

◇ Defenestration ◇

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Two Poems
by
Bryan Thao Worra

Hey, Einstein

*"God does not play dice with the universe."
- Albert Einstein*

Playing dice in God's universe
Doesn't get you any closer to him.
Understanding craps
Does as much good as knowing old maids.
Random acts of kindness, like one-armed bandits
Have an uncertain payoff.
You can go fish, reach 21 and hit me,
But divine conversations occur
With all of the frequency of a royal straight flush
On a blue moon in the Year of the Dragon
During your final hour on death row, waiting for a pardon.

Unfortunately, beating those odds only happens if you play.

Good Girls

The city beautiful
Is filled with women
I will never meet

The beautiful city
Will never meet
All of the full women I know

The city I know
Will meet beautiful women
Filled with burning nevers

The city is burning, I know
Filled with beautiful meetings
About women who never think

We're full of it

Stalker
by
David J. Dalley

Beyond these shipshape garden borders
you'll find I trimly fit the bill,
defying two restraining orders,
bedraggled but with time to kill.
I'm the loner at your driveway gate
with rucksack, pen and sodden hair
and guile enough to appropriate
your wash-day underwear.

From the haven of a call-box phone
I rang you twenty-seven times
and in between my breathless moans
I begged
to be
your valentine.

I crept across your patio
to play our game of peek-a-boo,
I saw you come, I saw you go,
I watched you with your husband too.

I'm sorry that I drugged your dogs
and chased your Saab along the road,
then sent you murky Polaroids
of me

at home
unclothed.

I carved our names upon a tree,
sketched heart shapes in the sand,
became your blooded devotee
with a tattoo on my hand.

I may not be of handsome build,
of noble stock or pedigree,
but I have schemes and dreams to fill
with metaphors
of you
with me.

Infatuation's not a crime,
you may just find it flattering,
you'll see me as a friend in time,
unbolt your door,
invite me in.

Three Poems
by
By Jonathan Hayes

Dancing

Naked in my room
with dirty dollars;
filthy mind
and government.

The News

Sometimes humans
are like TVs,
if you get
too close,
reception is bad.

it is 9:33 a.m.

and I'm drunk
(thanksgiving)

The kids are alright
by
David Gaffney

When I heard about the boy whose parents dressed him as a girl till the age of 12, I thought, lucky kid. My parents dressed me till I was 13 as popular crooner Perry Como. They even encouraged me to carry, but not smoke, a beautiful briarwood pipe and I would stab the air with its stem to emphasis a point and suck on it when deep in thought. Yet I wasn't unhappy; it was normal. My cousin had it much worse, as Max Bygraves.

One day I was house-training the dog. The sleeve to Swing Out Perry was on the floor and before I could stop him Engelbert squatted and squeezed a neat little turd right in the middle of Perry's polished inane features.

The next day my mother let me have my fringe cut like Dave Hill out of Slade. Kids have to be allowed to express themselves.

Antediluvian
by
Maude Khannes

A bizarre event often referenced in medical journals of the early 20th century involved the remarkable pregnancies of several women across the United States. Upon delivery, these mothers found themselves faced with unexpected arrivals that baffled scientists and obstetricians throughout the globe. Toasters, the sort used to warm slices of bread to a crisp condition for breakfast, were being born to couples who believed they were about to start families of offspring. Often, the new parents found themselves in denial, insisting that their newborns were normal and without any sort of unique circumstances surrounding their delivery. With earnest and sincere intent, the affected parties proceeded to raise the toasters as infants, no different than their age-respective peers.

This scenario produced a variety of interpretive dilemmas for the parents of these appliances. For instance, how did one go about feeding the child? Investigation revealed two orifices, slot-shaped in a parallel arrangement, at the top of the toaster. Were these mouths? If so, this created a great deal of anxiety for the parents who would place a strained cuisine dish into the perceived mouth only to have it returned quite propulsively in what many interpreted as vomit. If this was indeed the case, as many couples reasoned, then their children were starving themselves to death through this bulimic behavior. Fortunately, a solution presented itself for some parents who came to the conclusion that the slots represented both mouth and rectum and that the action previously defined as vomiting was in fact excretion of digested material. Thus satisfied, the relieved parents would respond with celebratory, loving, and supportive cheers as their babies made their excrements. However, despite the occasional victory of reassuring perceptions, many couples found their psyches overwhelmed with the burdens of caretaking. This resulted in a great wave of toaster children being put up for adoption by their weary parents. These abandoned toasters froze to death in the streets or languished in orphanages, unappealing to those seeking normal children to adopt. As they reached the age of legal adulthood, they became wards of the state as inmates of state-funded mental asylums whose psychiatrists diagnosed the toasters as catatonic schizophrenics unable to survive or perform in society. Most of these toasters died elderly and under the harsh treatment of fame-seeking doctors hoping to find a cure for their afflictive states. Sadly, no cure ever arrived and the remarkable medical marvels died in ignominious circumstances, as mysterious in their deaths as in their births. Their stories disappeared into the annals of time, replaced by the excitement over the scientific achievements of the age; television, microwave ovens, and the threat of nuclear annihilation brought the country into a brand new era of progress where the view was always focused into the future at an indistinct but optimistic and bright point on the horizon.

What I Done
by
Michael Leone

WHAT I DONE: MY LIFE AT GREEN HILLS, BY DARYL P. JONES
TRANSCRIBED AND EDITED BY GREGORY P. SANDERS
(University of Cincinnati Press, \$24.95)

There's been a spate of memoirs published in the past few years that concern the various tribulations of youth, for example: *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* by Dave Eggers (29 years old); *From the Anvil to the Ax: A Drawn and Quartered Life* by Bud Van Wert (24 years old); and *My Life Up to This (Not Very Sharp) Point* by Joshua Pankiewicz (16 years old), an emigrant Pole growing up in a New Hampshire asbestos mining town. While reception has been positive, if not laudatory, there have been those detractors who have claimed that these works and others like them are the products of a long-corrupted publishing industry intent on capitalizing on yet another blatant marketing trend, the *memoire juvenis*. What, Doubting Thomases spout, can a 29-year-old, a 24-year-old, or a 16-year-old possibly have to say that's worthwhile to the rest of us world-weary readers? Where is the wisdom, the strife, the sense of life-having-been-lived in these callow confessions?

Enter a new contender: *What I Done: My Life at Green Hills*, by Daryl P. Jones, published by University of Cincinnati Press. Mr. Jones, or "Little Daryl" as he is affectionately called, is an eight-year-old foundling, and you haven't seen such a foundling in literature since the pages of Dickens. The book has been transcribed and edited by Gregory P. Sanders, Ph.D., Infantile Cognition, University of Cincinnati, and is bound to intensify an already scorching debate. Mr. Sanders has painstakingly transcribed over 800 hours of taped conversations with Little Daryl, rendering the solecistic discourse of an eight year-old phonetically. Here is a typically fascinating passage:

Well... (pause)... Um... (pause)... Well, like James and then George would come into my room. We'd run around and play and stuff. I was that guy... (pause)... That guy... (pause) With the mask and the sword—Zarro?—and I made this cape out of... out of the shower curtain. I got in big trouble for that! You wouldn't of believed how mad Samantha got at me! (Little Daryl giggles) She told me she had to go out and buy a new one 'cuz I made it all wrinkled and stuff. It was so much fun, though!

The above excerpt concerns a comical albeit quotidian scene at Green Hills Home for Abandoned Children. In his foreword Mr. Sanders defends his editorial decisions:

The intention may be dubious to some critics. Why tell the story in Daryl's words at all? The answer, I hope the reader will discover, is that in order for the book to have any impact, it must be rendered through Daryl's eyes, and thus, through his language; otherwise the psychologist comes across as a ludicrous, pedantic mouthpiece. I understood this immediately when I began recording our discussions. Daryl's language is not typical for his age. I knew immediately that his was an astute, flavorful elocution. His descriptions of Dr. Dalton, for example, are almost poetic in their simplistic beauty: 'He was big. Really big. And kinda goofy.' What a travesty it would be to replace this language with a stuffy, antiseptic language of my own!

can imagine him running barefoot along a beach, two ruddy, smiling, loving parents by his side.

That is the Daryl the reader will take home in these pages: a frail, inquisitive boy who refuses to cry when would-be parents turn him down for yet another fellow orphan of the ward; a determined boy, who both smiles, shouts and bawls, sometimes within the passing of a paragraph, and is prone to alternating fits of gaiety and impudent outbursts of belching and flatulation.

I am a parent of two beautiful children, partake in the Big Brother program, and every year donate a handsome sum to Operation Santa, run by the U.S. Postal Service, but after reading *What I Done: My Life in Green Hills*, I became acutely aware that I simply wasn't doing enough. And therein lies the invaluable contribution of this important tome: praxis. It compelled me to act, this book, and I'm proud to say that my wife and I are currently negotiating a deal for three children with the National Adoption Agency.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sanders has moved on to even more exciting terrain. At the end of the book, he informs us of his next project: a transcription of the various sub-auditory sounds that fetuses make in the womb. Sanders insists that these are not "wholly inarticulate sounds but a kind of preconscious patois" that he is in the process of faithfully translating. "It's been a rough gestation period for Lyndsay," he writes of his test case, and "Scott, (the sonogram has proven it to be a boy), seems to have an awful lot to say about the matter. Well, let him talk, because I'll be listening!" If it doesn't seem crass, this reviewer would like to suggest a title: *My Life in Three Trimesters*.

Two of a Kind
by
Miriam N. Kotzin

. . - . . . -

Agnes leaned on the horn. She caught the eyes of the driver in the car ahead of her as he looked into his rear view mirror.

He raised his hand, flipping her the bird.

She tapped out F U in Morse code on the horn, the only useful skill remaining from all her years teaching civil defense in the fifties.

Young people today have no respect for the elderly.

. . - . . - - -

Eric slammed on his breaks. The woman behind him leaned on her horn.

It's a red light, lady.

He looked into his rearview mirror and exchanged glares with a Blue-Hair, barely able to see over her wheel.

Eric flipped the bird.

Damned if she didn't honk, spelling F U.

Where'd she learn Morse Code?

He beeped U 2, glad he remembered something from his years as an Eagle Scout.

Sick Note
by
Ryan Nemeth

Mrs. Walsh,

Please excuse my son Leonard from gym class today. He is suffering from a severe case of gingivitis. I am concerned that if aggravated by strenuous physical activity, his condition may escalate into something more serious, perhaps turning him into a mindless, flesh-eating corpse. You, of course, would refer to this sort of creature as a zombie, and I expect that you would try to kill him to avoid being gruesomely devoured alive. Or, maybe, you'd try killing him to avoid turning into a zombie yourself (as we all know, that's what happens when one is bit by a zombie but survives). As much as I understand that you, as a logical human woman, have very strong survival instincts and believe in self-defense, I can assure you that if you try killing Zombie Leonard, Principal Walters will hear from me. Leonard is still my son no matter how awful his oral hygiene may become.

Thank you,

Margaret Willstock

P.S. I thought your seminar on cholesterol and healthy springtime cooking was informative and entertaining. It was a perfect end to a busy weekend. My favorite part was the recipe you gave us for Zucchini Sunrise Chicken (Mr. Willstock cleaned his plate!)

Total Rapport
by
Victor Schwartzman

An eminent scholar once ate an extremely intelligent apple, which upon entering his stomach encountered a philosophical carrot. Having little else to occupy their time with, they entered into a discussion concerning the relationship of entities to one another. The carrot maintained that beings existed to work together, whereas the apple replied that each entity was independent of all others and became involved with another only when absolutely necessary.

A garrulous rutabaga fell into the debate, offering the viewpoint that an entity's life span is merely empty space between creation and death.

The apple used this remark to substantiate its argument.

So did the carrot.

Soon some string beans tossed their ideas into the lively debate. With so many intelligences at work, they came close to uncovering the ultimate interrelationships of all entities to one another when a swollen flood of beer washed them into the scholar's intestines, where they disappeared forever.

Moments of Randomness, Episode 2
by
Stephanie O'Donnell

Moments of Randomness

One day in science class, they taught us that we are all six people away from knowing everyone in the entire world.

In addition to that, we're all three people away from knowing everyone in the mafia.

We definitely learned a lot that day.



Contributor Biographies

Lao American poet **Bryan Thao Worra** has never been a superhero poet, but would one day like to be. His work has appeared in many places, including impromptu placemats, birdcages, and underneath steaming drinks of cheap hippies hitting on beautiful women without a chance in the world. He also keeps a website at <http://members.aol.com/thaoworra>. He also likes sea monkeys, hermit crabs and stroganoff.

David J. Dalley (aka David David) - (b1964) Now resides in the wilds of rural Sussex, UK having previously lived in Washington State, USA (by mistake). By day a landscape photographer and purveyor of photographic equipment; by night a writer of short fictional or semi-autobiographical stories and poetry, some of which has been published in print (miracles do happen). He collects toy robots, listens to Van Morrison and would very much like to get to know the Scottish BBC journalist/broadcaster Kirsty Wark. Well, who wouldn't? The poem "Stalker" is dedicated to her.

Jonathan Hayes says the following about himself: "After several wet salmon seasons in Alaska while working in a cannery, and hoboing along the Columbia River of Washington, until joining fruit tramps and migrant workers in the red delicious apple orchard, and then driving a John Deere tractor before sunrise on slippery-dewed grass of agrarian reform, the factotum ceased. Now a barnacle-covered hermit crab scurrying from class to sea lettuce in the tide pool of San Francisco State University, by the not-always peaceful Pacific littoral."

David Gaffney wrote this story on the back of a receipt from a late night video store using nothing but lotion.

Maude Khannes insists that the above text is 100% factual, and we at *Defenestration* would like to back up that claim. Weirder things have happened. The other day, Eileen gave birth to a healthy baby television. Babysitting is *easy*.

Michael Leone was born on a crab fishing boat on Kiawah Island, SC. When he was thirteen, he moved with his parents to an ashram in Costa Mesa, California. After being inculcated in the principles of the modern-day Hindu sect Kapalika, which included eating and drinking from the skull of a sacrificed person and following tantric practices such as munching on the flesh of the dead, and daubing themselves with the ashes of corpses, Leone turned away from the religion. He now studies the art of Panama hat weaving in Cuenca, Ecuador, where he resides. He has seventeen children.

Miriam N. Kotzin grew up in Vineland, NJ, practically in the shadow of the famous Palace of Depression, and she went on from there to write poetry and fiction. Not all of her work shows evidence of gloom, and, like the architect of that Palace, she finds beauty and utility in unlikely places. Or she may be baking a fabulous cheesecake. But when she isn't writing, she is usually teaching literature and creative writing and Drexel University, where she directs the Certificate Program in Writing and Publishing. She also writes fiction with Bill Turner. <http://miriamkotzin.tripod.com>

Ryan "The Bully" Nemeth gets into a lot of fights. He's currently studying at the Improv Olympic in Chicago and living at Bezo's house. One time when he was counting, he made it all the way to the highest number there is. Ladies: he's single and he's probably not a murderer! Contact Ryan at Nemethrp@xavier.edu

Victor Schwartzman says: "I have been writing since I was able to, and at 59 I'm finally sending my stuff out, having recovered from the many literary rejections of my teenaged years (I kept every single one, Freud could tell me why if he'd just get that damned cigar out of his mouth). Frankly, that someone other than myself will have the opportunity to read my stuff is both amazing and a little embarrassing. Normal bio stuff would add that I am married, have two kids, and work as a Human Rights Officer, but I'm not normal, so why should my bio be, and is a bio bee like a honey bee?"

Readers disturbed enough to like Victor's stuff should check out <http://weaklyherald.tripod.com>. The site features ten early chapters of a graphic novel about a community newspaper. Readers can download the chapters for free 'cause no one has said they'll pay for them.

Born and raised in New York, **Stephanie O'Donnell** created the character "Poley Polarity" when she was 10 years old. At age 15, she had the character copyrighted on the advice of her father, a full time artist who also was interested in cartooning in his youth. Recently, Stephanie has developed her characters into the comic strip "The Original Nutty Funsters", which ran during the 2004 summer edition of the K-State Collegian. Bill Watterson's "Calvin and Hobbes" is at the top of her list of major influences.