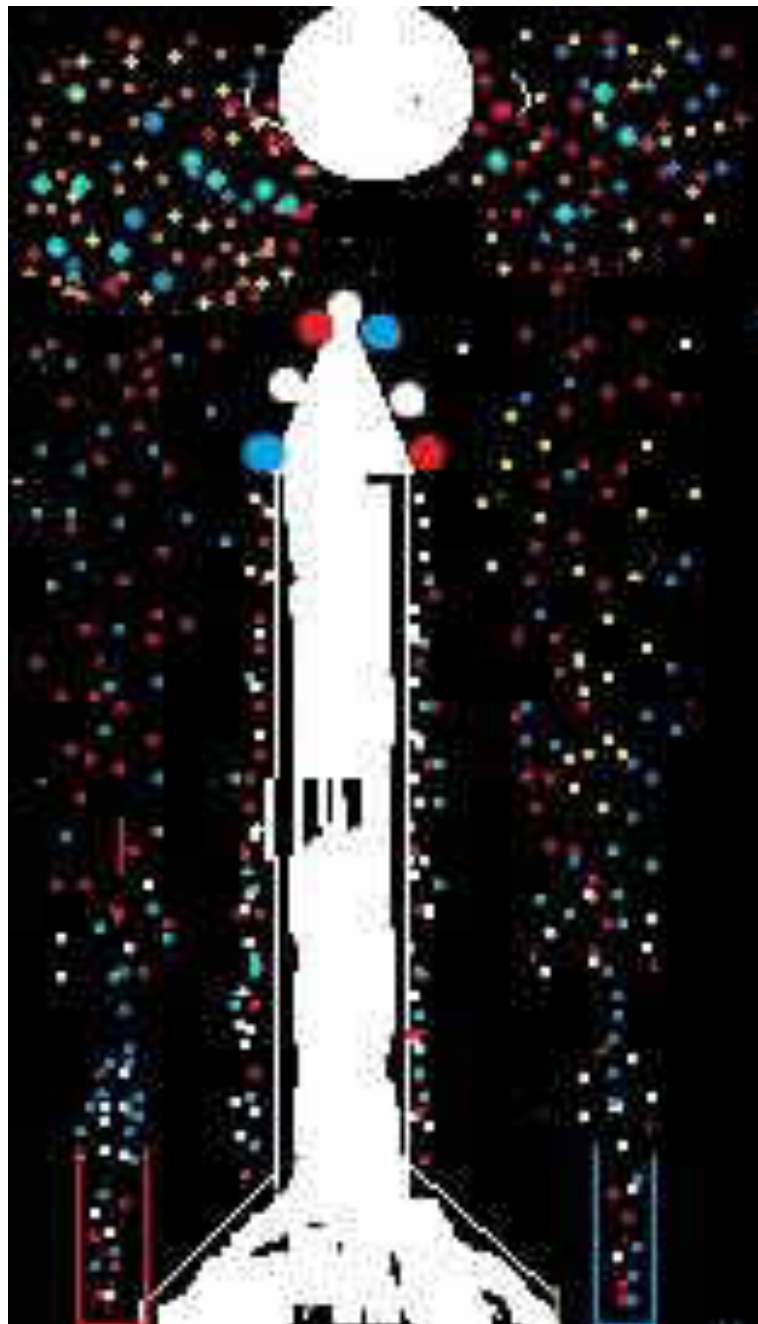
two toys down his list
Santa's eyes scan
the young boy's mother



Count Down

Beneath a full moon Venus and two red stars above a blinking
blonde beneath a blinking border of off white liquor store lights
tapping on the front window of Sally's three room flat above
Kit Kats Record Shop beneath Connie's Pharmacy one kiss
launched two rockets.

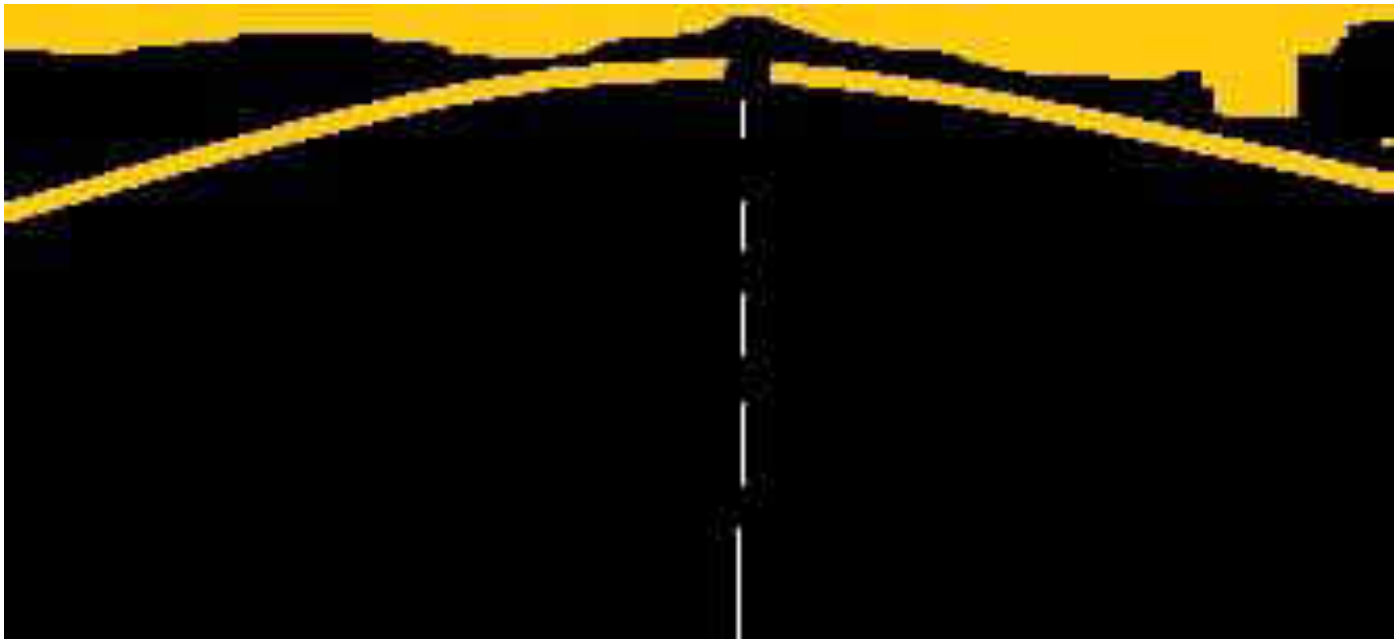
Falling
On The Fallen Scarecrow
Harvest Moonlight



Cowboy

At the Cattleman's Meat Market
on the outskirts of Abilene Texas
An old man tips his black ten gallon hat
smiles and says, Howdy Son as he wrangles
the shopping carts in the cart corral on a rainy day.

Loon's Cry
In A Split second
My Moonlit Biography

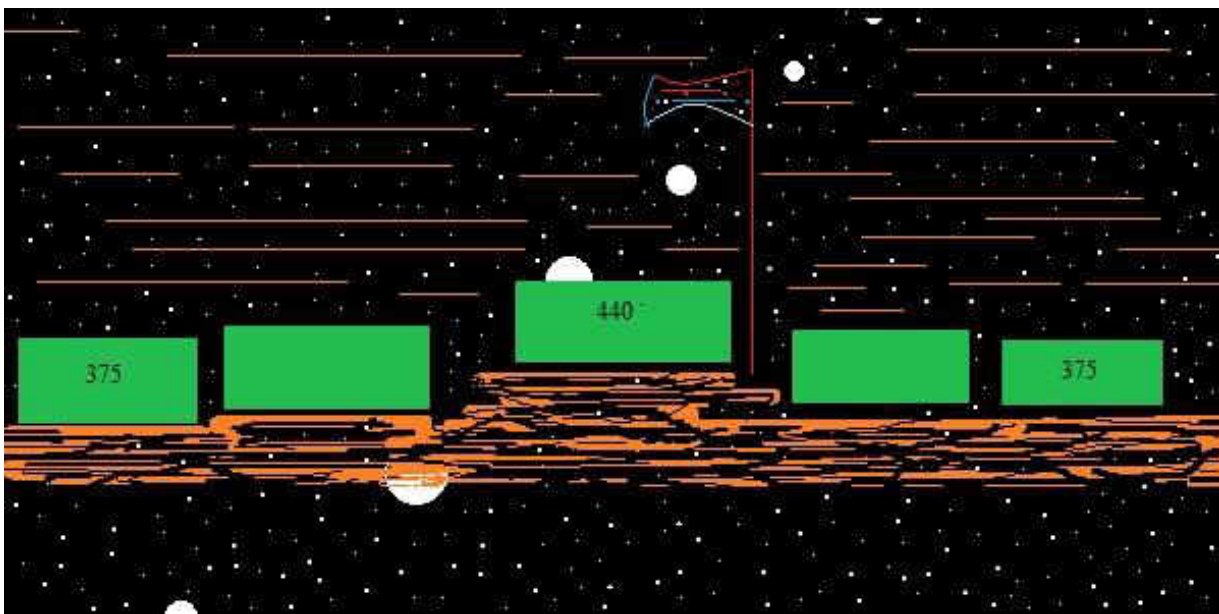


In Late July

Jim called on Wednesday morning. Said he wanted to take me to the baseball game since I hadn't been to the new stadium. Said too, that this was the last chance before he and Stacy traded their long johns, boots, mittens, Mackinaws, and Michigan for sandals, shades, sunscreen, cutoffs, bikinis, and Arizona.

On the way to Jim and Stacy's place Thursday morning, I drove through the old neighborhood. Everyone I knew was gone. Most of them dead. The house where my sisters and I were conceived, the house where my sisters and I went from diapers to graduate degrees, the rock solid house our parents died to pay for every day until their deaths was a Wes Craven camera riff on the sad and shabby state of the American Dream. Our three bedroom, bath and a half, two car garage citadel was a crack inspired creep show of charred wood, broken bricks, shattered glass and weeds.

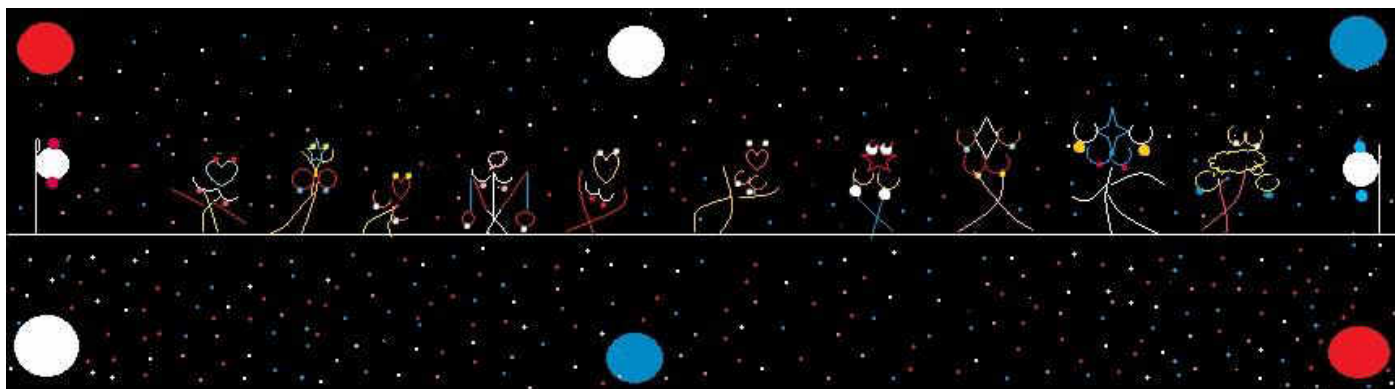
Growls
Our
Whispers



if i can make it there

so i caught a cab so the driver asks if I'm afraid of being in New York City in the dark. so i says hell no so the driver asks why ain't you so I says New York City in the dark is noon time sunshine compared to where I call home. so the driver asks where's that so I hold up my right hand. 4 fingers tight together thumb splayed to the left so the driver laughs so I ask what's so funny about it so the driver says I've been driving this taxi for twenty years I thought I met everybody from every where but you're the first guy I ever met from the land of hand what finger do you live in so I says about seventy miles south of the thumb so the driver asks what's the name of the town so I rifled the driver's pockets emptied the driver's till left the driver on the corner of nowhere and nothing listened to Smokey And The Miracles sing Going To A Go - Go and snapped my fingers all the way home .

almost
beautiful through
a window in
Windsor the skyline of
Detroit



Iowa

Once the Zephyr cleared the Donner Pass the man sitting beside me said, “ Well my friend, I’m Perry Thomas and I’m going back to the Midwest. I’m going back home to Barnum, Iowa because the people in Iowa don’t swap wife’s and husbands, and the people in Iowa raise corn not porn. I’m going back to Iowa for the county fairs. I’m going back to Iowa for the hospitality, decency, and felicity. When your neighbor invites you over for dinner, you’ll get a moon sized plate of home - made German Potato Salad, corn on or off the cob that’s sweeter than sugar cane, pickled beets, green beans that were never crammed into a can or jar, and bratwurst that came from a blue ribbon pig the paperboy raised. ”

Passing through Winnemucca, the man went on . . . “ From the back you can’t tell if the farmer is the farmer’s wife, the farmer’s son, the farmer’s daughter, or the farmer. Everyone has hair that resembles corn shocks in November. Everyone wears John Deere gear. Kids don’t get gunned down over a pair of shoes. In Iowa, every small town gas station and grocery store between Dubuque and Onawa has a public restroom that isn’t littered with sluts, gigolos, queers, or hypodermic needles. ”

Twenty minutes down the tracks, the conductor called out “ Elko, Elko Nevada, Elko. “ The Zephyr stopped. We got off to stretch. The man kept on talking . . . “ Let me tell you my friend, the people in Iowa are damned fine people. If you give your neighbors a couple of beers, a cup of butter, or lend them a wrench, later that day you’re going to find a twelve pack of Bud, three rhubarb pies, and a trained monkey sitting beside your wrench on the front porch. I’m telling you as God is my witness, Iowans are strong people. They’re the invisible threads that stitch, tape, tack, and tie our great nation together, person to person, village to village, town to town, city to city, and state to state. ”

I put a crisp new Abe in the vending machine. I told the man the snacks and sodas were on me. When I asked the man what he wanted, the man stuck a cold metallic rod in the space between my ribs and said, “ Your watch, wallet, cash, and credit cards. ” At ten after two a.m. I watched mister Perry Thomas of Barnum, Iowa meld into the dark of Elko, Nevada.

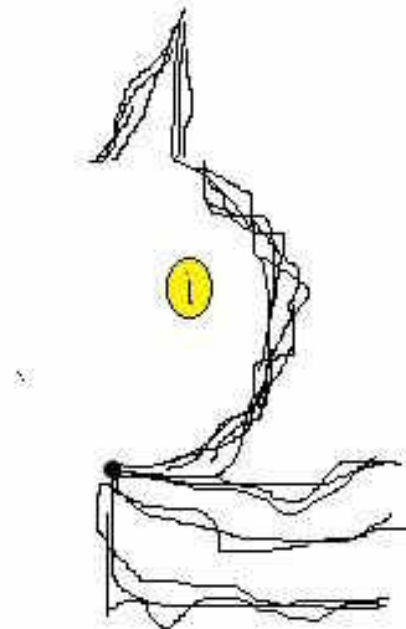
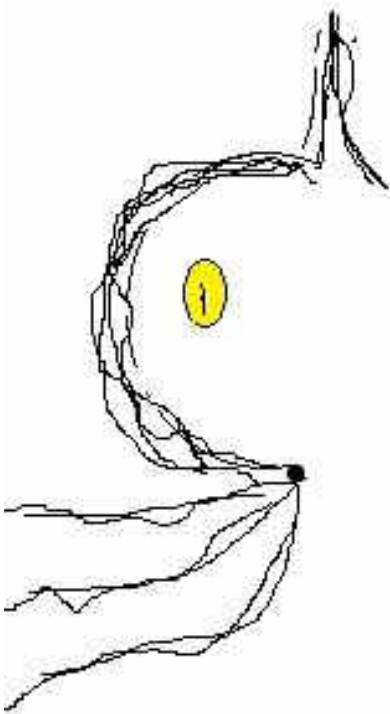
Enlightenment
The Stillness Of A Hummingbird
Hovering



from detroit to kyoto

ten hours and twenty - two minutes in the air
filling the space between two beautiful women
and not a trace of turbulence.

zen garden
the shadow of a cat
adds a dead cardinal



Lift Up Your Eyes

Ten times from the mountain
Ten times from the plain
Ten times from the forest
Gonna shout his glorious name

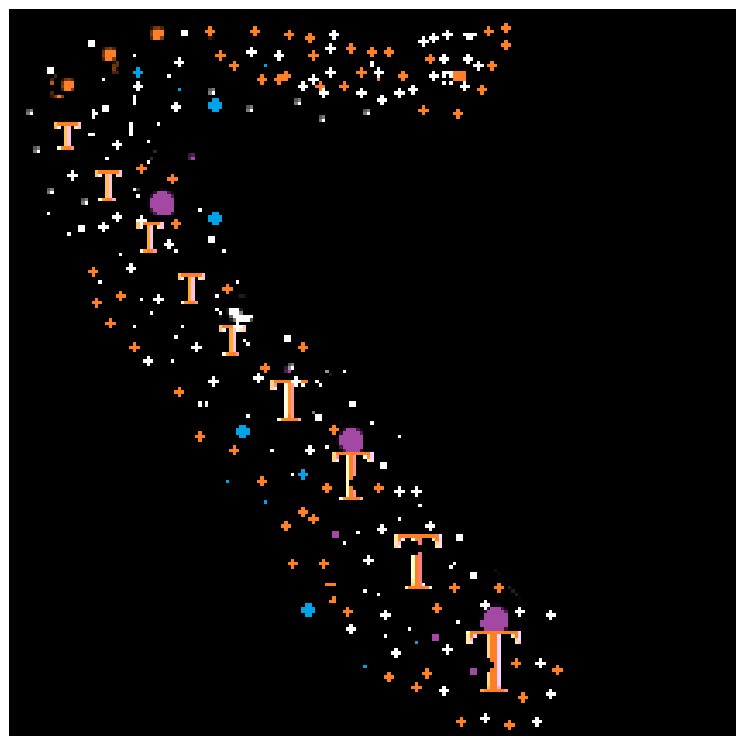
It's sweeter than a spoon of honey
It's finer than a grain of sand
It's warmer than the Texas sunshine
and yes it's twice as grand

So many folks is speechless
So many folks is blind
Praise his name my sinning friend
You ain't got that much time

Lift your eyes up to the sky
Before you slop that sow
Hitch your mule and weary soul
To that good ole' gospel plow

It's sweeter than a spoon of honey
Praise his name 'till it resounds
Stake your claim and slay the devil
Upon his solid ground.

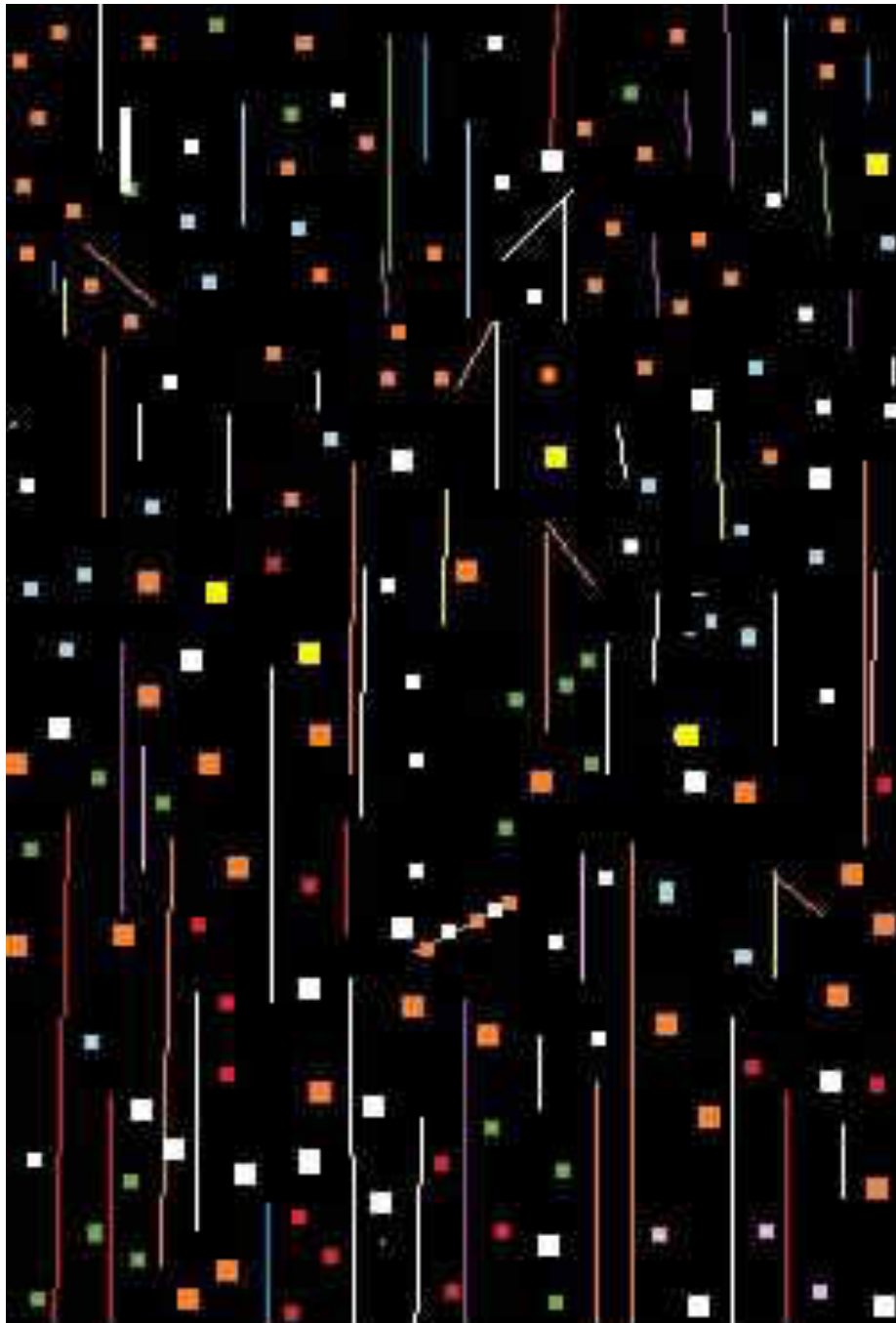
Spring . . .
Fifty acres of rich black soil
And the bleached white bones of my
Father



A Thanksgiving Day Parade

Pushing two three wheeled rust raped shopping carts down a trail paved with the shattered ashes of rot gut gimps crack creeps junk jockeys and needle nuns in a pair of pink canvas Keds the old lady waves winks smiles laughs blows kisses and shouts “Hal I’ll be there waiting on the front porch for you tonight” to an apparition hidden in a swirl of snow as she passes me and the abandoned Packard Plant on a street we still call East Grand Boulevard.

New Year’s Day
It Is As It Was
Winter Wind



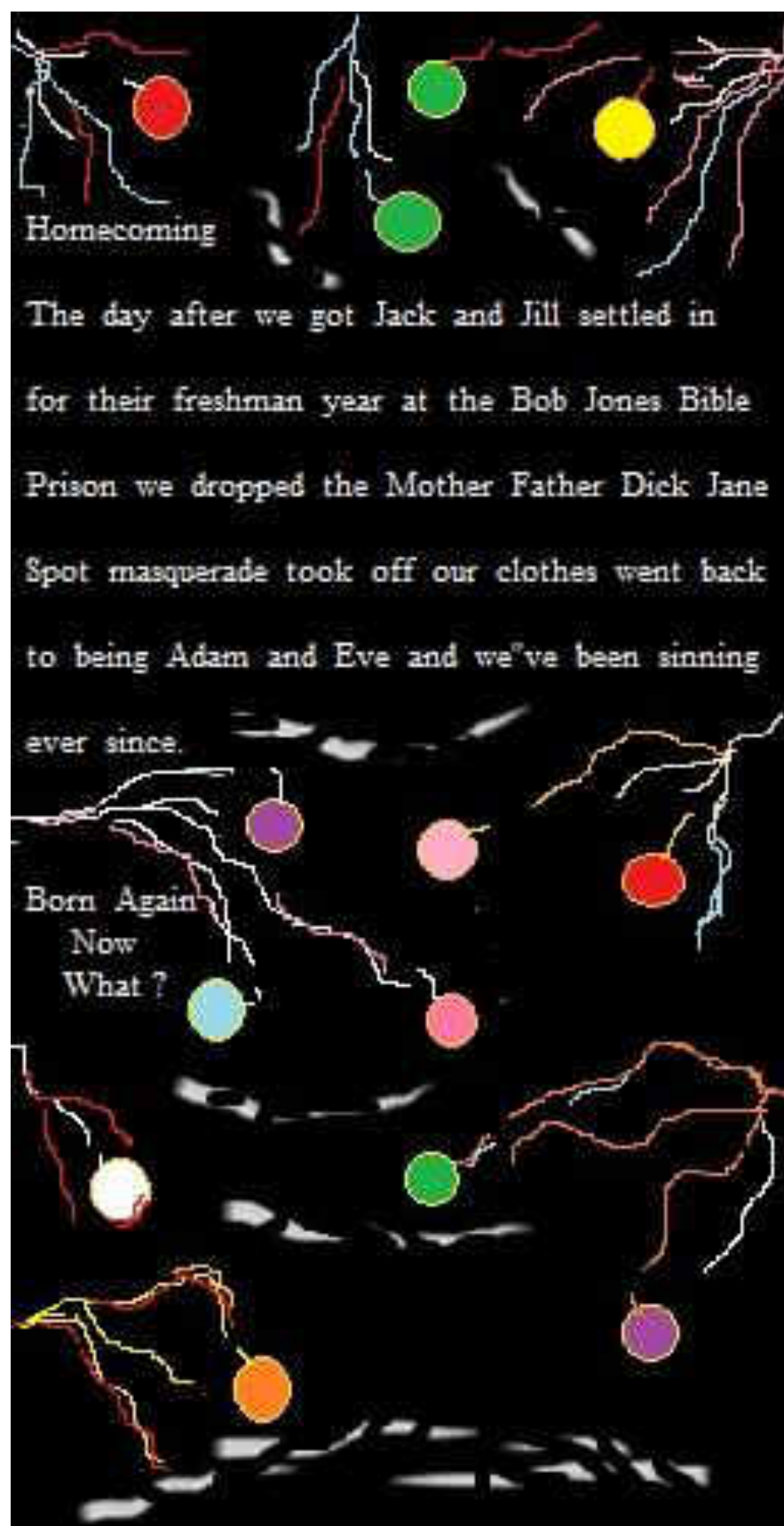
Candy Man

I'd rather be a Sugar Baby than a Jolly Rancher
I'd rather be a Jolly Rancher than a Willie Wonka
I'd rather be a Willie Wonka than a Baby Ruth
I'd rather be a Baby Ruth than an Oh Henry
I'd rather be an Oh Henry than a Mary Jane
I'd rather be a Mary Jane than a Cracker Jack
I'd rather be a Cracker Jack than a Sugar Daddy
I'd rather be a Sugar Daddy or all 3 Musketeers
Because let me tell you Mrs. Butterworth
Life's a bitch being Mr. Good Bar.

Lent
The Scent
Of Her
Flesh On
A Holy Card



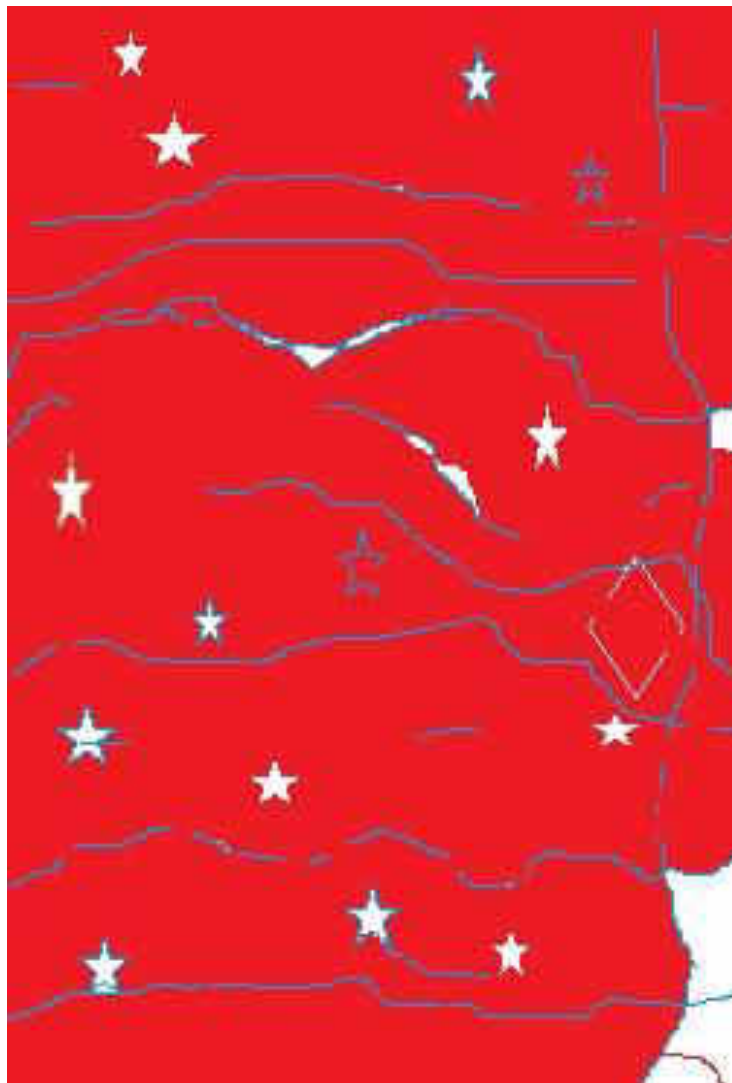
Homecoming



Scars And Tripe Forever

In the dream, Jesus was wearing a Derek Jeter jersey and a top hat he was doing magic tricks in the Rose Garden he snapped his fingers and Dick Cheney fell out of a tree then he turned Dick into a pole humping stripper who winked, rocked shimmied and saluted an Arab canola oil sultan when Jesus pulled George Junior out of a Lone Star beer can and had him read a Burger King menu Junior's gal Laura shouted out Thank God my husband's been the recipient of a miracle he never could read and now he can't talk Don Rumsfeld and his canine Karl Rove laughed before and after Jesus turned Don into Michael Jackson and Karl into a jack-o-lantern the Democrats applauded wildly and shouted in unison c'mon JC show us how you did that so Jesus turned them into jack asses, left town, and never looked back.

Washington Monument
In The Eyes Of A Panhandler
A Map Of America



Factory Town

The night after he slapped the college kid's face in front of us, Mike the crane operator, Nate the hook up man, me and the Mosquito Man watched the cables unravel and snap.

Five tons of stainless steel bound to become hood ornaments on thousands of Cadillac El Dorados ground the foreman into the greasy concrete that covered the north end loading dock.

Mike and Nate laughed. Me and the Mosquito Man shrugged our shoulders. No One took up a collection for the foreman's widow, and Ted Lasky the midnight shift security guard went out to the field behind the factory and gathered a bouquet of Bindweed, Poison Oak, and Skeleton Weed that he delivered to the funeral parlor with a note that read "Thank God for small favors, frayed cables, and the Invisible Man. "

assemblylinespotweldersweldingshouldertoshoulder



TV Dinner

Two minutes past Grace, as Ma was passing the smashed potatoes, CNN appeared on the screen and Wolf Blitzer spoon fed us sixty thousand dead Syrians, two - hundred and twelve Egyptians killed by a car bomb in Alexandria, three teenaged suicide bombers on buses in Tel Aviv burnt beyond recognition, and twenty dead kids on Main Street USA. For dessert, Wolf a la moded Ma's apple pie with two melting glaciers, thirty – three crushed coal miners, and a crumbling ice shelf all stacked on the pointless point of a Ku Klux Kleep's dunce cap.

Tourist Town

G
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On A Drunk In The Gutter



At The Switching Yard

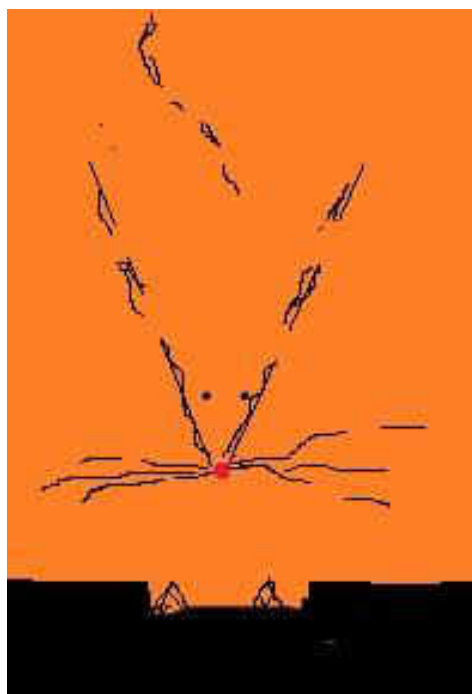
The trains began arriving at sunset. By sunrise, thousands upon thousands of smiling priests had drifted through the corroded gates. Happy chat and euphoric stupidity were the flavors of the day until the orientation assembly began

When I appeared from behind the curtain, faces went blank. Eyes popped. Jaws dropped.

Teeth chattered. These men who had articulately conned parents and their children into believing that they spoke for me, were tongue tied and stutterless. I granted each and every one eternal life on Earth as eunuchs.

After everything was said and done, I met my son Jesse for sushi, I treated myself to a black satin bikini, six tubes of cherry fire lip gloss, a pair of blue ruby studded flip flops, two boxes of Godiva Truffles, and a gorgeous sax player named Pete from down yonder who I met at The Switching Yard Martini Bar .

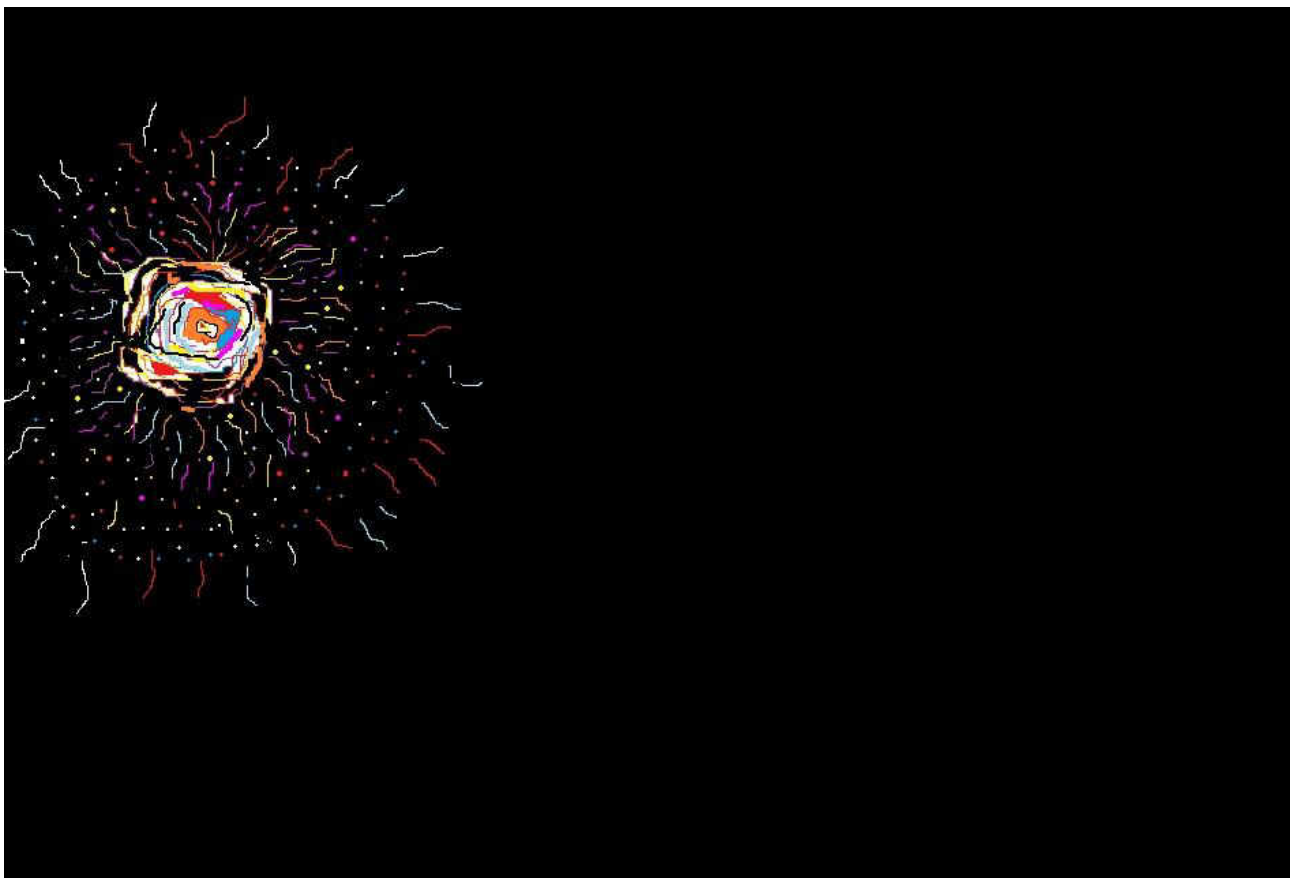
AA Meeting
The Women I'm
Addicted to



Baseball Light Show

That the neon orange baseball was conceived on a night when twenty sparkling blue moons swayed overhead hypnotizing the Earth on July twentieth nineteen sixty-seven and was delivered on August fifteenth nineteen sixty-nine by a man who took a mule to a cocktail party and employed two mechanical white rabbits beneath home plate in a town that still vibrates six and a half miles due east of San Francisco and six and a half miles due west of Berkeley made common sense in an era when non sense was perfect sense and perfect sense cost fifty cents a hit.

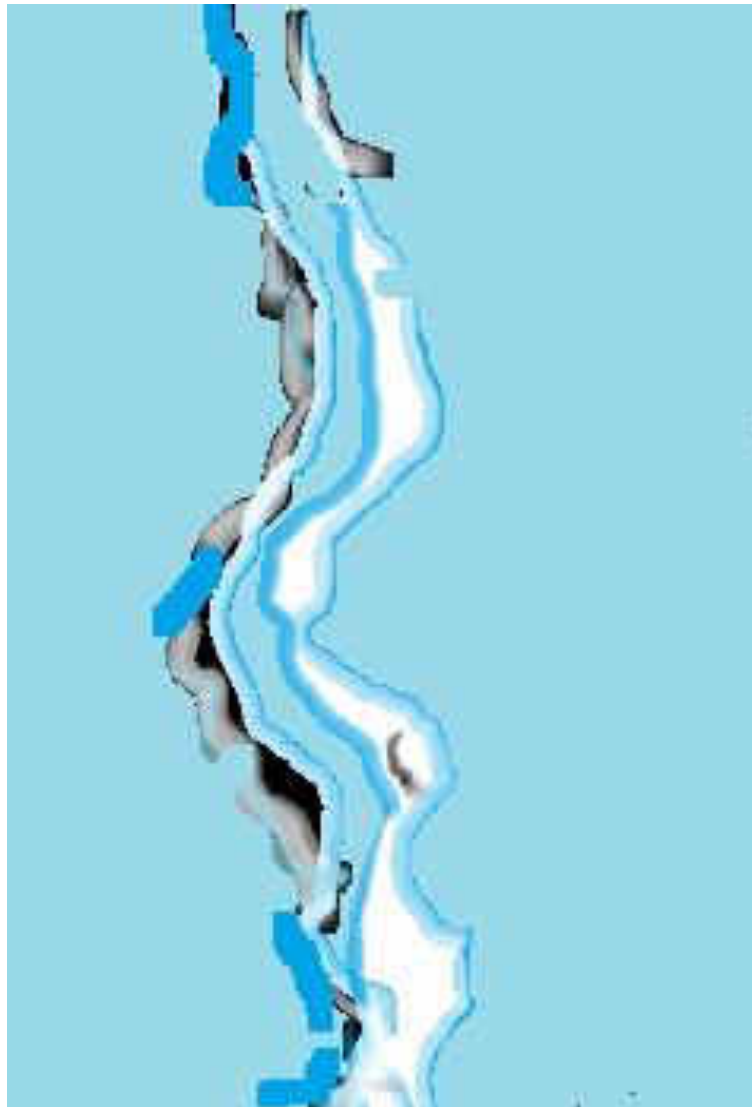
new born baby
above my wife's pink lips
our handy man's blue eyes



Our Marriage

We beat each other down with insults
until we fell in love and got divorced.

first time on the river
I fish the spot
the heron fished



Midnight

Friday

July 17, 2012

Temperature 87 F

Not a cloud in the sky

Big Moon

Shining Clear

So clear

I can see Laurie unhitch her

Spaghetti straps

And drop her

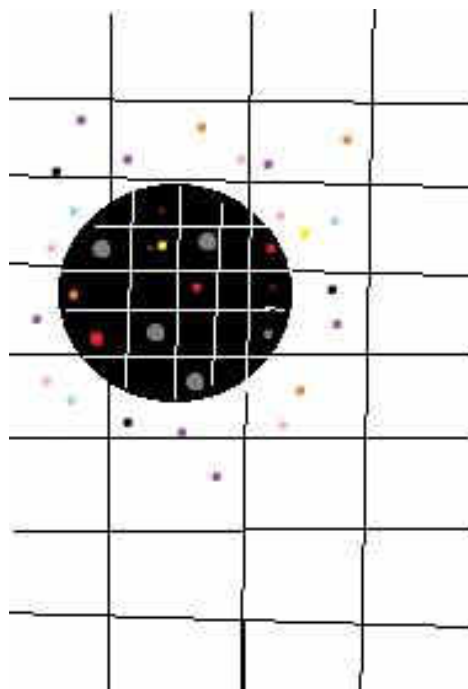
As the Foreman walks by screaming

“ Pick up the fucking pace ”

Factory Entrance

Moths Spin ‘Round & ‘Round

A Caged Light Bulb



WHEN WE GOT TO THE GARDEN

WE DIDN'T HAVE A MAP. FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON WE KEPT WALKING UPHILL EXCEPT IT WAS MORE LIKE SOME FORCE WAS PULLING US IN THAT DIRECTION. WELL WE WALKED SO HIGH UPHILL WE COULD REACH OUT AND TOUCH THE CLOUDS. WE PASSED THROUGH CLOUDS THAT PASSED THROUGH US. THE LAST CLOUD WE WALKED THROUGH LED US TO A PATH THAT WOUND THROUGH GROVES OF COCONUT TREES, ORANGE TREES, FIG TREES, DATE TREES, AVOCADO TREES, CHERRY TREES, LEMON TREES, PLUM TREES, NECTARINE TREES, TANGERINE TREES, ALMOND TREES, PEAR TREES, WALNUT TREES, PEACH TREES, CLEMENTINE TREES, AND SUGAR MAPLE TREES. WHERE THE SUGAR MAPLES ENDED THE PATH WIDENED AND WE ENTERED AN ORCHARD. IN THE ORCHARD WE CAME ACROSS RED APPLES, GREEN APPLES, YELLOW APPLES, PINK APPLES, SWEET APPLES, TART APPLES, DELICIOUS APPLES, FUJI APPLES, NORTHERN SPY APPLES, MCINTOSH APPLES, GALA APPLES, PINK LADY APPLES, WALTZ APPLES, EDDIE APRIL APPLES, AMBROSIA APPLES, WINESAP APPLES, OPALESCENT APPLES, ZESTAR APPLES, REVIVAL APPLES, IDARED APPLES, TICKLED PINK APPLES, QUEBEC BELL APPLES, TOPAZ APPLES, LIBERTY APPLES, VIKING APPLES, ADANAC APPLES, SATURN APPLES, BLACKJON APPLES, ANNA APPLES, KING LUSCIOUS APPLES, BEACON APPLES, DISCOVERY APPLES, SURPRISE APPLES, CRAB APPLES. WE LOOKED AROUND. SHE PICKED AND WE SHARED A NIAGARA APPLE, THEN WE FOUND OUT REAL QUICK THAT THE ORCHARD AND EVERYTHING ELSE WE SLID AND SLIPPED ACROSS WAS OWNED BY A LEMON SOUR GUY NAMED GOD ZILLA.

SURPRISE PARTY
I HANG MY TOUPEE
ON THE HAT RACK



Virtue

In the mining town of Virtue
where the Mercy River flowed
two men met with death
in a wicked blinding snow

The Gypsy left his home
a thousand miles east
looking to partake in
Virtue's golden feast

Tall John was the barkeep
at the Ruby Star Hotel
a gentle man from Tennessee
and a card sharp just as well

He killed kings with the German
Black Willie and Old Dutch
that night he dealt a loser's hand
to the preacher and the judge

The Gypsy took room number ten
at Miss Jesse's boarding hall
when the silver moon had faded
and the snow began to fall

As the sweet scent of a woman
drifted clear across the floor
the gypsy lit a hurricane lamp
A knock rattled his door

A woman clad in sorrow's shawl
who's eyes were wet and blue
said listen to me mister for all
I say is true

My name is Emma Simpson Sir
the woman whispered low
in the morning mount your horse
don't look back just go

In our town of Virtue
no one will hold a grudge
unless you cross our marshal
preacher mayor and our judge

Why thank you ma'am the gypsy said
I can't pass up this chance
in the glimmer of a glowing wick
they danced the lovers dance

He is a man of God and truth
Emma muttered in the glow
and of this tender moment
he must never know

The gypsy flashed a crescent smile
room ten grew cold and dark
the silence of the storm screamed
a blood hound's bark

Now up the empty street a block
behind them Methodist Doors
the marshal preacher and the judge
called out I need three more

Tall John cut the poker deck
with a magician's blinding speed
inviting his opponent to take
as many as you need

Across the Pinyon Altar
he stretched his mighty arms
Tall John gazed upon the cross
feeling warm and calm

The marshal kissed the hand he held
he was blinded to the ruse
before his eyes three of a kind
each card a pallid deuce

The mayor and the judge exclaimed
I'll see that and raise ten more
he laughed and showed his triple play
Tall John fanned Aces four

The marshal and the preacher
dropped his eyes down to his boots
Tall John laughed and said to him
as he rounded up the loot

Don't feel bad my righteous friend
then he gave the mayor a nudge
I'm just a vagrant barkeep you're
the marshal preacher and a judge

Tall John winked then closed the door
and through the fog of snow that fell
he ambled out to pour the drinks
at the Ruby Star Hotel

When the gypsy left Miss Jesse's hall
to sip a well earned drink
Emma thought of their bare skin
as a web of slate and pink

If the gypsy would invite her
to ride the mustang winds
she'd escape her judge and mayor
life would begin again

The gypsy stood before the bar
he ordered up a glass
Tall John tipped the bottle
two dancing girls walked past

You new in town Tall John asked
I guess you could say so
What brings you here the card sharp asked
I come to mine some gold

You know this town's named Virtue
said the barkeep with a smile
though Virtue's just a cruel mirage
that hide's the boss man's style

They use it to disguise themselves
and justify their sins
you see it serves them very well
another drink my friend ?

I wouldn't know the gypsy said
I'm here to stake my claim
sir I ain't really interested in why
a town's named what its named

Ok said the barkeep
I guess that's up to you
in this town you'll be amazed
how lies become the truth

Old Piano Jack struck up a chord
the camp town horses ran
Miss Emma leaned against the bar
her face shifted like sand

Well my friend I'll consider that
your intention's crystal clear
the gypsy then took off his cape
as a face rose in the mirror

A cropped goatee of gray and black
green eyes that glowed blood red
A pistol shot then Emma cried
My God Tall John is dead

It wasn't but a minute passed
when the mayor and the judge
showed up in the bar room
with the marshal and his badge

A silver star shone on his coat
he stroked his cropped goatee
there's been a crime the preacher said
the guilty man I see

The mayor locked the iron cuffs
round the killer's hands
We'll drop the rope at daybreak
you are an evil man

In the hate and silence raging
to the cadence of church bells
the marshal judge and mayor said
Boy we're sending you to hell

That night there was a trial
before the preacher in a gown
after the marshal judge and mayor
alerted the whole town

The people lit their torches
they gathered up their guns
when the killer's noose was set
they knew he was the one

Who had ridden into Virtue
about twelve hours gone
on a dead man's devil horse
the judge said he was the one

Who then walked into
Tall John's Ruby Star Hotel
where he drank a glass of whiskey
and laughed when Tall John fell

Who harbored malice in his mind
blackier than a pit of tar
who then sent Tall John six feet deep
with a bullet through his heart.

In the frozen morning
the gallows stage was set
the gypsy wore his riding cape
Miss Emma's eyes he met

Her tears were pent up deep inside
of a vault no man could breach
her love had vanished in the storm
to a world no man could reach

The preacher judge and marshal
dressed in gambler's black
waved to Virtue's mayor
as he rubbed Miss Emma's back

When her fearsome preacher
stroked his cropped goatee
he locked his lady in her guilt
for he held all the keys

The marshal shouted HANG HIM !
we'll let the whole world know
that in the town of Virtue
a man reaps what he sows

When the hanging fest was over
the mayor then proclaimed
bury the snake without a cross
in all his guilt and shame

The judge well he just up and left
to raise a well earned glass
and in the Ruby Star's long mirror
there was no reflection cast

The mining town of Virtue
has since returned to dust
where the Mercy River flowed
there's just a barren gulch

You see there wasn't but a speck
of gold up in them hills
just the vision of a gypsy
who some say wanders still

When I was a young man

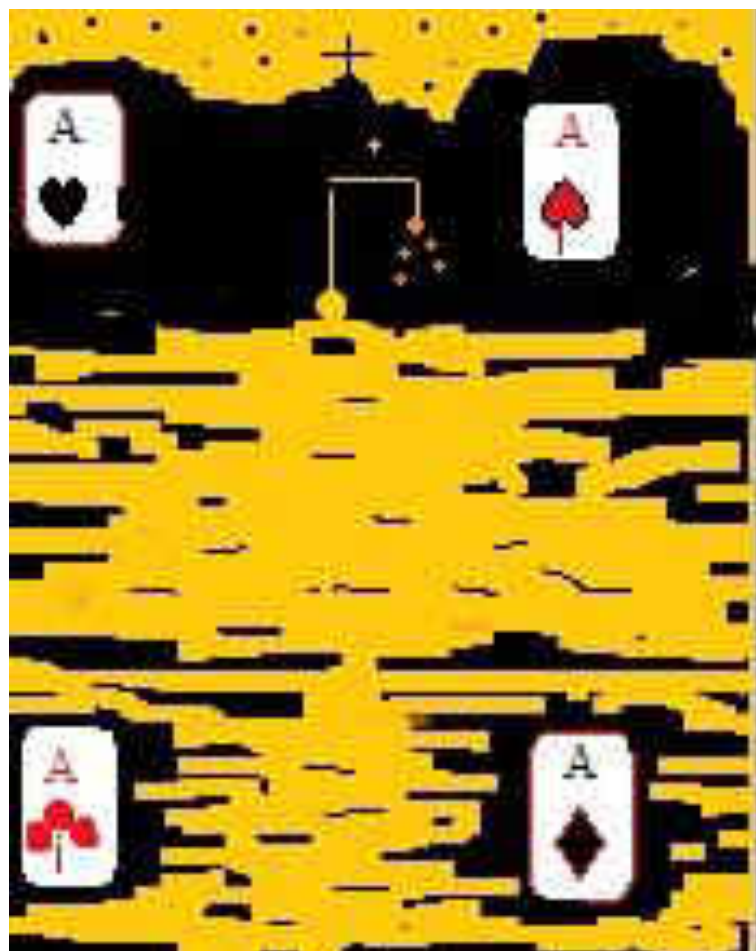
fresh within my youth
through that night I wondered
what composed the truth

Did truth have a color ?
Was truth calm and kind ?
I found truth was a shadow
just an element of mind

that faded with each sunset
then twisted into black
Excuse me now the old man said
I'm tired of looking back

With a nod he hit the trail
riding cape and dusty boots
just another lonely gypsy
just a miner of the truth

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ghost town the face of a s



Trust

After the shrimp scampi, home made basil buttered angel hair , and two bowls of neon red ice cream, she walked over to the upright water fountain next to the furnace in my basement apartment.

When she saw the red, green, and white cotton candy and silver tinsel gushing from the rusty spout she said , " You're a hell of a cook, but better yet, being with you is better than being at Disneyland. "

She said what she said dressed in a candy cane colored reindeer costume so I figured she was telling me the truth.

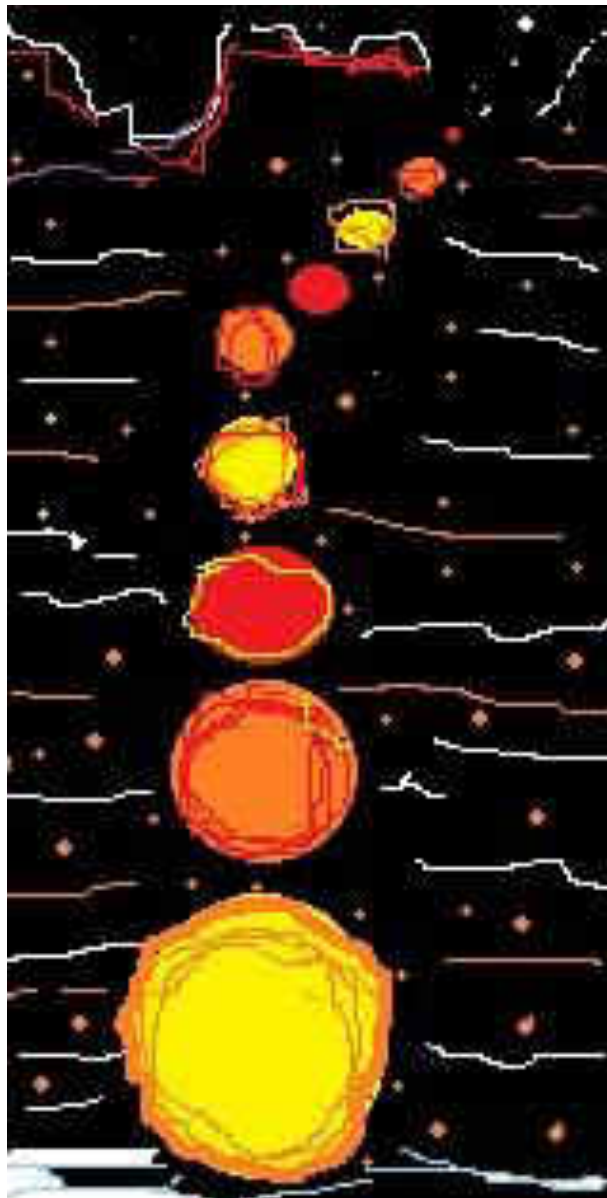
long kiss
we re emerge
an apparition



TIME LINES

IN A NEW YORK MINUTE WE MET IN LINE AT THE EXPRESS CHECKOUT HER LADY FINGERS WERE WRAPPED AROUND A JAR OF INSTANT NESCAFE MY POCKET ACES JUGGLED TWO DECKS OF FLASH CASH LOTTERY TICKETS SHE SCANNED ME I SCANNED HER HER SHE SAID LET'S GO I SAID LET'S GO FIVE SECONDS LATER WE WERE SITTING IN HER MERCURY COMET TEN SECONDS AFTER THE COMET WE STOOD ON HER FRONT PORCH FIFTEEN SECONDS PAST HER PORCH WE WERE PANTING ON HER BEDROOM FLOOR TWENTY SECONDS BEYOND HER BEDROOM FLOOR WE WERE THE STARS THAT ROSE AND FELL IN A CEILING MIRROR TEN SECONDS AFTER THE FLOOD TWO SPARKS BEGAT A THIRD SPARK AT THREE THIRTY ON THAT FIFTH DAY OF MAY WE SAW EACH OTHER FOR THE LAST TIME FIVE YEARS LATER I RECEIVED A NINE WORD LETTER FROM MISSOULA MONTANA THERE'S A BOY NAMED JAKE HERE CRYING TO MEET HIS DADDY ON RAINY DAYS LIKE TODAY I THINK ABOUT THEM FROM DAYLIGHT TO DARK AND EVERY MORNING NOON AND NIGHT I BEAT THE SELF I WAS BUT I STILL CAN'T KILL HIM.

SALVATION ARMY STORE
ON THE CLEARANCE TABLE
SOME OLD SOLDIER'S PURPLE HEART



In The Surgeon's Mirror

At the ends of my smile both dimples become bright shining ice blue ponds
that catch and contain the rest of the man caving in cell by cell without a
whimper without objection without a splash.

birthday balloons
the one that doesn't burst
blows away



Saint Nick

Every day, night and day, for the past five days, we've had rain, rain, rain, rain and more rain. A total of thirteen inches since Monday has turned an entire state of immaculate snowmen into an ocean of mud. I lost my eyes this morning in a rising tide of blacker than black black sewer water flowing from an endless black hole that's blacker than black, and blacker than the blacker than black liquid filth cresting the lip of the sump crock. I'm trying to figure out why the dog damned sump pump keeps on quitting and spitting up on us. Yesterday, Laurie and I took thirty-five bags of sewage soaked paper, cloth, and wooden memories out to the curb. Thirty-five garbage bags that contained Jesse and Becky's baby shoes, two programs from the 1934 World Series autographed by Goose Goslin and Ducky Medwick, Laurie's wedding dress, a first edition of *The Old Man And The Sea* signed by Hemingway, a blue paper lei Elvis allegedly wore during the filming of *Blue Hawaii*, Barbie and Ken's entire wardrobe, decades of joy, decades of tears, and the tangible history of a family that no one, including the Red Legend who's due to arrive at midnight, can replace.

With my face still searching the sludge for my eyes, a late December mosquito plants its flag in my left cheek. I say to my co-pilot, cheerleader, apprentice, tricycle king, and three year old grandson, "Nick, go get your old Oppie a roll of tape, a hammer, and a screwdriver. I hear Nick shuffle off to Oreo. Then I hear a metallic symphony of thuds, pings, booms, and bams. I'm mesmerized by the song of wrenches, screwdrivers, levels, and concrete trowels falling from their pegs. In perfect harmony with the bangs, my mind screams, "You better be sure the boy is ok. For Christ's sake, what are you waiting for?" Next, a scorching duet composed of Laurie's voice and Becky's voice geysers up from the depths of the sump crock. "Maybe the hammer fell and broke Nick's foot. Maybe he cut his hand on that rusty razor wire. Maybe Nick's skewered on a screwdriver. Maybe he's sipping a cup of cotton candy pink anti-freeze. Maybe you should take your finger out of the dike and make sure he's ok you irresponsible ass."

When their voices fade I hear the triumphant footfalls of a tiny warrior marching back to Bataan. I hear Patton parading through Paris. I hear fifty-thousand Yankee

fans cheering a Mickey Mantle walk off moon shot. I hear Nick coming closer. I hear Nick's laughter. I feel Nick's excitement soaked words temper the damp cold air. "I found four hammers Oppie, four Oppie, that's good Oppie, isn't that good Oppie, Oppie, can I have a donut now ? "

I look over my shoulder into the dim seventy – five watt light. Both of Nick's hands are Good and Plenty pink. With each step, Nick's hands shift from bubble gum pink to Pink Panther pink, to pink grapefruit pink, to the undisputed heavy weight champion of pink, Polyurethane Pink Flamingo Pink. I turn my back to Nick. My eyes are still lost in the foul puzzle flowing over the sump crock's lip. When I turn to face him, Nick drops four hammers on the floor. His face and voice blossom into the shape, sound, color, and scent of pure joy. "Oppie, I found these too where you didn't hide them so good." Nick points to the sump pump's plug that's sagging in the wall socket. "Here Oppie, put some of this over there." Nick hands me two pink eggs of Silly Putty that he and his big brother Matthew were going to find in their stockings. The Silly Putty cements the plug in place and the whir of the sump pump becomes the sweetest Christmas Carol I've ever heard. Up in the kitchen I set two powdered sugar donuts on a paper plate for Saint Nick. Then, as the rain changes to snow, I dial Santa's number and order two dozen for tomorrow morning.

Reflecting Pond

My Face Clutters

The Space Between Clouds



Love Scene

Jane from Grand Junction tore the cut along the dotted lines here in the rain
bathing in moonlight over here on the sun porch swimming in my fish bowl eyes
Jezebel Jane unfolded me here on this ping pong table here in her mint scented
basement right here in the dust adorned window of Molly's Everyone Comes Clean
Laundromat located at the intersection of Water Avenue and North River Road Jane
The Generous Jezebel from Grand Junction spindled me here here here and right over
here in this red leather booth at Hector Tiant's Criss Cross Lounge sipping Sangria
Jane the jelly fish from Grand Junction mutilated me here on this Earth here on
The Blue Star Highway here on this beach here on the outskirts of Muskegon Michigan
here on the Fourth of July here at Mattie's Sunset Drive-in on Red Arrow Road way
down deep here in the center of her ecstasy Jane the magician from Grand Junction
turned a dead zeppelin into a rocket that exploded twice in twenty minutes twenty
minutes past the beach blanket scene Jane's voice slipped through the window
speaker I'd love to do it again with you up here on the big screen right in the
middle of the love scene.

Silver Anniversary
The Deep Dents
In Our Tin Cups



Down The Lone Star Trail

Shining naked in the display window at Vegas Vic's Lazy Lay Filly Ranch and dive deluxe on the North corner of Lone Star and Fifth riding a mechanical bucking bull and blissfully blinded by her windswept hair sinner's smile outlaw eyes and silver spurs that jangled from the peaks of her good and plenty pink nipples and slashed the last thread of morality from my mind at the height of the evening rush and already late for work I stopped and window shopped until she bounced back up broke the bucking bull breaking her slapped the corral dust from her peach velvet cheeks mounted me again and again and again then rode me quivering and quaking every inch of the way from May 12th 1982 on the outskirts of her in skirts until last week when she and my milquetoast brother Billy celebrated their tenth anniversary a thousand miles down the dust of that trail.

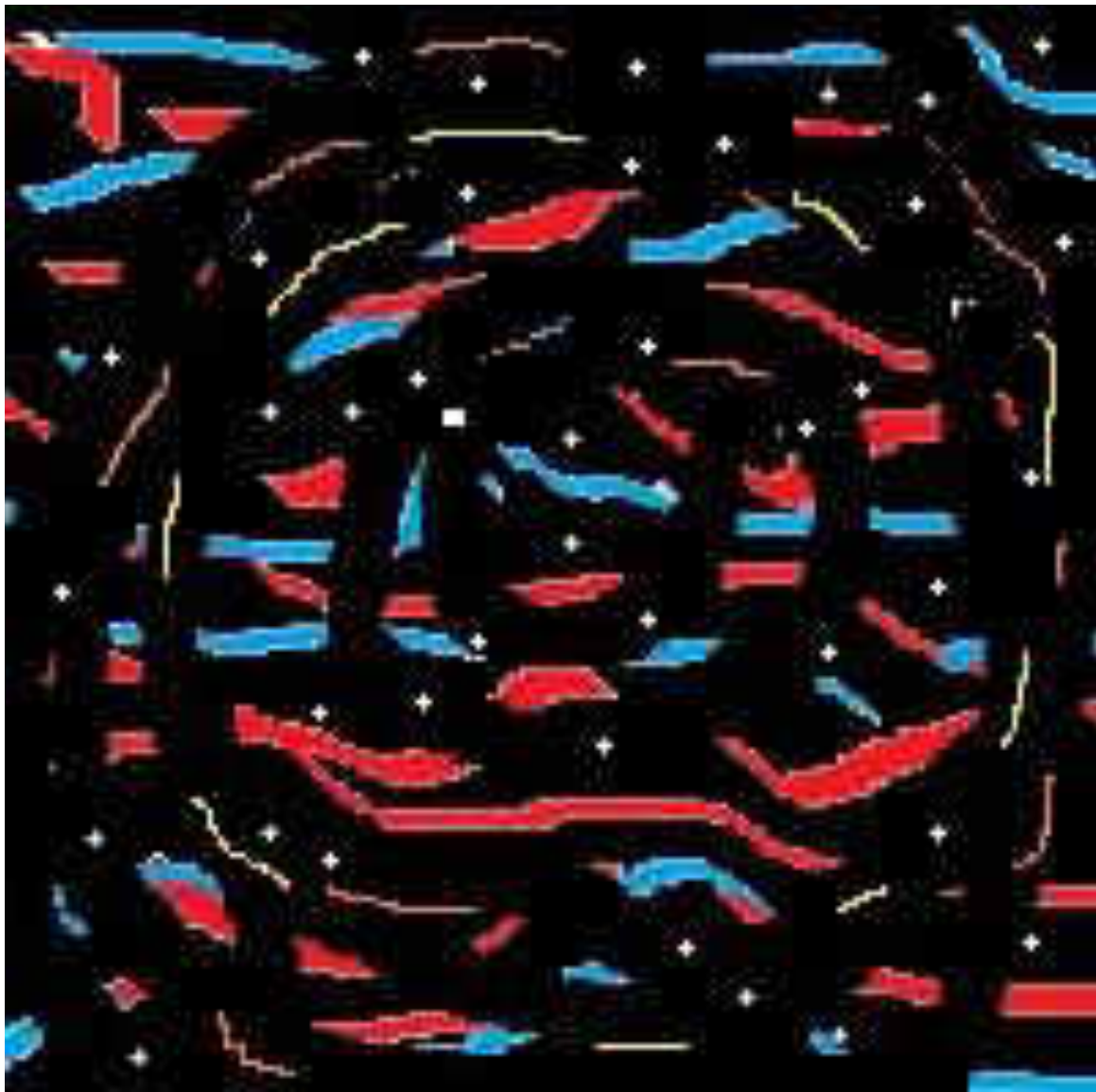
Clear Night
My Moon Shadow Settles
On A White Tombstone



On Hillcrest Road

Hidden in an April explosion of milkweed switch grass creeping jenny
spotted calf's ear queen anne's lace horsetail bedstraw begger's buttons
wild violets yellow rockets and bindweed behind the house behind the
barn before the apple orchard in our rust kissed gum ball blue 1985
Coupe deVille on the spot where her daddy caught us bare handed
bear hugging bare naked in an empty corn crib bursting with love
lust and lusciousness 32 years ago Laurie and I go all the way
again and again and again

Gale Warning
Two Gulls Surf The Waves
Above The Lake



Job Description

Chastity Sexton

Age - 33

Height - 5' 6"

Weight - 124 lbs.

Hair Color - Barfly Blonde

Eye Color - Wet Blue

Complexion - Wetter than Wet Pink

Address - Two Stools South Of the Jukebox.

unemployment office
a nameless clerk calls me
number ten



My Favorite Uncle

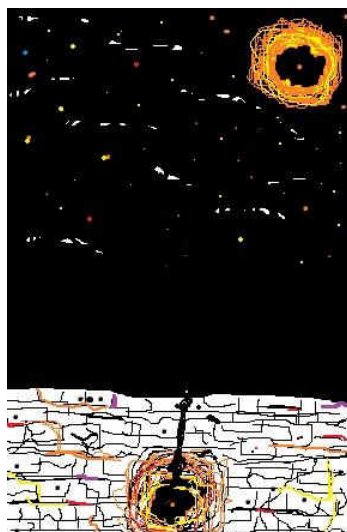
After twelve years, Uncle Donnie shows up at my door on a perfect Summer Saturday evening. Other than his vampire white skin, and a scar that zig-zags from his right earlobe to the corner of his mouth, he looks fit and trim.

Uncle Donnie hands me a fifty pound box of Delmonico Steaks. “ The thugs at the Crooked Cue tell me no one in the neighborhood cooks a steak like you do. I’m hungry kid. Feed me. Make mine rare. You know me kid, a little blood always put a smile on my face. ”

Over steaks and bourbon he asks if I remember that Saturday night. Before I can thank him, he says, “ Forget it kid. It’s enough that you cooked for me. These are different times. I got a new angle these days. ” Uncle Donnie offers no specifics, and I don’t ask.

On the driveway, he scans the house, and slaps me lightly on the cheek. “ You did real good for yourself kid, you did real good. Now tell me, who’s you’re favorite uncle ? ”

on parole
the tedium of dinner
conversation



Ripple Effect

Rose rang us at ten after nine on Monday morning. The medic who survived Tet helping others to survive Tet and the finest brother a brotherless man like me could have become the 58, 213th American life claimed by two selfish and sinister gangs and their opposing interpretations of the domino dogma.

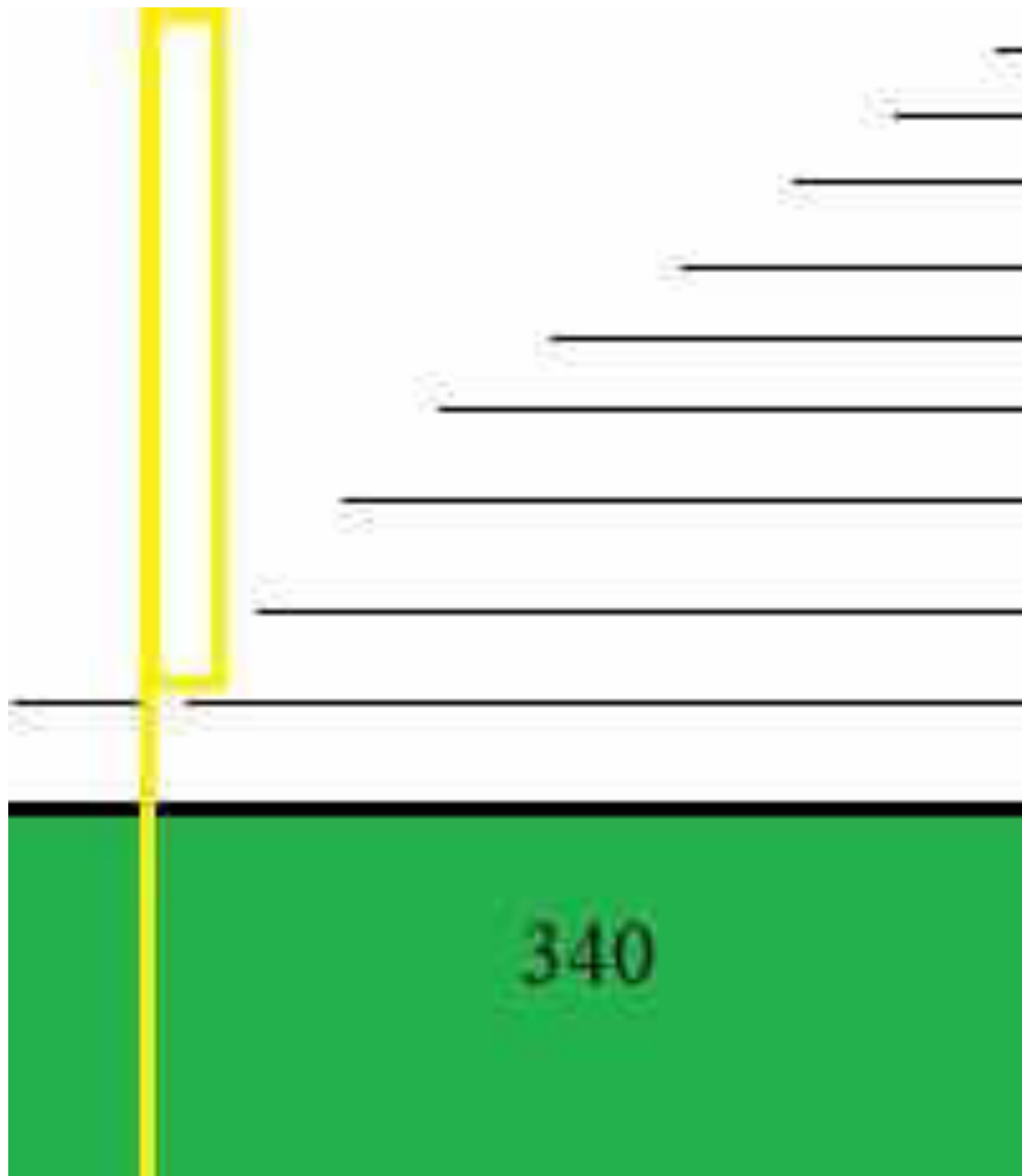
Flag Day
The One I Fly
Made In China



Brothers and Sisters

When I delivered Marty's eulogy, I stood at a lectern that was placed equidistant between his casket and his mourners. I felt the floor shift beneath my feet. I watched a flock of coherent words glide across my mind, sharpen, clarify, scramble and explode into the relief of chaos. Marty's eulogy became a prayer delivered from that dimension where life is death dancing at dawn in a white tuxedo, Jesus is the devil in the details, transience is the eternally durable fabric of eternity, the Pope is a Wild Irish Rose scented wino named Mack, the Mother of God is an atheist, and God The Great White Father is a Tang Dynasty Buddhist from the Kwangali Tribe in Namibia named Sitting Bull.

tropical paradise
flies on the goats
and the babies



Credits

Some of the haiku and haibun (or variations of them), contained in this volume, have previously appeared in the following journals:

Bear Creek Haiku

Blood Lotus

Bottle Rockets

The Camel Saloon

Haibun Today

Lilliput Review

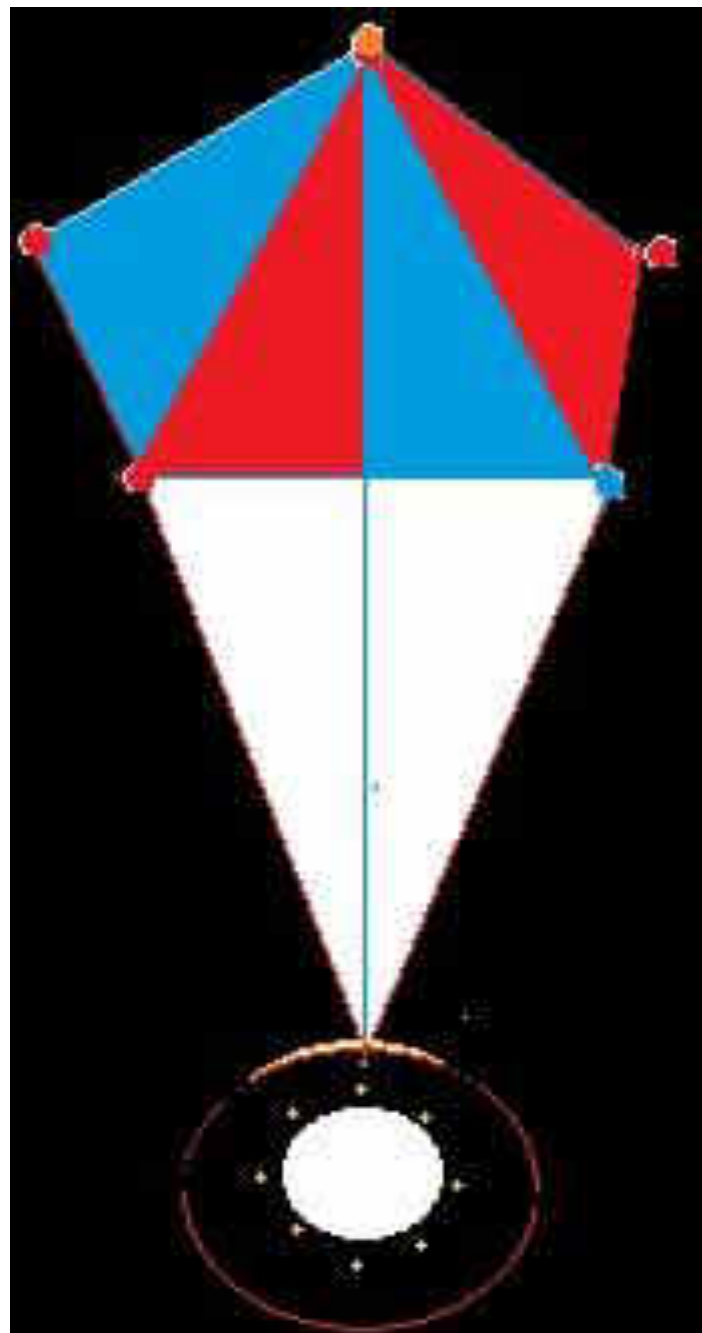
Mainichi Daily News

Modern Haiku

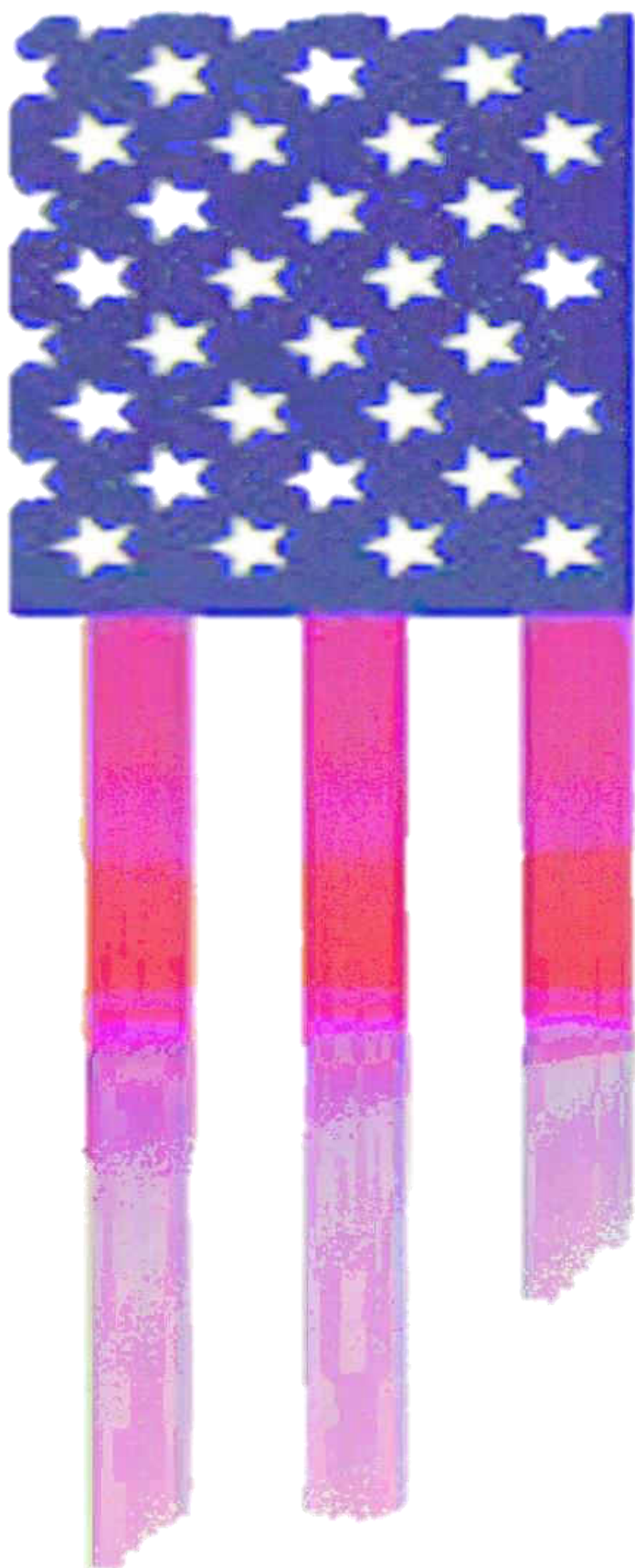
Simply Haiku

Tinywords

Authors Biography



Ed Markowski Lives In Auburn
Hills Michigan With His Wife
Laurice A Black Cat Named
Lucky And A Black Lab Named
Bea. If You See Him Tell Him
I'm Still Looking For Him.



America as described by the pen of Ed Markowski . With 50 haibun Markowski paints a vision of a shattered American Dream : this is white picket fences with blistering paint ; This is baseball played with bare hands and nail studded bats, this is the lingering scent and flavour of crabapple pie .

Markowski is to American haibun as David Lynch is to film .

Colin Stewart Jones - Editor ,
Geant Tree Press .



Aberdeen, Scotland, 2013.

www.geanttreepress.com