

Rightful And Goodly: The Portfolio  
Aaron Hammond  
21W.762

*"Pleasure, after all, is a safer guide than either right or duty. For hard as it is to know what gives us pleasure, right and duty are often still harder to distinguish and, if we go wrong with them, will lead us into just as sorry a plight as a mistaken opinion concerning pleasure."*

*"So disturbing and so sad*

*Sent from my iPhone"*

## “Better Living Through Chemistry”

Broken down, cobbled together, and now strewn out  
from the great churn of so many cosmic coinflips:  
where do we go when the sidewalk ends?

Here we are and warned:

A mass-forget of massive consequence,  
the cracked mud shuddering off tendrils  
of Miracle-grown mercy;

A Myers-Briggs psychosocial inventory,  
couched in terms of "characteristic"  
and only "probably";

The universal narrative of self,  
newly remodeled in dialogue  
with the popular hits of the 1980s;

Upstart tulips tiptoeing to a primitive  
but probably weaponized plea  
for the wrinkled guidance of bloodless sand;

The Cambridge Marxist Education Center  
boarded up in a self-interested  
poverty of self-interest;

Spiderwebs of light-bearing cable lurking  
beneath sidewalks, gobbling and vomiting  
in equal measure the measured;

...

When sidewalk crumbles into lawn,  
and earth can wake and stretch and yawn:  
we will go to Epcot.

## “A Beckett Story About Committees”

Sometimes I see  
Samuel Beckett  
In CVS or Walgreens  
And I walk up behind him  
And I tickle his belly  
And he starts grinning  
And I say Oh, Sam Beckett  
And he says Oh, Anaconda

He calls me anaconda.  
It's a code.

I pick him up and  
put him on my shoulders  
And he's wearing his little  
sunglasses and turtleneck  
And I start to wonder  
Does Sam Beckett like Twitter?  
I bet Sam Beckett likes Twitter

I think Sam Beckett  
shat on my shoulder  
I guess it feels okay

“Lovesong I”

We found ourselves again, driven forward  
in the myth of life by flesh made meat  
for ancient god-planets, hearts still shaking  
to the pacemaker rhythm of the great sky.

So we shimmied from hunger for a new  
rebirth, reborn in the rhyme and patter  
of earthworms and symbols only scribbled.

We tied our shoestrings and intensified  
production to save for dinner parties  
we'll throw at the end of the tour.

We lay in our hampers and lied to our  
hampers to stake our claim in those  
epic poems of laundry day.

We picked up frameworks to frame the  
discourse of our souls in the merry  
and married warmth of face-effacing erasers.

We took dust up our noses and skipped  
to the dusty Paradise/bar where the stars  
always hid when they tasted tired.

We flew past islands and ingrown hairs  
and never said sorry for the flue of  
holy fire licking our once-vestal virginity.

We danced in the specter of shadows  
sprayed gently over walls by the candles  
tucked safely behind your carved eyes.

We scratched at ruins and shored against drywall  
the too-sniffed haze of too-shorn grass and  
thirsty blades drifting home into lemonade.

We sang our lives like new wave songs, our

pipe tumbling with grace from table to floor  
to celebrate with broken glass the wasted crystal.

We bit the hand of the immortal lunch lady  
in the sky, feeding on her rosy fingers  
of dawn and chemically red-burned hair.

We heard hymns sent down to the river  
to pray and weep for the peace I found  
when *you* were the stranger in *my* strange land.

We divided our house between my rock and  
your heart, hardened and scarred by sighs  
and bathed in light by the cosmic computer.

We saw it nibbling on time and churning to settle  
the settled order, the great pumpkin, the last  
spec of sand shouting orders from the rear:

Time's up, pencils down, finished,  
left with only a post-it reminder to pour  
another mimosa and never leave our bed.

But when you saw the face of god  
and he said he was itchy,  
I left and knocked on Abba's door  
and she said she had swine flu.

Then we-four churned and were churned,  
to move forward and eat inwards,  
to eat local and bare our singled soul,  
past the sun-starved pale of beyond,  
to a whither wondered world  
of woe and wunderbar.

“Lovesong II”

Spinning lazily along the linoleum floor to Italian  
opera boppity song keeping the beat in a  
drawn-out exhaustion driving in from Manchester  
(on two hours of sleep at six-in-the-morning)  
to imitate the dance of nibbling pigeons,  
we fled into the woods overdressed  
in crisp collared shirts and elegant pants and  
walked to avoid the mud and stopped  
sometimes, backs pressed against tree bark.

This was no test but I angrily  
scratched at your back to caress  
the we, predetermined because the Illuminati  
pulled the strings, and then pledged always  
to accept the dirtiest definition on UrbanDictionary.com,  
to scream YAHTZEE at garbage storms and *Golden Girls* reruns,  
to take tenderness as it comes and never fuck with lights on.

How much longer  
can you avoid the gaze  
of strangers on the sub-  
way or train?

Walk quickly  
to look busy?

Browse away  
a full day's  
work?

[Turn upside down]

[Alternate ending]  
— Look busy—  
Jesus is coming.

How much longer  
can I?

Dear Santa,

Please grant me:

serenity to accept the things I cannot change:

- the will of the shadow government
- the Disney company's changes to the *Star Wars* franchise
- the sleep schedules of the beautiful people
- the expiration date on my milk
- the unannounced drop in temperature
- the TV guide

courage to change the things I can:

- my socks
- my relationship with my mother
- my email delivery preferences
- my bank account balance
- my daily stimulant intake
- my consensus-constructed reality

wisdom to know the difference:

- between eating and eating well
- between sigh and dissatisfaction
- between coerced and freely given
- between material fact and symbolic order
- between conspiracy and creative non-fiction
- between myself and the other

Thanks for the ride,  
Eric Hamund



## “Celiac Disease”

Sometimes, I dream about going to Chipotle and never coming home.  
I would go feral inside the Chipotle.  
I would hide under tables in a nest of torn-up burrito bowls and napkins.  
I would bite the ankles of fat people who walk by.

Now, Chipotle says they’re willing to accommodate food allergies.  
And because white people are often called white bread and because most fat people in Chipotle are white, I have a serious concern that the ankles of the fat people whom I bite from my nest after I go feral in the Chipotle will contain gluten.  
This is unacceptable.  
I demand accommodation.

I suppose they could bring fat Asian people to the Chipotle so I could bite their ankles instead.  
I have been told that Asian cuisine does not contain gluten.  
Notwithstanding the cultivation of millet and wheat in China beginning in the third millennium B.C.  
And soy sauce.

“Return to Oz”

You said the happiest moment of your life  
passed the night you fucked the once rough-  
and-tumble boy who taught your sixth-grade-self  
that “faggot” is a snarling word.

You said you'd never see him again.  
I didn't know it then, but you were right.

-

You said you'd rather stay in,  
because life is for the living.  
I asked then what you were, offering  
a name for your deathly cling:  
Restrained?

You forced pursed lips to a weak grin and replied:  
Diapered.

-

You said you weren't sure where you caught it,  
the when no longer relevant. You offered theories.

Berlin, with the two twinkles?  
The blonde one, delicate hands, too delicate to  
deal in liquid GHB. Or so customs thought.  
And his friend, the crystal Ángel, with  
salt-and-peppered hair and fingers thin  
enough to growl. He sniffed e off your buttock.

You laughed and I understood.  
It was worth it.

-

Your sister called me when it happened.  
It, your passing, your passage out from

the middle of things, your weepy return to dust.

She said you fought until the end,  
knocking clipboards from nurses' hands  
in one last campaign against contentment.  
It was the sickness, she explained,  
your brain addled by fever and acronyms.

Twenty-eight years of burning,  
of fighting and crying and cheating,  
of loving and kissing and helping,  
of celebration, tragedy, and compromise,  
all swept away like so many ashes by  
the whisper of three little letters.

RIP

## “Before an Afternoon in Davis”

Walking towards the entrance of the outbound red line train, I realized that I wouldn't finish my bourgeois cancer stick by the time I reached the stairs. And so I huffed and puffed and dragged and—wouldn't you know it?—just a few knuckles-widths long from the filter when I turned around, ass towards stairs, took a seat on the bench just covered slightly enough by overhanging abutment to serve up refuge from the light powder snaking this-way-that from a grand salt shaker somewhere up high beyond the least timid cloud coverage. Above the back of my seat, a yellow sign, reading in bolded script "NO SMOKING," implying of course that anyone addiction notwithstanding would choose to sit by the entrance to the T anytime outside of the three weeks during which Cambridge weather is palatable—not too hot, not too cold—and not feel an incorrigible urge to shove a little dose of stress relief deep into lungs. Close to filter, flick to ground, boot press, still lit, bad smell, again press, out—kaput, extinguished, marking with gray on red brick where the boot of the smoker in neutered affection for such a civil authority as a sign with a message in bolded script sent the little ember again to the realm where little embers go when they die—clouds and Mormons and harps, that sort of place—only to realize that the grape juice is actually cyanide and that when the Great Leader says that it's time to leave, he means that it's time to be lit up again.

Rise, jerking knees straight, lean down to roll up the seam of antipodes marking the designation and the sign between boot and jean and sky from sea. Bottom of seam already wet—sand, not salt, more environmentally friendly, can't dump salt in the river, can't dump snow either but that's because folks have dirty boots! I look at my boots and notice a little oblong patch of less black black, resolutely separate from its forebear of leather by a thin corona of white crust—salt. Shake head, dismissingly, much like I imagine one would do at a library social, try to convince myself to giggle at even-the-thought, and much to my chagrin, no chortle was to be recollected then! Realize I'm trying to convince myself, half-measure full-stop. Realize that I'm trying to stop myself from trying to convince myself, duck into station before it's too late for me.

Stair, stair, stair, plateauuuuuuuu, stair stair stare clomp clomp clomp stomp stomp stomp, sole knocked clean against civil authority excuse for carpet (I always have wondered where one buys the cheap, dingey gray thin carpets with rubber anti-slip bottom-layers), curl arms in front of corpus—making a semicircle, naturally—shake chest and beat it vigorously, descent of white—now melting—clips of snow. Precipitation no. #2.

I pat my left thigh, scouting successfully the location of my wallet (it hadn't moved in the five minutes between my residence and the T stop) and fishing it out. A rather brisk woman beats me to the turnstile; in a singularly fluid and graceful stride, she taps her fare card on the reader and continues, stopped only by the unsympathetic and grit-stained gate and consequent triple of what sound

may always haunt the wine-tasting-and-orgies of the Bay-area-Boston-born-transplant.

ACT I SCENE I. Cambridge, 1627. A platform in the court in front of the desk of the mightily esteemed comptroller.

COMPTROLLER

Now that we've decided to have a mass transit system, the parallel of which one must return to the perfidious continent to nary—*scripter's note: I've never been entirely certain of the proper usage of the word nary*—find, we must determine its rightful and goodly accoutrements!

CITY COUNCILLER

I have just the idea! A request for proposals must be disbursed! Gather the minstrels: whomever shoots an apple from the head of our rightful and goodly friend Susan shall decide the sound most goodly and rightful to which our citizens shall be subjected after ruefully attempting to storm through the turnstile—much to the embarrassment of said citizen, who shall then turn head—but not so far as to actually look, for that is the rightest and goodliest way to get knifed—and grin at any citizen behind said citizen so as to cultivate a warmth the likes of which only mutual disdain for civil authority as best expressed by bolded script "TAP CARD HERE" can inspire!

The comptroller and city councilor in the court in front of the desk of said mightily esteemed comptroller nod with a vigor such that even the mayor's-executive-assistance, hitherto unnamed and unmentioned, materializes just to nod and then rightfully and goodly returns to place in garish paisley wallpaper barely evocative of any such continental and perfidious notions of circled-stars-and-stripes. EXEUNT.

Stopping short of clumsily barreling into the now-facing-me-and-grinning woman right at the moment that Paganini gets real—I believe the term now is the drop—I redirected the inertia of my mass added to substantially by coat into the turnstile nextdoor, tap my wallet underneath the mark of civil authority as best expressed by bolded script, and proceed gracefully and elegantly as a woolen peacoated marshmallow in front of the in-side of the turnstile where I see her still struggling. Doing my best not to glance over—but not so far as to actually look, for that is the rightest and goodliest way to get knifed—and she, noticeably frustrated at the civil authority, still tapping card and false-starting into turnstile door. I stand (there was a homeless man on the inside-bench along the wall of the tunnel) on the platform, bosom erect, Paganini-dropped, looking at the time until the next outbound train in a manner so graceful and slight that I need to look again. Two minutes—somewhere between 120 and 179 seconds—rock back, forth, tap fingers, neck jerk hitherthere—somewhere between 60 and 119 seconds—silently hum Paganini rather unfruitfully (the difference between music and songs it seems is directly reflected in their relative ease of humming), la la idle idle eye-dull. I begin to see the light now just peeking at the tail end of

the long straight section of tunnel parallel to platform. I still can't hear the train, music is too loud, but I can see the ears of my fellow riders-to-be nearly turn up and inch closer (too much movement for the human ear, says I!) at the radiating source of sound barreling sooner to the platform. And here, the first car, the body that follows a nose aquiline with conductor, second, fourth or fifth, something-count-th, stop. The doors open, and I rouse myself to move the three or four feet to the nearest portal—moving room, with just the right amount of light—inwards goes me to the seat next to the seat reserved in coddishly polite language for those people who may not like or be inclined physically to stand thus in the middle of the car. Really, the ideal seat; assured thus that I won't lose it to a member of that class of those people who may not like or be inclined physically to stand thus in the middle of the car, I can take in the anticipatory stillness that follows the closing of the portals and precedes the acceleration unmistakable for the imbalance it puts into the core of the men gripping pole—coddishly, I might add—by the static friction alone of their finely-clustered-fabricked armpits against steel because—why, look at him, hands so occupied, must be a really busy guy—hands so occupied thusly with paper and briefcase. Being, naturally, far after dark in the tech-industrial-chrome-collared part of town, there were no such specimens to bewilder or knock askew with acceleration, so, naturally, the train could lurch forward with economy!

The lurch gave perfect opportunity for the eyes to dart naturally and scan the scene—without, naturally, spending all of one's gaze in one place, for that is the goodliest and rightest way to get knifed—observe from the corner of the seat, several square centimeters of seat of pants totally unsupported by that seat, stretched out instead precariously and eagerly towards aisle—I do have somewhere to be! On the opposite wall, above the heads of fellow travelers whose eyes I took well advice from ma and pa to avoid, laid an embossed advertisement for higher education, a desperately common sight on the redline T. MASTER'S DEGREES, bold and centered, flanked to the left by a rather pallid black man, clean shaven so not threatening, blissful smile and promise of the sort of life provided by MASTER'S DEGREES. Right of center: a list, scrawled in obnoxiously yellow-and-black font against brick of a photographic cameo of a campus ready to offer MASTER'S DEGREES; two columns, dictated by the length of PRODIGIOUS OFFERINGS. Noting the contents scrawled then, I said a little thank-you-prayer to the one dead bulb in the lightful outcrop in the ceiling illuminating the ceiling—oh dead bulb, thank you mightily for bestowing graciously upon one of your most and only sometimes solitary adherent that I shall, as the presently solitary adherent, with of course your blessing, be able to avoid the sort of line of work—presently and hereafter named 'career'—that would require a MASTER'S DEGREE(S) in social work or early childhood education or tax preparation or MBA—a non sequitur fitting the gravitas of its object, hoho!

The sign, now used up, brought no further promise of novelty. That's it boys, pack it up, we made a good run of it—I imagine a copywriter in tiny room,

probably scribbling down the message of MASTER'S DEGREES on waxy paper, probably, most naturally in fact, with a crayon, folded over, delivered by way of priority domestic non-commercial mailer to the cameoed campus which is offering said advancement as prophesied in the smile of a man with skin so cafe-au-lait as to be non threatening but still a symbol of the diversity of the cameoed campus—probably not room, possibly sweatshop? Or just a very hot motel. Move on, said the lame to the blind, eyes following mutely the directive of a hippocampothalmoporoietal lobe inspired to crave further novelty.

Right then, so aptly as the hipipiohsummercampthetamygoodfriendalmoparochial lobe demanded, a new stimulation, movement of a statuary previously abandoned as is goodly and rightful so as to avoid a knifing offering a brief glimpse into the greater dynamo by which it is 'driven'. Making, naturally, indirect eye contact with the figure, I soaked in just a bit of his character—sartorial 'flair' (by which one can only mean a fedora or stetson or whatever thing for head warming can be purchased now at your local drugstore, check it out across from the blood pressure reader), crisp oxfords on feet—so cthrisp, so cheap—and now, fingers moving ever so slight but deliberate, tapping of desperately-need-to-be-trimmed fingernails on the twin locks of a hardformed plastic case in form roughly that of 17 inches long and desperately intimating a caricature of the a stringed instrument. His desperately-need-to-be-trimmed fingernails, now index fingers in unison, slipped into the imperceptible (from my spot on the train, minding of course not to make too direct my gaze) slot between the upper and lower pivoting-on-seam-opposite-front halves of the thing. With his entire frame now shifted and contorted towards the next-to seat where the plastic Matryoshka-cello sat, his thumbs slid, gently prodding the slide of the locks from center-outwards on either side. After an appropriately dramatic silence following this, a satisfying click flew out from the twin locks to the dreadful ears of our hero seated on the corner of lightly padded train-car-bench who, naturally, engaged the target of my (or our hero's, left to the discretion of the discerning reader) just-so indirectly as to not get knifed.

Right then, so aptly as proper dramatics demanded, the singularly burnt out bulb in the fixture above my head sputtered back, reasserting its dignity in the way only a flicker with obnoxiously inconsistent frequency can. Taking this, naturally, as an omen, I directed my observative gaze inwards (askance, in keeping with the party line); these coincidents, the rebirth of a briefly-thought-dead light bulb in the fixture above my head and the disruption caused by the sartorially-flaired man across the aisle, could portend only of coming annihilation. Conferring with my head-Hesiod, I determined my position thuswise: for the love of God-burnt-out-bulb, please, please, please let the contents of his case be either a gun or a violin (if annihilation is coming, and by this point, I was surely convinced it was, then a proper funerary fugue would at least rest my frayed nerves). And, naturally, it was neither; he instead pulled from the plasticene case a soprano ukulele gaily/touristly colored in the manner of its

native practitioners. "Pluck, pluck, pluck", his fingers noted to the fretboard. And then, deceleration, stop, pluck pluck pluck.

The doors opened (by which I mean half the door opened—if it weren't for the thing sitting still in preparation of a good-ole-croon, I might have appreciated the absurdity of this state of affairs), and I escaped the car, the melodic gargling-tuning of the cheaper-than-its-case instrument following me onto the platform and colliding unceremoniously with the ear-sensibilities of the boarding passengers. Fearing that I might become a pillar of salt or the equivalent for a deity formed by burnt-out-bulb (as opposed to an essential composition by way of clouds and harps and the like), my brow and therefore eyes remained on point and course with the trajectory negotiated by the hips and legs which supported them. Forward, the glare of the candles lit behind carved eyes waning; why couldn't he have trickfully played a 'fine diddy' on a safety (such a teasing scamp) or trigger? Or something, &etc.



## “An Afternoon in Davis”

### I. Arrival

Standing there, then in the moment of inertia (a birthday party for an tired/inert shah, as it were), boots clacking the brick surface of the cement platform in subterranean train station, I looked up and away beyond the turnstile exit, towards the dead of night subtly creeping and creaking in through the gap of terrain marked so dignantly as the place where the stairs went (because they were tired). So many stairs! And sway and so through the turnstile gate, towards those stairs, and towards up the gap of terrain, cold wind blowing underground (I have heard it said that the underground is always 56 degrees fahrenheit; maybe it's just caves?) and inviting the weary face of the traveled-within-new-england traveller. Up, step, clomp, bottom of stairs, take escalator instead, and then in line, trodge slowly upward, feet making the journey faster. Behind: followers walking slowly up an escalator — in front: leaders walking slowly up an escalator; true equality is then and thuswise brought out only by an escalator-exit of a subway station — everyone wants to move forward, make progress, consequently humbled by the above-ness of the man who was on the train also but got to the escalator first. Move, move, step, grind, staircase receding again into aperture exposed just-so by the brick platform to which I most certainly wanted to become acquainted. And again, refrain, broken by a bit of walking onto the platform which obscured the aperture-of-the-disappearing-staircase. But not walking with mind intent on getting to the place of walking-towards; rather, walking with mind intent on getting past and fete-ing it.

Again, and then past the refrain, gap in terrain, I emerge triumphant from the underworld — Charon paid off, naturally — up and away! Davis Square, cold night, wind, Tee stop gone down to the place of deelelevation that inspires natural feers of the down-below no-heights. Taking in surroundings, cloud of air, clean — Taipei Tokeo, a place of fine orientalist cuisine and noodling, that. Oh, and a quaint little coffeeshop; marked, naturally, with the outstretched repurposed burlap sacs bearing names including but not limited too "Guatemala", "Mexico", "Somalia" underneath a layer of artistic merit and advertisement with black sharpee marker: "WE'RE OPEN" "KOMBUCHA BREWED FRESH DAILY". I puzzle over the meaning of kombucha: is it a tea or a mate or something — of that ilk, naturally — or something more fortified with the bean brought in the burlap sacs now repurposed with black sharpee marker, caffeinated? I don't know, says I, talking to myself, mumbling over the now-past-dropt Paganini. Out comes the phone, communication, yes, here, outside of Taipei Tokeo. Behind

me — suddenly, naturally — came the spectre! Yes, the one expected, no hamlet, no father, no deathsong, just friendliness in spectred surprising form. Ah! Hug! And then again, walking, but this time without grip on the firmament which divides the earth from air — poorly shoveled street and occasional gripping puddle of iced orchid water cast to the side by spooked wheels of Fordian industry.

## II. Meeting

Oh, oh, yeah, sure, a Deezul Cafe sounds nice are they still open? Well, the Starbucks is, so yeah, should be. Yeah. I can't wait for it. We're still on for this weekend? Terrific. What's been going on? Oh, oh, yeah, sure. Reading, yeah. I've been following Fran Lebowitz lately; yeah, I think you'd like her, nice Jewish lady. New York, early 70s, you know the type. Oh, yeah, how'd you guess that? Okay, yeah, it follows reasonably. At any rate, she says that superfame, you know, it's just a joke. An inside joke, percolated outwards, thrust onto a undeserving people by a vengeful demiurge, possibly through the water supply. A lot of thinking, exploding outforth there with in surprising images of demiurge in water supplies, a whole lotta ancient planet god names. I think I've been smoking too much marihuana. It makes me tired, yeah, but. Oh, okay. Yeah. I keep asking people if I'm going off the rails. Well, yeah, I think it's the marihuana (PART I TITLE XV CHAPTER 94C Section 34); too much eye-dull thoughts bouncing around, finding new adventures, that sort of thing. And I guess I have more energy now — I'm resisting adding a question-mark here, out of inestimably raw respect for the object of my question rhetoric — a proclaimed and pronounced and cleaned-and-well-appointed (sartorially) thought-mind constructed accordingly — remember when we went to the park when I was still living in that little place in Wusta? Yeah, shit, I forgot (for rhetorical purposes, naturally; a nelliphant — caliph — never forgets, hoho!) that, I felt so awful. Yeah, of course I laughed; I just have the image now enchizzeled in the front of the periphery of your ass, clomp clomp clomp down the stares. Yeah, Wuuhster. That park, there's a little statue of a boy on a turtle — I think, recalling it correctly (I know they call him the turtle boy) — totally haramly naked now, but it was made a while ago and cleaned up. I don't know why they put it there; a little inside joke between an architect or something. Placed so adjacent to the water supply (stated here comically, implying, naturally, that lakes are still apart of the water supply), dangerous. I guess that's how memes start? Oh shit, yeah, turtle boy! We figured it out!

### III. Chatter

Observations/Instigations”

Class — ass (rimes leanne accordingly).

Contemplating nothing — ruminating thuswise.

This is how it happened in Tokyo, Taipaid Sun Tzu.

Jojojodoro — a way of tarot — sky

Tornado toronto best city Fernendaz of Argentina victim transgender prostitute

loss of credibility seaons in the sun mckuen dead 81 iPhone, shot with, medium

preserved — Up at 11, Sundance

This is why John Lennon had to die.

Many different people seeing it in many different contexts and pea poles.

A tasteful nude portraiture of dead babe strangled in night sitter's boyfriend  
rather coy too coy about the whole affair.

Mount Prussmorian.

Potable, even aerated for your pyur pleazure: nostalgia buff.

President of Nicaragua hired Blackwater to avoid the same comparable  
victimhood distress.

A love supreme a love supreme a love supreme — I got a frozen dinner!

How Sad Is Your Reputation And Uppencummings 10 Easy Quiz To Find Out

A candide obscura camera phone — it depends on the brand

Hot Pot pot pie a la Depechemode with Johnny cached corn and I don't pairs

Caesar Permanente in booty shorts is quite simpatico with permanent cainkles

Quee quay quack quota systems are crack (constitutionally speaking) — spilling  
some raisined tea are we!

Mobile, Alabama Rama Dhamma Dhumma Dhumma Dhumma Dharma-izing  
Ibiza.

## “The Great American Novel”

I saw Jack Kerouac in a dream last night. He was sitting on a park bench, beer can in hand. It was night, but the tip of his lit cigarette illuminated the scene. I sat down next to him and asked what he was doing here. He responded, “Fucking off.”

With his words, I woke up. My hands fumbled around me for the liter of whiskey I left there last night. It was empty, and I wanted more. But it was 4 a.m., and no liquor stores were open. In that moment, I felt for the first time in my life so acutely the constraints imposed by a bourgeois society that permits such a deviation from the norm only sparingly and on its terms.

I cast off my sheets and brought my feet down to the side of my bed. My socks and boots were tucked just behind the edge of the metal frame. I brought my feet back and kicked both out in front of me while leaning down to collect the t-shirt still in the pile where my girlfriend had left it crumpled last night. She, still asleep, lay innocently on the far side of the mattress. A bare quiver sometimes interrupted the serenity of her slumber. Sleeping, dreaming of her suburban home, so quick to return to that place I fled.

I stood, and I thought she turned to face me. No, just a quiver. I pulled my boots on now. Next the shirt. Over to the laundry bin and the threadbare denim I found that one time in the thrift shop last summer in New York City. I looked around for a belt and found one coiled on the top shelf. Looped through, pulled tight. I saw my reflection in the mirror. Gaunt cheeks, unshaved face.

The empty bottle taunted from the reflected background. No sleep either. I pulled on my inherited army jacket and opened my backpack. Out went textbooks, notebook, laptop. Fishing out the sturdy cigar box in the bottom drawer, my fingers ran over its decoratively foiled drawings of plantation life. Simpler life. Opening it, I picked out a few baggies: pot, speed, and some methadone pills I copped from a friend when he came back from rehab. Into the backpack.

I stepped to the door and twisted the knob. Looking behind me, she was still asleep. Asleep. How can I do anything with sleep? No, I can't be great here. Smoking pot and casual sex and booze and Jack Kerouac? I need more. How can I write the Great American Novel without being a Great American?

Not just sex: anal sex. And pot? Too casual. I need heroin. And cannibalism. And probably guns or bigger boots to kick teeth in. Hard streets! Burnt out lights! A 24-hour diner for coffee with likeminded people. No yuppies, no hipsters. Raw, uncarved, unchallenged energies. The truth. Not just the Ivy League, real people and poets.

I walked downstairs and outside. A bitter wind met my face, and I took it deep into my lungs, and started something great.

*Aaron Hammond didn't see the Walmart tractor trailer as he began to cross the street. The driver, tired but alert enough to lay into the horn, couldn't stop in time — Aaron's earbuds drowned out the blare, even as his head bounced off the pavement. His parents successfully negotiated an out-of-court settlement with the conglomerate for a not-insignificant sum, which permitted them to retire to a simple life of activism. In his honor, they established a scholarship fund, "for a brilliant writer whose career was cut tragically short." In his possession were found four moleskine notebooks, variously filled with to-do lists, the occasional rhyme, and many blank pages. His girlfriend slept through the incident and promptly started a blog, inspired by the trauma of the whole ordeal.*