

LIBELS ON NATURE

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New World Vulture

Mind is racing in the funny car finals
Round four eliminations
Monkey at the wrenches
Working lefty-loosey
On a broken synapses
I recite slowly while the wrench turns

—Nocondorsnocondors no condors no condors
Knockondoors knock on doors....ll

A young Johnny Bench sits in mind's corner
Practices signing autographs
Catches brain cells before they even spark
I can soar but I can't score
I'm a new world vulture with a bandaged head
Annotated
Tagged
Resurrected from the dead
I'm sharing words of wisdom with my condor friends
Feasting on cattle _till my engine rattles
Too old to dance
But I'll freeze a curveball with a steely stare
Melt a racing opponent with a fey, faux romance
Rock an' roll my roller rockers
Fly on a brand new gas

Occupied/Vacant

The AC won't kick in
I've left my striped boater on the anti-theft hanger
Can't sing four-part harmony
With all the guys gone out for a swim
Can't enchant an empty room with conversation
It's Sunday night at this two star hotel and
The AC won't kick in
Mind's a cluttered exhibition
Of oil paintings by Pinot
His women look like Sophia Loren
Posing as a noble in peasant garb
I move away to look at
Street corner sketches by outsider artists
Pixilated buskers filmed on the fly
Eyes open to see flies
Hanging from the drop ceiling
Eyes turn back to mind's TV
I'm a city kid standing in a farm field
Judging wind's direction by the way the barn *leans*
Brain needs a compass and a destination
Even here where
The AC won't kick in
Silence is the new/old song
Fly strip understudies for the role
Of a barber shop pole

4x5

Black and white detritus on the Isle of the Dead
Found family/ quite alive
Photographed amongst the cypress trees
With a flash bulb and press camera
The little girl with the pug nose and light curls
The languid boy with a book marked with a feather
The boisterous toddler with an egg in his fist
Their nearsighted father cocks and presses the shutter
They all fail to notice
The boat approaching the watergate
The oarsman and the white-clad widow
The coffin and the impending storm

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I am not Judas Iscariot
I am not Pete Best on his worst day
I am a lowly member of law enforcement
I detest pigs and doughnuts
This makes me feel rather conflicted

Uncle Arthur is curled up in a striped suit
Beneath a PVC chair
In the doctor's examination room
Just enough space for deli sandwich wrapping paper
On examination table
Poster of the heart
And the brain in the average male

Uncle Arthur whispers blue sucker ballads
About Arian angels
While the medicine man with the cabinet on wheels
Waits at the open door

In my bedroom,
I can see the world in Amoxicillin pink
And smell lilacs picked from the tree outside my window
Gjon Mili is waiting in my wardrobe
Finger on the shutter of his camera
He wants to see car headlights streaking outside
He wants to see the window blind sway to the jazz of a summer breeze
I invite him to jump on my bed
And schedule a visit to a store on Black Friday
In four month's time
We'll lock the doors on the crowd at 5:30 a.m.
Turn off the lights and release noxious scent
Sending two thousand people into mass hysteria
Tromping innocents and islands of price-reduced toasters
And we will inundate the throng with an improv session
Exploring cool absence of materialism
Toss a grenade into the center of our
Desire to please progeny
(Those grim ingrates who tickle and scrape your senses into oblivion's greased pit
And flush your nervous system down the toilet while eating roaches and toothpaste)
And incite this mass of embryonic greed
To drink the Kool-Aid
And take a nap

But for now
I read photocopies of past-due bills

From an historical perspective to avoid emotional involvement

I am not Judas Iscariot

I am not Pete Best on his worst day

I am a lowly member of law enforcement

Wearing adult diapers

Thinking about return to the womb

Codicil

Naturally I shall refrain
From speaking on subjects that unlock
Through calculated teeth in wheels
The chain of command
The state chief's brutal reprimand
The imbecilic kiss of steel
That meets with blood
And ends with shameful gasps of false confession
Castigating caution with a blotch of mud
Following weak back-boned inclination
To dissuade the warmonger's threat
To abet the beaten
With progeny sweetened
Over coals blown to full heat of the infernal
Thus satisfying the moment
At the cost of the eternal
Splintering hindrance
Shattering innocence
Loosening the skirt strings
At the expense of the forgotten
Cottoning sound judgment honored on high
For the child's hand filled
Full of fool's stuffs nigh

What Free Will Gets You

I don't want to linger in the corner of the room
From which the broom has declared itself a stranger

So I take to

Driving a Crown Victoria with the post-mount spotlight
Looking for historical figures in beaver top hats
Wandering the side roads leading from the shore
Mostly we get jean short-clad armadillos
Searching the gutters for empties

I mark the miles
By counting cheeseburgers and palm trees
Watch time fly in my rear view window

Dumpster dive radio news
For clues regarding storm patterns
Get lost in the steel-toned coolness
Of the white collar show host

Carp in a barrel
Curriculum vitae
Always got those two mixed up

Memorie\$

Brain is rabbit starving
All lean mean protein
No fat
No declarative memory
No old episodes in rerun
Nothing
But wait
Some kind of sensation in replay
Feels somewhat like
Stale fudge
And yet without the right kind of loose change
The machine won't play a full moment's dream
Just rear-light a still picture of what might be
In the chilled can with the pop-top lid
Leaning forward in the mountain of ice
But that's okay
Because
After a list of lost childhood memories regarding specific events
I want most of all
Pretzels
And for the moment
Both are out of my price range

Ice Dream Headache

Smiling kids and ponies
Smiling sons and ponies
Corn-anointed hotdogs on a splinter of stick
Brown-legged girl from the bar sings
While opening apartment door next to ours with key chorus
Son smiles in his sleep
Dreaming of corn dogs
Brown-legged girls sing over dreams
Life is a series of accidents
Woven into readymade ado's
I flush memories
Of youthful mistakes
Where I once witnessed or condoned the spread
Of hoarding and fighting through pneumococcal filth
Blind propagation with unpruned vines
In changing rooms with swinging doors
Willful decimation of spoiled seed

I bought a master's degree
From some man who knew a man
Who works for the University Dar es Sallam
I presented a desertion on a piece of cardboard
Foisted from a store made pie
It was accepted and rewarded
I embarked upon my new career
As a sandwich board sign man
Dancing lazily through southern heat wave
But this proved
So much better than satisfying the common man's
Hunger for broilers and puzzles and gold chains to drop in the mouth of Mithra
Or the
Need to walk in a trance through midnight and dawn to hoard sacrifices from alters
Flammable boxes of flammable goods
Prizes and lucky invocations
And did you watch
The mad chimp share her infant's flesh with two older children

But
Here on the sidewalk
I was given a raise
When kicked in the behind
I walked home with two twenty dollar bills
An ice coffee and a sad ending
But tonight
Son sleeps to brown-legged girl songs
Dreaming of corn dogs and theme park rides

Run Don't Walk (And My Father Will Love Him)

Man imitates bats in flight and sight
While imagineering
Bioluminescent deep blue cheese
Ray guns and snow crab clusters

Spaghetti squash No. 4776

Is grown and distributed by
Outsider artists living in an undisclosed communal farm
Tomatoes however
Are not
But are instead grown one cherry tomato plant
At a time
In a banker's box
Forgotten on a patio
By a librarian who wears a straw cloche hat
She eats yogurt with a fork
When she feigns death on her toilet next Tuesday
(She does this once a year and has gotten quite good)
The police will discover
Fifty 3 oz. bars of Palmolive hand soap
Individually signed by BOB in mirror reversal
Bob
You may recall
Is the five-year-old muralist
Who gave the well-received public discourse
Regarding *el Dios todopoderoso*
From a Victorian third-floor balcony
In his pajamas and slippers
Some stopped to admire ornate wrought-iron
Others considered the weight of his words
Brumenschenkel is his surname
That is to say Hayman
And he likes to paint
Merchant venturers plundering oranges
And guitars

Jannock Jem He

Can't worry tonight
Just pray for
Step Grand-Dad
Eoin MacEgan
Descendent of the men of County Tipperary
God bless the old bugger
My people are from County Kilkenny
He is driving around in his dead wife's car
A long way from home
He should be in the Annapolis Valley,
Nova Scotia
But he's checking out trailers
In Florida
And as a bluegrass fiddler and strummer
Of eighty-plus years,
The old sot has no business
Courting disaster with 60 degree Fahrenheit/15.6 degree
Celsius nights
Young drugstore killers are hungry for money
MacEgan keeps five thousand dollars in a boot
And a custom Marshal guitar in the trunk
He finds friendly palms in lonesome parking lots
And parks beneath them at night
I pray for my step granddad
I pray for his strength and honor
And that
He be given a roof and protection by a bright band of angels
Hope I get to share a story with him one more night
Hope he hears cheers for stage tricks and old wisdom
Hope he outsmarts us all just one more time
And that his memory lingers with his undying figure

Federal Offense

I say the
Pos'
mas
ter
goes through muh mail
I say the
pos'
mas
ter
goes through muh mail
I said the
pos'
mast
er
goes through muh mail

pos'
mast
er
goes through muh

I say the
pos'
master
goes

muhmail
tha's'muhmail

Tha's'why I'm takin' to the internet

whisperin' at traffic lights

takin' to the sound stage

tattoo skulls in Morse code
cut me deep in monologue
make a headline synagogue
and smoke upon the mountain

pos'
pos'
pos'
pos'

In Danger of False Brothers

Two girls named Kay
Kickbox a diamond
Into the floor of a kayak
Diamond transitions into
Stray hare sleeping
In a reed basket
With one eye open
He floats upon dry waters
But that's what photographs are for
Memory perpetuates life's necessities
Lawn mower man
Shoots craps
On the sands of the Garden of Eden

Let's fight the flu together

I used to love days of autumn
Now I watch trees turn
Through broken slats in the window
Neighborhood kids refer to my physique as
Scrawny, squirrel-like
Faith follows that which we have heard
Didn't know faith would be the charity blanket
Warming trampled old man

Let's fight the flu together

When you don't feed the new generation
Per their department store gift registry
They cut you down
Like bad brush

Let's fight the flu together

There's a new vaccine for twenty bucks
It leaves a bad bruise in your fighting arm
Like an old promise made in childhood
Found to be false in the late, wee hours
Enduring
Pile of kidz an krackers
While espousing my philosophy in toto
From my passenger train toilet

Wreck to the Seaman, Tempest to the Field

Used to print instruction books for clownography on index cards

Using a Kelsey hobby press

I'd

Send books to students scattered across the Western US,

The Northwest Territories

And to sailors in strange waters,

All

Eager to learn the art of operating a camera while hiding behind

Grease paint, a wig and

A shutter release bulb disguised as

A big red nose

To this day

I still get notes of appreciation

And

8x10 photos of

Shipwrecks and corn rows and

Clown cars in stormy weather

Feast Upon the Seated Lest They Rise to Run

I'm not wingman for the flea circus boss
I'm gonna crawl up a tree
Gonna pull out the stops
Wave down clouds for chariot rides
And I shall descend upon your porch steps
So you may flee when I knock
And enquire thereupon
Whether your mind gets a kick out of fireworks
And you may eagerly digress and state broadly
That your relatives are either sinners or critics
Thankfully, I don't have to worry about friends
At night I
Dip my sword in mineral spirits
I've painted what I have to say
But I am still your census taker and have been asked to ask
Does your brain watch its own can-can?
Mine has
And I have
Surrendered my health to spare the dandy's life
Style
Recently
I swapped my
Shoes for shackles in a big box
Store
But wait
There's more
Red ants are the new romantics
I've painted words with a sharp sword
And lodged them in a traveling nest of
Locusts so that they will spread with a vengeance
When my own dies out
Red ants bite their way through the crowds at the club
The nest is ready and ripe
Red ants
Bight their way to the top
Like a candy apple with a bomb inside
And the FCC wants you to know
That this poet's scheme *must not cause*
Harmful interference
And the FDA states that this poet's words
Provide iodide, *a necessary nutrient*
And I would like to ask that my grave be marked
By an auto passenger's side door
So that you may have somewhere to be taken and to go

Boaz Loves Rumiko

You and me both
We both fail to understand
That out of doors
Between floors
It's raining Rachmaninoff

And yet

You will not know me
That is to say
You do not know about me
Or one should rather say
That you don't know about me
Without you have drawn

Too close to all the science

And its ever-present yawn
As one more Tokyo-born tourist
Seated expectantly in a Russian rocket
Clothed in Levi double X jeans with
Moonstones for a button fly and a
Fish bowl for a space helmet to view the stars

I see you in your myopic yearning
The Paleolithic figure with
Mud colored features
And then just beneath the surface
A marquis-cut diamond of a heart

And here in this universal
Star-studded crazy house of mirrors
I see you awaiting the landing and
A drop ladder down to leap up
And assess what the moon has yet to offer

Sprechstimme in Spring Time

He rises to read in the temple
Coffin nail boots tell my back
Where I sleepwalk at night
He rises to read in the temple
It's just a dream in the sheet metal ark
But the memory lingers
The kid in the blue pajamas
Interrupts dreams of all kinds
Even the Biblical
The mother in the miniskirt
And thigh-high net stockings
Pushes buggy with baby through
Overgrown kudzu of homeless plastic
I am retracing my steps in this synagogue
Of money tables and sacrificial doves
Five-for-the-dollar clearance and discontinued
This and that brick-a-brack
I am reading between the lines
Spoken by a kid in blue pajamas
I am searching for Christ through Shakespeare
On price-reduced album
And
Through radio for children
I hope to sing and speak properly
At the midnight hour

Schlepherd Kills Sheep

DJ Virgin Killer
Is playing MC5's Rambling' Rose
And smashing it against
Marching feet
She drinks
Fortified wine
Burns rose petal
Incense
And no one is there
Except the smiling plastic baby
Beaming from war-torn Lego rubble spilling unenthusiastically
From the television onto blue-lit dance floor
DJ and baby bleed into retail lull minutes before midnight in Florida
I'm placating old men with toothpicks
They were good for something once
They try to hang their hats on rusty nails
That will soon give out
I love agape
But tonight
I'll sell
Black market warfare to latch key kids
You can kill who you want to
Providing you can convince your parents
To give you money to kill
It's just a game
Unless you want to
Work it for the government
Or just as a pastime
I love humankind
But give me 59.95
And I'll open the glass case door
And let your opponent's blood
Soak the virtual floor

-30o

Dad I'm calling
Too old to be young
39 years old and bald piece of dross
Eyes half-blind with candy floss
I'm calling to grasp for inheritance

It's

Valuable, turns out
No silver in the claim /just
Prayer and telegram
Urim and thummim
Roll em in your hand
All alone with public phone
In northeastern cold
Freeze-burned into old
End with mouth and ear
On a swinging, silver
Cord

Stop the Music

If the dead are coughing
While a sparrow tears curtains
With high notes and disdain
Will they be neglected in the resurrection
Or will they be denied a drink
Of cool water

Or will the curtain fall
In a furrow of diamond-cut shellac
With the label clawed away
And a hole in place of a heart
?

Killing FreezeSean-Nós Dance

I crush the emergency stop switch
And hit the brakes at the crossing gate
Where Reed Canal kisses Carmen Drive
An FEC locomotive pulls
HERZOG-HERZOG-HERZOG
Hopper cars full of salt
I see cold frost cloak royal palms
Hail striking red hibiscus
And New York City's dispossessed
Freeze into death coil springs
Inside PVC pipe ectopy
Along the stitch-like scar of tracks
They die dreaming of beachfront parks
As Paradise lost

Tonight I will lead old Huddie Lifechair

My former parole officer
In a weary buck and wing
To his nursing home burrow
But at present we are in silent expectation
Our bellies full of whiskey and knots
I look at Huddie through the rear view mirror
He's a kingfisher making his debut
From a wound bleeding lava and larvae
I rub spit and clay from my eyes
And see that his seat is vacant
A flatcar marks the train's exodus
I leave my options and the rear door ajar

Hibakusha/Bash Haiku

In a dark hour unaccounted for
In Key Biscayne
Half-frozen Iguana falls from a banyan tree
Staggers across the street
Puts two dollars in the payphone
Calls Martha Promise, an old flame
Mutters something akin to this:

*I've been considering
Your dash of dinner
Splash of glitter*

*I know you can vanquish death dust's minions
Down stairs and through the hall
I'll run my finger over white gloss molding
Fall underneath my double bass*

*See no evil
Soft shoe out the open window
Just to catch a fire ant to heat up the cold blue morning*

*I'll come back when I've grown too cool
Join your Joshua tree as friend Caleb parch your thirst and feed your hunger*

With a finger's promise

*On your dry, chapped lips
Cut thorns from wild rose stems
Hem the curtains
And blow the horn
To avert fear of the uncertain,
Mother's gentle scorn*

--None-too shabby for this catatonic voice
Whispering promise through ice-cold night

Oil Cloth on a Firm Table

*Daddy was called to Vietnam
Momma shot rabbit
And we never had ham
There's pink snow in Buffalo
Got my father's tags
And a rabbit toe*

Sedulous
Tongue eating louse
There in that diner booth
It has long been her
Pied-à-terre /recruiting office
Hand stirs fifth free refill of coffee
And spins
And weaves
A rope of sand
But her son
Dr. Evander Berry Wrasse
The foppish dentist
Has a broken finger
And cannot call
Often
Unless
To be retrieved from his corner in
Bear Garden
This is where Ma still plays
Floundering public relations pawn and
Knight errant
Against this townsman belebeg and that
3 tailed bashaw
Fancy words for
Rich kids with dirty silk slippers
And servants to sweep up behind them
But she can assume
The voice of the dominant
And alter it
So that venom purposed for foe
Is swallowed and forgotten
Making her
Irony fully recognized
Another servant with a big broom

Wrestling with Angela/Swimming with Sharks

Dear Current Resident:

We are in dire need of money for transportation
And uniforms for our Atlantic Peewee Sharks Grade School
Wrestling Team
It's
The only way to develop suitable maturity
And enviable qualities of character
Proper self-esteem and
The ability to tackle obstacles without fear

Wait
Dismiss this mass-mail out letter
We'll save thousands of dollars
And hours of solicitation
By closing the program
And encouraging mothers
To withhold outward demonstrations of affection
They must
Spread passive aggression
With a sumo-sized butter knife
Just raise that bar high to the heavens
And wait for that pearl of excellence
To be born from that *heya*—house of emotional neglect
And we'll see wrestling against mediocrity
And the undesirable
Brought forth to heralded heights

At the Country Rose Café

I spoke to the scarecrow man
Who had survived fire
And marked lost features with greasepaint and
Molded ears of soft plastic with discreet aids for
Hearing your gasps of dismay
And we had Dr. Larry flying around us
Making sure we were secure
In small talk and large boasts

Sometime after midnight
We got ambitious for something other than
Warm tap water in a tea cup
We demanded and obtained
Generous portions of Casu Marzu
The dead cheese alive with
Sardinian maggots
They did a fine job eating our dead insides
And the cheese burned blasphemies
From our tongues

This tells us
Upon further meditation
That you can't put too fine a point
On inward reclamation of the homeless soul

Invocations Amaze Switch
The
Orange blossom is a shriveled fiasco
In its uncapped bottle of
Manischewitz
Passover wine
I couldn't drink the rest
But it lingers
Like a noxious reminiscence
Of Florida corner stores and vagabonds
The state flower frozen in the cheap
Kosher booze
Forgotten in a farmhouse window
Overlooking
Nova Scotian whiteout

Update/Scandal

Yes,
Old friend, I am
Now shamming serenity/ wisdom
In exchange for a vending machine route
Coins for candy
A most
Steady return
Invested in the skin of
A Californian tree
And this much powder
To this much shot
And Jimson weed
To sicken cross-grained betters
I long to be a Cheyenne war song
An Ailanthus triumphant
In gardens turned to dust
We could snaffle the old guard
Out- general all
Assume a piecrust face
For behind it
I have passed from one owner
To the other
To ease the incubus of debt
I've become
An Old World duck
In a valet's rags
Languishing in splendor
Like a fake brilliant amongst the genuine
A cloudy-hued hostler
Worrying gaiters
And polishing a well-worn buggy
To certain death

