



## **Joefiles 125:**

**simmeringly sloppy suburban surmises**

## **another one for the old man**

as i  
sit in this  
chair  
thinking  
about  
my  
dad who has been  
gone almost a year now,  
i realize  
that he spent most of his  
life in a chair.

sleeping,  
eating,  
dreaming,  
TV watching,  
talking,  
everything  
of substance  
i can remember he did in  
a chair.

he slept on a chair  
the first 14 years of his life  
while his folks and sister  
dreamed in comfortable intimacy  
in their own beds.

the last 10 years of his life was  
primarily spent in his chair  
to carry on what he did the  
first part of his short life.

and i think that  
it's not so bad that he  
returned to what  
he was most comfortable with.

who needs a damned bed when you have a chair?

and that's where  
his story stands  
as i sit here in my  
soft,

deep,  
dark  
blue  
chair of  
now.

**at night,**

i love looking over the peach  
leaves of our tiny front yard tree  
as the boys run around with  
their wiffle balls and errant truck toys  
as my wife emits thousands of  
tiny sun drenched dots  
towards her mother's day plants  
assorted around the porch and  
front deck  
and as the thousands of sparkled  
dots land on her beloved plants,  
i think about her love doing the same  
thing to me and the boys  
as her metaphoric watering is  
mimicked all over the place  
like a hundred fire hydrants  
making the world wet,  
loved  
and  
worthy.

## **bob dylanish surmise**

i guess  
i always thought  
that my dad was  
going to outlive  
bob dylan  
and as the  
new dylan album  
ratchets through  
the room  
with my quickly moving  
4-year old fixated on  
opening a small plastic bag  
i realized that the only  
thing certain about this life  
is that the music will never  
die as the obituary notices  
in the sunday paper  
hold steady with their numbers of  
souls that graced this earth  
in their own raucous  
tambourine man ways.

## **fading father words**

i wonder when the day  
is going to come  
that i'm going to lose  
footing on when my dad  
was around when i used to listen  
to something or wear something when he  
was still alive.

and as that song  
fades away into  
a bird careening over the  
calm summer sky,  
i feel that there is always going  
to be something that i will  
force myself to accept  
about my father's relativity  
in my own life ..

so,  
as i continue to expand like  
the aftermath of the big bang,  
my father remains that collapsing sun  
in some yonder orbit i  
only see  
in distant satellite pictures  
depicting  
depths of space  
my  
brain has a hard  
time  
fully  
encompassing.

**glenn beck**

reminds me of that  
retired clown that  
got the call for  
one last 'retirement gig'  
at a school for blind kids  
and just before  
he goes up in his  
sad clown get-up,  
he reaches into his pants  
behind the curtain to  
grab that sweaty itch  
as a picture of  
george w. bush loses  
it's taping and comes  
zig zagging to the ground  
as the curtain rises,  
beck smells his finger  
as a tiny girl in the back  
sneezes loud and the crowd  
awaits his first  
clown act.

## **I am a salt convert**

as a kid,  
i used to reign in  
sweets  
as though it was  
the only reason i was birthed.

pancakes,  
cereal,  
gum,  
ice cream,  
hard candy,  
cinnamon rolls,  
waffles,  
donuts,  
straight sugar.

and somewhere in my  
early 20's i have lost the  
urge.

here and there i'll  
do a chocolate bar  
or some ice cream,  
but i finally fell off the  
wagon and i have no  
true definitive reason as to why.

perhaps i'm shunning away  
those ugly parts of childhood,  
or perhaps i saw my dad enter  
an early grave because he couldn't  
keep his sweet urges to safe minimums,  
or perhaps because one of my most traumatic  
childhood memories was a bad dental visit  
that sprung more blood and tears than rocky  
in the second movie.

and if it's not just one of those,  
it's something similar as the kids in my  
home can rest easier knowing that their  
nosy, hungry old man won't be making off  
with the sugary sweetness they wait  
in sheer patience to rip and roar through



as though our home is a battleground for  
culinary competitions.

**i love nature's relentless voracity**

with  
the organic design  
color  
and grace of the  
dandelion.

from the vibrant fields of  
yellow,  
to the kid loved spokes on a  
wilted dandy  
that gets hustled into the wind  
to germinate more,  
all the way to the  
rainy days when they fold up their faces  
like umbrellas covering the yellow  
and making you believe for one  
brief notion that all the weeds are  
gone  
in  
a  
flush,  
eternal field of  
newly  
strewn green.

**i think**

i'm going  
to retire  
the bad craft  
i have picked up  
as being a bad  
gift giver  
to my wife.

it's actually  
quite surprising.

i used to be good at  
it,  
but  
this last mother's day  
compounded the  
disarray of my  
lack of talent.

i got her a bunch of  
flowers,  
that should have been impatience,  
but they were tulip kind of flowers  
that don't survive well in the roar of  
summer sun.

and i got her a mug  
that my boy scrawled  
'i love mom'  
that was ruined after one washing  
when the waters seeped inside.

then,  
i had my other boy pen a design  
on a plate with permanent marker  
that later got fried in the  
washing machine.

it happens time after  
time.

the intentions are polished  
like a genie with 3 savory wishes,  
but it usually melts and seethes

like butter on a hot sidewalk.

so,  
i'm retiring my tired,  
bad ways  
for  
shiny,  
new,  
colorful,  
lasting,  
momentous,

simple  
gifts  
that  
can  
deliver  
me  
from  
the  
cellar  
i walk  
to  
climb out  
of  
with  
a  
big  
fucking  
red bow on  
my  
new  
head.

## **Maria has left the building.**

fuck.

christ,

she was only 40.

maria showed me  
new york city in fashion,  
introduced me to bukowski,  
parlayed interesting stories of  
heroin and cocaine in NYC 80's,  
jukes full of joan jett,  
sushi in greenwich village,  
all the smokes on the top of the  
london double decker,  
and the piano in the basement apartment  
she held in her parents home.

i remember every talk,  
all the exchange of poems and  
the musing of where god is hiding and  
how everything was going to end up.

then,  
several sundays back the music faded.

my brother said that maria  
mimicked her hero,  
elvis,  
and indeed left the building  
for the final fucking time.

and as the shock of her early  
dismissal sinks in,  
i hear the distant din of  
our family's once distant relative,  
billy joel,  
crooning that only the good  
die young.

and it's then that the  
notion and reality of  
the best leaving early,  
sets in a new sting

that i'll never get a shine  
from her coolness again.

maria is gone.

fuck.

christ.

## **mere fractions**

the  
first  
half  
of  
your  
1/8th  
can't  
touch  
the  
2nd  
half  
of  
my  
2nd  
9th.

## **miles in miles and miles over miles**

the  
lurching,  
monstrous,  
unrefined,  
penetrating  
beauty of  
my  
highly  
energized  
4-year old  
miles  
boy  
with  
his  
extra long  
arm  
on  
the  
15th  
chromosome  
is  
one  
of  
the  
best  
things  
i  
have  
and  
will  
ever  
witness  
in  
this  
very  
short  
life  
we  
get  
to  
lead.



## neighbor mystery

there are these  
two plastic,  
rubbery shoe looking things  
that have been on the  
neighbors  
rusty shed for  
well over a year  
and each time my wife  
and i see it we ask  
each other what it is  
and repeat the same  
process of stupidity  
and try to theorize as to what it is.

each time,  
i tell myself that i will look  
when i 'm closer down in the yard  
and always get derailed by the  
kids,  
the grass,  
the peaches,  
the apples,  
the mist,  
the bugs,  
the weeds,  
the porch,  
my wife,  
the clouds  
or a bird.

and then,  
i sit here at this  
sunday afternoon  
window  
again wondering what  
the hell  
those kids next door  
threw on that  
shed top  
and did it in  
such a way that  
it's a permanent  
haze of

TV noise rattling and  
clinking in  
our  
small,  
neighborhood  
mystery.

## **NO-STOP-DON'T**

when my 11-year old boy  
zen has his niece or pals  
over for some  
fun running around the house,  
i begin to hear the 'NO-STOP-DON'T' doo wop bop  
begin as my 4-year old miles  
runs around trying to get their attention ..

then,  
my wife and i have to jog in with our  
own blend of redirecting and calming  
as the NO-STOP-DON'T' doo wop bop  
begins in full charge like a spring field of  
fresh dandelions and the process begins anew.

over and over  
and over and over  
and over  
until i actually cannot hear  
the words NO-STOP-DON'T'  
from another human  
for at least an hour or so ..

so,  
i'm going to work on my newest  
doo wop bop masterpiece for  
the family and world to  
grab like a lost hug from a dead relative ..

it will go a bit like this ..

'YES-GO-MORE .. '

**one day**

a

while

back

when

gas

was

over

4

bucks

a

gallon

i

noticed

that

gas

backwards

is

sag

and

it

finally

soaked

in

how

draining

the

driving

process

can

be.

## **one long unintentional line**

my eye  
ball  
followed a  
long trickle  
of  
erratic,  
yet ordered line  
of black liquid  
that  
was  
oozing from the  
back of  
some car  
that  
went on and on  
for  
miles  
down the road  
as  
i  
wondered what  
kind  
of  
path  
we  
all  
have a tendency  
of  
lying down  
when  
someone  
takes  
notice  
and  
wonders  
what  
and how  
your  
drip  
did  
the  
things  
that

it  
did.

## **one things**

the peril  
of living through everything  
we have to live through  
on a daily basis is that  
there is always  
one beautiful thing  
that can bring me back  
to orbit ..

whether  
the wife,  
the child,  
the other child,  
the collective,  
the coffee mug,  
the corned beef,  
the new idea,  
the lost memory,  
the last person in line,  
the dog head out the window on the highway,  
the way the sun blinds a bit,  
the curve of a tasty apple,  
the bend of my wife's kiss,  
the thought of tomorrow  
and every fucking thing  
that happened  
in each  
and every  
on  
of  
my  
personal  
yesterdays.

**our old friend tom**

has run out of pot  
and i can always tell  
when he  
comes by to  
drop off my boy  
and brings his step son  
into the house.

today,  
i had a stack of  
old wood sections of  
fence he wanted to haul  
to make a tiny makeshift  
fence in his own back yard.

as he asked with wild  
eyes for a circular saw,  
i click my fingers and  
said come this way ..

after i got the saw plugged  
in and the wood in the  
front,  
he cleared the fast food bags  
and empty beer bottles  
from the van floor  
to welcome in his  
new  
lug of wood.

as he poured with  
sweat containing the  
booze from the night before,  
he began to saw into the wood  
in wild torrents of white/gray smoke  
because of the dullness of the blade.

as the wood bowed,  
he chagrined a bit,  
but plowed forth in  
that patent tom manner  
because he was going to  
win in the end.

and as the last lug of



wood was tossed into his  
truck,  
he teetered unsteady in the  
new, hot sun  
to tell me about the  
evening's tale  
the night before.

something about a dude  
he was drinking with that  
recently had a heart attack  
and involuntarily starts to twitch around  
midnight cause his body has  
caught up to him.

with a sports shake of the hand  
and a good work quote,  
tom was gone in his blazing  
ensemble of green van,  
fumes of old booze  
and the dreams  
that some  
day mary jane will  
visit him once again  
with fresh musk  
and  
a refrigerator full  
of fresh dreams.

## **our pink cat**

might be  
the most confused  
animal i will ever own.

his name now  
is 'pinkie' and he  
responds to that  
and another  
name,  
'petchu'.

but,  
my wife and i decided  
to change the cat's  
name because he's  
a male cat that has  
all the makings of looking  
pink and acting rather metrosexual  
in all his mannerisms.

and,  
the russian name he had  
was a throw back to an  
evil, violent ukrainian bastard  
she was once married to.

so,  
to rid the memory of the past  
and forge our own,  
we had given pinkie a new beginning  
and with 9 lives on the  
docket i'm  
certain that he's the perfect creature  
to have a fortunate reversal  
of fortune ..

## **our terrified orange cat**

tip toes around our  
home as the loud pangs of  
our 4-year old miles,  
along with  
me,  
the wife  
and 11-year old  
trying to negate a  
barter plan.

the whole while,  
the cat tries to sleep off  
the previous nocturnal night  
with ears bent like beef jerky  
in a new plastic bag.

other times,  
he tepidly ambles over  
the gray carpeting as though  
the sky may finally fall  
and all the birds of yesterday  
are going to swoop in  
and make is worst dreams  
come true.

then,  
our miles boy will  
melt into a rare fit  
which always brings the  
cat to his side.

alas,  
this is always  
the worst sort of  
approach the cat makes  
in his death wish marches.

he usually gets  
kicked,  
grabbed or swatted at  
as miles enters the 5th gear of a  
thermonuclear melt down.

the whole while,  
our cat feels that need

to comfort the trauma  
as he licks his lumps and  
goes in for round 2  
just before i save his  
cat soul and usher him into another  
quadrant of the home ..

all the while,  
the wisps of his hair  
swirl around the room  
in a harried symphony  
of insanity to get lodged  
onto my tongue  
and take my mind away  
from baby  
and feline  
motives.

## **quitter**

i've never  
had the courage to  
be a quitter  
because  
i know that  
my karmic  
guilt may pop my  
tire at an odd time  
or  
swallow my memory  
away from my  
salivating synapses  
forever leaving  
me dumber than  
i already have achieved.

so,  
i keep dawdling on  
the best i know because  
i like everything to  
be hard in this life of  
mine.

wouldn't know which  
corner to retreat to if  
i decided that all  
these words  
and actions had to cease  
and i became  
a part of the silent  
majority  
driving  
to wal-mart  
or  
taking a golden  
leak in some  
errant  
johnny on  
the fucking spot.

## refrigerator mystery

the football  
coach  
for  
the  
local high school  
in the district  
i work  
sent a mass email  
the other day  
to  
everyone  
that he was looking for  
a  
refrigerator  
that  
grew legs and  
waltzed  
out of his office area.

my first  
thought was that  
his newly signed NFL quarterback  
son  
likely took it  
as he polished up his  
millionaire ways by  
becoming a  
learned cheapskate.

and my notion  
was further clouded in doubt  
the following day  
when he said they  
found his refrigerator.

with many questions  
unanswered,  
i wondered if  
this coach considered  
the notion to call his kid  
and just have him order  
the biggest,  
fanciest fucking refrigerator  
for all the meals

his old  
man  
gave  
him  
over  
the  
years.

## **sad condom guy**

my 4-year old  
miles son  
just started watching  
TV about a year ago  
and one of his favorite shows  
is an odd sprig in the TV lineup  
called yo gabba gabba.

it's a land of colorful,  
odd characters in fictional lands  
being run by a wiry DJ in an  
orange felt hat and a yellow robotic  
character.

and with all these main characters,  
there are a host of other ones that peek  
in every now and then.

one of those odd characters  
is a condom looking thing that  
always walks around with sad,  
tragic downturned black eyes and red mouth  
as he sprouts fake, graphic created tears.

he usually only lasts about 5 to 10 seconds,  
but the whole time his sad condom body  
flits around in a depressing fit of tears.

each time i try to peel back the methodology  
of the creators to make such  
a crazy creation in a kids show.

then,  
i realize that this sad condom guy  
is likely sad cause his rubber tip broke  
an he impregnated the world with his  
proverbial child which is that  
tiny window within us all that feels  
the pain  
and cries those big,  
fancy TV made  
tears.



**sometimes i'm sure**

there is something in the air  
that is making my  
4-year old miles boy  
rip roar around  
without listening to anyone but  
his own impulses.

he's been diagnosed with  
an impulse disorder,  
yet we work  
as hard as  
we are allotted  
to tame his tempest.

but,  
when that barometric pressure,  
and humidity,  
and wind,  
and heat,  
and sun  
and  
other invisible particles  
collate into the outside airs,  
i believe it minces with his sensory integration issues  
and that damned extra arm on the 15th chromosome  
to send him lurching into a space  
we can only pretend to understand  
as he ignores yet another statement  
and begins  
scrawling his own all over  
every inch  
of  
our  
tired,  
kid addled  
bones.

**the best way**  
that i have  
made my version  
of jesus  
real is  
to make light  
of things  
when i have  
the change  
to flip that coin.

recently,  
a serious story  
came on the news  
about a dude in texas  
that found a cheet-o that looked  
like jesus.

they called it chesus.

the dude put it in a  
pretty plastic display casing  
and has used it to publicize his  
church and  
collectively increase  
the  
masses to  
chesus.

and with this,  
i had to wonder if  
this guy would keep looking  
in rapt attention in all the future  
bags of crunchy chips to  
see if he might run across mother mary,  
mary magdelane,  
jesus' favorite donkey  
or any other  
cheesy coating  
participles  
of gods  
many truisms.

**the brand new world**

lies just outside  
of my aching feet  
as the sounds of neighbor kids  
cry into the sun drenched  
pre-june sky  
as the love dove sits  
on the swing set  
wondering where  
its pair went off to  
as the smell of love  
wafts off the  
newly sprouting peach  
tree waiting  
to bulge,  
and toss a tiny  
film of hairs  
all over  
this  
saturday mug.

**the bright hot light of today,**

i'm glad i cannot hear  
the neighbor man  
chide his kids  
for being  
kids.

he's only outside with these  
tikes if he has to dole out  
his nasty hash of verbal discipline.

and on this air conditioned day by  
the window,  
i look out at his hairy shoulders and  
volumous belly  
feeling how good it is that  
i can't actually hear what  
he's pelting the kids about this time.

and quickly,  
the yard is empty and the  
last trace of the door begins  
it's descent as the dad  
gets what he wants  
as the  
kids  
urge onto another tempest  
to  
save  
their  
sagging,  
raging  
childhood memories.

## THE EVALUATION OF TRUE QUANTITY AND QUALITY

when i think about  
the veracity  
and volumes  
at which i produce  
and consume  
in this existence,  
i think about the  
final recording my  
father left behind saying  
that i almost killed  
my mom in labor.

she had to last for hours  
and lost a  
huge quantity of blood  
to bring me into this world.

and as he talked about  
that dark time in his life when  
he almost lost his wife  
and graced his third child on  
this planet,  
i had to stop the tape and pause  
in a bubble  
of muted silence  
and just  
watch  
the rest of the world  
move  
and hustle as fast as they could.

i just couldn't form  
the words to  
understand the  
circumstance  
that brought me into this world ..

still can't.

i just sit a bit  
more quiet,  
and introspective  
as i ponder the magnitude

of  
our collective  
lives  
as the  
sound  
of  
silence  
appears to be quite  
odd.

## **the goose family**

down  
the way is  
flourishing in  
ways i have never  
seen in  
many human  
families i have  
encountered  
over this youngling  
life of mine.

from the erect  
mom and dad goose,  
the 7 tiny goslings  
waddled their tiny bodies around  
weeks back looking for food  
and pooping as  
a goose should.

just yesterday,  
i saw this flock of goslings  
all grown up and  
got a lump in my throat  
as i wondered  
when i should send their  
family the christmas card  
i feel i need to pen ..

all this,  
as the geese grow before my  
eyes  
and doodle on an invisible  
map of spots they want to vacation  
when they finally leave this town in  
the cold winter  
just missing my  
arriving christmas card  
and tough guy song ..

## **the insurance commercial girl**

every time  
the insurance commercial  
comes on with the woman  
in dark hair,  
bright lipstick,  
pony tail waving,  
starch white clothes,  
clean white room,  
my wife silently fumes  
at this woman.

she's just one of those  
souls my wife has to see  
traipsed over the TV screen  
all the time  
and she can't stand the woman.

this only peaks my intrigue  
as i linger on the station  
telling her that her favorite commercial is on.

at this point,  
she's immune to the commercial spot  
as i keep it on,  
peer closer,  
listen to this actor's words  
and actions hoping that  
i may actually get while she  
gets so disgusted at this  
rather benign gal saving  
folks hundreds on car insurance.

then,  
i dismiss the notion entirely because  
there just doesn't have to  
be a good reason to feel such disdain  
for someone we don't know.

it's the nature of TV.

it's the commercial insanity that won't end.

it's a cruel, cruel world  
full of



commercials,  
baby.

## THE NEWNESS

standing outside  
of my son's karate  
practice the other night  
talking to one of his instructors  
that just had a baby she  
was rocking in her arms  
i was talking about how  
everything changes  
and all is  
new  
with  
different sounds,  
new tastes,  
brand new colors,  
rare sensations  
and the absolute twist in  
your martini ...

it was a talk  
i can have very rarely  
with my lot of single friends  
angling to see a new show  
or taste another unfound quadrant of earth  
and i love all them bastards for their  
zest in living conquest ..

but,  
it's those moments with new parents  
that are chalked up as some of my finest  
because the best moment of my  
life besides that first walk with  
my wife in the AM dark  
was watching my son Miles  
fly into this world a click  
before 5  
to  
start re-arranging everything  
i once held as an absolute  
truth.

it was the day  
that was to begin  
my mad scramble across the darkened room  
to find the light switch

as he calmly calls my  
name,  
'daddy'  
and i  
feel  
whole once  
again.

## **the thing about getting older**

is that i have known  
a handful of folks that  
have become famous.

and when i hear reports  
of them or see them on tv  
or hear them on the radio,  
i pause and see what the hell  
they are up to as  
though i used to when we were  
friends and i was in  
the same 'common individual' bone  
they were in.

one such old friend is  
a missouri politician by the name of  
trent skaggs.

he's a feisty type of politician  
that doesn't take any shit.

he was more of a docile type  
when i knew him,  
and his new personality traits  
are proof positive that politics  
does what it promises.

so,  
the other morning i heard  
a brief interview snippet with  
t. skaggs and he closed his  
quote with the word 'remonstrative'.

and i thought that was  
a fucking great reason to  
urge reasons in opposition  
as i clicked the radio off  
and  
realized that  
his quote would stand as  
the finest of any big  
shot  
i  
was ever going to know.

## **thievery**

i always  
dig the  
saying  
"thick as thieves"  
when it is uttered  
because  
it seems to me such a  
silly utterance to  
make ..

not only have  
i never rarely met  
a thick thief,  
i never see  
large thieves depicted  
in movies  
or  
TV ..

but the thought of  
a bunch of  
bumbler bees  
in thief gear  
gathering into  
a big  
thick,  
fictional pack  
like a rabid  
spoke of bees  
ready to  
come down  
and  
spell  
a new  
saying for  
thievery  
in the clear,  
gold sky  
all  
clad in black letters  
whipping  
and whizzing  
with their  
tiny metaphor

of  
bug wings.

## **weather color blobs**

every time i  
see those big  
swirling amoebas of  
weather patters on those  
tornadic heavy weather  
nights on local TV,  
i scrunch to figure out what  
the reds,  
oranges,  
greens and blues are supposed to mean  
on their tiny,  
secretive legends depicting  
what the color globs are going to  
do when they settle over our  
doomed quadrant of ground.

and then,  
i start to realize what it would  
be like to get zonked out on LSD and  
watch the weather as all the weathermen  
walk calmly back and fro into  
their well protected bunkers just a whizzing  
on about what could happen to us  
when the erratic color explosions  
wait to sucker punch us  
in both the funny bone  
and lower chin.

## **what i realize late at night**

is that  
i love  
being in love  
with my  
wife  
and  
that  
my kids  
will only  
have one  
smile filled  
childhood  
to  
rip  
and  
roar  
full of  
dreams  
as the  
dark of night  
becomes my own  
delightful mix of  
light i sip  
down with  
my  
cold  
orange  
whiskey.



**when i catch a mighty hawk**

or determined vulture  
in the high skies darting around  
like a loopy 747 out of control  
while a handful of birds  
swoop and peck away,  
i realize that the big bird  
is always going to win  
and that those small winged birds  
better have a good head start once  
they all stop for a break or  
when the wind stops shouting so loudly  
with the vigor and beauty  
of a darwin quote recanted  
by a small kid in the lands  
holding us all together below.