

SARANAC REVIEW

Thank you for your submission. Please understand that we have read your manuscript carefully and would provide feedback if possible. Committed to celebrating emerging and established voices, we hope that you will consider Saranac Review in the future.

Best wishes for your writing,
The Editors



Joefiles 107 (CVII)

mopping sweaty fingers with rejection letters

EAR SMEARS

the dirtiest
spots
on the human
body
have to be
behind the ears.

i always used to
wonder what why my
mom was always concerned
about the backside of
my audible pals
until i swiped my index
finger behind one ear.

after a good swish
through the nostrils,
i vowed more soap
be deployed towards my
head and to never make
that mistake again.

**early morning
and poetry**

just don't
mix with me
anymore.

about an hour ago
i tried to
rearrange
about an hour
of work last night
and it was lost.

vanished like
nothing happened.

all of those little
rivulets of
gold flecks in
my jagged river
of last night
have been blotted off
the map and replaced
by a steel siding
mall.

now i look at that
fabricated mall of
gimmicks and forget
the key points
i was refining
with my iron ore
blazing.

with way too
many poems written
for one lifetime,
i still feel the
sting of those that have
been swallowed by the
big technological monster
mouth known as my
crammed brain.

as with any poem
i have made,

saved and retained,
it's my fault
that this morning
erased the squiggles of
last night
as the tapestry of
this attempts to
pick up where
the pink bits
eraser shears
leave.

ENDING MY SPEECH ON WISHING

after my 2 year old
boy miles was born,
i used to muse that
he would begin speaking
at some incredibly
quick pace.

sure,
with the volumes
of words my wife and i
speak on a casual, daily
basis,
i was convinced that
osmosis would bode our
miles well as his brain center
lurched to language
and vaulted him into a
celebrated life of
fruitful oratory.

here at 27 months,
he is lucky to only say ma and da,
along with a smattering of
sign language to reduce his
possible tantrums to
agitation.

and i realize that the most
stark of our life lessons
come from direct experiences
that pierce your heart the hardest.

i have vowed to not make any more
predictions or cheeky revelations
of ignorance in light of this
horrible prediction about
my non talking son.

be careful what you wish for,
and equally as wise about what
you don't ever want to wish for
as his silent lips curve upwards
next to me in the most quiet of
sleep slumbers.

everything i leave becomes better somehow,

or maybe i'm making up
quite a bit of fiction
or realizing that hindsight
is a glorious dose of 20/20.

it all began in junior high.

once i left that odd monstrosity
of architectural accidene,
they turned the school into a
technological playground that
would have lent well to my
current life.

would have been a helluva lot
more enjoyable.

once i left my high school
that was in worse shape than the junior high,
it was transformed into what could
accurately be called a land casino
with polished pop machines and
some windows.

my classmates and i existed in a
windowless blob of cubicle walls
preparing us all for a life
of accidental career choices.

there have been old girlfriends
that married well and moved onto
sunnier states and bigger homes.

and i sometimes swipe at my shadow
wondering if i leave something worthy behind,
or just fool myself
like we all do with that
amazing ability we
have of being fooled.

Genetic Repetition

the grand
equalizer in
this life
is having a small
pile of your
genetic replication
in the form
of a baby
to graduate
your existence
from 2-D
to 4-D
and give you
the simultaneous
high of
both fear
and elation
to meld together
in the waltz
you decide to dance
down this
overpopulated
planet of souls
seeking the
right belief
to mold
an indestructible
heart.

highest bidder

the best
part of a
a recent art
auction that
sold off two of
my pieces was
one small visit
to the water closet
to empty the
free, cheap
beer that was
chilled and free
at the tiny wet bar.

there was a man
at the faucet,
one shoe off,
his opposite hand
digging
into his shoe
on the counter
as a look of
beguiled pain
stretched over his
face like
saran wrap
as the echo of
the toilet flush
rang into the hallway.

later that night,
i saw this man
limping around
with his newly dawned
cinderella slipper
and a face of
pained relief
as the
world of wealthy
buyers ignored
everything and
everyone
with one
fatal smirk

of
nonchalance.

HUNGOVER MOON

our car
almost
careened off
the road
as i stared
at index fingernail
sliver of
a slightly orange
moon
inching up the
sky a night
after going through
a rare
solar eclipse.

the edges of the
moon sliver
looked almost
red with veins
as though it
celebrated with
it's celestial
friends after the
sun slashed through
our collective orbit.

shadows of aspirin
made the rest of
the metaphoric outline
of this still
slightly drunk
satellite inching
further and further
up the invisible
sky rope
letting all of
us know that
the universe is
full of small,
futile
celebrations
that swish
like precise,
eternal clockwork.

if

george

w.

bush

committed

suicide

we

could

all

finally

feel

what

rotten

poll

numbers

and

a

lie

feels

like.

INTERESTING US

as much as
we share,
run,
meet,
make friends,
create families,
grow children,
write letters to editors,
get published,
make film,
record music,
develop film,
make food,
mix drink with pals,
act on the screen,
become an extra in a film,
relish stars,
react to drama,
laugh with comedians,
the hard
truth of this
world
full of merry memory makers
is that
we are all
only
interesting to ourselves
and
that's
all.

KID WISHING WELL

i always
knew
that i had
a wish
in a genuine
well as
a kid growing up.

each time
we went to the
local perkins
for food,
i would stop
by their
small toy filled
wishing well
and squeeze my
eyes tight
in hopes of the
best toy
in the indoor
wooden flank
of fictional
kid fun.

and there were
other times
that i would
shut my eyes together
tighter than other
times wishing for things
that was impossible
and when i would
open my eyes,
the sun would
beam louder
while all the humans
swished in
well times whispers.

i felt as though
my wishing may have
brushed off on
the world

and somewhere in
the expanding cosmos
being hidden by the clouds,
there would be something
in the inner machinery
of life that was
actually growing
that tree of cash
behind our three
bedroom
duplex
in the
sticks.

LAZY CONTAGIOUS NEIGHBORS

white wires covered
by boughs of
christmas holly and tinsel
shine in the march
morning as though
the holidays will be
back sooner than expected.

a big circle of holly
on the front of the home,
several astute reindeer
munch dead grass in the
brown trodden yard,
as the vertical lines
of lights strain towards
the ground.

it is christmas
all year long
for the couple on
the corner that
find television,
some radio,
hobbies,
grocery shopping
and general procrastination
much more important
than home tending
and ending the
happy sting of
the long expired
holiday season.

i may muster
the strength
to amble over
and feed those
inanimate deer
some fictional carrots
if i could
only motivate
myself up the
ladder to
take down

our line
of jellied lights
wrought
in a
guilty row.

LIBRARY ROBBER

there was once a
simultaneously smart and
dumb man that used to
go into public libraries and hold
them up.

all he wanted with shaking fingers,
fake gun in trench pocket,
and horrible breath,
was all the fine money.

he always brought his own back,
threatened the folks and employees
with kind chiding,
and had his own back for the money.

once finished,
he would calmly walk out
as everyone inside looked perplexed.

each time the robber left with
barely over fifty bucks,
but had the pride of retaining
the penalty money of all
the devout readers that
touted absent minds and
the love of the word.

and every time he leaves,
he goes to the best eatery in
town and eats all the fines
we incur
as the cops heat up their
search
and the missing books
continue to go
unrecognized.

MEASURE OF STRENGTH

when
i was a
kid
the number
of bulging,
flaring veins
in a dudes hands
and arms
was a mark of
how tough
he was.

as an adult,
i can cherry pick
the drug users
in a crowd based
on that same
strength filled
display of
arm veins.

miles

boy
has a
grin
and
young
kid
swagger
that should
land him
enough
numbers
to have
a better
prom
night
than his
old man
had.

MUFFLER SNAKES

at times,
when i'm
a bit
drowsy,
ready for
sleep i'll
never get,
and wobbly
with the
failure
of an extra
cup of
coffee
i
begin seeing
the
slender tubes
coming from
muffler bodies
as modern industrial
snakes
searching
the road
for
the
next
concrete mouse
to
sate
it's
exhausted
city
appetite.

MY CURRENT STATE

my favorite pair
of jeans
in the past
five years or more
was a faded sky blue
pair of girl jeans
that tugged on my hips
like i might one day
have the chance to bear
a baby.

my haircut now is hands down
one of the most wrought piles
of extended follicles i have
had the misfortune of ever seeing
on my new father head.

my pair of sunglasses are
a mangled set of spectacles that
are so old i don't remember buying
them as the sun gets blocked better
than any pair i have every known
in it's deeply crooked swagger on my face.

i could go on
about how i have left vanity at the
door and just don't care what i
wear, how i look or in what
way i accessorize as my friends
continue to talk about the small
details that do nothing more than
make me look further into my
2 year olds fast feed hurrying
to the next thing he is going to
mangle as my mass of
undefined hair squibs into my
eyes and deters my
concentration.

NAP TYPERY

my serene
little 2 year old
boy,
feet perched
on my thighs,
writhes in a fit
of jittery nap
movements
making me stop
momentarily,
returning to
a fragmented thought.

and once i get
back on my poetic
track of the moment,
that tiny boy
are quickly begins
squishing eye lids
and disheveling his
tiny eye brow arch.

then,
he's silent
while his yellow
rhino peers towards
my jerking fingers
and fearful gaze
into the region
just above his stance.

it's as if this
poem was meant
to be written
or my baby
was supposed to
be dreaming about
something
just like this.

NATIONAL BANKS

we always
see the shiny fronts
of the first nation banks,
but what about all the second
and third national banks.

i think i would
like to put my money
in institutions that have a
second third or fourth
in their names.

it's not so far in the clouds
and steeped in piles of gold i could never count.

it has that blue collar ring that makes
me feel like i'm the poor guy that
i really am.

maybe i should start
the third national and
give everyone a free tootsie pop and
whiskey shot to join.

NEW AND OLD

you
will
eventually
get
really
old
and
unstable
when
you
don't
believe
in
the
word 'new'
anymore.

NOSE SHUTDOWN

every
six months
or so
i get that
feeling in my nose
that there is something
up there,
but it doesn't exist.

i look around,
pick,
look around some more,
pick more vigorously,
nothing.

it's the security camera
catching a crime,
but there is no evidence
to support the
infraction.

then my nose aches,
people stare more
as i just don't care
and dig,
dig,
dig more.

nothing.

and when i finally give up,
i cannot feel my afflicted nostril
as the box
of tissue one room away
taunts me with
windy explicatives
of
my
nostril failure.

NYC DREAMERS

i
believe
that folks who finally
Pack up their midwestern lives
and move to new york city
have more balls than anyone i
will ever meet.

sure,
i've had friends go to
arizona,
california,
new mexico
vegas,
florida
and the like,
but the heat of new york city
is enough to snuff out any dream
city across this
american land plane.

there is one such loose acquaintance
that i know who recently went
up there to do some art work
and it fell through.

they have since left,
and that is just fine.

the attempt at a town like
new york is the point.

as the huddled teams of
building cram through my
wondering brain,
i imagine that i live there
for a night
and sip in the morning before
i awake to another kansas city
morning
with my own slivers
of new york
in the paint on my typer keys,
the plaque in my boy's teeth,
and the girl smell in my wife's
hair
as the dissipation of dream
becomes the emulsification
of my
shoe soles
sucking in another
patch of middle western ground.

our president

has most recently
lamented democrats
for yanking at his
credentials and
called their acts of
simple accountability,
'political theater'.

i have the ultimate
act of political theater
to answer his
assertion.

how about we woad all political signs
after a presidential campaign
into a gigantic ball of paper signage
and call it the circle of assholes
or the circle of confusion.

we could then sell tickets for folks to
come see this huge ball on stage,
then everyone could exit the ritzy
theater and look up into the sky.

at that point,
a huge cannon would pop this
ball into the sky in a shower of
burned paper and as the
chards of burnt pulp come raining
down towards the ground,
we could all imagine that it
is the fictitious sky ooze of nuclear
fallout and applaude at the notion
that politics has not anilated
all humans as of yet in 2007.

PAID AND SOLD

we legal
folks with our
fetid tails
wagging tiredly
pay for everything
we see around us.

we pay for the lights
in the ball stadiums
to stay lit when
everyone is gone,
for the coke sign off the highway,
for the arby's to stay open up
these street.

whether we indulge in it or not,
us legal tenders of tax,
magazines, food, drink and banking
make the way possible for everything
that assails our eyes each day.

we are the pauper CEOs without
proper benefits or perks,
yet we still wake everyday
waiting to pen the check that
will quickly leave our hands
into the haunches of politicians
that smile with expensive mustard
on their napkins
and ignorance as to the town i
live in.

i'm also the boss of those
homeless folk that stand with
a ripped sign from my box of beer
asking if i can bleed my turnip
a little bit more for their
affection fuck off to the process
and to this i throttle
harder into second
and watch their erect body
hanging with a tatter of pride
as the forecast begins
turning more expensively overcast.

PHONE TRIUMPH

my most
triumphant
phone conversations
of late
are with
my delightful
mother in law
judy.

never over a minute,
and usually within
20 seconds we
cover the terrain
of yesterday,
and today,
along with a slight
musing of tomorrow.

figuring the rest
of the worlds
needs most of our
attention,
we squeeze the best
of our brief intentions
into that
final
squeeze of the
end button
as our lives
begin
over
and
over again.

REAL SACKER MAN

there's a
rag tag
nail tough
old man
that hauls
in carts at
the grocery store
up the street.

his face
never changes
from his determined
charge to keep all
shoppers content with
a steel crate on wheels
to buy buy buy.

all the while,
he sacks with
youthful vigor,
yanks piles of carts
into the store without
any help
and has the walk of
a champion just dawned
the purple heart in
the war of keeping
customers happy.

and when all the
young kids
lazily lop groceries
into pink sacks
and have exasperated looks
of weakness while pulling
only several carts,
the old man's glaze
turned harder,
wiser,
and he steps in
to show the youth
how you
charge through life
with the heart

of a gorilla
beating swift
in the cavity of
a virile little
human.

ROAD MUSIC

at times
i catch myself really
hammering invisible drums
or using the steering wheel
to fret over a song
while driving
and quickly stop my
foolishness because it has
to be the dumbest thing
going
and i know that cause when
i see someone else in a
passing car doing the same
thing i want to toss them
a small note to stop
because they have the possibility
of losing any confidence in
their persona or
blasting music
and there is nothing
worse than that to
kill off a good
personality
and solid music.

ROGER POWELL LORE

an old neighbor
behind our tiny childhood duplex
was an alcoholic construction worker
man by the named of roger powell.

they had a nice burnt sienna home
with several floors,
lots of rooms,
a pool out back,
and the old man
used to always wear on billy bop hat
and drive an old pinkish cadillac.

with a red nose and hearty smile,
he used to hop out of his car
in a roar of laughter and the
tint of a bar in his cloth as
the sun shone a bit brighter

one day,
i remember he pulled his little
three year old daughter
from the front seat and said,
'you wanna see something?'

my brother, i and some of roger's
daughters said 'sure'.

he handed his youngest daughter
a can of mostly emptied beer
and said,
'watch'.

this little girl with scraggly blond hair,
dirty white shirt,
oversized blue jeans and huge bottle cap glasses
took that tall can
and tipped it back in vigor.

after what seemed like
fifteen minutes passed,
she drained the can in several seconds,
let out a huge 'ahhhh'
and all of us just roared
as the day became older
and youth seemed to be
compromised in
the vacuum of comedy.

saturday night thought trickle

and all there
is left to
remember is
how to
allow memory to
stick harder
so that the
random events
that needs to be
forgotten
will not intercede
the needed memories
that keeps you from
roaming the
empty alleys of
your ridged meat brain
and keep you
thinking about
how essential sunday
will be in all
that non traditionalness
of making
a new day
sudden.

SHIT SHOUT

the guy up
the way
had an
old toilet
at the end
of his driveway
while a
loud blue
lawn sign
proclaiming,
'I LOVE JESUS'
roared for all
the cars ripping
by as i figured
the owner of
this house
just doesn't give
a shit
as god hurls
more cloudy sun
into
my squinting eyes.

the contagious fervor of our

tiny two year old
miles boy is amazing
when he's in public.

people stop pouting,
looking serious,
stop suddenly
to either observe
or get closer to his
tiny body of energy.

their eyes widen,
they ask his name,
coo other sayings
i have since forgotten,
as he darts about with
an amazing laugh and
an unbridled zeal i
haven't ever seen in
a kid after three decades
on this planet.

i was never one to
pay attention to kids
as a single man,
but i know energy
when i am surrounded by
it and i know my little
boy possesses something that
can make the world smile
and i knew that
he needed a name that was
closer to smile than
closer to odd (todd).

THE ODD TODD PROD

the
fact
that
i
didn't
name
or
even
consider
naming
my
kid
todd
should
be
enough
of
an
accomplishment
to
call
me
a
good,
upstanding
father.

THE STARK OF OUR RELATIONS

i have
a good friend
who's girlfriend
packed up and
moved
in the middle of the night.

nothing but a flimsy note,
and mums the word.

gone as if all those
moving montages of their
making out in public was just
fodder for a movie
they were making.

but there is no release date.

it's as if fiction was
their truth.

now she's gone,
using methadone in the room
of a friend that has more money than her,
and he's likely given up on
women for quite a while.

the earth moving at a tilt,
the hour of midnight strikes
yet again,
and the sound of moving trucks
slowly slip into
the envelope of confusion
as love
swoops through
every street in the world
like a patch of ESP wind
moving us all towards
a collective moment of
deja vu.

the world

probably thinks
i'm a stoner
and the funny
thing about
that is that
if i was a stoner
the world
wouldn't meet me
because i would
be holed up
inside somewhere
avoiding the world
because nothing
would finally
be funny
instead of
the sobriety of
needing to meet
the world
to extract the
laughs
i need to breath.

thieves

rarely
leave
with mere
dollars.

they leave
quashed souls
and bruised
dimensions of
optimism.

weeks back,
a happy worker
soul was robbed
at weapon point
in the
neighborhood
dollar general shop.

she has since been
replaced by
an elderly security
guard
that talks to so many
folks he'll miss
another robbery
attempt if
it even
happens again.

a broken old
man for
an optimistic
young girl soul
and the other
glum employees
decline to predict
when their
manager will
return
to the broken store.

i know it
will never happen.

the area will have
to make due
with what a couple
of selfish humans destroyed
that one,
anonymous,
unassuming day
when the color of
sun was uncommonly yellow
and all
employee
shoes had well knit laces
forgetting
there would be
anything
but
hope to
step on.

TWO SIDES OF SEX

i saw a
bulky,
rusted truck
tucked in between
large sluices of
tree
some months back
and knew
that the only
sort of mushroom
hunt these
kids
were on was
straight up illegal
sex as their
corroded metal evaporated
in my forward motion
straight towards
my nightly whiskey
bottle and
the legal sex
i could dully
muster.

UNFOLDING GENETIC REPLICATION

when i watch
my 2-year old miles
daringly climb
objects and do things
that are generally
seen as daredevil acts
for a tike his height,
i hear a distant thud
and again realize that the
apple truly doesn't
fall too far from the tree.

when i was about 4 or so,
i was with my mom at the
fabled JFK pool
and i had again slipped away.

i was quick with my exit
strategy,
as my miles is.

suddenly,
my mother said the entire
pool area was quiet,
looking up at the highest
diving board waiting to
see what i would
do as i waited at the end.

i jumped.

and the hush ended,

with lifeguard the first one
to pop into the water's surface,
i rose up and became
the youngest at JFK to tackle
the waters without wings,
dingy or abandon.

i'm proud to pass on such a
heritage to my boy that loves
water
and the smell of danger in
that odd, small way
that is impossible to define
except for small
miraculous actions.

What We Ingest

reading over
the ingredient label
for the bun on
my microwavable
white castle burgers
requires a brain full
of advanced chemistry
knowledge and a healthy
desire to read something
more interesting than
a diva shaving her scalp
before entering rehab.

reading an ingredient list
for anything as synthetic
as a microwavable meal
requires the reader to
stop pondering the overweight
condition of our nation
and why heart surgeons get
pockets full of jingle jangle.

reading the ingredient list
and instructions of
new miracle drugs in magazines
requires a level of boredom
and a physical condition
that precludes me from doing
anything more than turning
to the next page that leads us
to our drugged condition.

reading this poem is going
to lead you to wrapping a
label around my invisible
bones and i would recommend
that you use these words
instead of something concocted
by scientists in a lab
or drones in an office cubicle.

thank you.

WHITE NOISE

more and
more lately,
i hear both
the faint and loud
shouts of neighbors
airing their dread
over the panicked air
in just another
kansas city suburb.

some are neighbors
pleading with their
dogs to stop ripping
each other apart,
others are just arguing
with the logic of god
to find some kind of
way to look forward to
tomorrow.

as the echoes of yesterday
mince with the finely
shaved voices of today,
we have nothing more to look
forward to than the new
sprouts of spring growth
on the plethora of
trees to blockade
the sounds that
keep the world
from believing in
the solace of silence.

Xings

the last
little baby duck
in the duck x-ing
sign
always warms
my heart
with that
quiet dread
cluttered
around
it's tiny
painted body.

all the other
dark ducks look
calm,
steel,
and contented in their
journey across the street
towards another
water pond,
but the last
one in the group
seems
as though he sees
the loony bin van coming
to take his duck body away
for further evaluation
and he just cannot stand it.

it's like the final
goose in an arrow,
or that small headed kid
in the back of the room.

you never really know what
they are thinking.

they are the politicians,
priests,
lawyers,
corporate CEO's,
any other assorted bastion
of the charlatan arts
flapping invisible wings
into the loud
vortex of
perpetual signage.

25 MPH

between
short tufts of
coffee sips,
i fixed my eyes
on the tiny slip of
hill on a street
across the street
and noticed
for the first time
a 25 MPH sign.

in it's strategically
placed spot
as the hill begins
a slow, gradual
descending dip,
i wondered how
many more obvious
signs are in
my daily way
and i pay
no heed
or tether to.

the yields,
stops,
one ways,
no outlets,
dead ends,
duck crossings,
ped x'ings,
and other
cryptic
messages of help.

as i left
to get another
slug of morning
warmth in my mug,
it was no longer
a morning myth
that i have it
figured out
because there are

so many obvious signs
around me
that i barely realize
as the cat
swipes his
tail over my shin
and the vowel babble
of my 2-year old
wash over my
ears like
velvet on
newly dried skin.

A CHARMING YES

in
recent
mid-term
elections
there
was a
tatamount
measure
on the
bill that
was a
yes or no
question
and in my
wife's
twiterpation
she accidentally
voted 'no'
on the
stem
cell issue
and i
took
comfort
knowing
that she
has
voted 'yes'
to the rest
of
our
days together
on earth.

A TRUE LITERARY CELEBRATION

i fervently
believe
library's should
give huge
congratulations
and a possible celebration
to patrons
that consistently
rack up
huge amounts of
of library fines.

these are the
folks that give
the system extra money
and make for certain that
both new books are ordered
and that the quota met
each month is achieved.

these are the renters
and readers that
are too busy using the knowledge
of the books read to
parse out the time needed to
constantly go back to the
library.

they are the literary heroes
of our time.

they are the believers in the
word.

they need to be lifted upon
the mountain of books
and given
a shower of trophy words for
all their darting eye efforts
and blatant fearlessness
against the angry
bard of
monetary penalties.

BARKING WON'T STOP

over the
last several days,
the dogs in this neighborhood
just
bark and bark,
and battle each other in barking.

they never do it in
the morning
or during the day,
but when dusk begins
and the globs of dark start
mounting over the sky,
the symphony of crackling
dog voices take over the neighborhood.

and all the obedient
suburbanites
sit quietly,
thinking abbot other thoughts,
being polite,
while my brain races towards
the best thing i could
succinctly shout
into the cold globs of dark
air to make the dog owners seize
their best friends and save
my 2-year old from wiggling again
towards the bubbling
froth of my
awaken
ear drums.

BATTERY POWERED LIFE

i have turned in
both ink and lead
for battery powered
thoughts.

instead of
new pens
and pencil sharpeners,
i crack open alkaline
longevity pieces to
help my brain imprint
what is going on around me.

i'm now an advocate fro
battery powered thoughts
as my old triple A's clank
hard against the bottom of
the plastic trash can
as my newly powered recorder
captures that sound in a way
that my paper would
make monumental.

BIRD JOY

the
big
pack
of
birds
in
that
cold
november
sky
looks
like
a
pack
of scattered
eraser
bits
running
away
from
the
mistake
of
the
pencil
lead.

can you stop thinking?

can anyone you
know stop thinking?

is there anyone alive
that would possess the
ability to stop thought?

is it humanly possible
to stop thought?

when you stop thinking
are you thinking about
not thinking?

what's the true definition
of thought versus
the absence of thought?

does this have you thinking?

it has me thinking.

i'm gonna end here and
hurry off to complete my
thought training to
stop thinking whenever
i damn well
feel like it.

COLD BEGGAR

an older woman
asked me in the
frozen food aisle
for some money
while my son looked
in her directions with
a wry smile.

i stopped,
peered with amazement
into her mouth chewing on
denture gum
and said,
'uh, no. sure don't'

she sauntered away
as i kept staring from
her to my son
and back and forth like
that for some time.

where had i moved to?

i used to live in the urban
core and never had anyone even
attempt to ask more for anything
and this was before i had a
kid in a cart.

now,
in the urban suburbs of
the grimy south of town,
i get hustled in the frozen food
aisle by

COLLEGE NOTE

some
college girl
wrote my pretty
professor wife
a note that said
she couldn't
her homework in
because she just broke up
with her boyfriend
and had been crying and throwing up all night long.

this was the only piece
of paper i would need
to prove the difference
between the genders.

not only would most men
not write a note,
very few if any would
use vomit or tears as a reason
to do something so rudimentary
as homework.

this note was furthermore
the reason why women get out
of traffic tickets more than men.

and this note needs to be
photocopied into the largest font
on a computer,
printed out on big pieces of
paper and plastered up
on a blackboard
to let the kids
know just how much university's
enjoy tuition money
with the option
of attending
a class.

CRACKED LUMBER MAN

with a full
half assed
crack showing,
the hardware
store man
was tugging on
our large pieces of
fresh wood
as i tapped my
8-year old
and told him to
steer clear
out of the way.

with his face agape
and curios eyes
preened open with
invisible toothpicks,
he teetered to
my side
as we watched this
retail wood cutter
of undefined prowess
amble to the right
and tug the three
long pieces of
wood through
his hungry saw.

right towards
the end of his cut,
several sizable slits
of wood
shot like a gun blast
to the right
towards blocked
aisles to the right
as the rippers
stood,
sheepishly
looked back,
pulled his pants up
over his half moon
and wiped his

sleeve of his
lucky honker.

i then took a book
out of his
journal,
wiping my own nose,
looking down
at my boy,
telling him,
'see, this is why
you listen to us
parent types.
that would have
really hurt.'

his head shook
in unabated agreeance
as the next two pieces of
wood were hoisted towards
the loud,
circular saw.

we peeked from
behind a palette
of heavy metal doors
wondering if the
bare moon
would again rise
over another dose
of daily
common
chaos
in our lives.

CREIDT CARD KING

if
i
owned
my
own
credit card
company,
i would
have a
card number
made completely
of wing dings
so that
when the
voice on the
other end of
a purchase
asked what
my number
was
i could
say,
'hourglass - webcam - folded paper - keyboard - folder - file cabinet - unfolded piece of
paper'.

DAY ENDER

miles is
my tiny hero
boy
when i see
his naked
body warble away
from my
grasp towards
the bathtub
with unsteady
two year old feet
and a couple of
bruises on his spine
from the damage
of living with
bad balance
and a thirst for
life that no
amount of therapy could
ever teach a
small one.

DEER KARMA

when my
brain couldn't
find a 2-cent
scientific remedy
to the problem
of a blinded
deer running into
speeding cars
causing enormous
damage and
death,
i stopped for
a moment.

when the moment
elapsed,
i found my solution
in the irreversible
stone's throw of
nature
that this
accidental
reoccurrence
is the karmic
retribution for
all the deer
killed by our fellow
free amendment
weapon carrying friends
that can't get enough
of that scrumptious
venison.

all the living
deer have that
glint in their
brains to charge
back at humans for
taking their
mothers,
fathers,
brothers,
sisters,
cousins,

friends,
foes,
akin sort
because
we as
humans would do
the same?

wouldn't we
in our
refined
human
ability
at retribution
as
world runs
recklessly
away from
the screaming
teams
of tire
tred.

DIVORCE POSE

i wonder
why the sunday
section of the
paper with marriage
photos doesn't have
a section in
there about divorces.

couples ending
their lifetime of
love and sacrifice
could convene for
one more cherished
moment in a
final couple
photo.

the prior husband
and wife could
scowl at the
camera
in a flaring
biopic of
hatred as
the shutter
clicks and
the mirror
sends down
the final image
of a vow
unable to wade
through living waters.

the whole city
could look
on in remembrance
knowing that love
is both eternal and
tough
as the givers and quitters
squint
through the city's news
ink into all
the pounds of

surrounding advertisements,
new news about
war and peace
being etched
moment
by tiny moment.

DOG MIRRORING MAN

the older
man up the
street with the
miner jawls,
and large nostrils
put his
faded light brown
recliner out on the
curb.

it sits sideways,
fully reclined,
crooked
and well worn
with years
and
years of procrastination
and lost dreams
oozing like
molasses into
the dirty winter street.

and as the trickle
slowly leaves
this chair
i wonder how
many times this
anonymous neighbor man
leaned healthy farts
into that
beaten hunk of
chair that
will eventually
find
another gas filled home
or
sparkling land fill.

DUCK ROAD

there
is a
small
sort
of
road
outside
of
downtown
grandview
called
duck
road
and
it
has
to
be
one
of
the
mightiest
of
all
animals
with
it's
lack
of
echo
screaming
off
the
dull
green
paint
and
bold
white
animal
letters.