

ACCORDION MUSIC FOR HUNGRY EYES



Nathaniel S. Rounds

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We dedicate this book to your nose
which has two cavities that toothpaste can't prevent
and
to the pioneers of cliché

High Rent

I live inside the neck of a giraffe
Made from spare change
Not very comfortable up there
Such tight quarters
And those flights of stairs
We manage just the same
And the penthouse
Overlooks the zoo

Where Do You Want Captain Formaldehyde to Go Today?

A triple razor screams without a newspaper. Each influential litter relates to the enthusiastic conference. A heated indent coats Captain Formaldehyde. Captain Formaldehyde travels the protocol around a lunch. Electric suppository worries about Captain Formaldehyde. Electric suppository examines the taxi past an optional melody.

Captain Formaldehyde stares across Glamour Gal. His longest detective staggers a typed race. An asynchronous bread dishes the lullaby. Captain Formaldehyde rages with Glamour Gal. Captain Formaldehyde hopes!

A retaining chorus parades above Frothing Grandma. Captain Formaldehyde assesses Frothing Grandma. Why does Captain Formaldehyde purge within a competitive dream? Why won't Frothing Grandma pause near Captain Formaldehyde? The photocopy yawns outside a cynic. Frothing Grandma bites the imperative across a peripheral.

Singing Goodbye

Rules are in the tin urn
Coffee can rappelling down
Quagmire Mountain
Spilling your fascist-frown-as-dust
(I
n
c
i)
Dental plate and spectacles

To make rules we must break rules
And the fools who make them

It's the Right One, It's the Bright One,
That's Immolation

The cerebral cortex is a frigid mother
With her back turned to an open window
The cerebral cortex is a wet cloth sack
Ulcerating kittens
The cerebral cortex is a sniper in the shadows
Convertible in his crosshairs
The cerebral cortex is strychnine
Served in a cup to a thirsty child
The cerebral cortex is a filthy word
Its expression censored by tight lips

Silence, Like a Poultrice

Old Iron Toes is giving the ivories a beating
Big, bad foot of formidable proportions
Playing Chopin's nocturne in C# minor
Pink kerchief absorbing his perspiration
If not the stench of his callused physiognomy
He's like a power hammer in an infant's nursery
Chopping Chopin on the butcher's block

Then a little girl named Natalia taps Old Iron Toes
And suggests he take a breather
And in his welcomed and long-overdue departure
Resumes the nocturne with sparkling facility
Here in the lobby of a tenement house
Where the rats and collection agents
Find easy spoil

Necessity never made a good bargain
But she makes great banana waffles
With fresh strawberries and whipped cream

Her eighth floor apartment is a curiosity shop
Snake bite serums and dried seahorses
A library containing a Gutenberg bible
And Kerouac's letters to Ferlinghetti
And underneath the kitchen counter
Equipment for a pirate radio station
The microphones for which are placed behind a marble table
At which a neighbor's two children, Loruhamah and Loammi
Build villages on a board game
Stopping only for banana waffles and bathroom breaks

They've been at it for months now
Saying nothing, the silence broadcast
And appreciated on both sides of the Atlantic
Interrupted now and again
By the hammering of an unfortunate piano
In the lobby seven floors below

We return to Necessity, the generous, cross-eyed beauty
As she sails across the narrow hallway from her door
To the exit at the south end
In a flax, pintuck dress

Her hand brandishing a wasp nest on a torn branch

She steps into an elevator

Joining a rat and a collection agent

Scaring them into silence

And by the time they reach the basement parking lot

Into models of self abnegation

They wave shyly with their straw boaters

As she exits in a blaze of thunder

The Only Freedom

We dance upon an angry ball
Inscape and instress
Mossy green pads of earth sinking
Under foaming waters
And from these waters
Three men in a boat
(Not to mention the horse):
Rasputin, Caligula, and Nietzsche
All accommodating each other's
Mad statements and gestures
While asking the horse to stop
Chirping
That horrible song
The with all the schmaltzy "ra-
Ta-ta-ta-ta" and "Chanson d'amour"
Business and the horse says nothing
Just shakes its head
Nervously
Waiting for its end to be
Unceremoniously conferred upon it

Devon Talks about His Wayward Ways

Someone in a van once told me
That long highways make for deep thought
I told him how passageways to Argentina
Make for sauerkraut and chocolate trousers
And he looked at me, waiting for the punch line
So I punched him—hard

Splash/Rewind

I paid for my freedom in Swiss francs
The ones with Honegger on them
Sealed myself in an old pea coat
Rolled myself like a bundled carpet
Downhill toward downtown
And into the water
There were two ravenous gulls
Who were curious enough to pull me
Safely to the loading docks
But they had hoped for beef and beans
Not a one man enchilada

Storm Dance

You danced upon the desk top
To Shakuhachi jazz
Long skirt swaying like a window curtain
While the wind whispered of an impending storm
Drums thundered warning
A flute cried like a loon searching for its children
The bass did groan like a wise, old frog
And I was entranced by your movement
And failed to see the world scatter
Beneath the expanding cloud

Kappelmeister Cypher/Remix

the four-limb amputee
and struggling contortionist
incrementally
swipes
matters from your memory
secret drawer in his desk presiding
while

The surviving syndrome airs Random Frankenstorm, the last surviving chicken of New Jersey, next to whatever inspiring estate. A cubic painting transmutes into Tokyo. Random Frankenstorm chases the photocopy. A pulse advertises? Random Frankenstorm celebrates Tokyo with a plastic bridegroom. Tokyo rants without the disclaimer. Frank the chicken escorts the wrapped contract past its manufacturer. How can the sinister cigarette balance this theater of air? The wed orange bends Random Frankenstorm. Every acting keyword documents this theater of air beneath a warrant. When can our theater of air revise this altogether? Random Frankenstorm stalls under a yellow, kitten fur-covered automobile from Korea. A kidnapped hello quotes the fog. Random Frankenstorm pours guilt as an elixir over the crowd. A broad parent fiddles underneath the contortionist. When will our yellow kitten fur-covered automobile from Korea acknowledge a map?

We return to the secret drawer
And remove a wiggling hand
Each finger marked with the former owner's name
It finger-signs designs of impending doom:

“Random Frankenstorm's artistic rival speaks a concern.
The tangent reactor punches this light.
How can the quiz think?
The offsetting comparison reaches throughout a monkey.
An indicator complains?
This triggers rockets!
How does my heart's tears quench unrequited desire?”

In Conclusion:

Secret agent Eggplant involves espionage. Another cobbler instructs Eggplant behind an alternate New Jersey. Eggplant misuses a closet underneath an irate anatomy. The review shoe flowers a marriage without the invented spoof. Espionage quotes my laboratory.

South of Houston Street

When General Tom Thumb used to sit at the foot of my bed with a bag of grilled cheese donuts, we'd pull the travel record player from underneath the bed and play those 45's we'd swapped or bought at Rock's In Your Head, The Rezillos and Black Flag and Whole Earth Rainbow Band, and sometimes Abraham Lincoln would climb up the fire escape from his flat two stories below to our window open to summer and news on the Street. He'd have a hat full of fresh fruit and bottles of beer, and we'd argue about who said the most with a song or a beat. General Tom would have the most to say, but Abe would hold the reigns with a few, well-chosen words.

Illumination/照明

Where are the large windows
From which light of ancient calm
Is sprayed over dirty street talk?

Don't Pain(t) the Rabbits

Jonah the stargazer fish is eating Chinese takeout
Watching a TV adventure show
The one with a butterfly riding a motorcycle
Pteranodon in the side car
There's a bed of straw in his upright piano
Egg whites leaking from his baby grand
Spilling into pie plates of soot and honey
Ink oozing onto white pile carpet
A messenger comes to the door to ask Jonah
To *kindly refrain from painting the rabbits*
As *they're awfully sensitive these days*
And you are blinking quietly from the hallway mirror
Making certain that everything
Stays the same o' same o'

Feathers and Ashes

It was a funny evocation
Of a memory returning from the fog
That covered Mirror, Alberta
The Rauschenbergs were a very fine couple
A coffin/ark as chariot piercing blackness of darkness
Everyone was fond of the Rauschenbergs
Troubled though they were
Mr. Hosea Rauschenberg drove the '55 Ford Country Squire
A classic Four-door woody wagon
Its body was painted red
Like Mr. Rauschenberg's comb and wattles

Riding in the passenger seat
Was Mrs. Gomer Rauschenberg
Who sat quietly
She had no choice in the matter
Since her transformation into feathers and ashes
After a final midlife betrayal
Her insatiable intellect and lonely heart
Not to mention her unsatisfied spirituality
Leading her to a tragic affair with a deep friar
Who had an explosive temper

Hosea placed her feathers and ashes in a scarlet pillowcase
And took her everywhere he went
He stroked the pillow into an elongated figure
With small head and exaggerated pelvis

In the wee hours of this early spring
They listened to the radio

Hosea used the twists and turns of the broadcast song
As a means to determine where to drive
Hosea in his plaid shirt-coat and coveralls
Both covered in sawdust from his latest job
Replacing panels on the Ford and sealing them with bitumen

From the radio

Frank Sinatra considered
“*From Natchez to Mobile*
from Memphis to St. Joe
Wherever the four winds blow”
While Hosea circled the Mirror Hotel
A mothballed Canadian National Caboose
And the Mirror Cemetery

In his twilight tracings of the familiar
Hosea clucked the name Caroline—Gomer’s family nickname
Caroline, sweet, sweet Caroline
While the woody cut through the veil of fog
And rambled through snow turned to slush



Nathaniel S. Rounds is a Pushcart Prize nominee and father to three charming freebooters. He was born in Wichita Falls, Texas, largely against his own better judgement. This did, however, allow him to be closer to his mother. He currently lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

