

# **LIBERTY IS A BAGEL**

**90 failed  
attempts to stop  
writing  
poetry**

original word combinations by Pat Tanzola, for everyone

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## "A cry for help"

[illegible]

(ps we love you too)

**Don't quote me on that**

Unless you know what I said  
unless you know what I mean  
unless you repeat every syllable  
just as equally keen

## The mad scientist

I'm throwing all my potions  
into this fire, consuming  
each and every recipe  
I'm putting up these signs for hire:  
'help wanted--alchemy';  
so  
let's try something new or  
try me on for size,  
I'm your huckleberry baby so  
rub my rhubarb with your  
pi  
cuz  
I'm a mathematical and  
magical guy, and  
I don't know  
what else to do.

I am the electric-spoon inventor  
the obscene-neural-feedback progenitor  
I'm the marvellous mirthful mystical mentor  
also: landlord of Jiminy-Cricket Manor,  
I'm a recently graduated  
cylinder  
dripping liquid-lovin' from the skies  
my bunsen burner's firing high,  
but my helium voice is wheezy  
so  
give me credit, pass debentures  
*argh!* there be photons up my pirate-sleeve—  
my honey-coated protons and  
bananarama neutrons  
have never failed to please;

*let's stop telling each other what to do  
let's start by sayng hi*

see me, Babe Ruth,  
I don't give a sweet fancy fig for couth  
why?  
well I'm no moron, and I don't sniff glue  
and not to mention  
the competition's poo:  
Benny Broom, ph.D, is really such a snot  
(a known philosophizer)  
Ms. Weathers teaches tying knots  
s'no wonder she's no flyer,  
and Frederick Fallacy can't count for beans  
he calculates by rote,  
(he's on a list and riding high

of enemies I wrote);

but I'd never have an honest chat  
with any one of them—  
I'm a hay-wire-spinning  
spider-web Daedalus,  
and so I'm  
stuck here  
mashing tragic scat into  
a pair of golden wings.

## **Ms. Rhythm's revenge**

She came in all twinge and cringe - and without a sound she took me down.

I was a thundercloud then, a heavy shroud, but I was dry inside, chased by hell's hounds, and she was proud; she froze me, shattered me with no warning somehow. It was a crowning act of glorious mourning, it was low-down and crazytown, all sugar, corrosion and clowns, it was all around and I was picked apart, eaten by her crows; it was a massacre, it was art: my limbs crippled, my heart ripped from its beating start; I was a quaking termite mound, aching to shiver, collapse and drown. I got hit hard, I admit - I was eyes closed, head down; I was beaten into the ground, I got raped all night in my wedding gown.

I woke, paralysed and screaming, disbelieving, all fume and steaming, wasn't sure I wasn't dreaming, robbed of all meaning, leaning barely on the railing, ailing – sure, you could call it that. I was wailing wild jazzy scat; once I was a cool cat, yeah, but I was absolutely nowhere now – that was right where I was at.

But Bobby pulled me off the mat.

Bobby yeah, he saw me bleeding, grabbed me cuff and sleeve, taught me to breathe again, stand up, smile, say cheese again. He dried me, tried to guide me, had me fed, clothed, made me realize where I was, to remind me of the prize; I sighed, I cried sure Bobby, I am finally alive. But I lied.

I had long put down my sword. I was drilled and bored, I was bull-gored, I was wiped out, humiliated, had lost the war, was hiding from the Lord; and so I slept for two years more. But Bobby waited patient at my door.

For two whole years he heard me snore.

Then Bobby got mad, had enough, shook me, kicked me raw, beat me up and worse, pity-time was over - his voice mammoth, mighty and terse. Bobby told exquisite truths, he knew just how to hurt. I shivered, wasn't ready, the furthest thing from rock-steady, I was all dread and leaden, couldn't fathom heaven, forgetting every reason - it was simply not my season. Bobby had to show me, teach me how to show *her*, to really get to know her, to learn her tricks, that Jezebel, that witch, to smack her and run right over her, to chop her up and rip her, cast her in a ditch. But I was so slow; I walked with a limp, I was an easy target for that bitch.

I saw her the next day in an alleyway, and my hand went straight to my switch. I took a good look at her, tried my hardest not to retch, I felt a sharp sliver of fear, and a shiver, like an excruciating kiss. When revenge is next to ruin, you must be careful which is which; you must make certain what to pick.

She was all talons, tar and fangs, garlands of strung-up claws, tusks, snake-scales, a man-eating vulture squat on her shoulders, she was Medusa and Delilah, Mistress of Hades, crushing boulders with her teeth. She hissed and spat and laughed; it was her rules every time, man, always her kind of scat. She wanted blood; I should have run, but she caught up with me every other time; I should have brought my gun...(unfinished)

**Mona get out**

("behind every beautiful thing..." -Bob Dylan)

Posing for the portrait  
holding so still  
waiting for the miracle  
brushing by his will

O mona, get out  
shake the paint about  
we're all here inside  
waiting for your shout

Leo is gonna 'mortalize you—  
he'll frame you, make  
you goddess, steal your soul—  
and that's a bad bad scene so

go Mona go  
don't let him trap the smile  
(but it's driving him to drink)  
'cause they'll hang you in the gallery  
and  
they'll curse you for your secret  
and  
they'll stare at you for centuries  
and  
they'll never let you blink.



## **Twist and shout**

Scream it up my little sistas,  
your tongue's covered in the blistas  
tonight we're playin' the ultimate twista  
and i'm the rubbery magic mista  
and it's winner take all.

**Dignity's a long shot**

I can't let that glaring lack sustain me—

because bitterness is no fuel

madness is not a tool

and libido ceases as reliable credo

*—pass me the cherry cheetos, my dear glistening and needy Juanita?*

no I won't shine the black light on my freakness

*I bet the long shot every Preakness*

—my horse is finally on the inside post, and  
meekness,

I wager, will one day rule the earth.

### **Poet-as-rock-star**

I can't sing or play guitar,  
but you can still rhyme my  
bizarro-verse  
while driving in your car

*the stars spin us around;  
this rock is flat and upside-down  
the stars spin us around;  
this rock is flat and upside-down...*

(repeat chorus until rich and famous)

**Truth (rarely) speaks:**

“I have a reputation for  
mischief, and  
so I refuse to  
open my mouth:  
you’ll  
burn me at the stake,  
and  
rape my daughter—  
whose name  
is Beauty.”

### **Benjamin's easel**

Benjamin was a weasel  
he had some paints and easel  
tried to draw a beauty  
—but it just came out evil

Benny was agog  
he never seen such fright  
he stuck a knife right through his painting  
and wailed throughout the night

Benjy was a jerk  
he spat and shirked his work  
he called in sick and hit the bricks  
til everything just burst

B-spot was alone  
sat by the phone and moaned  
'I am good, so give me food'  
but the bank refused his loan

B-Jam ate canned beans  
thought up crazy schemes  
he made wishes, washing dishes  
in his head he dreamed

Benjamin's a friend  
inside of all men  
but we kick him and we punch him  
we don't like what he pretends

He forces us to think  
which drives some folk to drink  
better one man sinks, so the rest don't think  
'bout how everything just stinks.

So, repeat after me:  
*Benjamin was a weasel  
he had some paints and easel  
tried to draw a beauty  
—but it just came out evil.*

## **Yawning Bobby**

He doesn't listen  
he just stares,  
he scratches his belly  
in his underwear

Bobby talks, he  
laughs a lot,  
waves his hands  
and he smokes up

curses Jesus and  
reads the news, so  
easily displeased  
by contrary views;

numb from nagging  
'why don't you chill'  
—his foot's asleep  
on a windowsill

stays up late  
he gets so tired  
looks at the telly  
flips through 'for hire'...

now Bobby's skin  
is showing signs  
hair gone grey  
in thinning lines

steps outside,  
it's still raining  
'I just got fired,  
so stop complaining'

yawns out for  
a caffeine hit:  
'I switched to decaf—  
what made me quit?'

but no one listens;  
Bobby just stares.  
he scratches his belly  
in his underwear.

### **Feeding the dragon**

There's an empty file folder  
in my computer  
it screams at me in binary,  
"what have you lately done  
for me?"  
back to square one  
got to go shopping  
pick my brain  
every single day, the same  
wake up naked, beside a dragon  
relentless in its feed  
- I wish I were an  
accountant  
something to count on  
every single day, all the same  
I  
wish I were an  
accountant  
to keep track of what  
it means

## **Your granny**

That bitch  
is addicted to bacon  
it sizzles in her arteries  
she gives new emphasis to the phrase 'arterial cloggedness,'  
so much bacon has your granny eaten that  
the authors of bacon.com  
asked her for an endorsement  
--she would gladly have given it  
but alas,  
she is a total moron



### **Your stepsister**

That slut  
is a hog  
she wants to hold a rave  
dance upon the table  
and toss her saffron recipe  
she likes to cook  
man does she like to cook  
shake it up and shake and bake  
things are interesting in  
the kitchen 'round here  
we are having a wild burlesque orgy  
things are pretty fun

### **Your uncle**

That bastard  
is a demon  
he spits and calls for Jehovah  
he likes to roll the dice  
he destroyed a rack of spices on a wall  
and didn't repay the owner  
the owner got upset  
and purchased a large sharp weapon  
which can be found in  
your uncle's skull, now  
messily cleaved in two

## Meta-magna-magic: beyond greater magic

*(explanation...)*

‘There is greater magic at work’ is  
what you say when  
something feels really really good but  
you haven’t waited long enough  
to be able to put it  
in a box

‘this is meaningless rubbish’ is  
what you say when  
you can’t be bothered  
to track the associations

--*good on ya* I say;  
I mean  
who needs a troublemaker?  
after all, our  
brains are hard-wired for practical things  
like humping and  
hunting

but these poems are in the title  
and the \*poems\* themselves are  
the critical analysis.  
but *those* poems, see, aren’t my poems  
they are just somebody’s  
tools I’m borrowing.

“wait, you mean  
is this poetry--  
or this is  
semiotics?”

*“a box, my kingdom for a box!”*

I guess  
it is,  
when you

*(...is deformation)*

put it *that* way.

[ps: yah, whatever.]

### **The day the words were hijacked**

By a filthy investment banker  
wolf's at the door  
carting cool hundred-mill  
finally come full circle  
another sign of the apocalypse

when wall street's welcomed with open arms  
and establishment is art  
beauty is a tired pony, so  
sell it to the knackers, or let it sniff my fart

hack hack is there no voice of dissent?  
hack hack hack you must not, though poor, relent.

## **Math vs poetry**

Radius is one-half diameter  
the area's  $r$ -squared, by  $\pi$   
for years I was chained to a perfect circle  
the formulae kept me from asking, why?

### **Show, don't tell**

I am smitten.  
happy, yet  
sad;  
I'm crying, because  
life is a poem  
and I'm so bad  
at writing.

## Calabria

In my grandfather's town  
olive trees tall as ents  
greeted by a marching band  
the local ladies and gents  
all so good looking  
except for hairy arms  
wrists and necks, dark and thick  
from errands to the farm

then came Bovalino, and  
I saw such poverty  
my cousins had an orange grove  
fruit was falling off the trees—  
I felt myself in that cracked pavement  
I'm not just going on  
memory

*"the ionian sea is a green crystal  
lonely in may, yes, but swimmable..."*  
*we lay down on pebbles  
you were so beautiful  
you were there  
all this time, apart  
all that we have, shared*

my land is a foreign land  
filled with people like me  
my eyes and smile  
even the dimple.  
you wonder where you come from  
wonder if you'll always be there  
there was a boy who came from the hills  
there is a boy who loves the sea  
now I finally understand  
I come from  
Italy.

## 712 College St.

“The Lord Himself dwells in these waffles!”  
quoth the fat Jehovah’s witness  
espresso slicker than gheri-curls  
as Lil’ Richard graced the business.

they say it got unhip up here  
southwest - the Drake’s - where sizzle’s now  
but ‘they’ don’t know Tronno from Tonawanda  
and the Sitchy-Side still blazes.

sure, the waitress ain’t really from Sicily  
but she looks pretty good to me  
she brings us water, lots of bubbles  
I wink and tip accordingly.

time to park, blab, hang out  
with black Camilla, Swedish Inga  
one scoop chocolate, one of vanilla  
—sidewalk days or nights out.

don’t dress your best; or dress to impress  
chug the coffee, slurp that mess  
spit out foam on your fresh-pressed breast  
sit and watch the stars gleam.

PortuGinos and paesanos  
veggie gentry, Woodbridge Sopranos  
905ers and downtowners  
—it’s so much more than ice cream.



## Toast of the town

The toast of the town  
is sugary brown  
the folks who eat it are  
called 'toaster hounds'  
butter's spread good  
whipped and fluffy  
jelly well slathered, it  
makes a nice muffin

moist and chewy  
this toast's the *bee-yatch*  
folks goin' screwy  
to taste the whole stack  
the upper crust love it, it's  
all the rage  
it's toast of the town, and  
crumb-bums become sage

toast of the town  
on all the cooking shows  
the rest of the breakfast is  
stale and it blows  
but the toast of the town  
has keys to the city  
the flavour don't last  
but the banter is witty

the toast of the town  
it boasts *savoir-now*  
so let's grab our chow  
while it's passing around  
it's toast of the town  
—but don't burn your lips  
as you swallow it down—  
it's toast of the town  
and if you chance to miss it  
just catch the next round  
when yesterday's plate  
is tossed to the ground.

**The artistic bliss (excruciating)**

They envy and  
fear your  
undignified  
dignity:  
always crying alone  
in public places.

## Across Ocean

I tickle you with  
words because that's the  
only way to  
touch you; when  
we will sit,  
snooze together again?  
my dearest darling friend, makes my  
face flush warm tickling  
massage? how bout it  
you say 'amen to that'  
like the end of prayer, me wishing when  
you answer  
every couple weeks  
'cross an ocean you  
flicker in a screen  
my teeth flicker too and  
I'm smiling into you  
that big-tooth sheen of mine  
I know you're keen on it and  
you onscreen  
my big brown eyes lit and I—  
you, afterward, after words we  
smile, having gleaned from  
the eyes, the sheen—that we know  
'kindred' means that  
only we know what 'we' mean.

**Flowers for the lioness (she lives in a tree)**

Fluttery, willowy are the words  
delicate and strong  
Norse-Irish magic,  
yes  
there's  
magic in her treehouse den,  
she decorates her walls  
with tender traces of  
tears and smiles

I can't decide whether  
her hair is brown or blond or red  
she's all kinds of animals  
a swan, or deer  
—with an aching back

fierce, fiery are the words  
I haven't felt her roar  
but I've seen her upset  
and once I made her sad  
I wonder, does she think  
I am a clown

she's a swan, yes  
no, a gazelle  
(I've seen her eat like an elephant!)  
but she's royal as a lioness, she's  
queen of her jungle

*fetch me flowers for the lioness!*  
*she lives up in a tree!*

... I'm proud to say  
I have held her  
in my arms, and  
kissed her  
forehead

because we are two lions and  
pride is a good word.

### **Lois the muse**

I sang to you once  
on the sidewalk;  
you smiled, *no one's ever sung me a song  
before;*  
I still can't believe that--  
why, Lois, your legs alone  
could inspire  
an entire album or  
a folk-  
festival.

**“Saliva exchange causes kafuffle”**

Lithe, silk  
brushing knee with  
suggestive finger  
flirty-girl kissed, lips  
on lips under  
mistletoe  
shocked awe-filled  
colleagues whispering for  
weeks; it's  
harmless  
xmas gossip?

## **Ana and the poet**

I flaked out on you  
I never called, you  
were too  
perfect;

I had to  
spoil it before  
things got out of hand

after all, I have  
my loneliness to perfect  
and  
your perfection  
to  
protect

### Apologies from a cave man

He called again  
a talking brick wall  
wacking at the cracks  
like a neanderthal  
your ooga-booga baby, he  
wouldn't do any harm;  
it hurts him more than you  
and when he walks all over  
at least he wipes his feet...

He called again:

*I'm so sorry  
so sorry, but  
I feel strong,  
my feelings so strong;  
so  
it's no wonder I have to club you:  
I have to show you...  
how I love you*

—so get off the floor  
and cook a nice dinner



**Yet another gorgeous K (#58 in a series)**

You worked behind a desk  
I fell for you once a week,  
five minutes at a time as  
I retrieved a stereo and  
asked you for the key - but  
you were too busy  
to notice what I was  
asking.

### **The crotch-block blues (for JLo)**

Man I hate it when big fat Australians  
who smoke their cigarettes  
arrive between me and my lady  
and breathe their aussie breath

"hey now Bruce" i want to snarl  
"you're messin' with my action;  
my lady here is from New Zealand  
--screw you and your 'outback-jack'-tion!"

Brucie farts, he snorts, he kills the mood  
--crotch block in full effect--  
he talks pointlessly 'bout his travel plans  
till i'm all "shit yo, what the heck!"

my zealand lady's cooling off:  
she yawns and shrugs and sighs  
I curse the world, my luck--and Bruce  
who snatched our passion from the skies

it's salt in the wounds, my dear dear friends  
this crotch-block in cold blood  
cupid all year has not been kind  
and I'm stuck in a loveless mud

'cause a crotch-block at church, at work or in my parent's house  
doesn't really get me down  
but there's no nastier block than in a euro youth hostel  
where free love should abound.

**Three billion women...**

and all for me  
it's the playboy galaxy  
there's Betty and Zoe and Sherry  
and Constance and Penelope

they smile at me  
call me cute  
I'd ask them out  
but  
the point is moot

she's not "can you whistle my tune?"  
it's just  
"toot my flute"  
—so I sit and eat my  
jujee fruit.

**Girl with the green jacket (aka a dozen ways to begin the unfinished poem I'm writing about you)**

You rejected my moonlight melodrama  
and asked for  
something substantial  
—because like  
when buying candy from the machine  
your decisions are based “a great deal  
on grammage”

like lightning  
in a desert  
(and subtle too)  
was how you electrified me;  
after one week of  
the knowledge that you  
existed  
I was upside down

and you were too  
leaving for Australia, or some rot like that  
I knocked on your door  
but it was locked and  
I was on the bottom of the world so  
I wrote you  
the sweetest letter you ever received in your life  
but you waited too long  
to let me know that;

because on the seventh day  
after making a fool of  
myself  
I did something even stupider  
I shackled up with  
the first siren who looked at me twice  
—that's what rejection does to you  
and man does it ever  
rot your gut—  
but I guess things  
happen that way

and when you reappeared in fall  
I wanted to jump over the railing  
to show you  
what I was all about

—but seconds later  
I was sipping coffee  
and reading my books  
so for years I

wrote drivel  
and  
packaged it as  
decoy-cool  
but you didn't bite  
you funny fish.

I wish you had seen me that day with my cap and gown  
because  
I wanted you to be proud of me  
for just a minute, just once  
though we are basically  
strangers;

I wish my dad owned a library too  
then I could've read up  
on what makes you tick

but like that moonlight hello on  
my doorstep  
this poem of ours never happened—

it's nobody's fault but  
it never got  
written,  
and  
for that at least  
I'll take the blame

## **Big dumb kahuna**

You buy those metal pins from deaf guys  
I swear honour to this mic  
I drove five hundred miles  
asking what you meant by 'like'  
I was taking in your curves  
you had me on a hook  
you smile through every meeting  
like there's nothing to your look;  
I was fishing in the sewers  
you were piling up the boat  
I swore off meat and cheeses while  
you sacrificed the goat;  
I looked up—something beautiful—  
it was everything she wrote  
(you dragged me back up through the waterfall;  
you taught me how to float.)

**To the brunette waitress at kos**

You look like that girl in  
your cowboy boots and  
Irish skin you  
ask me what i want

'just pancakes for now'  
i'm hungry as  
you bend over  
look down at me

'how're your milk shakes?'  
i'm wondering  
your legs eyes hair lashes  
'oh they're the best'

yes yes everything's all right  
yes yes anything else?  
just the bill please and your  
heaving bosom.

## **Planet stop spinning**

Morning you

evening me,

one ocean

two worlds we

spoke hours,

nothing time

distance less

(I would have eaten the receiver)

—timing everything, and how

we might never have, but

never have we been

closer, singing on

this planet of

heart beating head

light speed spinning

stop.



## **The vicious cycle**

The first mouth I ever kissed  
turned out to be  
a slut's—

I was just a  
flower to pluck,  
another two-lipped notch  
it was  
school-yard learning or some-such  
rot  
it was  
rough stuff  
a sucker shot  
kick to the crotch  
you put me through; so

now I've learned to  
pull punch too, I  
may never  
learn to  
forgive you, for  
making me like  
you.

## **Silver lining**

The best part of having your heart ripped out  
is to watch it beating still in her hand  
-it's just like those cool vampire movies

the best part of being kicked in the face  
is spitting out all your teeth  
-it makes a pleasant staccato whoosh

the best part of monumentally humiliating yourself  
is watching the slo-mo replays in your mind  
and pretending to be some kind of relationship 'football announcer'

remember friends,  
there's always a bright side!

so let's not act all dramatic  
because the best part of being screwed over  
is getting revenge.

**That's all there is to say?**

Doesn't happen every day  
and you just  
threw it away

you stupid  
silly  
fool

so I went on my way  
the very  
next day.

### **London! (first impression)**

Town of soot  
and snoot  
tubed up and tied up, traffic-wise  
you are grand  
but also a slap in the face to  
good sense pricing  
I enjoy your architecture  
but your women are skanks  
a bit snaggly-toothed;  
your men are the worst  
I wish they were all hospitalized with  
chest pains  
oh London you are an island  
of garbage  
in a sea of snotty mucus  
that is Britain  
which is also an island

yet there's glory on every corner  
and the British Museum is prêt-ty fancy  
and the tall waiters in the cafes, they earn  
their 5 quid an hour with dignity

ah, London! Town of cobblestones  
awash in boroughs, swimming with shortbread, and fudge  
imported from Scotland  
ah! I have eaten at one too many  
persian restaurants which you ward over;  
you who play host and  
salon-keeper to the World,  
the grand world! yet, per capita  
it's only one tenth or so as grand as thee

oh London, it's a rough test  
whether to stay or go when  
faced with your ridiculous  
double-deckered buses.  
which is wherefore, Oh Londinium of Roman times  
I bid thee, despite the row we  
have oft suffered, I bid thee, yes, thank you!  
for London is Lloyd's and Life, and Leisure  
and repressed emotionless laughter

simply put: you people  
make me retch.

### **Unforgivable/unforgettable**

Cross country drove  
with a man  
at a drop, she left him  
to become my woman  
turned round, home drove alone  
a fickle thing  
what a thing  
for me trading him

eight months later, so  
I did what I must  
the bullet bit  
she bit the dust  
eight months crushed  
- a fickle thing, I was -  
had it coming, all summer she  
had left me hanging  
- she, then, left him

it was lose lose  
making beds  
baking cake and eating too  
lying in steads  
eight months later  
what I did was just  
but back again looking  
was all of it just  
a  
serially monogamous resentment bust?

## **Surviving Joy**

Saw pure joy today

been long enough

saw her joy again

- not long enough -

but

there she goes again

and

we'll be tough

- tough, when she's gone -

because joy is enough.

**Be still my muse**

After all I stand to lose, your eyes

insides I needed to use

we do what we must

do, but when

everything unglues

and still I need you

will you be at least my muse?

**Because the \_\_\_\_\_ has no memory**

I am shell

of a man who used to

sing—

hollowed out, voice cracked, sand-dry skin

—but there's beauty still

inside my shell

it lets the ocean ring;

so if you set my

lips beside your ear,

remembering my ocean grins;

even as you put me down

I will have forgiven everything.



**What's it like?**

I was here first  
now I'm just waiting  
for the rest of you to  
catch up  
mind starts to wander  
this hateful invitation to nothing

### **Bad simile girl**

Like a bat out of hell  
like for whom? the bell  
like venus or mars  
like wunderbar

like a jaguar cat  
spotty, reflexive  
like a diplomat  
chatty, pensive

like marmalade  
spread too thin  
like a meaningless receptacle  
like a semantic ramekin  
a linguistic porcelain dish

like missionaries in a jungle  
like a monumental blunder  
like anthrax in the mail  
like bread crumbs in a jail  
like nothing

(please look for me by the barbeque  
I'm turning on a skewer  
I looked through every side street  
and I found you in the sewer)

I don't like it because  
it's not perfect:  
it's like sabotage  
like a mirage  
like a millionaire with a  
lousy accountant;  
I looked at you, wrote you down  
compared you to the whole world  
but it was insufficient  
you couldn't do it justice  
it was just like  
you were a  
bad simile or something

## **Yaba dabba,**

Chaka lakka! Bakka makka takka. Me Bloggah, talka lotta! We wakka lotta lika teevee, watcha fafas make-a speecha! No good, yankee dankee, Bushee bloppy, Krishtanee nek-reds insany stuppy sillees, Kerry Kerry, Mika Moora! Saddy saddee dis eerie Eerack racky, Osama bama, bomba! Bomba! Bomba! War for oyloo nogood.

Yaba dabba, yoosa dumbo! Mesah smaartee, yabba! Lookee picky, bigga booby! Porno picky, webba debboo, freeya bimbo, bayly legoo, yabba, looka, screena go-glo!

Yabba dooby, compootah, me lika, yum yum big frendy. Tekky tekky maka mee stooped? Nono, maka mee globoh, talkee talkee big-ho planeet. Maka meha likka lika oldy tima no mo boooringa– intranetty hava evree tingy me needs! Maka me likka Jaja Binky, yousa dumbo mesah smaartee!

Yaba dassa, mesah goo now kowkay? No-mo tenshun spanno, okee say bayou-bye, dissa poopy postah soo broringy! Chakka yabba bloggy blobby!

## How we arrived at nonsense

In the beginning it was karmash and circumstance; it was a bit of teflon marquisitiveness; it was mostly loquacious flatulation and clairvoyant bovination; it was just such underteeming incumquantable violixion—it was a shlitztorm of zuthingness. And so it started, and so it developed, until we rended up at the currulent prognex. Above all, it was blinking yaggamallow broonery (as in, don't blink or broon, or you miss it), but at the rend of the day I apillocize for zunth of it.

I admit we were hackabilly buttnuts back then, years ago, when popular malakovs tocktillied over the teleradio humpspool, and insobreeniated professogres screed-screeched their zabootska-style 'honeysuckle', buzzing in their porntz vulga-tongues, and, it seemed to us, contimmerating everboddy's languastic subsoil but their own. But every so often we would pick up on a dizzelating unk of sheer phantiberrish broilliance, and, to make a long story short, eventually those uranial and sacroyssant 'binge pins' ended up bilgespat over the wedge--the plastershocks of which really fasciallated me and especially my brooptha, Cyrus (Cyrus already knew how to vermiculate malandromically, with his richardsonian gothotorical vergeboards, and that always made me blast out lerfling). But never in our wizzardus screams did we think there was a raisin to siriusly conflimyoo pontifaturing this zoundsense. I juice tank Dog, wiwa wong.

## Nonsense redux

I snap Jasper twigs amid a florid tentacular grunch, but like the zappity Hartford brunch, I billow speciously into fisticuffed granulations; I tether the frutonia like sworling hogg yashews in brigadoon ballrooms.

The mooncock pheasants bray widely and fecundistically while a groony faffle of quoral narwock vagillionaires court calamity in yew pine meadows. “Tra la la,” saws the Woad Granger as consequence tribbles igloo-like underneath goondoggled parth bunions. “Fazootska my haberdashery!” I cry to the fop; I wizzle toward the coughing narcot. But ’twas all darwood and mammaries, ’twas blue-blood rothmunching gunderskunk.

Welted in lackadaisical fraggery, the dasil beech yadeblow pops into my mind--quite mephistophysically I might add--and Father Tune zounds me a bright plinkered package, a Kazakh dreedle slashered with neo-preen fetishistic varicosity. I fold open, and drawjopped, I manulate three sammy clucks and a dark widgical loofula:

“Woe, vloosh, and salmon trestles,” I emittify, for it is a fortunary blooshing. “Anon, I was tuckered and yet here now fronds the underclutch!” My my, the ironious turn of gluck--ha, like I always said, life is full of ridiculistic zapretskys!

## **The meaning of loof**

The loof is a fish  
a bit of a fool  
it squawks when it talks  
and pukes in its food

the loof likes to pry  
and buy lots of pie  
fresh from the shop  
where pies like to dry

'poof' goes the loof  
when it tastes a fat fig  
and the loof has a pig  
that can dance a pig jig

I once met a loof  
at a sad loof show  
this loof hit the roof  
when I made him eat crow:

"I don't take dupe,  
from a moop of a guy,"  
the loof said to me  
when I poked out his eye

and "don't cross a loof,"  
did the loof whine thus,  
"cuz if you mess with us,  
we'll mess you all up!"

and some loofs *are* a mess  
they got crap in the tank  
best not to test 'em  
(best to leave the space blank)

but a loof is a thing  
that's hard to put down  
when a loof busts out  
it burns the whole town

the loof is a bitch  
a big old wreck  
it cares not a whit  
it feeds you the dreck;

so watch for the loof  
and don't rock the boat  
loofs are quite mad  
they'll kill your pet goat

cuz the loof is a goof  
a bit of a doof  
as it hums and it drums  
in the al fa bet soup

### **Zazuby pamoobi ladooby**

Zazuby, pamoobi, ladooby-la  
fringa fonga funkifaw  
higgle snuggle toggle noose  
mama got locked in a google booth

clicky zap, flippy pap  
wiggy waggy, piggy bobby  
quocky flecky himmy haw  
jason mitzin' twibby craw!

netty nockers, wangy dong  
digi pixie singin' song  
macky billy antitrust  
mozilly fibro-coptic lust

nurry nurry flashy fry  
silly syllogismic pi  
mon-manny baddy, glo-bebe gong  
soon be nothin write or wrong.



### **The pesto was thick**

And your accent too  
the spices quick  
your lactose flu  
my body sore after  
I beat it  
the meat is grilled  
is there someone to  
eat it?

here's the toast  
battered nice  
I'm serving you  
I'm asking nice  
you want more  
more  
more  
I can give you everything  
there's a grocery store  
it's next door.

## **Salad days**

I spent nine years learning to tie my shoes  
I spent money on booze—weekends sipping, weekdays quitting  
I spent nine months in a snooze  
but now I'm eating salad

I spent my life in an excuse, and  
summers in a wintry blue  
I spent a year trying to chase her too  
and now I'm eating salad

(the girls flap purses in neon twilight  
before Booster Juice, gossip loose  
tongues flappy, tight butts tucked, exposed tummy  
there's a hole in the belly bowl...)

I have a new credo, a way that works  
a rejuvenated libido; call me "big turk"  
I have a million words to say  
turns to phrase, games to play  
I'm skipping every stale entree  
just let me at that salad!

## **Jalopy lovin'**

Archie Andrews, 65  
Betty Cooper at his side  
Archie's hand upon her thigh  
it's *jalopifix*, viagra pride

rambling, clattering, dusty road  
'34 Chev, chugging load  
creaking wheels, thin with rims  
spare tire bolts to vinyl skin

crazy looks on avenues  
boulevard princes slowly cruise  
rubbernecking at the view  
'jalopies, man--they're frickin' cool'

noxious engine, diesel fumes  
pipe exhaust in blackened plumes  
choking as we hit Main St  
jalopies man, they can't be beat

jalopies are a man's best friend  
sexy rusting metal cans  
another romp is round the bend  
nostalgia-lopping never ends!

## **Siht edoced!**

Theal phab eti sadir tysumb itch  
youth inky oua respel lingnons en se  
bu tre allyitis ac rap pypo em  
whi chi swor se? Ik nown ot.

## **Animal crackers**

Fish are in the schoolyard  
the trout are in the barn,  
llamas are chiding the dromedaries  
--it all sounds quite divine.

the pandas get quite queasy  
chugging quesadillas,  
nor do lemurs have it easy  
importing raisins from Manila.

the ocelots are tepid  
they don't support the arts  
the pumas are *pee-yew*-mas  
adept at cupping farts.

the orcas held a conference  
exhort the walrus and the seals  
they're tired of trade restrictions  
that hurt the common weal.

and ibexes are deadly  
their horns can pierce a tank  
while skunks are quite lascivious  
—those stinky smelly skanks.

yes, the animals are everywhere  
they're flooping from the trees  
but their pageantry's oblivious  
to silly human beans.

## Shaggy pig-dog story

The pig in the garden sighs a lot  
and drinks a cup of cider  
the reason he squeals is 'cause of the gout he  
contracted from a spider

the spider's name is Bethany  
an eight-legged hairy frump  
she knits a sweater with her eight long legs  
and rags on grampa Grump

Grumpa's a tarantula  
he poisons people anon  
Bethany bugs him about his venom  
so Grampa shouts "Eh, Ron!"

now Ron's a sexy scorpion  
a jagged tailed bloke  
he scares the little alley cats  
sneaks into stores for Coke

the cats hiss and chase ol' Ronnie down  
it's scorpion 'do or die'  
Ron's saved by Tabitha, the shaggy black lab  
who howls at the sky

Tabitha's been to Brixton  
where the market's really hep  
yesterday two big pigs were there:  
Silly Sam and Porky Pep

Pep and Sam said to Tabitha  
"You're bound to catch the gout,"  
Tabitha nodded, mentioned the pig in the garden,  
"There's been a lot of that about."

now this story's about pork and pop and poison,  
shaggy dogs and pigs that sigh  
it's a silly little ditty 'bout tarantulas  
and scorpion *chatricide*;  
it's bound to raise an eyebrow,  
a quick scoff or "no one cares"  
but it's got to be written anyhow  
though it floats away on air

'cause dogs and poison, and pigs with gout  
are what make the world go round  
and so we wallow like hogs in the fancy-free  
'cause it makes a pleasant sound!

## **The Angry Turnips**

Once there was a massive kitchen, full of vegetables of renown-  
and among them were the turnips  
with an e'er confounding prowess  
a daring mix of red and brown

upon a turnip shelf was often heard to pound  
a mighty turnip drum:  
singing 'we are the turnips, everlasting veggies  
and we'll always be around'

but produce items did not last, 'cause rotting is the norm  
even despite their vitamins;  
yet the turnips shunned mortality  
loathing to conform

some turnips turned to the blackest arts; their voodoo did enthrall;  
they ordained turnip priests, and  
their mystics awoke a mighty beast  
which was called the Wherewithal

worse than werewolves was this Wherewithal, with its demon's red hot ass  
—a truly shocking pantry spectre—  
the turnips used it to enslave the baked brown beans  
—there was much passing of the gas

life was bleak in turnip-land for many drudgerous eons  
there was many a lamentation over  
the caste system devised by the turnip shahs  
in which carrots were the peons

today the turnips still hold sway in their empire of the fridge  
the salad days are waning, however  
the tupperware perishables are escaping  
—freedom's oozing from the lids

let this be a lesson to the Angry Turnip: few tyrants ever prosper  
the day of cooking is fast approaching  
indeed it's rare that anyone survives  
being boiled alive with a lobster!

## Twelve minutes to kill in Robarts library

'I wish I were Ghanaian' said my friend Tlomi from Djibouti  
I said 'Tlomi dear, I respect your wish but can  
you shake the Ghana booty?'  
he looked at me and said 'tutti frutti, Patty--u r a cutie and I M N luv!'

purple poltergeists come and go  
they shake their bangs out to and fro  
they clang a lot, learn *tai bo*  
you say 'that is *sooo* five years ago'

my favourite priest is made of chocolate  
I call him Father Cocoa  
he melted in the microwave  
a holy sticky mess  
while languishing in a puddle  
he cried 'I am languishing in a puddle'  
'I need to get that off my chest!'



## **The end is near**

Daniel David Earnest Witham is the  
king of the earth  
a prophet of god,  
a 17-year-old in Bermuda shorts, 5-foot 8 Latino, blue eyes, fledgling goatee  
who skateboards at the corner of Queen and John and  
predicts a massive earthquake that  
will destroy all of California  
in April 2005.

at the time of this writing  
there are 6 days left in April, and  
I'm beginning to get scared, see -  
David's the only prophet I've ever met, and sure they don't tell lies

"the devil created dinosaurs"  
he says,  
"so men would get addicted to  
petroleum;"  
hmm, the Fossil-Fuel Curse, an  
interesting theory  
about as good as any  
such a comfort that the mouthpiece of  
heaven is a modern-day  
environmentalist

he's following a long line of liberators  
- Lincoln, Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King -  
David hassles me in a phone booth  
asks me what exactly am I doing:  
"I'm just here to tell a few jokes," I say  
and that's God's honest truth  
I'm just another hurried sceptic

I take David's hopeless literature  
insert my indifferent coins  
it's apocalypse, revolution, repentance, catastrophe  
tossed together on 8x11  
the Keeper of Secrets is a fellow downtowner  
makes me proud to be an eccentric

dial tone, click, it's my cousin in  
Los Angeles, David's doomed and soulless wasteland  
I hang up in a minute or two.Hmm.

in five days I will write a  
frantic email  
telling him to  
pack up his possessions and  
get the hell out of there.

### **Walk that dog**

They have you on a leash  
sausage shaped or squat, shaggy,  
they reek with  
the sweat of their lowly station  
it is a dog's life and  
we are the husbands  
the wives  
who walk the dog  
pick up shit logs  
with plastic baggies;  
cooing teenage ninnies  
want to touch your beast  
they don't please me least  
better to remain a-doggal  
not suffer to be their slaves  
those panting happy nose-cold blood-hounds of  
perdition  
owned by guys named Dave

walk that dog, you sick hippy bastard  
walk that dog!

walk that dog, you urban sonufabitch  
walk that dog, and dance around in your hippy happy clogs!

if a hound approaches, I grimace terribly  
these poochies best not mess with me  
I'm the reaper, got a spade full of trouble  
I bop them o'er the head  
—I ain't no doggie lover  
they're gonna end up dead

so walk that dog, you sick hippy bastard  
walk that dog!

### **Extreme birthday fun**

We are scavengers in this city  
we crawl ten kilometres  
east to west, to do our best  
I knocked over a hobo just to snag a bus transfer  
I never used to be this coldblooded  
but there's a fake marble trophy on the line  
and the winner gets all the biotches?

### **Hitchhiker without a face**

Driving by the road, there's another man  
listening by the radio held firmly in his hand  
claps along with Scott Joplin, and  
rags away the time  
he asks me to get hitched, and that, today, seems fine.

he wanders to my four-door and  
thanks me for my kindness  
his is a sullen, grizzled glare that  
softens a moment to fondness

I ask where can I drop him  
he whispers 'any place'  
his eyes are twitching nervous  
- he's a man without escape

I collect my wits and step the pedal  
the roadway is our task  
men who drive, must arrive alive  
with seatbelts firmly clasped

the hours melt like snowflakes that my windshield wipes aside  
the cars droning are, my passenger moaning  
his fishlike exterior quietly deboning  
I'm pondering his faceless hide

suddenly, yow - a crack of lightning brights the dash!  
us riders scream and lurch  
I yelp a fast reliable prayer (- that's funny,  
I'm not a man so easily churchied)

don't wonder what happened the morning after, when the hitchhiker left the road  
my bags were stolen and interior soiled,  
with foul sausage slims and empty whisky skins, and so  
it's clear that man was no Tom Joad.

## **Moses harangues the masses**

Big black Moses  
works at the foot of Ossington  
folks more colourful there than in Little Portugal;  
women and men in transit, don't know what to make of it  
where the Queen car stops in fits, east to west  
Parkdale to Bellwoods, "this is nutbar territory" you overhear  
but October's meaner than summer now,  
not much love for 'nutters' even here

Moses wades into roadway, parts the traffic  
rubdown rag in hands, attacking windshields at the lights  
drivers protest, wave away, sometimes they honk  
he frightens two skittish teenage girls  
chases pretty Asian women along the walk  
(what are we supposed to do?)  
I'm fixated by the spectacle  
enthralled by his honest nerve, such  
earnest close-talking discomfort

Moses has no place to live, except with himself  
and it can't be easy, that crowd  
—and we're a tough tough Monday afternoon crowd—  
when no one sees what he sees, Lord knows what  
his coping mechanisms are: bushy white beard, felt bowler, brass crucifix  
and a scorching case of schizophrenia  
—but Moses works his corner like a bloodhound  
he networks like an MBA.

so, if you want out of the ordinary, head to  
Ossington and Queen in the afternoon and look for  
Moses and his pals:  
they may entertain you for a token or loonie;  
most people say "sorry" and look away,  
and it's tough holding that loonie after 15 minutes' wait  
but I too say "sorry" and look away,  
how else can I make it on the 501 in one piece?  
you see Moses really asks too much—and my conscience needs some sleep.

## Chris and Di among the paupers

Princess Diana once waltzed through  
the intersection at Queen and Bathurst,  
fleeting sunshine on a Saturday and we  
loved her smile and swish; and  
hoboes gather round to worship her and we  
tolerate hoboes here, but  
really we want them dead;  
in this city we tolerate everyone and  
we hate everything:  
weekend afternoons run by  
sidewalk punk-freaks and ephemeral  
ecstasy in hot veins that we struggle to  
accept in vain

*Fuzzy J's an assassin in front of a store, in front of  
a crimson door on the corner, a  
king of the score who  
winks at Di as she's passing by;  
he's handing out high-fives and more*

\* \* \* \* \*

St. Christopher's alive at  
Queen and Bathurst, below  
a super-sized poster of Britney Spears  
(another delightful Di)  
his healing hands on a hot forehead;  
he notices you drinking  
a cold black coffee,  
eyes and face so teary and red.

he says,  
*in my house you will get  
warm food and a hot chocolate  
no exceptions here  
- I don't tolerate hungry strangers*

\* \* \* \* \*

Now Christopher's stuck downtown  
he's got a full house and  
a long way to go, before we  
forget the dead princess  
and pray for the living saint.

## **Nursery rhymes for the urban cynic**

**\*ahem\***

### **Fluffy**

Binky dinky trucks, filled with magic marshmallow fluff.  
Beep beep! Beep beep!  
Clear away the marshmallow path; clear it fast  
– or face my Pegasus puff-pillow wrath!  
I'm deep in a fluffy gunk,  
so lock me in the puffy trunk  
– I'll munch my way to heaven!

### **Ronny Roy**

Zassy passy joy – here comes Ronny Roy,  
a tall thin chap with a leather cap -  
his glass eye rolling on the floor.  
Hey hey Ronny, you're so funny, let me ope the door!  
Do not sigh, here's your eye,  
come on in – we're drinking gin!  
You cannot ask for more!

### **Jelly or Jally**

It's jelly, Jimmy, or jally:  
you can sidle, Jimmy, or you can shimmy,  
you can slurp or you can spit  
– but, Jimmy Jones, you should know that  
we'll get quite fed up with it!

### **Fuzzy Frederick Froo**

Fuzzy furry Frederick Froo, fashioned fire with his foxes two  
Fie fie, Freddy – it's time to get to beddy:  
Angel pies with angel eyes will tickle your pink belly!

*( the sensical and the cynical)*

### **Market**

Ooga booga, ooga booga  
fluctuate flump and flash  
eat some bangers, eat some mash  
bug-eyed babies wail the crash  
– time to sell your shirt for cash!

### **Print**

Happy slappy pap – read it like a map,  
Following squiggles makes you giggle  
wiggle wiggle, wriggle wriggle  
– I think that’s a wrap!

### **Earthquake**

Underground sounds: pound crash crack!  
The earth is in a lurch – look out above,  
the mountains are on drugs!  
Screech and scrape, lava bakes  
– it’s smashing us silly mugs!

### **Tube**

Watch the talking box, look at how it squawks;  
it’s so silly, willy-nilly – I’d rather play with rocks!

### **Traffic**

The beetles on the street, crush em with your feet –  
Oh no, oh no, they’re made of magic rubber metal!  
They got glowing eyes and teeth!  
The light is red, stand on your head  
Now it’s green, so you can dream  
– please go right ahead!



### **Firewater**

The fire's in the water, flaming in a bottle,  
drink it up, or drink it down  
look, the world is spinning round  
– out the door you wobble!

### **Black Bean**

Black bean, black bean, make me jump  
if I don't sniff you I'm a grump  
milk and cream, spoon and steam  
– we're a clump of sugary lumps!

### **After hours**

Pizza man, pizza man, bake me a pie,  
oregano-basil and turn it on high  
it's getting late, my date can't wait  
– I'm so munchy I could die!

### **Bus stop**

Wait all day, wait all night,  
wait so long I want to fight  
I need the bus, and so do you,  
could it be in Timbaktu?  
– the driver is a possum!

### **Sidewalk**

Blompity rompity clomp – through the snow we stomp,  
slushy stewy mushy mash – don't fall your on ass!

### **Office**

Look up, look down,  
don't look around, don't make a sound  
the going up, the going down,  
– the elevator is so stuffy!

### **Hobo**

Oh one-eyed Jim, where do you sleep?  
On the sidewalk? That's pretty neat  
– live and work in just one place!  
Jiggle, jingle, fill that cup  
here's a coin, now please let up  
– we're all in such a hurry!

### **Newspaper**

Newspaper, newspaper, spin me a yarn,  
splice it together and stitch it up fast  
– I don't have time to bother with facts!

### **Medication**

Sticky lickie ricky roo  
I have something good for you  
I know something you must do:  
turn the lights off two by two, in the dark you swallow goo  
*Woohoo woohoo* – now you don't feel so blue!

### **SUV**

Sparkly pizzazz, cool suburbia fad! My abs are fab!  
I don't do carbs, but I do yoga  
– look at me, blending in so flawlessly!  
My dog's a collie, my girl's a Dolly  
and my Filipino nanny's name is Molly!

### **Metrosexual**

Tell me boy, what is your Gay-Q?  
If you live downtown, I bet it's two-hundred and two!  
Do you, do you, do you look gay?  
Hey hey hey, it's hip to act gay – tall, skinny and gay  
– it's the surest way for a guy to get laid!

### **Bleeding Heart**

Don't eat meat – it's bad!  
Don't use paper – trees will die!  
Don't say those words – it's not allowed!  
Don't do anything – we might not like it!  
And whatever you do,  
don't tell me what to think  
– I'm a unique freedom-loving individual  
and so are my unwashed friends!

## **O Starbuck**

how dare you

We'll thrash you  
for being a  
success

scaring off mom and pop

attracting coiffed  
suburban dos

hysterical women  
with only childs  
--minimum two dogs, one nanny--  
who everybody wants to smack  
parking Audi Galacticons  
right at the corner

your secret  
ingredient:  
something  
that makes you  
forget  
you pay  
4 dollars for a coffee\*

hey I'm not complaining

thanks for the free  
newspaper and  
the sanitized mix tapes,  
perky baristas  
trading magic beans in that spicy  
caffeine language  
but

listen up babe--  
I just want a cup of decaf  
and a chocolate chip cookie;  
do I really need a dictionary with that?

*\*quote from Conan O'Brien*

**the three bitches (no end in sight)**

‘What was he called again? Jamie Oliver?’

‘My husband is no masseuse that’s for sure’

‘I’m on my way to the [zeitgeist] therapist—’

*sorry, but I have to pack up and leave. NOW.*

**“Everyone should live the way you do”**

Len Ford Park is at the  
edge of the City, the end  
of the Lake -  
here is your freshwater forest-top metropolis,  
long branches and alder woods,  
weeping willows and the wind at  
1:24 pm; cold breeze, blue water  
heart aches, head clear as  
a blue bell  
and on a clear day you can see  
past the armpit of Ontario,  
on a clear afternoon you see for  
miles: solitary single women, grandmas  
pushing strollers, babies  
baptized by the waterfront and  
tiny proud bungalows along the  
shoreline whose owners must  
wake up every morning inhaling the air  
like kings;  
given the right situation,  
the lie of the land, given a  
chance and circumstance anyone can  
be a king;  
canada flags flutter, smokestacks  
rising in the west  
beyond the busy highway,  
it's virgin territory  
a patch of green outside the everyday  
grey; so look for secrets here,  
discover a new Toronto; it's in  
the winding narrows and  
vast expansive spirits, buried  
just beneath the surface in April  
in the southwest corner  
of Etobicoke.

### From the sublime to the grotesque

Thickety rickety plop,  
effeminate lyrical glop  
when driggling a rook  
jiggle the shnook  
til the ungulate mascula drops

but if reckoning klunder, you huff  
at zanzibar's flunderful muff  
then hasten the verse,  
(like shaq and the nurse)  
because physic is faster, or worse:

the goolies drink wine at the Y  
femonade'll be baked in a pie  
don't ever flim flam  
--that scuzz is a scam--  
slick-wickery tickles your thigh

Palladio waxes a niglet  
while Romeo yokes with a piglet;  
the moons will balloon  
with kaleidoscope poon  
as they open up Venus to eedgits

so never go wokking abroad  
except when evening odds  
the reason is this: funicular bliss  
—it musn't be missed—  
you'll flimmer and float up to god

and the breath of a geyser is air  
which soaks the druidic *au pair*  
whether putzing in forests, or fuzzing caloric  
—none of it matters, 'cause  
I can get skunked anywhere!

## **Bobby beholds beauty, beast**

Basement Bobby, bard, barrelchested bloke, borderline beatnik, bottomed-out,  
broke, balding, beggarly,  
buys banana-banjo, beholds beastliness; begins bashing booklearning blowhards,  
bossanova boinkery,  
bespectacled bearded buzzword bureaucrats,  
boyfriends banged by bread-n-butter bordello babes--bow-wow! brouhaha!--buxom, bouncy,  
blonde; bobby berates brazenly (bobby benign? *bah*)--  
but baddass braggart bad boys bearing blimpish beer-belly baby-fat  
breed bountifully, begetting blemished (blech) brainwashed bastards, blaxploitation bigots, bitchy  
blighters, because, bobby believes, billion bees--breathtaking beings born besotted, beautiful but  
bound, bewailing--buzz, bump, bleed, break, blackening bliss.  
but bottom-line, before brunch? bugger-bollocks, bobby--beauty busts, beastliness booms, and  
business best be better.



## Shappy the Clown

Shappy the clown lives downtown  
he has a round white painted face  
Shappy's hands snap his happy fingers, and  
the air around his earlobe lingers  
before escaping to that snappy place.

he wanders by the winding water  
he's blowing goose-balloons for free  
but sometimes real, nonballoonic geese appear  
- it's bi-winged, ornithid, aviarian fear -  
just flapping feathers, dust and wind on Shappy's white mascara skin

and we ask:  
do you laugh, Shappy, at the fat grey geese?  
do they peck you in the knees?  
do they ask you 'pretty please'?  
"No," screams Shappy, "they honk and screech, and they clog the beach  
- gather the geese, call a truce, it's a thousand maniacs on the loose!"

*the policemen and the clowns go dancing  
the town mooses scatter fast  
the fire patrol's on a red-white roll  
and ambulancers fence their patients' pants  
while dogtors play duck-duck goose*

Shappy smiles at the smell of fried liver  
and winter ice makes old men shiver  
but Shappy jumps, slides on the sleet  
a rat-tailed mouse squeaks in his pocket  
-- it's been living there for weeks!

Paperboy Pete is a friend of Shappy  
he delivers the morning *Times*  
and Shappy's maids cook up his kitchen,  
everything seasoned with cinnamon, cumin,  
cayenne, dill and lime – oh what a nice relaxing time!

Shappy calls his agent, Bruce - but Bruce is out of town  
so Shappy blows a Bruce-balloon  
conflated, taut, he tied the knot  
"funny, Bruce - he looks like a goose!"  
"If he sees this, he will surely frown!"

Shappy has a million clown tricks, just sitting in a bank  
just waiting for his wife  
but Mrs. Clown has not come around  
so lucky and alone, with no one else to phone  
Shappy lives a single life;

he says:

“better to swing low than rocket high!”

“better to blow up balloons than to expire and sigh!”

“better to eat liver and season your life,  
than to sit and shiver, and forget to taste the spice!”

“now,” says Shappy, “where in tarnation is my wife??”

### **I need a piece of toast**

I have a need, this growing thirst  
it must be quenched or I will burst  
--but my thirst is not the liquid kind, however  
it is luscious toast for which I pine...

a slice of rye, or loaf of brown  
glass of milk to wash it down  
some toast I need to sop my wounds  
blackened grain for every mood  
a crispy breastplate for my soul  
stacked upon a plate with rolls

yes, I crave toast in all its myriad form  
singed so glorious every morn  
toast to slather, toast to butter  
a crusted sister, a raisined brother  
--why, if I had toast instead of family  
then christmas would pass quite crunchily

I call for jams, I cry for jelly!  
clear some room within my belly!  
coax the honey, rouse nutella!  
Mr. Toasty is a hungry fella!

I walk through life - not living - inside a dream  
of toasted angels with crumbèd wings  
while my toaster sleeps 'neath stars that gleam  
*I prithee wake me when it dings*

**Have a nice day**

I sure hope you do. Hey after work  
let's get a slice of  
pizza!

**Have gum in your hair?**

So what - I'm still  
fond of you.  
Chew on that!

**You know what sucks?**

Nothing! I mean, things  
are pretty good.

**You look great**

Absolutely stunning  
in that outfit.  
Smokin'.

**You mean a lot to me**

Bar none, you are the  
tops.

**It's one of those days**

where planet earth  
rocks my world. You  
feel the vibe?  
Sweet  
heavenly apples!

**So I was thinking...**

about lending you  
some of my  
favourite CDs. Heck,  
you've earned it.

**I haven't got a clue**

How to fix my  
bike.  
Can you lend me a  
hand?

### **Sweet success**

We need another reason to get upset  
something to hate  
rancour and bitterness, fuel for our wittiness  
we need someone to tell us no.

### **Cumulo question**

I asked the vapours for some advice,  
the cloud looked at me and said,  
'when you get this high, everything looks different.'

I said,  
'thanks, but I don't like to smoke.'

*'really?'*

I said, 'some people, when they land, after a long journey --  
all they see is fog'  
but he ignored me again, and  
dissolved into the stratosphere.

when I landed on the ground, I booked a train to somewhere hot;  
I was tired of clouds - I wanted to see the sky.

## **Romantic drivel**

Mystery would not be kind if  
opened up, hung on a line  
and vision fails in infrared, so  
feel the heat in what's unsaid

a gaze can speak in any tongue  
with soft breath more than empty lung  
catch the drift from a nod or wave  
point's as clear as a crying babe

in waking dreams of dumb and blind  
where mermaids sing in harmony  
I study a secret chemistry,  
measuring the best of me  
awaiting her, clandestinely.

**Caro cugino (dear cousin),**

We never did discover  
the meaning of life, but  
I did discover you  
and that's a fine second best.  
my blood's in your  
veins;  
we think the same  
thoughts in two different languages  
it's this rock we live  
our lives on  
thicker than the atlantic  
that keeps us apart--it's  
called family, brings us  
together  
any day of the year  
I can walk in and  
lay my head  
on your couch.



**Whoa man – that's deep**

When you turn on a light,

you don't see *the light*

-

you see the light-bulb.

### **The big split (pick your poison)**

Analyst Bobbie has no life  
he works, he spends, he sleeps  
artsy Brentino can't find a wife  
cuz he lives on the cheap  
yet Brentino knows the sexy sets  
he's hipster till he squeals  
Bobbie tends to pick up cheques  
(don't ask him how he feels)  
Bobbie knows Brentino well  
they schooled together once  
two boys living half a life;  
economically it's one but it really  
adds to  
none.

### **Seven deadly clichés**

Seventy-seven times a sinner  
first to hundred is the winner  
seventy-six times forgiven  
one more time for interesting living  
lust, greed, gluttony, wrath  
'time to call a homeopath'  
then there's pride, sloth, envy  
same ol genesis, never ending  
--the seven repeating clichés of  
the manic media Madison men in the murky message maze.

### **Anger, intercepted by hunger**

“I want so much to smash you  
shake you up and thrash you  
wanna lock you up and stash you  
ride up and lasso you  
I’m gonna trade you for a... peameal rasher  
at the bacon-butter rodeo?”

## Rhythm experiment

One big tree's all I need to  
topple you with my big poo, it  
clangs and shakes the motor breaks  
the fist I take and ram it through

everyone must catch the meaning it  
sucks the brain and takes the tweezing, it  
calluses the inside of my head  
it rocks and talks the way we trust it  
must unrust the bust I lust for else I'll  
end up dead.

here I can and now you can't you are a sinner  
you must recant, you can tell me and everyone I see it's  
a walking talking fantasy, so come with me  
don't tell me lies, it sighs skies I realize a hypnotizing rhythm  
unwise to surmise the fly-pies in the eyes of the wiggety white guys.

and taking and telling unravelling hellions and  
the motorcycle millions and the silly old sarcophagal mould  
the older I get it's useful to forget the  
truce I won't regret it begets clorets  
and menthol cigarettes, I take bets to  
impress the suffragettes.

In and out I tinker about so long without  
my baby trout, she cannot shout about the drought she  
walks about the square and there is nothing there care to for,  
romeos and wherefores I scare  
forlorn to winter time so wash the brine from my hide,  
it cracks inside, yet we grow stronger in the meantime, the faulty brick it  
sticks thick and makes me sick this rickety stop I  
wonder at the top it unlocks bricks to throw at cops.  
we can stop we can't heave it over the top it rolls logs and clogs itself like a sewer dog, pollywog  
and hunted hog.

## **I Guarantee Sun on Sundays**

Heaven and hell smell, it's  
well to dwell on the death knell, but  
it's swell to bell-clang with lung men  
though we shout and hang the delirious gang,  
we think, stink and rinse,  
drink pink fluorescent mixed things, me and him  
big pig bins and thin winnings.

cranes build high and we sky-sigh outside in the  
dry warm blast of mai-thai soaked vermilion,  
the million clicks that make a clock, smiling  
walks around a block the rocket stopped to mars,  
money-mad for moptops not marvels,  
the fancy foreign cars that park remarkably politically  
and the loanshark harping for men desperate to make a mark - into this tank of fish we swim in  
day and dark,  
it is murky and lark-laughable, jerking, rustling, expecting  
affable but facing disaster, able only to chew, unable to do or undo - this, sadly, is you.  
boo hoo boo hoo, you get what you choose.  
and me? Woo hoo - time is chipping me, ripping me, spitting at me, sticking me in a memory  
glue.

me?

all I've done so far's unscrew; I have so much more to brew, but the recipe's in flames, I'm  
distracted by the dames, I'm a crutch away from lame and I haven't got a clue.

### **What I learned from literature**

The tall oak sees all, knows all  
bleeding piece of earth  
green lantern of hope  
jungle where your soul is  
rabbit hole of confusion  
road not taken  
dignity in age  
the humanity of monsters.

## Romangstic

Dreaming, of mounties gunned down, the streets running with blood, the ice that kills you with cracked hips, the salt that corrodes through clothes, winter on its way out. We are melting slowly, slowly. Bitterness does not last through spring; there is the pain of rebirth. Phoenix again. *Let's head to Arizona, I cannot forget that man I love. He is a bus driver; I will follow him – on muleback if I have to - into the grand canyon of my heart.* I am dodging reproaches, following that bliss; I am doing what the movie screens tell me is good; I am fading into that Warner Brothers sunset, I will let those credits wash right over me.



**She said (and so I stopped to listen)**

"They say  
the best things in the world can sometimes come from the  
bottom of the barrel of a gun,

they tell me one year of pain is worth a moment of gain  
and try not to think about it - it's just your brain."

"tough love, the way the world works, the earth randomly sprinkled with a fistful of jerks;  
don't feel guilty for not being poor? shame on you, now donate some more  
feeling a tad overqualified to march off to war? close your eyes, now forget you're a sacrificial  
whore"

"who made these rules? It must have been they  
but they aren't here, not today, yet they  
always get their way  
(always the way, the way they get away),  
always in the way"

she said "I think the devil of they, calls himself 'the people'"

"the people aren't they, the people are me and you, Betty and Lou, and another teeming six billion  
point two.

"they is the excuse, to put a noose on yourself, to serve something else  
to grin,  
lay in bed, offer blood  
while the bullet from some firing line tears through your head  
(judgment takes a holiday, your insides go grey, so don't think today)"

she said "don't lie on the shelf  
don't live for someone else  
don't stop churning, questioning, yearning  
as long as you're burning, much as you're earning  
don't fade away."

she said "when I'm finally me, how happy we shall be! when the subject is the object, then my  
life sentence is complete."

they don't like what she says.

## Mind game

What in the world could be deduced from a splattered can of *nous*, the Greek word for mind, a find, also a French pronoun so politely reclined; have you called a truce? It is a verbose pose, a lachrymose boast, counting on toes and digits, the basis for calculation lingers, and who made us count by tens, my friends, was it laws of heaven or of our fingers? Why not count by chicken-eggs, the hens laying zeroes in every coop, we confuse the Moors and the moops, it takes you for a loop... This thought was over before beginning, a future interception, a lousy self-deception, prose without a plan; It is random, I'm random, 'I' is not me, identity does not exist, at least not for me - what a limp-wristed explanation or evil abomination! a poor excuse for abandoning speculation. I read more when I was younger; I did not have hunger, I was a wonder, like thunder, a bustling tongue-wagging punster with tricky meaning, sheen and sizzle, a swizzle-stick sized to stir pots, a photo-essay in Camera-lot. Mind and soul, body too, the duelling dualists run it through, the frog Descartes, his mind was art, his body pained gave us a start. I am I is no white lie, you are you, this too is true, we are us in the grammar pew. And so they say, but what is 'they'? They're not them, not do they obey my fingerplay; do they say nay, or say they 'neigh'? Nay on neigh I say today; hey, a horse of course eats its hay, its mind is naught and soul a blot, the animals and flies we swat; and then there's God, dominion Lord (we're so 'fraid that we get bored), and what is Time, can we rewind to the Big Bang rhyme, to remind me of my mind, materialism is fine alright, but things inside now give us fright, (the dreams you have at night, do they arise from oligodendrocytes?). Or so we hope and pray inside the mind, that souly brine so undefined and intertwined with 'causing things' in wavy dots and quantum zings, and so we'll never know upon this train what reasons are upon this plane: mortals discordant, Immortal Supreme - in this spinning world is a balance beam and thinking through it makes everything cold and chaotic scream, so bold, beautiful, velvet and chocolately serene...

### **"Interesting little fact..."**

From every mountain top, Dr. King said, let freedom rain. In every country, let freedom rain.

Well, interesting little fact: Freedom did rain.

Freedom rained from the skies, and it landed here, quite accidentally, in my bathroom. Here in my bathroom there is delicious freedom: open markets, wonderful credit agencies, luscious interest rates, all beside the toilet, which I somehow manage to keep clean despite living my hectic daily schedule.

Freedom in the bathroom, yes--but oppression in the closets, intolerance in the kitchen, sadomasochism in the bedroom, and imperialism in the foyer. Whatta shame.

**Sunday morning, you're in Napoli**

Ring

Ring

Pick up the phone  
and sing to me  
bout how much you  
miss me