

Poetry Series

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler
- poems -

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Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler()

'Don't worry about avoiding temptation... as you grow older, it will avoid you.' -
Winston Churchill

A Shitty Day's Redemption

nothing makes a lousy day better
than seeing a sexy woman at the
convenience store
in her office attire with her white
half-sweater buttoned snugly around her breasts
and her black hair pulled back, her
face barely creased with the lines of experience,
but still retaining the glow of her youth
perhaps she is there on her lunch break,
choosing between the
chocolate chip cookies and
the granola bars as her perfume
drifts lazily down the aisle

she strides around the shop
confidently, silently demanding the
attention of every man in the room
her every curve jiggling slightly
as if she were shaking off their
wanton eyes
i almost want to shake my awe and
walk right up to her to thank her
for redeeming the morning's thankless
wasted hours and reminding me
just why i woke up in the first place

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Acquaintance

relationships always begin
with a few kinds words

and invariably end with many
unkind ones

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Akimbo

are we not just
bouncing around in a great rubber inferno
occasionally colliding with one another
until one of us breaks?
i dangle from the ceiling fan
the light has burned out, the walls are closing in
the air is getting thinner
all this time i had thought you would rescue me
but you never showed
i have no superhero
to cut me down
it's the same old fucking ritual i have come to expect
except
you forgot to light the candles this time
i forgot to sign my name
those dried flowers were probably used as kindling long ago
while you continue to obsess
about whether or not you can still fit into your prom dress
with swinging hips like a skydiving elvis
you rewrote my bible
you taught me there is
no such thing as love without consequence

you so badly broke my heart the scars
will never heal
i even neglect to correct my typos
i conveniently overlook cleaning the
champagne flutes out of the fireplace
the broken glass scattered in that corner of the living room
and cut our feet after the glass burst in the flames
but our marionettes shrugged it off as
a necessary angst
i was picking glass bits out of the
scowling bearskin rug
all day the next day
all day today, as a matter of fact
does this make you happy?
does it?

because deep down
it's all vagrant
twenty years from now you will still be with him
with your spawn tugging at your pant leg
while you continue to lament that you no longer
can fit into your wedding gown
and i will still be hanging here
waiting
for my superhero to show

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Anesthetic

i have made a mistake
i have made several mistakes
they all started when i left you
and i have tried in vain
to kill the pain
but the pain is killing me
can't go back and change the past
must move forward
barrel on thru
like a lorry with all the brakes out
i may try to pump the pedal
but i can never stop
all the while i lick my wounds
i made my bed
now i must sleep in it
even tho
i would much prefer
to sleep on the floor

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Be Careful What You Wish For

my trousers have become uncomfortably snug
my belt is suddenly a notch too tight

i prayed for a few extra inches below the waist
but this is not what i had in mind – no, not quite!

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Big Easy

i long for Nightfall to dropp her heavy curtain
i find myself in the dwindling hours of the day
cutting thru the darkness like a drunken knife
past prophets and prostitutes
that speckle the screaming sequin sidewalk
the brightly coloured people;
the neon sign chameleons
ever seeking anonymity by blending into buildings
and ducking under subways
they all seek asylum in the jazz miasma
that seeps from under doorways
of the hidebound bars
bodies crumpled like litter on the soggy street
stars drip onto the crawling cars that narrowly miss
the lumbering pedestrians that stumble in their stupor
to find their way back home
or someplace just as good

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Blessed Yoke

two-way stop signs
shot up with holes

a good pair of boots
worn smooth at the soles

heavy wildflowers with
a slight nod in their stems

old corduroy coveralls
that are frayed at the hems

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Bribery

ample-breasted girls
can get almost anything
by leaning over

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Budd

he woke early as he always did
on a damp January day
his wife was already awake
down in the kitchen
cutting up a banana
for his cereal
he stretched, cleared his throat
and peered out the window
the lights of the adjacent homes
flickered on sporadically
as his neighbours set about
their morning routines
the heavy unmarked manila envelope
sat neatly in his open briefcase
on his uncluttered desk

he ambled over to the closet, took out a crisp
white shirt and laid it on the bed
he took out a pair of trousers, still warm
from his wife's ironing, and laid them
on the bed with the shirt
he thumbed thru his tie rack like they were
the pages of his autobiography
and noticed patterns in their designs
he had not noticed before
he picked out his favourite tie
the same one he had worn the previous night
whilst out to a quiet dinner with his family
and laid it across the white shirt
it was a good tie, the perfect page, he thought
to write his spectacular epilogue

he sat at his desk and stared for a moment
at the blank sheets of paper he had set out after dinner
he picked up a pen and began writing
he considered typing these letters on his computer
it certainly would have taken less time
but time was not so much a concern anymore
seems we all rush around, he thought

to hurry up and die
his wife peeked into the bedroom and
asked him if he was coming downstairs
be down in a minute, honey
she paused and smiled at him
and disappeared with a turn
he dropped the stuffed envelopes into the briefcase
and latched it closed

as he washed his face he caught
a glimpse of himself in the mirror
suddenly he realized he had grown older
right before his eyes
his face hung loose from his cheeks
his belly was round
even the chest hair sprouting
from under his wrinkled t-shirt was gray
the top of his bald head reflected
the harsh bathroom light
but he still felt as fresh
as he did in college
running up the field
to score the winning touchdown
he smiled at his sagging reflection
he had lived well
for growing so old
as good as his health was
he made a mental note
to be sure to have his organs
donated after he had gone
he flipped the bathroom light off
and headed downstairs to breakfast
as his busy neighbours' cars
roared out of their yawning garages and joined
the rush hour traffic

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Christine P., If You Read This, I Still Remember You

Christine P., if you read this, i still remember you
more than i should
more than you know
you have never strayed far from my mind,
eclipsed between
my waking memory and a smoky dream
i remember you in Sixth Grade,
passing steaming notes to me
during study hall, stealing kisses from me
at recess, making out with me
behind the convent during lunch and
teaching me more about a girl's body
than a 12-year old boy should know
i remember caressing your
budding pincushion breasts, feeling your
impatient tongue in my mouth, and tracing the curves
of your smooth hips way up
beneath your plaid Catholic skirt
i never forgot the innocence and curiosity
with which we explored each other's
young bodies for few of my intimate
encounters since have bested those wide-eyed moments

i never forgot you, Christine P.
not with all the drugs and heartbreak did i forget!
the mother of my daughter even
resembles you; my final recollection of you -
the way you looked
before you moved away - with her
short brown hair, velveteen belly and
agile, eager hands
i remember telling you once in a letter
that i wanted to marry you
and that's when we lost touch...
maybe i've ploughed thru each
of my liaisons
searching for you all along
in an attempt to reclaim that
feeling of complete gullibility and virtue

for my love life has left little more
for me to discover

you were indeed my first, Christine
while you did not surrender me your virginity,
you gave me your body to tease and your mouth to enjoy
and i wonder if your first time was as clumsy as mine
was it on your honeymoon cruise or
in the backseat of his beat-up Ford?
did you marry at all or keep your maiden name?
do you remember me as well as
i remember you?
because i wonder, too, if you will
ever find this poem,
hidden amongst the weeds of
other poems to my bygone girlfriends
whose names have scarred over
and faded with time

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Courtship

to write a poem
for a woman's favour:
it is fraught with misery and pain

with a poet man's heart and
stout esteem to lose
and his lady's disdain to gain

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Crotch Rocket

i was jealous, but i don't know why
perhaps it was because i felt emasculated,
picturing you on the back of that crotch rocket
tightly hugging his denim-clad middle-aged belly trying
to hang on as he whisked you thru the streets of town
with the wind in your hair and a laugh on your tongue

no doubt he fantasized as you both rode
about how he wished you would straddle his
fat waist like you straddled that wide seat
riding him and laughing and whipping your hair
like the winds against his hairy chest,
tracing his tattoos with your slender fingers

but you are quite the ingénue
and your youth endows you the spontaneity
to just hop on the back of some strange mechanic's
Harley while his slack-jawed lackeys who
rotate your tires look on in envy
wishing they had a Harley, too

and perhaps i felt threatened because,
while that same mechanic gleefully surfs
the crest of his midlife crisis,
i drive an SUV with a baby seat strapped in the back
i can see the tide of my own midlife crisis
start to roll in to drag me out to sea

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Document

sometimes writing is like pulling the
teeth of a thrashing shark whilst
his mouth is wrapped tightly around your leg

then other times the shark spits
his teeth at you
then calmly swims away

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Etc.

my pen is like a
frightened octopus
the way it shoots its ink.

it will lead my horse to water
but it will not be my shrink.

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Fingerprints

picture frames, my CD player, plates & silverware
there is nothing in this room she has not touched; her fingerprints are
everywhere -
even the extra pillow on my bed
still has the soft bruise left by her head -
she's gone without a kiss or a slam of the door...
this apartment will not be disturbed by her anymore
my body my lips my face my hair;
the shattered scattered pieces of my heart:

her fingerprints are everywhere
her fingerprints are everywhere

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For Laura

i remember staying up with you that heavy night
passing a bottle of raspberry wine back and forth
as we dragged ourselves thru a thick conversation
about prom night car crashes and brushes with death
you lazily took the last swig from the bottle
before you gazed out the window
i could have sworn you wanted to blame me
but instead you told me you were ready for bed
so i drunkenly hoisted you
out of your prisoner's chair
and tossed you giggling onto the naked mattress
to lay down beside your ballerina's body and hold you
an injured bird trembling in my clumsy hands

we manufactured feelings
that had been lost somewhere between
the horizon and that hotel room
you told me sensation was merely
a new memory but you still knew
how to please a man
the candle's glow flickered and bounced
around the room to the rhythm of our breaths
as you lamented that
you would dance like that flame
if you still had use of your legs

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Geezer Poets

geezer poets with your guns ablaze
who pathetically pine for your glory days

who shoot down young poets at every whim
who burn their every poem, every prose, every hymn

who would curse a young poet in your final gasp
dropping your weapon from your weakening grasp...

geezer poets, you know who you are
no one gives a damn about your fallen star

and when dementia renders you unable to think
of which ends your lousy pens diffuse your stupid ink

a young poet will use your rifle's butt
to pound the tired lid of your coffin shut

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Hairbrush

how i wish my fingers were the bristles
or my breath were the wind when it whistles
thru your hair, thru your hair

i wish you'd hold me in your hands
and let me skate thru all the strands
of your hair, of your hair

i could style it anyway you like it
i could brush it straight or even spike it
au contraire! au contraire!

or i would wait patiently in my box
until next i would comb the locks
of your hair, of your hair

i would braid it tight, tousle, and tease!
or pull it back in a ponytail, if you please;
if you dare, if you dare

how often is it a man confesses
that he wish to run barefoot thru the tresses
of your hair, of your hair?

you may think me a little touch'd
but can i tell you just how much
i hate your hairbrush?

this obsession may be zealous
but can i tell you just how jealous
i am of your hairbrush? !

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Hallo Microsoft!

well, hallo, my good friend Microsoft! hallo there my old chum!
fancy seeing you at this pub, how far have you come?

where have you wandered these days? worn are the soles of your shoes!
your cane is splintered and cracked, surely you must have some news!

'indeed, i do have some stories to tell, old boy. come, let's have a drink
'and sit down by the that fire so that i may have a moment to think.'

'i have been to the front lines of battle where warriors wave pens, not swords
'where letters are the ammunition and the weapons are their words'

'alas, i was struck several times. not once, not twice, but thrice for merely being
a correspondent on the field

'i wanted nothing to do with this war, in fact, no weapon did i wield

'now i find myself wounded and weary, resting with a mouthful of stout
'i would be just as content in this Pub; figuring these people out.

'poets have no love for each other. even less love for themselves
'they don't realize their names will be collecting dust on old library shelves

'if they are published, and that's no guarantee.
'but nobody wants to listen to me.'

and the old man inhaled deeply, savouring his tar-black beer.
he looked to the ground,
then all around
his eyes met with each patron's in the bar
he felt a twinge in his every scar
'we must go, ' said he suddenly, 'the murderers have come here.'

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Hymn Xxix

suffer the little children!
suffer they do, and how!
they are padded, protected, petrified
as they dangle `neath broken bough!

they cannot drink water from the tap,
they must wear a helmet outdoors,
they must strap pads to their elbows and knees
if they want to crawl on all fours!

children carry the burdens of our dreams
and crack the mirrors of our regrets!
with the cages and cradles,
leashes and playpens,
chew toys and feeding times
they are treated more like pets!

children are no more human beings!
children are our pets!
here for our amusement!
here to fetch our cigarettes!
here for our own selfish reasons!
here to pay our debts!

suffer the little children!
is this what Jesus meant?
any parent who lets kids be kids
is truly heaven sent!

any parent who lets kids be kids
is truly heaven sent!

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I Almost Robbed A Bank Today

i almost robbed a bank today
i stood in line and while i waited
i made a plan on how i would do it
oh, there would be a thrilling chase!
i imagined my friends cheering for me
as they watched the news from the
circling whirlybird camera
with police cruiser lightbars flashing madly
officers on the highway frantically throwing spikes
they would spot me on the tv screen
fleeting in my getaway car
like Clyde Barrow – a grand marshal
in some outrageous parade - with the
windows rolled down
as paper bills streamed from my ride
like confetti, parting the Red Sea
rush hour traffic in a race with Smokey
for the Mexican <i>frontera</i>...

the buxom brunette bank teller behind the plate glass
soon snapped me out of my deluded daydream
she was bored and unattentive
but i think she could tell i was up to no good.

i saw her later at the bar down the street, during
happy hour, chatting with some other young fella
smiling kindly and absently stirring her cocktail
i slugged a shot of rotgut tequila –
you know the kind, made with cactus in some
border-rushing tonk's toilet –
walked up to the teller, whipped her around
on her seat, pulled her face into mine
and smeared her lipstick real good then
ambled on out into the street smiling broadly
i almost robbed a bank today
but planted a sweet one on the bank teller instead

something told me she needed some excitement, too

I Remember Jimmy

Oh, i remember Jimmy
Quiet, anxious, and young

But you never could believe a single damn word
That fell from Jimmy's tongue

He'd play that beat-up guitar of his
Everyday in Maggie's barn

Singin' about some jilted maiden
Or spinnin' some great yarn

he wasn't much of a musician
he didn't have much of a voice

but when he cranked out those crazy stories,
Jimmy really made some noise!

They say he packed his few possessions
And put his thumb out on the road

He disappeared from our small town
Headed out east, i'm told

None of us have heard from him since
Most of us doubt we will

As i walk by Old Maggie's homestead
I think of Jimmy still...

Saw Jimmy's New York face
On the cover of some hot shot magazine

Said he wrote a far-out song
About a man who played the tambourine

Said he wrote a far-out song
About a man who played the tambourine

Insignia

"Well I never fucking loved
You in the first place! " I hurled

At her backside as she briskly walked away
Her raincoat nipping her heels behind her

In sudden synchronicity the chattering heads
At the bar swiveled and gawked at the lovers' circus

Whose boisterous tent was being unfolded before them
By two angry clowns pickled in smart clothes

She pivoted perfectly rigid on the ball of her foot
As slowly as a jewelry box ballerina

With teeth clenched as tight as her fists
And bored holes into my pupils with hers

I stood rocking smugly, half shocked with myself but
Still proud I got the last word out and let the world know

She outstretched her hand and grabbed the first item in reach -
Some nearby patron's long island iced tea -

And threw it in my face with a sharp pitch,
Glass and all, before she swiftly made her exit

To the enthusiastic applause of each female in the bar
While I wiped the alcohol out of my fireball eyes

With my tie and laughed along with the circus crowd
I think I fell in love with her all over again in that mad moment

She had let me have the last word in the fight but
Hadn't left first without making a statement of her own

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Leather Jacket

adopting a nom de plume
is kinda like buying a new leather jacket
it's stiff and mildly uncomfortable at first and you're
not exactly sure it even looks right on you
but you wear it everywhere you go, and pretty soon
the stiffness has given way to creases and it softly
moulds to your shoulders perfectly
it stains deep with cigarette ash and pints of stout
it assumes your horrible personality and surrenders its new smell
for your own distinctive stink
it becomes a clone of you;
your mannequin's cocoon
you feel naked while it hangs
useless in your closet and you can't at all recall
how you got along without it draping off of you

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Lignano

those sweet summer days
we would walk hand-in-hand
swim together in the sunlight
and write our names in the sand

now the sunshine has disappeared
all the skies are gray
i walk alone and watch the waves
wash our names away

i won't be back next year, my love
and altho we're out of reach
i will never forget that summer
we will always have the beach

we will always have the beach

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Morning After

the sun shoots up
and explodes like a rocket
last night's tears
still damp in his pocket
hair looks like he
stuck his finger in a socket

but he don't bother to look for a comb

he kisses her
forehead but forgets her name
he can't remember
what he called out when he came
it wasn't 'i love you'
but sounded just the same

men say the dumbest shit when they're hip-deep in strange

he swallows like
a man who has no throat
and recalls a lousy
little poem he wrote
and scribbles it
down to her in a short note

before he scrapes together some change

he almost told
her he'd see her later
but didn't want
to sound like a traitor
his favourite beer
is in the refrigerator

and he needs a place he can call home

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Ode To A Black Pen

my Black Pen is like my Princess

the way they run about

and when i need them both the most

is when they both run out

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Papercuts

as she wrote 'i love you' on his Valentine
it cut her with its edges and she took it as a sign

six years later, he's long gone and she disregards
the papercuts she gets with her anniversary cards

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Poetaster

i think most people (no matter how educated
or sublime they thought they were) wouldn't recognize
a decent poem, even if it jumped right off the page
in all its rage,
pissed in their eyes and took a shit in their
overpriced Starbucks lattés

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Princeton

i remember that mild summer's day
in Princeton
the wind pushing
the sweet smell of the country thru
heavy green leaves
dad told nanna he was
going to see poppa
nanna's face bent into
a downcast smile
she said "before you go..."
as she and dad talked
nanna cut a cluster of stems
from her bursting rosebush,
clipped the thorns, and
handed the roses to dad
"...take these with you"

i went with dad
so did my brother
we hadn't seen poppa in years
he was a faint memory who
mostly smiled at us
from old photo albums
that was poppa
so we talked all the way up
the hot asphalt road
as dad carried the roses
clutched tightly to his abdomen
in a thick fist
the look on his face
was chiseled stern
like a warm piece of
somber granite

my brother and i were
in tow of his long shadow
where we chased each other
and tugged on Dad's sleeve
but he paid us no mind

we walked through the schoolyard
swingsets and monkey bars
and across a brown paper field
set aflame by wild dandelions
i didn't know we had to
walk so far to see poppa
i would have taken my bike
the field became different suddenly
the brown grass was vibrant, greener
and all around us sprouted
rows of headstones and grave markers with flags

one of them bore poppa's name
my brother and i cut short our frolic
and watched silently
while dad set Nanna's roses in the vase
and his stone face
crumpled like a wet rag
i think i had only seen him
cry once before:
years ago after we heard
poppa had died

my brother and i stood there
watching dad weep
while i prayed with all of the
strength in my young body
that we could see poppa again
dad mumbled a few soaking prayers
then quietly, among the rustling trees
and chirping robins,
my brother and i
followed dad's sad shadow home

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Rape

it was another spontaneous New Year's Eve
when we climbed the locked gate
outside the municipal park where
we laid on our backs looking up
at the stars sharing a bottle of
cheap champagne – the kind
of tart bubbly swill that
makes your tongue curl – she
wasn't even that attractive in fact
she was a bit heavy for her frame
which was fine
i wasn't there for sex anyway

but more for her company;
to have someone to kiss at midnight
she told me how she was raped by her
brother's best friend when she was 13
and it awoke an insatiable demon
inside her longing to make peace
from that violent act with each boy
she had been with since
we all rape each other, she said,
it's just that some times feel better than the others
her watch beeped madly at the stroke
of midnight and she clumsily pounced
on me and shoved her tongue in my mouth

her hands pushed their way below my waist
as i lay there like a fresh corpse
not fully participating, but not reciprocating either
if she was aware of my apathy, she pretended
not to notice as she soon had
peeled my damp clothes off
and took full advantage of my naked body
while she begged for me to take her from behind
i held out as her mouth crawled all over
me like a groggy snail
before i reluctantly rolled a rubber on and obliged her
all the while with my eyes on the moon

wishing i were with someone else

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Schism

The fireworks and the flowers
Of their younger years together
Had waned and wilted
Through thousands of seamless hours of
Her with her constant harping,
Him with his ceaseless philandering
His roman candle libido coughed like a
Smokestack at her whenever she climbed
Into bed with him
Whilst the butterflies that had once fluttered within her
Bosom when he walked into the room
Had fallen frozen
In the winter of their marriage
Neighbours supposed the couple stayed together
Only to hold out for the meager life insurance
And maybe the infinitesimal hope of
A new romance before they themselves
Forgot their own grey names
Daily, the pair passed thru the silent house
With cold barrels bent
Their last private thoughts every night
Before they fell asleep
Were to dream up ingenious ways each
Could kill the other and make it
Look like an accident

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Spiderhair

sixty seconds before happy hour
four: fifty-nine
the spiderhair barkeep
asks me what i want
i put my hand up
without breaking my gaze
on the clock
the second hand slowly sweeps
away the seconds
one mississippi, two mississippi,
three mississippi, four...
the barkeep sits and waits;
lets out a loud impatient sigh
sure, Spiderhair's probably secure in his
day job, putting away his 401K
he took this moonlighter to meet women
he can probably even afford to keep a girlfriend or two
but not i, the lowly, despised dive poet
the introspective journalist drunk
bespectacled, unshaven
who spends each meager penny on beer
and ink and napkins and paper
i can scarcely afford a dropp before the
work-bell rings, before that fat lady sings
the seconds wind down
fifty-seven, fifty-eight, fifty-nine
i turn and smile.

"i'll have your least expensive import" i declare.
i might be a broke poet, but i have my dignity.

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Thankyouverymuch

this is not a poem, this is a thank you note

frankly, i don't have fun anymore.
the marrow has been sucked from all my bones.
i consider it a good day if i can go to bed
without crying myself to sleep.

those stories you heard about me were all
the result of liquor-fueled post-adolescent rebellion.
i was the crazy drunk guy i had always wanted to
hang out with in high school, but i never knew his name.

all those crazy stunts you witnessed a year ago
were the final bleats of a bugler's bugle,
who desperately felt there was a new war within him,
on a battlefield grown over with weeds and abandoned.

the posthole piercings in my body have scarred over.
the makeup has been washed off of my face
the nail polish has flaked from beneath my cuticles
the clang and crash of drum machines barely ring in my ears.

as we sat chatting that night in the flashing nightclub with the
patrons spinning around us, i put away every smiling word you
said in a safe place to cherish later. and, as i listened carefully,
i swore i heard that bugler's defiant bugle calling me to arms.

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The Agency

it was another long day at The Agency
amidst the clatter
of typewriters & staplers
& telephone chatter
and telephone rings

it was another papercut cyclone
of meetings & lunches
& memos & cold coffee
& three-hole punches
amongst other things

he put in long hours for his boss's demands
worked like he'd grown 12 extra hands

his brow was wet beneath his hat
his tie felt tight around his neck
his fingers felt like swollen bullets
rolling beneath a commuter train wreck

his useless mouth, his trembling lips
his heavy bullet fingertips...

yes, it was another long day at The Agency
(long month, long year...)

another long day at The Agency,
The Agency for life!

and for all his hard work at The Agency,
he goes home to beat his wife

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The Laugh Of God

the morning after heavy drinking
last night's liquor
straps me to my whirling bed
and makes me wear
a stethoscope
that was lying in a gutter
amidst all nervous traffic & bus stop conversation

the garbage truck always comes
crashing down the street
and the ice cream man always
stops outside my window
like the morbid punchline to
some divine joke

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

The Rejection Slip

all would-be poets, take note!
proofread that so-called poem you just wrote!
those who aspire for more Famous Days
please steer clear of these clichés:

so what if your heart
beats,
leaps,
bleeds,
weeps,
throbs,
breaks,
soars,
aches,
cries
sighs
skips,
or dies?
hearts are ever in a state of perpetual disrepair
we don't need you to tell us

who cares if your soul
tears,
flips,
fades,
rips,
shimmers,
dances,
glistens,
prances,
bounces,
flounces,
shivers,
or trounces?
souls are soiled and sold in bars and airports everywhere
we don't need you to tell us

we already know the world is
small,

doomed,
cruel,
entombed,
spoiled,
alone,
frigid,
a stone,
squeezed,
diseased,
dismantled,
displeased
the world is a brutal desert, mercilessly fallow
we don't need you to tell us

don't go on about how your poetry
moves,
sways,
dives,
plays,
hates,
doesn't,
is,
wasn't,
entreats
defeats
scores,
then retreats
the very art itself is narcissistically shallow
we don't need you to prove it

all would be poets, take heed!
before you publish your crap to read,
consider these guidelines lest they be your death
by wasted ink, wasted pages, wasted hours, wasted breath!

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

The Sport Of Kings

I hate the horse races
Except when I'm winning
But it's always a bad sign when
Your horse starts strong and leads
The pack from the gate
He almost always falls behind by the time
He reaches the last straight-away
And the horse that started last
Gallops thru the group like his
Hooves are on fire
While his jockey whips his ass
All the way to the finish line

She left her overnight bag at my place
Where we drank a bit and horsed around
Before we left to meet up with her friends
I paced myself through the liquor cabinet
To be sure I'd be ready for an early morning romp
When we got back home
She had been talking all night to this
Thick-necked dude who got there late
With broader shoulders stronger haunches and a shinier mane
When one of her pals discreetly handed off a rubber like
They had just made a cocaine deal
I rolled my eyes and slugged
What was left in my glass
The last thing I remember that night before I blacked out:
I saw her leave with him
And slap his ass on their way
Out the door

She called me from his place the next afternoon
Audibly hungover and slightly out of breath
Her overnight bag still sat at the foot of my bed
She said she hoped I wasn't mad
And I honestly wasn't

We both knew this horse wouldn't
Win, place or show

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

The Top 500 Poet List Blues

i can never find my name on the top 500 list
of which, none of the poets or poems belie
all of my chums are in the top 500
why, oh why, not i?

i know i'm not the best poet out there
but i also know i'm not the worst
so if i'm not in the top 500
i must be the Five-Hundred First!

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

This Pen Is A Piece Of Shit

How am I supposed to write under conditions like these?

Barreling motorcar roar through my alley, please.

Wake me, shake me from my world nocturne

Turn me, burn me; dump me in my urn.

Scatter me onto the earth of a continent never traveled,

Where barefoot folk can carry me and grind me into the gravel.

There will be no more roaring motorcars, no more pens and barrels.

No more off-key motherfuckers singing Christmas carols...

I have seen my world of life and strife, rapture, indifference and peril.

Your world will thank me when I am gone, and pray that I was sterile.

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

Tiny Battles

who wants to wage war
with the Orgy of Four?
against those who don't score
them an Eight or more?

go ahead, leave a low mark
leave a comment if you dare
let them know exactly what
you think, but beware!

they might strike back with some witty verse
or post a crude bitchy sonnet
you see, there's no room up on the High Horse
while the Orgy of Four are on it!

how dare you give them Ones
they deserve not a score so low!
two of them once drank tea with the Queen,
and two are published writers, you know?

we all crawl on our stomachs
while they sit next to God
their poetry is perfect
its the JUDGES who are flawed

so go on, you Foursome,
fight your battles for those Tens
the rest of us will go on without you
and beat our swords back into pens

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

To The Illegitimate Child

to the illegitimate child,
whose streets are dimly lit
who pores thru dusty photo albums
for the eyes that look like his,

who searches markets and
city parks for his family name,
who wanders thru the naked tenements
whence your grandpa came,

who holds séance with the black-ink
ghosts bound with flimsy twine,
who sits atop the highest branch
of any tree that he can climb,

to watch them all go to their graves
with the secrets that they keep
as the highways whisper lullabies
in your brave ears while you sleep

and as you carry on your lonely
quest thru every face of everyone
you have not lost your father, rather,
your father has lost his son

nobility is rarely ever
present in such a sacrifice
a man's rash decisions are
often made in desperate drunken cowardice

still, your left thumb and the bus fares
carry you further and further away
from that great big bright green
front garden in which you played

but there is a mother that misses you
on the end of that hotel dial-tone.
you still have her arms to hold you;
you still have a home.

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

Tradin' Paint

O, NASCAR driver, you're my idol
becuz none o' y'all don't give a heck

for pukin' up your organs vital
and stumblin' from a burnin' wreck.

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

Uncle Josef

Uncle Josef strides proudly amongst our weeping fathers
his uniform crisp, his medals aglow
whistling Wagner on his way to work
whilst off to the chimney they go

Uncle Josef's riding crop snaps to attention
<i>links oder rechts</i> to the prisoners show
the white-teeth dogs bark and bite at their heels
whilst off to the chimney they go

Uncle Josef points the women to the showers
their sad march forms a path thru the snow
but his showers don't have any running water
off to the chimney they go

Once, during an outbreak of typhus among the Gypsies
Uncle Josef had no mercy to bestow
so don't get sick and do what you're told or it's
off to the chimney you go

Doctor Josef's hands are red with Friedrich's blood
his twin looks away as his brother moans low
Josef kisses the dead boy's hand
off to the chimney they go

"Dig me a pit and set it ablaze, " Uncle Josef orders
"then into the pit the children throw
"don't you fail me in this task, there's
"no room in the chimney, you know."

Uncle Josef flees as the Reds advance
to deliver Berlin her final blow
he gathers all manner of damning papers
and off to the chimney they go

Uncle Josef drowns off the coast of Brazil
and i wonder if, as his pulse slows,
he sees our ghosts floating in the cold waters
whilst off to the Chimney he goes

Uncle Josef's lifeless body drifts
in water cruel as evil's art;
the flame of justice fiercer still
than any flames that sear the heart

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

Untitled

on keeping with tradition
i would like to say
i was never much for
tradition anyway

traditions are the names
on those dusty picture frames
hung and crooked on dark walls
in condemned and forgotten halls

this is my theory
(you might think it strange)
traditions start with people
who do not favour change

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

Very Same Firsts

before i met you,
i had already done everything
for the first time

while we were together,
those very same firsts
i had done the first time with you

and now you're gone

and it's been so hard for me
to do those very same firsts
for the first time without you

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler

Well Done

i ordered the steak be done "medium well"
but it looked like it had been grilled
in the hottest pit of Hell

rare, medium, medium rare; all steaks come out charred
i thought the chef was award-winning -
is grilling a steak so hard?

my smouldering steak may be protection
against court action in case
a patron faces e coli infection

i am no Emeril, but i have some skill
and i certainly know my way
around a grill

i don't think they'll ever learn, tho
so now i order my steak bleeding raw
with a flaming can of Sterno

Rev. Dr. A. Jacob Hassler