

A soft-focus photograph of a hand holding a pen over an open book. The background is a warm, reddish-orange hue. The book is open, showing its pages, and the hand is positioned as if about to write.

BOOK OF
AFTERNOON NAPS
A book of Prose Poems

David B. McCoy Chapbook

Scars Publications, 2007

Despair has no wings...It is a boat riddled with snow.

Andre Breton

One cannot dream the real into the dream.

Philip Lee Williams

A dream has power to poison sleep.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

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THE PROSE POEM

Just beyond our yard, where the nature preserve starts, was a rock that looked just like a sleeping bear. It's funny that we have lived here 20 years, and I never noticed it before. Every morning this winter, when I would look out the window over the sink, I'd think to myself, "That rock looks an awful lot like a bear." This morning my wife, as she was looking out the window, announced, "Oh my! I see our bear is gone. Didn't it look just like a big rock?"

I was born an island. A dozen or so people lived on me. No, I don't know that exact number, and no, I don't know which ocean...might have been in the Black Sea as far as I know. Most of the inhabitants were likable. A few were not. I enjoyed it most when they built fires or made love. One day we were all rescued. The people boarded a large cruise ship, and I was towed to an enclosed bay where I walked out onto land to begin my life as a Chinese paper dragon.

The woman yearning for a mate has changed herself into a monarch butterfly and is flying to Mexico. By the time she reaches the boarder, she realizes that she has been overtaken by reproductive diapause. Out of frustration, the woman who changed herself into a monarch butterfly changes herself into a quail egg and falls to the ground where the rodents, the rodents, the rodents...

The forest is sobbing in grief and bald heads are pushing up through boggy soil. In a room across the way, plastic flowers rest on a kitchen table. As the sound of distant hunting horns fill the breeze, bald heads emerge through the floor. Damn! Damn! Damn! The woman in the room across the way says without interrupting her methodical passion for placing plastic flowers on the kitchen table.

Mona Lisa's smile has moved into our neighborhood. Daily, faces drive by her house hoping to snatch a glimpse. Once in a while I do see Mona Lisa's smile peaking out from behind her curtains—but she appears rather reserved and shy. Only on holidays, when Andy Warhol's wig drops by, do you hear a peep out of her. But when you do, you'd think all hell is breaking loose.

The 99 year old uncle has started walking around with a pacifier in his mouth. While his relatives, with good reason, chide him about his newly developed behavior, a woman at least 130 years old enters the room. “Hello, George, ready to go next door where you can crawl up into my vagina and return to the home of your pregnancy?” Before relatives have time to regain their composure, the old couple exit with pleasant smiles on their faces. The next sound to be heard is that of a pacifier hitting the floor.

Three girls that I have never had in class are demanding A's—but I refuse. They've painted on my garage door, "Give us A's"—but I refuse. They have keyed onto the hood of my car, "Give us A's"—but I refuse. They have sent me registered letters from their lawyers demanding A's—but I refuse. Apparently, they have decided to change their tactics. Yesterday, I found moray eels swimming in my pool, and today all my patio torches are covered with condoms.

On the night of Kristallnacht, an inch of broken glass falls. Jews in defiance, and bare feet, walk out to pick poppies growing around recently dug graves. On a bridge crossing the river that now flows with blood, a man in uniform stands guard. By noon, the glass, the Jews, the river of blood are all gone; except for the man in uniform who continues to stand guard.

One morning a sunflower poked its head through my open kitchen window. “Say, might you have a spot of tea?” *What?* “Why yes, you planted me solely to attract gold finches; it’s the least you can do.” The next morning, there were hundreds of sunflowers, and even more the next, until my entire back yard was filled with sunflowers asking for a spot of tea. When it looked like the situation was hopeless, the yard of sunflowers disappeared under a hovering blanket of gold.

A man has fallen in love and married the candle he met at the lighting shop. On their marriage night, they get into an argument over who will be the penis in the relationship. The man insists that he is the man and, thus, the penis. The candle laughs and blurts out, "Please, my length beats yours hands-down." Frustrated by this unexpected turn of events, the man rushes out and returns with a blow torch. When the candle is melted down and spread out all over the floor, he strips and humps away. By morning, the bridal suite is covered with hundreds of little flames which the man is finding impossible to snuff out.

A man declares to his wife, “I want to fully understand the game of baseball and there is no better way than to be the ball.” With that, he removes his head and throws it out to the pitcher who proceeds to fire it at the catcher for the first pitch. Back and forth the head goes between the pitcher and the catcher, with only a few line-drives to short. This remains the pace of the game until Sammy Sosa knocks the head out of the park. It’s retrieved by a boy who takes it home and puts it in a clear plastic ball holder. Now, every night before bed, the little boy listens to the man tell him about the inside workings of baseball.

A little girl wanted to play jump rope, but her mother was too poor to buy her one. To keep her little girl happy, the mother made a slit in her abdomen and pulled out her small intestines. For an hour or so, with great delight, the little girl played jump rope with her mother's small intestines. "Oh, mommy, that was so much fun; can I do it again tomorrow?" While the mother taped her abdomen closed, she told her daughter, "We'll see, honey, we'll see."

Knitting has become all the rage with single young ladies. Shelia decided that she would use strands of DNA and knit herself a family. First she knitted a little girl and then she knitted a little boy. She started to knit a little dog, but it lashed out and bit both of her hands off. “Oh, how terrible! Now I will never be able to knit my children a father!”

The Blue Plate Special today is pork chops smothered with mushroom clouds. The chef recommends that it be cooked medium-rare because by the time it can be served the meat will be scorched. When the waitress calls out that she wants another “Los Alamos Special,” the chef becomes so pissed he could explode.

Instead of leaves, miniature bodies of the dead appear on the trees in and around the cemetery. Family and loved ones that come to visit point with excitement when they see Aunt Julie or Grandma Smith or a deceased husband, wife, or child. The excitement continues until an unusually strong wind comes along and blows the dead away. For the living, it becomes a topic of conversation for years, but no one is completely sure it actually occurred or whether it was just a collective dream.

Two secrets inhabit the same house, and both know and honor the rules of secrecy. One secret belongs to the husband; the other belongs to the wife. By accident, the two secrets bump into one another, but take care not to look each other in the eye. Each secret is suspicious of its respective owner and that which is being kept secret. Both secrets fear that they are, in fact, the same secret.

The whale painted on the side of my apartment building and the violin in the pawnshop window across the street, serenade each other twenty-four hours a day. No one in the neighborhood can get any sleep, and they are becoming awfully pissy

The outlook for the whale and the violin ever getting together is bleak because a three story high curtain, with an assortment of keys aliening the bottom, runs down the center of the street as far as the eye can see.

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