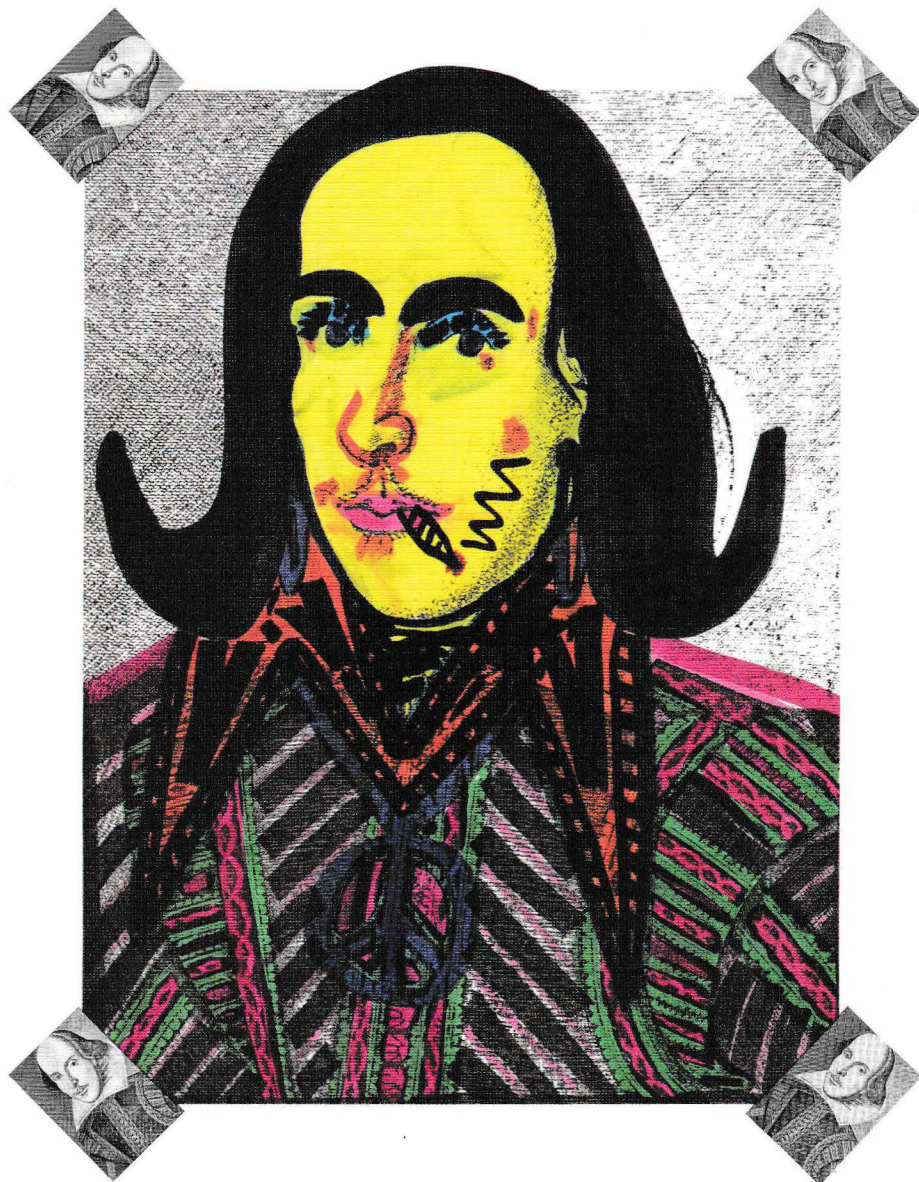


Manuscript



All the famous poets were just big babies . . .

Manuscript

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Chris Marzaca

My Best Enemy

"Not a bad shot, Al!"

"Gee, thanks, Bob, you're all heart."

"Whad'ya hit, a five iron?" Bob said as he laughed.

"No, I used a seven-iron."

"Seven-iron, wow!" Bob repeated patronizingly, "You must have eaten your Wheaties today, pal. You hit that ball a whole 130 yards!" Bob uttered his unmistakable laugh and I somehow kept from throwing my club at him.

Bob finally stopped laughing and approached the tee. I stood by and prepared to watch the usual show. He studied the hole and pulled out his "Ping" nine-iron from his white leather "Ping" golf bag with the seriousness of a pro on the Tour. Bob then proceeded to adjust his black and white "Foot-Joy" golf glove. He adjusted his white "Ping" golf cap and began his pre-shot routine. Bob was an accountant who played golf about four times a week, but you wouldn't know it from his appearance because he wore the same expensive clothes and used the same expensive golf equipment as the members of the PGA Tour. This part of Bob's personality really made me sick.

"Think I can reach the middle of the green with a nine-iron?"

He knew he could, he always did--he hits the ball a ton. I knew I had to answer him though or he would keep talking until I said he couldn't.

"I don't know, Bob, there's not many pros who can reach that green with a nine. There's also a little wind in your face so I..."

"Watch this, buddy, I'll show ya why I'm defending club champ!"

Oh, please don't keep me waiting, Bob, I thought sarcastically to myself.

Bob aligned his feet, checked the wind by throwing some grass in the air, and then took his three practice swings, two at half speed, one near full. Bob then stepped back from the ball and repeated his ritual like he always does. Just hit the goddamn ball. You're not Jack Nicklaus, I thought.

"Get left! Get left! Sit down baby!" Bob twisted his body to the left in almost perfect unison with the ball's flight, "Did you see me make that thing hold? Wow!" Bob screamed as he waved his club in the air much like a hockey player does after scoring a game-winning goal.

"Must have been that new 'Max-Fli DDT,' Bob," I said trying to provoke one of Bob's modest replies.

"What are you crazy, Al? I hit that one open-faced so it would bite. You know pal, I could show you how to hit that one, but not today."

Spare me, Bob, I thought as I flashed my usual smile, that same

smile that really said, "Fuck you, Bob." I climbed into the cart to drive, because Bob never drove; driving distracted him and hurt his game.

When we got to the green I found that my ball hit near the back-fringe of the double-tiered green, which left me with about a twenty-five footer downhill, that broke hard to the left. Bob's ball was pin-high about twelve feet away, and was straight as an arrow.

"Tough putt, Al buddy, you better start it way to the right." Bob was looking over my shoulder as he said this to me.

I responded to Bob by saying, "Thanks, Bob, I'm glad you pointed out that break to me, I didn't see it." I was thinking however, no shit Bob, Stevie Wonder would have seen that damn break blindfolded!

He always did this. If my wife and I were having problems, if the boss was on my case, or whatever. Bob always knew what was best for me, and Bob always told me. When we were kids it was the same way. Bob was better than me and was there to help me, his poor best friend.

I quickly putted, but missed by almost ten feet. I putted again and passes the cup by about a foot. I then putted a third time and left it short by only a few inches. As I prepared to tap-in I heard Bob's voice.

"Mind marking it for me, buddy?" Bob asked. "Don't want any spike marks to 'kill' my birdie attempt!" Bob then laughed at the stupid pun he had made. I marked the ball, then moved to the edge of the green where I couldn't kill Bob.

When Bob started his pre-putt ritual, which by the way was slightly longer than his pre-shot routine, I think I actually dozed off until I heard Bob's ear pleasing voice.

"Bang! I sure dropped that baby for another easy bird, huh, Al?"

"Nice putt."

"Just pick yours up, Al, I'll give it to ya, since you can't beat me," Bob said as he put his arm around my shoulder and smiled at me.

Can't beat me, I thought. Aren't we just playing for fun?

Well, Bob had ticked me off again by making me mark that putt. He didn't mean anything by it, but he still acted in his usual arrogant way. That was Bob though, an arrogant little pain in the ass. But he was my best friend, and had been for twenty-two years, and that wouldn't change.

"You're hitting the ball real well today, Al. If you had my putting touch you'd have a chance to break 80 today."

"Why thanks, Bob, I'll have to work on that. So what's my score now anyway?"

Bob casually looked over the scores. We had finished nine holes already and had played four on the back nine. I was playing very well, although I always seemed to be outperformed by Bob's play. If I had a chance to break 80 then I must have been playing better than I thought, because I only break 80 about twice a season.

"Well, Al, you had a 40 on the front, and you're even after the first four, so with a little luck you just might do it pal."

"That's nice," I said, trying to hide my true excitement, "What are you at Jack...I mean Bob?"

"Four under so far, but if I play well on the back I might have a shot at beating my best score ever," replied Bob in his matter of fact tone.

Only Bob, and 'Monday Night' bowlers keep their own personal records I thought. I also hoped he would play poorly the rest of the day so he wouldn't be able to brag about himself for the next two weeks. To this day that cocky sonofabitch still reminds me that I have never beaten him. As we drove off, I had a feeling that Bob wouldn't be bragging after today's game.

"One more hole!" I declared as we approached the 18th tee. "What a great day for golf, huh, Bob?"

"Yeah, great," he mumbled.

"Check the card, would ya, Bob?"

I could tell this made him angry because he knew I had birdied the last three holes, as I watched him make three consecutive bogies.

Bob paused for a moment before answering me, and I could see that he was counting the scores again.

"This can't be right! This is bullshit! According to this you're at three over!"

"What are you at, Bob, those bogies really hurt you, didn't they?" Take that, Bob, I thought to myself.

"I'm still under par, and still way ahead of you!"

"Check again pal, I might even beat you today!"

Bob laughed, but did check the scores again, trying not to let me see. I pulled my driver out of my bag and again asked Bob about the scores. I knew what they were, but wanted to see Bob's reaction when he realized I was only two strokes behind him.

"No way! No way! I'm only up by two? This can't be right!" Bob cried as he began to perspire.

"I think I have honors, Bob," I said arrogantly as I approached the tee. This was a first for me and I wanted to rub it in Bob's face. I set my ball on the tee and looked down the fairway of the five hundred yard par five.

"You know what, Bob?" I asked just before swinging.

"What?"

"I feel real good about this one."

My unemotional tone of voice made Bob swallow hard. I then drove the ball farther than I had ever done before. When the ball finally stopped rolling it was less than 225 yards from the hole. Bob stood there speechless, and I just smiled.

Bob approached the tee and oddly wasted very little time before

hitting his drive. He swung quickly without taking even one practice swing. He hit the ball hard, and I lost it in the sun. I figured it wasn't very good though, because Bob had thrown his \$180 'Ping' driver about halfway down the fairway and was screaming obscenities at the top of his lungs. I jumped in the cart and yelled to Bob to get in.

"I'll walk," he snapped.

When I got to my ball I saw that Bob's ball was behind a tree about twenty yards behind me. He was talking to himself and I knew he was in trouble. Bob thought about his shot rather quickly, and decided to hit the ball back towards the tee to avoid hitting the tree. I was happier than a pig in mud, and had to hide my laughter from Bob.

When Bob got to his second shot he again hit the ball quickly. I didn't see this shot either, but I did see Bob kick the ground and throw his hat. He said something under his breath, but all I heard was something about the "damn sand."

I knew Bob was pissed, but I played dumb and asked about his shot anyway.

"Just hit your own shot, would ya? Don't worry about me!"

I replied to Bob coolly by saying, "No problem."

Then I hit my shot, forgetting that Bob was even on the course with me. I hit it solidly and the ball took a great bounce, which put me on the front edge of the monstrous green. I caught the end of Bob's swing and saw that he hit a great shot out of the sand that landed on the back of the green.

When we got to the green I yelled to Bob, "I think I can putt this one, so I guess you should putt first." This made it clear that I was closer to the hole than Bob was. Bob was studying his putt, and was still too mad about his previous three shots to answer me.

"Looks like it breaks a little left-to-right, pal."

"I know. Do ya think I'm stupid or somethin'?"

Bob putted, and his ball rolled by the cup by a couple of inches, but it was a good putt anyway.

"We'll count that one, won't we, Al?"

I pretended not to hear him and instead asked Bob if he would mark his ball. Bob's face turned bright red as he reached into his pocket for one of his monogrammed ball markers.

I was about twenty feet from the hole, but had studied my putt and knew I could make it if I hit it hard enough. I took a few practice strokes and hit the ball firmly, but missed by about a foot.

"Don't choke," Bob said as I stood over my second attempt.

"No problem," I said with a smile. I again took a few practice strokes and knocked the putt down for a birdie.

"Bang! Did you see me drop that one?!"

Bob was silent. We both knew that he could only tie me, even with

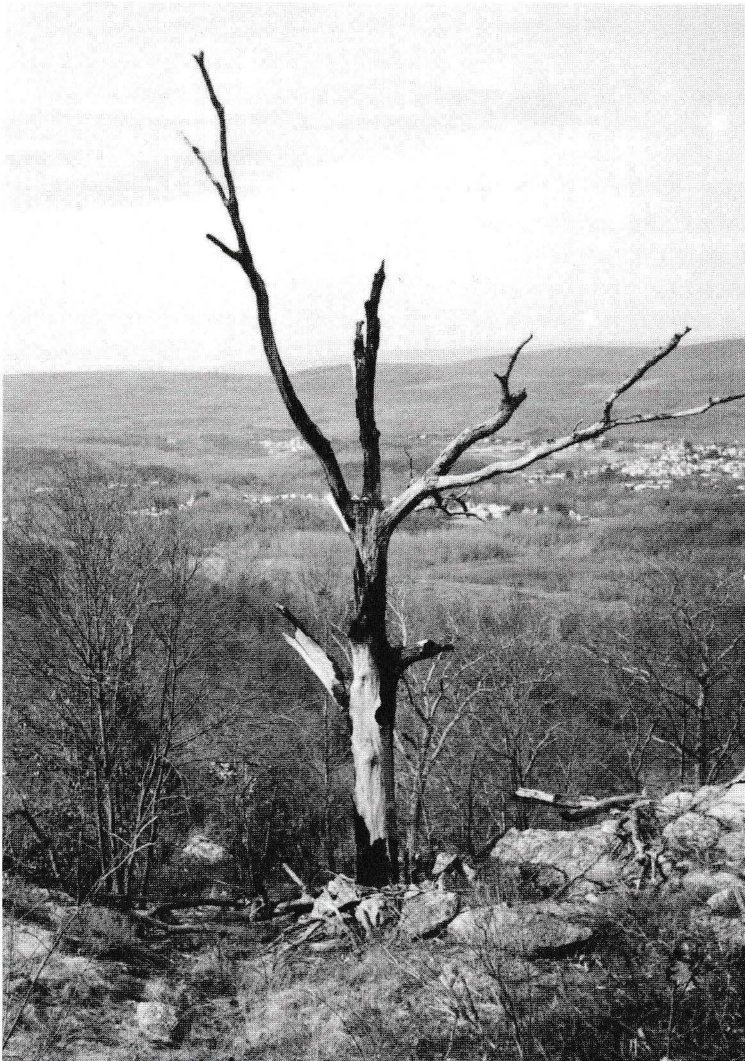
a successful putt on this next try.

I again looked at Bob. He stood motionless on the green, and looked like he had seen a ghost. I walked over to him, put my arm around his shoulder and said, "Don't worry about yours, Bob, I'll give it to ya."

Bob smiled back at me, and we walked back to the cart.

Mark Williams

Dead Tree's Vista



Kimberly Kinney

Most Unrelenting Death,

You have me in black again,
Holding the little card that bears my grandfather's name,
And the twenty third psalm, and a cross.

"YeathoughIwalkthroughthevalleyoftheshadowofdeath"

(I know this too well)
Aunt Margret's hearing aid is buzzing.
Uncle Kenny is too thin. 85 lbs. 85 years.
Frail, old, almost gone.
I had almost forgotten them - too many years.
They have forgotten me. Strangers now.

"Blessedarethosewhomournfortheyshallbecomforted"

Father James.
Stranger.
I look down, numbly, at the tacky flowers,
At the astro-turf that covers your dark soil,
At the casket...at the deep hole in the earth.
Stranger.
I close my eyes, I'm in your trance, I'm in your graveyards.
I hold your hand, I Feel your greed, I hold my breath.
I'm dreaming.
I'm there.
I see them.

1916-1991, 1921-1991, 1972-1990, 1971-1990, 1913-1991.
Papa Grandma Terry Gerry George
illness heartbreak guns ropes tumors
(strangers)

"Ashestoashesdusttodustihavewatchedthemfadetoblackashestoashe
sdusttodustihavewatchedthemfadetoblackashestoashesdusttodustih
avewatchedthemfadetoblackashestoashes..."

I Know you.

Amy Basham

Her Garden

The old man slowly rose from the tree stump where he had been resting for the past half hour. With sadness in his eyes, he viewed his back yard, a place that used to hold so much beauty to him. Years ago, the small yard had been filled with trees and flowers and her garden. Now, things were quite different.

As he stood by the decaying tree stump, leaning stiffly on his newly acquired cane, the old man started reminiscing about time gone by, cherished memories he thought he'd forgotten. With a quick grin, he remembered the time Bitsie wanted to plant a vegetable garden in the back yard, even though he warned her not to.

"It won't work, Bitsie. Listen to me for a second, will ya? This soil, out back here, it's dry. Not enough of the right stuff for plants to grow. Are you listening to me, Bitsie?"

Of course Bitsie didn't pay any attention to his ramblings. She began digging up the dirt while he went on with his speech concerning fertilizers and nutrients and the chemical balance of soil. He always knew what was right, but just this once, there was one thing that she wanted, and that was her very own vegetable garden. There had to be a way. Even city girls had dreams of coming home with a blue ribbon because their squash was the best at the county fair.

The next night, without her knowing, he crept outside and pulled a bag of Garden Grow that he'd bought earlier in the day out from under the porch. He took the bag of fertilizer to the back of the yard and mixed it up in her garden.

"Well, it can't hurt anything. Besides, it'll take more than a bag of fertilizer to make this dust pot suitable for planting. A miracle just might help a bit."

About a month later, was he ever surprised. He called to her from the back of the yard, but Bitsie simply smiled while she rocked in the porch swing. She wasn't surprised at all when the first batch of vegetables began to appear.

With a slow but determined step, the old man made his way from his place by the stump towards the back of the yard, where her garden used to grow. Once there, he let his imagination run free. Bitsie's garden came to life once again.

He could picture Bitsie now, working in her garden with locks of black hair falling on her face as she bent down to pull weeds. She was a tiny woman, but not afraid of hard work. The thought of those big leather gloves he gave her to work in always made him laugh. He knew they'd be too big for her hands, but he thought she was too delicate and didn't want Bitsie's hands to get scratched up.

"If you're gonna be out here, digging in the dirt, you'd better keep these gloves on. I don't want you to go hurting yourself."

He also knew Bitsie only put the gloves on when she heard him coming. Only then would she quick throw them on and smile up at him with a flushed face. He'd gaze at her for a while and realize all over again why he'd married Bitsie. She would push a stray lock of hair back with one gloved hand, and with the other motion to him for a kiss on her dirty cheek. He would tousle her hair and leave Bitsie working in her garden with a twinkle in her eye.

The memory of her smile still tugged at his heart. It was just one of those things about her. Her smile was kind and gentle, yet he still drew strength from its softness, even when times were tough, while warm blue eyes calmed his nerves if he'd had a bad day at work. Bitsie made him laugh and think with a more positive frame of mind.

Bitsie always sang. She'd start singing a tune just about any time of the day, and always off key. He used to tease her, saying she sounded like an angel, only one with a tin ear. Listening to Bitsie would make him feel wonderful inside, because she sang with every emotion she had, giving new meanings to old songs.

As he thought of her singing, the old man began humming one of the songs Bitsie used to sing while she worked in her garden. He couldn't remember the words, but he could hum a few bars that stuck in his memory.

There weren't too many things that didn't respond to Bitsie's green thumb. Her tomatoes were plump, carrots crisp, squash hardy, strawberries juicy, and the zucchini was always plentiful. The thing he loved best about her garden was the juicy tomatoes she would pick fresh and put on his tuna sandwiches for lunch. Bitsie would pick any of the vegetables from her garden, throw them together, and somehow make them into something wonderfully delicious.

Shaking his head, he tried to rid himself of the foggy feeling that had overcome him. The old man gazed around the area in front of him for any signs of the beauty that was once her garden, but nothing remained. Tears came to the old man's eyes as he thought of her garden the way it used to be, and the way it looked now.

Rotten vegetables and dead vines were scattered on the ground, cluttering the area, along with squashed tomatoes and cauliflower filled with bugs. The sight of all this decay brought more tears to the old man's eyes, but he didn't try to stop them. He let them fall to the ground.

Now the old man bent down to pick up a rake, and began the work he swore he would do. His cane was thrown aside as he started to clear away the debris. He worked slowly, but eventually the soil was ready to be planted. He wasn't going to let her garden die again.

The old man reached deep into his pockets and pulled out various packets of seeds that he was going to plant. Zucchini in the back, tomatoes on the side, carrots up front, and squash by the fence. Bitsie was always particular about where the vegetables went. Perhaps that was why her garden was so beautiful. But maybe it was just Bitsie.

Eric Sullivan

Autumn Ritual

Beyond the haying field came a smoke in the air.
It was carried low to the ground
On currents of micro-winds;
Those winds that are content upon
Rattling dried corn stalks in a field or
Adjust a fallen leaf from up to downside down
And not venture to move twigs and leaves above.
The smell was not that of wood smoke
Rising from hearth and chimney.
Following the air-borne path to its origin
Would be the most logical investigation.

Two fields distant stood a farmhouse.
No longer a farm, in the grand sense of the word
But activity still goes on daily.
An old man lives there, alone now.
From the view upon the hill, he appeared
Beneath the sugar maple next to his house.
Familiar as a recurring dream
He stood aside piles of burning leaves.
This was the smell that came with autumn's chill
And I knew it well enough not to have found its origin.
But at length, during those grey days
I needed reassurance.

Joseph Barberio

All the Famous Poets Were Just Big Babies

All the famous poets were big babies.
I came to this conclusion
After years of meticulous research
Carried out in dusty volumes within
Stuffy reading rooms.

Now, please let me clarify
When I say all the "famous" poets were just big babies
I mean people like Keats, Shelley, Yeats
You know, all the big boys (and girls)
(Keeping things sexually and politically correct).

Well, I mean just consider some of their subject matter:
Unrequited love, death and the pain of everyday existence
Sure...like none of us has ever had a bad day!

Your common everyday garden variety Jane and Joe
Don't have the luxurious crutch
Of snaring their pain on paper and
Inflicting it on the rest of us
Ad infinitum via the ubiquitous "Norton Anthologies."

"Let me compare thee to a summer's day,"
"A rose exploding from the black elongated neck of a vase,"
"A piano in the mountainous wilderness,"
C'mon, give me a break!

Vito Sebastian Quaglia

Proposal 92
(a satire)

Some time ago, in my high school years, I was required to read "A Modest Proposal" by Dr. Jonathan Swift. In my youthful rebellion, I scoffed at this work, dismissing it as an ancient, yet amusing attempt at satire. However, recently I have rethought my first reaction to Dr. Swift's essay. The present plight of the homeless in America has driven me to research certain aspects of Dr. Swift's theory intensely. Along with my colleagues in both the medical and biological fields, I have collected some interesting data concerning the many uses of the human animal.

Although Dr. Swift's essay may seem tongue-in-cheek, I believe he was well on his way to some striking truths. Overpopulation of the lower classes, also the case in Dr. Swift's time, undermines the ideals put forth by all decent citizens. Homelessness, that dirty and shameful state of being, is threatening to milk our economy dry of all its revenues. It is a well-known psychological fact that once a human being has fallen into this state of homelessness, there is no hope for his recovery. The sorry truth is that all homeless humans will never attain gainful employment, contribute to honest society, or regain their previous station in life. Moreover, these homeless will huddle in dark alleys, implore the decent citizens to relieve them of their burdens, and litter the streets with their dirty persons. Most importantly, it is the homeless that will cause the end of mankind by their spreading of the twentieth century's Black Plague, AIDS.

My research has led me to find that there are three major issues all decent citizens wish to solve; cleaning the environment, controlling the economy, and stopping the spread of AIDS. These three maladies will be cured by the execution of my proposal. Mine is a plan of rational action, a painfully obvious answer to these most perplexing questions. Good citizens, listen intently to my proposal, for I am sure its conclusions will cause a most joyful reaction.

First, I will address the problem of the environment. My colleague, Dr. Christopher L. Greyson, has found that by the year 2008, the continuing depletion of the ozone layer will have caused the existence of a perpetual summer. The four seasons will cease to exist in differing temperatures, and the melting glaciers will cause widespread flooding. There are further details that I will not go into due to the younger readers that may be offended.

Dr. Greyson, along with Dr. A. Rodney Fitzgerald, has come up with a most startling answer to this problem. They have devised a schematic for a RED ION CRYSTAL STABILIZER.

This machine would break down the heavy carbon monoxide cloak that is causing the Greenhouse Effect by the use of Red Ion Crystals. These crystals are produced in a chemical reaction between Red Dye No. 9 and the charged human ions caused by instantaneous death. So, the process is obvious: use the insignificant homeless as the catalysts in the Red Ion Crystal Stabilization. This process will be carried out in the most moral and humane ways as deemed possible. Great pains will be taken to insure the immediate and painless death of the catalyst.

Once the reaction is complete, we are faced with the problem of having to dispose of the corpses. This problem may well be the answer to stabilizing the economy. The skin of these creatures, weathered from being exposed to all sorts of climates, can be used in the manufacturing of clothing. This skin is softer and more durable than that of any other animals. Our research shows that from one average homeless, **four** handbags, **ten** wallets and **one** jacket can be made. Multiply this by the number of homeless we have, and you can easily see the profits to be made.

Also, the meat from these creatures can be used to feed the starving in neighboring nations. This meat can be sold to the governments of these countries to offset our national debt. With the profits from the meat and clothing materials, we estimate that over three billion dollars could be made annually.

With the threat of AIDS as our most notable foe, we must do all we can to combat it. We know that the homeless are the primary cause of AIDS with their filthy habits and shared needles of drug abuse. By ridding the nation of these creatures, we will certainly reduce the possibility of AIDS. If that doesn't work, we can use the homeless creatures for testing of AIDS vaccines. No matter what happens, we have the plentiful natural resource to clean the environment, control the economy, and stop the spread of AIDS; let's use them.

Joseph P. McDonough

Ode to a Primary

So many saddened faces, so many broken dreams,
So many nasty bastards, so many nasty schemes,
They will steal your money!
They will steal your land!
They will steal the food, from your little baby's hand!
And all the time they smile,
And all the time they say,
Vote for me, vote for me, I'll be President someday.

Colette Elick

She-Male



Brian Hnat

The executioner donned his black robes
The child was brought forth to the guillotine
His crime was not his own
 Sadly enough, he was beheaded
 for the crimes of his parents
Nonetheless, the sentence was his to bear
The executioner rinsed the child's head before
 dislodgement
Painless death
The child was slaughtered without a chance to
 defend or decide for himself
The executioner gave the vulnerable child guilt
 for his parents' sins before he was even
 old enough to exonerate himself
Now the child lies dead
 Guilty; never to be proven innocent

The executioner donned his black robes
 with a white collar

Stephanie Kramer

Childish Spring

Studded with diamond dewdrops, soft blades
of green grass
slip through my toes

Laughing
I break into a run
Stumble
Fall
Leap to my feet again.

Tim Williams

I Know You

Thumb in pocket leaning against the
Cold brick wall,
Waiting,
 waiting,
 waiting

For the 2:40 bell when the converts rush to you.
Not caring about the world you create.
Used to have to sneak in a bathroom and leave
Free samples of life on the urinal but now
No more looking, just waiting to be found.

Harsh ringing pierces the air,
Echos the emptiness of fenced-in cement.
Children rush from the edifice and board the
Long black and yellows, and your flock to you,
Their after-hours dad.
Exchanging tightly rolled paper for another
Piece of heaven.
Out of tiny hands into the pocket.
Out of hidden traps of leather into the nose.

Into the nose.

Vito Sebastian Quaglia

Resumé

Each day I bleed ambition
Questing upward mobility and cash
Down undergrad halls.
Everyman lost Christ in college --
Nietzsche killed God my first semester.

Course planning like Sherman's March:
Burned, twisted textbooks and notes
Line room drowned in public radio.
Twenty-one and torn:
Graduation at fingertips, Rolling Rock at feet.

Karen Therese Jordan

the crash

You half-awoke to your own rattling

fallen to the floor and mimicked in cloth

Ash stains a yellowed fingertip

and gently blown dust

skin and smoke conquering the furniture

weaves itself into day-old hair
life-old rug

This body weeps more

turning onion-skin pages

dragging delusion across paper

nimble groans ooze from your throat

"do you wanna. . . do you
wanna. . ."

And I almost --

?!What dream split your head!

". . .do you wann see me cry?"

do you wanna?

Ed McGinnis

Unsleep

Night world black
and still
Alive in some secret way.
Creaks jump
From corners unseen
Quick to leap away.

Are my eyes open
or not
That it matters in this dark.
I hear
Each rising slow breath
Echo through my heart.

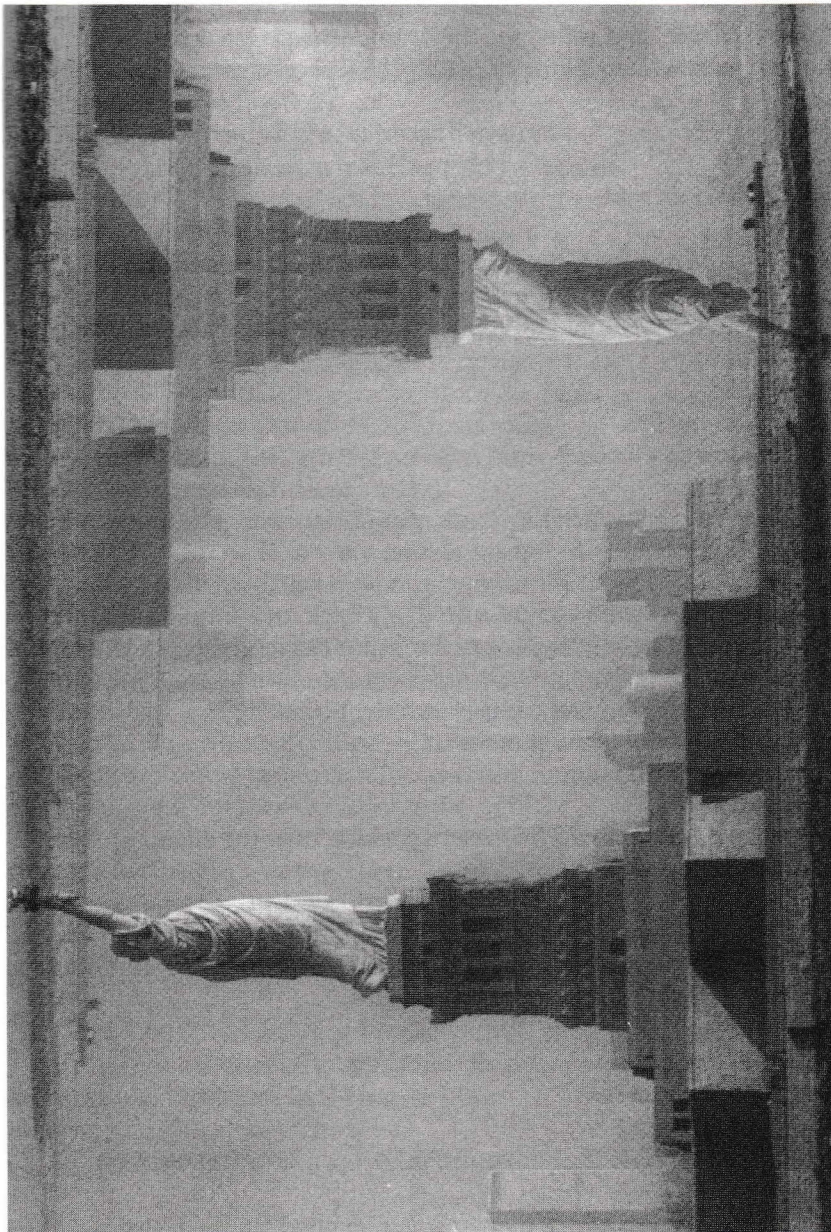
A lone car goes by
outside
The crickets quietly play.
Time exists
In some faraway land
But not here where I lay.

Chris Bilardi

Transmissions from the Closet

I tried getting (hard)
to know him
last time
(I blew it) --wishful thinking--
got myself into (him)
an obsessive
spell (his name q-u-e-e-n)
to bring light [O Lucifer pray for me!]
(to him in a closet of darkness)
of our weird society
in weirdness (as he saw it) happened

This is queer
that he never had (and never has)
told me (to fuck off) that
he is --
or isn't (queer, as this may be)
a straight (guy) answer
would've said (drop dead!)
I know
he desires (me to and to not)
he waits (and it's hard for him too)
but he'll look at me and
--trying to be ignorant--
act as if he wasn't (queer)
that he is
 in public
 he'll speak (to me on occasions)
I feel (him up in my head -- [space between his legs])
two words spoken (to me in private with five or less others),
two words and no more is weird
Two human-beings
divided by the "Sex" Factor
times, why (is he so squared)
in his attitudes
(which he pretends to be so cool about)
is he a poser?
[Is he frightened by Skin-Heads who paint
in colours of black and blue (eyes and missing teeth and worse
is our cultural heritage)?]
And he said I'm weird
He's careful not to indict himself
(but between-the-lines)
he fails



Foreplay

He leered at me, and rolled the dollar underneath his nose
like a fat man with sideburns does with a Cuban cigar and said

I can smell america in here

I giggled and he said

I can smell the sweet smoke of the crack dealer,
the stale inside of an old broad's coffee can, and
the week-old bubble gum in a little boy's pocket.

I grabbed it
stuffed it in my bra
What do you smell now?

He cupped my breasts in his hands, put his face between them, and
inhaled my cleavage

the pennies saved behind a mother's back for a training bra, and
the sweat of a cheerleader's first moist victory celebration, he said.

So I slid the wrinkled wet paper down my belly
slid it into the satin of my panties
What do you smell now?

He stuck his nose into the bushiness peeking over the edge,
breathed, and said

the expensive perfume of your best girlfriend, and
the last man that was down here.

I giggled
threw the bill on the bed with all the others
What do you smell now?

He fell face first onto the bed, breathed deep, and rolled over

the biggest pile of money I ever smelled before, he said.

I giggled and joined him.

Cindi Loo met with Horton the elephant, that elephant true,
And with a huge elephant gun, she made elephant stew.
"Now there," chuckled Cindi Loo, "Now there's a sweet treat.
If you don't like Green Eggs and Ham, try some Horton meat!"

Cindi Loo found the Grinch's dog, faithful old Max.
She cut him in pieces with a big, bloody axe.
Finally Cindi Loo came upon the (now reformed) Grinch.
After all the others, the Grinch would be a cinch.
She stormed his small house, no longer on Mt. Krumpet,
Tooting her horns and blowing her trumpet.
In her mind, Cindi Loo saw the Grinch in his suit
Made up like old Santa stealing Who-loot.
In she came, like a monster, to murder the Grinch
With her great auto-mated Grinch-killing winch.
It sliced him and diced him, and spewed lots of smoke
That made his eyes water and grinchy throat choke.
And when, in his own pool of blood, the Grinch lay dead,
Cindi Loo Who silently crept back to bed.

When they found her on the morning of Christmas Day
She stood among the corpses singing Da-hoo Da-ray.
The Head Who Shrink declared her *cranial zambazi*,
Which to you and me means just plum crazy.
So now Cindi Loo Who, who has just turned age four,
Stares at padded walls and wonders what this Christmas has in store.

Melanie O'Donnell

Narnia

Sometimes upon a chill morning I can almost see the lampost in the
back of the closet.
And I am tempted to follow the trail of pebbles somewhere beyond the
shoes and the mothballs
And step into the night and the snow, and the glow of the lampost
And offer my tongue to each chill crystal
And learn new stars
And let the woods close behind me
And wait for you, my Faun, to come.

Patrick Brice

like fractals in my eyes

black and white pandas hide in the cool mist
and the tall straight maze of bamboo
feed and sustain
a light dew
drops
smashing the clear surface
and circles are rings that expand
forcing the bonds to contract
the powerful waves are small enough
to kiss the dark earth covered with moss
this green sunlight hides the open fire
of the butterfly's wings
whose wet legs are lifted
against the pull
by the breeze
what we think is random
really unfolds
to the wet winds of a hurricane
crushing the smell of coffee
in the Jamaican air
whose ground reeks from the stream
that pours from the gulf
the smell of smoke can be caught
by the nose
as the fire burned on the deck of a ship
its wood filling the sky with dark premonitions
the future is here
the past never forgotten
my vision can see now
the revelations of our sun
opening up the earth
filling it with water
the air rushes out of the hole
like fractals in my eyes

Tim Williams

Happy Gator



Joseph Barberio

Immaculate Reception

Darling, you needn't worry about the past anymore
For the past ends here tonight
Nothing lies outside these four walls
Beyond this room is illusion and illusion only
Reality, alone, is contained within.
There is no life beyond the first;
No others have tread upon this hallowed ground
No eyes before have seen what you are about to see
No ears have yet to hear this sweet sound
For tonight as we dwell here amongst the centuries
The stars above shine for us alone
Overhead, yet not out of reach.
We two, here tonight:
Destroy the past
Create the future and
Immortalize the present
With one silent caress
Initiate and annoint you to
Christen and ring in
The era of modern love.

Tracy Youells

Sometimes it's hard being married to a white man

I'm not black.

Don't know any great, great grandmother
stacked in a hull of a ship
shackled body
to body
to body
picking, scrubbing, singing lonely
deaf
crying the beauty of a daughter
deaf
screaming under the whip
deaf
praying the pounding will stop.

Not an American Indian.

Never had a great, great grandmother
watch babies bounce off the tips
of swords like balls
see her land
raped
ravaged
burned
her daughters
small pox
syphilis
nurse lonely
run grandma the demons are so pale.

Not immune.

I'm my great, great grandmother
caged by a whalebone corset
grandmother, poet, dead and
buried under dishes and diapers
mother, hookin' it,
can't raise kids on four dollars an hour
sister, raped
boyfriend pissed off another man
commercialized, marquis
maserati
model
territorialized, claimed with a flag-
pole

owner to owner
cars don't
depreciate
like cunts

Vito Sebastian Quaglia

Confessions of a History/English Major

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury,
I would like to make a statement on my own behalf.
On the night in question, I was sitting alone in
the University library working on my verse.
Just as I pressed pen to paper, I became aware of
an evil presence behind me. His badge number was 000,
uniform grey flannel; I knew in a moment it must be
an officer of Poetic Justice.

"Let me explain, officer," I attempted.

"That won't be necessary. Professor Starch has explained
enough already."

Starch, that prick, I knew he would get me. All he wanted
was 2500 words, I should've known. Maybe I could lose
this flatfoot in the Reference section.

"Can I at least get a refund for the blank copies that the
microfilm machine made me?"

"Okay, but make it snappy."

I walked over to the first semester freshman at the desk.
Her New Jersey accent did well to cover her intelligence.

"There's going to be a skinny, balding conservative coming
up the stairs any minute; tell him I'm rewinding my reel."

The gumshoe didn't buy her line and soon we were wrestling
behind the microfiche. He reached for his red pen, so I
grabbed a drawer filled with *New York Times* and belted him.
Self-defense, plain and simple.

"Not so fast."

It was Starch, all liquored-up and waxing philosophic.

"Good evening, Professor," I said, backing to the door.

"Another move and you'll get a B in history."

"What, what do you want? A footnote?"

"My dear sir, you've been using the MLA style in History papers again. I've warned you enough. Prepare to re-write."

With that I began reciting Keats, Shelley, and Herrick. His mind couldn't handle it. He smiled and I swear I heard him breathe. I know I did.

So here I stand, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, accused of maddening a professor. I beg of you, look into your hearts and find the truth.

JUDGE: Has the jury reached a verdict?

FOREMAN: Yes we have, Your Honor.

G U I L T Y

JUDGE: I hereby sentence you to three years without use of poetic license.

MORAL: Never confuse facts and figurative language
or
Never rhyme in World Civilization 101

Adrienne Tinney

Scholastic Inferno

No longer are students destroying their minds completely at the will of the College Board. Many state legislators (such as those from New York State) are remonstrating against the SATs, ACTs, etc., claiming the exams to be biased and to have an unfair advantage over most high school juniors and seniors.

In this "canto" the College Board is eternally punished for its own torture upon the innocent "conscientious."

*For Lisa Tinney,
who is going through this same ordeal*

In a dark, dank chasm of despair
shall they who torture advanced students
receive their punishments of equal measure.

The College Board, which disguises its repulsive manner under
inappropriate leaves and acorns, which eliminates
the zeal for success in the lives of the conscientious,

shall reside permanently in the depths of
stress and pressure, overcome by the shock and horror
of visualizing their own future's deterioration in one
moment.

Forever shall they be forced to succumb to
lengthy, yet unnecessary examinations of
nerves, ceasing never to sacrifice

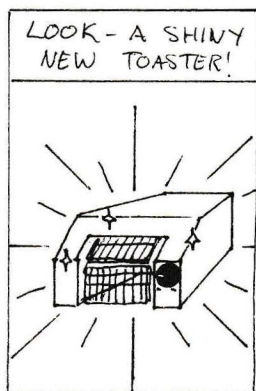
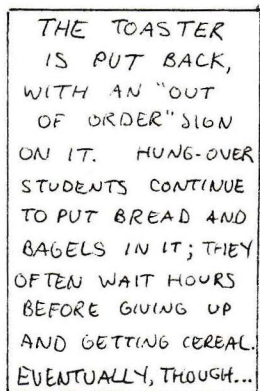
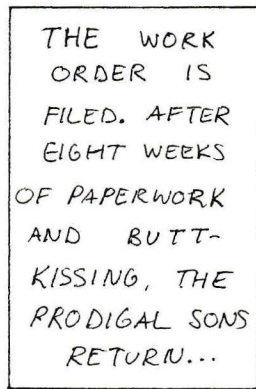
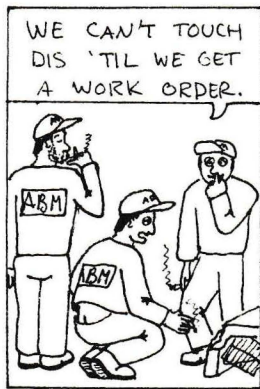
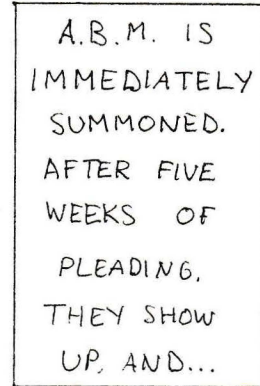
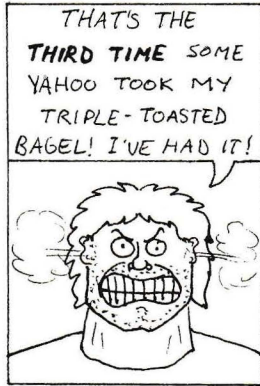
endless Saturday mornings of analogies and
geometry, of antonyms and trigonometry,
perpetually pierced by darkened ovals;

and the newly freed high school seniors shall be appeased.

Rob Hermanofski

One Fine Day at Brunch

"One Fine Day At Brunch..." by Rob Hermanofski



Matthew Dugan

Long Beach Island 1990

I sit with my feet buried
in the warm velveteen sand.
Down by the water,
a father with loving eyes
helps his son build a sand castle.
The small blond child scurries timidly
in and out of the frothy sea
collecting water for the moat
in his red bucket.
His father smiles with reassurance.
The king of his son's silicon castle.
For hours I watch,
until I realize the sun is setting,
and they have left the beach
to only me.
I watch the waves undulate into the shore.
The water is rougher now;
the waves roll up to envelope the castle
and drag the palace slowly out to sea,
smoothing the beach
like years washing away memories,
pushing them down into the
forgotten past.

I will dream of the child tonight,
asleep in his father's arms.
Protected from the greedy hands
of time.

Kimberly Kinney

Starry Night

The Madman takes me by the hand
And leads me into his Starry Night.
I stand on a hill in a dark clear night
Alone
But unafraid,
Looking down upon a sleepy town.
Drifting out from behind his Cypress
Into dark whispering mountains
That slope gently like calm ocean waves.
Flying slowly into his great Living Sky
That swirls me around into the
Short impassioned brush strokes
of Fiery Blues
Breathing Golds.
Silence - save for the Madman's music.
I hold on tightly to tortured hands,
Praying quietly that he'll never let go.

Joseph Barberio

Easter Sunday

1 The day begins grey
You never call
I fantasize painting you, nevertheless,
With saliva, my tongue, the brush
My hand flattening
The soft contours of your back
Passing down your spine
Then rising to the slope
Of your buttocks
When suddenly I feel like turning on
My heel and running
Like Santayana mid-lecture
At Harvard leaving disgusted by
The splendid desperation of it all
I had become horrified at the
Very concept of my own existence.

2 I lean back close my eyes and
Begin to enjoy it
To lose myself in the act
Meanwhile the existential elephant
Enters the darkened room
Toppling in its wake like the
Bull turned loose in the china closet of history;
"Life begins on the other side of despair," Sartre sighs
heavily.

3 While I sink slowly into bitterness
Like the unlearned swimmer
Going down for the third time
In a sea of apple butter and Ovaltine
Entropy
Chaos
Decadence
I know I shouldn't be...
But, I'm enjoying this.

4 Your lips are moist
Cherry red, causing
The personal grey wolf to come out;
On the sidelines we merely
Watch the games cheering wildly
...and...
While I was well intentioned
The champagne bottle
Loses its cork for the last time.

5 What about that one
Standing over there by the curbstone
Ghostly and ghastrly?
Disciples and betrayal
A bag of gold coins changes hands
Bodily secretions are exchanged
God! It must have been
Fun in the old days
Before herpes and (gasp!) AIDS
Still I'd throttle her just the same
The wolf again
"Suffering is the origin of consciousness,"
Says Dostoevsky.

6 The differentiation between existence and essence
But, hey, maybe Sartre and Nietzsche were wrong
Maybe absolute freedom doesn't eliminate the possibility
Of supreme beings
But, merely opens all possibilities
I mean all those arguments...
A reality that transcends space and time
The ground of being and value and
Man's worship.
"There are no transcendent experiences," says Kant.

7 I mean we need some reason
To exist, don't we?
Other than your cherry red lips.

Tim Williams

St. Pat's Cathedral



