# **Classic Poetry Series**

# **Aaron Fogel**

- 5 poems -

## **Publication Date:**

2012

## **Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## **Aaron Fogel (1947 -)**

Aaron Fogel was born and raised in New York City. He graduated from Columbia and Cambridge Universities, and holds a Ph.D. from Columbia. Fogel currently occupies a space on the Boston University faculty, a position he has held since 1978. He lives with his wife Barbara and his son Adam in Cambridge, MA.

#### Works

Aaron Fogel's books include Chain Hearings (poems) and Coercion to Speak: Conrad's Poetics of Dialogue (criticism). Backdoor Books will soon publish his chapbook, Ornery Language Philosophy. His poems have appeared in such places as The Best American Poetry, Boulevard, AGNI, and Slate.

#### **Awards**

2001: Kahn Award for The Printer's Error

1987-88: Guggenheim Fellow

1967-69: Kellett Fellowship

Works:

The Printer's Error (The Miami University Press Poetry Series - January 01, 2001)

Coercion to Speak: Conrad's Poetics of Dialogue (August 01, 1985) Chain Hearings (1976)

Ornery Language Philosophy (Upcoming)

#### **Cobblestones**

The coffin, set up as coffins always are, near the grave, contained the father. The sentence, set up as sentences always are, on the page, contained the words. The meat package, set up as meat packages always are, with cellophane covering, contained the chops. The synagogue, set up as synagogues always are, for people, contained the rabbi. The classroom, set up as classrooms always are, for chairs, contained the professor. The coffin, set up as coffins always are, beside the grave, contained the mother. The word, set up as words always are, beyond hearing, contained the syllables. The prose, set up as prose always is, in census-rectangles, contained the phenomena. The nation, set up as nations always are, in questionnaire rooms, contained the sworn. The can, set up as cans always are, with ornate paper covers, contained the chicken o'noodle soup, with the circular noodles. Abacus, guitar, and quipu, set up as abacus, quitar and quipu always are, hieratically on notional strings, contained tobacco's troubadours. The coffin, set up as coffins always are, next to the grave, contained the sister. The elegy, set up as elegies always are, dishonestly, contained the family. The steak, set up as steaks always are, artificially reddened, contained the fat. The rectangular venetian blinds, set up as rectangular venetian blinds always are, in the windowframe, contained the slats. The DNA, set up as DNA always is, in double helixes, contained the and. The word people, set up as the word people always is, in writing, contained the o.

#### P.S.

P:The statistician and the poet need each other, But not yet.

S:You need us now. Without a theory of probability To guide you -

P:Not the unguided but the unguarded moments Are the most beautiful

S:Poetry is measure and measure now is population All signs signify groupings: we count people.

P:There are nonmeasurable groupings that defy Time and space and run wild as numbers

S:We call that Brownian motion, stochastic.

P:Stochastic rain, stochastic snow, the populace, The monkeys who sleep in different groups each night Unpredictable in the rain forest.

S:I seem to remember that image from the work of Cohen, A statistician of monkey sleeping groups

P:This is the rain forest and it has no scientists Only invaders, stripminers, depopulaters The clever critic made a joke about the word Depopulater and the sophomores laughed.

S:What you need isn't the apocalypse but the apocalyx Taking off the green shield of the flower In whose middle you'll find the new peopling

P:Number may be the sine qua non of lyric But without number lyric is still lyric Without number or the space or time it yields it is still lyric But strip statistics of number and there is nothing

S:There is collective rhythm

P:The next dance then?

## **Pupils Slip Up**

I have several questions. For a few months A radio business channel In Boston carried

Thrice hourly reports
On the stock market-The Bloomfield report.
Suddenly it was gone
And replaced by a
Monotonous religious channel.

I couldn't find it Anywhere on the dial. Why did that happen? Massac came from Casamusetts. Cassam came from Massachusetts.

They tell you that vitamin E, Grape juice, and aspirin Thin the blood and Reduce cholesterol buildup But if you take two Or three of these

Substances regularly, do they
Thin it too much,
Causing other, unforeseen
Dangers of an interactive sort?
Massac came from Casamusetts.
Cassam came from Massachusetts.

If all politics is a lie
We tell ourselves, if
People who think they are
Conservative have horrible
Anarchic lives, raping children

And people who think
They are radical, and
Tell you so, typically,
Are repressed, authoritarian, and
Thinly frigid in their
Personal bearings,

Leaving the world on both sides To be divided up between Aggressive territorial types Finding ideological excuses To kill other people's children-- If all this is patently,

Obviously so, so that Only poetry, and not Politics can save us--Is there any hope for us then? Massac came from Casamusetts.

Cassam came from Massachusetts.

#### The Man Who Never Heard of Frank Sinatra

The man who had never heard of Frank Sinatra: he lived A perfectly ordinary life in America. Born in 1915, He followed all the fads, read the newspapers, listened

To Television, knew who Dean Martin and Sammy whathisname Were (Sinatra's friends), but somehow, by a one in a Zillion fluke, whenever Sinatra came up, he was out of the room.

Or his attention was diverted by something else, and (You will say this is impossible, that it cannot be), never Heard him sing, like a man in my generation who somehow

Missed the Beatles though he had heard everything else. Once, just as he was about to hear the name Frank Sinatra A plane flew overhead--he was fifty-five years old--his hearing

A little more impaired. He had heard of Humphrey Bogart, Of Elizabeth Taylor, of Walter Cronkite, and of perhaps a hundred Forty thousand other celebrities names by the time he died,

And yet he had never heard of Frank Sinatra. The Greeks had That famous saying, "The luckiest man is he who was never born." Which is kind of gloomy, but I think they were wrong.

The luckiest man is he who never heard of Frank Sinatra.

#### The Printer's Error

Fellow compositors and pressworkers!

I, Chief Printer
Frank Steinman,
having worked fiftyseven years at my trade,
and served five years
as president
of the Holliston
Printer's Council,
being of sound mind
though near death,
leave this testimonial
concerning the nature
of printers' errors.

First: I hold that all books and all printed matter have errors, obvious or no, and that these are their most significant moments, not to be tampered with by the vanity and folly of ignorant, academic textual editors. Second: I hold that there are three types of errors, in ascending order of importance: One: chance errors of the printer's trembling hand not to be corrected incautiously by foolish professors and other such rabble because trembling is part of divine creation itself.

Two: silent, cool sabotage by the printer, the manual laborer whose protests have at times taken this historical form, covert interferences not to be corrected censoriously by the hand of the second and far more ignorant saboteur, the textual editor. Three: errors from the touch of God,

divine and often obscure corrections of whole books by nearly unnoticed changes of single letters sometimes meaningful but about which the less said by preemptive commentary the better. Third: I hold that all three sorts of error, errors by chance, errors by workers' protest, and errors by God's touch, are in practice the same and indistinguishable.

Therefore I, Frank Steinman, typographer for thirty-seven years, and cooperative Master of the Holliston Guild eight years, being of sound mind and body though near death urge the abolition of all editorial work whatsoever and manumission from all textual editing to leave what was as it was, and as it became, except insofar as editing is itself an error, and

therefore also divine.