

101 Tales From The Typer



**The Best Of The Mess
2010-2020
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rocky and bullwinkle goto washington

they tried bombs and it didn't work-
they tried cold war. it didn't work-
they tried hot war, it didn't work-
they tried peace and it didn't work-
they tried apocalypse. no workie-
they tried republicans. no workie-
they tried democrats. it no workie either-
but then.....

then... they tried cutting to
commercial and selling the kiddos
more sugar coated cereal and it
worked like a magic charm.

american gothic

coke, pepsi, kraft and spam
vietnam, iran and iraq
little rock, austin, waco
oklahoma city-
wal mart mcdonalds microsoft
ike, jfk, lbj nixon and carter
george forty one and forty three
bill clinton monica lewinsky
dylan, warhol, big bird mr. rogers
whitman to ginsberg
lady liberty
july the fourth, thanksgiving
september the eleventh
pro choice pro life professional
baseball steroid tell all ghost
written auto biography-
dream big don't dream at all
turn on your radio rock and roll
levi jeans now made in guatemala
voice america is still broadcasting
but nobody is left to listen.

grounded

a wildflower stands
alone
amidst the cactus
tumbleweeds
and coyotes-
the last of her species-
defiant...
against monochromatic
sand dunes-
as jumbo jets scream
overhead
one after the other.

take this brunch and shove it

burnt toast
a few avocado wedges
some sprouts
three red pepper flakes
totally tasteless
ten dollars plus
tip.

ever after

she fell into the bible
he fell into the bottle
and forever two parallel
lives continued nothing
but a tv remote between
two recliner chairs
fairly content with
their status quo.

the minority report

endless wars
in foreign lands
evening news blues
politicians promise
preachers pray
empty flags
broken men
broken women
wandering the streets
of my hometown
nobody listens
nobody cares
i've seen it all before
and i'll see it again
it ain't gonna ever change
good evening
good night
good luck.

brick box blues

take it easy-
inhale,exhale .
repeat as needed.
lay off that car horn,
put the finger down-
buckle those rug rats in
no need to worry
your bottle of chilled wine-
your ten dollar belgian beer
will still be there waiting
for you when you get home.
we are all in the damned
vicious circle together,
my friend.

cool hand donald

boss putin got trump's mind right
boss NRA got trump's mind right
boss ann coulter got trump's mind right
boss hannity got trump's mind right
boss kim jong-un got trump's mind right
boss melania made old cool hand
sit alone in the box all night.

#hoopdeedooforyou

#blessed
#bestlifenow
#livingthedream
#gotitmade
#inthemoment
#inspired
#nofilter
#winning
#lovinglife
#withfriends
#party
#natural
#simplelife
#inlove
#selflove
#loveislove
#liberated
#hangingout
#besthubby
#bestwife
#fridays
#saturdays
#sundays
#atthebeach
#relaxing
#chilling
#justsaying

a six note symphony

earth into mud
mud into brick
brick into homes
homes into dirt
dirt into dust
dust into earth.

due to lack of interest

tupperware party canceled tonight
wallace in sixty eight
posted keep out
no trespassing
this means you
beware of dog
dog is mean and hungry
no solicitors
no soul savers
keep knocking, i am reloading
violators will be shot
and then fed to dogs
i mean business
do you catch my drift
trump for life
make liberals cry again
go away and don't come
back again

all i ever needed to know i learned from dr. zhivago

life is tough-

a lot of times it's damn
cold outside-

you're just a pawn in
the eternal battle-

one day you're gonna
keel over in public

dead of a heart attack-

silent moments are few
and far between

so, in those few precious
moments-

live a little,
love a

little-

write a few poems
and keep your

vodka bottle handy.

social security

a chicken in every pot
two cars in your

garage-

televisions in every
room-

wall marts in every
neighborhood-

mcdonalds at every
traffic light-

forty years left
on my soul's

mortgage-

and then it will be
mine, mine, mine

all mine.

the crude dude

bow down to the
almighty

barrel

line up for your
daily

dose-

drill it, spill it
fill it, kill

it

suck on the sour
sponge until

it's dry

fractured fairy tale

cracks in the pavement
cracks in my mind
cracks on the ceiling and
cracks in time.

cracks in my bones
cracks in the brick
cracks with the dead and
cracks with the quick.

basic math

if country 'a' has two
thousand nuclear

warheads

and country 'b' has one
thousand more,

but country 'c' wants to
by some of their

megatons

then how many bombs
does it take

to make humpty dumpty
fall off his

wall?

talking 'bout them snake oil blues

are you tired?
do you find it hard to concentrate?
are you a male?
are you a female?
are you between the ages of 19 and 99?
do your feet sometimes hurt?
have you ever had to use the bathroom at night?
is there ringing in your ears?
do you have bad thoughts?
do you have any thoughts at all?
do your fingers sometimes swell?
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 above, worry no more because you
may be the victim of axiomatic phlegmatic syndrome
and from the pharmaceutical labs of dewy
cheatem and howe comes the remarkable prescription
medication called "euphorica". why wait?
call your doctor now for a sample.
if you cannot afford, you may qualify for a
free supply. call the customer service hotline
of dewy, cheatem and howe to see if you qualify
operators are standing by.
you have absolutely nothing to lose.
haven't you suffered in silence long enough?

company shirt alternatives

grow a beard
go see a movie
fly a kite
hide but not seek
turn on tune in
drop out
play hopscotch
speak with a
kiwi accent
take my typewriter
to starbucks
start the revolution
proclaim the end
is near
stay in bed
watch soaps
make conversation
with the postal
delivery person
run around in
circles
watch the sunset
play a guitar
play a trumpet
fall asleep
wake up inside
this dream
trapped forever
inside the
maze.

the met life blimp floats of a houston suburb

there it is
between cookie cutter brick homes
and the sun
enormous shimmering shadow
hovering in the sky like an
unconcerned whale
snoopy the beagle and woodstock
the canary frolicking on a field
of white canvass
for all the soccer moms and goatee
dads to behold
i guess it was supposed to make
me run out and buy a life
insurance policy
somehow, i doubt it will-
at least it got a few people's
eyes engulfed from their i-phones
for a moment, but then they realized
what a cool status update that
would make
mark the score, dude,
advertising eggheads, one....
humanity, zero.

the double bubble

double cheese
double size me
double meat
double burger
double shot
double scoop
double chocolate
double fudge
double latte
double feature
double barrel
double trouble
double jeopardy
double time
double bacon
double shift
double the fun
double the pleasure
double income
double fires
double mortgage
double bypass.

side effects may include

sneezing, wheezing, coughing
hacking, phreaking, slicing
and dicing-
loss of sleep, appetite, libido
sense of balance and car keys
sudden blurting out of
obscenities...
a strange affinity for the
musical styling of tom
waits-
blackouts, hallucinations and
apocalyptic visions
drying of the skin, sweaty
palms, oily hair, white spots
on fingernails
belief in right wings conspiracies
left wing conspiracies and all
conspiracies in general
a constant sense of nausea and
in extreme cases, mild vomiting.

five dollar brownie, free poem

sustainable
peruvian chocolate
non gmo
manifesto
cage free eggs
two ounces
two bites
#great_things
#sweet_street
#omg
may have come in contact
with peanuts
if it was any better
it wouldn't be legal
#you_know_what_i_mean

i'll have potent potables for a thousand, alex

the revolution came and the revolution went...
tom brokaw condensed it into a sound bite and
wrote the book for us all,
rush limbaugh passed gas into his microphone,
oprah gave away cute little gift bags of her
favorite hand lotions,
and many pages were left intentionally blank.
a disproportionate number of twenty-somethings
rushed out to join their local branches of
the rotary club-
I shrugged my shoulders, resolved to start
wearing more colorful socks and plotted a
course of action to make it so-
the next day, it started raining like it was
nobody's business and it didn't stop for two
weeks. .
a few people got the old-time-religion and
there was some talk about building an ark, but
it never made it past the planning committee.

texas bumper sticker hodgepodge

horn broke, reloading
keep austin weird
keep austin west of houston
davy crockett for president
comet collision 2020
gilley's
come and take it
cbd for life, baby
honor student on board
my kid beat up your honor student
13.1,26.2.70.3,140.6
0.0
goto church
church of the sub-genius
what would willie do
repent, the end is near
oh well
shit happens.

pumpkin spice pavlov

pumpkin spice coffee
pumpkin spice candles
pumpkin spice chocolate
pumpkin spice beer
pumpkin spice days
pumpkin spice nights
pumpkin spice dreams
pumpkin spice news
pumpkin spice on the left
pumpkin spice on the right
pumpkin spice girl
pumpkin spice boy
pumpkin spice moon
pumpkin spice mars
pumpkin spice peace
pumpkin spice war
pumpkin spice life.

the price is right

how much concrete
how much copper
how much bronze
how much silver
how much gold
how much iron
how much lumber
how much asphalt
how much aluminum
how much oil
how much coal
how much dollars
how much euros
how much water
how much salt
how much sweat
how much tears
how much blood
how much time
how much bodies
how much ya got?

step right up

cbd oil
cbd oil soap
cbd oil lotion
cbd oil foot powder
cbd oil infuser
cbd oil chocolate
cbd oil air freshener
cbd oil cough drop
cbd oil candle
cbd oil soda
cbd oil pills
cbd oil flavored peanuts
cbd oil miracle
cbd oil life
cbd oil savior
cbd oil take away pain
cbd oil make it better
cbd oil all you need
cbd oil love
cbd oil come again soon
cbd oil dollars and cents.

a more perfect dis-union

fearless leader has vicious dogs
he has ominous weapons
fearless leader passed the
cognitive test
self proclaimed genius
finger on the bottom
waves the bible in his hand
big little orange man
shoot first and ask
questions later
made for prime time
fly his flag wear his hat
dominates the carnage
shouts at the generals
says trust him and only him
builds walls
likes the power
likes the podium
likes the attention
loves the money
so why the hell should
i worry?

balancing the equation

i threw away my papers
i threw away my poems
i threw away my comic books
my baseball cards, program
certificates and textbooks
i threw them all away
i threw away my records
i threw away my tools
i threw away bottles,boxes
and furniture
i threw it all away
i threw away letters
i threw away photos
i threw away toys,computers
and broken machines
but i kept the guitar
i kept this typewriter
better yet, i kept my
sanity.

how to live in suburbia and still be legit

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

preferable a convertible-

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

not visible with business attire-

and the consumption of massive amounts
of margaritas at the neighborhood

strip mall mexican restaurant routinely
every friday evening.

that makes zero out of three for poor
old fuddy-duddy me.

the ants go marching

we fill our shelves
we fill our closets
we fill our garages
we rent storage bins
and fill them too
the likes of wal mart
target and amazon
give us dozens of
reasons why we should
whip out the green
whip out the plastic
and start the cycle again
with shelves
and closets
and garages
and storage bins
we drill for oil to
make more plastic
plant trees to make
more paper
dig deeper for copper
soon we'll have to
ship all our crap
to the moon when there
are no longer any
shelves
closets
garages
and storage bins
on earth anymore
and when the moon is
full we'll look towards
mars with dollar sign
smiles.

i walked away

there was the long email
there was the short email
and there was the delete
key.

two bits worth to my teen

put down the goddamned phone
go outside
play in the rain
find a forest
get lost
sing
get dirty
get grimy
get sweaty
chase a butterfly
count the stars
love the moon
get stung by a bee
laugh until ya puke
cry all you want
i'll be right here
when you get back.

how i spent my summer holiday

lost my job
played the trumpet
looked at the bottle
went to disney land
said goodbye to my family
cried at thirty thousand feet
called some old friends
emptied the piggy bank
saw fifteen movies
read four novels
house work
yard work
thoughts to paper
lectured myself in the mirrors
did some elvis air karate
took out on a suit and tie
resumed my place on the
assembly line.

never again

high school reunions
marathons
who concerts
rolling stones concerts
mosh puts
differential equations
voting republican
voting green
hauling hay
substitute teaching
steak tartar
driving a pontiac
church camp
snipe hunting
reading casteneda
reading people magazine
bourbon street
neuvo laredo
rocky horror picture show
disney anything
making excuses
over thinking it
shrugging my shoulders
pretending like it didn't happen
convincing myself otherwise
wasting my time
wasting your time
silence
apathy
loneliness
sorrow.

a poem in the key of b-flat

friday texas night in the
friday texas heat under
friday night light during
friday halftime i hear
friday drums and
friday trumpets marching
friday four four time
friday far away
friday long ago filling the
friday hole in my lonely
friday heart.

last man standing

the retired refinery workers
playing forty-two in a thick
cloud of cigarette smoke. the
screen door slamming in the
evening breeze. a hostage crisis
in iran on the news. over and
gone now for decades. all that
remains is a moonstruck child
in the corner banging on an
old piano-looking for the right
note, the right word, the right
way. and neither hell nor
high water will move me away
from my mission.

document management 101

certificates, diplomas, warranties
insurance, mortgage statements
tax forms, photos, ticket stubs
programs, letters, notes, journals
report cards, test results
and countless scribbled
doodles, letters and poems
all up in smoke
burn baby, burn.

my bachelor or buttons

what's this button for?

what's this button for?

what's this button for?

what's this button for?

what's this button for?

what's this button for?

.

.

.

(class dismissed)

witness

four walls
two opposing clocks.
one slipping slowly into
the past, the other hurling
ever too quickly into
the future
and
i'm stuck between waiting
for thirty years of dust
to speak the truth.

typewriter therapy

this is the disney free zone
the deliverance from email
the twenty four hour fix it shop
no garbage in, no garbage out
keep it simple stupid
keep it easy and breezy
keep it real
primal screaming allowed
don't have to keep your problems
on a leash
running around in the garden of
eden here
we don't need no stinking badges
or fig leaves holding us down.

the red dirt ranger

there's still sand in my shoes
and caked mud on my hands
and grime all over my neck
and there's no kind of soap
or amount of water
or college hours
or motivational seminars
or nights at the opera
that will ever cleanse me
of the earth.

a dozen ways to fix a broken heart

i stitch
i staple
i slice
i dice
i splice
i reassemble
i replace
i glue
i tape
i hammer
i nail
i wait.

station wagon blues

nineteen
eighty-four
big brother
ronald reagan
new coke
old coke
pepsi
born in the
u.s.a.
rainy days
bus rides
empty halls
echo
steel mill
closed
loaded car
fly by night
new start
cross country
drive
no time to
even say our
goodbye.

orphaned

lonely wisteria
locked far

behind a rusty
barbed wire

fence-

another spring
arrives,

and her vines
still have

no place to
climb.

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 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.

from texas with love

i submitted three poems to
the new yorker magazine
they required a short
biography so i told them
that my goal in life is to
be rejected by the best of
the best and then work my
way down the literary
evolutionary ladder so i'm
sure they won't let the
poor boy down.

going the distance

why don't you walk a mile
in my shoes
no wait, don't stop there
walk three or four
more
hell, while you're at it
you can walk clear across
texas in my shoes
walk a year
walk two
walk a damned decade
in my shoes
and then when you've done
all that, please give
me your honest opinion
but until then, step back
step
way
back
if you please.

a place to make a stand

i goto the well and it
gives me water
i goto the well and it
gives me dirt
i goto the well and it
gives me bones
i goto the well and it
gives me air
i goto the well and it
gives me air
i goto the well and it
gives me nothing
i goto the well and it
gives me water.

a twenty-first century holiday

do we have data yet?

no.

do we have data yet?

no.

do we have data yet?

no.

do we have data yet?

no.

do we have data yet?

no.

do we have data yet?

no.

do we have data yet?

no.

coda in the canyon

wind blows
whistling around
and beyond me,
filling in the
vacuum of sunset
behind rocky
ridges,
leaving silence
in it's wake.

idaho for dummies

it's the pork chop shaped state
on the map of america
potatoes. you want 'em they got 'em
(that's no lie...)
friendly folks.
salt of the earth
cold as canada in the winter
hotter than hell in the summer.
evel kneival once paid the snake
river a visit and they're still
talking about it today
forty years after the fact.

still waiting on the first-coming

they're still looking for big foot
in the pacific northwest. there's
even sasquatch sightings in
the deep east texas piney woods
and high atop the blue ridge
mountains of virginia. the faithful
camp out with their shotguns,
beat sticks on trees and make loud
drunken yeti-mating sounds through
megaphones in hopes their savior
will show. god, how i wish i was
making this shit up but i'm not.

houston poem

ghettos shoulder to
shoulder with

gentrification-

churches,porno shops
and gas stations

in the same strip
center

chili, barbeque and
mexican food

capital on the world.

good old boy asian
ex-pat southern

hubs-

a great place for a
cup of coffee

at two in the morning
in the shadows

of the exxon refinery.

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 roman statue.
between us are these muddy
currents that will never
reveal the centuries of
secrets that it keeps.

driving across the golden gate bridge

this is where i want to be forever
driving back and forth over this bridge
always between today and tomorrow
suspended like a photo in time
pacific waves cresting below us
over and over pendulum motion
it's here at sixty miles an hour that
i can forgive humanity of centuries
of transgressions
and i myself, feel nearly absolved
of all the promises i've made to you
but have failed to deliver.

in a world gone wrong

about twenty miles north of houston is a city called "the woodlands". it is what hungry real estate developers with star-spangled power point 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 live happily ever after together-

and in this city, a mall was seemingly built overnight. and in this mall between the lego store and "every is pink" outlet (directly across from the alter of saint steven jobs) is a place that sells only 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 two hundred dollars you will get a free towel with your purchase-

gentle readers...i rest my case.

the world according to dupont

in a place called deer park
stands a hundred foot tall tank
holding something called
cyclohexene
upon the surface of the tank is
a multi-colored multi-storied
mural of a rag-tag anglo army
wearing coonskin hats
they are brandishing muskets and
bowie knives, pointing westward
towards downtown houston as if
it must be the promised land.

encino estates

same six foot tall welcome
sign purchased at hobby lobby
same rocking chairs bought
at costco
same miniature camera doorbell
from target
same little brick and stone
houses
that hermetically hide each
of our personal dirty
little secrets behind
closed doors

the view from telephone road

all night psychics that'll
read your palm. all night ice
houses to get all sauced up
concrete, asphalt and potholes
to sit down and dry up. lonely
old down-and-outer standing at
the bus stop shouting at
the morning. jumbo jets so
low they'll knock you over.
strip malls, street vendors
endless traffic lights. a
solitary little white house
behind a picket fence where
there grows several rows
of sunflowers.

the american experiment

in a place called river oaks
way down yonder in the city
of houston-
two roads, kirby and west gray
intersect
and at this juncture,
sits a starbucks
then,
two doors down, another-
and across said intersection
yet, a third starbucks
mark it dude-
ivan pavlov, one
humanity, zero
game over, man.
game over.

houston, the rough guide

it ain't austin
hot and humid
hot and dry
hot and raining
hurricane parties
ice houses
best damn tex-mex in the world
host to the national air guitar
championship every novemeber.

they walked away

rusty pick-up truck
frozen engine

house falling into
the earth

mason jars, metal
buckets slumping

behind prickly thorn
vines that

partition the perimeter
like a prison

camp.

the sun setting on wichita falls

the pumpjacks on the horizon
disappear into the darkness-their
motors still whirring-
a caravan of trucks loaded
with local teenagers pulls into
the dairy queen-
a lone tumbleweed rolls down
main street caught in a brisk wind
from the north, still three hundred
miles from the sand dunes that
kiss the gulf of mexico.

the covid-nineteen blues

john prine's soul rolled
on up to the rochester
dam this morning. god was
there to greet him with
a new guitar made in
nazareth. john played.
god smiled. the rest of
us had to keep watching
the news.

inorganic chemistry

ten thousand well to
do fans take out

i-phones,

and proceed to sing
along with

as aged rock star
goes into his

signature tune
for the

millionth time.

still lives with mommy

suburban upper middle class white kids plays
the part of inner city hipster well-
probably close to thirty years old
no shave, no haircut, no problems
smokes marlboro reds
works in the vintage vinyl shop by day
delivers pizza by night
quotes lennon, mccartney and dylan
plays guitar in a local rock band that
once opened up for reo speedwagon
they've caught the attention of a few record
labels but no contract signed yet
the big break could come any second
but for the time being
still lives with mommy.

her second wind

she's a rough and tumble good
old texas gal-
she's pushing fifty but really
doesn't give a damn-
she's a mother, grandmother
and office manager-
she's getting a master's
degree in history-
she says why the hell not-
she's marking things off the
old bucket list-
she's not taking crap from
anyone anymore-
she's just getting started-
she says better get up, move
out of the way , or else.

a requiem for vincent

van gogh exhibition
van gogh houston art museum
van gogh gift store
van gogh socks
van gogh tablecloth
van gogh rubik's cube
van gogh magnets
van gogh soft toy(w/detachable ear)
van gogh postcards
van gogh scarfs
van gogh coffee beans
van gogh hat
van gogh bow tie
van gogh salt shaker
van gogh roll over
van gogh in his grave.

sebastian

the old man lived off the
highway among the desert
chaparral in a partially burned
adobe hut. he stole electricity
with a hotwire. when the wind
blew, there was running water.
he spent his days sifting through
mementos from his ninety years.
sometimes tourists stopped by to
trade talk and trinkets. at
night, he dreamt of his lost
lover, maria elena, and cursed
the morning sunrise that
interrupted their reunion.

an open letter to rachael ray

rachael, rachael, rachael...
you minx, you tease, you sound
bite throwing little tart-
it's never just thirty minutes
is it, though i've a shelf full
of your books that promise these
miraculous culinary comforts.
no. it's one hour. it's two hours,
it's a kitchen full of dirty
dishes that takes me until
midnight to clean. where are you
when i need one of your perky
little catchphrases the most, eh?
probably out drinking margarites
with that other mythical maven,
mary poppins, no doubt.

curmudgeon with john deere hat

spits tobacco juice on the sidewalk and says
this country sure has been going to hell in
a handbasket since about nineteen-seventy
looks up at the sun, curses the heat
love his social security check but hates
paying taxes. wants the government out of
his god damned business. distrusts all
politicians be they democrat or republican.
refuses to wear a seatbelt when he is driving
don't even get him started on women in the
pulpit, that pisses him off too. wants to be
buried with his twelve gauge shotgun in his
hands crossing his heart. until that day though,
you can get off his property or get an ass
full of buck shot.

mr. cool

sitting at pool side
perfectly trimmed goatee
microscopic flecks of gray
sipping on custom european beer
reading rolling stone magazine
two hundred dollar sun shades
lost in his little i-phone ear buds
watching soccer moms pass by
like he was center court at the
french open
his kids beckon to him from the
edge of the pool saying "daddy
daddy look at me, look at me..."

the big thicket switchman

ghost road through
a ghost town
leading to a dead end
where the ghosts swings
his ghost lantern back
and forth forever waiting
for a ghost train that
never arrives while
looking for his ghost head
which he will not find.

no bars no reception no problem

my grandfather had a farm with
lush pastures, gardens and
orchards
but those fields are now fallow
the barns and buildings collapsed
and a bank somewhere in new
york own our land
but sometimes, on a saturday
morning, i'll make the two hundred
mile drive up from houston,
sneak under fences and past
"keep out" signs and sit on his
rust bucket 1953 ford tractor under
a sheet metal shed and i will talk
to all the ghosts that
still remember me.

how wars get started

i was about five years
old, it was cold

outside and i was
watching the

hollywood squares with
my great uncle who

was working on his
third or fourth

pack of camels of the
day-

he reached into his
desk drawer,

gave me his pocket
knife and told

me it was mine.

my aunt got up from
the couch

stormed into the
kitchen, started

banging pots and pans
cussing up a storm

and complaining about
nixon and vietnam.

they had never had
any children

of their own.

ferris bueller's day after

ferris and sloane broke up-
but he met a girl from detroit
and move the family to atlanta.
they live in a community called
peachtree estates where he is
president of the homeowner's
association, works as a regional
i.t. manager for a major life
insurance provider and goes to
work five days a week, ten
hours a day for the rest of
his life just like the rest
of us lucky schmucks.

those who wait

some days the table was empty
but mostly she ate a lot of rice
rice, but no gravy
she prayed for rain
the dirt turned to dust
dust turned to powder
the powder blew away
wells dried up
she stood in bread lines
banks served foreclosures
one december day, the radio
said that war had begun
then nothing else mattered
so she prayed for peace.

behind every brian wilson is an al jardine

good old al...
he didn't snort no coke
he didn't shoot no smack
he didn't moan about artistic differences
he didn't storm out of rehearsal
no sir...
he stood in his place on stage
he sang that middle harmony part
he occasionally took lead
he played rhythm on his stratocaster
like it was the greatest damned job
in the entire universe
you know...
the world could sure use more al jardines
right about now
but all we got are are fucking geniuses.

the station master

the trains still pass but
they no longer stop, yet
he sits there in that old
depot among rotting timbers
recording engine numbers
and sketching pictures of
rusty boxcars in a notebook
as they grind around the
bend metal upon metal
headed west to parts unknown.

who the hell is grover norquist anyway?

oh sage! oh great
prophet!

another sunday has
arrived and

your bow-tied pundits
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 head

hear us grover,
do not forsake

us

oh brother can you
spare a dime?

usda wildland fire fighter group six

incredibly young. barely twenty-something.
eyes full of hope and optimism.
scarfing down waffles, coffee and toast
at the lobby of the flagstaff sleep inn
quietly nestled among the ponderosa pines
across the road from northern arizona
university. they carefully cinch red-wing
boots, scratch unshaven cheeks and chins
as they await a bus that will take them
into a raging fire just across the state
border somewhere in california.

the widow

she
suffered spells of

insomnia

and was prone to
waking up during

thunderstorms to
scribble

poems

onto stacks of
notepads

imprinted with the
logo of an

international shipping
company

sent to her by her son
who was working his

way up that particular
corporate ladder

and always too busy
to visit.

the captain

sits atop his boat
docked in his yard
nowhere near a lake
ocean or river,
every evening until
sunset, casually
drinking budweiser
beer and smoking
marlboro cigarettes
waiting for the
flood that hasn't
arrived.

the vietnam vets

maintenance department break time
at the chemical plant-

ken, terry and james sit together
at a table

playing dominoes, laughing and
spitting tobacco juice-

patiently counting down the days
and minutes until retirement

exchange war stories, new
photos of their grandkids

and wonder what the hell ever
happened to those

crazy brave
assholes they once were.

condensed cosmos

leaves fall to ground
day falls to night
man falls to time
moon falls to earth
earth falls to sun.

walking past my grandfather's work shed

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

a futile effort for while there will be
no victory

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

the lonesome valley

pacific air
alaska summer
midnight sun
shadows
stretch out
to meet the
horizon
so
i let the noise
of decades
escape
unnoticed into
the silent
symphony.

woodrow

kept a fiddle
next to his recliner
chain smoked kent
cigarettes
would take a long drag
bow out a quick tune, let
out a puff of smoke, maybe
chuckle a bit at johnny
carson's banter, tell me
some kind of lie about the
"old days" and then
light another one.

the middle manager

knows a lot of fancy terms
six sigma, best practices and
operational discipline
does his due diligence
gets that crazy timothy leary
look in his eyes when he talks
about putting it all
"in the cloud"
used to manage the assembly line
at the ceiling fan factory
before it moved to china
want to get on his good side
assure him that it's all a
turnkey solution. doesn't make
waves. hell doesn't even
make a ripple
riding this baby out until
retirement day.

beyond the breakers

i have a tattered photo
of my father taken in vietnam
he's wearing a t-shirt, bermuda
shorts and his dog-tags. has a
bushy moustache and is standing
in front of a sailboat that he
and his buddies had built
together. he told me that once
they made it so far out into
the south china sea that it
was really a toss up as to
whether they'd return or go
awol all the way to australia.

the summer of cash

seventy-something has been
rock-star. morning talk show.
wife number six with him
updated clean bill of health
from betty ford rehab. ghost
written autobiography no one
is gonna read. wants to get
the band back together, get
back out on the road and sing
those golden moldy oldies for
the fans one last time.

high tech huckster

he chased tornados one summer
rode broncos in the rodeo that autumn
got drunk for a year
slept for another
pissed into the grand canyon
kayaked the colorado
turned thirty
met a girl
fell in love
she got his mind right
turned forty
became a millionaire
wants to make me one too
all i gotta do is signed his
god damned dotted line.

hole in the wall record shop

ex green beret
still believes in the hippie ideal
lives at the foot of a mountain
with his wife of fifty years
rides his harley to the sturgis
rally every summer. grandfather,
dealer in classic vinyl,organic
farmer,pony-tailed fiddle player.
please don't call him mister
everybody just calls him "joe".

the time keeper

maybe fourteen years old
she wears an arkansas
razorback t-shirt
and shouts at the top
of her lungs
"can i get a yee yee?"
"can i get a yee yee?"
"can i get a yee yee?"
and the valley below echoes
it's reply
but the little girl will
grow up to forget
yet the mountain remembers
it always does.

the honesty box

bring me peach preserves
sealed in a mason jar
purchased on the red dirt
roads of a forgotten
east texas town
glistening
like a prism in the
sun
bring it to me
wet with morning dew
and i will wait for
your return.

bill thornton's blues

coach asked...

"does anyone own a tennis racket?"

...silence in the boys gym.

coach asked...

"have any of you ever played tennis?"

...a show of no hands.

coach asked...

"well hell, has anyone ever heard of the game of tennis, then?"

...about five of us raised our hands

coach said...

"men, welcome to the highlands junior school tennis team. a racket will be provided for you"

coach added...

"it's gonna be a long damn year..."

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 shoveling shit somewhere in the backwoods of east texas. that is all.

the lubbock kid

they laid the lubbock kid to rest today. they had a photo of him standing next to his b-24 in the paper. had sailed around the world, met john f. kennedy, coached football and taught algebra for thirty-nine years. loved and married only one woman who had proceeded him in his passing leaves behind many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren enjoyed fishing and working in his woodshop. proud member of his local methodist church and oddfellows international. age ninety-eight. they just called him the lubbock kid.

a seventies poem

i remember the boys coming back
from vietnam, wearing army jackets
throwing a football with five year
old fools in the middle of our
street. eventually, each one
answered the oil refinery whistle
or a silent madness set in. quite
often, both.

the day war ended

they gathered around an old
model-t in the back yard. my
grandmother all of twenty-seven
years old with her four kids
holding little american flags
even the six month old baby
smiling. they waved at the
camera for the first family
color photo. it was as good
as it would ever get.