

BATHOS

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poems by

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Prologue

Now my amnesia's dropped me
in a furnished eggshell basement
with eleven blushing undergrads
I may have never met.
Hiding under the ottoman,
sitting in the window shelf,
a conga line up the staircase
leads us into a Starship Gravitron.
One by one we place our hands on the rail
and I watch each comrade one by one
get teleported soundlessly around me
to principals' offices across the galaxy.
Soon, in a soundless surge, I'm teleported.
My eyes peel open feebly on what I think
is a principal's comb-over but is actually
a nightstand's brown books.

Egg

An eyeless mastiff patrols the underground depot.
I walked down there once, carrying some crates,
one shoulder pressed to the beige vinyl walls.
There was a low noise, like whale-song,
and now this overhead lamp won't stop swinging.
Still, I prefer that to fluorescents, like they have down there.
Although... I dunno...
Maybe one day I'll go down a little deeper,
take a freight all the way to the farms...

The Plight of Dreamcast George

On Columbus Day by accident
I kissed Linux Lloyd's Ubuntu brooch
in the Smokers Choice parking lot
and he stepped on my shoes
and called me messed up in the head
in front of everybody:
Hentai Hal, Roy the Deist,
even Truther Pete.

Nobody will ever forgive me
and I don't know what to do.

Lately I've been listening
to Sugar Ray's self-titled
while stirring Baja Blast
into patches of wet clay
behind the old laser tag arena
where they popped Guro Gary.
People say the place is haunted,
but I don't care.
It's not that I don't believe them,
I just don't really care.

In the House of His Parents

Drumming a pencil without skill
on the metal kitchen table, clanging like an anvil,
seeing what weird “beat” you can come up with, still
the stucco is unshaved, the parlor gapes like goatse
or a crater, inviting and foreboding, its gloom
butchered casually by fan blades that still spin.
And on the couch cushions are arabesques,
at the lamp’s base dice.

Your subtle mullet stirs
with a draft carrying one of those awkward cutscenes
which introduces a new level, teasing the three levitating keys
you’re to, with acrobat tricks, retrieve.

But the bedroom door is already cracked,
its nylon Nerf hoop hangs collapsed like Bartholomew.
Having only light from the hallway
and a looping *Metroid* attract mode
imparts the atmosphere of a crime scene,
makes it seem like something bad happened.
Queasily, you dredge up a stack of jaundiced notebooks,
but their pictures make no sense, they all smell like cat piss,
they’re the most valuable things you own
but you want to throw them away.
Maybe, if less than some, you’ve always had a taste for oblivion.
You’ll go on to do great things.

The screen door slams.
The fate of the house, now,
is ultimately in the bank’s hands.

Epitaph

Brendon drafts his epitaph on Pictochat
while railing catfish roe and fiberglass
with seven shirtless Ralphs.

Having found out that his dad's mysterious girlfriend
was actually a canvas sack filled with cubes,
he seeks and almost finds consolation
in this ancient Obama-era proverb:

DON'T TOUCH THAT DON'T SIT THERE DON'T EVER LOOK ME IN THE EYES DON

*Here lies Brendan [sic] Kozik, Chaotic Neutral parkour videographer.
This better be the lot behind Regal Cinemas.*

The 20th Century

I want to write a one-act
from my dorm room
with a title like *THUG* or *BOP*
(something more or less onomatopoetic)
consisting solely of a man
jumping around and punching people

or maybe one set not onstage
but among girders above the audience
so that the actors look like spiders

but I only experienced about eight years
of the 20th century, and was really barely conscious,
and that was, it seems, the shallow end
of that curious escapade anyway.

R2

DualShock in hand, an idle finger flicks
the right stick's oozing agaric cap, then
caresses the controller's side and ascends with slow smoothness,
coming over the crest, a modest plastic parapet,
and tumbles down, thumping thin R1, to land on large R2.

R2, for thrusts and throws, grenades,
for mass and rarity, extreme, secondary,
shoulder-seated R2, the big bulky one,
with beveled edges, chunk, for chucking,
hurling, stomping, squatting, of bevel and heft,
baldness, tubers, and the counterpose of both characters' curl.
The earthy locution of a George Costanza, R2-D2, Sancho Panza,
that granite slab of peasant wit, never in the center
on the cover of the DVD. Or heavy, but with
weight of revelation, the boulder or bomb
hurled through one's gut, underwater eruption of a terrible dream,
black molasses glop and yet some muscular, mechanical snap
within, that assured slow stomp and rumble, continual
clicking into places of gears, the gyre,
between each thick click a wave of bass,
pulsing in bands of frigid benthic blue, an undertow of bass
in the thick shriek of a giant bug, with R2 for a face
and my face within, receding continually, fat and small,
the essential R2 ugliness of my beveled head, but with silver insect eyes,
roaring deep below the world, alone and mindless
yet directing all, among the throbbing walls of Hades,
lit by few and blurry lamps.

Temptation Craig's Appeal

20 years later I emerge from Jail,
amazed at the pewter welkin,
hoping to water a fern.

Like many of you, I've chased my parents
through the sewers of New York,
pitched camp in abandoned pantries
while nearby flashlights clicked like bugs,
been echoed up at from the 8th floor landing
to spare me the fucking histrionics alright;
I have managed a box-like head that tilts this way and that,
was dropped as a boy down chutes labeled
HOMO AURA and POOLSIDE SHONEN
and, with the help of my trusty RC helicopter, I've put a dent or two
in the New Atheist machine.

And despite a hazy, exceedingly strange couple months
a long time ago in which I procured several plants for my office
through acts of stomach-churning brutality, I empathize
with my fellow man. All I ask for is a fresh start,
a set of choppers that aren't quite so blue and concave, a fern
like I mentioned earlier, and a real book with real pages in it,
not just bismuth and cigars.

Knowledge

She in her boots, sketching
my Balkan nose,
her clothes
magically vanished
save those boots—
what a mess. And now

this ascetic half-hug, a snuck-in sniff
of hair, nylon's quiet squeal,
not knowing what to do,
new knowledge of cigarettes,
hand-rolled cigarettes,
tea cigarettes, tea
and rum.

Which new half-friends,
her friends,
Noahs and Isaiahs
pulsing with knowledge
in denim jackets
in convenience stores
for slushies and tobacco
have what I'm looking for?

Of course it's all a sham.

That Hudson River castle
I passed on the train back
against a vulva-colored sky:
I won't mention it when I get back.

All I Want

is to be a heavyset Russian mobster
forcing Warner Bros. circa 2001
in a mossy whisper and a Reebok sweatsuit
to print each Harry Potter DVD cover
with the title *Fist*,
same lightning bolt font,
no numerals, no subtitles.



Sonnet 1

Close nights stack like stones of a cairn,
patterning sensation, pointing somewhere strange.
And from that dim, rattling shore, some voodoo migrates,
its ripened zeal whipping like a subway tunnel gust.
Or maybe that's fallout wind; I saw the blast
—rum-softened sunrise—
and now this desolation. Pages, intervals,
others' words: droplets splashing
some horizontal forehead.

Yet where within my being march the marble troops?
Nor flourish pink hydrangeas, ebullient and about to rot?
Let's say music smarts, and rooms are small.

But of course those two
have always been true.

Manlet Ditty

I dreamt I touched your wrist, arm, and finger,
but dreams are just gas, and real life is a sack
filled with rice, and slung across my back
and the only sweetness
hangs high from boughs along the road
which I eye
and always wish I were taller.

Grotesque

so there i am, razin hell on raptr like usual,
grillin some Objectivist bimbo w/ hard-hitters such as “oh? due tell, what is
ambience then?” & “have you even *played* Lugis Mansion?” etc.
when suddently i get this habbo message from an old timer who
goes by x3rx3s (“Blade Aficiondo & Hardcore Insomniac”) saying

*RUBBERMAID ASSLORDS AT IT AGAIN.
BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS I’LL BE BONES.
HI-RES SCIMITAR PICS INCLOSED.*

so now of course im all riled up / rearin to go & i try to leave my room
but my despicable fucking fatass (yet award-winning? wtf) brothers
Tetanus Clyde & Pisshog the Zealot
barricaded the door w/ Dad’s half-ton combination subwoofer/ossuary
& theres nothing i can do.

they say no one can hear you scream in space
but my question for all the Einstein’s out there
is can someone besides your awful siblings who smell like the crypt
hear you scream from within a windowless 5x5 room
covered floor to ceiling in Blue Man Group ticket stubs

The Windy Night

blasts Nate Fox's bald head.
He beatboxes 10 bars of 2-step
then hops a turnstile
and throws balled-up bags at cameras.
There are 4.2 million cameras.
I'm a 4,000 year old security guard named Liam.
This is my story.

Operation Beef Hellscape

Triumphal Meats LLC would like to extend its thanks to the Visor Bros. for their continued support, especially last week when Collin got lost and scared in the abattoir, scratching his stubby arms and muttering, “I’m not sure how much I have to say about *the flesh*,” and they jogged in and slapped a backwards visor on him and lead him out with their massive white-gloved hands squeezing his shoulders.

Mix for Kid Rock

A mature DAMIEN. My numerous BUSINESS CONTACTS and razor-sharp VISOR make me a formidable enemy. I will do anything to get my hands on the JIM BEAM! I will do anything to DECOMPOSE on FILM. Do not underestimate me!

From a Demo

So these little J.P. Morgan-looking conductor guys are called Trumbals, and what they do is they're like the Rosicrucians, right? So they, you know, they take pictures of you when you're in the hospital, they take pictures of your *car*, they dig *holes*, uh, constantly, in all types of terrain. You'll see they do this thing where they sit down on the floor and open their mouths, slowly, and eventually, um, *frighteningly* wide, which allows all manner of rust flakes, silverfish, small ghosts, and so on to enter into their bodies. In the book it says they do this for dietary purposes, but some consider it to actually be a response to the, the *cataclysms* of the 20th century. One of our own in-house critics, I forget who it was but he called this routine, and I quote, "the terminus of Dance." So, yeah, make of that what you will. Now this guy here—you see he's got his little whistle, his cap and baton; he's got this little badge on his sleeve here, what does that say: "DYSPHORIA." Uh, ha, I don't know what *that's* about aheh. Anyway. Uh, so these guys have got full 360-degree torso movement, state of the art pathfinding; each one's got over 30 individual lines of dialogue, including some penned by renowned dieselpunk memoirist R.L. Schnates, as well as returning *Lopris Ascendia*® favorites "Ahm Gettin' Aggervated"™, "Where'd He Go?"™, "This a Dream"™, and more.

From a Chance Encounter

Garvin?? Is that you? It's me, Lance!

We met at AJ Pedalino's 11th birthday party
when we all took turns trying to figure out that Monster Rancher eroge
and then that guy who kind of looked like Ed Begley Jr. with rickets
electrocuted us down by the quarry?

Jeeze Louise, I can't believe it.

Oh yeah, yeah then I remember I went over to your house that one time
and as we were coming up the driveway your dad started
throwing pieces of asphalt at us while calling himself The Nexus
and we ended up hiding in the thicket between you and your
neighbor's house snapping twig effigies of the doctors
who delivered us because they five-starred us and trying
to pull off our braces because they had braces too
till I got picked up? Yeah. Heh, ah...

Hm? Oh, um, I don't really draw the maps anymore
but, you know, I'll doodle like graffiti lettering and shit.

Les Nabis

Why don't we get high in the daytime?
I'm getting almost indignant.
The evening alone is too even, too opaque
for those outings I think of like *España*.
I'm uh, I'm writing in the afternoon. Yeah.
You, I have no idea what you do.
Are you afraid of gradients?
Is it because—it must be—because
of the sunlight's bludgeoning? Whose crystal cudgel
cracks into a knife, then snaps off at the handle.
Well I don't want it moaning at me through a window.
I want to engage it, in dialogue, like Les Nabis,
bumbling through our supple village
under a verdant spell.



Daydream

Eah, yeah, cast off your sailboat blouse,
I want to see you crawl naked
to the ledge of the roof of the Lowe's
like an opal komodo dragon,
see your jarring 3D nakedness shifting above me
in the lucid and neutral plaza daylight.

A cloud scoots in front of the sun
and your now-bluish goose-bumped tits
wobble with piney laughter
but the cloud isn't passing and it's getting colder
and your eyes dilate and bulge and then balloon hugely
blinking ceraceous nictitating membranes
and alright okay moving on...

Sunworshipper

I still think about you. Heck, almost all the time!
But thinking about you is easy, but thinking about
the mid-June sunlight, that potent sigh of an overweight
onion, seeping through the window into my room
with nothing I could do about it, onto my bed
where I read the Special Edition of *Ghost World* you lent me,
my bed where, still coming down off Blue Dream,
I dreamt of you rapping about affixes, is difficult
and makes me feel uneasy. O that plasma grenade
was such a nuisance, but it's November now
and I miss him!

Hmm

Hnnyygggynngyaahhoowahhokay, yeah,
it's coming back to me now—

a corrugated coral favela...

the environs beyond Brain City...

I was using telekinesis
to orient plants in an isometric forest
in accordance with the ancient and unknowable principles of feng shui
for grant money I suppose
when a trick of perspective caused
me to fall to a lower level
where this silent musclebound pygmy
kept pushing me into hedges with his chest.

I was thinking about SALTY

the biopic they'd make of my 10th grade
geometry classmate Ethan "Salty" Van Raalte
a couple years ago when two extremely lustrous
vibrating caterpillars came clanking and honking furiously
down the drainpipe, I believe it was around Thanksgiving 2012,
they looked like demons from another dimension
and I ate them.

I still can't totally place how they tasted
but it was kind of a chemically peanut flavor
like burps from Nutter Butters
or these antibiotics I used to take...

Plaque for a Local Landmark

1

There I was, photosynthesizing breakfast
on my back on the lawn of the Delmar KeyBank
with my bros, the garish treetops—
those irretrievably green
leaves gibbering hysterically
in the woozy coming-to of June 14:
too much data, I'd reckon,
to be real leaves.

2

I know what reality is like.
I know how just a pimple on one's forehead
can forfeit one's knowing anything.

1. *Polished bronze*
2. *Platitudinous inscription*

Another Marijuana Poem

Gathered again at this sordid den of squalor, the low-lidded cabal
further lowers its lids to consider an Arabian synth solo.
Reemerging, they sift through smoke:
Catherine was given those bootleg CDs
as a birthday present from Angelo, who was given them by his uncle,
who in turn was given them by a coworker
right before said coworker mysteriously vanished.
Where did Angelo's uncle's coworker get those CDs?
Where is Angelo's uncle's coworker? Heck,
where's Angelo?



Hell

I popped my collar while taking a shit
and was suddenly overcome with foreboding.
Das the less shraw, my son's voice seemed to say.
I tried climbing out of our recently re-glued bathtub
but I'd been interrogating a vampire bat
pinned to the basement's crossbeam
and my arms hurt. A lot. In any case
I felt the poor thing wobbling under my abject 420 lbs
and then, wouldn't you know it, it *shattered again*
but this time I hit my head on the radiator hard enough
to dislodge some tuna steaks and passed out
and actually ended up drowning.
I'm in Hell now I think, which is to say
I'm a songbird in a wheelchair
"adorning" a porcelain teapot.

The Birch Woods

Marek and his brother the sniper's friends are walking past you,
in ceremonial chinos, into the birch woods.
They have a bladder of ayahuasca.
Musty silver; a lull in the season.
Chimneys puff like grandpas.

Grandpa *ruined* me, I crow, snapping my suspenders.
My own transhuman grandson
will be a little nothing. Ugh.
I feel like finally dissolving
into that blithely anxious clarinet-and-pizzicato
they use for middling TV comedy-dramas like *Monk*,
but I'm meeting my crush's ex tomorrow
at his new place by the middle school, the water tower,
and I don't want to make it harder for him to recognize me.

Sometimes I'm back to normal,
taking my shoes off in the kitchen.
Other times I find myself flirting in a haunted thicket,
but the girl I'm trying to talk to has the flashlight
and she keeps waving it around and being kind of hyper.

70mm

I wake up to a clap of new summer heat
and an indigo sky holding giant backlit tablets.
This weekend we're staying at a schoolhouse
powered by a dam. The city is rowdy
because of some holiday, so we walk the long way back,
through a Jewish cemetery and along the canal,
avoiding main roads, which takes us essentially
the whole afternoon.

Chris' Lupus

Empty the spittoon? Throw chairs at my stepmom's go-kart?
Report a domestic disturbance
with my overheating, comically large cell phone?
Disable comments on that video of me screaming into the reservoir
for Indie solidarity? Wake my wife up from cryostasis
so I can show her an interesting article I read
about augmented reality basketball or something?
Trim the mayor's visor
in exchange for groceries?
Walk to the DMV and back
while there's still a little light out?

Oh, Jesus, it's already 8:30.
Moon's in the sky.

Chris...

#Gamergate Rap

>Greetings, we are legion, poppin' red pills and preachin'
>In tin foil trilbies, gray hat hacktivists breachin'
>Security shit and now the Laughing Man has cracked in
>To speak for the G's, this culture you're attackin'
>And alienatin', infiltratin' and degradin'
>Invadin' with agendas, political crusadin'
>New land to balkanize, despise, rather, resent
>But we see your thirst for favs so we question your intent
>Like white knight betas genuflexin' for m'lady
>Phil Fish got phished and flopped, just another caremad baby
>But we're not your shield and there's Quinnsipiracies at play
>Risqué review pay, collusion on display
>And this is our club, we're ambassadors of the bachelor
>Harkin' back to '89 like the Montreal Massacre

Podunk

Having wound down the exit ramp,
we found a sonorous geometry
of law firms, Ikeas, empty lots
and dance studios. Gulls mingled
as if at a summit, obstructing the road.
A cavalcade of harpoonish trees,
a bonfire somewhere glowing on cement,
an achy breaky algebra,
an annoying déjà vu.

Later, I looked down from the thruway
and saw a slum.

An Arboreal Siesta on Campus

A quarter through the Sundance darling
the camera pans underground
to gloomy mahogany accented with amber,
cabinets, tins, mouseholes and tondos,
and spangled with mirrors reflecting a table
with two gold-inlaid copper bowls holding snow globes and figs.
A watchman's cape rustles in the next room
past the chandelier-lit doorway—this pantry
is drowsy, but we probably shouldn't camp here.

Here, exit out and start again from the main menu
whereon we materialize sans fade-in
under covered fluorescent tubes, among
blue vinyl wall pads and speckled rubber flooring,
a reinforced red door, bolted (behind us—where we entered?),
translucent plastic air ducts pleated like accordions,
and a boombox on a folding chair softly screeching cock rock.

We slam ourselves against said door, ballast, laugh, hyperventilate,
phase through, and groan-laugh while coughing, jouncing down a hill.
The exurb we wade into is brilliant lawns at night
whose mulch (all mulch) is, we find, a sort of CG "cheese" or aerated clay
comprised of billions of jostling ellipsoids
and draped at each bass pulse in billowing polyurethane skirts
stylized like school bus yellow cartoon cephalopods
with rubber-coated "suction cup" grommets in purple and green
and an iridescent afterimage.

Which is pretty visually interesting, but
there's nowhere to lie down.
Well, here's a pavillion with some picnic tables.
David's got his pipe, let's sit...

...

Some time later I come to
and you guys are gone;
there's just a dog wearing my own face
on the sinking superliner seat beside me.
Metal rattles,
the dog and I zoinks / ruh-roh,
but just before all goes black,
at the deafening cusp of the flooded basement's anus,
for the smallest moment
I seem to perceive,
beyond the singularity,

Paean

(in Long Island accent)

Lightning streaked across the skies
The electrical displays of natural energies
Your dazzling performance tonight
Enraptured me with wonder.

I find it silly, but also sad
That so many of my fellow humans fear you
Even though you are made of light.
You light up the darkness of the night.

My visual perception was amazed by your brilliance.
I hope to be as bright in my life
As you are in the night sky.
Thank you.

