

# THE EQUALIZER

## 1.1

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SUMMER BLOCK	[ 4 ]	Sixth Grade Rock Collection
JIM BEHRLE	[ 5 ]	It Serves Me Right to Suffer
MACGREGOR CARD	[ 7 ]	What Am I Not a Maker
MARK BIBBINS	[ 11 ]	Honky
EMILY ANDERSON	[ 12 ]	Sestina
AARON BELZ	[ 14 ]	The Ultimate Love Poem
DON SHARE	[ 15 ]	Self Portrait in a Velvet Dress
CODY WALKER	[ 16 ]	A Long Time Ago, in Italy
CHRISTOPHER SALERNO	[ 17 ]	Parks, Recreation
AMICK BOONE	[ 18 ]	Pray
ADAM CLAY	[ 19 ]	Grief and Its Source
CHRISTOPHER SALERNO	[ 20 ]	American Funeral
BUCK DOWNS	[ 21 ]	a drop in pleasure
STEPHANIE ANDERSON	[ 22 ]	All the Rascality of the World
MARK BIBBINS	[ 23 ]	Confidence
OWEN BARKER	[ 24 ]	Selling Limes
CHRISTOPHER SALERNO	[ 28 ]	At the Municipal Pond
ADAM CLAY	[ 29 ]	Psalm for the Silence in the Air Before the Newspaper Hits the Ground
CODY WALKER	[ 30 ]	Haiku
CACONRAD	[ 31 ]	(Soma)tic Poetry Exercise & Poem

**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

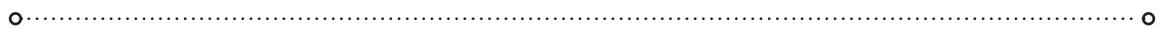
Dog bee dog  
  Ear bee ear  
Bee bee bee  
                Tree tree tree

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

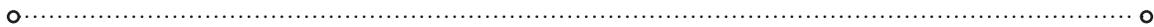
A A A beeeeeeeeeeeeeee  
A A A doooooooooooog  
beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee  
dooooooooooooooooog

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 maldiver 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,

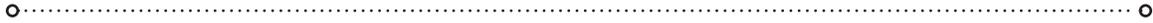
the yard that would have seemed  
savage a year ago to any passerby but myself?

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

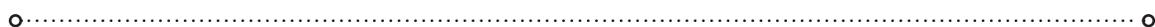
the History of Madness  
725 pages is too much to  
not be normal

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