

# **MEDITATIONS ON BLUE, YELLOW AND GREY**

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ISBN: 978-0-9879561-4-9

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I don't divulge this stuff to conspiracy theorists and chin waggers and such. But we've invested all our profits into plastics. Every single penny. Plastics. So there's your story.

### Burning Bus(h)

There's no sound of sirens  
And that's a problem.

Some girl with a head wound  
and Ugg boots  
Is drinking a placenta mocha latte  
While talking in a staccato style  
In an affected, sing-song,  
Mezzo-soprano rise- and -fall about Pablo Neruda.

There's an overwhelming smell of burning flesh  
Pulsing out from the street  
To which she seems impervious.

But the problem becomes apparent  
When we see she is speaking to a flaming bus  
Which she includes in her imaginary clique of well-heeled friends.

Bus passengers try frantically to get out.  
When we pull back we can see that her convertible Saab  
Is all-but-demolished.

A man smashes his way through the front door of the bus  
And leads ten people with multiple flesh wounds  
And third degree burns  
Outside and way from an impending explosion.  
The girl wrinkles her nose and says "*Ewwwww!*  
Let me check my purse for some wipes.  
You look *gross!*"

### Everywhere in Chains

I do not wish to sing for you  
I don't need carnations that fade from view in the cold, grating air  
I do not wish to dance for you  
While you dangle compliments  
Like treats in front of hungry dogs  
I will not humour you  
Or meet your greedy gaze  
Have my use to you weighed on crooked scales  
I will not be that expendable man  
Decorated like a cheap cake  
For a shotgun, midweek wedding  
And my exit will cover you like a temple curtain  
Torn in two

### Daddy-O

The sea pig was loudly sipping slurping and sucking bottled water with a straw until there was nothing but air in the green glass bottle and he sucked that too until a fellow patron and psycho-biddy paid a waiter to bring him another bottle of water to keep him quiet as the sax man on stage was getting heavy with song and labouring over squeals that wanted to become definable notes but something was wrong there was a wall that had to be broken and so the sea pig at the front table sucked down some more water and the psycho-biddy held money out to the docile waiter who produced another green glass bottle of water complete with straw and the sax man bent his knees and squealed some more until his horn blew fourteen hundred different notes that spun like baby replicas of the sax itself, fourteen hundred visible and audible sons and daughters of this brass seahorse manipulated by anxious hands and mind variously applauded and recognized by seated spectators made ready by wine and water

### 615 Words to Go (Before You Get The Picture)

When I was young and foolish  
I worked as Chief Photographer  
For an award-winning studio.

In the course of the day,  
While immortalizing high school graduates,  
Rich fiancés, expectant mothers  
And undertakers,  
I would take a moment to dust, sweep and  
Mop the studio from front glass window  
To the rear bathroom.

I felt that this cleaning business was part of  
Eliminating the unnecessary.  
But I was young and foolish then,  
And neglected to take out the owner with the trash.  
He was old, rich and hateful.

He was the one who would boast:  
“I can sell clothes to a nudist,  
Constant craving to a Buddhist, and  
*Go to Jail* cards to bail bondsmen.”

He had me selling eighty cent 8x10 portraits  
For forty dollars. Just because they bore his name,  
Even though I had shot them.

When I set up my own studio to set up in accord  
With my ethics, he came walking in with a contract I  
Had signed, and pointed to something I hadn't read carefully:  
Something called a non-compete. I couldn't shoot in a fifty mile  
Radius of his studio for the next five years.

So I took up work as a realtor,  
And in four years' time bought the three buildings closest to his studio.  
I sold one to a nudist cafe, a second to a Zen meditation group, and a third to  
A bail-bond agent. In the fifth year after I had left this  
Award-winning portrait studio, many parents forbade their children  
To walk near the nudist café, even though they had a high fence.

The monks who ran the Zen meditation center would sit peacefully in their long  
Garb with their shaved heads in the studio waiting room, causing the  
Vanilla-middle-class clients to flee the scene.

The sudden loss of income came at a time when the studio owner's debt  
Was through-the roof. Finally, the unscrupulous bail-bond agent

Sold the studio owner a bond following his arrest for stealing money  
From purses left in the changing room.  
When the studio owner couldn't pay an additional fee, he was led back to jail.

When his studio and equipment went up for tax sale,  
I bought it and liquidated the estate,  
Then opened up a restaurant: The name: *385 Words*.

### Mr. Pinky

The windup clock had not been on the bus stop seat moments ago, but there it was, rattling its two-bell alarm like so much clucking in the early rain. He didn't dare touch it, as it belonged to some person not yet visible inside or outside the Plexiglass shelter through which he stared in expectation of Bus 52. "Infidel" said a voice. He jumped at the sudden sound. He could see that the alarm clock had been replaced by a short man in denim coveralls and a plaid shirt. It wasn't his pork pie hat that made the costume absurd as what must have been size 12 shoes in ruby red which completed it. "Sorry to startle you, little chick," said the man. "I'm Larry. Couldn't help myself." The rain had made a little pond on the floor of the shelter and sent a little leaf spiraling around like a lost boat. "I have diverticulitis," said Larry. "Little pockets in the colon that go all painful, like hot pizza or snake bites." Larry offered a hand. "What's your name?" He hesitated to respond, more out of city conditioning than anything else. Then he reluctantly produced his name. "I'm Mr. Pinky," he said. "I'm a stand-up tragedian. I get fifty bucks for five minutes. Tell people the most depressing things—about being stashed in a dumpster at six months of age, or about vivisection. People like to cry their eyes out. When I'm off stage, I like to wear these feathers, because I self-identify as a chicken." Larry looked Mr. Pinky over. "Polyester feathers can give you the hives," he whispered. "You should go to a chicken farm, get some feathers there, and wash them in sodium borate. Stick them to a union suit." Mr. Pinky shook his head. "I'm allergic," he sighed. "Poly is all I've got." Larry nodded gravely, and then brightened at the sight of the spinning leaf. He knelt down to pick it up. "Maple," he said triumphantly. "I like a good maple tree, don't you?" But Mr. Pinky was not there to respond. He had seen the Bus 52 in the near distance, and had braced the heavy rain to board it—just in time to look back and see a maple grandfather clock chiming at the bus shelter door.

### Night Soil

I am a night soil man  
In the night I haul off your excrement  
Along with your sordid thoughts and vanity  
I take it to the countryside  
And use it to fertilize cabbages for your corned beef  
And when you eat the lovely cabbages  
You get roundworms by the hundreds  
Which choke you  
And make parts of your mind, heart and soul  
Gangrenous  
I get two shillings for every ton of your night soil  
And sleep while you wither  
Under the sun

## Stock-Still in 3D

The glowing harpy  
Takes a spent product benign in origin and transforms it into a middling object inferior to its new purpose  
Meanwhile, our collective of fat bottoms further deflates a razed earth  
We rescue the air to further inflate our undersides  
So that should a typhoon occur  
We shall be able to float to safety  
If we don't sink first

And there on Marginal Road  
By Gate 26 on the water

The aging Pomeranian sits at his master's desk  
In the square mill building standing on tall legs by rust-stained silos  
And attached to said silos by means of long chutes and ducts that serve  
As weather-proof tunnels for rats of all sorts  
Is an office  
Where the Pomeranian serves as temp supervisor  
Over a canary-gone-cuckoo in her bamboo cage  
And that brick-built cat of course hair

And in vinyl blind- filtered-sunlit midair  
Through dust enumerated but not registered  
This mutt's heart revolves on its axis  
Around his brain  
And as it does its sleepless walk  
It is acknowledged by this brain  
While the other side of the heart  
Remains in shadow

The cat eyes the bird  
As she titters:  
“What do *you* think I should do?”  
“What do you *think* I should do?”  
“What do you think / I should do?”

And the cat makes hissing sounds  
And paws the stand  
That holds the bamboo cage

And the dog growls in such a way  
To say: “Bark incoming—and you won’t like it!”

And his heart turns cold toward his charges

And then

After what seems to be a season or so

He warms up to them

Only to hate them again

But then in the coldest of winters

There is that unexpected thaw

And wouldn't his master

Absent following closure of the factory

Have been proud of his overcoming personal emotions

For the betterment of all

Rationing his own biscuits and seeking out seed

Opening the window to seek water caught

In the window box

And through neglected sunflowers one might see

Enlarged cracks in the pavement below

Through which

Weeds and trees grow

And through the wind-beaten steel gate

Roads that lead to concrete road blocks

Obstructing holes that plunge

Into salty water

Water baptizes

Salt preserves

But forgotten jackets and newspapers

Keep winter away from the living

And this mutt's heart warms up

What the brain forgot

And the brain reminds one

Of what the heart has turned from

And the two seek intercourse

Over living while waiting

And

While industry turns into history



*Nathaniel S. Rounds writes from an illuminated box  
using a carpenter's pencil. When he has filled the inside  
walls of the box with words and has no room left,  
Mr. Rounds sells the box to a publisher  
and moves to another box.*