



Joefiles 129

the half-empty water bottle ballad

ANIMALS GONE

a hugely
dead,
scattered
animal
that is unrecognizable
litters
two lanes of highway,
with blood in the third
and fourth
as
the hurried humans
dart
and
rave
over
the
concrete walkway
to
their next
moment
as
the
small,
mammal detectives
hang on the side
of
the
road
investigating
the
murder scene
as
they
keep
one
paw's of fingers
crossed
that
their

not
next.

as if now matters anymore

while the cold air outside
gets chillier
and we wait in
a hotel
room for
our little boy
to get enough
oxygen in his red blood
to beat the
blues
as i ponder
the real definition of luck
for folks
as
all i have ever known
is that luck is a matter of perception
as much as being alive is,
so as we cancel out big holiday
party to heal our
hospitalized son,
i feel warm inside
as the cold winds howl
and yet another
story of luck
goes through
the slots
of
hundreds of casino machines
hoping to
squeeze out some kind
of expensive truism.

at the end

of

your

day or month,

documenting

the now

may

be

the

only

thing

you

actually

have,

baby.

bad doctors

are like

horrible

construction contractors

and

awful security guards

are like

brisk

nurses

and

foul

clowns

are like

no other

as

the

child runs in the other direction

and

stephen king

rolls over in his

deep slumber to

burp

and fart

simultaneously.

bags of christmas blend coffee

huddle around
my
exercising fingers
while
my
turkey
thaws in the garage
refrigerator
and
my
head begins to
get near christmas
overload with a
whole month to
go
and
the
porcupine quills of
political news
there to
wrap us all
in a
acupuncture
cocoon
until
next year
as
the
mistle toe
again
reigns as
the
only
lucky
thing
this
holiday season
in
it's

inanimate ambiance.

BELLS RINGING AROUND THE CURVE

my miles
boy is going to
be six
in less than
a month
and
i have decided
to not
sweat the bell
curves that never
happen
or take years
as
his autism spectrum
becomes a funny
set of words
in
the english lexicon
and i
measure
our future
in
love
without
any
TV
he can't stand,
all the books
he will read
and
the
huge heap of
his favorite sushi
on his birthday night
we will
revel
all
the yesterdays
have proved

something that
i would have wished,
but could
have
never imagined
on
the
massively
impossible
tram ride to
here.

BRANCHES

the barren black
tree branches of night
show
their real personality
as i
dart by in
my fast
crafted piece of metal.

some trees are just lugs of
big arms
outstretched like
a christian idol,
while others are intricate
laces of branch that
represent the scattered mind
of a worrier trying
to win a multi-level
race to the sun.

others are just
collections of straight lines
representing a
sketch a kid did
in the doctor's waiting
room while the parents
talked in scattered lines
of medical lingo.

then others
are monarchs
that keep their sloping
weeping willow branches
full of leaves,
yet arch in a dancers revel
towards the devil below
as they snicker to themselves
about how they have extra
winter protection

the other trees lost
long ago.

many more are simply
stick figure drawings representing
simplicity in winter,
yet etched with tiny knobs
and thick brown skin
to show their wisdom ..

together,
it's the best production of
the nutcracker in wintertime
as the car
speeds up and all
the swirling lines and
straight etches become
everything and
nothing.

BRUCE

it took all
those years in the city
with crazy cats
as neighbors
to groom me for
the
real neighbor of
my lifetime
that lives behind my
white suburban castle.

he goes by bruce
and with his small,
portly fame,
graying mustache
and solid mane of
still gray hair,
he strides slow
and deliberate.

he always wears a black
sport coat,
black pants
and
a solid pair
of worn dress shoes
also in
dark vader pattern.

he speaks so calm,
low,
that it seems like a slur
as he jostles the piece of
of candy i can never quite make out
around his mouth.

and each time i catch sight of him
or talk for a minute,
i'm comfortable that bruce

is out there in the world
giving originality a definition
and
a large purpose
to smile
in
the
land
of
same
regular
sane.

DOG-GONE

i had
a
dream last night
that
we were going
to lose our
dog
and
i was crying
in
my dream.

it was a long,
hard sob
because
i love
that we
gave
our
fears to the wolves
and
got
a
dog for the
kids,
but
really it becomes
a part of us,
as well.

and our dog
is
the newest hero
in
a
line of familial
heroes
that
pang

around
victoriously
in
my
dreams.

and it was only when i
woke
calling
for my liver colored dog
that
my
real heart
began to race.

she was nowhere.

usually
on my body licking
my hand to sleep,
i couldn't find her anywhere.

it was then,
my 12-year old opened
the steam shower door open
and
her
bent back ear face
came towards me with
a hungry tongue
and
yet another
dream
i
never
wish
to
come
true.

each morning

i take my son to school,
i swing my car down by
the old housing row for
richard's gebaur air force base
and see the mingling of
the old and new homes
passing by in a collage
of won wars
and new lives beginning.

it is then,
i think about my late father's journey
from new york to the
suburbs of kansas city to
ready his air force bones
to possibly go
to vietnam and see how
good he would be as
a
soldier.

but,
it didn't work out
that way.

he never went to war,
but finished his duty and
bore a family in this town.

and all those echoes of my
father wanting me to get out
of the urban city to start
a family in the suburbs
always rolled out of my ears
as i went on living through my
20's and whatever dreams
i was going to believe in.

now,

10 years or so later,
i'm back in the neighborhoods
he wanted me in
taking my son to school
by the reason
he came to
this town
and somewhere in
the low lying clouds
i see
the smile
of content
as
i again
get compounded by
the 'careful what you wish for'
notion
as
the carousel
continues to spin
as
fast as life
will allow.

EXTRA SECURITY

while my
youngest
boy was
in the hospital
getting
the
cure to pneumonia,
a security guard
got
nasty with me
returning
to the urgent care ward
because
i didn't show him
my whole
wrist
bracelet
and
as
he
said,
'YOU HAVE
TO SHOW ME THE
WHOLE THING SON'
i knew my
fatigue was greater
than
my
ultimate desire
to
say,
'YOUR INABILITY TO
BECOME A REAL COP
IS NOT THE WORLD'S
PROBLEM,
ESPECIALLY IN A CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL WHEN PARENTS
ARE FEELING A PAIN
WORSE THAN YOU NOT

LIVING YOUR LIFE'S DREAMS
OUT
SO GO ON AHEAD AND
CUT THIS FUCKING BRACELET
OFF MY WRIST AND JAM
IT STRAIGHT UP YOUR
TIGHT ASS AND HAVE
YOURSELF
AND COMPLETELY
FUCKING DANDY
DAY THERE,
FUCKFACE.'

instead,
i wandered on
down the well lit
and antiseptic addled hallway,
wondering
what day it
was and
if i was ever
going to see my
home,
pets,
kids,
back porch,
old cords
and any other thing
i owned in
my
own
natural
light
ever again.

fake snow flakes

drip about these
cold coffeehouse windows
in their adhesive plastics
while
the real cold looks much
more fictionalized outside
with passing lights
and the insignia of
tomorrow lurching close behind
and as
the sound of the
jazz tenor
and drummer
continues to rise
rise
rise
above scales
meant for higher human hands,
i think i may have a bit of
a handle
on
this
whole masquerade of
now
as the
next
moment
starts to
hide from
me.

FILMY BIRD HANDS

every time
i stop to
film
a
set of
geese
making
their
black
arrow
over
the
cold
fall
skies
i
know
that
someone
in
this
rural,
red state
is
shaking their head
looking
at me
wondering
what
the hell
i have
my camera aimed
at
as
they
readjust their
waist
and
figure

it's
all
some
kind
of god damned
waste one
way or
a
damned other.

FIT TO NOT FIT

a great many
nights of
my life
i was stuck
in paralyzed fear
wishing my
son would
never have
another fucking
fit
for
the
rest of his
days
and
forever
would be
a more apt
notion
as
the devils
of exorcism row
wake
for
a
fresh cup
of blood.

FUCKING EDITORS

when i
hear bruce willis
decry
to the villain
that he
is a
'bleeping mother sucker
in a dag blasted blubber
of slip'
while his lips move in
odd meters on
a cloud of censorship
on basic cable TV,
i feel we have
decided to
turn the hero
into
a
dunce
in
the
quickest
twist of
fate
known
to
the fucking
god damned
entire
motherfucking
human
son of a bitchin'
race.

growing older

is the wine
i never thought
i could comprehend,
but as
with everything i thought
i knew in
my
'brilliant' stage,
i a yet again proved wrong.

this was each and every night
i had to see my 6-year old
boy attached to an IV in one
hand, a heart monitor on the other
and a huge oxygen mask on
his face as he lie sweating
in a hospital bed trying
to rid
the
pneumonia
ridding roller coasters around
his young lung.

there with his mouth half open,
i thought
it should be me there and
my son over my body,
but that's not how life
works out.

we don't get what we wish
for as the
wishes we once had
retire to an island we cannot
pronounce as the truth
of our own story comes
in stark moments on the
cold of a hard,
clean hospital floor

as the nurses race here and there
to make sure
the best is given
to my
tiny little boy.

as the fluids
drip
and the heavens of oxygen
pump steadily,
i think
that
the only thing
this
could be is
the way
it
should have
always been
whether i
was going to believe it or not.

it's the therapy
in the insanity
and they
psychology
in
the
very first moment
i saw my son
and
tried to remember my
earliest memory
on
this
planet.

HEALTHY FRIGHT

the only thing
more frightening
than viewing the health
care industry in
a hospital 24-hours a day
for 5 days with
your kid in a bed
inside a children's hospital
is to flick on
the television
and watch the angry,
oppressed
politicians
lament healthcare overhaul
legislation
that could actually make
things
better in
a broken,
screwed,
fractured,
bloodied
system designed to
help
the human body,
and not
decay
the
fragile human brain.

i had a dream of childhood

as an adult last night
and figured
it was something
akin
to feeling like
this grown up adult thing
lasts too long sometimes,
so when nieces and nephews
complain that they
are ready to
become grown adults,
i stop
them short and warn them how many
years of their lives
will be spent wishing
on that childhood star
that they could
feel that willful
gift of abandon
one
more
time
much like
a
good poem
ready to blow up
the skirt or
into the hot air balloon
to make
it
all
seem appropriate in
the most
inappropriate of
moments.

I WILL ...

don't
you
worry
your
pretty
lashes
and
tomorrows
clean
outfit
with
a
new
bow,
i
will
be
your
late
night
fucking
talk
show
host.

JEW'S BOX

when i think
about something
called
'jew's box'
with a
colorful piece of clip
art of a juice box
with the face of
either jerry seinfeld
or sarah silverman's face
on the side of that
said box,
i know that both
of them would get the humor
in my intent
and i'm sure george carlin
would beam,
but this modern world of
ours would turn it
into some trite,
anti-semetic
thing
that
couldn't be
farther from the truth
as
that
little
play on words
in my mind
becomes
just that
as the
world
finds
a
way
to
stew

over
yet another
comical
moment
that
should
be
just
that.

JUST NORTH OF 40

the woman
in the wal-mart
checkout said,
'are you 40?'

i stopped,
looked up and
wondered if
i was on a gag show,
asking,
'me?'

she squinted
as my naked box of
wine sat guilty
on the tiny blue counter
and
she
said over my
5-year old's
decree of
'daddy-daddy'
'you have to look
over 40 for me not
to card you?'

and as i dug in
with a huge
grin,
i was simply not
25 or
15 or
31
or
22
or
34
or
8

or
13
or
36
anymore ..

i was a rugged
38
and
even though
my
winter worn
face sprinkled with
tiny dots
of beard
sprouted tiny red tents
of teen zits,
i was getting made over
by mother nature.

always the youngest
in a room
and constantly getting
carded for that youth,
my wagon has finally
caught up with
my horses
and
as
i
lean down to rub
my son's head
to
calm his excited consumer
bones,
i
realize
the view standing next
to
the

horses may
be
as
kick
ass
as
every
year that
led
into
today.

MARY'S GONE

i found out
early on
a monday morning
that she
wasn't going to be with us
anymore.

a 60-year
old music teacher
that gave this world
more
than she ever
wanted to
return.

got married in
israel to her sweetheart,
and headed back
to the midwest to
sow the sweet seeds
of music into the
fertile ears of
children.

she always
said 'bless you'
when i left
her room following
me fixing her
computer
or
talking about
our favorite
local donkey.

and by accident,
i found out
what her last act
on the planet was

on a whim of a conversation
with my 6-year old next
to me at a local
donut shop.

after she got her last
box of donuts,
she had a stroke behind
the wheel,
wrecked her car
and lived for another day.

but,
it was that last dose
of quality sugar
morning zingers that
made
me smile
for
mary
and all
the sweet things
she did
down
here.

MIDWESTERN OCEAN BIRD

at odd,
interesting
times
i notice
this one,
bright white
and quite wondrous
ocean gull
that flies from
pole
to pole
in the wal-mart parking
lot in
the
thick of our
midwestern missouri
skies.

it usually
let's out some version
of a squeal as it
careens smoothly through
the air like
a
hawaiian fowl
going slowly from one moment to
the next.

it doesn't belong in this climate
and there is neither salt water
or a big body of water
for it to inhabit,
yet it pops in like
a
lucky charm on this side of the
world for all of us to
place our wish upon.

each time i stop,

call my son's attention
to view it
and we
sit or stand silently
watching it leave our periphery
until our neck
cannot stretch no more,
or our eyes fail
or an obstruction
jams it into the memory bank.

from there,
we go on our way
wondering
how
we
were to be so fortunate to
have
one magical
bird grace our
seasons
with
that
subtle surprise
in
the
wal mart parking
cove.

MORNING THRONE

several weeks back
i wheeled my dirty,
ailing cold car around the
corner and saw a bright,
white toilet seat in the
huddle with bags of
trash waiting
for its next shitty moment.

as my laughter died down
a bit,
i thought about all the
miracles,
dreams,
stories,
magnificence
that toilet
created in the
peak of morning
or
the
dawn of night.

later that day,
i noticed that the trash
men decided not to
cart off this victorious throne.

as such,
the toilet man kept
that porcelain king out
at the end of his driveway
for the duration of the next
week in defiance of
trash law
and to flaunt
his
bowel skills.

this last monday,
the trash men of morning
finally carted
off they mystery man's
shitter to its final
grave
so
that i
may
add
one
more
crap,
poem memory
to the
paper pile.

my favorite e-mail exchange ever

Hi Frank. My name is Scott. Joe Domino gave me your e-mail. He told me that you wrote a computer program that enters you into various sweepstakes with anonymity. This s something that sounds interesting to me and I would like to know more about it. Could you tell me how it works? I look forward to your response. Thanks.

Sincerely, Scott

**

From: Fred P. <[@gmail.com](#)>

Subject: Re: Sweepstakes

To: "SCOTT" <[@att.net](#)>

Date: Monday, June 21, 2010, 9:56 PM

Who are you? I'm not Frank and I don't know anyone named Joe Domino. I have no idea what you're talking about.

my little miles son is a tiny rock star.

recently he went into the
hospital for a 4-day stay
and he
threw his world
of friend,
family
and
school into
a fervor.

also,
he attracted a host of
nurses to his side
as if he was a tiny
king in a
world he
was carefully constructing.

we heard
that he was on the prayer rolls
at a local church without
our knowing,
while his principal
came by several times
to see how he was holding up.

the power of our little
miles is like a potion
we try to look within,
but cannot quite deduce
as he smiles again and
hooks yet another stranger
into his aura with
a natural ease.

we are witnessing
one with the
rapid skill of

a thousand
tiny
miracles wrapped into
a
massive rubber band
ball of magic
and
it
makes
the
world
a
bit
brighter
and
for
me
with
the
sound
of
pound of agony
during
a
painful
hospital stay,
it was enough
to stave off
that
darkness
as
his
tiny spokes of
light
flew
around
like
a
wet,
sun drenched tire

giving everything
and everyone
yet
another
reason
to
dig
the
shit
out
of
living.

my sick little boy

cried for me

as

i left the room

to get him

a

box of blue cup cakes

for his little pals at school

and as

i

fell well outside

of

ear range,

i felt

again

what

it was like

to

walk

the tight

rope of loving

something

more

than

you

ever

though

you

could

dig even

your

own

self.

one day the chinese will own the world.

heard a report
in the cold
car
as lines
of
heat trickle
from
american
strip malls
how
coal is
being used at prolific
rates
in the largest
center of the world.

one day
china will
rule us all.

and in this report,
a 37-year old man
was getting ready to
enter his curtain call
with a nasty
spell of black lung caught
way too late.

surely the chinese
will rule us
one day.

and as the population surges
and production flies
into government happy numbers,
the environment is crumbling
under the pollutants
spewing with dark joy into

the skies.

one day china
will be what mao
always imagined.

and as our american kids
and adults fetter with all of
our goods made in china,
i think of the one
man in this report that i have
already outlived and how
he
worked to die.

the chinese
are closer to the
finish line
than we can imagine.

and underneath
the few lumps of
dark matter hiding the
diamond,
i know that
china will one day
display that
ring
to us
as
we
wonder
what
brought us
under
the
cloak of
asian rule.

our cat

is part dog
the way it attacks
our hands
and sulks around
in a big cat shadow
eating kid toys like
a rabid dog mouth
and taking big pieces of
food in mouth
as though
it might not have 9 lives,
then i realized our cat
is likely just a crazy bird
when i pee into the toilet
and he bobs his head around
like a soul train intermission
waiting to leap his
abnormally small white
body into the
filth of my liquid waste
and
at that,
i dodge,
block his leap with
my one good hand
and
smile that i
saved our
cat dog from
a mess
i would
never
want
to
clean up.

PICKLEWARE

I would
like to invent
a
full
line
of pickle eat ware
for
all of those out there
craving the juice
that
make's the world's mouth
salivate.

there would
be
spoons,
knives,
forks
and
sporks that would
double
as
deliciously
aged pickles
to scoop up soup,
spread butter on bread,
eat tasty beans
or any other
sort of culinary wonder you
could
imagine.

and right when you
ready to put it away
to be cleaned,
you would remember
that you could
eat these utensils
in full

so
that the
culinary experience
would be complete
and
the
world
would
have one
less
dirty utensil
to
clean.

at the
end of
the
day,
we
could
all
be divinely
delicious.

QUESTIONSANSWERS

go

ahead

and

launch

all

your

juicy

missiles

at

once

and

ask

you

tiny

shadow

of

questions

later,

bitches.

SHADY SHADOWS

on the real
sunny winter days
i see all the shadows
of the world
banging
in loud crashes against
each other
as
the real world
safely moves with
ease from
one
stop light
to
the next house.

but these dangerous shadows
fly at high rates of speed
and take each other out
with violent swipes
like
drunk football players
on motor bikes trying
to even the karmic
pull of it all.

and these shadows begin to
crowd around me
and
smash me around the
ear
and
toes,
giving me tiny moments to pause
and look up at
the
sun
for
being

such a
bright
culprit on
such an uneven day
as today.

SIMPLY TIRED

in all those mornings
my bones wreak of
tired,
my eyes hardly open,
the cough wakes me a bit,
then the dog jumps on my
ball bag,
the cat sneezes snot on my
shoulder,
my 12-year old is
still asleep and misses the bus,
my 5-year old
screams for his blue pen,
the morning continues to
hone it's razor's edge,
the feet pound from the
day's prior kid fun pain,
the breath wakes the neighbors
and it's when i finally
remember my wife
said 'i love you'
in a groggy whisper
as i left the room,
i remembered
that
all
of
this is done
generation after
generation
to
give
our
kid's
a
childhood
to
remember.

SIX

my little
miles
boy
is
going
to
be 6 years old
tomorrow
and
i have always
got
a
bit
choked
up
the night
before,
which happens
to
be
pearl harbor day.

i think about how
far away that day was
when i never imagined
we were ready to bring him
into the world
one click before
5 on the day lennon
was shot,
but nature had another plan.

on a hunt to get a
dvd about flying geese,
a nap in the midday,
then fatherhood by
evening.

our small

boy was cold
and he held my
finger with all
of his fingers
on that first,
chilly winter night
that was one of
my finest ever on
earth.

now,
he ambles about
in his own jeans,
little kid body,
love of animals,
the world opening
within his irises every morning
as he insists on
walking to the bus alone.

my little son
is going
to be
6 and
i
feel
like
i get
to
relive
all of the birthday's
of my
life,
but with
better
colors
and
bigger props.

happy birthday,

miho.

SPY ZITS

i think a real
good spy
mechanism in
this increasingly
silicon, microprocessor
world
of ours would
be to implant a biological
seed to sprout a zit on the
face
that could listen in
on secret
russian talks
or yugoslavian plots
or
iranian diatribes
or
american jibberish
just
before
the
bubble
bursts
and the
secret listening
device
goes hurtling away
in a life
well
served.

TAIL TALE

i had this
odd sense the other
morning when i woke
that
i couldn't have a tail on
my body because i love
to sleep square on my back
and it would simply
get in the way,
so i would
have to
pass on the
leprechaun's
wish
and
stick
with my
flat ass
and
dumb
butthole.

the birth of idea

is
the
closest we
men will
ever
get
to
feeling
what it's like
to
create
something original
from our bodies
and
i find
so many
men incapable
of
doing
that
so
i
am always
reassured
that
women
are in
control
of
the
birthing process
to
keep
this
whole
human
dance
moving
in

forward motion.

THE #'S

when
you
finally
think
you
get
what
you
deserve
in
life
you
should
go
ahead
and
get
a
fortune
cooking
and
pay
attention
to
the
numbers
on
the
back
of
it
because
they
will
either
be
the
best
or

most
twisted
of
luck
you
will
ever
have
silently
wished
for.

the only hogwash

around
these parts
in this delicately
drawn technological
police state
we are increasingly
living in
are the mechanical
eyes in the sky that
take pictures and video
of your car not
coming to a complete stop
at a red when making a
right turn
or
when you run a yellow
into a red light
or do any other sort
of human lapse an actual
cop wasn't around to witness
only to get a hundred buck
ticket in the mail
condemning you
for a tiny slip in
driving judgment
as the
stats for accidents rise
at each of these
filmed intersections
while city officials
smile with money smudges on
their cheeks
as
the
pig spittle
washes over
the
end of
this

poetic
style
rant.

the slow tempo of aging,
with intermediate drags of
panic,
is what is written in the lines of
old men and women that
wait patiently in grocery store
lines looking
around them with a modicum of
fear as all of us youngsters
talk on the phone to our people
as if we have
any kind of idea of
what we may theorize is going on
as
they
smile loudly at what they know
and
how their wrinkles now
triumphantly blend into
smiling face
at
the
future
of
truth.

tired and thoughtful

in the consumer line

tonight

i saw rather

big boned woman

on a shopping mission

with only a few items

waiting to swipe

her credit card

as her shiny 1,000 dalnmations

purse swung stiffly

while she threw her large

brown coat emblazoned with

a gold outline of the hundred dollar

bill all around her

and as a glint of her large

silver diamond wedding ring

caught the edge of my eye,

i thought

that was one helluva a fucking

guy

to

have

tied down

this

woman

of

middle america.

ULTIMATE MATERIALIZATION

if i could find
the time
to
materialize
each of my
wife's
good ideas
i know we
wouldn't
have to feel
the pinch of the penny
each month
and
we would finally
know what it's like
to
worry
about not worrying
that much
but i'm certain
that will never happen
as
i
love
her
more
each day for
being
her
and
loving
me
for
who
the
hell
i
happen to be.

VAGPENISTRY

i think about the day
that war might end
on
this planet
and i think
one of those
ways might
be for
scientists and chemists to
come together on
a new revolutionary pill
that could be pink
in
color.

it would be
'vagpenistry'
and it would
be taken by
both men and
women.

one formula would be for
men,
the other for women.

it would orgasm the
world much
the same way viagra did.

essentially,
it would let women understand men,
and men understand women.

slowly
and surely,
it would release the appropriate
chemicals
within

an herbal sort of mix
to allow the
juices to swim
for
men to be on venus
and women on mars.

once this happened,
we could call Washington DC
a place of political pride
as wars
erode,
arguments turn into
better ways of living
and
the hoax
of
conspiracy
would
become
plato's truth.

it would be a future world,
but
most of us would
call it only
a fictionalized
tomorrow
as
the
man and woman finger
intertwine
as
though
they
may
make
it to the
next level.

WRITING RIGHT.

Are
we
all
righting
history
each
day
or
just
a
tiny
part
of
writing
it?