

# A\_Book\_of\_Poems.pdf

By: thepanamaslider

*A book is a small cog in a much more complex, external machinery. Writing is a flow among others; it enjoys no special privilege and enters into relationships of current and countercurrent, of back-wash with other flows - the flows of shit, sperm, speech, action, eroticism, money, politics, etc. Like Bloom, writing on the sand with one hand and masturbating with the other - two flows in what relationship?*

-Gilles Deleuze

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(read carefully: there will be a test)

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# Memorandum

To: You

From: Me

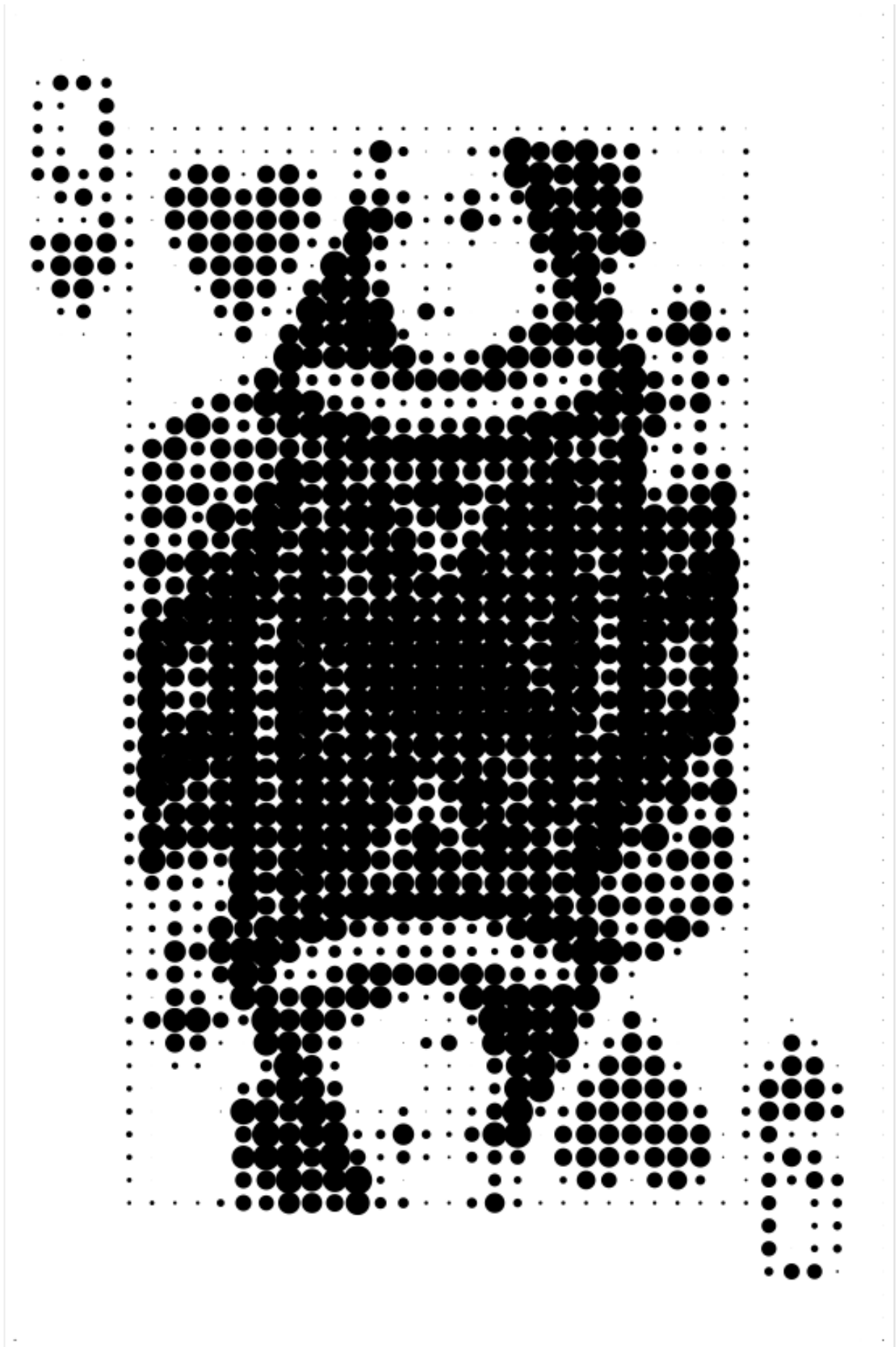
Date: 1 December 2007

Re: Introducing poetry to an electric world

It has come to my attention that there is great contention surrounding the essence of *poetry*. I enter into the debate only to say it is a stupid debate which narrows that beautiful portion of us that cannot help but question. I hope that in reading this you feel uncomfortably happy and slightly confused, because that should be the natural state of humanity. So please keep hands and arms outside the vehicle—typing or dancing or giving a hug. By the time you are finished, things will be different from when you started, and there is nothing you can do but run with it.

I want to explore the relationships between language, technology, and control. As humans, we have great difficulty thinking past our own language. It governs how we perceive reality, and how we try to control it. Writing this, I have become unhealthily obsessed with how we decide something is a poem (or a chair, or a beer). What happens in that time between uncertainty and certainty that flips the switch between the two? What drives us to define? And how do our words give us the illusion of mastery? I have noticed that we are greatly disturbed by the things we can not pin down. I hope that these poems inhabit this moment before certainty—the moment before we *know* and can only *suspect*.

Accept everything, believe nothing.



## Tubaligation

Give me the perfect in everything.  
I'm sick of the half-assed, bullshit,  
overdone, no-fun.

And when I say sick I mean it.  
My stomach hurts and  
I can't sleep—  
just a sweaty tangle  
of squatted legs and high-arched feet.  
I'm sick of my feet too.  
I can't buy shoes that fit  
because my toes are fat and my  
bridges wide.

Bridges don't really lead  
to  
any  
where  
they  
just  
collapse

because some rich fucker wanted to make money by skimping on the stuff that holds it all together—the bolts and joints and skin—like the stuff that holds us together minus the bones and brains (which I suspect aren't that important anyway). 60-40% Fe. 80-20% Al. I barely remember the ear infection when I almost went deaf (and most of what I do is from stories). I sat in the car with my grandmother at the foot of the Jimmie Davis Bridge. Jimmie was a governor and wrote *You Are My Sunshine*, but his sunshine didn't mean much to my wailing 4-year-old-self who would have destroyed the earth with a thought or a blink or a fart if I could. The Bridge was closed because someone decided he wanted to jump, but not really. Really, he just wanted people to think that he wanted to jump. How long would it take him to hit the water if he did take the plunge, grow the stones, find the balls, fit the bill, hold his nose, climb the hill, be the king, play the part, snuff the stuff, bluff the bluff, grow the wings, ring the bell, make the sale, have no fear, god is near, rise above, all that stuff, find the love, entertain, tell the joke, blow the smoke, touch his god, and

SPLAT? Splash. sploop. make a ripple in the river.

Then what?

What would be the function of his fall?

$$f(x) = x^2 - 3x + \sqrt{\infty}$$

No, probaly logarithmic.

Nice and neat and easy to watch.

$$f(x) = \log(x) \text{ plus or minus}$$

depending on the wind.

Screaming. I was screaming in an endless line of impatient humming engines.  
I'm not sure you get it. Four years old, ear-infected, squirming, sweating, fevered, sick, and  
screaming.

My grandmother rolled down the window  
and yelled at a traffic cop.

“What's the hold up?”  
“Somebody's gonna jump.”

And she thought for a second,  
deliberate.

“Push the fucker off.”

They put tubes in my ears  
and I never screamed again.

The things we do with our information

Tie it up.  
Hedge it.  
Run it through a filter.  
Leather strap it to the wall—  
red ball-gag in the mouth like  
a roast suckling pig with  
an apple.

Soak it. Steam it. Brown it. Clean it.  
Broil it. Boil it. Grill it. Blacken it.  
Spice it. Dice it. Blend it. Chop it. Can it.  
Crush it. Juice it. Cure it. Smoke it.  
Freeze it. Salt it. Dry it. Fry it. Burn it.  
Churn it. Learn it. Char it. Chew it. Eat it.

But don't eat it rare—  
then anything can happen.  
“I hear it carries parasites,  
tapeworms that wiggle and latch in your gut.”  
You do the work and they get the nutrients.

And E. coli. It always has E. coli.  
The T.V. screams E. COLI!  
Don't forget E. coli.  
Always lurking.

“I hear it lives in intestines.”  
“I hear it affects your senses.”  
“I hear it takes over your brain.”  
“I hear it was invented by tobacco companies!”

## Deadly Disease

BALTIMORE (AP)—A scientific study has shown that E. coli has been linked to increased high school drop out rates, teen pregnancy, gun crimes, rape, terrorism, narcoterrorism, Vietnam, Pearl Harbor, World War II, and cocaine. Ed Johnson, senior research fellow at Johns Hopkins Medical Center, told our correspondents that the chances of catching E. coli have risen dramatically in the past decade due to America's increasing dependence on pre-processed meats. “This is a deadly disease,”

said Johnson. “Right now we are on the front lines trying to find a cure, but it is an elusive enemy. Our intelligence has traced the problem's origins to one of the thousands of isolated sausage factories in Pakistan, though the search for this insidious culprit will require time and significant increases in manpower. The Pakistani government has offered its full cooperation in this endeavor, though we expect the exercise to last through December.”

So what do we do with this information?

Broadcast it? Tell it? Print it? Produce it?  
Sensationalize it? Fear it? Avoid it? Deny it?  
Point at it? Blame it? Cover it? Uncover it?



Process it? Polish it? Clean it? Mean it?  
Buy it? Bank on it? Own it? Sell it?  
Write it? Direct it? Create it? Control it?

Oh, how we have to control it!  
Dig our dirty fingernails deep  
into its haunches  
(did you wash your hands?)  
and don't let go.

*Ed Johnson says:*

*"I don't understand why people don't just cook their meat. The scientific community has never been more certain that this is a very real concern!"*

I like the blood, Ed, and I'm not concerned—  
not about this.

I'm still here, Ed,  
taking tiny steps toward the beautiful dark  
where anything can happen—  
where we can't be certain at all.

Byron Hiccup has been to Mars

Byron has seen the Earth's green glow fade soft,  
slow into space.

He imagines parts of it, tiny particles,  
slip awkwardly beyond  
like setting aside a prom dress—  
straining past the silence  
to snatch a sliver of chiffon melting into  
the black unknown of a bedroom floor.

And he knows from school  
that these particles power far-off stars,  
fueling the fantastic violence of the universe.  
And he knows that one day—  
when he has been hit by a car  
or his lungs fill with fluid and sag from his chest  
or worse yet  
when he has lived out his years and falls asleep quiet,  
without regret—  
that day, parts of him will power stars too.

And sitting on Mars,  
watching bits of himself stir  
the swirling turbulence of vast distances,  
Byron Hiccup will conclude that it is honorable  
to feed the heavens until he is used up or  
until the universe snaps into place  
like a rubber band.

## Sci-Fi Poem

“Electrofuck!”  
    said the green-eyed alien  
    while the space-preacher slept  
    near the airlock.

On its home planet it was perfectly acceptable  
for two consenting adults to electrofuck  
until they were blue in the face—all night long, and all day too.  
Electrofucking improved relationships.  
Made people closer. Happier. More understanding.

But this was Earth and  
they don't understand electrofucking—  
can't see past their old way of fucking.

Because when you have fucked a particular way  
for so long, it gets inside of you.  
You can't conceive of new ways to fuck.  
You can't break out of your patterns.

“Electrofuck!”  
    it said again,  
    causing the preacher  
    to shift under his blanket.

    “What is that alien trying to say?”  
    thought the Shepherd, knowing it was something important.

He tried to decipher the nonsense,  
copper-wire hums coming from the creature.  
One sounded sort of like a *k*—  
another like *batbatbatbat* in short bursts.  
But they didn't make sense together.  
They didn't fit his head.  
Maybe it was talking about baseball!  
Maybe it wasn't talking at all.

Annoyed, the space-preacher rolled back to his left side  
and pulled the blanket tight over his head.  
    “That thing ought to learn how to talk here on Earth.  
    It isn't hard. Just learn the words.”

To Master the Art of the Bad Picture!

Put me on a circuit  
board. My face and neck—  
the curve of my cheek  
cured with current.

My rectangle grin stands out from the digital—  
snaggle-toothed and snarled,  
a lightning-struck stump  
perked like a pecker in a patch  
of unpruned ribbon grass.

Cameras capture creatures  
called by command line voodoo

DISPLAY: you.jpg  
RUN: chickenfoot\_magic.exe  
IF you.jpg==you.exe  
THEN

P'i - Standstill [Stagnation] Six at the beginning means:  
When ribbon grass is pulled up, the sod comes with it.  
Each according to his kind. Perseverance brings good  
fortune and success. Six in the second place means:  
They bear and endure; This means good fortune for  
inferior people. The standstill serves to help the great  
man attain success. Six in the third place means: They  
bear shame. Nine in the fourth place means: He who  
acts at the command of the highest remains without  
blame. Those of like mind partake of the blessing. Nine  
in the fifth place means: Standstill is giving way. Good  
fortune for the great man. "What if it should fail, what if  
it should fail?" In this way he ties it to a cluster of  
mulberry shoots. Nine at the top means: The standstill  
comes to an end. First standstill, then good fortune.

ELSE

END

Cameras capture sex  
called *love* sometimes—sometimes *fucking*.  
Now don't we fucking love to do it!  
And film it, photograph it, to remind us that we can!  
That we still have the drive to make smaller monkeys.

Cameras capture children,  
called *smaller monkeys* by half-assed poets.

The kids we wish we were—  
chasing Liz, her frizzy hair pulled back  
by Wind (she thought it was  
you). You caught her! stutter  
over the clutter in your head:

ABCDEFGI (or is it L?) x 2 = 4

and freeze,

follow fractal-patterned pine needles to the point when  
they are so thin you could breathe them.

Know this is synchronicity—

that everyone freezes  
until Liz walks away,  
her hair like red fired river clay.

≡ξ≡ξ≡

## Chapter V: Does Reality Have A Lower Case?

There are always two versions:  
the picture and the person,  
upper and lower.

Cases just make sense—  
x is a smaller X.  
Obviously.  
It is lesser.  
Why wonder?

But where did d come from?  
It is so very different:

D v. d  
They look nothing alike!

d is lesser because we learned it

D v. **d**

Now it's not.

All I can do anymore is question. Does reality have a lower case?  
What would it look like? Is the photograph the thing? Just a symbol? Something in between?

Out-of-breath I catch her,  
both of us huffing  
and I stare up at the pine needles.  
So green they almost hum.  
Say cheese!

sucking for air

## Tropical Waters

I remember Hawaii like heaven—  
white and warm  
and smelling like stale sea salt  
forming film across my fingers.  
Even my eyes begin to burn  
as I glance across the glaring ocean,  
from Hapuna to the cold crab waters of the north.  
I stare at the sun as it strains  
to burn a hole straight through into Africa.  
And I wonder if I could climb through  
and out the other side  
into the arms of the Earth mother  
or the jaws of a crocodile,  
wide and waiting for the herds.

The cool water mats the hair around my ankles  
and I can feel my face turn burnt  
before the sun moves behind a cloud.  
In the shade I hear the noise of  
a fisherman from Fairbanks  
shouting shit set to drums from the upper Nile.  
And in a flash the sun is back  
burning the clouds like chaff,  
a bright and blinding God  
and everything is quiet.

Electric Jesus

Electric Jesus  
on electric cross  
with electric grace  
to give

to electric people  
with electric troubles  
electric sins do make them double

electric work  
for electric pensions  
taken by thieves  
with electric mansions—  
Electric Messiah roll off the stone  
and prepare for electric ascension.

It is quite certain that we no longer need the State to watch over affairs. It's just old men in suits with way too much loot and time on their hands to split hairs. And no one's behind it—they haven't been for sometime and the world didn't stop when they were. It swallowed them up like the rest of us schmucks and kept spinning and spinning and spinning...

How many ways can a grackle cackle?  
When threatened, males let out a whisper-pitched hiss  
that stutters with increasing speed.  
Females have a more traditional *caw*  
that serves to attract potential mates.  
Fascinatingly, young offspring rarely develop  
communicative capacity early on.  
As they mature and prepare for flight,  
they learn the dominant communication patterns  
and nuances of their home group, which tend to vary  
(only slightly) from flock to flock.

<SCRIPT language="???">

```
<!-- begin prayer
Hail Electric Mary—
    {
        alert ('do you recognize me?');
        alert ('am I saying this right?');
    }
full of Electric Grace
the Electric Lord is with thee.
//-->
</SCRIPT>
```

Shakespeare's language was largely iambic  
and Longfellow's largely trochaic.  
The Church's language is what it is

and the State's is quite archaic.  
Society's language is hateful and cruel  
in need of a loving revision.  
And my own language is something or other—  
I haven't quite made my decision.

This computer here needs some work—  
the memory is fragmented,  
uncompressed.  
It's connected to the network through  
a digital interface,  
ten digits touching everything:  
smooth counters, rough sand,  
warm cider, soft skin, coarse hair,  
thick soup, clattering keys,  
cold snow, funny money, moist cake,  
white beaches, cold robots,  
leather uppers, rubber soles, hard souls,  
god.

Time to expand the program:

ὁ δὲ εἰπὲν Ὑμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ

#### Electric Parable

The sheep in the field  
sit quietly,  
their wool grown thick with  
wild curls.

The bear in the cave  
sleeps peacefully,  
its body overstuffed and worn  
from summer.

The mice in the pantry  
scuttle about,  
their claws clicking lazily for food  
in the dark.

The man at his machine  
attempts to make sense,  
his fingers flicking frantically  
at the interface.

*We are growing, you and I. We are loving editors. Don't forget.  
Revise yourself.*



**Chapter III: Before Chapter IV, but after II, according to systematic logic**  
(What is the limit of poetry?)

There is a point where you stop believing you are a force. I did. When you're young you believe that all the world is going to love you and they never do so you stop. Some people work—some people drink or fight or smoke or have children. They move it along.

I design systems. Closed systems, open systems, the works. That is what this new world is based on—systems.

"Hey man, you catch that new show? You know, the one with the chick with the huge tits and she has to run around fighting those whatsits?"

Swipe. Bleep. Swipe. Bleep. Swipe. Bleep.

"Twenty Sixty Seven. So did you catch it or what?" the cashier pressed.

The Grocery is where I feel normal. Everything runs according to its system. The stockers stock, the taggers tag, the checkers check, and the consumers consume whatever the hell they want. It is a beautiful system that no one could have designed. It is a system that could only come from years of grocery evolution.

"No, I missed it. Was it good?"

"Hell yeah it was good. I told you man—chick with huge tits running around and killing whatsits."

"Yeah. I'll look for it."

I got my bags. Plastic. Everyone thinks that plastic bags will kill some whales or harm the natural order of things. I happen to know from my studies of natural systems that plastic bags actually do very little to any natural system and all of that malarkey is simply part of bigger, bullshittier system created by the paper companies to sell more brown paper bags. Or at least it was. Now I'm not sure anyone's behind it. Maybe paper bags are just a product of our attention, and when we turn away—POOF! I use plastic because they are stronger.

I was paying attention to the automatic door when I felt my weight lessen. I slid and spun and landed on my arm. There was a spot of orange juice soaking into my shirt which is interesting because I couldn't see it before. Next time you slip in a puddle of orange juice, let me know if you see it before it is soaking into your clothes.

"Shit! Somebody help him."

The manager came running over in a panic, concerned that I was ok. Well, my arm was broken. Now I don't care too much about that, any system has its glitches. My arm breaks, the cleaners forget to clean the floor, an inactive volcano erupts unexpectedly—these things happen. But I did feel like being an ass. Have you ever felt that way? You wake up one morning and say: *look at all the shit I put up with every day. People cut me off or leave me hanging or hang me up themselves. I've had it my whole life and I've never really felt any different. But now the system owes me.*

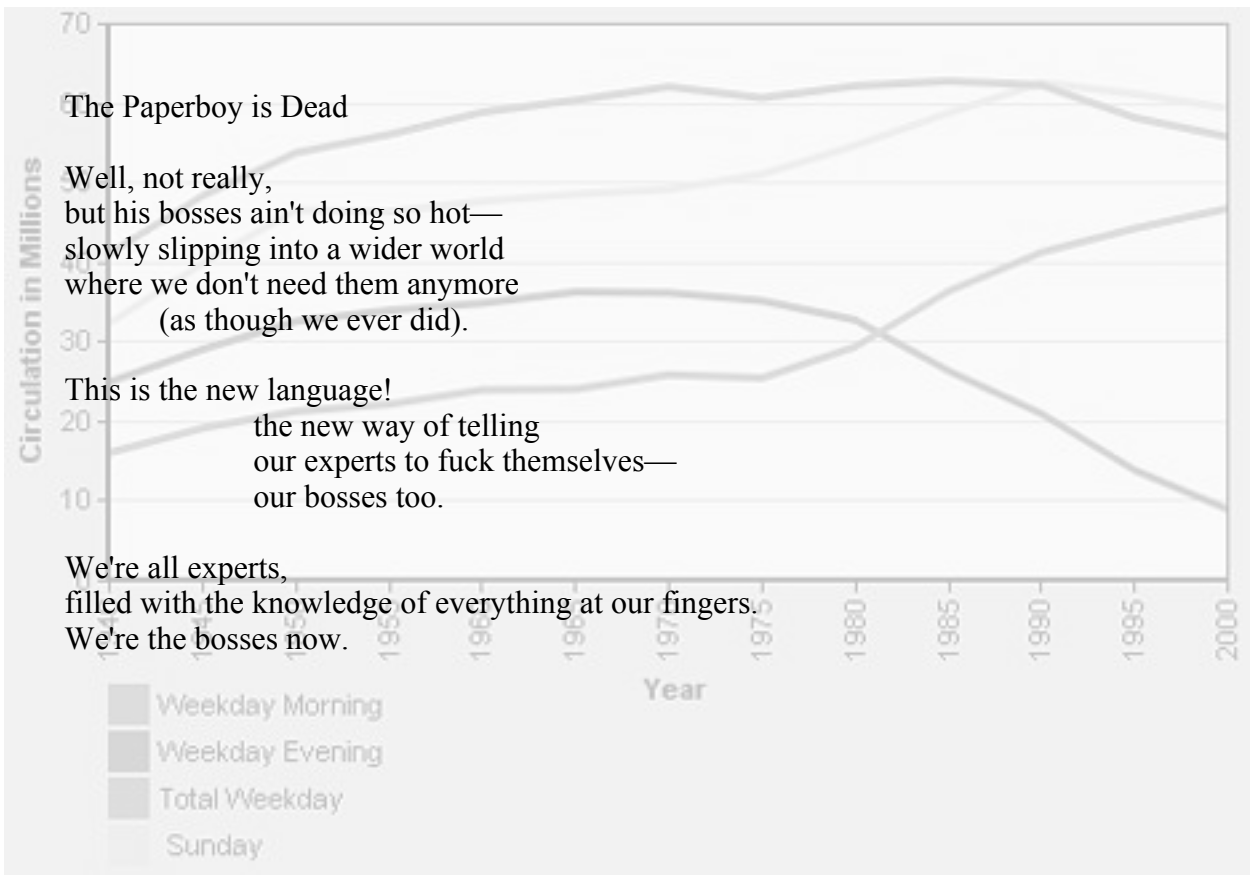
"I am gonna sue your ass." It felt good to say.

"Sir, I apologize. Surely we can work out an arrangement."

*An arrangement?*

"Certainly. My lawyers can arrange to call yours and let them know I am suing your ass."

Now that upset the system.



# Obituaries



Frank Jefferies, beloved son and paperboy. Taken from us in his prime by brutal forces we do not understand (he was hit by a bus). He was pretty normal, whatever that means. He liked to go for walks. I'm writing this, and I don't really know Frank Jefferies, but I feel sad that he died. And happy in a way, that he doesn't have to be here to read his obituary. Then I wonder if a fictional character *can* die?

I suppose they can. It isn't such a big deal though. In the comics they can just be resurrected. In the scriptures, too. But what about in books of poetry? There, I think, the dead stay dead. They have to, or no one will be missed. No one will be wiser.

Frank Jefferies is survived by his mother, Rita, father, Orton, and brothers, David and Lester. Memorial services will be held Saturday, June 18 at the Glendale Cemetery on Flournoy Lane.

Spiny, prickly things

I haven't got my newspaper in six weeks.  
I think the kid who delivers them must've died.  
But I shove that aside.

I discarded too many thoughts this way—  
swung them around by their hair  
and released.

I watched them slice and arc through  
hot-buttered sky, pig-tails flapping behind.  
It's an ideological babydoll hammerthrow!

I could not keep them all  
so I picked the best ones  
or the easy ones,

the ones that stuck the quickest  
and the others disappeared  
like children in a bad world.

When I was young and lost a toy my mom would say  
    "The briars got it."  
And I grew up believing in the evil of thickets.

Somewhere there's a patch of thistle  
filled with ex-girlfriends, drunk uncles,  
old cars, healed scars, and six weeks of Sundays  
ripening.

## Busdriver

Busdriver says he isn't feeling well,  
clutches his breast and grimaces.  
I think to myself  
(but don't say out loud)  
    "Shouldn't have eaten the spicy shrimp, old man."

Busdriver leans a bit,  
still clutching his breast,  
and from my corner seat I can  
see a trickle of brine on his cheek.  
And Busdriver, the same one who  
has driven me to work these years,  
slumps forward and rolls his eyes back.

    "Can anyone drive a bus?"  
    (I do say that out loud  
    or at least I think it really loud)

The passengers' eyes go wide  
as Busdriver falls into the aisle.  
Julie from Nursing School tries to help him,  
presses rhythmically on his chest  
and *breath breath breath*.  
I grab the wheel of the bus.

Someone has to.  
Mick from the Plant shouts directions in my ear  
while Susan from Sales checks for cross-traffic.  
Twelve people and a two-ton bus.  
We figure out quick what to do.

The road to the hospital is long and winding  
and the morning fog is thick.

## Ars Poetica

This is your poem.  
It isn't written. It isn't restricted.  
And every time you look  
it will be beautiful, blank, and  
endlessly possible.

