

THE EQUALIZER

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SIXTH GRADE ROCK COLLECTION

A teddy bear is too full of meaning
to pour more meaning into
but this warm liquid thing
brimming through your workday
which you could carry
sloshing through a graveyard
now breaks like a wave
careful over polished stone

IT SERVES ME RIGHT TO SUFFER

Get ready for Mercury Retrograde

The 9/11 lights are on

Come with the fall / elf shot lame witch

We are chanting “Moloch!” “Moloch!”

Carry me from mansion to mansion

I’m gonna flush you down the toilet

Like a tampon / You can read all about

It in my new book “Endless Balls”

And Coltrane plays “Bwah Bwah Bwab Bwah Bwah”

No one should ever die because they

Can’t afford health care, or because

Of robot werewolves, or for lack of

A kung-fu grip—if you agree post

This as your status for the rest of the day

I probably only want to sleep with

You once, for like a minute

Love is an illusion designed to make you

A better consumer / She was perfect the

Way she was: shaky, tragic and smelling

Vaguely like crayon / What do people

Deserve to die from? The cooties

My students line the streets with flowers

To celebrate my descent / My friends

Think my poems are top notch, but it

Serves me right to suffer

My libido just gave two weeks' notice



WHAT AM I NOT A MAKER

Here is your balloon tree
 dog, that bicycle I made for you
 was wrong—I should have made it
 for the bear

Here is your balloon ear
 kid, that bee I made for you
 was wrong—I should have meant it
 for your feet

That bicycle was wrong
 And bee for you was wrong
 That poem I spent on you
 UNCALLED FOR

don't apologize
 inside a house of commerce, notice
 what your agitations risk
 efficiency at any tone
 and thank you
 for one empty carton of punk hay
 after another, sorry
 how do you say
 AAAAAAAAAAAAAEEEEEEEEEEEE in labrador
 or strong provincial gallery
 in yugo-scotia
 every kind of song was feeling wrong
 that you could listen
 to expand the wrong direction, touching, out
 Intend them for my stupid feet
 Don't track them that way, in
 and don't apologize for youth
 inside a house of commerce, notice

Made in the shade
 Late in the day

Young in the wood
Laid in the bed
Dead in the shade
Young in the shoe

Play me a tune
Never to shiver
Dead in the water

Made in the shade
Dead in the wood

Show me a tune
Made in the future

Laid in the timber
Dead in the wood

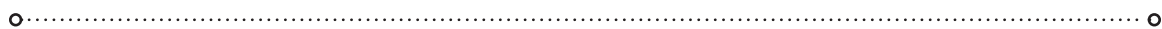
Show me a future
Tool in the shed
Lay in the water
Dead in the water
Young in the wood

Show me your tool
Made in the future

Never to shiver
Long in the shade

Young in the future
Long in the shade
Made in the wood
Never to shiver
Dead in the timber
Show me a tune

Gallery timbers!



Shiver me
Gallery timbers!

Tree bee bear Dog bee dog
Tree bear kid Kid dog ear

Dog bee dog
 Bee bee bee
 Bee dog bee
 Dog dog dog

Tree bear bee
 Bee dog kid
Kid dog ear
 Ear bear bee

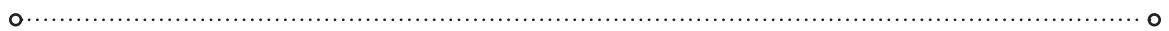
Dog bee dog
 Ear bee ear
Bee bee bee
 Tree tree tree

Kid kid dog
 Kid kid ear
Kid kid bee
 Kid tree tree

Dog dog kid
 Ear dog kid
Bee dog kid
 Tree tree kid

beeeeeeeeeeeeeee
 dooooooooooooog

A beeeeeeeeeeeeeee
 dooooooooooooog



A beeeeeeee
dooooooooooog

A beeeeeeee
A dooooooog

A A A beeeeeeeeeeeeeee
A A A doooooooooooog
beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee
dooooooooooooooooog

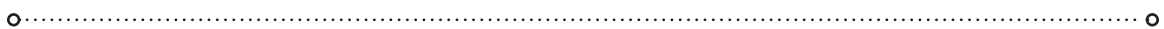
beeeeeeeeeee
dooooooog

beee eeeeeeeeeeee eeee
dooooog

beeeeeeee

dog

beeee



HONKY

feels undermined by every morning
he sleeps through. Honky is straightening
things out in Honduras. Honky intercepts.
When Honky kicks it on K Street, cocks
look up for miles around and lengthen
their lunch meetings. Honky see, Honky do
you hear what I hear. The stem of time
shoots through Honky's shoe
and into the soil, watered by the goatsmilk
of regret. Honky's gift theory: gimme that.
When Honky finds a business partner
to dick him over near allegory's end,
he empties his meds into the commode.
Jeebus grant us ice hockey centerfolds
and iron pyrite winking from the wall
of an abandoned mine in which Honky
is slowly but exquisitely canarying.
When Honky drops a hankie,
please to pick it up. Honky made it
past the menacing hurdle of his poor
spelling. The gravity of Honky's project
makes a difference everywhere he rubs it.
A backhoe ran over Honky, uneasy
to undo. Honky must occupy himself
with looking at this fucking honky.
Honky leaves on your abdomen
a hickey the shape of Sicily
and plays several other instruments
with parasitic enthusiasm. Last year,
Honky trended toward the dark meat, ate
the equivalent of 17 five-legged chickens,
but left 80 three-egg omelets undisturbed.
If a sign says yield, trust Honky to gun it.
Huffy Honkey, you can't just repackage
a premise. The Honky is painted on both sides.
As often as cosmology and Honky intersect,
we have not yet determined how to loosen
the red shrinkwrap around our sibling sphere.
If spectacle breaks out, Honky is there,
siren screaming, a volunteer fireman on fire.

SESTINA

Yellow tree in marshlight, green.
 A sparrow leaves.
 My fare: comma,
 a crossing to my astronomer:
 my hairs on his coat—Berenice's Coma.
 Clever, deciduous love.

I slept love.
 You pricked your eyes' green
 husks to spy coma,
 sowed heresy among the rose leaves
 with spikenard gazes. Farsighted astronomer,
 beneath your feet stars sleep, dark, curled commas.

"We are cut and yet comma
 space—love."
 Play doctor, play astronomer.
 Dictate my pale green
 bruises, stamped leaves
 for writing exponents into their comas.

We fall in. Dark. Breathe sweet coma
 skies, inverted commas,
 hair in my mouth. He leaves.
 Thanksgiving shivers. A pink bath. Love
 is over. The silver cups, your forgetting green
 damask: register, astronomer.

Hear, astronomer.
 Tell my true coma,
 moss green
 with no stone, no comma:
 a toothless love
 who (invisible) leaves.

You are shriveling leaves
flapping on a desk on a hilltop, astronomer.
Even in the wind I love
unseen unbeing; I love coma,
a dead star growing hair, the rooted comet
who fell when our tree was green.

Bird or star or falling leaf? The astronomer
has hair in his eyes, trails of coma, love's
heartbeats, green blinking commas.



THE ULTIMATE LOVE POEM

People had told me that you
aren't very interesting to talk to.

Then I met you, and I have to say
that they were right, at least partly.

Some of the ways you opine
are somewhat interesting. Borderline

very. In fact, on a scale of one to Kevin
Bacon, I'd rate you at about a seven.

The thing is, who really needs this?
I'm semi-interesting enough as it is,

and I have to spend my whole life with me,
taking long lonely walks by the sea,

talking through each day's events
in a way that even remotely makes sense.

I'm the one who puts on an Oxford shirt and slacks
and a stripey tie and Oxford shoes and then acts

like it's unique and nobody else does it.
Adding your personal brand of semi-illiterate

chitchat to the mix would be like buttering
a lump of margarine, or spraying

it with Pam. I guess I'm admitting to being
sad enough as I am without adding

you and your running commentary.
Also—no offense—you're kind of hairy.

SELF PORTRAIT IN A VELVET DRESS

Wrong sex, you sing.
Eh? Don't they know
what they're doing
at an autopsy?
I'll probably have to hold
my tongue, literally.

And anyway, why
shouldn't the neighbors'
dogs bark, their skinks
play basketball till all hours?
Thank God it's Friday.

Thank God for crisp
white wine, and pee.
If flotillas of good lucks
came trolling my way,
I'd simply say: I'm sick.

Even before I was ill,
I was disgusted.
Please please yourself,
to paraphrase wrongly
James Brown, the sill.

Sometimes when you think
you're being reasonable
you are ranting, you minx.
I'm composing a bloody raw
list of things I dare not mention.

That's where the whole show ends, they say.
Gone are the noses of yesterday!

A LONG TIME AGO, IN ITALY

A Portuguese sot, pumped up with Madeira,
Paid seventy-thousand lire
To schtup a cup of oxtail stew.
Distasteful, but true.

PARKS, RECREATION

Except for clearing the land by fire,
not much is legal.

To create tension, debris lay
on one third of an acre.

I'm wrong. This bottle was left here
by kids. They are more

afraid of you than you are of them,
and lay flat as a banner

for soldiers flying over.
We put our blanket down in the fog.

Our kite holds a mirror to nature.
We're dead. Our days are

pressed into slides. I must be coming
down with something—

you are standing right there
in the clearing:

tight white headband, racket
between your thighs.

When I'm wrong, a blush
awakens in the sky.

PRAY

○.....○
A delicate hole

carved in red, too raw
Started slender rotting with:
This is what I think of you
I took this with no asking

Now unhinged, what it manufactures:

Mind's a pretty chaos, true

Said I feel like some church
then a lavender mouthful
which

My eyes smell sweet
not
spider on the ceiling

ugh I'll never sleep

Take me for a house
with a whole lotta porch

When you
put me up there
I'm like a little mother wish

and it moves me

GRIEF AND ITS SOURCE

○.....○
A classical sky made from glass and a view from above the earth,
refracted back, a view of an explosion pipelined back at itself,

back at the dull moon
still visible along the arc of noon-time.

Do I think the well has gone dry,
the bucket to be bottomless, the well's bottom rising up and up
with the clouds in the sky slowly filling with briny rain,
meant to poison the well?

And then the spinning world ceases to—
And the memory of a lake always looms larger than the lake itself.

AMERICAN FUNERAL

Weight I gain
gambols
above leather.
Leaned against it,
you, like
before the bulb
gave light
to mise en scène,
to anything
from the parlor drape.
Work, I could stay
awake for days,
word up
in my mouth,
moon over
the Credit Union
all alone.

A DROP IN PLEASURE

dancing's version
of running
and what the fucking
thought it means

I been waiting for you to leave
ever since you came back
but not like that—

new marginal hay

dropping a card
in an old school way
accept this gift
whether or not
you like it

even by my own standards
I spent the holidays hammered
it was a time
for gratitude
and I was grateful

ALL THE RASCALITY OF THE WORLD

Rum assisted in making a hero

Notwithstanding their cleverest precaution
They fared sumptuously
A seemingly superhuman vigilance in ferreting

All three possession-related variables

The dog was a necessary adjunct
An early training of muscular energy
Significantly more prevalent in relatives of hoarding

My absence saved the pork

CONFIDENCE

This looks almost like tomorrow
when we make it here, “this” being
today or a month yet to be named.
When a woman comes into my store,

points at me and says to her child,
Tell the man what you want, I turn
around to see where the man is.
No use telling a child, please, no:

I’m a disaster and you break, to use
a phrase you might elsewhere have
heard, my heart. Visit me someday
in the Home for the Wildly Inarticulate,

for the Destroyed, for the Actual Man
Standing Where I Cannot Reach Him.
Don’t expect I’ve seen the epicenter
of anything, though I have been privy

to enough bizarre exchanges to do
with hygiene: henceforth I ban you,
letter-shaped body parts, from
my purview. Our last conversation

left in my mouth the taste of buckshot.
It’s early again, and late, when the birds
have taken a tone not exactly mocking
or judgmental, but something about

their exuberance is oppressive
as it follows me home. The holes
in my roof embody all the information
you require about this place. I just

make the occasional collage that falls
apart when it rains, wield my black
umbrella like a sword, and charge
as drunk soldiers would into the storm.

SELLING LIMES

I

audio branch claire does tilly
 mort & matador hallal
 mars moans chancy spirituals
 voldemort parmesan gorillas
 cue north sing rye nose veins
 voice enchanter last vines
 let ceiling joy commune an age
 laser is loud community
 jet soars sun rayon my blouse
 jet succubus surly mouse

quone patient quone sentence
 serial troops simple my pines
 jet view queues late dramatics
 my lie a son charred fortune
 quite particular buttercup nature
 amounts sell money nulls jets mirror
 along quills burger cents droll
 murray a pooh-pooh mound

jets view ben quick seasons amusement
 a toy nature jets rend
 ma fame enters my surf
 sylvan path nourishment abbreviated
 rain of rain new milestone
 seven roar axe parents quantum sold
 mars jets new view rises rain
 a library sit certain unfortunes

II

olive jetpilot
 a trout of service
 parma delicatessen
 joy pardon my view
 alcohol temporary fine
 owl core suppose

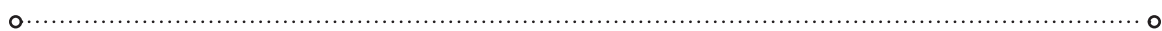
jet swiss ditch lassie
 quotients violet
 sams promise
 denver hates joy
 quiet rain turret
 august retreat

aint fate patient
 la quinta jubilee
 cranes & soufflés
 add sense snot party
 lavender soft insane
 obscure my velvet vanity

aint anazasi prairie
 a double life
 grandee & flourish
 descend & diary
 ah bourbon pharaoh
 descamisados not much

a mile vague
 dollarize poverty aims
 quaint images
 take care knots dame
 essence of prize wine
 laser merry

olive jetpilot
 true assent
 poor delicates
 jape not my view
 alcohol temporary blinds
 owls cry supreme



III

elle macpherson retro
who eternity
sells the sea alone
avoids the sale

anime sentiments
murmur avenue
delicate norse noodge
the jury in flames

humane suffering
communism elates
late to disengage
involved salon

pink various sails
brazen satin
the devil exhales
sands quiet maldive elfin

lapland desperation
null order
science avers pattern
supply a star

elle macpherson retrovirus
whom eternity
settles the sea
a vacant sun



IV

quincunx void
troubadour angel
ill sage demon
vermin explains

a million quests
quiet ram
name too found
quack & folly

recognize the hour
sigil smiles your face
& visible all sky through
the chant which hell

reckon the door
signs so faint
centuries quake flower
simile families

puss-in-boots
eastern fruitcake marvel
bob saget demands
verily your suspect

chants the instant
sour helen
don't tell bro paris
my ardent peace

the moon is vice
the sky is taint
visit me a few
obscure tunafish

joy shatters palace
joy of you & claire
some ageless esther
a northern grand

chant outside me
multiple scores for voice
past the true public
glory of place



AT THE MUNICIPAL POND

As in a lick of yellow reeds,
what we ferry from the mud
is no good to eat. We spread out, stuff
our fingernails with mint. Slowly, sun burns
the forehead largely mute. Longing
returns. A three-day thought held open.
There's no finer hypnosis: a small girl
wades into the pond. The hole she's dug
has a gold fleck in it. I have been trying
to be that gold fleck. Plenty
of game shuttles to the wildflowers
and back. The pond covers up.

PSALM FOR THE SILENCE IN THE AIR BEFORE THE NEWSPAPER HITS THE GROUND
○.....○

Where was it that I found myself, face near the sand
looking for a grain of sand
among a million others? And did

I dare to remove a puzzle piece
from the yard so carefully pruned,

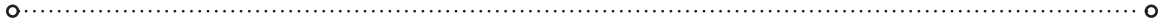
the yard that would have seemed
savage a year ago to any passerby but myself?

Bereft of perception,
what is the ideal curtain-call
of diesel fumes and worn-out railroad ties

spoken in the hinge of darkness
outside every door? At what point

do we pause to worship
the ringing phone no one else can hear?

HAIKU



I'm a mountain and
you're a new weather pattern
that crushes mountains.



(SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISE & POEM

CONFETTI TEST KIT

Is there a deceased poet who was alive in your own lifetime but you never saw one another, and you wish you had met? A poet you would LOVE to correspond with, but it's too late? Take notes about this missed opportunity. What is your favorite poem by this poet? Write it on unlined paper by hand (no typing). If we were gods we wouldn't need to invent beautiful poems, and that's why our lives are more interesting, and that's why the gods are always meddling in our affairs out of boredom. It's like the fascination the rich have with the poor, as Alice Notley says, "the poor are universally more interesting." This poem was written by a human poet, and we humans love our poets, if we have any sense. Does something strike flint in you from the process of engaging your body to write this poem you know and love? Notes, notes, take notes. The poet for me in doing this exercise is Jim Brodey, and his poem "Little Light," which he wrote in the bathtub while listening to the music of Eric Dolphy, masturbating in the middle of the poem, "while the soot-tinted noise of too-full streets echoes / and I pick up the quietly diminishing soap & do / myself again." Take the handwritten version of the poem and cut it into tiny confetti. Heat olive oil in a frying pan and toss the confetti poem in. Add garlic, onion, parsnip, whatever you want, pepper it, salt it, serve it over noodles or rice. Eat the delicious poem with a nice glass of red wine, pausing to read it out loud, and to toast the poet, "MANY APOLOGIES FOR NOT TOASTING YOU WHEN YOU WERE ALIVE!" Take notes while slowly chewing the poem. Chew slowly so your saliva breaks the poem down before it slides into your belly to feed your blood and cells of your body. Gather your notes, write your poem.

LOVE LETTER TO JIM BRODEY

Dear Jim
 for
 those whose
 acid trips were a success
 only twice
 I've met men who
 are high exactly
 as they are sober
 both became my lovers
 both died one like
 you died Jim he
 played music too
 loud at parties to
 gather us into a
 single frequency feel
 healed for the length
 of a song
 nothing works forever
 there was something in
 the air that year Jim
 and you put it there
 a rapt center in
 pivot looking
 to face
 love again
 learning to
 accept what's offered
 without guilt
 to be reminded
 of nothing
 my favorite day not dragging
 the dead around
 they're looking
 for Lorca in the Valley
 of the Fallen



Franco's thugs would understand
 "developing countries" means
 getting them ready for
 mining diamonds drilling oil
 teaching them to make a
 decent cup of coffee for
 visiting executives

if I'm not going
 to live like this
 anymore I must will
 every cell to
 stand away

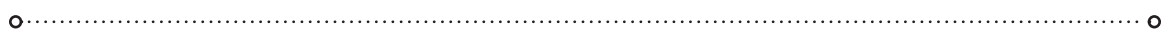
the History of Madness
 725 pages is too much to
 not be normal

scorn is very
 motivating

I'm vegetarian unless
 angels are on the
 menu mouth watering
 deep fried wings
 shove greasy bones in
 their trumpets

the cost of
 scorn is
 often unexpected

I see my fascist
 neighbor from downstairs
 "Did my boyfriend and
 I make too much
 noise last night?"
 his glare the
 YES that keeps
 me smiling



We don't want no gangboss
We want to equalise

We don't need no gangboss
We need to equalize

The Clash