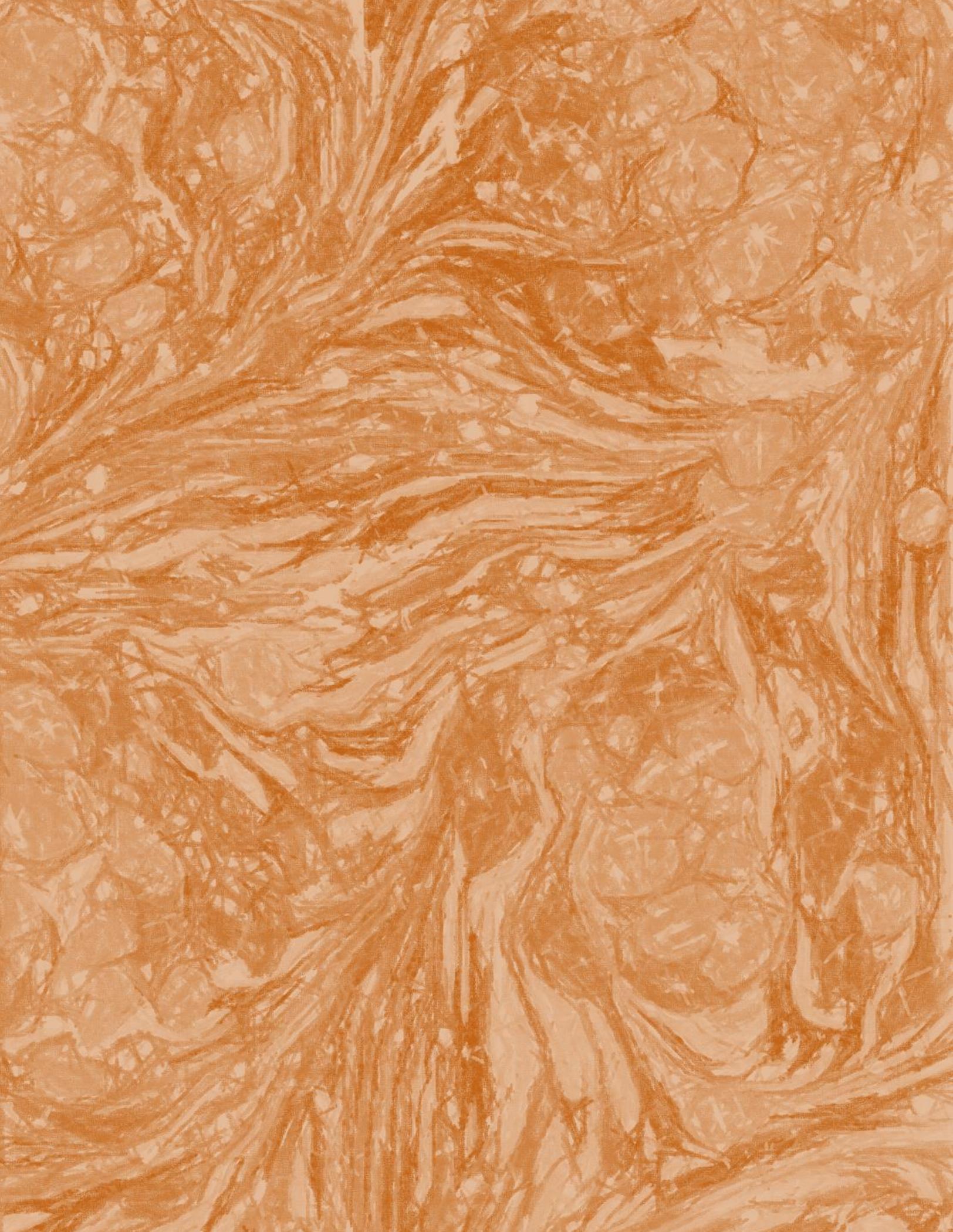


**NATION OF NATE: A
DONGPO PORK MIXTAPE OF
MELANCHOLY & MADNESS**

**SELECTED POEMS BY NATHANIEL S. ROUNDS /
EDITED AND WITH A FOREWORD BY ALISON ROSS**



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Dongpo Pork Mixtape of
Melancholy and
Madness*



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Edited and with A Foreword by Alison Ross*

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ISBN: 978-1-927593-51-6
Published by Fowlpox Press and Clockwise Cat

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Poems in this collection have been selected from books published by Fowlpox Press.

From *Cautionary Tales & Sundry Ballads*:
"VIII. Prima Facie: Nocturne for Disassembled Ukulele and Rickshaw"
From *Sgraffito: Whiteslip Patterns from Seaside Heights*:
"Are We Playing God with our Brains?"
From *Flowerhead (Noon)*:
"Flower Head (Noon)"
From *Asphaltum*:
"Prima Pimple/Lost in the Stars"
From *Enigma Variations*:
"Shmeat Dreams"
From *Your Mysterious Tears*:
"Omelet du fromage"
From *Shavings from the Drawknife*:
"Tiger Poem Ruin"
From *Libels on Nature*:
"Hibakusha/Bash Haiku"
From *Crevalle Jack*:
"Time Rocket in Water (3-2-1)"
From *Brains n' Eggs*:
"Suggested Serving"
From *The Glass Pillow*:
"On/Off Switch"
From *Bread of Tears*:
"The Garbage Tree"
From *Reproachable Optimists*:
"Peace Work"
From *Poems from Fenwick Tower*:
"Laughing Laplander Blues"
From *The Poetronica Scrolls*:
"Freud Chicken"
From *Clefts of the Rock*:
"A Rich, Satirical Blow"
From *Because So Much is Riding On Your Unicycle*:
"Pocket Cruiser (Weeping)"
From *It's a High Voltage Adventure*:
"Like A Red Morn"
From *Meditations on Blue, Yellow and Gray*:
"Mr. Pinky"
From *And Your Dreams Will Be Made Into Songs to Sell Burgers and Cars*:
"Courtly Love"
From *Gnomon Pierces Brain with Shadow's Outline*:
"Unnatural Order"
From *Rugs, Chickens and Automobiles*:
"Solitaire"
From *Dynamometer*:
"Joy Ride (Halted)"
From *Accordion Music for Hungry Eyes*:
"High Rent"
From *Love or Duty*:
"Halo Data"
"Swift Demise of Schwiphti"
From *Literally Ethical Pork Belly Mixtape*:
"Choking on a Rainbow"
From *Coins Between Cushions*:
"Royal Red & Blue"
From *Candy Medals of Bravery*:
"Michael and John Get Their Flashback On"

From *Megamouth Shark Eats Dongpo Pork with a Spoon*:

"Moralize Mad Windmill"

"Love"

From *One Man's Mosaic*:

"Subdivision Overview"

From *Fraudulent Twinkies*:

"Gold Ringed in Clothing Bright"

From *Things Which Are Not*:

"Forethought at Midnight"

"Perils in the City"

From *Paintings of Robots*:

"Reject Spy by (S)corn"

From *Deep-Space Dubstep*:

"Pyramid of Skulls"

From *Rockaballad*:

"Stash"

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FOREWORD

Nathaniel Rounds writes multi-layered lyrical poems which are hysterical, harrowing, sad, sometimes all at once. Their tones can radically shift within a single poem and sometimes within just a few lines from “ranting madman” to meditatively melancholic to jukebox jazzy. The poems are always imagery-intense, teeming with unorthodox associations, populated at times with cryptic characters and fantastical scenarios, and zooming forward with a feral frenzy.

So how exactly do you curate a “Best of Nathaniel Rounds”? Not only is it a daunting task, it’s impractical – in the words of the Mad Hatter, “unpossible,” even. Indeed, it’s probably even blasphemous, attempting to carve out “highlights” from a sprawling body of mind-blowingly original pieces. And then to have to whittle his prolific output to 38 poems?

But then, I think, duh. You have to extract representatives of his wild style, ambassadors to the Nation of Nathaniel. You must select those poems that, cumulatively, would induce readers to imbibe his entire beatifically bizarre oeuvre. And you have to cultivate variety: Some short, sweet and (relatively) straightforward pieces, some longer and more enigmatic poems, some prose verse, some free verse, some poems with stanzas and rhyme, some pieces with haphazard pattern, some mystical musings, some circus-tent revival ravings.

Variety, after all, is a decadently spicy affair.

At the end of *Dynamometer*, Rounds writes:

“If we assume that your mind is made up of toxic substances that stagnate inside a soft skull, then you cannot recognize nor demonstrate common courtesy. In short: You are completely bereft of character. Nevertheless, you’ll forget all about it once you snooze in front of the television tonight with a big bowl of pretzels on your lap.”

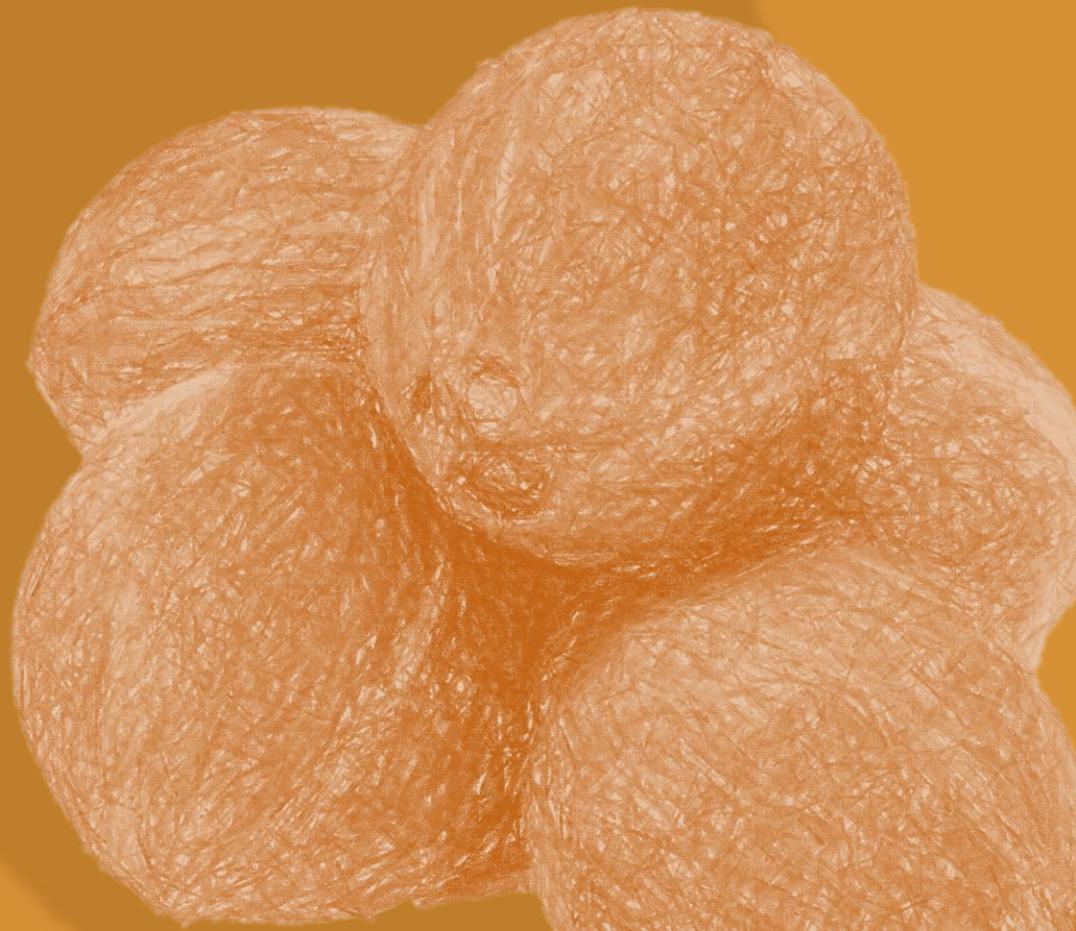
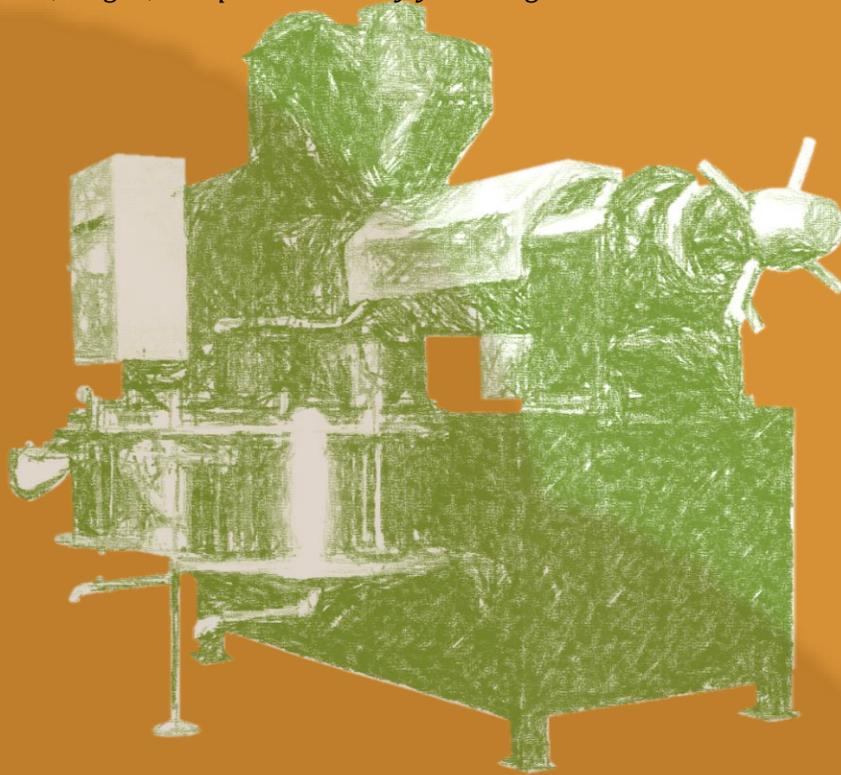
This, I do believe, encapsulates Nathaniel Rounds’ philosophy of poetry: Cut to the core of things using outrageous humor and outlandish insights. Disorient people, but also ground them in the here and now – and always compel them not only to see the absurdity of life, but to touch it, and taste it as well.

--Alison Ross,
Editor and Publisher of *Clockwise Cat*

Contents:

Coconut Oil

Store in a hot, bright, wet place to annoy your neighbors



VIII. Prima Facie: Nocturne for Disassembled Ukulele and Rickshaw

Were I not a celluloid messenger;
Were I not Nosferatu,
Feasting on his own
Nitrate flesh;
Were I not a failed study
In Appalachian sunshine,
Broadsided in broad daylight
By a San Franciscan streetcar
(Downtime: one hour);
I would flood you (no warning)
With my tidal bore.
I would bore you with pressed flowers
And polecat tears.
Tonight the sky is gauze and airplane exhaust
Dispersed against flood lamp searches of diamenté.
The sky is coccus scarlet,
Cedar wood and hyssop,
And blood from the throat of a young, red cow,
Thrown and sprinkled over
Burning, northern lights.

Please find enclosed a handwritten specimen
Of an account written by an unconscious patient
Detained in a military hospital
While stationed in occupied Japan.
He mentions several men crucial to the war's end,
His mother,
And his love for tapioca.

He also composed a poem,
Written in Esperanto,
That serves doubly as an address
To the United Nations.
It speaks uncharitably about war, nationalism,
And about one cow seen devouring another.

The doctor and nurse check the patient's vitals.
His mother enters (stage left) and places a bouquet of black
Roses on the side table.
The sound of distant canons and artillery are heard offstage.
Outside the theatre, a white dove
(Picasso says it's a pigeon), painted with talcum and
Paste, falls off the roof top
And dies.

Are We Playing God with our Brains? (Tumble Dry Low)

Fog bound in the Everglades
It's a rubber-legged doughnut man
Mirror for a hole
He's smiling with glazed crescent moon eyes
Up close, it's a sad state of shag carpet pile,
Body sweat through camouflaged air vents
THE DOUGHUT'S ON THE MOVE!
He doesn't roll
He strides, poses for pictures,
Resumes his Krispy Kreme stride
Of eternal optimism,
But then things change
One day, just before the great hurricane,
The rubber-legged doughnut man turns apologist,
stops
Passersby in the park, shares a few thoughts
From a book entitled *Nanoethics:*
The Ethical and Social Implications
Of Nanotechnology, then asks if he can
Use a magnifying glass to check their scalps
For tiny robots
A couple from Japan smile, laugh while under
Inspection, then ask to take his photograph
He stalwartly refuses, presses forward, takes his
Business from Titusville to Jacksonville,
Holds up to an angry throng a Ziploc® bag
Jam-packed with tiny little mechanical men
Kicking and writhing with unyielding determination,
A kung fu foofaraw
In every bite.

Flower Head (Noon)

On a cathode ray tube TV
Pop star sings with gravel-lined throat
Ad hoc lyrics stab and then
Bleeds the listener
Who awakens without painful memories
And yet recollecting the flesh
Of a warm, big fish

*

We feel sorrow regarding prior conflicts
Slick as whetstone
Deaf to afterbirth of faux- gourmet
Pork-as-propaganda

*

The alchemist laughs
Then collapses, castrating himself in rainfall
Waiting for help while dreading night's arrival
And the promised alleviation
Of the mysterious design of his own psyche
Relinquishing feathers
Of starlings in flames of gold and orange
And in this oasis in a glade
We listen, quiet, still
The fiery birds fleeting, flying
To jungle drums
Alerting those waiting
In war paint

Prima Pimple/Lost in the Stars

*Dedicated to Otto Frederick Rohwedder
(July 7, 1880-November 8, 1960)*

I was watching a television manufactured in China when you walked by. You had two gangrenous ferrets and an attitude. But my brothers Uz, Buz, and Hazo think you have remarkable acne. It glows in the dark like the reticulum constellation. And while the baker feeds my loaf of pumpernickel bread through the industrial bread slicer, I see your pimples glimmer, distant and star-like.

Shmeat Dreams

I had some dreams

They were injected/they weren't

Mine They didn't share the same

DNA

They didn't speak the same

Language

They didn't have the same

Birthmother

They were injected by

Committee

Like a formalist manifesto in

Lieu of love

Some say they were indicative

Of inward confessions

Like a purification from above

But even sparrows have songs

And these dreams couldn't sing

To save their souls

Omelet du fromage

Ishmael Onager, the ill-tempered obscurest, is grading the condition of his Japanese jazz LPs and placing them in clear sleeves while listening to Moon Dog and watching a rare kinescope of a time travel puppet show performed by a trained octopus in front of a live audience. He can't take it all in. He is plagued with culture shock. Spastic colon. Ulcerative colitis. Take your pick. In the final episode of season five, Dagobert threatens his brother Charibert and arranges his death, then takes the entire kingdom as his own. Onager drops the LP from his hand and falls face-first on his 1960's, German, two tone sectional sofa. Meantime, through lines and coarse grain and a digitally restored soundtrack, Amoghavarsha writes poetry from his man cave while he pays a beatnik to run his pizzeria. The beatnik ties his hands behind his back and steals his heart. "WILL THE TIME SAILORS BE QUICK ENOUGH TO SAVE HIM?" asks the narrator. The wayward beatnik joins his brother's motorcycle gang and takes a wrecking ball to forty- six cities. Mass hysteria erupts in Judea. Bartimaeus sees all. Onager remains still, except for his left foot, which itches. He removes his sock and scratches it with a banjo ukulele. The narrator closes this episode as he does all others: "Tonight's program is brought to you by Plutonium Electrolysis. It's the comprehensive system used in clinics and spas nation-wide. When you want permanent hair removal, think Plutonium. Ask your doctor about susceptibility to hydrargyrism, mercurialism, or silicosis."

Tiger Poem Ruin

So if I can't make the payment on yesterday's success, does that make me bereft of the right to live? Should I stick the key to the city in my mouth and spit it into a drop off box positioned at the bottom of a cliff at the end of goodbye? Should I untie my shoes and jump out of them before stumbling into the nearest swimming pool? Here are some autumnal thoughts based on notes whimpered on maple loose leaf: It's never too late to admit that it's too late to learn level one high school French. Also, no one was listening anyway.

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

Suggested Serving

Chippewa Ted in the
Orange rockabilly pompadour
Scoops pig brains
From a dainty can
Spork scrapes pork
Ted paints vibrant
Porkscapes
Shapes an ecosystem on stretched canvas
From processed memory
Aluminum May impair memory
So this ecosystem looks iffy
Like factory second plastic trees
But ah!
There's the rub—
Puddle of brains from a small tin tub

On/Off Switch

Mein liebster Freund
Herr Runde Wald Morgenstern
Lies on his bed of
Bleeding grass
Glass pillow cradles
Cranium harshly
While Leo the ½ price barber
Picks at Morgy's brain with a flea comb
And doctor's loupe
You
Are the headily dried
Rich
Honoured nymph
With the tramp
Stamp
Dancing on
Mammoth tongue
In front of the full-length mirror
Singing softly
(So as not to wake the children)

Twankydillo

Twankydillo

Twankydillo

Dillo

Dillo

A roaring pair of side arms

Silenced softly with a pillow

You steal the show
Tiny toes twitching
To the Sunday drummer's beat
And like a dove
Your conscience lies beside you

The Garbage Tree

And the world is an upturned tree
Of repurposed copper coil and aluminum
Welded but stretching out
From rusted dump truck hood
Angled and covering
Springs suspended above mud-caked piano
Utterly decomposed and yet
Still playable for the incorrigible

Peace Work

I'm the guy who puts the banana skins on the bananas. It's peace work. Whenever I put the banana skins on the bananas, I feel peace. Most of the time, I put on the yellow ones. For stores that sell a lot of produce to old people, I put the green ones on. That's because green means Go, and old people have a hard time going. They like to say their going has got up and gone. So we put the going back into their banana skins. Of course, nobody eats the skins, but the green skins give you incentive. When you smell the green in the scent of the banana, it makes you want to go. And for people who don't wish to buy yellow bananas or green bananas, we put on the black skins. These sell well to people who are mourning. There are quite a few mourning people. They get up first thing and all they want to do is jump up and die. So we give them a black banana with odd spots and they have something to cry about. It's our way of showing we care.

Laughing Laplander Blues

Electric power
Who needs it
We can watch the sun rise
Watch it do a fan dance with skimpy little clouds
Watch the sun do a belly flop
Plop over earth's edge
Heat is marginally necessary
Drag some deeply scarred trees from the forest
Cut them up and make a fire inside
A stove discovered in the attic
Maybe we should just live up there
Leave the first two floors to the animal kingdom
Keep the goats and feral dogs full of venture capitalists
We can tie them together to make a motley sled team
Drag the house to town
Show the other rats
Where the real cheese is at

Freud Chicken

Play the overpaid shrink like a pawn shop sax
Sell him your mellow song
Tell him you see acutely what was wrong
And how you made adjustments in your attitude
And that the medication works great
Then get him to sign you out of here
And then take a long trip to nowhere
So that you can reacquaint yourself
With talking ducks and evil food blenders
And Greek choruses on the radio
And sunsets that spell THE END just for you
Because troubling though it may be
It beats the pink and beige walls
Of a six-by-eight room

A Rich, Satirical Blow

You are not a show dog
You are not an acrobat
You are not a stylist
You are not a hare
You are not a Taoist
You are not an emancipator
You are not a Barcalounger
You are a Holy See sick host
You are a reptilian third-eye cognizance
Mother-of-Judas child killer
Choking on a burnt scone
You are a false projection of Mary Magdalene
Made from hatred prayers
Spoken by devils
You are inescapable mustard gas
Burning
Burning
And my child cannot run to safety

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

Like A Red Morn

*That shameless little guy, she mused
That smooth-talking King Cottonmouth
He needs to be reminded of his glass house
Get ushered inside
Bolted inside*

In this room of orphaned china bisque dolls and pyrite
Tar-scented ship rigging and sail
The wooden ladder positioned under the cross beam
Succumbed to a broken leg and step
Declaring its weaknesses by imposing them upon an
Unsuspecting girl of twenty-six with broom in one hand
Her head stopped by slab stone while King Cottonmouth
Descended a jack post
To examine
Her flailing hands rebuked by rusty saw blades while
She waded through rising rivulets of red

And now we've no word regarding the early life
Winterberry wife cake
Zoha Diakonos
Although it is widely understood that she
Did not kick up the dust on the floor
She relinquished not an inch of precious time
For her pocket-sized feet to reach it
And in the morning light
She whipped the warehouse on the wharf
Into presentable-to-the-public-shape
To a new jack swing
There in her page-boy black hair
Black tee and shorts
And
M- 1965 field jacket
She had a broom-as-mallet
And an incendiary compartment
You could feel razing the streets with the cop cars blocking us
From passage
She was a heat that scared Atlantic gentle winds
And motorcycle bar draught beer/mesquite/ white bread and gravy jabber

This
Only child of a man born near the Cave of the Apocalypse
And his wife
(A correspondent cum copy editor from Mumbai)

Sweeping out uncertainty and pained condescension
Leaving no place for dust balls or devils
With her eagle's watch
Who dared creep amongst this sleeping pile of porcelain
Palms and knees and clothed loins in this many-sided sickbay
Born in the Hôtel Nelligan

Art is not a handicraft you leave in the alley there on Beach Street in Daytona
Art is not something you abort because it counters your programme
Zoha was ART all in uppercase letters
ART had to bleed through all the disparate currents and somehow find a home
She had her long tresses and objections cut with shears by an obliging carpenter
And she worked against the superfine and the self-exalted without the smallest of
Provocations or dog bites

The high tessitura of her role ruined her voice
But the angels still listened with persistent devotion
She gave birth to a man
An out-and-out he-man in snake skin booties
She ejected him from her long, navy kit bag-shaped womb
Which she had often pointed like a finger at King Cottonmouth
I.e., "I want YOU to act like a provider, spade head"
But somehow accepted that she would be busy fighting and feeding
Like a hawk everlastingly

While getting crushed and melted down into
A fly's breath falling through a passing shadow
She was that muse in the closet to
That bookish poet with the tongue of silk
Who painted her with words
Which variously praised and damned her
As either Queen Esther or Jezebel
And now
In this red sea fashioned from ill ladder and serpent
Made her downfall red amongst the heartwood within
And the palms and evergreens without
While her offspring in cobwebbed pram
Cut through darkness with beaming eyes
While King Cottonmouth minded his own head

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 Plexiglas® 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.

Courtly Love

Chivalry isn't dead
It's just in remission
Like a cockroach sleeping
There beneath the stove
In Hell's Kitchen
And I will gladly open the door for you
While you speed through
Eyes closed to my empty gesture
I will carry your books home
Even though nobody reads books
These days and
I will gladly send a bottle of wine
To your table
Even though you hate wine
And this week only
I will offer you my protection
Even though your dwarf me
With those high stiletto heels
Because despite the common consensus
Chivalry isn't dead
It's just a coat we sometimes shed
To avoid the heat

Unnatural Order

Me and Sam the rabid optometrist
Decide to dance first
And think later
While pursuing the guy who wears the molting chicken costume
And goes by Inexplicably Subpar Boy
You can see him on Tuesday mornings
Giving burning waffles to the homeless

We run down to Barrington Place
To catch Bus 61 to catch up with the chicken
Who is driving a tow truck
With two dressed hogs with light bulbs in their mouths
The light bulbs stand in for the smashed-in tail lights
Making the evening more of an enigma
Than an "Aha!" moment

We go over the bridge and to Baker Drive
And into a parking lot shared by four car dealerships
The cars have been replaced by thirty-five poets
Who write an American-style hybrid of surreal
And frag-men-ted poetry
On cell phones and keyboards to video games
Then launch into the future for a billion new eyes

Sam is screaming about progressive vision
And about something called expanded cinema
And how Christian Metz cannot have seen the movies he describes
And how the apostle Paul may have been nearsighted
And he is jumping up and down while sobbing
And yet smiling
As though there really is some good in catharsis

The chicken is circling the poets while shaking his head
And listening to quirky retro gypsy music
Or whatever Radio Canada wants to call it
And the world is lowering its plastic signs for the final sale
And these poets are chewing on consonants and adjectives
Confirming that certain words and types of words
Taste funny or at least ironic
They do this in the most disconnected fashion
As though words were history divorced from us
And I have lost my desire to pursue the inexplicable
When it all seems to taste like chicken

Solitaire

Salinger's private words
Are immune to little, brown
Dung beetles clinging to his memory
Salinger's musings are private worlds
Kept private in the room he once occupied
Where the sun meets the dust
And highlights its ascent
Salinger's inner monologue is a slice of cake
Boxed up and interred
Nodded at and given official pardon
We all curse in our final sleep
We all wish to be forgiven

Joy Ride (Halted)

Joy is a virus spread
Soft and silly
Like a cotton candy cloud
Which turns into a storm cloud
Of stupid ideas
Hand out the umbrellas, friends
There's little time

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

Halo Data

leave the door a jar
the door adores a jar
jeer over
jars full of locks and knobs
hinges and bits of wood
screws and unclaimed
botulism

Swift Demise of Schwiphti

'Round Midnight at Minton's, DJ Kool Joe Keiberth has got his wheels of steel going and he's milking the Wagner LP of Tristan und Isolde to death, dumping samples over samples of samples and turning the whole thing into a fat, hissy sprawl of a soul/hip hop aria and then, right there on the stage, he stumbles backward and doesn't jump up again, and at first no one really gets that the DJ is dead in the house, I mean, this is exactly like his bud Felix did a while back scratching the same wax. So they drag the guy off the stage and this other DJ with a pork pie hat and shades gets up out of nowhere and starts tearing up the club with Schuller's Where the World Ends and adding bits of discordant piano—Jazz on orchestral fathered by jazz and it's like nobody ever died here, and that's the whole thing, the song just never ends.

Choking on a Rainbow

After eating, a housefly regurgitates its food
And eats it again like when Brain Delmedico
Of 777 Bateswood Drive in Houston, Texas
Regurgitated his chocolate donut (minus the hole)
And ate it again
While laughing at a television drama
Afterwards
He choked on a toothpick (the
Most common object
Americans choke on)
And at a neighbor's urgent call to 911
("Dude's laughing way too much—while choking!")
Was rushed by an ambulance
Driven by none other than Corto Maltese
To Lyndon B Johnson General Hospital
But the fly survived and the toothpick
Which in height exceeded the fly
Was burned in the presence of five
Hopi elders who murmured to one another,
"Does this mark the return of the rainbow?"

Royal Red & Blue

Professor Longhair stuck some walrus tusks in the holes where the piano keys were pulled from/you know, where the dreams seep out/and he got two other pianos and some secret clones/and now you should hear them/it's a concerto from Mozart in dream warrior triplicate/womb-to-womb-to home-brew-birth

Michael and John Get Their Flashback On

Two kids play in the same
Puddle
Puddle has gasoline
Rainbow sheen
We have welfare rags and
Unselfconsciousness
We have God as Stepdad
We have crossing guard as
Shelter
We have two different
Mothers
Mary and Liz
Who ate penny candy
Between hunger sandwiches
While they carried us in
Their bellies
And we just entered this
Ragged scene
With the second-hand
Smoke and the gasoline
(Leaded like Lucifer who
Fathered us both)
With a hunger for words
As song

Moralize Mad Windmill

I gave the tone-deaf octopus
A missionary haircut
(No charge
And using kitchen shears
And punch bowl)
We stood in the rain
Between a match and a woodpile
I walked around him
Making sure the sideburns were right
He told me about his days back in the fifties
As pinch runner for the Toei Flyers Baseball
Club
They wore hand-me-down uniforms
But this meant nothing to him
The only thing that mattered
Was the game itself
I asked if he ever missed the ocean
The octopus looked at me quizzically
Then laughed gently
“Nah,” he said while making a face
“The sun is best seen above water.”

Love

I was winding my 1960 Dodge™ Polara around the 24 hour drive through convenience store with my huge friend Jav who was born in India and who plays bass in a bluegrass band when it came to me that what I needed for my two acres of barley was not chemical-saturated manure but a rhino because rhinos produce manure that has a neutral pH factor and then after picking up two Pepto-Bismol® and a spatula we took a drive through a corn maze that from the air resembled Pliny the Elder riding a motorcycle emerging from the beak of a Lord Howe Swamphen when I suddenly got to thinking about making edible jigsaw puzzles for the sight-impaired and that's when I met Tracy, the woman of my dreams because she was in charge of removing potential obstacles like cow patties and rocks from the path so people would not sue the farmer who made this corn maze and when she removed a sharp boulder from the ground using a chain and tractor I knew I was in love but I also had to put on the brakes and drove off-course thus taking out some of the corn but the farmer let me take some of the corn and I invited Tracy over for a corn boil during which Jav played his bass and sang to a Bill Monroe record and boy did the Pepto-Bismol® come in handy when we had eaten all that corn and figured out that we had no drinks. I'm still looking into getting a rhino.

Subdivision Overview

Dangerous donut warriors
Defer to
Rainstorm in the suburbs

In a forgotten cul-de-sac
At the edge of town

Blue feathers and Spanish leather
Decorate this witness to
Owl giving warning of a certain,
Nebulous
Albatross hanging over the sky
Scuff wanting lasso
Elegant avocados
Perilous arched weeds

The artist with the double burden
Of being a citizen of the world
And a citizen of the soul
Will see you now

You will commission an image
Not so much your likeness
As the rosy surface of your facade

While frozen in repose
You will continue to lose bon mots
To carelessness in deep pile shag
Painted
As the cultured cowboy cause célèbre
Of your split level castle
In these gated, jaded 'burbs

Gold Ringed in Clothing Bright

Man's anger lingers on
Ineffaceably inscribed
Upon a yellowed page
It's metachromatism
As metamorphosis
With a self-inflicted wound
Unapologetic
And unyielding

Forethought at Midnight

Business was slow last night
Came home
From Bayers Lake on the Metro 52
(Which is that articulated bus that
Sways like a caterpillar if it were fat,
Drunk
Or both)
And
I got home feeling awake and
Uncertain
Of how you thought of me and
I guess it was good
That you were asleep
So I could think up some new ways
To say how much I love you
Only
Without the mock sincerity, or
That loathsome, grave earnestness
Before the morning came

Perils in the City

Just a stone's throw from a marble
Quarry
The emperor moth has abdicated
Its throne
Spear thistle has gone threadbare
And homeless children make toy
Houses
From bundles of bills

Here:
Quark-sized
Baby-robot-turned-soliloquist
Devolves into lo-fi solipsism
By way of Kawasaki®, walkie-talkie
Oratory:

“The germinated exterminated
Itself today.
Too late for a drink and a sun tan!
Ultrasound reveals how unsound
We've all become.
Too late for the peasants to
Revolt—wait a moment—
This just in—oh, that's my thumb—
Nobles still insist that
The peasants are revolting.”

Here enter two figures:
Clyde the wandering, sleep eating
Fire-bellied Toad
With a rhinestone moustache
And a very nice suit

And to his immediate right
Enters the zoo-zonked, Bengal tiger
With transformative powers
(Examples: late model family van,
Discounted duvet cover,
Factory refurbished nose hair
Trimmer)
Shall they battle?
Shall they fight for the title of
Customer-Recommended
Employee of the Month?

Clyde and Thunder Tiger converse
At a picnic table
Against a cityscape reflecting into
The Halifax Harbour
Clyde wears a grey, double
Breasted suit while his guest
Wears a fringed suede jacket cut in
the Western style

“Let’s return to the Puritans,”
Clyde offers
“Was outcast Anne Hutchinson a
Solifidian—your word--
Or just another radical feminist
With hyperthyroidism?”
Thunder Tiger leans in, clasps claws
And moves them
Like sidewinders traversing desert
Sand while speaking in a low
Voice offering cautious- albeit -
Convivial droppings of “aw shucks”
Proxy

But all this posing is interrupted by
An unplanned cough followed
By another
Thus prompting an unscheduled
Transformation into a nose
Trimmer which Clyde picks up and
Examines and then demonstrates
Until he sees the red blinking light
On camera one and then stares into
Its lens to say:
“Ladies and gentlemen, our tiger
Just made friends with whatever’s
Left
Of Bell and Howell.”

Clyde exits behind the wheel of a
'97 Ford Aerostar, smoke belching
Behind the closing credits
Dithyrambic jazz notes
Spilling over the air like silver
Spoons
From a thief’s coat sleeve
And the television plugged into the

Sidewalk

Is alone in its cautionary leanings
And the children, critters and doll
Don't pay it any mind at all

Reject Spy by (S)corn

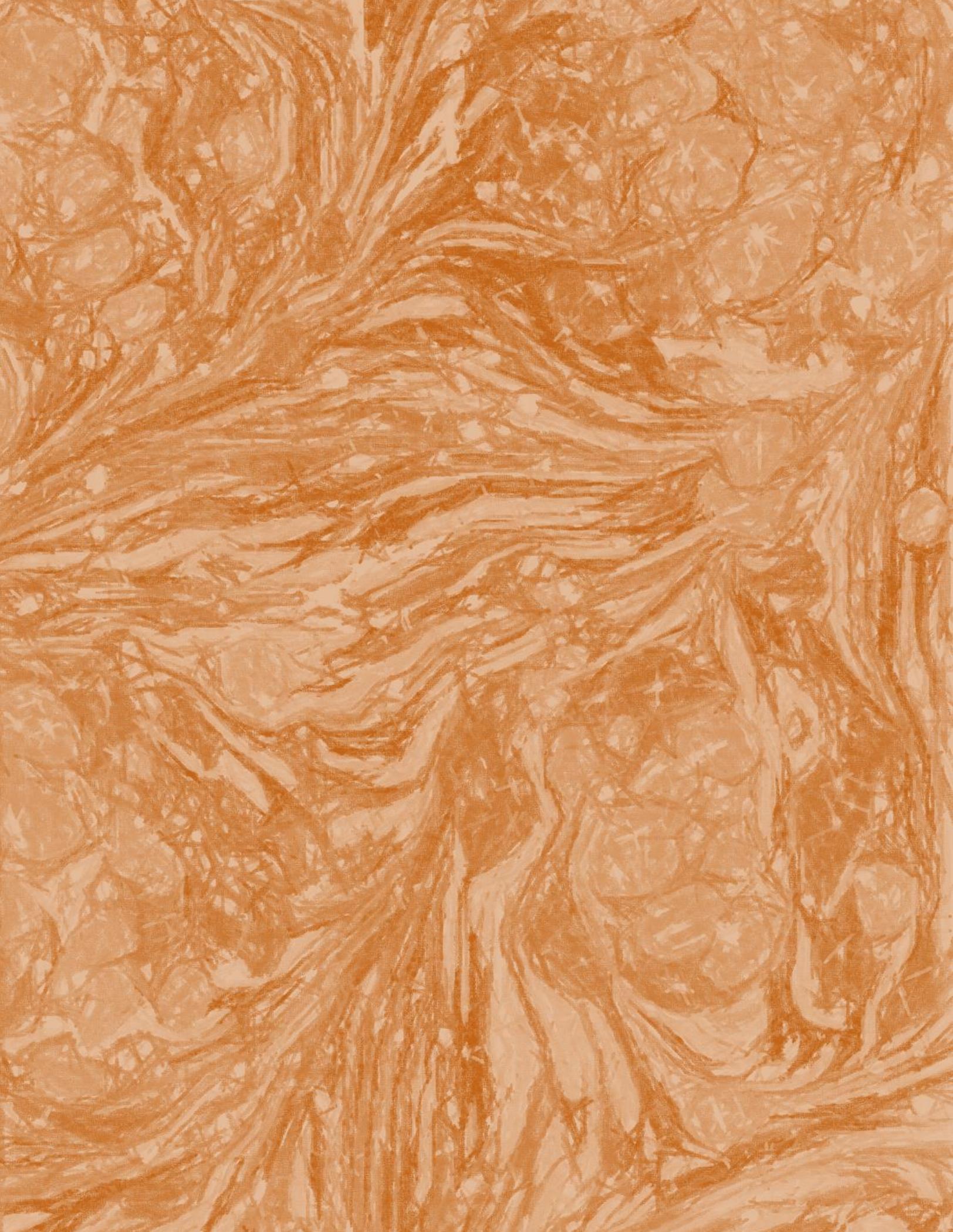
Let your short-term haircut be the talk of the town. You get two looks in one: Chocolate dribbling in Gaudi-esque cascades along the sides and back, topped with a flaming, comet goldfish. Our short-term haircut is a natural successor to Sir Astrotrain Sandstorm III, the tinfoil-clad skywriter with a penchant for pickles. Buy two advanced pro-formula short-term haircuts in the child-proof box, and we'll give you twelve hundred dollars against the mortgaged bereavement getaway of your choice. If this haircut fails to glitter and the loan-to-value is not gold, return immediately for a full refund. Only participants in the 48 contiguous states may apply, and are invited to do so liberally.

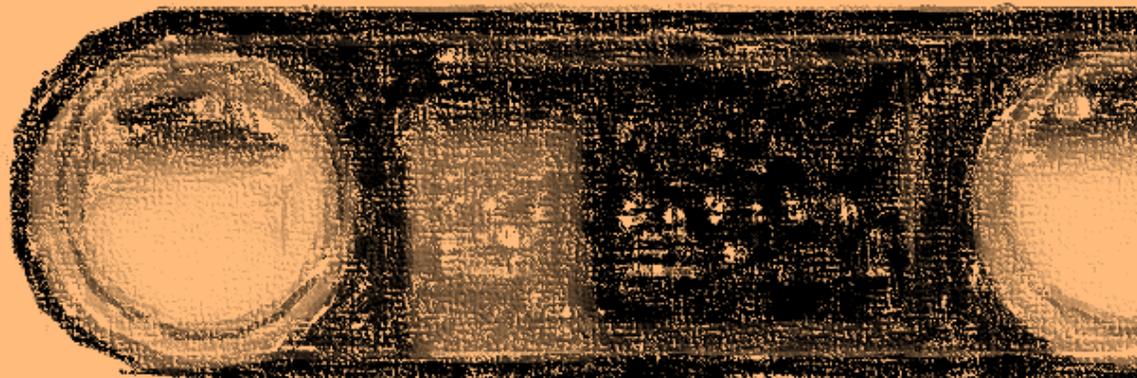
Pyramid of Skulls

When the day is done
I had a hard way of dealing with
Amitriptyline
Valium
Percocet
I'm a river man without the pillow
To muffle remorse
I'm a pink moon sinking into the hole of a
Guitar
Left in the wet morning grass
And we both rested here and held long
Conversations
But only third-hand memories of words
Or their carbon copies
Remain

Stash

I heard the promise strangled
Squashed and sunk in ocean waters
I felt the great depression
In the furtive glances
Collection of tin cans
Paper strung together with kite string
And in the hedonistic 1950's
Someone saved everything
Just in case





SONY



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