

joefiles 144  
the hustler got lost in our tall heart

i thought  
a gaggle of  
pranking  
kids  
rang  
the cold door bell  
again,  
but  
when i  
flung  
the door  
open  
hard  
there  
were  
tiny  
footsteps  
in the snow  
steaming  
as  
the devil's  
bright  
red scarf  
laid  
squiggly  
in  
the  
bright white  
snow.

the soft claws  
of the donkey  
visit  
my  
daydreams  
and  
remind  
me that  
the  
only  
way  
to live  
forever  
is to  
remember  
that  
the dust  
is  
the only  
thing  
truly  
eternal.

pieces  
of  
the leprechaun  
trail  
were  
placed carefully  
by  
unicorns  
trained  
to  
see  
the bottoms  
of  
the ocean  
and  
not  
tell  
anyone  
but  
the  
short  
old  
people  
about it.

i was shoved  
into the n. gaiman  
book  
like it was  
the next life  
protecting  
the criminals  
so the could  
later  
wipe me  
clean  
under yellow  
california  
circumstances  
as the  
artificial heat  
hums  
and my AM  
Dr. Kitty  
protects  
my  
small  
shadow.

death rays  
of  
normal  
are  
the  
tiny  
roy g. biv  
refractions  
from  
TV  
that  
obediently  
listens  
to the power cords  
and  
glisten  
to hear  
up  
leave  
the  
last  
room  
Elvis  
just  
finished  
dusting.

im sure  
ill never  
be old enough  
to  
think  
like  
an  
old man  
as i  
remember the  
tiny  
old women of rome  
from  
my hotel room  
serving pasta plates  
all small like elves  
and  
its now  
that  
elderly  
spores  
are beginning to  
form  
as  
i digest  
that  
i have lost  
two  
inches in height during  
the  
last three years  
and  
thats  
one tall,  
antiquated  
notion  
for  
me  
to  
amble  
abouts.

i  
like  
the bad  
winter  
snows  
that  
force  
me  
to  
turtle crawl  
and  
remember  
the  
hare  
of  
spring.



my big  
red dog  
sniffed  
my  
warm hand  
hanging from  
the tangle  
of  
blankets to  
wake me  
tjus winter AM  
and  
when we touched  
a large  
gust  
of static energy  
popped  
as  
that  
touching  
michealangelo  
painting  
flashed  
loudly  
above  
me,  
then  
vanished.

the only  
thing  
that  
mysteriously  
creaked  
out  
from  
the  
rolling  
fog  
is the  
faded  
clown shoe  
of the  
journalist  
that  
emitted  
his  
first  
big  
lie.

the  
bottom  
of  
a  
kid's  
school chair  
is  
perfectly  
grooved,  
dented  
and  
grayed  
by  
the  
best  
destruction  
humanity  
has  
attempted  
to  
hatch.

our little  
basenji mixed  
dog  
eve  
has  
a black tail  
that  
curves  
with  
a distinct  
white  
tip  
that  
looks like  
a  
magic wand  
from  
a  
Potter book  
and  
when it  
wags  
in crazy zags  
of  
excitement  
i  
wonder  
who  
will  
become  
a frog  
when  
the magic dust  
settles and  
her  
tail is  
once  
again  
asleep.

in these  
bitter  
cold  
February  
daze  
it  
is  
murphys  
lawwwl  
the  
time ...

my last  
real  
bad  
habit  
is showing  
wods  
of  
thick,  
creamy  
Vicks  
up my  
nose  
enabling  
me  
to  
breath  
a hospital  
scent  
as  
the  
bad  
smells  
become

a  
distant  
memory.

small  
kid  
vessels  
of  
empty  
valentines  
wrappers  
trudge  
tired  
on the  
post-14th  
ground  
looking  
for  
the friend  
it  
once  
had  
and  
the  
life  
the  
world  
may  
just  
remember.

a  
shadow  
tried  
to  
choke me  
with  
an  
evil  
ambiguous  
noun  
last  
nite  
&  
i used  
a  
non  
verbal  
verb  
to  
ward  
that  
fucker  
off.



kittens  
on calendars  
as the  
slices of invisible  
yellow  
scream  
old geometry  
as  
i wait  
for  
the doctor  
to  
explain  
to  
me  
tomorrow  
and  
how  
yesterday  
failed  
to  
get  
sick  
again.

stray dogs  
running  
from  
their  
owners  
voice  
10 feet  
ahead  
while  
my  
leashed dogs  
bend their ears  
backwards  
a bit  
farther  
as  
the freedom  
if one dog  
defines  
the  
human  
desperation  
that  
will  
never  
be figured out  
no  
matter  
how long  
and  
far  
we  
trot.

morning  
mouth  
laughing  
into  
the cell phone  
to  
perfumed ear  
as the  
snow  
melts  
and

the birds  
begin  
to  
chirp  
that  
one  
faint  
spring song  
again

and  
again.

the  
cows  
standing  
on  
bleach  
white  
snow  
reminds me  
of  
the  
overly  
frozen  
beef patties in  
my  
freezer  
and  
how  
serene  
the  
cold  
trees  
look  
in frigid temperatures  
like  
tall  
broccoli  
on ice  
from  
the window  
of some  
beefy  
airplane  
getting  
ready  
to  
land.

found  
a  
solo  
dime  
on the  
ground  
and  
being  
10  
cents  
richer  
meant  
about  
as much  
as that  
old fortune cookie  
saying  
that  
said  
the  
longest  
day  
will  
eventually  
end...

the  
lost  
blue  
balloon  
bobbing about  
on the  
highway's  
shoulder  
wants  
to  
eventually  
get  
married  
to a bright red  
balloon  
one day  
and have a litter  
of yellow balloons  
once  
it  
gets back on  
its string  
and  
back  
into  
the  
air again...

i  
accidentally  
beat  
buddha  
in  
a dreamy  
arm  
wrestling match  
and  
he explosively  
yelled,  
"god dammit!"

lance armstrong  
is that  
dizzy  
bile  
nausea right  
before  
you  
throw  
that  
near perfect  
dinner up  
&  
that  
tiny  
dark  
dream  
that  
unexpectedly  
woke  
you  
like  
a  
badly  
popped  
tire.



Customer service  
workers  
at  
Wal-Mart stores  
are the  
purgatory  
gate keepers  
that hold  
the secrets  
of  
Alex Trebek's  
soul.

the absolute  
center  
of  
compassion  
is  
a  
savage  
with  
a  
spear  
leaning  
down  
to  
pat  
a  
lost  
bunny  
&  
get  
momentarily  
lost  
  
forever....

the  
dying  
flower  
blames  
everything  
and  
remembers  
nothing.

your  
version  
of  
hell  
means  
the  
least.

the  
devil  
lied  
about  
your  
missing  
yogurt  
as  
he  
wiped  
the  
ash  
from  
the  
corners  
of his  
mouth  
and  
pondered  
the  
universal  
truth.

if most  
literature  
is  
written  
by  
drunks,  
then  
the  
children  
of  
sobriety  
reign  
like  
gods  
high  
on  
a  
cloud  
that  
insanity  
&  
dollar  
bills  
will  
never  
penetrate.

if god  
shook  
your  
hand  
it  
would  
be  
numb  
for  
months,  
but  
you  
would  
finally  
feel  
a sliver  
of  
infinity.

city scoundrels  
are  
the anointed  
few  
that  
truly  
get  
to  
guard  
your  
dreams.



salvation  
is  
the  
choice  
you  
forgot  
to  
make.

hope  
is  
something  
that  
lost  
control  
and  
decided  
you  
were  
the  
best  
parade  
float  
in  
mississippi.

dancing  
blades  
of  
grass  
became  
the  
best  
dope  
the  
priest  
peddled  
to  
the  
ailing  
pope.

one of these days  
i'm going to  
hire crew of young  
pranksters with video prowess  
and begin  
a  
long,  
fruitful journey  
of filmed fun.

first stop is royals stadium  
to  
set up a gift shot  
that is full of schotty  
hand written signs  
people wave at games.

each will be priced,  
full of crayon bits,  
drippy acrylics,  
full of homemade gusto.

and as the  
pre-adrenaline  
faces  
come strolling through  
looking at the walls in  
confusion,  
then bewilderment as  
they flip  
over the price tags,  
the kids  
with the cameras will  
be rolling

to document  
the shock,  
surprise

and endearment of  
the best shop  
in baseball history.

one tiny,  
drunk on human food  
ant  
was centimetering  
along the bottom  
of the dirty  
silver  
bowl  
as my giant  
person body  
approached with a  
tumbler of  
food  
sending that  
metal into a  
loud orbit of sound  
and  
making that  
ant  
live a tiny nightmare  
replete  
with a tornado minced  
with hurricane  
of food raining  
down in the sweetest  
wish he could have  
ever imagined.

the one  
essential  
thing for all  
those construction  
sign  
holders on  
the little roads of life  
is that they smoke well.

how much convincing did they  
really have to do  
to say they could stand at long  
intervals watching the cars  
stream on by.

it was the  
prowess and determination  
of their smoking habit that  
got their

signs  
moving in the right orbit.

tiny humans full of relevant  
biology,  
determined to  
rupture their mortality  
as  
they tell all of us to  
stop  
and slow

as their  
tiny tufts of  
smoke  
signal  
us all to  
the next road  
in life.

if i ask  
my 17-year old  
boy about his prom  
plans or what his girlfriend is  
wearing to the dance,  
he would shrug  
in confusion.

but,  
the minute i would  
ask him  
the exact rules for  
freeze tag that  
i was foggy about,  
he would have  
a very elaborate  
explanation full of  
youthful wonder  
and vigor

as his  
girl  
sits in her  
teenage bedroom  
across town

waiting  
for the next move  
in this  
big  
life full of  
freezing  
and  
tags.

i gave  
up on ties years  
ago.

my 6 years of  
so of  
corporate work  
was enough  
to end the  
noose around  
my skin neck.

so,  
it's the weddings  
and funerals as  
an older fella  
that bring the ties  
back out  
to strangle my  
throat

into  
a circus of  
thoughts

rotating around  
the years of love

or  
the  
finality  
of the end.

like the bleak credits  
at the end of a corporate movie  
or the  
tiny wafting hearts  
lifting into the  
sky above the

ties of  
marriage  
that bind  
us all to  
everything  
forever.



the AM dudes of  
trash truck  
glory  
are the ultimate  
urban surfers  
hanging onto  
the back of dirtied  
trucks  
carrying all of our  
unimportant  
residue  
of the week  
with their  
faces  
screwed clean towards the future  
like  
the original surfers  
waiting  
for  
one more bit of  
glory  
as  
the  
world  
moves on  
in their bland  
land walks from  
place  
to  
trashy place.

if they  
opened a school  
to  
teach  
people how  
to  
be fans,  
it would be crammed full  
of  
everyone i have  
seen  
parading in  
languid  
silence at the stadiums,  
but  
the  
real question is  
who  
would  
teach these  
classes  
in  
the  
land of subjective  
instructional  
superiority?

the only  
thing  
on  
the  
planet that  
will  
be strong enough  
to  
survive  
the  
end  
and another  
beginning  
and  
the  
absolute  
dark end  
again is  
the  
milkweed monarch  
with their  
glint  
of  
hope  
in the  
barrel end of the  
gun  
made  
in the beginning  
to  
last  
forever.

it's always  
that one  
car  
in the midst  
of a thick,  
creamy  
white filled  
fog morning  
that has  
no  
headlights  
on  
that  
i smile  
knowing  
that  
their level  
of  
oblivion  
is  
the  
best thing  
any of  
us can hope for  
as  
we  
skim past  
all the mortgages  
and  
tethered  
ropes  
holding  
the  
parade in a slow  
motion procession.

in all the faces  
of the  
missing kids  
etched on the wall  
by the Wal-Mart  
bathrooms,  
i wondered  
how many of them  
will  
ever be found  
in this ironic  
world of loss

and  
how the karmic  
blend of hope  
can  
be the only thing  
we will ever be  
able to rely on ..

much like a  
bathroom when you  
need it

or  
a  
piece of  
light bulb  
in the dark  
mystery  
of  
dark  
in a  
dreamless night.

my head  
is still spinning  
with the ultra bright colors  
of hawaii still swim  
in  
my head like the finest  
residue a dream  
has given me in years.

for all the nights  
that  
dreams went by in some silent  
ignorance  
not wanting to wake me,  
it's those rich  
dreams of  
dark waters,  
suns hovering over a lost horizon  
and the shapes of pink cloud  
on a sky i have never seen  
that  
will

blot out all  
the  
vacant  
nights

that  
waded for  
that  
one,  
dreamy  
hawaiian  
vacation.

the stark silence  
after the  
teams of starlings  
leave the  
newly sprouting spring  
tree tops  
is  
much  
like that moment  
after  
a baby  
stops screaming  
and  
the  
sleep  
settles  
in  
like  
the miracle  
you could never  
explain.

i'm certain  
that the lost  
pen convention  
would  
be hosted  
by  
the  
lost pencils  
and  
funded by  
the  
erasers of the  
world  
because without  
them  
we would all  
have to live  
with our  
dull mistakes  
and mysterious karma.



the one  
solitary,  
dirty  
pink croc  
in  
the middle  
of the  
busy  
road  
is more  
powerful  
than any  
flare  
a cop  
would put down  
in  
the  
road.

for all of  
those private  
souls  
waving  
people across the  
streets of  
america  
from their tinted windows,  
i salute you  
with  
one simple  
finger in the  
middle of  
my hand  
you  
won't  
be able to  
see  
either.

the best  
way to  
get the adult  
world  
to know each other  
and  
return to those  
speilberg days of  
bustling youth  
is  
to  
have a PJ day  
in the workplace all over  
america ..

the trophy  
makers  
of  
the  
world  
hold  
the  
highest honor  
of  
anyone  
as  
they  
flaunt  
an ego  
that  
isn't even  
an  
ego  
in  
the  
middle  
of  
a  
team  
of  
souls  
waiting  
for  
a bit  
of  
validation.

the other day  
i watched the  
beeps  
of  
goods going  
over  
the  
grocery scanner  
and  
after  
a couple of bags of  
cheese and  
a tub of  
ricotta,  
the total was  
\$6.66  
and  
i knew  
after  
that  
I was destined  
to make  
some  
devilishly good  
lasagna.

the tiny,  
and large  
pieces  
of  
paper  
that errantly fly  
out of the back  
of lumbering trash trucks  
crushing down the  
road  
are likely  
all the missives  
bob dylan  
wrote  
down  
for  
mccartney  
to  
eventually  
sing to the  
world  
on a stack  
of  
hidden B-sides.

the giant,  
dirty rolled up carpet  
lying on the roadside  
like a forgotten  
circus attraction  
was  
the  
bed of a giant  
that got drunk  
with the angel  
debating  
whether or not  
the  
devil  
payed up  
his bar  
tab.

the huge,  
winter futuristic  
volleyball  
tent going over  
the  
backside  
of  
the novelty bar  
looks like  
area 51  
working on  
the next  
race  
of  
species that  
will  
be fueled by  
beer and sport,  
yet  
delicate enough  
to  
pilot  
a  
ship

straight outta earth  
and  
into  
the  
setting suns  
of  
Saturn.