



**JOEFILES CV1:  
THE CLEVER IRONY**

## **our luck lately**

has been  
something i am trying to keep  
hidden behind our flimsy barn  
doors lest the world  
will catch the untimely  
scent of our misfortunes  
and begin buckling under the  
force of our existence.

i cannot pinpoint when  
it began or for how long,  
but just recently  
a bad skid started when we  
bought a 2 year old vehicle  
that has been in the shop for  
about 10 days and there is  
no hope for its immanent return  
any time soon.

this computer screen i type into  
got horribly cracked by a mysterious  
foot or bounce on the top of  
it's plastic enclosed casing.

then another computer failed,  
another one failed,  
my wife's desk got mysteriously  
locked shut,  
a black cat howls in front of our  
house after we just got rid of  
two of our beloved gray cats,  
this home won't sell and  
the bills race towards my dreams  
as though the pitchfork is  
severing fresh compliant flesh.

in between all these moments  
of small misfortune,  
and work,  
and parenting,  
and husbandry,  
and chores,  
and such,  
i find time to laugh at  
self-made jokes that no

longer go over with my  
wife because they are  
so overused and she's  
so used to my humor.

and as the humor  
train comes rumbling through  
my brains once more  
and the starship rides  
through another imaginary  
brainscape of mine,  
i opt to close this poem  
out and hit the save button  
lest a power surge comes  
mysteriously out of the west  
and i urge you to wash your  
hands and brush your teeth  
after the final period  
in this ramble  
so that  
you  
can  
be safe,  
and secure in  
your satchel of  
good  
reading  
luck.

## **PARK CRIMES**

when i pawn  
through the local  
section of the newspaper  
in the earliest of  
the morning before  
my brain is aroused  
and read the worst  
and most bizarre stories  
of hookers,  
drugs,  
murder and  
mysterious death,  
i think about all he  
broken cars with tinted  
windows that linger  
the drives at public parks.

every time without fail,  
i see teams of these men  
just lingering with cars idling  
or no engine humming at all.

i peer into these black voids of window  
wondering if they will snap to,  
shoot me a nasty glare  
or wave a gun into the sunlight  
with a huge grin on their lips.

and as i roll away from  
the park with my kids in tow,  
and a head full of fresh air,  
i see that one mystery car  
has disappeared and another has  
taken its place.

if i was a crime investigator,  
or a cop with huge quantities of  
time on my hands,  
i would linger in these  
parks and start doing the good  
deed of making sure that  
horrible morning ink  
doesn't get stained on  
innocent eye balls like mine.

## PET STORES

the  
best  
outing  
for a  
grave A  
cheapskate  
like  
myself when  
i have a couple  
of kids on my hands  
is  
to  
gently  
linger  
throughout  
the  
aisles  
of a  
local pet  
store  
and  
grin  
like  
i actually  
have a good  
savings  
account  
and  
that i would  
really  
be at  
some  
expensive  
kid place  
full of interludes  
and games,  
but  
i don't read  
the paper or  
keep  
up on all  
that much.

## population impeachment

the  
real  
torture  
of  
not  
voting  
for  
george  
w.  
bush  
and  
having  
to  
endure  
the  
pain  
is  
that  
all  
his  
pals,  
friends,  
voters  
now  
have  
to  
get  
a  
good  
solid  
joust  
to  
the  
mouth  
with  
his  
failed  
presidency  
and  
utterly  
unpopular  
walk  
down  
the  
plank.

## PUBLIC RADIO AUCTIONS

one of the  
very few times of  
the year i get anxious  
and visibly deterred  
is during the public  
radio auctions.

i have tried to fight  
the feeling,  
but the tide typically  
snags my feet and yanks me  
under.

it's a double prong  
that sticks in my side.

on the one hand,  
i tire of having my  
programs,  
music and such interrupted  
by tear soiled pleas.

on the other hand,  
i'm too poor to donate  
and have rarely done it.

this means,  
that i'm responsible for  
the mundane boredom  
that comes from not donating  
and as the volume knob  
remains glued  
in hearing range,  
i peer into my empty wallet  
and concede  
that this is all better  
than  
the hell of commercial  
radio taking my money  
without my asking.

## QUASHING LIGHTS

some  
days i go  
into a work  
a bit drunk,  
or goofy  
on the prior  
night  
of wine and  
find myself  
stomping  
on white lights  
moving in front of me  
from the sources above  
as the shiny floor tiles  
look up in surrendering mercy  
as i pause,  
look about a bit,  
and realize that someone  
may have had to process  
my pouncing of wandering lights  
following my  
slightly gone brain  
around my vessel of day  
thinking. trying to catch  
them ..



## REAL POLITICS

becoming a part  
of the familial chain  
of american politics  
has made me take things  
a bit more seriously than  
i ever could have imagined  
and wanted to.

ever mindful of years  
that the seriousness  
can lead to quick death,  
ulcers,  
useless prescription drugs,  
or stronger alcohol,  
i waned away from the  
seriousness as though  
it was a sickness.

and now in more frequent  
moments i am serious myself  
and wonder when the moment  
happened that my perpetual jackass  
follies came down to these more  
increasing moments of jumping off  
the hobo train and walking towards  
the movie behind the white picket fence.

it is then,  
that my 2-year old wakes in the other  
room as the smell of paying online bills  
remains on my fingertips as the green  
dot of my early morning alarm burns square  
into my retina and i realize that  
my smile has eroded and  
the muscles are a bit stiffer  
than usual.

and then i cross this poetic bridge  
when i can look into the proverbial  
mirror,  
blank my mind to a simple set of zeros,  
fade to black  
and find that one tiny bird  
squawking a well timed joke in the

back of my mind and  
i know that the black cloud of my imagination  
will part and all of this seriousness  
will indeed be just a lousily timed  
joke that will produce  
small,  
shiny happy kids  
and a wife that  
will again not take  
most of what i do seriously  
in that no so serious manner.

## Remember?

the past two weeks  
have robbed our 8-year old  
zen boy of simple acts of  
remembering his life.

he has lost both of his  
winter coats,  
and as the real cold approaches,  
he has no idea where they are  
at as my wife and i  
stare in confusion out the front  
window  
with a picked apart home  
and torn apart cars.

for several days in  
a row,  
i reminded him in his  
flimsy, thin  
fall coats to  
ask the front desk  
at his school if they  
found his mysteriously  
vacant coats  
that left without memory  
or a single trace.

they wandered off like  
a taliban warrior under  
the green swish of some  
army radar.

and when i asked zen  
if he inquired about his  
missing coats at school,  
he told me that he didn't have  
time to check  
as the temperature in our  
home dipped to dangerously  
cold levels.

at that,  
i had to do what i always  
have to do with him,  
find his lost memories and  
reapply wrinkles to smooth  
surfaces on his brain.

so,  
i called the front office  
at his school and they immediately  
said they were on the top of  
the lost and found box.

as zen sauntered back  
to his school during after school  
hours,  
i again recanted my thanks  
that his actual brain is attached  
to a stem and has no  
chance of wandering away  
or slinking into some  
cardboard lost and found bin  
because  
it would never be recovered  
and we would collectively  
miss the partial enjoyment  
we get from  
his  
vacations  
away  
from our regular,  
clinging reality.

## REMEMBERING THE UNFORGETTABLE

each time i see that  
'9-11-01 : WE WILL NEVER FORGET'  
sticker streaming from the  
back of broken american car  
i want to follow these drivers,  
get out and tell them that  
i cannot forget this day  
because these stickers remind  
me why this country is on such  
a reckless course to Armageddon,  
so in reality,  
i would never had to have a bumper  
sticker that cost the slight fraction  
of an actual bomb that is falling over  
Iraq as all the dummy Americans Trollope  
around reminding each other of something  
that none of us will ever forget  
and no bumper sticker of any cost,  
size or color could be enough to  
unremind or remind me of such a  
day as 9/11 as the  
poor old car with the pearl harbor  
sticker kills its engine behind me  
as a small kid walking into  
the dollar general asks his dad  
what kind of pearl is in the harbor  
and why would we ever forget to call  
911 when there is an emergency.

## **RESURFACED BRAIN**

after i leave an  
area of parking lot  
that says in big,  
proud letters:  
'CLOSED FOR RESURFACING'  
with the plethora of  
yellow tape blocking off  
anyone from entering,  
i begin wondering how  
it would be received if i  
did the same to my head  
one day so that i could  
rebeautify, rest,  
and come charging back out  
into the world with a  
brand new brainy  
black top sheen.

## SHACK STAR

there's one  
rundown small  
white paint chipped shack  
on a busy corner up  
the street  
and the muted  
make shift shades are  
always pulled  
tight.

there appears to be glimmers  
of life in that tiny hovel,  
but there is never anyone in  
the wasted windows or  
out in the lush yard.

i imagine some  
haggled older man,  
badly kempt,  
that got whacked out on  
thorou and is writing  
words that will some day  
change the course of all  
the cars that careen by in  
huge numbers on a  
gradual basis.

## SMALL ANIMAL JAIL

the other  
night  
i bought  
our 8-year old  
a clear plastic  
bubble like thing  
with an astronaut  
sheen for his  
plump guinea pig.

his excitement  
was clearly bustling  
as he fondled the  
plastic ball all  
the way home  
dreaming of the  
joy this little  
creature was going  
to gain from  
such an big  
animal adventure.

then  
the moment arrived.

i looked into the  
other room  
to see this  
poor,  
dejected  
hair pig  
shoved into a ball  
the offered him  
no leg room  
and he wobbled  
in a slow pathetic  
circle gait  
back and forth  
as zen boy  
looked at  
the flickering  
swatches of light  
from the TV  
as the world



continued to be  
his personal playground  
of complete kid  
joy  
as i fled  
my  
seat to  
comply  
to my humane adult  
duty  
of freeing  
this small animal  
from  
joyous  
kid bondage.

## **stoners aren't all that different from drunks**

and i found out firsthand  
last night  
when the mother of a friend  
our 8-year old hangs  
out with came in for a bit of  
wine and some  
talking.

she had two small bottles  
of wine in her purse,  
and as my wife and i talked  
politics,  
religion  
and sexuality with  
explosive precision,  
her wine disappeared.

then,  
our wine disappeared  
gradually  
as she told us about  
her stoner fiancé  
that started the car the other  
night in the blazing cold,  
came inside  
and over an hour and a half  
later discovered that he forgot to turn  
the engine off or leave the house.

she got a howling  
gut of laughter from this.

and as the wine was vanishing,  
the time followed suit  
and she decided it was time to  
leave and get her kid home  
for school the next day.

before that,  
she was gonna start her own  
car and get the heat rising  
and ready for a short trip home.

guess there was more wine  
that i had thought,  
and the conversation over  
the three taboo topics  
roared forward like a  
summer bumble bee  
as the car kept running  
and running  
and running  
and an hour  
later when her

fiancé came by,  
the car had been running  
for over an hour.

it was astonishing  
and as the voices of  
her exclusionary theological  
views came blaring out more  
intense  
and pointedly,  
her fiancé told us how his  
friend was so drunk that  
he said there was no basketball  
game on TV,  
which prompted the fiancé  
to go home,  
turn on the game  
and notice that it was  
halftime.

the game was always on.

ahh,  
the stoner and the drunk  
stuck in overtime  
as their cars hum  
like a forgotten  
thought  
melting off  
the tip of  
a sorely frozen  
ice spear.

## STOPPING ROUGE MARKETING

if i had the  
special reserve  
of energy to start  
my own philanthropic  
marketing business  
it would be to teach  
all those folks out  
there with makeshift  
stenciled signs on the  
sides of van windows  
or in the back of  
common car windows  
proclaiming their  
own business venture  
to use  
different  
kinds of letters  
and techniques  
instead of  
pieces of paper  
with scribbles  
and small letters  
rambled into long  
paragraphs that  
no brain is gonna  
swallow even  
at  
stop lights  
so i'm asking all of  
these guys a favor  
because i will never  
open a business like  
that to take  
down your pages of signs  
and hardware store  
stencil letters and  
make a web site  
or by TV commercial  
time and save all of  
us in our innocent ventures  
from pondering the depths  
of other things you  
do badly  
and let us focus

on ridding  
what we do badly  
on our innocent jaunts  
via  
travel salvation.

## the diaper is pale

we still  
harbor the dreaded  
diaper pail in the corner  
of our parental  
room sanctuary  
and cringe at the  
smell that hangs in the  
airs of our room.

sometimes it's much  
better than others,  
but after two years,  
the heave needs the  
grand old ho-ho-ho  
as the smell of regular  
outside air is so refreshing  
that i can sit out there in the  
cold for minutes just flexing my  
mouth like a pair of goldfish lips  
underwater  
sucking in the invisible shots  
of whiskey as though i just  
arrived into this new  
oxygenated world and  
there is nothing finer out there.

then,  
i stop and ponder the infatiguable  
love i have for my son  
and how it would be almost cruel  
if the tables were turned and he  
had to be subjected to a diaper  
filled bucket of my shit.

that's enough to scare me from  
ever questioning the slight  
scents of his residue  
clinging on for dear life in  
our room as the memory  
of this dreaded diaper pale  
gets closer and closer  
to being exactly that - a memoir  
to the ascension  
of our miraculous  
baby  
in his shiny,  
clear,  
golden diaper.

## THE GLASS I LOOK THROUGH

i have a painful  
sprig of a glass sliver  
in my pinkie because i smashed  
about 10 window panes out of old  
window frames for a new painting  
series that i'm going to start soon.

also, the muscles in my forearms  
ache because of the constant force  
i had to use with my wielding hammer.

i realize now that not only am i  
getting old,  
but that i am nothing like the dudes  
that is littered throughout this  
suburban neighborhood and those guys  
in all the commercials on TV.

i'm not checking stocks,  
watching sports,  
doing extensive home repair,  
lazily lounging on a couch,  
avoiding housework,  
or any other dude activity  
that typifies that typical male.

instead,  
i ready artwork that doesn't sell  
all that often  
as my injured forearm aches a  
tiny bit more as these letters  
run away like a strip of stock quotes  
tinkering across my  
fictional tote board.

## THE LOVE OF STRESS

i have  
finally  
admitted  
that i have stress.

i love stress.

i may have  
become stress.

i might just  
crave stress.

i enjoy the sound  
of the actual word  
stress.

i need stress anymore.

i get nervous if  
there is no stress.

a week without  
the smear of stress  
would likely be  
a mental month long  
vacation to an exotic  
location that would  
save me oodles of money  
give me enough strength  
to handle the following  
week of pent up stress.

stress and i have become  
conjoined nouns that  
are in love in the big,  
wallowing kissing tree.

i hope this poem hasn't  
stressed you out.

forgive me if i have  
passed along my stress.



funny enough,  
i haven't felt the stress  
since this poem started.

so i would like to continue  
writing this very poem  
for days and days and days  
to keep away the stress  
but i think the stress would  
miss me if i wasn't there  
to focus on it's issues.

i will leave you now  
and wish you a stress free  
slip into the next poem  
you read as i go on  
to battle more issues  
to keep the poetic topic  
line fresh and full of  
hand picked battles of  
common yore.

## THE SMELL OF FREE THEOLOGY

when i was  
a young kid,  
i used to call  
that toll free number  
and have tons  
of those books of  
mormon delivered to my  
duplex home.

my folks never blocked  
them from coming through,  
my brother and sister ignored  
them,  
and i thought it was entirely  
brilliant that i was getting  
free books sent to my house.

i had no idea what mormon  
meant,  
nor did i mind finding out.

i just thought  
it was someone's lengthy  
interpretation of the bible  
and that it made for something  
to stack on a book shelf.

and i would hoard these books,  
put them in my closet,  
rarely read any lines out of  
them,  
but always cracked that book open  
and took a good whiff of the  
pages and smiled all over  
with that fresh ink delight.

i did this to each book  
without fail,  
and figured the fragrant  
smell of the ink spelling  
out their theology  
would assuredly be better  
than having to read their  
entire book of words.

and now,  
several decades or so later,  
i'm convinced that  
the best way to  
absorb the thrust of any  
good theology is  
to first smell the pages,  
smile,

and plod with caution  
through the annals  
of their  
written interpretation  
of our good human sense.

## **the time of timing**

if you  
have the time  
to tell me  
or anyone else  
that comes up with  
some notion like  
a hairless donkey  
or a lost brady bunch episode  
that i have  
way too much time on  
my hands  
then what you have done  
is negated yourself  
and officially  
bested me  
because  
i have never had enough  
time to ever  
contemplate  
fully  
the notion that i have  
too much time on my hands,  
thus  
you have robbed your minute  
and given it straight into  
one of my robin hood arrows  
that will  
pin the tail on  
your lost donkey.

## THE WHETHER CHANNEL!

i'd have  
always wanted  
to have a  
real 'whether' channel  
that would be personally  
tailored to my life  
as the kind of guy,  
and way of life i lead.

in the morning,  
i could tune in to see  
a map of my brain  
with tiny swirls of jet streams,  
rain patches,  
clouds and sun  
littering the different  
regions of my brain  
as some 'whether man or woman'  
tries to gauge whether or not  
i'm going to do this or that  
throughout the day.

am i going to have a good lunch?

am i going to have a fender bender?

am i gonna laugh more than 26 times  
before lunchtime?

will i do this  
will i do that  
will i do the other  
will i .. will i

my own whether channel  
would help me enjoy  
the weather outside so much  
more and my moral degree  
could even forgive the  
actual weather people  
if they predict rain  
on one of my sunnier  
whether days.

## Tomatoe and Potatoe

it's all dan quail's  
fault that  
i fuck up the  
spelling of  
tomato  
and potato.

i now shove an 'e' onto  
the end of these  
glorious words and  
delicious vegetables  
because of his  
lapse of  
fortitude in  
the spotlight years back.

he misspelled the word  
tomato as tomatoe  
and forever galvanized  
a wierd wrinkle in my brain  
that sucked in the potato  
as well into my 'e' quagmire  
that i haven't been fortunate  
enough to shake.

so,  
please forgive me if  
i offer you a small tomoatoe  
or delicious potatoe  
with an extra vowel on the end.

it's only the wreck less  
work of a dangerous politician  
averting the democracy  
and assailing  
my personality.

## TROPICAL CONTACT STORM

one of the last moments  
of my day in the bathroom  
is filled with a small joy  
that can be described as  
a tiny hurricane in a  
wet volcano.

when i finally  
get to extract the  
contact films from my  
eye balls,  
i watch them closely and carefully  
as they splash into their  
tiny pools of fresh saline  
solution and the mad scurry of  
lashes,  
dust,  
and sometimes unexplained  
residue slink away  
from the submerged lenses.

all the trash and miracles  
my eye balls absorbed into two  
small covers over my eyes that  
enable me to see how  
you do what you do  
and ensure that what i'm  
doing won't result in  
a spreading chaos of  
trash particles.

## TRUE HOLLYWOOD BULLSHIT STORY

the only proof  
i need that  
hollywood is a  
bit lopsided  
and doped up  
on something  
is to look at  
the hollywood  
signs patent  
jagged architecture  
and imagine the  
band of drunks  
that concocted and  
built such a sign  
to signify  
a group of people  
that makes so much  
money  
that the sign  
could be reconstructed  
in pure gold  
and jacked up into the  
sky like a huge  
diamond winking  
in the lopsided sky.



## **Watch out for October 19th**

if it hasn't been  
proclaimed before,  
then October 19th  
of any year from  
here on out can  
be officially deemed  
worldwide dumb day  
for all humans.

and this idiocy  
can be doled out  
via sun rays or  
faint gray glimmers  
from cold cloud cover,  
it really doesn't matter.

but this is the day  
that folks steal your  
parking spot,  
your boss forgets to pay you,  
you hear people talking  
their stories,  
you watch the worst of  
humanity stream by in a proud  
line of non-stop insanity  
as you check for your wallet  
and hope the  
20th is your eternally  
lucky day.

## WHO'S THE REAL TOUGH GUY?

i  
would  
love  
to  
corral  
all  
of  
those  
tough  
country  
dudes  
with  
COWBOY UP  
bumper  
stickers  
and  
ban  
them  
from  
going  
to  
the  
gas  
tank  
to  
fill  
up  
their  
enormous  
tanks  
and  
then  
finally  
figure  
out  
who  
the  
toughest,  
roughest  
bad  
ass  
modern  
day  
cowboy  
is.

## WINDOWLESS

when  
i  
hear  
the  
words  
of  
a  
jehovah's  
witness  
on  
my  
doorstep  
speak  
about  
how  
they  
have  
to  
spread  
the  
light  
of  
truth  
around  
the  
world  
i  
always  
neglect  
to  
ask  
them  
my  
burning  
question  
as  
to  
why  
their  
kingdom  
halls  
never  
have  
even

one  
window  
to  
let  
all  
the  
light  
of  
the  
world  
they  
profess  
come  
screaming  
through  
in  
daring  
torrents  
of  
theological  
rapture.

## wood smoke assumptions

my caroline  
wife kept  
saying that she  
felt as though  
she might have  
a brain tumor  
because  
she kept smelling wood  
smoke.

i never smelt it,  
nor did anyone else  
that was in the room  
that she would ask.

her rationale was that  
folks with brain tumors  
begin smelling odd scents.

this went on for at least  
two weeks  
and each successive time  
i was beginning to believe  
in her watershed theory  
that she might be  
developing some dreaded  
lump of flesh in her  
cranium and my  
disbelief in her  
assertions would  
be a cruelty that  
would only make  
the possible lump  
grow larger and  
more hideous.

and as thoughts  
of this possible tumor  
persisted,  
i ended up being the  
investigative home reporter  
that cracked this  
sherlock case.

after a marathon  
shower one night,  
i waded through the  
pounds of mist  
to find her soft slippers  
she ordered from a  
small outfit on the foothills  
of the Himalayas in Nepal  
and i smelt the wood smoke

as well.

was i beginning to develop  
the brain swell  
with my wife.

and as my nose went towards the heel  
of her left slipper,  
i found out what her theory  
was all about.

while lying her  
Cinderella slippers on the ground,  
i told her that her brain was  
fine because the wood smoke  
was on her feet the entire time.

and suddenly i felt like  
a real life doctor  
wading away the demons  
as a warm smile broke  
over her lips  
repaying me in full  
for the  
hearty investigative  
reporting  
it takes to be a  
husband in this modern  
world.

## WORLD FULL OF STRANGERS

when i feel like  
i might know a lot  
of people,  
met a lot of people  
and have enough friends covered,  
i go out to my car,  
drive down the road for some  
time while paying attention to  
all the passing cars and  
strange faces.

then,  
i quickly realize that i don't  
know as many folks as i once thought.

where the hell do all these people  
come from and where are they going  
in such a refined hurry?

there are blitzes of faces that  
careen on and on and on  
in a blinding twirl that i  
eventually have to stop looking  
at all of these strange people  
like you and my unknown neighbors  
and realize to meet all of you  
people would probably be less exhausting,  
and equally taxing as looking at all of  
you blaring down your  
road of reason  
armed with your mass of  
fellow strangers.  
from

## **Zumwalt Ave.**

if you're not  
sure where we should  
meet,  
then let's just meet  
on zumwalt avenue  
in the quaint of  
downtown  
small town america.

it's the street  
i pass everyday  
and wonder who  
would name a street zumwalt  
and how many people  
could take such a  
street seriously.

do people even notice?

should they notice?

do they care?

hell,  
they should,  
because it's  
zumwalt.

when the fuck  
have you heard of such  
a name,  
let alone  
naming a street that  
hundreds of people  
ride,  
and use  
as though  
it's a name  
wholly  
unconquerable.



## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ELECTRONIC AMNESIA

i recently lost  
about 45 recorded  
thoughts that lead to these  
poems on a small  
electronic device that  
rests gently in my  
calmed daytime pocket.

and several days ago,  
after clicking the  
screen 'ON',  
i noticed that all of those  
thoughts were gone.

thinking it may be hidden  
somewheres else,  
i found out that it was  
gone.

a weeks' worth of some  
of the best thoughts i have  
had in a long, long time  
were vanished.

as though they never happened.

when i let this notion  
sink into my brain,  
i felt the way an amnesiac feels  
when afflicted with the ugly  
cloud of not being able to  
recall your own life.

forgiving this cold piece  
of black plastic,  
i now look down with a  
lack of trust,  
as the small red light  
of recording glares up at  
my gambling eyes knowing  
that it's computerized  
wink is completely in  
control of my next  
small,  
possibly forgotten thought.

## ANOTHER WAR

my darling  
caroline  
has had to sacrifice  
most everything that  
she knew as earthly comforts  
when we first met each other.

from wine glasses  
to decorative lamps  
to treasured blankets,  
fine lotions and any other  
assortment of girl items  
a guy cannot understand,  
and now the final blow to that  
sacrifice is happening all  
around this house.

she keeps stepping on  
inanimate, tiny green  
army soldiers that are spread  
by our two chickadees all  
over this battleground known  
as our house.

and there is no plan for an  
immediate pullout,  
because the kids would cry  
and call us liberal pusses,  
while the economic costs are low,  
the emotional toll of mashing  
hard plastic corners into our  
feet continue to mount.

day and night,  
new feet casualties,  
and even breaking the occasional  
mechanical sweeper is happening,  
but there is a war to fight in  
this house and these kids need  
bodies and weaponry  
in their fight for ultimate  
kid and baby freedom across  
this democratized house of ours.

without a vote to be cast  
or a voice that will be willingly heard,  
my dear caroline and i  
tip toe around the dangerous  
domestic policies and hope  
that the pain of these soldiers  
will subside when ours do.

## **BACKWARDS & FORWARDS**

i wonder  
if others like  
me newly married,  
with kids,  
ever start an inevitable,  
without warning or trying,  
a path of reverting back to  
being a kid again.

troll ping over old stones  
and paths to figure out what  
wasn't figured the first time  
around and to make friends strangers  
and the sky the ground,  
as everything begins to get  
reversed and what was once logical  
becomes a temporal land of insanity  
that is actually fun and new enough  
that to drink a cup of whiskey would  
rob that backward momentum towards  
some inevitable light spot in  
the middle of my vision that is  
hard to place.

and as i slip from my twenties  
back into my teens,  
then i think the reversion of  
universal expansion will end and  
i'll beg my brain that  
becoming older is something that  
i really want to do as  
my left wrist aches a bit  
from an unknown injury.  
get older

## beauty of baby sleep

one  
of the best  
things about  
a baby is that  
they sleep a lot  
and give parents  
time to do  
some things,  
wander,  
sleep themselves  
and get ready for the  
next spate of activity  
as the baby head flits  
through a page of dreams  
and the whole  
notion that something  
so small and basic  
needs so much sleep  
that if i were to change  
places with this baby  
and sleep the hours  
he gets the opportunity  
to sleep  
i would be so replenished  
that i wouldn't  
even marvel at things  
so small and somewhat  
trite like  
the amount of  
sleep a human being  
gets during the course  
of a day  
or  
week.

## **boring rooms**

the  
real  
reason  
why  
they  
call  
those  
expensively  
decorated  
and  
glass  
enclosed  
corporate  
think  
tanks  
board  
rooms  
is  
because  
it  
is  
the  
most  
boring  
place  
in  
any  
company  
across  
the  
world.

i  
have  
never  
been  
in  
a  
meeting  
in  
a  
board  
room  
that

hasn't  
been  
one  
of  
the  
most  
boring,  
uninteresting  
thing  
that  
i  
could  
have  
done  
during  
that  
one  
slice  
of  
willful  
time  
in  
my  
ever  
expanding  
life.  
bored in a board room?

## **BOUTS OF REMEMBERING**

i find getting  
older increases daily  
moments of deja vu  
as all the best and worst  
of my kidhood comes  
corralling my brain  
like a metal lasso  
asking my subconscious brain  
some follow up questions.

from the feeling of  
our neighbor's treasured golf turf grass,  
to the old lake rocks and copperhead  
snakes behind my childhood home,  
to the feelings of alienation,  
and the moments of sports glory that  
are foggy in my current brain.

moments flit in without warning  
and it feels more like i'm walking  
around in a dream wondering  
when my past will stop catching up  
to me and the future can just be  
like a motion picture profiling  
someone else's life  
instead of my own for a moment.

but the point is that  
we live these memories so  
that we can rest on some hard wrought  
morals and know that  
the journey we trodded is sweetly destroyed  
and filled with something that we can  
give to the rest of the human  
race as this poem momentarily curbs  
my ironic deja vu romp  
for today.



## CONVERGENT LIVES

what are  
all the lives  
that i have lived  
and will live doing  
together under the hair  
cranium of my  
busy brain?

like the baby,  
infant,  
young boy,  
hell vandal kid,  
born again christian teen,  
coming of age 20 year old,  
boyfriend,  
single careless,  
married,  
father,  
husband  
and  
my current state.

do all of these  
living epochal organisms  
flow in a parallel line  
towards the greater  
good,  
or are each burroughed and  
waiting to come out  
when the  
store is closed for the night?

maybe we are all  
superhero's in our own way,  
and could actually be that  
way if we knew how to channel  
all of the different parts  
of our existence into  
one cohesive whole.

i'm beginning to believe  
that we will become  
the actualized superhero  
of our life down here  
the minute or so before we  
die so that we  
can actually become the superhero  
we should have been  
to go on and save another planet  
other than earth  
because  
there is simply no

hope  
for  
or  
rounded  
blue  
planet  
dot.

## DEAN SCREAM

in the  
ever increasing  
list of shit  
i would do if i  
had more money and  
time on my side,  
i have a new one  
to commemorate the  
democratic  
hopes of 2004.

i would stage  
an annual 'DEAN SCREAM'  
competition at the university of iowa  
to commemorate  
the human spirit of genuine emotion  
and the beginning of another  
four years in bush hell.

this would be an annual gathering  
of common folk belting out  
their best rendition of  
howard dean's famous  
verbal blast that shook  
the world.

and the winner would be able  
to have the actual dean scream  
recreated as a ring tone on  
their fancy cell phone,  
along with getting  
a screaming bronze statue trophy  
of dean on that fateful night.

and i think  
i would probably  
be the winner in the first year  
of such an event.

i've been practicing a lot.

i have lost a lot of support  
in the process.

i have barely a bid yet.

i'm emotionally ready to  
be quashed into  
utter oblivion  
by a fake trophy  
and the adoration of  
a politically ignorant  
crowd.

## DELICIOUS CARROT CAKES

i stared into  
the cardboard box  
holding a stack  
of individually wrapped  
carrot cakes on the  
counter at the local  
7-11 and couldn't shake  
the thought that  
there is no possible way  
i could purchase this cake  
because i don't like carrot  
cake and would never get hungry  
enough to make that mistake  
but i also realized that  
i have seen that box there for  
several years and that they  
have to refill the box on a semi-regular  
basis and that there are folks  
that really likes this sub-standard  
cake and they are likely about as healthy  
as i am or so blasted out of their  
gourds on a drug that they simply  
have to eat something sweet and it's  
a last minute response to getting gas  
or a cola and they like it that way.

## DICK CHENEY : LIVE = EVIL

with a  
crooked eye,  
lowered chin,  
entirely skeptical brain,  
i braved the state of the  
union speech on TV  
and focused on the nostril glares  
from dick cheney in the  
left hand corner of the screen.

as i thought about his newly immaculately  
conceived mary daughter with a womb  
full of lesbian zeal,  
i saw the words 'live'  
flashing over his head  
and figured that  
cheney has to be one of  
the angriest,  
backwards men to ever  
occupy high government.

and as the words 'live'  
hovered over his balding  
space head,  
i figured that his backwards  
world trickled into 'live'  
and made it evil.

good old cheney  
under his backwards word  
of zeal  
as his nostrils  
flexed in ways  
only  
the truly angry  
could appreciate.

## DISCOVERING TRUE, FICTITIOUS HELL

i  
finally  
found  
out  
what  
hell  
on  
earth  
would  
be  
like  
and  
i  
figured  
out  
it  
would  
have  
to  
be  
trapped  
for  
one  
solid  
week  
in  
a  
room  
listening  
continually  
to  
nothing  
but  
cable  
news  
analysts  
rip  
apart  
the  
repetitious,  
flimsy  
events  
leading  
to

a  
national  
election  
of  
importance.





**everyone around these neighborhoods**  
are not from here.

most have come from texas,  
new jersey,  
other places north and south  
to join  
'gods army',  
while the rest have come here  
to make some money.

i'm not even from around here.

it's a lot like the  
fabric of America.

no one is a real,  
first generation american  
with pure american blood.

we are all displaced.

are all littered with  
different colored bloods.

we have one reason to get along.

our wooden nickels have been  
traded in for shiny quarters  
as the used dollar bills of  
yesterday run amuck in the  
wind as though luck is all  
around our  
united state of mind.

## GETTING A NEW SUMMER JOB

this past  
summer my  
second job was  
running around  
to any number of  
doctor's appointments  
and as the bills continue  
to trickle through  
from months and months  
back and the sting  
of the insurance company's  
ineptitude is enough  
to make me perk my ear up  
as the black muslim  
presidential candidate  
talks about cheaper  
and more universal healthcare  
and then i finally start  
realizing that all i  
had to do was get old  
and acquire more bills than  
i could have ever imagined  
to understand fully how  
politics get interwoven into  
my daily jaunt through this life  
that feels more like  
i'm a punching bag  
growing and growing  
as the days loom forward  
and the gloved fists come  
to knock me square into  
another unexpected doctor's  
visit once again as my  
boss smiles while i approach  
his office with the fate  
of the following day  
stuck in my gravy brain.

## GLEEKING

the absolutely  
coolest trick a  
teenager could have in  
our junior high was  
the power of gleeking.

the gleek was a method  
of folding your tongue  
together and thrusting it  
back and forth towards the  
bottom row of your teeth  
that would emit a curving  
arch of saliva from your mouth.

if you were good,  
the result was a drenching  
stream of spit that would secretly  
douse an enemy  
or friend in jest.

this could be done during the middle  
of class and if you had a good poker face,  
there was no way that someone would  
suspect that something like this  
could be done.

i was one of the best  
and now,  
i can only gleek on accident  
when i yawn.

i'm just another  
retired gleeker  
wondering what happened to  
that once saliva rich  
skill.

## **GOD ARMS**

up the street  
at the international  
house of prayer church  
all the bright, mechanical  
faces of the church patrons  
walk in unison  
towards one of a several  
different complexes  
with a glaze over their  
eyes as though  
they are going to  
crawl into the bright,  
white hot light of god's  
arms and come back with  
tales of how they will  
get everything for christmas  
that they could ever imagine  
as they all recite this mantra  
in unison as the  
day gets a bit older  
and the promise of tomorrow  
stepped backwards and  
glazed itself over the  
hope of this tiny day.

## **i live in an ice house**

during the winter months  
and after 3 years i have  
finally gotten used to  
it.

with a sweater clinging  
to my arms,  
slippers snug,  
winter cap on head,  
i saunter through the house  
as though the ceiling is gonna  
snow at any point.

with a consistent  
60 degree dial in the house,  
i sneak in a 65 to be safe,  
and a 70 to be daring,  
knowing that a battle with ensue.

after some time,  
i feel a cold whisk  
through the living room,  
and know that the thermostat  
is back down to sixty  
and that my wife again  
won in the venerable contest  
to level the home  
he live in.

and more times than not,  
i decide to back off  
my thermostat war because  
winter is my wife's season  
and i want to honor that for  
her as much as she  
celebrates my desire to  
exist well in the summer months.

it makes living in  
temperate seasonal  
weather exciting  
as my dry patches fade  
from the oils  
my wife rubs on my  
battled, dry skin  
as i smile in her cold  
air desires  
floating past my  
dream of approaching  
spring breezes.

## IDENTICAL CAT DREAMING

last night  
my wife and i had  
the same  
dream.

several weeks ago  
we had to finally  
give in and let  
our two alpha male  
cats loose to a local  
shelter  
to find another home.

she had an alpha,  
as did i when i moved  
into her home,  
which is our home now,  
and these cats have  
tried to annihilate  
each other for about  
three years.

after braving the horror  
of taking these cats  
in,  
i now have the bruised  
subconscious  
that is pumping out dreams  
of me turning my back  
of the beloved cat  
that was my only family  
for about 3 years.

last night,  
we both dreamed  
that the cats had  
returned to the house  
because the folks  
that got them from  
the shelter were  
in this neighborhood,  
so the cats returned.

and we couldn't take  
these cats back to  
the same shelter we took  
them to originally.

before the reality of  
going back to the  
nightmare of having these  
two cats living together,  
i woke from my nightmare

to listen to the  
feline ghosts pawing  
through the quiet  
halls of our sleepy  
home  
as the one remaining  
cat we kept  
rises his  
head just a bit to  
see why my  
head is  
looking around  
so intently.

## IHOP BUS

i like to see  
that shorty old beat up  
squat international house of prayer  
bus in the neighborhood  
courting all the young,  
flowery god kid heads  
with their eternal notions  
of all collectively being  
the chosen ones  
as they peer out of their  
small dirty windows at  
our world,  
cars,  
and have a pity that's  
hard to convey  
as the world  
melts into their  
brain folds  
like melted water  
into the  
icy,  
cold ground.



## **John Kerry – The Republican**

after the  
last monumental  
fuck up that  
john kerry made  
before the latest  
mid-term elections,  
i started to  
believe that this whole  
cinderella john kerry  
march that nearly won  
him the presidency may  
just be an actual republican  
shrouded in  
flimsy democratic cloth.

sheep in wolves clothing?

have any shears?

let's find that tall man  
with the long, wrinkled  
face  
and solve this  
once and for all.

## KANSAS CITY NATIONAL NEWS HEX

kansas city  
hit the national  
news circuit again  
and it was another  
sprawling chronicle  
of immanent death,  
destruction and  
general bad news  
that is usually  
the case for  
this town smashed  
in between all the  
other towns in  
this large country  
of ours.

apparently  
some kind of huge  
chemical explosion  
took over a portion  
of the lower east side  
and chemical flames shot  
out of control  
as the fire boys  
waited on the side  
for things to simmer.

huge plumes of  
black acrid smoke  
wrapped around the lost  
fortune of this town  
as the national news  
channels reported on  
this big missouri accident  
as though the chinese  
launched an attack on  
the least visible quadrant  
of downtown  
as residents went to bed  
with LA thoughts  
and NYC regrets.

## **ladder volvo man**

it takes a bit  
for a guy like  
me to absorb the creeps  
and wake to type about  
it,  
but such a tale is  
taking place now.

there is an older  
man up the street from us,  
maybe 5 houses south on the  
same side of the street  
who drives around a hatchback volvo.

he has that dreary serious face  
portending to be an ex government agent  
or pedophile hiding in the  
suburbs with thoughts no  
one could ever imagine.

during the christmas time  
this year,  
i noticed during a quick drive  
by his place that his lighted tree  
in the window  
was rather odd,  
but i couldn't get a handle  
on what it was.

later,  
i had to throw on the shoes  
and walk up the street  
to find out what he  
was displaying for the world  
to freely see about his life.

and it was a standard metal  
ladder with a string of multi-colored  
lights.

the rest of the room was barren,  
and the slight emission of light in the house  
was non-existent.

he was no where to be found.

his car was silently in the lot.

and the entire neighborhood was quiet.

calm was everywhere as that  
ladder stood there smiling,

laughing with it's hurtling  
spray of festive lights in the  
vacuum of no living creature about,  
nothing stirring.

and as i turned towards the north,  
going home,  
i started to forget that i was interested  
in what this volvo dude was doing,  
or thinking about  
in his blank  
silence  
hidden in that  
empty,  
festive  
home.

## LAZY HAWK

the strength  
of that one  
lonely hawk  
bobbing up and  
down on the upper  
rifts of cold air  
as my hot metal  
vessel goes to  
wherever i'm aiming  
for is quite a sight  
and i feel  
finally that  
the random  
advancement of that  
one zig zag hawk  
is enough for me to  
just calm a bit  
and dream of  
absolutely nothing  
within some Buddha  
nugget of dream.

## legacy sandwich

i came face  
to face  
with the legacy  
of a lost rock n roll  
star and it wasn't through  
the miraculous sounds swimming  
over my ear drums.

it was through  
several bread slices,  
a tub of peanut butter,  
a whole banana,  
one plate,  
and a knife.

i concocted a delicately  
made peanut butter and banana  
sandwich for our 8-year old boy  
to devour before slipping off  
into his own set of rock n roll  
dreams.

and as i handed the finished plate  
into his pale,  
anxious hands,  
i realized why the elvis lore  
ended so abruptly  
with the legacy of such concoctions  
roaring through the annals  
of our history  
past the dishwasher,  
over the silent jukebox  
flashing the famous  
chops of our  
most famous culinary king  
of rock ever.

## MANGLED MAN & DOG

there's a  
fellow up the  
street that  
lives in a  
modest white home  
on the corner  
and he's a bit overweight,  
visibly poor health,  
under exercised,  
mid 40's  
and he has a small  
mangled dog that  
looks just like him.

both have the same  
blasé blah attitude,  
but i see a twinkle in  
his eye as i drive by  
and he is averting his  
shy eyes as the  
small dog mess  
leans down to do  
his toilet duty  
on the front lawn.

and once it's all done,  
the man looks over  
with a sheepish grin  
knowing that  
each day he's a work  
there is always going to  
be something to  
look forward to  
even if  
it's a sack of  
shit made by  
his small,  
best friend.

## Midwest football Kansas City

the  
doom  
of  
being  
a  
football  
fan  
in  
kansas  
city  
is  
that  
you  
are  
destined  
to  
be  
in  
for  
a  
disappointing  
'what  
if'  
scenario  
once  
the  
curtain  
closes.

much  
like  
living  
in  
this  
town.

a  
real  
city  
imitates  
sports  
scenario  
that  
i  
know  
you  
were  
looking  
earnestly  
for.



## MISSING THE KID HAIR MAGIC

i was telling  
my 8-year old  
yesterday  
that  
the best thing  
about being  
a kid is that you  
can have a perpetual  
case of kid hair  
with errant globs  
and wisps of hair  
strewn all over  
a bulbous,  
innocent  
head and no one  
gives it a second  
glance or would  
ever say anything about  
the hair style  
and as an adult  
it becomes the bard  
of continual perpetuation  
that you have to keep your  
hair combed,  
presentable and tailored  
to meet the world  
with all the discerning  
eyes trying their hardest  
to see something deeper than  
a hair follicle  
as the neglected eye  
brows rise in frowning  
arcs of amazement.

## MIX OF A MASHED GENIUS SIGNALS

at the end  
of the night  
when my eyes start  
sinking into the  
quick sand potion  
of a long day  
i start  
peering closer  
into my baby miles'  
two year old  
antics  
and begin wondering  
how many signals throughout  
the typical day i  
don't get from him.

all the grunts,  
grabs,  
eye swirls,  
kicks,  
swirms,  
leading me to the treasure,  
and all the gesticulations  
of a tiny human i have never  
been around the likes of before  
and i try in earnest  
to  
get what he's saying at the end  
of the night before  
he slumps into  
utter silence  
and do my best  
to fully comply with  
his genius notions  
packed into  
the best riddle  
i could ever  
have  
created on my own,  
but i had little to  
do with this phase  
of human nature  
smearing across  
the walls of my  
packed brain.

## NECTARINE DREAMS

i can  
wait out  
the bitter  
cold  
of a kansas city  
winter  
with all of  
it's ice strewn  
windshields  
and new frost bitten  
fingers  
to have  
my  
big front  
teeth pop  
into the  
juicy flow  
of a fresh  
california  
nectarine  
smack dab  
in the middle  
of  
a sweltering  
summer.

## OLD FRIENDS AND COLONS

when i think  
i may have a thing  
or two figured  
about how we  
may all run into  
each other some  
how and some  
way down the line,  
i get swatted with  
a story that takes  
my knowledge to a level  
i have to recover from.

years ago,  
my best friend in high school  
passed away at the young age  
of 17.

his name was matthew,  
and his step mom  
was ginger  
and from time to time  
i thought about her.

she was the quintessential  
motherly type,  
and she always took  
real good care of me  
and matt as a couple of punk  
kids trying to garner just  
a morsel of good living  
to lead us into our  
adult lives.

and i thought  
about her lately.

how she was in her  
fight against  
age and  
carrying the proverbial  
torch of a son gone  
and another that is  
likely so far

gone that NORAD  
couldn't find him.

and then my mom  
told me the other day  
that when she was getting  
ready to get a colonoscopy,  
that ginger was the nurse  
administering the invasive  
procedure  
to get my mom back in order.

in the myriad of  
ways i could have  
rejoined with a lost  
mother type,  
she was looking into  
my mother in ways  
that i would have never imagined.

and how the karmic tale  
of our lives  
weaves down ironic paths  
as the sounds of a  
god barks  
like a dog down the street.