

North Insciber Shop

Christopher Brinson

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who the hell is grover norquist anyway?

oh sage! oh great
prophet!

another sunday has
arrived and

your bow-tied disciples
are mumbling your

sacred name.

i kneel down at the
alter of my

flat screen and pray
to you

with images of blue
furry muppets

in my mind...

hear us oh grover, do
not forsake us-

oh brother can you
spare a dime?

11.10.2012

alternatives to wearing the company polo shirt today

grow a beard-
go see a movie-
fly a kite-
hide and seek-
turn on tune in
drop out-
play hopscotch with
an imaginary
friend-
get a tattoo of my
wife's name on
the arm-
speak with a cockney
accent-
take my typewriter
to starbucks-
stand on the steps of
city hall and proclaim
the end is near-
stay in bed all day and
watch game shows-
make conversation with
the mail man-
run around in circles-
watch the sunset on
the water-
play taps on my trumpet-
fall asleep-
wake up stuck inside
this dream-
trapped forever inside
the maze.

11.12.2012

drummer's creed

i believe in rock and roll with a solid
snare shot on beats two and four-

i believe in playing air drums to a led
zeppelin song while waiting at a
traffic light-

i believe it's ok to make an ass of yourself
for the entertainment of complete
strangers-

i believe in soul mates,love is all you need
and until death do us part forever and
ever-

i believe if you ever find yourself at that
perfect conjunction of traffic light,led
zeppelin and soul mate at your side...

best to leave the air drums for later.

11.20.2012

pax romana

we are rome-

roman smart phones,
roman computers

and roman
televisions-

all tuned into the
global gladiator

games-

simeultaneously
watching

the global carnage
as it happens.

12.08.2012

a concise history of these united states

we've usually just kicked ass and
asked questions later-

not always with favorable
results,mind you...

during times of peace,we lounge
about eating cheeseburgers

thinking about them good old days.

12.28.2012

stalemate

i stand beneath the cypress
trees at the bank of the
brazos river on a cold and
weary day. spanish moss
hangs low like hungry hands
that dangle into the dirty
raging water. on the other
side, a red tail hawk has
perched upon a limb-as still
as an ancient greek statue.
between us are these muddy
currents that will never
reveal the centuries of
secrets that it keeps.

01.16.2013

forty year woodstock hangover

when his roaming was done, he parked the volkswagon beetle in the garage, got an eight-to-five, monday through friday office job with the best of intentions to restore his car back to factory condition. but things happen- life happens. there were always more important things to use time and money for. he got married, had kids put in three decades for the company. retired. sold the house. renters moved in. the car stayed in the garage. never moved or even budged. the house burned down. the garage remained for a few more years and then collapsed upon itself and the beetle. the earth started to take over the heap of wood and rust but just in the nick of time, a construction crew bulldozed the heap, laid down a shiny new concrete slab and buit a mcdonald's there.

01.19.2013

binary world

two traffic lights.
two reasons to stay.
two reasons to leave.
two vacant houses.
two fires ablaze.
two doughnut shops that used to be
two exxon service stations.
two banks but not enough money.
two pawn shops that will loan you
two hundred dollars for your soul.
two lane main street leads one of
two ways the hell out of there.
two generations tied down with
two children and
two car garages.
two liquor stores to cure what ails.
two dozen churches for what fails.
two people remain there to forever tell
two different versions of the truth.

01.22.2013

forgiveness is the easy part

methodist summer church camp.
sounds like a hoot doesn't it?
nineteen eighty-one as clear as
my reflection in the mirror now.
the first night they woke me
up,stripped me down,took all
my money and flushed my face
in the toilet over and again
while the counselors were
deep in the east texas piney
woods drinking jack daniels
and smoking pot. of course i
reported the incident. you
know what they made us do...
hold hands and pray about it
together,act all lovey-dovey
and go about the business of
the day. but the rest of the
week wasn't any better though-
terrorize the nerd in the thick
buddy holly glasses. pray
about it some more and act like
nothing happened. i don't
pray often these days, but on
the occasions that i do,
i hold my breathe and keep
one eye open.

01.23.2013

confiscated internal memo

what are we going to do about dad...
he's so embarrassing.
he writes poetry and plays guitar
in the front yard.
drives a hyundai elantra with a
big old crack in the windshield.
he makes conversation with complete
strangers in public places.
wears the same kind of jeans he
did in nineteen eighty-six.
even swings,skips rope and goes for
long runs in the rain.
he made us listen to somebody called
bob dylan on the radio and tried
to explain how "culturally significant"
it was. oh mah gawd it was horrible.
please tell us what we can do about
dad. we can't sell him, can't trade
him in. can't even throw him off the
bridge into lake houston-he'd
probably think that was some kind
of wonderful fun. we are out of
ideas and submit our plea to the
world. dad just won't go away. i
fear we may be stuck here for years
more unless we figure out what to
do about dad...

02.20.2013

how to live in suburbia and still be legit

i surmise that it has something to do with
driving a yellow mini-cooper,

preferably a convertible with cute little
union jack side view mirrors-

a tattoo or three, placed out of the way
on ankles or upper arm,

not visible while dressed in business
attire-

and the consumption of massive amounts of
margaritas at the neighborhood

strip mall mexican restaurant routinely
every friday evening-

guess that makes me batting zero for of
three and out of place like a

chimpanzee at a tea party in this very
strange land that surrounds me.

02.28.2013

pink elephants and purple pills

are you often tired?

do you find it hard to concentrate?

are you are male?

are you a female?

are you between the ages of 18 and 89?

do you sometimes ache all over?

do you have to use the bathroom at night?

do you have bad thoughts?

do you have no thoughts at all?

is there ringing in your ears?

do your fingers swell for no reaasn?

do you blow your nose too much?

do you not blow your nose enough?

well.if you answered yes to one or more of these questions, then worry no more because you are probably a victim of axiomatic phlegmatic syndrome. and from the pharmaceutical labs of dewey,cheatem and howe comes the remarkable new medication called "euphorica". why wait? call your doctor for a sample.

if you cannot afford it, you may qualify for a free supply. call the customer service hotline right now to see if you qualify. operators are standing by. you have got absolutely nothing to lose. haven't you suffered in silence long enough, friends?

03.01.2013

dozen things to do with a shoebox

put the old shoes in and donate to the
salvation army.

store all those overdue medical bills
that you will never pay.

hide little debbie snacks and girl
scout cookies.

build a better mousetrap.

throw all those letters she wrote to
you back in the eighties.

alphabetize your dreams on four by six
notecards.

create a diorama for the little invisible
gremlins to live in.

build one of those things that's supposed
to let you look at the solar eclipse.

a home for photographs without a home.
decorate it and use it as a lunch-kit, friends
and family will be impressed.

fill it full of sand, punch a hole and
hypnotize yourself.

if all else fails, burn, baby, burn.

03.11.2013

they died with dollar signs in their eyes

walking though the alamo gift shop in a daze
on a fine spring sunday morning browsing
their merchandise-

shot glasses,coffee cups and beer mugs
drum sticks,pencils,pens all stamped
with official logo-

coonskin caps made in pakistan-

jim bowie dolls that look more like john
lennon circa nineteen sixty-four-

alamo cookbooks, alamo postcards and
reproduction texas republic money-

tiny alamo shaped peppermints,lollipops
with a dead scorpion encased in the
center-

quarter pound slabs of fudge cut in the
shape of...you guessed it...

the alamo.

bumper stickers,fridge magnets and t-shirts
embossed with the smiling image of your
favorite texas fallen hero-

the list goes on and on and there's at least
another two hundred and fifty

years that they can milk this mother before
the river runs dry.

03.14.2013

never again

high school reunions
marathons
who concerts
rolling stone concerts
mosh pits
differential equations
hauling hay as a career
steak tartar
faith in politicians
gumbo in lafayette
driving a pontiac
church camp
snipe hunting
barney fife,andy taylor
mr. scott, doctor mccooy
dollar a gallon for gas
reading casteneda
reading people magazine
bourbon street parades
jaurez and neuvo laredo
rocky horror picture shows
disney-anything
working for an insurance company
making excuses
over-thinking it
shrugging my shoulders
pretending like it didn't happen
believing my own bullshit
wasting your time
wasting my time
not knowing when to throw in
the towel and admit the
game is over.

03.26.2013

other career opportunities for governor rick perry

congress avenue taco truck chef-
ranger rick,big bend national park-
waco used car salesmen-
future farmers of america teacher, amarillo-
corpus christi hooks public address announcer-
border patrol agent along the rio grande-
texas goodwill ambassador to north korea-
dallas roller derby rink ticket taker-
next contestant on the price is right-
san antonio river walk tour guide-
postal carrier in houston's fifth ward-
variety show host on public access cable tv-
elevator operator at the san jacinto monument-
drummer in galveston island surf rock band-
spokesperson for "just for men" hair care products-
and if all else fails, i have a never ending list
of yard work, laundry and home improvement
projects i would gladly pay him minimum wage for
providing he can show up to work on time and pass
random sobriety tests.

03.29.2013

the universe version 2.0

everything falls victim to time and rust-
the forests, the mountains and our cities-
even copper,silver diamonds and gold
will all, one day, be a giant heap of dust
sitting at the bottom of an infinite hourglass
waiting for someone or something to wake
up from it's cozy billion year nap and
declare a cosmological do-over.

04.02.2013

how wars get started

i was about five year old, it was cold and raining outside and i was watching the hollywood squares with my great uncle who was working on his third six pack of the day. he reached into his desk drawer and gave me one of his pocket knives. told me that i was a man now and every man needed his own pocket knife. my aunt got up from her silent crochet knitting, stormed into the kitchen, started banging pots around and swearing like a sailor. she yelled at the dog, ranted about nixon, watergate and vietnam. she stormed out the front door and walked down the road. my uncle looked at me, smiled and then shrugged his shoulders. they had never had any children of their own.

04.08.2013

a dozen universal axioms

truth is often more gruesome than myth
just ask keith richards-
there's no such thing as a free lunch
but people very rarely complain when
they receive one-
sooner or later, the tax-man cometh, so
get used to it, people-
love is all you need, but a dose of
sobriety never hurts either-
there's only twenty-four hours in a day,
this does not allow for an infinite amount
of meetings and conference calls-
open the jars and assure that the house
perimeter is free of creepy crawly things
and universal harmony can be maintained-
one can never stockpile enough duct tape
and wd-40-
taken as a whole, over the past half century
the houston astros are the saddest excuse
for a professional baseball team ever-
if your car is making a noise and you can
still drown it out with the radio, then
don't worry about it-
a stranger will ask me for a dollar at
the gas station today-
nothing good can become of eating the caramel
bacon stuffed french toast at your
local denny's-
enjoy the ride folks, we are all destined to
take that eternal dirt nap sooner or
later, even keith richards.

04.09.2013

double dare ya

go right ahead,america-
ignore reality-
knock yourself out-
you don't need my permission-
hide-away and lock out the world-
watch lawrence welk re-runs all day long-
things are going to get worse before the get better-
sit there with that thousand yard stare plastered
on your face like it's still nineteen fifty-four-
sooner or later, the bubble is gonna burst-
the canary in your mind's mine will kick the
proverbial bucket-
but then, it will be too late, won't it-
you've clicked your mouse and lost your house-
no second chances amigo-
because four out of five studies show that
i-phone service in a coffin is spotty at best.

04.14.2014

epistle to the digerati

we know you're out there watching-
that's no longer a secret-
so why all the cloak and dagger-
why the pomp and circumstance-
go ahead and compile your compulsive lists-
put my name in your electronic rolodex-
watch my shopping patterns-
observe how i partition my measley dollar-
spy on me as i slice your american pie-
crunch the numbers in your fist-
the tighter you squeeze, the more digits
that you let seep through-
my thoughts are locked away so tightly, i
don't even know the combination to the lock
do you hear me mark zuckerberg...
do you hear me sergey brin and larry page-
great googlie mooglie!
that's the best i can give ya-
i got nothing else.
rust in peace, fellas.

04.24.2013

the generation x double helix dna strand defined

sesame street,the electric company and
mr. rogers neighborhood
mash,all in the family,good times, the
jeffersons
etch-a-sketch,easy bake ovens,nerf,matchbox
hotwheels,magic eight balls
pop rocks,bubble gum,carnation instant
breakfast
pepsi,coca-cola,dr pepper,seven-up and
sprite
apple,commodore,timex,atari,radio shack and
texas instruments
watergate,jimmy carter, ronald reagan.
k-tel records,eight tracks and cassettes
cd radios,burt reynolds and sally fields
big macs
saturday night live, saturday night fever
bruce jenner,dorothy hammil and nadia
comaneci
the thrill of victory and the agony of
defeat-
cold war, duck and cover,berlin wall
politics
big ass station wagons that stretched half
a city block and could taxi the whole cub
scout troupe to the sizzler steakhouse
all you can eat buffet.

04.25.2013

there are alternatives

the doctor is in...
the psychedelic milk truck is fueled up-
the typewriter is at my side-
my piddly little college degree from a branch
campus of university of houston that
nobody has ever heard of is folded up neatly
in a carpet bag-
this morning i will be driving up and down
the streets of your neighborhoods
blaring bossa nova music from the speakers
and writing out proscriptions-
a free months supply of medication of you-
today's recommendation, a small daily does
of reality(twenty milligrams should do ya)-
we can all use a pinhole view of what lies
on the other side of this cupcake infested
mirage that the powers that be want us to live in-
take once a day, no more , no less-
if dosage is skipped, do not over compensate-
too much of this stuff can put you six feet under-
and if you don't feel better in a week...
you are free to go back to your people
magazine fetish for what ails ya-
no problem, no charge, no questions asked.

04.27.2013

met life blimp floats over the houston outskirts

there it is...
between our cookie cutter brick box homes
and the blazing sun-
enormous shimmering shadow-
hovering up there casually like a whale-
snoopy the beagle and woodstock the yellow
canary frolicking on a field of white canvass
for all the soccer moms to behold-
i guess this was supposed to make me run out
and spend a few cents per dollar on a
new life insurance policy, no doubt...
somehow, i don't think it will-
at least it got a few people's eyes unglued
from their idiot-phones for a moment or two.
but then they realized what a cool status update
photo this would make on their facebook or
their twitter or their instagram page
(whatever the social media soup of the day
happens to be...)
chalk up the score, charlie brown-
advertising eggheads, one...
humanity, zero.

05.04.2013

camping near the pedernales river

i awaken.

groggy head,dry salty mouth-
most horrible thirst of my life.

get up,grab an old galvanized bucket
walk to the well beneath the full moon
surrounded by the sounds of night-
tie a rope to the handle and throw
it into the earth-

methodically i turn the spindle
bringing it back to the surface,
only to discover that the well is dry-
nothing but rust and dust.

well, no matter...

i meander downhill to the river and
place my jawbone against the flattened
riverbed rocks so that a steady stream
flows into my mouth.

i lean on the banks, appeased at least
and fall back asleep listening to
infinite trickling over the stones.

05.06.2014

cheeseburger economics

we are living in the age of the twelve dollar
cheeseburger...

all hail the sacred cow!

but not only that...

we live in a weird whacked out era where the
twelve dollar cheeseburger lives in perfect harmony
on the same street corner as it's four
dollar step cousin neither eclipsing the other-
enough american guts to fill and then some-
but before you can go patting yourself on the
back for having obtained some kind of
amazing "cheeseburger on every plate"
utopian society, consider for a moment all
those bloody cheeseburgers and the billions of us
little blind rats following in single file
drive through line to every happy mc-jingle.

05.18.2013

george s. patton as corporate motivational speaker

listen carefully gentlemen. no bastard ever met his project deadline sacrificing himself for the company. he met his project deadlines by making his team of poor bastards sacrifice themselves for the company. now...i want you to get your asses into your cubicles and harvest that damned low hanging fruit until your fingers bleed. i want you to adapt and evolve and dazzle me. do not give me any of that crap about coming in "on budget". by god, you will come in under budget or don't even bother coming in at all. so when you are seventy-five years old and a card carrying member of the aarp playing with your grandchildren in front of the fireplace and they ask you what you did in the great recession, you won't have to hang your head and tell them that you were shovelling shit somewhere in the backwoods of east texas. that is all.

05.20.2013

got those revisionist history blues again, mama

port arthur, texas is a hard nosed blue collar town if there ever was one. the century old refinery reactors still loom large on the horizon as you drive in from the west. what's left of downtown is beaten, battered and all but forgotten. business has moved out to the interstates. the city's claim to fame is that it is the hometown of janis joplin. and believe you me...even forty years after her death, everybody there either knew her personally or knew somebody in her family, or went to the same church as she did or has some other obscure connection with her. hell. even at the museum for south east texas culture you can get your picture taken with a life-size cardboard cut-out of janis right in front of her actual psychedelic painted rolls royce. never mind the fact that the last time she set foot in their fair city, the good folk of port arthur spat upon her and scorned her with a litty of insults as if she was some kind of traitor to their lord jesus christ.

05.24.2013

world gone wrong

about twenty miles north of houston, there is a city called “the woodlands”. it is what hungry real estate developers with star-spangled powerpoint presentations call a “master planned community”-

every blade of grass is carefully micro-managed to give the facade that it’s the greatest and grooviest place on earth to live-a place where humans and nature supposedly live happily ever after together-

and in this city,a mall was seemingly built overnight. in this mall between the lego shop and the “everything is pink” outlet(directly across from the alter of saint steven jobs) is a place that sells razors and shaving accessories for men-

their motto is “a clean shaven face is the best gift you can give your family” and they are currently running a special that if you spend at least one hundred and fifty dollars,you will get a free towel with your purchase-

dear readers...i rest my case.

05.27.2013

twenty first century hippie-chick

she's all alone in a crowd of fifteen thousand-
she's got the paisley skirt and cowboy boots on-
she knows every word to every song-
she's by the book-
she's tattooed in all the usual places-
she's already purchased their tee-shirt-
she forked over several hundred just to be here-
she's probably their biggest fan-
she's doing all she can to keep austin weird-
she jumps and twists in the summer heat to every beat-
she never sits down-
she closes her eyes and sways to the slow songs-
she's already got it posted on facebook,instagram,twitter-
she hopes they see her from the stage-
she works her space of four square feet because
she knows they are singing for her and only her.

06.02.2013

an open letter to the class of eighty-eight

come on all you former valley girls and
ferris bueller wannabes-
we've become far too smug and complacent
haven't we...
enough already of the planning for the
next high school reunion-
enough of cutsie, concealed tattoos-
let's stop looking backward and gaze upon
the horizon with reverence-
let's rise up, dispose of the old guard and
usher in solutions,
our moment is now, but it is fleeting-
we've one foot in their world and the
other in the future-
so what they hell is stopping us then...
you see, class of eighty-eight,i woke up this
morning and realized that my twelve year old
daughter knows ONLY of a world where the daily
body count is a ritual statistic on the
evening news-
and it became clear that something has to
give here, man—
so i am calling all of us out on this one.
put your god-damned i-phone down for a moment
lets make a list and get it done.
the revolution starts now-
but nobody has to die this time around.
my sleeves are rolled up and my work boots
tightly laced...
who's with me on this-
because i can't do it all alone.

06.05.2013

the vets

maintenance department break time
at the chemical plant-

ken, terry and james sit together
at a table...

play dominoes, laugh and spit
into cups-

patiently they count down the days
and minutes until retirement,

exchange vietnam stories, new photos
of their grandchildren

and wonder what the hell ever happened
to those brave and crazy assholes

they once were so long ago.

06.17.2013

all things being equal

angry man on the evening news-
greasy budweiser beer cap on his head-
seven day salt and pepper growth on his face-
shouting, spitting and pointing at the camera
while trying to keep his blue jeans securely
between his waist and stomach-
going on and on about how many rights he's
got and how he's an american citizen and by
god he's a taxpayer and they can't do this
to him-
newsflash, clyde...
there's seven billion of us out here and
we're all caught up in the pyramid scheme
too, you know-
and we're all on a slow train ride together
destination...that eternal six feet under
dirt nap-
and even the bean counters at the top of
mount ponzi aren't immune either-
so sit back, relax, enjoy the ride...
damn it.

06.18.2013

postcard from dystopia

california is burning.
the santa ana winds
fan the flame.
her rivers and aquifers
are running dry.
there is no paper,
there is no plastic.
mother earth is building
up pressure beneath the
streets of l.a. and the
hills of san francisco
are lined with the
sunken distraught faces
of broken dreams.
an eight ounce can of
coca-cola costs seven
dollars.
there is no more gold
to be mined here.
the piggy bank of
promises has filed
for bankruptcy.
better turnaround and
try your luck with
montana instead.

06.24.2013

walking past my grandfather's work shop

we're all in this long battle of attrition
against rust together...

a futile effort for which there will be
no victory-

yet, we must stand and be counted, there is
no other alternative.

06.28.2013

dead end experiment in democracy

so...

you said you wanted a revolution...

careful what you ask for, pal

a pie in the face never tastes as

good as a slice on the plate-

looks like you're damned if you do

and you're damned if you don't

can't have your free speech and

eat your cake too, now can you.

it's one or the other, fellas-

which one will it be...

flip a coin

roll the bones

draw straws

for all i care play a quick round

of engine,engine number nine

i mean seriously, folks, you can't

dispose of your leaders like they

were yesterday's happy meal toys

make up your mind, this is not an

all you can eat buffet, this is a

binary world. the light is either

on or it's off. pick one or the

other or we will pick for you.

quit sulking and whining. are you

men or mice...

07.04.2013

indivisible my ass

democrats say they have the answer-
republicans insist only they can be trusted-
both have their own mealy mouth minions
and assorted zoo of faithful mindless
talking heads who can spit out the spin
faster than dirty harry firing his smith
and wesson. they've both drawn a line in the
sand and dug trenches deeply in the bedrock
beneath us. they hurl insults back and forth
at each other across this no man's land called
congress. they blatantly barbeque one another's
sacred cows and serve up sizzling meat
on sharp stainless steel skewers to the likes
of kraft, apple and general motors. and these
corporate goons are playing them both for
the fool the entire time with fingers crossed
behind their backs. while we, the people, are
left by ourselves to lament the demise of
WE THE PEOPLE.

07.11.2014

goose creek blues

over the flowing stream where you and i used to go fishing, there is now a bridge connecting both banks-it's made of the reclaimed railroad tracks of a train that no longer passes by. i am standing on that bridge right now writing this. the creek has been dammed on the western end by a power plant whose steam turbines use it's water. the creek is now more of a lake but flocks of wild ducks and geese still make their nests among the marshy palmettos. they pay little attention to the rubber upon asphalt noise that's become a twenty-four hour companion. i imagine in another ten years or so, some sparkly eyed real estate developer still fighting the occasional acne blemish on his face, will build homes along the water line here and sell them for a million dollars each. the waterfowl will migrate further south and leave only the name to a new suburb

07.20.2013

performance enhancing drugs for the aspiring poet

take a helluva lot of walks-
pray for rain-
if it does, take a gulp or three-
turn off your i-phone, put it in a box-
put distance between you and this box-
take the stairs instead of the elevator-
eat alone in a crowded restaurant-
tune into each conversation around you-
listen like it's your favorite radio station-
make a damned fool of yourself often-
become friends with the silence-
shake it's hand-
buy it a steamy plate of enchaladas-
count to one thousand by threes-
stand on one leg until it hurts-
skip stones across the pond-
get lost in concentric circular ripples-
soak like a sponge-
retain like the earth-
find paper, find a pen, buy a typewriter-
i don't care, use your tablet computer if you gotta-
defeat your fear, don't be afraid-
do whatever it takes-
even if it takes a stiff drink-
coffee,tea,milk,coke,pepsi,beer,whiskey-
pour yourself onto the page-
come on now, don't be a mamby-pamby cop-out-
you've come this far.

07.28.2013

field notes from cosmos edge

it's dark and lonely out here-
the beating of my heart sounds like
an atomic bomb-
an ample supply of air and water is not
the problem-
the problem is the people with the stars
in their eyes-
they speak in tongues and thrash their
arms violently about warding off
the friendly outcast traveller-
our eyes never meet. it's as if they
and i are seconds out of sync moving
forever in opposite directions
through time-
i patiently climb their spiral staircase
break down their brick walls-
and navigate their endless mazes-
only to encounter more of the same.
i have but a little faith that this
journey might eventually come to full
circle termination-
but what else is there for a poor boy to
do except keep on keeping on...
i should have listened to dear old mom
and dad and become a civil servant-
no...instead i had to follow my damned
foolish heart and practice poetry-
it's not the best way to find out that
the shortest distance between two points
in the time-space continuum is not
necessarily a straight line.

07.20.2013

painted into a corner

two wars to the power of two-that's a quarter century of blood. and to what end...

a big brother democracy band aid taped over a religious rift that's been brewing and stewing for fifteen hundred years.

and what's been gained here folks-

just a big old rusty bucket of pride

bucket o'pride don't pay them monthly bills

last time i looked bucket o'pride corporation

had gone belly-up bankrupt on the floor

of the new york stock exchange.

and what are we left with here...

a new generation of men and women freshly

back from their fifth or sixth year, lined up

at every corner walgreens pharmacy in hopes

hopes that a daily handheld of pills will

avert a mental disaster.

08.02.2013

slice o' the city

competition or souls
is fierce-

there's fast food
drive through

salvation on every
corner-

and people standing at
the intersections

holding cardboard signs
for whome the

american dream has morphed
into an eternal

nightmare.

08.05.2013

i've seen the future

someday we'll all live in a box

our names will be forgotten and what
remains of our life will be randomly segmented

across hundreds of photographs that span
all our days.

this box will be condemned to a dusty, musty
corner of an antique shop-

nobody ever sees it much less gives a damn
about it...

the best you can hope for is tha some dreamer,
some schemer or poet happens by

while his wife is prospecting for fiestaware
and thumbs through these indiscriminate

fifty-cent snapshots and attempts to reassemble
your narrative for you.

08.07.2013

my happy poem

in my happy poem it's a brilliant day. the kind
you cape cod folks get all summer long but
only occurs in south-east texas once or twice a year
and in my happy poem, it happens to be that exact day
and for full effect, there's a bunch of flowers and
butterflies painted on like a van gogh landscape
probably some honeybees cross pollinating this happy
poem world as well. there's a huge crowd of happy
people sitting cross-legged smiling around the most
amazing lush green pasture you have ever seen. and
suddenly, out of nowhere, from the far end of this
field, i come running like a crazed manic olympic
sprinter faster than the speed of sound. i bend over to
my hands and launch into the most awesome back flip
ever known to humanity. but somewhere up there
in mid-air, i realize that i am not actually in a dream
anymore, but stuck in this happy poem reality.
my body freezes up, gravity has it's way with me and
i fall flat face on the ground, then the crowd
erupts into an explosion of laughter. i somehow manage
to pull myself vertical and begin to hobble away
in shame, dragging a broken right leg well behind
the rest of a shattered body. the crowd is silenced
momentarily, but soon breaks out into a wave of
applause that echoes off the distant mountains
just for me...thus ending my happy poem.

08.15.2013

being a poet in these turbulent times

i try to keep it all in perspective-
because it could be a lot worse ya know...
let's take old dr. zhivago for instance-
married to one woman but loved another,
every time he tried to sit down and write
a poem, was interrupted by a war, revolt or
counter revolution. walked around in the
snow all the time. couldn't find a house
that had proper heating. had to stand in
line for hours just to get a measly loaf of
stale bread. kicked the bucket in the middle
of a busy moscow street while chasing a bus.
so everytime i catch myself getting
complacent, i turn on the idiot box and
cnn,nbc and abc are serve up deep fried
sewage sandwiches twenty four hours a day.
it's then that the fever inside of me begins
to boil over again.

08.18.2013

the time traveller

i was born as an old man-
pockmarked face,myopic eyes
wrinkles and thinning hair.
i've had to grow into my mask
no college keg parties or
spring break getaways-
just long lonely nights working
the graveyard shift studying
calculus and physics textbooks-
my apartment walls eventually
began to close in on me so i
fled the country and flew under
the radar for a year or so-
fortunately,it all worked out
and sanity was maintained.
i happened to catch my
reflection looking the other
way in the mirror this morning
and realized that it's no
longer a brainless effigy.
the boy, the man and all the
noise between the two extremes
have finally synchronized.

08.25.2013

the old tree falling in the forest fiasco

we are a people of endless clutter-
there are three car garages full of it
on every suburban street-
warehouses,storage units and containers
cars in driveways busting at the seams
with plastic mc-junk-
closets,hallways and spare rooms we never
needed piled with crap
a tower of dreams and myths we've bought
cookbooks,gadgets,entertainment consoles
clothes,lamps and picture frames that
will never be used-
the more of the mania we eat...
the faster wal mart and target force
feeds us more of the same-
billboards blitz us from every angle-
how can we NOT conform to the insanity-
cut the umbilical cord-
draw a line, build a wall
run like hell to a place where the
goons can't find you.
no, not later, right now-
before it's too late...
before each and every one of us die
in an avalanche of excess and become
collateral damage of a planet that
had it's chance but blew it.

08.27.2013

military industrial complex nightmare

once upon a time, the masters of insanity and destruction invented a bazooka like gun that shot miniature nuclear warheads with the explosive capacity roughly equivalent to the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It even had a name—they called her “Atomic Annie”. The only kicker to the equation was that it could not be fired far enough to allow the soldiers pulling the trigger to fully escape the blast zone. But did that stop the cigar chomping generals from testing it...of course it didn't. They fired it over and over again, pockmarking the Nevada and New Mexico deserts with craters the size of football stadiums. They even deployed some prototypes to the Korean front line, all the while with visions of dead little commies in their eyes. It was only when the operating crews started dying of radiation sickness, did somebody think to file this one away into the department of very bad ideas. Now, boys and girls, I bet that's one they didn't teach you about in your star-spangled rhinestone cowboy nine grade American history class, did they...

09.18.2013

gwenneth paltrow's retirement pension

saw her today on some morning show while i
was trying to lace my workboots-

two time academy award winning actress
peddling her new cook book of all
things-

so does that mean if we cook and eat like
gwenneth,we'll all look as glamorous
as she does too-

yeah and if you you believe that,i'd like to
sell you shares of my gold mine in
siberia-

ain't that just what america needs...
another cookbook to add to
the cupboard,

but hey, let her get all the shameless
commerce out of her name while she
still can-

because she's got...what, maybe another
decade before hollywood throws her
aside for a younger likeness-

you don't have to take my word for it, just
ask the agents of debra winger and
meg ryan.

09.24.2013

the blame game

blame it on wal mart
blame it on mcdonalds
blame it on coke and pepsi
blame it on starbucks
blame it on apple or google
blame it on the democrates
blame it on the republicans
blame it on obama,bush,clinton
blame the pills
blame the booze
blame the needle
blame the devil
blame it on america
blame it on russia
blame it on iran
blame it on the times
blame it on rock and roll
blame it on the weather
blame your wife
blame your husband
blame your boss
blame your parents
blame your dna
blame your hometown
or just shut the hell up and
blame it on yourself for a
change. then it's game over
man, game over.

10.04.2013

beneath the microscope

october morning
skies-

i glance at orion on the
rampage above

my roof-

soon the trees will
be bare and

there will be no place
to hide from

his relentlessness.

10.05.2013

encounter at the kroger

you traded your grunge
doc martens

and beat up honda
civic

for twenty thousand dollar
engagement ring

and range rover full of
offspring-

you probably even vote
republican now-

but there we were, you and
me late night houston

twenty years ago-

and here we are now in this
supermarket browsing

the produce section.

10.07.2013

hell in a bucket

have no doubt,
the cult of elvis
lives on though
he's decades dead.
alive and well among
the blue and white
hairdos of las vegas.
but what of it...
the damage is done
prometheus has given
his holy flame to
all of humanity,
while the subways of
london are still
painted with prophet's
graffiti proclaiming
that clapton is god.
our heroes are now
a dime a dozen...
no, strike that,
they're even cheaper
everybody is an instant
internet star and
they're fat and bloated
on their own bullshit
they may fool some but
they are not fooling
me. the evening news
announces another media
martyr ever day.

10.11.2013

due diligence

noun. flashy american business conference room talk that really mean to one's ass before passing the train wreck of a problem that you couldn't solve along to the next poor unsuspecting bastard. this way one can be perceived as "at least" making an effort before washing their hands of the corporate carnage that is about to befall the stooge receiving the whole mass. one of several twenty-first century business idioms that needs to be in the tool chest of any self-respecting middle manager. some other examples are: "to pick low hanging fruit", "from the ground level up", "it is what it is" and "to think outside the box". and now that you know them...i ordain you to rise from your cubicle, evolve, go forth, claim that corner office you so rightfully deserve and propagate bureaucracy like your very life depends on it.

10.20.2013

missive for the masses

nothing digital can ever really die-
the bits and the bytes might be erased
but there will always be some residual
trace leading back to the original scene
of the crime. what i am trying to say here
is...that this ain't yo momma's two
dimensional etch-a-sketch,easy bake oven
world we live in anymore. the lines have
been drawn and sides must be chosen in
this new world reality. us against them
them against us. so that's why i am
standing here all alone so early in the
morning at the foot of a mountain throwing
stones into this lake watching every set
of circles play out their signal from
the cradle to the grave. there's damn
near an infinite supply of rocks and the
day is still young. you are free to join
me in the labor of my love. or you can take
the easy way out and play the part of the
innocent bystander.

10.24.2013

as i look out my bedroom window on a windy day

we build eight foot fences-
to protect our privacy-
to mark our territory-
to insulate us from the world-
to isolate each other from neighbors-
to be able to do things we shouldn't-
to keep bad energy out-
to keep good energy in-
to corral the kiddies-
to ensure contracts are adherered to-
to maintain sanity-
to practice insanity-
to hide what needs to hide-
to keep the property value up-
to keep safety inside a bubble-
to withdraw into ourselves-
to make sure they don't touch our crap-
to do what we think we're supposed to-
to keep going in a vicious circle-
to run like a little hamster in a wheel-
to burn away thirty years and have nothing
to show for it but our fuckin' eight foot fences.

11.26.2013

i've got your status update right here

this is my adorable little child-
this is what's for supper-
this is my happy-time alcoholic beverage-
this is a photo of me in the mirror-
this is the football game score-
this is me feeling crappy at work-
this is me and the crowd-
this is the jerk who cut me off-
this is the christmas tree and the dog-
this is a photo of my hand that i cut-
this is my heart for you on a platter-
this is the family at disney world-
this is my honest opinion, so shaddup-
this is my soapbox-
this is me and i don't care-
this is all i have to say,there is no more-
this is your chance to like or dislike-
this is me,sticks and stones-
this is the sound of the power switch clicking-
this is me, alone among the beauty of the cosmos-
this is me, so who the hell are you?

12.15.2013

text me

so this is what life's become
no card,call or letters
just a series of random rapid fire
messages when least expected-
hppy bday,where r u,mrry xmas
no prob,see u ltr,lol,brb
blah blah blah,yadda yadda yadda
yackety yak don't talk back-
ah well, when in rome...
do as the morons do.

12.09.2013

morning rituals

when i was a boy,
i'd walk down

the dirt road to a
cemetary where

my ancestors
were-

in and out of
gravestones

reading their names
i'd calculate each

one's age when they
were buried-

then i'd crawl through
the barb wire fence,

pick up a handful of
rocks and throw

them one-by-one into
the lake where

they'd never be seen
again.

12.12.2013

father son and the holy ghost

cold, windy day
texas state highway thirty-five
i stand in front of the world's
smallest catholic church too afraid
to open the door...
on my right is big jim bailey, buried
vertically in the ground, rifle in his
hand, bottle of whiskey at his feet.
to my left, the san bernard river
churning and swirling...
i know that i could jump into it's
currents, float down to the gulf of
mexico and be free of what ails me,
but i'd probably drown before i
got there. so death will have to take a
number and get it's ass in line just
like everybody else today.

12.23.2013

music of the spheres

i wake up in a fit of starvation and
look out the window trying to brainwash
the nightmares from my mind while the
moon is ablaze with a heavenly halo. so
i close my eyes and grind the teeth
attempting to conjure up memories of
a beat missed so long ago but when i
venture out into the thin morning air
i am still horribly out of step
with the universe.

12.23.2013

theo huxtable doesn't live here anymore

the news media didn't know what the hell to call us so they just slapped us with the catchy sounding label of "generation x" then to add salt to our wounds, they drilled the crappy "just say no" mantra into our heads. but how the fuck do you preach to pupils who don't even know the meaning of that word-latch key kids dwelling in windowless high schools where there were illegal trenchcoat pharmacies in every bathroom and shady corner of the "halls of public education..."

12.23.2013

being read my rights

you have the right to breathe the air
around you-nothing more, nothing less.
you'll never have your dream job so
suck it up and quit crying about it-
don't trust what you read on shampoo
bottles. cause is you do, you got nobody
to blame but yourself. today is the first
day of the rest of your life. so get up
off your lazy ass,boy,an do something
about it. take your pill, drink your
magical secret elixar. do whatever it
is you gotta do to sit up and re-join
the human race, damn it.

12.23.2013

the fishermen

i've watched him for twenty-five years
aging like rip-van winkle
hair turning silkly silver
and spine slowing compressing with
the curvature of the earth-
sitting there beneath pine trees
cork,line and hook in the water
looking at his reflection upon
a mirrored surface-
calmly and serenly trying to forgive
the younger man he used to be.

12.30.2013

when harold met maude

you are the teacher
i am the student
who faithfully consumes all
that you may serve...
even from the back of a
taco wagon on the south side
of chicago, i am mesmerized.
one day, i shall turn the table
and it is you who will come to
me with a basket-full of sacrificial
fruit. and on that glorious day
the universe will collapse upon
itself and be replaced with
something even more strange and
remarkable in the aftermath of
an abrupt reboot.

12.30.2014

the poem of misfit phrases

everybody builds their own personal
palace of paranoia-
as the networks keep on a' naggin
i sweep my delusions under a rug
and become the master of duplicity-
you see, sanity if but one brand
of conformity. i myself, have landed
in that sweet spot between apathy
and anarchy. i lock my door and
deadbolt the day out. deep in the
corner of my mind beneath the
world's last sixty watt incandescent
bulb,i'm brewing up one helluva batch
of bathtub gin to firmly see me
through this wretched tunnel of reality.

01.12.2014

reality tv is a bitch

the man in the mirror
the boy inside that man
unravelling every morning
illuminated by compact
fluorscent light.

the universe heat and
expands, then cools and
collapses. all that is left
at the end of the day
is the silence of years.

01.12.2014

big brother watches, but who the hell cares

the wife calls, bring bread home.
don't forget the milk.
a little red light blinks on some
security analyst's switchboard
in the bowels of washington d.c.
he crunches the data, plugs it
into the spreadsheet. the spreadsheet
goes up the information pipe
to the national security report.
it concerns us all, mr. president
because you gotta root out all
them big bad wolves in sheep's
clothing.

01.12.2014

dystopia is all the rage these days

i work at the plastic factory-

it's on the far side of the city but not
on an map or guided tour. you know it's
there even if you have chosen not to
think or talk about it.

where men in overalls splattered with crude
oil shovel coal into a miracle machine that
has a furnace hotter than the surface
of the sun.

twenty-four by seven we churn out billions
of little crystal pills that are sold to
china in order that happy meal toys and
water bottles can be made.

where the board of directors routinely meet
pat themselves on the back and give us
corporate pep-talks about harvesting more low
hanging fruit from all the trees we're saving.

i work at the plastic factory.

01.25.2014

we have no bananas today

went solo at lunch today
bypassed the old corporate button
down shirt crowd-
i've already had enough gloom
and doom for one life time thank
you very much-
no more time for senior citizen rock
star autobiographies-
see no purpose in state of the union
addresses or rebuttals therein,
you are here, i am there...
could care less about chubby little
cigar chomping men who claim to know
the truth. all that matters is how you
trudge through the storm and how
much you balance love
given with love taken.

02.01.2014

north inscriber shop

i followed my heart instead of my head
but who could blame me. i was all hopped
up on reflex and adrenailne. so i did
what seemed logical-i ran. ran far away
ran far as a nineteen-eighty-three pontiac
could take me before it died. all the way
to alaska and left no forwarding address
behind in the lower forty-eight. the
first morning that the sun refused to rise
nearly drove me to the breaking point. it
was all i could do just to get out of bed
every morning. put pen to paper and get my
thoughts straight for once in my life.
i watched the locals through the window.
they took great care in building and
caressing their personal towers of snow.
i thought the world must be ending and
it was time to get a religion. i closed
my eyes and dreamt of opening day
at dodger stadium. these are the kind of
weird things that happens to a man when
love goes wrong and he starts reading
crap like thoreau and carlos casteneda.
sometimes you gotta burn before you
learn. and once your learn, you return
yourself to civilization and reality.

02.03.2014

freight damaged goods

i cradle my guitar
and take the

thought escalator
to the top of

a department store-

there's more products
up there than

price tags in the
galaxy.

back down to floor
level-

i strum a few chords.

we've been around
the world and

through hell together
so what's a

few more cuts, scars
and bruises...

02.04.2014