

**BECAUSE SO MUCH  
IS RIDING  
ON YOUR UNICYCLE  
NATHANIEL S. ROUNDS**



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## Contents:

Cement and Super Glue®. But don't worry.  
They're almost as good as BOTOX®.

## Dollar a Load

Some old Greek guys were eating instant chilli from a vending machine  
While doing their laundry at the Laundromat.  
They were discussing a paperback on psychoanalysis.

Cleobulus: From the perishable standpoint, psychoanalysis supposes  
That the mental representations of the conferrers  
Have a cathexis of definite quantities of low-cal  
Heideggerianism. No, wait. That's another book I've been reading.  
Who has quarters? I only have this five.

Solon: The machine by the bathroom makes change. Back to the  
Discussion. The purpose of the ballyhoo man is  
To hinder any constipation of these woodwinds  
And to humiliate any tongue-tied monologists to which he  
is subject. Stin iyia sas!

Chilon: This dryer is dead. I feel sorry for the proprietor.  
Repairs must cut into his profits pretty bad. The path of mental flora  
Is tight-fistedly synchronized by the "pleasure-pain principle".  
Genetheto phos.

Cleobulus: I get all these books from my wife because she wants to have  
Something nice to talk about at home. She says, "No old man in his underwear  
Watching the game in the man pit." The books get all scrambled in my head.

Bias to Thales: I forgot my socks. I keep them in a net bag. No socks for bowling.  
I have that book you guys are going on about. I got it at fifty percent off.  
I recall it talking about the original pleasure-pain principle getting pureed  
In a food blender with reference to the external world,  
Giving place to the "bow tie";  
whereby the tongue-tied monologist with suspicious leanings toward  
A neglected form of Heideggerianism learns to project the pleasure of  
Self-inflicted pain. Like a sicko pyramid scheme.

Thales to Bias: I hope you get to spend some quality time with yourself. Really get to  
Know the man in the man. Know what I'm saying?

Pitticus: Am I the only guy that is starving? This chilli is flavoured water. The company that  
Sells this stuff is gonna pay someday. It will undermine the young people. It has already.

Thales: Like really get inside your brain and kick the tires. No, that's cars. More like, Check out the house and see what stinks in the attic. Then tear it all out and make a nice guest Bedroom. I did that a few years ago. In the literal sense, I mean.

Periander: It would be wise to go to that cheap Chinese place for lunch. We can put the laundry in the trunk of my car and I'll pay. I have these senior coupons for Fridays.

## Need a Million Men

There's a hundred dead between us  
That old school and me  
Crazy kids from town  
Knocked the headstones down  
Our clouds come from the refinery  
Sky is like Christ's glory  
Seldom seen by often felt by the faithful  
Sun is a red poker train crossing light  
And my window is bullet proof glass

### Dress Rehearsal for a Funeral

Every day I dress the corpse  
Italian suit of silk  
Tie and kerchief  
Cuff links and fine leather shoes  
Drink one scotch  
(Just one now)  
Watch waves conclude inconclusively  
Wait for the sun to clock out  
Ride with the moon in a side car  
To the club changing room  
Keep my pressed pants over the chair back  
Laugh with the radio  
Hit the stage after Death's knock on the door  
Sing the requisite American Song Book  
Through a Viennese filter  
Sing some undeserved and early hits  
Which were written for a younger voice  
Graciously fold to applause  
Sing the prearranged encore  
Slip into something more comfortable  
Turn the night into a blue pill slumber  
Awaken and bathe and repaint and dress  
That corpse in the mirror  
Who never closes his eyes

Eh! Voidable Me<sup>1</sup>

Wow

Thierry Shevchenko

I mean there are few names like it

Inscribed upon American Tourister Tiara luggage sets from 1968

And the man is still around somewhere

Minus his luggage

Maybe he still has some lady weave his back hair

Into an exotic cape

It's legendary now

He could solve mysteries with such epic disdain

He hated helping people

Anything that involved removing his scantily clad, hirsute body from his haunt

At a particular bistro table on Rue St. Denis

There in Montreal

The place that had its liquor license revoked six days out of seven

So he would drink cognac from a hole in a hairdresser's mannequin head

It was wrong, wrong, wrong

But he and Élodie liked it just fine

He said he learned to remove himself from the troubles of man

All thanks to Élodie the hairdresser's mannequin head

He had learned his disdain for all people and things

From Élodie the hairdresser's mannequin head

Who reminded him of the time they had gone to a second hand store

To buy a food blender

And the food blender refused to make any food

It was a third hand blender

Originally purchased at Eaton's in 1988

Then sold at a Value Village in 1996

Then finally purchased by Thierry and Élodie

At Le Coffre Aux Trésors Du Chaînon

In 1999

The blender spoke in a disdainful teen girl voice

That English-speaking undergrads use

The one who spits out a sentence

That ends with the final word sound like a squirrel

Groaning before dyinnnnnnnggggggg

But not really dying

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<sup>1</sup> Published by *Misfits' Miscellany*. "It's a bizarre instant association masterpiece but it all makes esthetic sense and it really sucked me in. Wow, really cool."—Earthslang, Wisconsin.

More of a casual death  
As in "I had this mocha cappuccino  
And now I'm dyinnnnnnngggggggg."

Then they bought a new blender  
Made in Vietnam  
And it operated as a great remote control for the TV  
And would shout "TV *kích hoạt!*"  
Which their neighbour from Vietnam  
The one who talked into a cell phone while  
Pacing the hallway in his pyjamas  
Stated was a misprint  
But that clearly the blender must have been assembled  
In tandem with another order for remote controls  
And that he could not help right now as he was expecting a call  
From his brother in Hanoi

But then  
Sooner than one can say "*Sh*-it's a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative!"  
I climb the stairs up to your detached soul  
You the shrink with the pin-striped suit  
The girl gone keeper-of -mind  
Inside I find  
Pictures of you  
Walking your mum's Deutsche Dogge

I eat the experimental medication  
And alternate with a placebo and a flying squid  
I eat imaginary furniture and watch children clap ritualistically  
I try to walk forward backward and sideward  
I sweep a dirt floor with a grass skirt

You march at night around the 5th floor  
You march at night and recite photographs of every moment  
You have recorded since age six  
When you started to remember to remember  
You ate a cake in Montreal  
A strange old man held your hand

You left your hand at the wrist in a waste paper basket  
You dried your tears on a burning bus  
You pushed birds into the holes of sinking ship  
You told the giant men what to speak and to whom  
You told trees and sun where to cast shadows

You told obliging coyotes with hats held to their chest  
To wander back home  
Backward and down into recessed field not growing  
Still cold  
And red  
Like angry skin  
Like fire burning under arctic ice

You have become the real legend  
The crazy shrink letting her hair down  
Crazy shrink led to the door  
Crazy shrink pushing chair and notebook out the open window  
And hiding under the fainting couch

I return to your office in the old factory  
Holding a flashlight beneath a basket  
Because you've come to hate bright light  
And I whisper remembrances of Thierry Shevchenko  
And his always wanting to solve the mystery of the 27 Club  
And theorized that all these cats that died at age 27  
Are actually alive at an undisclosed location  
A gated community for seniors in Miami  
They play volley ball while wearing sun shades

And how I have lost all communication with Thierry  
But then present to you Élodie  
In the hope that you shall become best friends  
As you share so much in common

## On Deathly Snog<sup>2</sup>

These being the confessions of a male anglerfish  
(Parasite division)  
And  
Screwball  
Lonelier plotter  
Named Lowly Bob  
Once a free spirit on Marlborough Street in gold lamé suit  
Who has been described as the opinion commonly was  
As being devoid of brain or brawn  
But who as a child of light eschewed all evil  
And became eyes to the blind and feet to the lame

I was quickly dying of lonesomeness  
Wandering through supermarket trees  
And then determined that it might be better to better oneself  
By plugging into a female of formidable sway  
On a permanent basis  
Namely  
One anglerfish named Robyn Snow, age twenty-two  
Even though doing so  
Would lead to my hasty corporeal decline  
Leaving only the tiniest of gonads  
For burial or derision

I was adamant in knowing my opportunity  
And so I seized it like a crazed gambler going  
Tête-à-tête with a one-armed bandit  
My ears never recovered from bleeding  
And my nerves never ceased to quake  
My loins were cursed with flaccidity and decay

Still  
I yearn to receive my supper and television programs  
And encyclopaedias of many kinds  
For free  
One cannot get such tonic and enchantment  
Without cost in these darksome days

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<sup>2</sup> Published by *Misfits' Miscellany*

And so I tapped into a lonely wallflower  
All pretty and educated in things clerical  
And found that like me  
She desired erudition and its appurtenances  
On an unvarying basis  
And so I connected myself most permanently  
With that formidable young lady

The results were immediately startling  
My mind's eye witnessed peculiar apparitions  
Regarding times distant and future and placed them  
In the here and now  
With a ringing sound and no soothing divider  
All newspaper headlines and manifestoes  
Of the most misfortunate kind  
As might be gleaned from this:

KIDS WILL DO ANYTHING  
FOR THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS/  
FALL INTO THE FALSE PROPHETS/  
INIQUITY JUST FEELS RIGHT/  
DIAL DOWN THE LOVE OF MANY

--All thanks to radio waves jarring  
With muddy water

I found to my dismay  
That I could not press Robyn's clothes just right  
Or be her constant button man  
Without heated discussions and provocations  
Gushing through holes in our public housing  
To neighbors and landlord and superintendent  
Our unrelenting discord

On the other fin  
Matrimony is private by definition  
Even when by insolvency or contrition  
It begs for the listener to opine  
Most have the common decency to decline  
And instead  
Resign themselves to glowering  
Over cold beans and bread

But no one would deny

That we loved each other  
Like Captain Spaulding and Mrs. Rittenhouse  
While gasping for water in a dead land  
And finding only the sourest of mead  
We naturally refused it  
And yet  
As though by some cruel curse  
Its taste poisoned our dry lips  
And lingered there  
But we would not fight it  
Nor would we dodge the stinging arrows  
Of so many winged putti  
While with restrained fear  
We sought the nearest pier  
From which to jump  
So that we could reacclimatize to our aquatic ways

These were anxious, harrowing days  
And in the thick grass of it  
We found our Satan-as-serpent  
Toppling ash cans in the alley  
And darting forth on four wheels  
A battered Land Rover  
Narrowly missing me  
Pushing Robyn to the ground  
She with child for six month's time  
I between regurgitations of favorite books to undergrads

I got her into a taxi  
The child was not affected  
My wife survived a broken leg and wrist  
And through a twisting of circumstances  
Our romance was rekindled  
Until  
I began to falter and wither  
First my moral resolve  
Then my will to live  
My Id hid its golden reflection from me  
Then snuffed itself into oblivion

The new child's birth did little to brighten  
What had become a room of mourning  
And now with Junior gone to raise his own mainsail  
And a wife drenched and moldy in a storm of grief

I feel a stranger has thieved what might have remained  
Of my crowning glory  
A book of words raw with unrefined energy and life  
Bound stiffly but affably  
Bidding the treasure seeker  
Both entry and adieu

Pocket Cruiser (Weeping)

Base and Jar

Please don't leave me

I need something to hold

Tears falling off a roof top

I need a tarpaulin and a long sword

To make a sail for a short boat

I need more tears to make a sea

To set the boat in for a long journey

I need a choir of amicable peers

To sing and to cheer me into high spirits

Because heaven knows

That I won't be coming back

About the author:  
A reformed Texan, Nathaniel S. Rounds  
Writes from the tallest eyesore east of Montreal.  
This is his heaviest chapbook.

