

**JOEFILES 111:**  
Harlequin Heart Chambers  
In Every Thought I Eventually Forgot



**9:59 AM 9/11/2007**

last night i had this bizarre dream, i just remembered it, where i was on an international flight of sorts sitting in a plane seat looking over the entire world .. i could see the continents and oceans in kind of rectangular strips .. and i was elated and scared looking over so far up in the sky seeing the ebb and flow of those tiny oceans glimmering on each coast .. every once in a while caroline or the kids would flit into my head as voices or pretenses without actually being there and ask questions as to how the 'trip' was going and i kept saying that i was looking over the pacific and the atlantic at the same time .. and the colors were amazing and surreal and as we readied to land i was relieved and terrified that i was gonna fall out of the seat .. the plane vessel i was on wasn't made of metal and seats and stuff, it was an open air ship that i could feel the upper space air on my skin while observing our world from overhead .. odd ..

## AN EARLY, EARLY

all  
the  
early  
morning  
walkers  
with  
their  
old  
lady  
hair  
and  
middle  
aged  
dog  
leashes  
look  
like  
tiny  
ants  
on  
cocaine  
wondering  
if  
that  
big  
watermelon  
slice  
is  
going  
to  
appear  
over  
the  
hill  
they  
quickly  
crest.

## ASS COUNTY

i now live  
in cass county.

used to be  
jackson county,  
and there is nothing  
much  
you  
could do to a street  
sign  
with 'jackson'  
on it.

but,  
with cass  
i could sabotage  
the 'c'  
and give all the  
motoring  
passer by's  
with a wandering  
eye the pleasure  
of  
living  
in a new county  
for a brief time  
until  
the  
'c' is  
reinstated.

the dream  
of living in  
an ass county  
is all  
up to me.

i could afford  
many proud folks  
the chance  
to finally  
live  
their dreams  
of being a

part of an ass  
county.

and together,  
we could all  
pay our taxes  
to  
the most appropriately  
named county  
in any quadrant  
of  
america.

and all  
the city employees  
would  
be ass county  
locals.

## **BEGINNING OF AN END**

when the  
old men  
of the  
world  
truly begin  
wondering what  
is happening  
to their  
eyes and brain  
while  
watching TV news  
is when the  
invisible matrix  
will begin raining down on all of us  
like ants from  
a kid's game  
of trying to  
build a mound  
of metal shavings  
on the inanimate  
smiling face behind  
hard,  
hard plastic.

## BUMPER STICKERS

my lovely  
wife told me  
that she doesn't put  
bumper stickers  
on her car because  
she simply cannot decide on one.

there are so many  
that would convey a reoccurring  
message to everyone within your car shot,  
but she cannot do it.

and with that in mind,  
i would like to capture that  
mental quagmire in a jar  
and release it towards  
all of those people that  
slam me at stop signs and lights  
with their personality stamps.

i would let her mental indecisiveness  
fly on over to those  
dudes with marine stickers,  
supporters of W,  
jesus disseminators  
and the like.

and as they breath in this  
whiff of not knowing  
what to do with their cars,  
they will make a u-turn for  
a hardware store to get some  
razor blades to  
bless all of us  
with their inability  
to decide what  
we all just don't need  
to know about these  
faceless strangers  
riding around on four to six wheels.

## CARTOONISH POEM

there  
was a  
cartoon wind  
the other  
day that  
beat the trees  
so hard  
that  
some towering  
trees were  
bent towards  
the earth in  
wholly unnatural  
ways  
as the cackle  
of all my  
lost or stolen  
cartoon characters  
i watched as a kid  
retreated to  
the basement  
to ingest all  
the best cartoon  
toxins  
to laugh louder  
and louder  
and louder  
as the winds  
finally subsided  
and  
the  
TV's became delightfully extinct.

## DENNIS MILLER

what  
the  
fuck  
really  
happened  
to  
dennis  
miller  
i  
wonder  
as  
i  
imagine  
him  
cashing  
another  
large  
check  
at  
his  
local  
LA  
bank  
branch  
and  
crawling  
into  
his  
hummer  
to  
continue  
listening  
to  
bush's  
weekly  
radio  
address  
with  
sheer  
glee  
as  
he  
let's  
out

a  
laugh  
that  
at  
one  
time  
made  
me  
believe  
in  
comedy  
with  
a  
human  
touch.

## DESTINATION MAN

every week  
i used to see  
this one particular  
dude on a ten speed bike.

he was a man in his forties,  
ragged handlebar mustache,  
an older ten speed in bad shape,  
a huge winter coat over his bones,  
one arm loaded with a big bad of shit,  
and the other free arm holds on  
for dear life as he weaves in and  
out of the road while  
trying to hug the invisible line  
on the side of the street.

and each time  
this man warms my heart  
with his thrifty,  
frugal ways of  
getting where he is going and  
where he has been.

the key to this  
memorable man  
is that i pass hundreds of people  
each and every day  
and it's these kinds of folks  
that everyone ignores  
that crawls into the  
forefront of my brain  
as the desire to describe  
his will to the world takes  
over and  
everyone else around me  
meanders as extras  
walking around a movie  
set trying to learn  
lines to a film that is about  
me,  
but i hesitate to remember  
them as i dawdle  
forward forgetting  
that the film is

raging on around me  
with boom mikes,  
cameras behind bushes  
and tiny key grippers  
tucked into the  
brown bag  
this bicycle riding  
man is toting on  
the way  
to his  
eventual  
destination.

## **DROP OFF**

of all the  
needle bounces on  
my emotional faceplate  
i have experienced  
over the years of  
my life,  
i have never  
felt what i feel  
when i have to  
tell my  
beautiful two year  
old miles by  
when i have to go  
off to work  
and he has to stay  
with a sitter  
or at a clinic.

when his bottom  
lip begins to quiver  
and his forehead  
becomes the  
hide of a pug,  
i seize,  
turn,  
and go back  
to tell him  
that i'm always  
there and that  
we will be together  
very, very soon.

this usually  
seals up his tears,  
but his genius baby brain  
knows the score as he  
kisses the side of my head and  
saunters off  
into his next courageous moment  
as my needle hovers towards  
the  
middle of somewhere  
we can all simply admire  
as parenting.

## **DRUG BUSH**

a truly  
fitting  
end to  
the  
failure  
of  
absorbing  
the  
bush  
presidency  
would  
be  
for  
him  
to  
repeal  
all  
DARE  
and  
drug  
programs  
promoting  
everyone  
to lay off the  
drug use  
and tell  
us all  
to  
do as much  
drinking  
and drugging as  
we  
like because  
him  
and his pals  
did  
nothing but  
that during  
their 8 years  
of hell  
unleashed on  
a nation  
of  
shocked

pill  
poppers.

## **everything reminds me of everything**

as i try to  
pinpoint  
the right  
way to get something  
done and realize  
that i may be  
wrong,  
but it would also  
risk that i was  
right  
when the fight  
to be both  
right and wrong  
and willful  
is enough  
to take me back  
to my original thought  
that everything  
will continue  
to  
remind me of everything  
and memories is what  
we are all about  
as the rain remains right  
and the sun continues  
to flat fucking shine.

## EVOLVING AWAY

there  
are times  
of the day  
when  
several phones  
ring  
at once,  
my headache  
won't let up  
and the smell  
of booze from  
the night before  
rips through  
my tiny work  
area as i get  
a call from my wife  
that our nine year  
old again forgot  
to do something  
as our two year old  
screams in the background  
drowning out my wife's  
voice  
as my eyes shut  
hard  
and i hear the loud  
boom of  
'it's just enough to be alive sometimes'  
rip over my  
brain as the entire world  
as i know it melts  
into pure silence.

## **FAST TRASH**

it's one thing  
to have a mcdonald's on  
every corner of  
planet earth,  
but do we need that  
trademark trash everywhere.

everywhere i look  
there is at least one  
sliver of mcdonald's trash  
looking up from a crumpled mash  
of cancer causing sorrow  
wondering if it will  
finally be put into a trash can  
and laid down to a proper  
landfill burial.

and there are fry tins,  
bags,  
cups,  
lids,  
and pie containers  
just  
cluttered all over  
the streets in any city  
i go to.

too lazy after their  
needled injection of  
the worst food on earth,  
the dirty eaters cannot  
even muster enough to hide  
the vice of their  
mcdonalds vanity.

and as the birds swoop  
over that trickle of fries  
on the street that didn't  
get consumed,  
visions of a cleaner earth  
takes another proverbial hit  
as my nine year old  
pleads for us to  
take him to

that twin  
arch home  
of  
trash.

## how many thoughts a day do you think?

seriously think about it ..

can you even begin to  
put your finger on a  
single number  
that would narrow down  
how much you really think.

the criteria is simple.

just pinpoint how many  
things may have gone through  
your brain.

whether you did  
anything about the thought or  
it was just something that  
gave your synapses a reason  
to flow,  
let's find a number.

is it a thousand.

a million.

maybe a billion.

maybe so many that  
this question  
is illogical and painful.

maybe so little that you  
cannot believe  
you have made it this  
far  
through this oratory of  
poetic poem rambling.

or maybe there is  
no reason to count  
the number of thoughts  
going on because  
quality is much  
more key than quantity

as  
i come down to this point of  
telling  
you  
at 2:27 p.m. on this saturday  
afternoon,  
i am bearing down on  
my 4,579th thought.

## HUGE COUGH

i see a massive  
kid walking to or from  
the school i work in  
as a tech guy.

he must be over 350-400 pounds  
and he always has  
this calm, obedient look  
on his face as he walks fast  
and pulls smoke from a cigarette  
in his hand.

without fail,  
he always has a smoke  
and it's hard to tell in  
his plump hands if he has a  
cigarette or not,  
but his plume of smoke  
spreads above his eye line  
and it's confirmed.

and this is the last  
kid on the planet  
that needs to work his  
heart any faster than  
it already has to.

as he leaves my view,  
i imagine this big  
ball of heart in his chest  
pounding like a car piston  
in and out and up and down  
and side to side in some  
erratic trance as though  
the middle of his chest will  
somehow awake with a mouth  
in it's center to chant  
in tongues some cryptic message  
that we need to put down  
that extra slice of cake  
and remember that  
we are entering our 40th year  
of knowing that cigarettes  
conclusively kill.

## **human irony**

is just a new  
term for health care  
in america  
as i sit  
in my son's waiting  
room trying to  
explain to the shocked  
nurse who just said he can't  
have another wellness visit  
within six months  
and she would have to  
check into another way  
to code this visit  
so that i wouldn't  
have to be charged for  
the visit.

all this time,  
i saw more emotion  
in her interaction  
than the actual visit  
we had with several nurses  
and our acting pediatrician.

it really comes down to  
how you are going to code  
your  
health care needs  
via dollars and cents  
as the  
sad  
trap of  
human irony  
lies  
as several  
band aided  
pin pricks  
healing on  
my son's  
newly  
healing leg.

## **i can't relate to my friends anymore**

as my phone  
falls silent  
day after day.

no one calls anymore,  
and i don't call  
anymore.

a two year old  
in the autism spectrum,  
a nine year old,  
a wife,  
new home in the far burbs  
and no more stamina to spend  
much time discussing  
hangover scenarios.

so,  
the phone remains quiet  
as i bank a turn around  
downtown this morning  
thankful that i  
had that time,  
but it is nothing that  
i miss as the smell of  
coffee wafting through  
the downtown  
air makes me smile  
a bit as i see my son  
in the rear view mirror  
nawing on a raw carrot  
as a brief  
greeting card goes  
out to all of those  
i used to devote my time to.

here i am,  
all is fine,  
good we could have run,  
but it's time  
i journey off into  
a memory i used to crave  
all of those down days  
we used to kill our brain  
cells for the greater

good of us  
and all our small  
selfish moments of narcissism  
that felt  
about as altruistic  
as they were philanthropic.

**i may never really win**

in ways  
i dreamed of  
when i was a kid  
or idealized  
in my teens  
or tried  
to live  
in my twenties  
or tried to  
refine  
in  
my thirties  
as i look  
towards my  
forties  
wondering  
if my  
goal  
should  
have  
anything  
at all  
to do  
with winning  
and losing  
as  
the  
mere  
slip  
from  
year  
to  
year necessitates  
something  
worthy  
of  
so  
much  
damn  
more than  
flimsy  
terms  
like  
winning  
and

losing.

## IHOPERS

there's a  
local group  
of young  
religious zealot  
kids that have  
bombarded  
south kansas city  
with their mantra  
as 'god's army'.

these kids are  
always walking  
to and from their  
strip mall  
24 hour a day  
pray temple  
with these  
soft dumb looks  
on their faces  
as cars blare  
by in regular  
consistency.

and when you  
really peer  
close into  
the eyes of  
these kids that  
have likely only  
read the bible  
and will try  
to dictate to  
you what you  
should do for the  
rest of your life  
and how you should life,  
you get  
fearful of  
their ignorant  
romp through  
this delicately intricate  
existence.

they are all young

george w. bush's  
with  
enough stupidity  
to fill  
all the empty seats  
at a regular college lecture  
and they believe  
without a shadow  
of a doubt that they  
are the chosen ones  
here to carry out  
the ultimate good work  
for the entirety  
of the human race and  
for all the accumulated  
years we have existed as a  
species.

and when you  
take all that  
into account  
and really peer deeper  
into their  
stolid, devoid of emotion  
irises,  
you get the deeper  
feeling that they would  
pull the rifle out of  
their backpacks  
and  
begin offing  
people because  
some falsely anointed  
white guy running  
this particular  
religious sect  
said  
it was  
all  
'meant to be'.

amen.

## LOSING POEM

i  
wonder  
when  
and  
where  
you  
are  
going  
to  
finally  
lose  
your  
grip  
on  
reality  
and  
exactly  
what  
the  
air  
is  
going  
to  
smell  
like.

## MY PUBLIC GOAL

maybe my real  
goal when i'm out  
in public  
picking through  
the legions  
of people  
lazily lopping  
through this reality  
is to offend  
them in every secret  
tuck of my body  
because i ultimately  
know that i shouldn't  
have to withhold who  
i am in front of  
anybody and i have  
every right to  
introduce  
concepts of  
silliness  
that may never  
be able to  
come out of their  
brains by healthy  
means like  
a bounding clown  
leaping over  
the dot of mars  
into your bowl of  
mashed potatoes  
to smile up at you  
in some  
silly grin  
as you leap up  
to run  
through a world  
of water  
collapsing around  
you as you awake  
and i'm there  
giving you my dollar  
bill for the gum  
i'm buying  
asking you how the

hell they thought  
up such a flavor as  
'frenzied pink lemonade punch'.

with change in hand,  
walking towards another  
innocent person to question,  
the change is really  
in the air  
and  
i can  
safely slip  
into my next innocent  
victim.

### **old satellite dishes**

hanging in dejected  
poses off houses  
and behind defunct  
enterprises of  
wealth decades back  
should all  
be ripped out of  
their dormant  
states and shipped  
to one big spot  
in a new mexico  
desert.

and with the volume  
of these once powerful  
dishes of concentration,  
we should spell out  
in big letters for  
passing UFO's  
the following  
message:

**'PLEASE LAND AND HELP US  
FROM OURSELVES!'**

and then,  
we would be the  
victors in ultimately  
taking recycling and  
self help as humans  
to levels that everyone  
can surely agree on.

## OUR CHOICES

the beauty  
of my wife  
is that  
she  
is  
the  
best thing  
i  
could  
have  
never  
selected  
all  
on  
my  
own  
as  
the  
question of fate  
gets tossed  
around ferociously  
in our  
popular culture  
as  
her  
smile  
reminds me that  
there is so  
much that  
happens to us all  
that is outside  
of the realm of our  
will as the rumor  
of gods continue  
to assail us  
in the karmic  
bath of light  
that willed my  
freedome  
to marry such  
a beautiful creature  
as her.

## **our work bathroom**

is usually  
so dirty  
that one  
bug  
gets stuck around  
the metal grate  
of our urinal  
and it gets pounded  
by torrents of  
urine.

person after person  
release their  
lines of used salt,  
along with flushing,  
and these cockroaches  
survive for a full day  
or so.

it's not until the  
next morning  
that i notice the little  
black bug finally succumbed  
to all the piss it could take  
and it's gone.

and when i consider  
the best vision of strength,  
i think about this small bug.

it withstood so much  
piss without dying,  
much like all those elderly  
folks in retirement homes  
waiting for bingo night to begin.

## POLITICAL TRUISM

when  
a regular  
american TV  
viewer  
accidentally  
stops on  
a random  
cable station  
to see some  
iraqi cab driver  
in the  
middle of  
a ragged baghdad  
curse the emergence  
of bush and his army,  
then passionately  
look into the camera  
lens to say how good it  
used to be under sadaam,  
then you can chalk  
up the fact that  
lying is a real,  
real bad thing no matter  
which side of the  
political line  
you decide to  
dance on that  
particular day.

## **poor people in public places**

are usually  
the proverbial  
barometer  
for how good  
or bad the government  
is treating  
their people.

and these days,  
the poor are looking  
more rabid, fearful,  
angered and rag tag  
than i have ever seen  
them.

take a jaunt to  
a dollar general in  
the hood  
and loiter for a while.

it is then,  
that a small mirror  
of the '05 new orleans  
slip and eight years of  
a silver spooned brat  
comes barreling  
down the gun of an  
invisible chamber  
spraying dots of harm  
towards everyone but  
pill addled rich pals  
sitting in their  
flight control centers  
laughing  
because  
they'll be dead soon  
and  
their problems  
will the  
goods that  
strapped family cannot  
afford when the  
final tally comes up  
on the cash register  
tote board screen.

## **PRESIDENTIAL COMPASSION**

if  
we  
could  
construct  
millions  
of  
dollar  
bills  
that  
had  
the  
ability  
to  
talk  
back,  
then  
and  
finally  
then  
would  
our  
dumbo  
president  
george  
w.  
bush  
might  
finally  
listen.

## PROTECTIONIST

one of my  
strongest fears  
in this life  
is that  
strangers will  
be around my now  
two and a half year  
son who is developmentally delayed  
and in the autism spectrum.

makes me grab onto our time  
more strongly in ways  
that i have a hard time pinpointing,  
but i milk each moment in ways  
that will lend an extra ounce of strength  
to everything he gets involved with.

then,  
there are just going to be folks  
i may never meet or have the chance  
to meet that will have some kind of  
influence over his reality.

and as my brain runs rampant  
with possible thoughts,  
i stop suddenly and redirect my  
brain towards what the real  
notion of faith could be if  
it indeed exists.

then i try to breathe  
out with a gulp of air  
that will make it towards  
the good will of anyone that  
decides to have any sort  
of interaction with  
the greatest thing  
i have ever had a part  
in creating.

## SNOWY

i love  
that compressed,  
fresh crunch  
of walking  
through  
the snow  
on  
mornings  
that is just cold  
enough  
to not hurt  
as the  
chimney  
cough of  
light mist  
comes ragged  
in jagged lines from  
my mouth  
to counter  
the  
simple  
exquisiteness  
of two  
things at once.

## storied tunes

each time i  
leave the grocery store,  
there is  
always one damned song that  
gets crammed into the  
inner recesses of my  
repetitive  
music brain.

today,  
it was 'WHY CANT' WE BE FRIENDS'  
searing like hot butter  
on a scorching pan  
and it  
repeats over and  
over again.

i start to mouth the  
song,  
then i catch  
and shame myself,  
as the song incessantly  
roils through  
my resisting brain.

but it gets worse  
and over the perpetual din  
of this single song,  
in a stack of several others  
i listened to through the  
aisles of shopping,  
and i finally realize  
what these grocery stores  
are trying to do.

in their own way  
they are distracting me  
just enough to  
buy all of that shit  
which will eventually be thrown  
away months down the line  
because i will wonder why i  
bought it in the first place.

the simple distraction  
of marketing music  
asking me over and over  
if we can just  
fucking be friends  
while my wife  
looks at me wondering  
what would  
move me to  
buy a small glass  
jar of pickled pig's feet.

## STRANGE PHONE CONVERSATIONS

are all  
these strangers  
having  
phone conversations  
in their car  
having good talks  
or are they  
just passing  
the time  
ranting,  
waving,  
wagging their heads,  
waving their free arm,  
moving their heads  
and slicing the air  
with a motorized mouth  
speaking passionately towards  
the techno mouthpiece  
held in precision against their  
heads and mouth  
or is it all  
the same kind of conversations  
that all of us  
are having  
as we travel at  
high rates of speeds  
towards each  
other in legally sanctioned  
missiles.

## **SURVIVALIST**

a billionaire  
record setting  
pilot  
disappeared  
off the charts  
several weeks  
ago and  
massive hunts  
through a rugged  
nevada terrain  
hasn't turned anything up.

and in the weeks  
since his  
flop off the proverbial  
radar,  
the news people have consistently  
said that  
he is a 'survivalist'.

aren't we  
all survivalists?

isn't breathing,  
sustaining,  
maintaining,  
eating,  
drinking,  
defecating,  
laughing,  
peering,  
reaching,  
sleeping  
and the like  
indications  
that all of us  
have that 'survivalist'  
bone in our  
soul.

so,  
the next time  
someone  
goes missing

or has a bad  
shake in life,  
remember that at  
the end of the day  
they are survivalists  
and their chances thereby  
increase exponentially  
as the  
breath  
in my surviving  
body smears  
all over this screen  
that survives  
for  
my survival.

## THE ALMOST, WHAT IF PARENTING TRAP

my uncoordinated  
two year old miles  
boy fell so oddly  
and hard in the hardware  
store the other day  
that he almost  
rammed his head into  
a metal stick that  
was holding  
a line of seeds on  
some rotating sales  
rack.

as i held him in  
my arms  
and soothed his tears  
and slight moaning,  
i wondered what the  
hell i would have done  
if that metal stick would  
have impaled his eye ball.

how would they pull it out  
and what would happen the rest  
of his life as his eye healed.

and it's these moments that  
happen several times a week  
when he takes an odd,  
yet hard fall that could permanently  
impale him in ways that  
makes my imagination fly with  
scenarios that are  
better left unsaid.

and my further  
jaunt through  
parenting  
makes a normal,  
brain bending assumption  
as the real world  
takes a very needed,  
yet exhausting break  
for a moment.

## THE BAD LUCK HOME

our realtor  
called last night  
and told me to turn on the TV  
because  
the investor  
man that bought  
our old property  
was being  
interviewed by  
the media people.

three weeks  
ago,  
our old home  
was broken into  
and they stole  
all this guy's tools  
and new countertops  
in the kitchen.

and as the  
news guys went on  
about a rash of  
recent serial robberies  
in the neighborhood,  
i blanked off a bit  
thinking that we  
left behind the  
torrent of bad luck  
that seared through  
each wall, plank,  
brick and stuffing  
of that home.

especially during  
that last several  
months of living there,  
the luck was so bad  
that i couldn't  
discuss the reality  
of our lives with  
family and friends  
because i wanted  
to save them from

potentially running  
through the catacombs  
of something nasty  
you want to protect good  
people from having  
to endure.

and as the media  
shows pictures of  
the supposed truck  
used in the heist,  
i think there is going  
to have to be more than  
an arrest to restore  
the nasty luck searing  
through the home  
we nearly  
escaped  
by the  
skin  
on  
our  
entire  
thankful addled  
bodies.

## THE COLDS AND HOTS

the only  
thing  
better  
than  
sipping a  
hot  
glass of  
whiskey  
while  
looking out  
at sci-fi arrows  
of cold beaming off  
rooftops  
is  
the way  
the aspirin  
feels the next morning  
as it finally  
erases that headache  
and gets you ready  
for yet another  
night  
to love  
the  
whiskey  
wiggles  
coming out of  
your mouth  
towards a  
loving wife  
ready to  
hear that  
story repeated  
again  
and again  
and again  
in first time  
ignorance.

**the crescent moon hotel**

is so obviously rife with  
illegal drug and hooker activities  
that it should cash in on  
this notion.

they should have big signs  
advertising 'crook night discount - add an extra 10%'

these guys could give a shit.

they're likely so cooked off their gourds with  
booze, drugs, cum, adrenaline or the like  
that they wouldn't even see the sign  
tacking an extra lump onto their bills.

and when the crescent moon finally rises  
over the last light shimmering in the whole lot of  
their motel row,  
we can all finally awake and  
proceed towards our regularly priced  
lives here in  
boring  
land.

## **the death of radio is here**

as satellites  
and radio personalities  
named slim fast  
slobber all over  
the commercial addled  
airwaves that blip  
over the car speakers  
like coins  
hitting the  
bottom of a  
coke machine before  
making that commercial a reality.

and this dying scenario  
of radio is hard to explain  
to my kids because i don't  
listen to radio and  
the speared brittney ranking  
over the proverbial airwaves  
in some torrent of over produced  
trash that is produced to make  
you buy the compact for your wife.

it's picking the right  
music for your music player  
or burning the right mix  
because you are running away  
from the inevitable death of  
something that used to actually  
provide hours and hours  
of needed enjoyment.

now,  
it's the dormant land of  
screaming voices,  
audio billboards  
and musicians that  
cashed in their slight talent  
for an overproduced cover shot  
to mask that fact that  
their music may actually  
make rats commit suicide.

and one day i'm going

to take my kids through  
some odd thrift shop that smells  
real good and explain  
to them what radio used to be  
like when they point towards  
that one display that has  
an old RCA radio sitting all silent,  
yet strong  
like the corpse of a hero  
in the casket during a wake.

## **the jesus railroad station**

in your  
town  
is  
a very  
gregarious  
spot  
that  
can  
save your  
soul  
but  
you  
will  
still have  
to  
pay  
full  
fare  
and the  
ride  
may be something  
you will  
never  
forget  
in  
that  
good  
bad  
way.

## **the poached faced biker**

revs his engine  
with one  
tatted arm  
and lights  
a cigarette  
with another  
as  
all the news headlines,  
human strife  
and  
general nausea  
of having to do  
all that we  
do in  
our  
daily human upkeep  
fall on his  
deaf ears  
as the first  
plume of smoke  
lifts into the  
air like a glorified  
blimp  
and he starts  
a short,  
all knowing  
smile  
as the light turns  
green  
and his hand  
releases  
his shiny silver  
break grip.

## **the what's happening lounge**

is what's happening everyday.

a big american flag  
painted on one side,  
and the rest of the joint  
is piecemealed with  
feet and feet of paints  
that have maintained throughout  
the years.

out front,  
is a long line of familiar  
car grills grinning in  
both sunlight and cloud  
as their owners  
stay inside  
to figure out  
what's happening in  
this wide  
world of our  
expansive world.

drink after drink,  
the headline always  
remains the same inside  
the what's happening  
lounge as  
cups and cups of liquid  
courage attempt to  
make the limited lot  
of folks waiting on  
their bar stool  
strong enough  
to do something different  
after they finally  
leave and swerve  
their car grills  
towards  
a new  
fork  
in the proverbial road.

## UP TO SOMETHING

the reason why  
i snore so loud at night  
or fall asleep while watching TV  
or have a hard time concentrating  
on people talking at me  
is that i'm always up to something.

nothing particularly illegal,  
coercive or jading,  
but something.

whether it's framing a picture,  
learning a new way to paint,  
thinking about how to capture that moment in video,  
yearning to write that book i would like to ink,  
kissing my wife in a new way,  
taking my sons to some cool spot on earth  
that did it for me at one point,  
giving the cat the right amount of food,  
getting our guinea pig to make that one sound again,  
putting on a mask and scaring the world,  
giving something to a stranger that will make them forget their lives,  
reading the lips of sports sidelines with the volume turned down so i know what's going  
on,  
trying to beat the speed limit in unbeatable ways  
and the list of options goes on and on and on.

my brain is a bag of idle hands as  
i playfully toy with the notion of  
another career switch as my son squirms  
on the changing table and the echo of  
my wife saying 'i love our life' on the  
back porch the evening before  
gives me a brief repose to not feel guilty  
for having a moment of calm in the  
vortex of my eternally stretching  
construction site unraveling in  
some 3D cacophony throughout my  
conspiratorial brain.

## utility work

if i could  
stage a good  
roadside  
performance  
art act  
it would  
be this ..

i would have  
a big sign  
warning  
road  
travelers  
'UTILITY WORK AHEAD'

and about 20 feet  
from this sign,  
there would  
be a dude  
flipping a light switch  
on some big, huge roadside  
pole  
as he has several huge orange  
flags dangling from wood sticks  
in the back of his  
sagging pocketed jeans.

## **utter incrimination**

my favorite  
kids  
these days  
are the  
hispanic  
youth with  
big green  
pot leaves  
splayed out  
over the entirety  
of a just too big  
black shirt  
as they climb into  
their beaters  
and ride  
at excessive  
speeds down the  
road  
to make a cops  
day and  
ensure  
that they have  
no chance  
to get out of  
anything  
they may get pulled  
over  
for,  
whether they  
are guilty  
or  
innocent.

**we are**  
the books  
we read  
and  
are stitched  
together  
in  
intricate  
quilts  
of  
all the  
pictures  
we have  
taken  
as  
some hidden  
camera  
captures  
what  
the  
pen  
and still  
camera  
has  
missed  
and  
when  
you  
want  
to skew  
all of  
this,  
just pick  
up a  
paintbrush  
and  
slide  
it back  
and  
forth  
over  
the  
white  
layers  
in  
front

of  
your  
eye  
range  
and imagine  
how all of  
these  
books, pictures and videos  
can become  
the reality  
you always  
hoped the  
prior  
would give you  
as  
a  
small child in  
your warm envelope  
of  
kidhood.

## WRONG?

is there  
any such  
thing as the  
wrong time of day  
or the wrong time of the month  
or the wrong time of the year?

didn't that wrong time  
unfold as the right time  
a week before.

didn't that same month  
give you more than you could have imagined  
some years back.

wasn't that wrong time of the  
year the time that one country  
struck a piece accord with another country.

is time to blame?

is time a friend?

is time a foe?

is time everything,  
and if it's so,  
couldn't it be construed as a god  
and to blame a god  
for being wrong  
is to question why you aren't  
perfect and  
how immaculate  
conception  
would be without  
sex.

## WWJD? REALITY

i  
have  
a  
tiny  
slip  
of  
advice  
i  
would  
like  
to  
give  
all  
of  
those  
devoted  
advertisers  
of  
jesus  
out  
there  
and  
it's  
this  
..  
please  
know  
that  
jesus  
would  
never,  
ever  
put  
a  
'wwjd?'  
sticker  
on  
his  
or  
car.

so  
maybe  
you

can  
absorb  
this  
and  
do  
what  
jesus  
would  
really  
do.