



Joefiles VCVIII
merely mere in the dark

god damned ass livers

are circling my
car wanting me to donate
to their sprawling fund
as they wave bags of
m and m's in my view
wanting to know if i can
eradicate domestic violence
or the poaching of seals on an
unnamed coastal town as i squint over
at their toothless grin and wonder
how they got here and why i met
them at this exact intersection in our
shared existence as human's on this planet
and wave the ass live away with a short
hand jab with that knowing look that
i prefer regular m and m's instead of
the peanut kind.

he waits white knuckled

behind the wheel

of the u-haul

to flee on to

the next situation

or girl

as she slowly dies

under the withering

trickle of the sun

bearing down like

a blood laden womb

waiting to give

one more life to this

planet that needs

much more than flesh

to keep things moving.

heartbeat

my boys,
3 cat,
dog,
wife,
fish,
area plants,
insects,
birds
and errant
human
eyes
all approach
me at one
as
i walk
through
the
door
and i just
look around
wondering
how big
i am or
if
i have enough
heartbeats
to
parcel out.

hey morning smoking guy,

i forgot my age and
all the tumbling cardboard
on the morning highway as
i studied your rocking
body going in rhythm with
wafting lines of used nicotine
that goes about you.

i feel like a spy and vindicate
my existence as i pass time here
at this job waiting for a computer
to break or my boss to treat me with
some sort of disposable respect that
will make this absence from my
family worthwhile.

mr. fume from the mouth guy
with your anal retentive smoking
behaviors,
you have me in a good lurch every
morning as i fill my red plastic
cup full of watery gulps and imagine
that somewhere in the world you have
a family that wishes you would stop
your ritualized routine of paying
for death.

then i dream about my own nine year
addiction to the smoke and how
i used to sway invisibly to and fro
with utter excitement as i reach
for the coffee pot without thinking
about it and wobbly pour my own self
another one coffee cup too many
for my morning drug intake.

HOW TO DECODE NEWS

is
the
whole
point
of
this
life
to
fight
or
coexist
peacefully,
a
child
has
to
wonder
when
they
turn
6
or
7
or
8
and
watch
the
news
people
flick
their
bits
of
information
towards
our
wet,
mostly
unused
brain
matter.

**i can't stop
rolling my eyes.**

talking to people,
i roll my eyes.

doing a project or
feeding the baby,
i roll my eyes.

walking from one space
to another space,
i roll my eyes.

focusing on not rolling
my eyes,
and i roll my eyes.

contemplating why i
could possibly be rolling
my eyes,
and i roll my eyes even more.

i tend to have ticks.

my eye lid used to twitch,
i had a weird heaving breathing
problem for a while there,
and before i could mourn the funeral of
their passing,
they were gone.

so,
i just rolled my eyes again of the end of
-N- in again as i ready to mourn the death
of another stress in my ailing eye sockets.

i don't trust people that own birds.

this includes my
parents,
and folks that
i generally like.

but,
it also includes
those kooky people
that could be from
other planets.

and don't get me
wrong,
i love looking at birds
that flits and flies about in
the skies around,
but not in cages.

that's too much.

if there was ever
an animal that goes through
torture because
of a cage or holding cell
it's a fucking bird.

my dad told me the other day
about one of his birds
dropping over dead in the middle
of the day.

my mom buried it.

so,
about a week later he said
the other bird had a raging hard on
and needed to get a female bird
to quench his small sexual bird
desires.

he went and got a female bird,
shoved it into the cage and
immediately the other bird
was fine.

i think what really happened was
that the one bird needed another bird
to share their misery together.

you know what they say ..

just let the birds go
you crazy bastards.

there are plenty of other animals worthy
of your tedious human fascination,
but let's go ahead and fill the large,
empty,
sparse airs with the birds that
loathe are iron gates.

i mourn the death of all my belts

because of my expanding gut.

in the span of 2 days,
i went from 2 of my favorite belts
to one.

age,
lack of calorie burning and
the enjoyment of whiskey
has led to my protrusion below.

and now,
my belts have suffered long enough
and they want me to know about it.

i desire to get them fixed,
but will it help?

will they forgive me?

do they want to cling to me anymore?

do they need me?

shit right they do.

this is the time in the history
of my time that they need me
and i'm gonna fix these fuckers
and strap them up to their last
solitary hole if it hurts me.

so, get ready
you load of belts,
here i come with my money
and some small old man in
a basement to restore all my
pants right back to this big
ole waist of mine.

i pass every possible person

on the way to work
every morning.

i literally meet
and see the world
as do you if you drive
as long as i do.

so, when you send your
hands to your temple and wonder
how much of the world you are
missing because you have to give
up your world for a job or a notion,
remember that everyone is around you
and if you believe hard enough,
the world is always all around you
and worth a glance or stare or more.

but it always helps if some
european monument is before your eyes
or you have a chance to chat with a
stranger on some red eye train ride
south into a tuscan olive orchard.

as i stomach another repetition around
the slight arcs of downtown's
highway look,
i imagine that i'm back in rome as
a taxi man swooping around the backside of the
coliseum to pick up my wife and kids after
a long day on the italian road.

**if you ever thought
you had a bad day,**

then just take a mouth of Nyquil
and go to sleep after this poem
and wake up with a whole new
way to tackle this existence.

one of my dear friend's,
phil,
has a 15 month old son
with a girl that is about as bad
as it gets.

he was lured in by the scent of
good times, fast sex, more sex
and nothing but sex.

this girl was a fast trick from
the bowels of the hood.

attractive,
yet horribly dangerous.

she was a stripper,
coke user and general mess the entirety
of their relationship leading
up to the birth of his son.

phil is a body builder and the
cleanest, nicest guy on the
planet.

he just has a bad compass for
selecting a good girl.

this is his 3rd baby with his
third girlfriend.

for some time he gave this recent girl,
treselle,
the shake and tried to get
custody of his son because it
was too much.

she had already lost 2 of her other
sons,
so he didn't wanna pile it on,
but he had to do what he had to do.

some months went by without any
word from phil.

we were co-workers and ran a youth program
together.

one friday morning,
he calls and says that they didn't offer him
a raise for the previous year's work
so he resigned.

he wanted to call and let me know.

i told him i would do anything to help him out.

he thanked me and hung up.

5 days later i called and asked how things were.

did he get a new job,
was he in good spirits.

he told me that the particular friday in
question went to hell.

treselle has his big ford SUV with
his son, PJ, in the car when she
slammed into the back of a car off the highway.

there was a kid working under the car because
it had just broken down.

she killed the kid inadvertently.

and phil's son suffered a broken leg.

the car was totaled.

again,
phil fell for her and it hurt.

as time went on,
i kept in touch and he said they were not
going to press charges.

he was relieved.

i was skeptical, at best.

just recently,
i called and he said that she was in jail,
the story was all over the news.

the phone reception was bad,
so i told him i would look into the story and
call back.

treselle is in on \$50,000 bond with
involuntary manslaughter, child endangerment,
suspended license.

and we haven't talked since.

i wonder how phil's doing everyday.

i wonder if his faith in god is his savior.

i wonder sometimes if he is a god.

insurgent memories

of all writing genres
collide and mesh
about my head
when i travel and
there is usually
only one place to go.

it's a place i cannot
merely speak in
the
words of this word drain
leaking onto this page
before you,
rather it's the collected spots,
puddles,
small ponds and
vein like tributaries
that have leaked the
liquid of my brain matter
all over any number or sorts
of paper slips that have
had the chance to pass
beneath my
mental word grip.

JASSPRINE

whenever
the sound of
a bad job,
bills in the box,
horrible news,
the evenings of limited sleep
and anything else
that tends to try my wavering patience,
i always know that
jazz will absolutely fucking
make everything instantly better.

kid movie idea

his grand
7 year old mind
got excited one morning
as he described to me the
very simple premise of a movie
called SLICE OF CAKE.

it would be a thrilling biopic
of one piece of cake and the world
trying to alter its chemistry
for their own good without regard
to the tasty, sweet individuality
of the slice of cake.

it may be in a theater near you some
day if this kid decides he doesn't
wanna be a pilot, swimmer, tree cutter,
scientist or anything of the like.

keep your eyes on the cake.

little milo,

where did your neck go
to on your 6 month old body?

why have you no kneecaps?

where are your tiny teeth?

can you hear me well?

do you like the taste of salt?

where is everybody?

are you still there?

ahh - there you are.

keep grabbing your feet kid,
they're gonna take you places in
this lifetime.

thanks for being around milo.

we couldn't do this with our necks,
teeth and kneecaps without you.

luck came ripping through

she called because
there was an evil finch
flying through the quarters
of our home.

it came in through
the open garage door
and she called wanting to know
who to get it out.

i told her to grab a blanket
and throw it on the bird.

she just didn't want to.

and then a relative driving by
came in and caught the bird
and let him free.

after the panic,
my sweet wife told me that she
read it was good luck for a bird
to come into your home from the
outside.

sometimes luck comes wrapped
in feathers with a small, beating heart.

miles became a star wars kid

as i held him on
my chest towards
the big screen for
the final descent of
darth vader into hell
as i transformed to
jedi level in my earthly
movie experience and passing
on some viewing candy to my
little wookie baby.

Miles' 1st

train trip
was like
my first walk
across a
crowded room
for a warm soda
i knew i was never
gonna drink,
but wanted to do
it because it was thrilling
and i may actually get
exactly what i want
without getting
what i want immediately.

miles lies on my truth

he lays
on my
legs and dreams
about his small arms
as his tiny
feet and miniscule
sausage toes wiggle
and the smell of used
tree goes over our heads
like a combined father
and son dream that will smack
into a telephone pole
in the neighbor's yard
and send a call straight
to a destination that
will share our cup of strong
coffee this early morning that
is much older than my 5 month old
son's developing brain.

miles neck hold

the crevice of my boy's
7 month old neck holds
enough lost dirt to fill
an elementary school's
play yard with hours of
entertainment.

he has a turtle neck.

it's hidden most of the time,
but when he looks up or peers
around we gather the evidence of
a hidden crevice that is holding
the keys to a cleaning.

bits of common dust,
carrot shavings,
peaches,
peas,
juice,
curdled water,
oatmeal shavings,
my old car key,
the dogs lost tags,
bits of lost regimes,
my yesterday,
his tomorrow,
anywhere between
our brains and knee caps,
and he just smiles
with the wide brimmed
fascination of ignorance
that's so deep within a
baby you almost feel bad
that their gonna have to grow
up some day and realize
that this dirt and hidden grime
is gonna spread from their neck to
all the reachable and yet unreachable
crevices of this reality.

but for now,
he has a personal cleaning
service that holds back the notions
of dirt with a single swipe and loud
laugh straight in his clean, smooth face.

minding the business

i woke to take a drizzle
in the porcelain when i
heard a sound in the front yard.

about 3:30 in the morning,
i saw a tall dark fella pushing the
front end of a his car that was smashed
against a light pole in our
front yard.

as he frantically pushed through
two spires of headlight splashing
around the reasoned circumstances,
i stared on.

knowing full well from years of city life,
it's better sometimes to just stay clear
of situations that didn't involved you
or have you initially inked out as a
sub-character in a hazy plot.

staring for a few minutes more,
i saw this wobbly fella weeble about
the road by his busted car talking rather
loud to a friend in distress signals
for some swift help.

sure that he was going to clean his own
blunder, i ambled away with a dry mouth
and naked torso back to my wife and
child in the warm clutches of security.

the next day, several republican neighbors
of mine were by the pole looking at the leaked
fluids that poured from this wreck.

i went on out and explained what happened
and why i decided not to act on a story that
wasn't to include me.

one fella - bob - took the news in stride,
while the other NRA man with a penchant for
the dramatic told me that i should have called the cops.

he went on a racial tirade about keeping blacks,
and speeding cars, or suspicion out of our neighborhoods
and if i wasn't going to do anything about it
that i could call him and he would get any number of
his home guns and do some street justice himself.

i smiled, laughed some and looked on at this older
man that remained a kid throughout his whole life
when he had all the opportunities afforded to him

for learning and a bit of growth, if lucky.

and as i sauntered away with thoughts of keeping
my family secure and making sure i know what fights
to pick and what nonsense to walk away from.

i knew i was walking away from nonsense.

the nonsense of all of it.

drunk man hitting 4AM light pole - republican chiding

MINUS REASONING = ME

i have
finally
arrived in my
personal history
where i just
don't need a reason
and if
you really need
one
go on and read
or talk to someone else
because my ink well of
reasons have dried,
come back to wet again,
dried,
and now have taken a
indefinite hiatus
for the
calmer seas of
a higher reason.

My personal California dreams

on drives around the
same curve,
corners,
billboards,
bums on a manhole,
i peer over to the north
at the missouri river
and momentarily disguise it
as a clear, huge mass of
the pacific ocean in my
future home of california
as the winding dirt water
of the missouri leads into
an invisible ocean i may
see some small, fine day.

MY REALITY

last year
i tried
very hard
to put together
an arduous
written application
and 10 minute video
for a political reality show
that was going to
be on a cable TV channel
that no one had and
now i think that
all of that just simply
couldn't have fucking
been real.

on my back and figured out

i remember as a 10 year old kid
getting dragged on my back
by my brother in the front yard
of our childhood lime green duplex
and thinking after extreme dizziness
that i had some ethereal
grip on how the world worked.

this would soon fade when he would let
my legs drop in a loud thud,
i would pull myself up to my feet,
fall back down into nausea and
close my spinning eyes with all
a mighty blackness and soon realize
that those swirls of swami intelligence
were all gonna fade when my stomach
let loose and my wobbly feet would fail.

**on the train
with the mafia**

is a comforting
sort of thing
because i know when
the whistle sounds
and the sound of
screams become muffled,
i will have to get off
soon and when off,
i'll have the bastards
trapped in their own
quagmire as i contemplate
the cigarette ends at
the feet of the mobster
straight ahead by the
luggage rack looking
very slowly for something
rumbling in his
dark black bag.

painting a girl's nails

is the closest
a fella can really
get to a genuine
invitation to do
something that a girl
really wants to do
along with creating a
pleasure that will not
only beautify a foot
but will more than likely
emit a response that can
make a man forget all those
fake orgasm screams he's heard
in the same proxemic range.

PICUTRE THAT

my wife
told me about some
trench coated man
that got verbally blasted
by some private woman
for taking pics of
her at a large department store.

apparently,
the cops were called in
and the guy was completely perplexed
as the eye of G. Orwell came out
for a moment and lost this day.

i thought about all the times
i have brought my camera to life
on someone else's life and further
compacted the notion that
folks have a right to be creped
a bit, but the tense edge this
society exists upon is like
a razor edge waiting to slice
our predilections in half.

as i hoist my camera for an anonymous
photo,
i don't worry about the melt down
of someone anymore,
because anything is possible,
i just wonder more than anything if
there is gonna be a good sale on
trench coats soon because i think
i would look all right in one.

POEM SUBMISSIONS

CALL FOR submissions: the Broken Bridge Review, a new annual sponsored by Pomfret School, seeks submissions from emerging writers poems (50-line maximum), stories (2,000-word maximum), and reviews of first books of poetry (1,000-word maximum) for the first issue. Submission window: September 1 November 1. Submissions recycled; include E-mail address in brief cover letter for electronic response. Open to all writers in English; welcomes college and graduate student submissions (indicate in cover); interested in writers with private school connections (indicate in cover). For specific guidelines: bcdavis@pomfretschool.org. No electronic submissions. Send to Brad Davis, Pomfret School, 398 Pomfret St., Pomfret, CT 06258.

COAL CITY Review, an independent literary annual, has expanded its fiction section! Now seeking short stories 100 to 5,000 words. Looking for compelling subtext, precise prose, and interesting (successful) structure. Deadline for Issue 21 (2006): October 15. Pays 1 contributor's copy. E-mail stories to coalcity@sunflower.com

ECOTONE: Reimagining Place seeks submissions for fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry. Ecotone emphasizes the deep importance of place in contemporary writing. First issue featured Mark Doty, Bill Roorbach, Ann Zwinger, etc. Send manuscripts and SASE to: Ecotone, Creative Writing Department, University of North Carolina Wilmington, 601 S. College Rd., Wilmington, NC 28403-3297. For complete guidelines, visit www.uncw.edu/ecotone

FOUR CORNERS seeks poetry submissions for upcoming issues. Past contributors include Charles Simic, Denise Duhamel, Ronald Wallace, and Ted Kooser. Samples: \$4. Subscriptions: \$8. Please make checks out to David Harbilas. Send 3–5 poems with SASE to: 8 Coles Way, Atkinson, NH 03811.

INKWELL Magazine: new reading period for Spring and Fall 2006 issues. Submit up to 5 unpublished poems or a fiction/memoir manuscript (6,500-word limit) from August 1 to November 30 (postmarked). No return of manuscripts. Send to Fiction (or Poetry) Editor, Inkwell (pw), Manhattanville College, 2900 Purchase St., Purchase, NY 10577. Submission guidelines: www.inkwelljournal.org

THE LOUISVILLE Review seeks original and previously unpublished poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and drama. Send to Sena Jeter Naslund, Editor, TLR, Spalding University, 851 S. Fourth St., Louisville, KY 40203. Include SASE for reply; submissions recycled. E-mail: louisvillereview@spalding.edu Web site: www.louisvillereview.org

MAIN CHANNEL Voices: A Dam Fine Literary Magazine seeks eclectic, accessible poetry that triggers an “Aha!” response. See examples at www.mainchannelvoices.com. Deadlines are January 30, April 30, July 30, and October 30. To submit, send a 2–3 sentence bio and 3–5 poems in the body of an E-mail to MCVsubmissions@mainchannelvoices.com

MANUSCRIPTS wanted. WordWrights magazine is seeking all genres of poetry and short fiction under 2,500 words. Pays \$20 to \$100 upon publication. Free sample copies of WordWrights Magazine and Argonne

House Press chapbooks available upon request. Argonne House Press, 1620 Argonne Pl. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Established 1993. Web site: www.wordwrights.net

NIDUS, University of Pittsburgh's online literary journal, seeks innovative and daring submissions of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction for its upcoming issue. Visit us at www.nidusjournal.org for submission guidelines and to read writing and features from Terrence Hayes, Tracy K. Smith, Tony Earley, Jane McCaffery, and more.

OYEZ REVIEW, award-winning journal established in 1965, seeks creative nonfiction, poems, short fiction. Send best work only. Reading period August 1–October 1. Current issue \$5. Send submissions with SASE to Oyez Review, School of Liberal Studies, Roosevelt University, 430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605-1394. Attention: Janet Wondra.

PINYON invites high-quality submissions of poetry and short fiction from emerging and established writers. Reading period is August 1 to December 1. Send short bio, including E-mail address and SASE, to PINYON, Dept. of Languages, Literature, and Communications, Mesa State College, 1100 North Ave., Grand Junction, CO 81501.

THE PROSTHETIC God, neophyte home to discordant voices, is a quarterly concerned with poems that strike a disquieting chord. Free verse favored. Send 3–5 poems with SASE. Simultaneous submissions OK, if noted. No previously published work. Pays in contributor's copy. P.O. Box 02873, Detroit, MI 48202.

ROCKHURST REVIEW seeks lively material for 19th edition, Spring 2006. Submissions accepted September 15–January 15, 2006. Typed. SASE for acceptance. Maximum lengths for submissions: fiction/essay—2,500 words; drama—10 pages; poetry—10 pages/5 poems; 5 b&w or color glossy photographs. No return of materials. Send name, address, phone, E-mail, bio to Patricia Cleary Miller, Rockhurst Review, 1100 Rockhurst Rd., Kansas City, MO 64110.

ROUX MAGAZINE seeks submissions of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction in any form or genre. Fresh and creative new voices are appreciated. Submissions to: Roux, 23811 Washington Ave., Ste. c110-340, Murrieta, CA 92562. Guidelines, FAQ, and more at www.RouxPress.com

ESTABLISHED online poetry journal seeks quality poems. ROADS Poetry is dedicated to fine contemporary poetry and the poets themselves. Featured poets include Sydney Lea, Scott Cairns, John Dufresne, and Marie Jordan Giordano. Send poems in body of E-mail only, no attachments. For guidelines: www.roadspoetry.com

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R-KV-R-Y, A Quarterly Literary Journal, is now accepting submissions for its Fall 2005 issue. Please see our submission guidelines at www.ninetymeetingsinninetydays.com/R_KV_R_Y.html

VERBSAP, a new online literary magazine for concise, eclectic prose, seeks fiction and nonfiction submissions. Make us laugh, weep, or howl at the moon in 3,000 words or less. Visit www.verbsap.com for details. Submit. We love to read.

PRISON PALS

i pulled up to the building i
work at to see several bus loads
of prisoners hauling furniture and
loitering around the front of the building
with blank looks and eyes of potential disaster.

looking on with a smile increasing over my mouth,
i thought this may be my lucky day and my
job is completely getting routed and i really
just don't need to be at work that day.

i just wasn't lucky enough,
but i shot a look over at the fellas as if
i wouldn't mind if they just stole the company i
work for and threw my job into a well that no
one could find.

??

i'd like to
buy the rights
to the question mark
and charge you
every fucking time
you ask me a question.

quitter

if there was
ever a time to quit
drinking it would
mean that i should have never
written this missive
and as this life of moments expands
to moments and the moments eat seconds
and all i have are hours to devour the days
while the weeks tremble for the years
i continue to think about a lifetime as
the amount of decades trickle slowly forward.

SAN FRAN MILES

nearly 2 weeks before
my lovely caroline gave birth
to our boy miles,
i had to forgo a
trip to san francisco
in anticipation of the
baby birth.

it was the coolest thing
i had ever witnessed and
as quick as i denied a
full paid 4 day stay in
san francisco, i
remembered in on the
first family train trip
and mile's first traveling
adventure ever.

and it occurred to me
that one day i'm gonna have
to take miles and the family
on over to the golden gate
city for
pure nostalgia and a bit
of a fortune cookie to relive
a permanent memory.

simple, yet ample leaps

a recent butchered
taco bell visit
nearly threw me over the edge.

like a lunatic with a baseball
bat in a house made of glass.

i have good composure and a
widely accepting view of this world,
but this sunday i nearly left earth
bound for a place i may not have
been able to escape.

i went to the taco bell because
my wife wanted some food from there.

once we started eating under the cool
shade our elm when she said that
there were two things missing from
her order.

i stopped eating and proceeded
to go into a fury of oratory about
human beings lately.

i don't even know what i said and
finally came back to earth with
visions of my father's bad temper
when she touched my arm.

i realized that folks just simply don't
give a shit and i really am more
like my dad in ugly ways than
i would care to admit.

and as i watched the right lights
of our baby monitor twitch up and down
i realized the least of my concerns
where a missing taco or empanada from
my wife's fast food order.

i have a son that could inherit
my brief bursts of utter disbelief
in the human race.

sure,
one thing from a stranger is small,
but the longer you walk this planet
the more it stacks up and sometimes
it's hard to mask that everyone is out
for themselves and i know
that i'm out for much more than
myself as i wipe the last of

some hot sauce off my thumb.

slowly time contemplates an upgrade

i was always told
that when i had my
own kids that time
would just start flying.

calendars would disappear
from computer screens,
cabinets,
walls and such because
the blinding speed was
going to send them gleefully
over the arc of time travel
that human brains couldn't
either comprehend or stop.

instead,
the drip of days and calendar
weeks are moving slower.

our kitchen calendar has
faint droplets of mist like
refrigerated items because
the march of air and slowness
of days just clings to their
limbs like frost on a good
cold morning.

not sure if there's a certain
age for me, the kids, wife,
animals, neighbors, the president,
circus acts, doctors or such that is
supposed to happen to make this time
fly but for right now i feel like
the clock of mars is in my front
vest pocket.

socks on my head

my wife bought
me a baseball boston red sox
cap for christmas
and it damn near alleviated
the ills of baseball
i have carried for over 11 years.

it's the first time i have worn
a baseball hat in the same timeframe.

after the 1994 MLB strikes,
I gave the finger to the sporting establishments
of america and started reading,
writing, smoking, running, drinking,
living, loving girls and all the like
of the lot.

now, i return as a married father
and the sound of baseball is slowly creaking
into my bones.

the nasty 84 year dry spell ended for the small
town of boston and on that same day,
the ill laden ghosts of my destroyed sports
past went back to the same ether they came from.

so go ahead and fucking play ball ..

i won't turn away this time.

strips of rain

pound through the
trees around this house
and the invisible
like judgment on my
movements as i ready for
another day on the job
with be speckled notions of
my father's work ethic coursing
through my very blood as the
bane of my time and crux of
my ironical catch 22 as i leave
the family behind and wonder for
the first time ever how the fuck
everyone has done it and how long
will it take for me to yank this
nagged over, yet crimson comfort wart
from the middle of my rain soaked back.

the candy isles

in gas stations,
grocery stores,
candy shops and such
make me dizzy.

there is a dizzying
blur of colors, boxes,
rectangular shapes,
circular loops,
bounty upon bounty of
many sweet sugary packets
that beg for my dollars and
bleed for my insulin line.

i was searching for
several simple black wrapped
chocolate bars for my wife recently
and when i didn't see it
glimmering at me,
i asked the attendant and he said
they were there very plaintively.

wandering back,
i had to close my eyes and
focus on the simple colors and
gloss over the rainbow orgasm in my
eye's way.

and there they were.

a full box and not a bit emptier
than before as i reached in and
reassured myself how cool the color
black is.

the cosmic sense

driving my 7-year old boy
zen to school some months back
he looked up through our
verbal morning skills of
silly nonsense and pondering
the impossibilities of our reality
when he mentioned that he had
a cosmic sense about things.

i stopped in my mental picture of
what an elephant crossed with a lion
would be called and asked him how so.

all he said was that he had a feeling about
things before they were to happen,
just a cosmic sense overall about things.

i nodded looking forward knowing that
i didn't need to ask any more questions
and he had no more answers that was going
to make things clearer.

my presumption was that he has a premonitory
sense or a real solid outlet on people
without their knowledge and i just let the
little guy swing his legs as we looked at
the blare of sun coming through our cosmic window
of a world.

and the whole time he knew that i knew that i
was giving him a break and moving on to the next subject
because a kid with a cosmic sense already knows
what i'm thinking and we can just play the mental
charade so as not to affect the moment between a boy
and his dad on their way to school.

THE END OF NOTHING

nothing
is
ever
gonna
end
as
the
death
of
people,
extinction,
wars,
white
dwarfs,
starvation,
nuclear
bombs,
annihilation,
and all
the
rest
look
forever
in
the
face
of
a
moving
atom
and
we
can
always
rest
assured
that
somehow
and
some way,
the universe
will
hold
the
dust
of
any
earth
death
and
we
will
finally

all
be
together
in
a
huge
collection
of
non-dying
human
residue.

the evil gene

in people
surprises me
sometimes as i
sit down to take a bite
out of a simple tortilla
only to see the
flicker of a newscast that
has to be a joke,
but isn't,
but what if it really is.

the evil gene comes out
on a drive to work,
at work,
through my boss,
through errant comments,
through the tiny windows
in my work building that briefly
distract me from the books,
music or other distractions that
ease me through a day of making
some money for my family and realizing
that this world is much too large,
cool,
endearing,
altruistic,
and triumphant
to have such an evil
fucking gene that exists in
common folk.

it's there.

that's why in 2005 Bush is still
in the devil's throne.

on the other hand,
i love the look of evil jeans.

torn,
barley blue
and ready to walk away from all
the world's assholes and their
forgettable problems in the
probe of some invisible plane that
just disappeared from view.

the guy god loves

i pass 'SMILE GOD LOVES YOU' bumper sticker
guy who is always going slow and deliberate
in the center lane of the busy highway
while tipping a huge cup of coffee into his
open lips.

he hunches,
glares at the sun,
ignores all surrounding drivers,
and contemplates his wife or the
new day of his work mutiny he
has to tackle.

the whole time i wonder if this guy
picked up this used car with the faded
pink smiley face proclaiming his love
for his creator or if it was a sticker
this lumbering man slowly creeping towards
his destination put all by himself
on this car.

and then the thought ends that quickly.

it really doesn't matter.

it's just a small murmur on the morning
highway i doubt most even notice.

most look like they don't even know what
god is.

they must wonder if god is that person
on the news last night?

and why smile, they all presume,
because they just don't feel like it.

as these thoughts pile,
i scan this man's face through my head again
and undoubtedly conclude that he put that
sticker on his car all deliberate so
that someone like me could ponder his commitment
to god and morning coffee and his sleeping wife.

the idea of a bad day job

is just
bad notion
to me at this
very moment in
my life as i
briefly recollect
the horror of
having to face the
company life in a hell
hole day in and out
for a man that has the
importance of spit on
a wandering girl's shoe sole,
but we have the bills that
accumulate,
voices that demand,
our past to rectify,
and so the wheels turn,
or they stop accordingly.

i ended my reign in hell
and if it was any indication
or consolation, i attained a
rich theological lesson between
the chasm that creates heaven and
hell and i'll be damned if i
will wheel my own paid off car
to a shit joint stinking of rot
and ready to be chiseled with the
iron rag of purgatory.

the image of the shoe box

that contained a pair
my wife bought for me
on our 1 year wedding
anniversary was enough
to get me nostalgic,
a bit choked up as i
realize in moments through
the day the 2 way love
we have been fortunate enough
to give a couple of prior ailing
hearts and as that shoe box looks
up at me with it's innocent
new shoe smell i vow to wear
the hell out of those of those soles
in the neatly folded box.

the life of a shopping cart

is one richer than
many lives i have either
been in contact with
or heard about.

it is a life of altruistic service
to every human need imaginable.

those little rusty carts push about
our bleaches, detergents, celery,
rump roasts, match sticks, gum globs
and any other assorted stacks of
health or junk.

the don't talk back or refuse
or infuse nonsense,
they just serve.

slit eyes abound,
solid black wheels,
it's like a temporary car
with a history that is
championed by hands that reach
from Ohio to California.

it's the gold rush in a silver blur.

as i grip the red plastic of the
handle that carries me on to aisle 8
i use this apparatus further as my
daydream vehicle to make me forget
the money i will pay and all the other
moving objects in the world that just
don't do what the silver grocery cart
can do.

the mathematical taxi genius

picked us up
to lead us to
our ultimate
hotel destination
in jefferson city.

without looking over much,
he talked about a worn and smashed
book on mathematics that was next to him.

my caroline asked him about the book
and as he looked up in sheer excitement
as if no one asks him a question
worthy of a solid response,
she said she was curious.

at this,
we began talking about how everything
comes down to numbers and suggested
a couple of films for him to watch.

but the guy likely doesn't have a
tv or go to the movies all that much.

he's just a numbers man waiting for
our number as he carts us across the
grounds of the missouri state capitol
looking up through the glaring windshield
as he sends the visor down to block his
face from the unfathomable amount of the future
glaring at him like a pail of numbers
he's gonna dump in his sink and marvel
at later as the world contemplates stopping
on a penny and spending a quarter to
relive it.

the mosquito

waggles

his

legs

on

the

wall

before

me

as

i

pull

my

pal

out

and

attempt

to

make

a

smashing

point.

the real danger

is always in your pants,
so buckle up
youngsters
and wait until spoken to.

the sunday afternoon trampoline jumpers

are like trickles
of water insects eating
the surface of the
water in hopes of some
nugget of plankton
that will help them on
to their next pond
as monday looks like
friday and the leap,
bound,
jiggle,
lunge
is enough
to keep this
visit to some
anonymous suburban house
bearable.

the ultimate adventure

of one small pooplet
that just won't disappear
from the mouth of our toilet
water is the reality show that
we are confronted with several
mornings a week as the tv holds
the silent cup in tact and the
next bird squawk outside is just
a small little mock of our modern
plumbing gone to shit.

**the ultimate road
to absolute humiliation,**

minced with humility,
is the trash i have to
pick up in flowered bits
all around the back of
our big lawned yard.

what i pick up are pieces
of a diaper that have been annihilated
by the whirl of a powerful metal blade.

they get there by our black lab eating
the diaper, processing it through his intestines,
out his rectum and as a pile of shit in our
yard.

after the blade hits his pile,
the paper is all over and i have to pick it up.

if there is anything more fowl than that,
please hold it in your little brain of yours
because i'm all filled up on fetching
piss and shit lately.
a

time reflecting time

when i had a lot of time
on my hands as a single
early 30's man in the city
living all alone in a big house
with my gray cat,
i craved the kind of adult
responsibility that would require
me to garner so much more out of
this existence and have the
indispensable camaraderie that
this life could afford.

it's not that i couldn't handle
being on my own,
but it made so much sense to me
to have a house of mirth and love
that would trickle out into the streets
and splay down the road like
trickles of a hose left on overnight.

and now that i have a lovely wife,
7-year old boy,
7-month old son,
1 dog,
3 cats,
1 fish,
5 tomato plants,
3 basil plants,
1 green pepper plant,
5 pumpkin plants,
yard work,
full time job,
developing another job,
i have lost time.

all the time i wanted my time swallowed
up by my own selfish endeavors have
been boomeranged back towards
everything else around me and it feels
like a warm worn pair of pants.

i just have to find the time sometimes
to contemplate my lack of time and i
remember the time during that time when
i thought about not wanting all of that
idle time and as that idle time trickled
forward i was to fall in love and get to
the point where i would truly understand
time and know time and become time and eat
time and become friends with my friend time.

have you met time lately?

no?

time, meet the reader.

time, reader - reader, time.

now go on and wasted some time together.

train whistles

attack
the
innocent
elderly
as
the
wheels
of
industry
glare
over
the
ears
of
my
tiny
baby
boy
trying
to
figure
out
what
the
hell
sound
is.

trained train man

he's a drunk
old timer on a train
to jeff city with a
satchel of memories no one
needs to know about.

always averting his face
from a staring child,
the man holds onto his
large umbrella and loose
briefcase as the shades of
light go over his face like
loose memories he loves to forget.

he's the mystery man that no one
wants to approach and as one
small fly scuttles around his
brow with indignant insect courage,
i wish for it to land on his ear,
bite in all wide and big
so that all of us can see
just one genuine emotion come out
of this moving statue.

UNDERSTOOD

do you mind
being misunderstood
or does it make you
feel free?

i have to side
with the latter
on my tiny ladder
leading
to my own stoop.

3 unreal cats

we have the three
most ferocious cats
in this entire neighborhood,
but the stories behind our closed
doors would be enough to baffle
both animal enthusiasts and vets
alike.

one afternoon recently,
the kids went downstairs only
to return shortly thereafter
telling me there was a bird
in the basement.

a full sized sparrow
was waddling around on a
bright piece of red carpeting
confused in the air conditioned
light of people living
and as i tried to scuttle him to fly off
up the staircase and out into
the big, fancy world
he bumbled his body and wings
about in a mad act of confusion.

shortly after he smacked around
for a while, i got him loaded up on
a blanket and he was tossed back
out into the hot soupy air of
feathered fowl.

several nights after that,
i woke have a pee and heard
a peculiar sound from the basin of
the bathroom tub.

it was a somewhat shrill scratching,
frantic movement and pitter patter.

i looked in to see a mouse trying to
escape the smooth edges of the
bath tub.

i reached in and gave him a hand,
returned him to the confines of other
feathered mammals in the neighborhood.

after that juncture in the road,
i walked back wondering if our cats
are catching fictional cartoon rodents
and if their whole bad assed 9-lives
act is indeed just a buncha smoke
so that we keep feeding them and

don't make them clean their own litter boxes.

the jury is not only out,
it's lost as the mice and birds rest for
another round of laughing in the face of
our ferocious alley cats.

a level of debt

we all can love
is anything we can't
afford as the plastic
clanks around the clunky
techno gadget in the checkout
line at your favorite store
as the amaerican ideal continues to
burn in a glowing ember of
dreamy dust and it just doesn't fucking
matter at all - worry about it when you
need to worry about it - it's never too late,
we're always in debt - shit you needed what you
bought - why the fuck not - as the spinning
spoke of my invisible money trail leads to a
faint din of laughter on the other end of the line
i wish you the best of luck in racking it up and
just finding that happy utopian notion of your
lovely debt ceiling.

ait ..

what
you
know
in
this
reality
is
only
really
what
you
think
you
know.

backeduptoforth

east - west,
mars - venus:
the ultimate neumonic trap
as i trip over my lack of
shoelaces lately and
wish for a good old fashioned
button up shit to cover all
the other traps that will
be a 2-4-6-8 inside of an
A-E-I-O-U-Y.

belief meets disbelief

when you know
what to believe
there will be complete,
utter disbelief to meet you.

i have met this before.

it comes in a weirdly painted
suit, small clothes, bad breath,
missized shoes, badly cropped hair
and a grin you won't be able to mistake
as anything other than disbelief.

and it comes because there is a
lotus of balance in this existence that
is better not tinkered with and if
this double deluxe realm is jostled,
you had better just ready your relaxed
brain for the inevitable and
prepare for a new era of
stronger beliefs, but it's hard
to say when or if they will
ever happen for a person like you.

bomb shelter church

would you
wanna be in a
church or a bomb shelter
in these vulnerable
modern US times?

both have that familiar
ring as one as we theologians
with a history book in our back pockets
fail to recognize how and where
the circle of repetition got back
to our calendar.

i think i'm going to buy an old
church and make it both my home
and bomb shelter as i peer through
the stained glass windows and
try my hardest to like tea and
just sit there with my pretty wife
watching lint gather in the air
all calculated like a small feather bomb
falling all over our beliefs.

bottle cap woman

on the red bridge
is alive, walking and
still collecting
all of your used drink
lids.

drink up, fucks.

broken or lost?

old men
keep telling
me that i'm going
to lose or break
whatever they entrust in
me.

namely,
this is my father-in-law,
and my father.

for the entirety of my
short life,
my old man has told me
that i lose and break everything.

if not lost or broken,
it will be smudged with a generous
heap or smear of hard to remove paint.

i never quite believed
the heap of accusations
lumped upon my misunderstood bones.

sure,
i could lose and break shit
because i don't invest the money
or thought to possessions that needs
to be lauded upon them,
but there are some things that i do
hold to my breast as a treasure.

one of those items is my wedding ring.

and during a swim in the local lake
while throwing a football around with
a 15 year old kid,
i lost it.

after a near catch and a jammed ring finger,
i came up through the murky waters of a
dirty fake beach to see a naked finger
and the prospects of winning a huge lottery
before i would retrieve my rightful treasure.

gone.

and for several hours after a futile search,
i couldn't shake the quote my dad always
lauded on my brain:
'THE KID LOSES OR BREAKS EVERYTHING.'

it sank in that day.

he's right.

my wedding ring is the only thing that
really mattered in this life.

gone.

guess i shouldn't get into the storage rental
business or much else that requires retention
of goods and a healthy respect for all the
many little and big things that are finger tangible
in the world.

happy holding.

i let go several weeks ago as my replacement ring
looks up from the keys laughing and laughing and laughing
a loud nervous laugh.

calorie burners

my folks decided
not to go to a
weight watcher's meeting
the other night,
according to my mother,
because they would have to go
up and down 2 flights of steps.

hmmm, i responded through
the other end of the receiver.

i waited.

i thought it was a joke.

she chimed in,
'ARE YOU THERE?'

oh yea,
i came back,
and we began talking about other
matters between a 61-year old mom
and a 32-year old son.

then,
i talked to my father a week or so
later and he said they went back to
a weight watcher's meeting at another
location without all of those nasty
steps that force you to lose the
calories they will describe in cash
how to lose all by yourself.

he said he didn't like it.

they went too fast.

he would have to read brochures
to keep up with the flow of classes
and that was just too much.

then,
i paused again and thought about this.

all of these activities:
walking,
reading,
concentrating,
trying,
require energy,
which in turn
burns calories.

isn't that what they want?

and folks wonder why i say
my parents have gone utterly crazy.

there you are.

as objective as it gets.

canine altruism

our big black lab
dog will eat anything
lying around the house.

if it's not digested,
he's had his mouthy saliva
all over it with slight punctures
or outright molar marks to
signify is never ending stomach
of desire.

he's eaten grass seed,
teas, soiled tampons, dirty diapers,
day old fish fowl, used bones, christmas chocolates,
birthday presents, ramen noodles, cat shit,
varieties of vomit, board games,
rented books and any number of possible
fowl good for the mouth of a hungry
trash receptacle.

it never ends.

it just gets more voracious.

and after all these days of scolding him,
i have decided to just let him have it.

he can eat tacks or razors.

it's his world now.

i'm developing a new environmental plan
for the city that would include feeding
the lab all sorts of trash to assist in saving
land space and making materials instantly biodegradable
through healthy stomach acids.

from now on my city folks can rest assured
that they are no longer creating trash,
rather they are feeding the culinary delights
of a dreaming dog currently contemplating ways
to eat his own body if it was only a piece of
trash or semi-edible food.

collector dreamin'

i had a dream last
night about the neighborhood
collector.

she's a small squatty woman with
many hats and a well hid face.

she crawls through the neighborhood
with bags just collecting sticks or
any other fancy that comes across
her periphery.

i hear that her house is so jammed
with shit that it's hardly livable.

last night i had a dream about her.

she was like a mother teresa figure
holding the face of a crying child.

and i didn't remember this until
i passed her on the road to work
with her big yellow bag and
down turned face looking for the next
treasure.

i'm starting to feel like my brain
is bleeding into the subconscious
in ways that make me believe further
that i'm not writing this as much
as your not reading this.

perhaps this will be an errant
flop of paper the collector woman
will retain and hold with a regard
we can all muse about.

control freaks
on whiskey and pills

are running to love your soul
as you slip your body
into the warm tub water
and close your eyes
lightly and without remorse.

dream changer

i have gone through
so much change over
the last year of my life
that consistency jilts me
in a way that i cannot
recount to strangers or
friends.

my knife waits in the morning
to carve more change off of
all the fresh meaty bones that
collect around me.

i'm restless,
yet content.

i don't really need change,
but i need the change.

and as i watch another mid-30's
person pay eternal homage to bad
rock and roll with stories of their
best friends from high school
doing a big bong,
i decide that change is the best.

i don't even keep in touch with
those that i was friends with in college.

all of them are off in successful broadcasting
careers.

i see their faces on the TV all the time.

that was supposed to be me.

i worked and trained with all of them.

they weren't really all that good.

one guy was the director of sports information
and i never really took him seriously.

another was a guy that i offered a writer position
to as a sports editor.

now, they are both on the tv all the time.

clad in pressed suits and hundred dollar grins
as i flick over to the comedy show with my
beautiful wife and family in separate corners
of the house.

and i dream that change will be my dream
and that i will always dream and that has always
been my dream.

i'm a dream changer
just changing from one dream to the next.

equal rights

the girl in the
green mustang flew by me
with a wrought stack of
exhausted air and her
entire back window was
emblazoned with the
sticker:
'BAD ASS TOYS AREN'T ONLY FOR BOYS'

i leaned back further in my
cracked plastic seat in a
rusted hunk of 1985 jeep and thought
it that social movements have their
leaps in all shapes and colors.

she's serious about folks respecting
her bad ass monthly car payment
and the fact that she can lean in on
a gas peddle as easily as any of her
male counterparts.

and as i peer into the cartoon of a
buzz cut boy with his arm curled in a
body building curl,
i think that she has to feel she
has made it as her needle
goes to 82 MPH and the long line of
traffic in front of her begins
to apply their brakes as a field
of red lights lose me into
another thought.

FACT ABOUT MY DAY JOB

i pulled down
my favorite
morning coffee mug
with the logo
'PROZAC' on the side
of it in big, glaring
gold letters as i
looked over to the
30-ish staff accountant
with a good disposition
and said,
'I LOVE HIS CUP. IT'S THE
IRONY COFFEE CUP.'

it took him a minute,
and he laughed.

he came back with,
'MAN, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE
THAT WOULD COME UP WITH SOMETHING
LIKE THAT.'

and as i took the comment in,
i wanted to come back with a hearty,
'THAT'S WHY I WANT OUT OF THIS
HELL JOB.'

but,
i decided silence as i walked away
with my ironic morning moment
and lightly sipped my hot brown
liquid.

GEORGIE HELL

wonder who'll
meet old george w. bush
in hell
to give him his
inaugural ass kicking ..

my money is on
hunter s. thompson.

go ahead

and

steal

my

yesterday

if

i

can

simply

barter

milk

for

your

never.