



LEAST LOVED POEMS BY A RELATIVE UNKNOWN
WHO'S PROBABLY NOT YOUR RELATIVE

Another motley collection of David M. Schwartz's poems

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Also by David M. Schwartz:

5/8 of Everything I've Written

"Ho-Ho", Said The Platypus and Other Snappy Titles

Amber Waves of Nausea

A Pickle for Bernice

Hey! I Just Write This Stuff

Winter Poems...More Snow In My Thoughts Than On Television

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Frenchman's Nightmare * September 5, 2005 © 2005 by David M. Schwartz

Oh, Canada Oh, Canada, come fight the British.

We tried to parlervoo the Francis and we're all feeling skittish.

Gather round the dogsled and watch the mouths gape.

The Jews call them blintzes, but we'll give you some crepes.

And while you are eating, the snow will be drifting by.

Then maybe by next August, you all will have thawed,

And look like prehistoric guys.

And while you are eating, the snow will be drifting by.

Then maybe by next August, you all will have thawed,

And look like prehistoric guys.

* This was written purely in jest, as a parody of the Jewish song "Oh Chanukah."

Bar-Code Blues September 5, 2005

Mmm... Got them bar-code blues.

Let me tell you 'bout 'em.

Got them bar-code blues,

They are such a problem.

When I send in rebates, or warranty my things,

Companies want the UPC codes,

but they print such small things!

I'm talkin' bar-codes, torn right in two.

I'm talkin' bar-codes, spindled and mutilated,

Giving me low-down blues.

Well, well, I tried to cut in a straight line.

Well, well, I didn't have to repeat kindergarten for the 5th time.

I have tried an Exacto and am lucky to have my fingers.

I jabbed myself when cutting, and the throbbing still lingers.

I have them bar-code blues! Mmm, mmm.

I have the blues in the morning, blues at noon.

My rebate better come, my reward arrive soon.

They may come from Phoenix, Young America or Bowling Green.

Their money isn't worth my effort, and I'm starting to feel mean.

Give me a B, hey-hey. Give me an A. Give me an R, C, O, D, E.

But nobody takes away these blues.



Ice Cream Cone After A Summer Storm September 28, 2005

I remember when we were kids.

During summer camp, we would be taken to the public pool.

I would wade best as possible, never being much of a swimmer.

Then, I'd bleach myself in the sun, ignoring later dangers.

Sometimes, the black clouds would roll,
eclipsing the sun, concentrating the rays.

The leaves would start to blow, baring their veins,
as they would turn white.

The nineties would drop 20 degrees,
and the horizon would turn charcoal grey.

Everyone scurried to the locker rooms,
to towel off, and be shepherded back to school.

The lightning flickered, flashed near the water,
but we were safe, insulated on buses from the storm.

We would be kept inside school for kickball,
released to parents' carpool after a hard day of play.

We'd change clothes at home, drying off and warming up.

We'd wait for dinner, listening as the thunder would fade.

I remember eating Chapman's strawberry swirl ice cream
out of waffle cones, though I liked sugar cones.

Another Coffee Freakout September 28, 2005

I never found salvation in any kind of dope,
indulgence of food,
or drinking binge.

There's been no chance of passion for me.
Nothing has seemed to help me cope,
nor self-medication from large mochas.

My head rarely throbs, my heart doesn't pound in my throat.
At least not today, but I am ready to crawl under my desk.
Almost like clockwork, time seems to stop.
Why won't the world move along at my pace? Why can't I nap?

My mind races, and there is nowhere I want to be.
Even prayers seem to go unheeded, at least in my imagination.
But I feel like an imitation of myself,
caught involuntarily on the set of a silent, slow motion movie.
Do you ever stop like I do?
Do you ever touch your arm or head,
to ensure you still have a body, not just a disembodied brain?
Do you ever wonder like me,
if the rest of the world is dead, or maybe you are half gone?

I don't get the shakes now.
I can't stomach food, but hope 4 burritos might sate me.
Even when I have quit coffee, I am not any slower.
Just like a tv show, I might explode or collapse if I slow down.
Yet I might just try it for a week.

Court Date September 28, 2005

Before You sentence me, please let me plead my case.

Your Honor, I beg your mercy.

Give me two minutes to account for my life.

I plead guilty, seeing all evidence is stacked against me.

But please don't give me over to death, don't let Your sentence be harsh.

Here I am, I don't even have defense counsel. None would represent me.

Sure, I know what I've done wrong, and then some.

I studied a little law, probably not enough to try my case. But try, I have.

It's not like I have excuses. You've tracked my every move,
since I've stood here before.

You already know about my less than altruistic community service attempts, charitable donations.

You already know .

Aside from trying to beat my rap, hide my very thoughts,
here we are again.

I give up. I want another chance, but each year I have these hearings.

What shall I say before You? I just shrug sometimes,

because my fate is in my hands as much as Yours.

That's about it, I can't say that I am sorry enough.

I await Your judgement.

Tent October 6, 2005

You are cloaked in light as with a garment,
meanwhile I shade myself with my prayer shawl.
I come to Your house, hoping to meet You early
before everyone else, before anyone else can watch me this way.
It's been twenty long years that I have been writing
the same lament, with awkward praises to You.
You'd think by now I'd get it right,
but I guess I won't, that's okay too.

So I stand here, enwrapped in this large cloth,
seeking solace, strength to face myself, much less the day.
I start crying, knowing all too well so much waste, so much sin.

What do I know? I I can't begin to speak.
There were too many lost opportunities, too many words.
If I wasn't learning, I was striving after my wage,
or else I thought I was doing something worthwhile,
losing skills as quickly as I learned them.

I can't even calculate the minutes,
the dollars that went any place, but where they should.
Surely if You are watching me,
You must grimace, not being able to bear what is so plain.

So I stand here crying underneath this tent,
ashamed yet relieved for this silent moment.
Would someone meet me now,
They'd stare at me like a burnt out van,
long abandoned down the side of a ditch.
Would someone meet me,
they might turn away, seeing me as I do.

My wails are silent but they could fill this hall.
My tears could water Jerusalem, if I only cried them
with pure intent, not selfishness.
But I am stricken,
caught between two homes, barred from both.
I don't make myself welcome anywhere,
since others don't know, they couldn't understand.

How long, G-d? Before I finish this rant?
How long before I wake from this state, exhausted
after heaving this load from off my chest?
I fear plenty more than others would know,
and I don't dare speak what I find in front of me.
What few friends I have, they would cast me out,
not wanting to know what I do,
as if heresy might be contagious.

How I pray or where doesn't even matter now,
or does it to You?
It just seems to matter as long as I do.
What little sense I can make from Your law, and the prayer books,
still I hope it will kindle something after all.

I won't let others see me,
they would not believe what's left of me.
Tear streaked cheeks or fasting,
I lay before You as a gift. Please take them, I can't use them anymore.
My tent is crumpled, with me underneath.
It is hot under here, but I could let the world pass by.
They could tear this building down, with me inside. I would not mind.
You could take the stones and bones, and start anew, someone should.

Restless October 6, 2005

“Blessed is the church service makes me nervous.” Paul Simon from the song “Blessed”
* Church, synagogue, no difference here! ;-)

I can't sit or stand still
while the world buzzes outside.
The children shriek out there, but I am too old to join them.
I am too lazy to tell them to be quiet.

I feel stuck in here, of my own choosing.
I am curious to find out how long I can last
or how long this day will go.

Prayers on the holidays aren't the same to me.
I can hear a ram's horn but it doesn't stir,
nor wake me like it should. I can't wake up,
it's like a hood over my head. Who'll take it off?

I used to feel awe and fear.
Now I am tired, and don't even care for beer.
My senses are betraying me.
I wish I had some resolution
since no reading interests me,
and I can't force myself to feel much of anything.

Even if I went home,
the story would be the same.
I can't sleep, and I can't eat,
and my thoughts are like nothing.
They are too much of junk, and I can't concentrate.

What I wouldn't give for some wonderment.
How the world seemed bright and new like spring
despite decay of fall.
It was simple then, when deeds meant something.
Now I have my doubts. I can't turn back time,
and I wouldn't know how to skip ahead to any good parts.
G-d, get me through. Why won't You?

Presence October 8, 2005

“You open Your hand, and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” Psalm 145 verse 16.

“G-d is close to the brokenhearted; and those crushed in spirit He saves.” Psalm 34 verse 19

I stare around me,
people weave and bob in prayer.
They whisper, mutter, raise their arms to You.
I finish my prayers, and stand quietly
looking up and past them at the light streaming through.

I close my eyes and can almost feel the heat,
the halo of sweat on my skull. I can almost touch the Wall.
It remains, cool, indifferent, permanent despite all the battles fought.

I open my eyes to see how prayers are progressing.
I can't stay with the others, I must read ahead to have a moment for myself.
Sometimes, all I can do is follow myself, not the congregation.
The direction and absorption are just not there.

For right now, all I want is a brief minute of eternity, like the light streaming through.
I close my eyes again, to block out as well as block myself in.
So, I throw my prayer shawl over my head, and create my own womb.

Modern Music October 10, 2005

I'm raging for no reason except music.
This is all for show so life imitates my stage presence.
Do you know what it's like
to bathe in the venomous juice of chilies,
to feel unnecessary pain?
I do it for fun after my desk job.

I've got meat in my teeth. I've got meat in my teeth, but it's only soy.
Spit is running down my cheek during my temper tantrum.
Now, I'll shave my head to get on MTV.
I've been told I'm imbecilic, but gee, I don't know.
All my information comes from commercial radio, and even it tells me so.

If I were on stage, they'd tell me to act my age.
But I don't need parody, when I've got the reality show deal.
You can't blame me for my alternative music songs.
I'm the product of a white, Euro-centric, male-dominated,
Western liberal Democratic upbringing with self-esteem issues.
Why can't I get federal funding from the NEA?

Don't tell me I'm stupid. I hate you cause I can do that myself.
No one can touch me for writing insipid drivel in the dark.
All I want is to out-do Macarthur Park.

My Inner Beast October 11, 2005

My name is David, like my grandfather before me.

I share my namesake with a king, though my crown's tilted most of the time.

I'm a lot like another David on tv, played by Bill Bixby.

I wasn't meant to be a nuclear physicist like Dr. Banner,
nor was a freakish chromosomal mishap my fate.

My eyes don't contract, my skin doesn't turn green.

I have never busted buttons on my shirt or ripped sleeves.

I'd be a dynamo if I could have that energy,

but I would use my strength for good and empower myself.

An ox I'd replace plowing fields, trim some trees barehanded.

Perhaps, I'd clear some landfills.

Everyday, I wrestle my inner beast. He's bigger than me.

No one would believe he's there, or they might shun us. I'd have to run.

My hulk hasn't been calmed by booze, books, reading or prayer.

The walks and bike rides, the music and food don't quell the rage.

He hasn't been provoked or escaped in at least a week.

I don't want to let him out. I don't want a Lou Ferrigno look-alike near me.

Small pets and kids would be scared even by what's inside.

Nothing's tamed me, but I can't kill the both of us off.

Maybe time will tell. Still, Mr. McGee wouldn't like me when I'm angry.

Post-Apocalypse October 15, 2005

Nobody needs a car or gas anymore.

No more fights over oil, nor even any bread lines.

All the helicopters and planes are grounded.

Don't call this place a ghost-town. Down the road is just as bad.

There's no clean water, but a few people still try to bathe.

Sometimes, they go to the river.

Just last week, a small group apparently had enough.

Then decided not to come back up from their contest holding their breath.

No one bothered to search for them, or give them proper burial.

It's hard not to laugh when one thinks of tv, appliance sales, especially email.

It's all gone. Generators failed.

People can't handle the heat or cold, they don't bother trading.

They just hope the food doesn't run out, and that they don't get looted.

No one cares about any news, much less gossip.

Even the newshounds are fending for themselves, unable to make sense of devastation.

But at least no one is complaining about fashion.

Back in the days of settlers and cave-dwellers,

they knew how to make do. They didn't know they didn't have,

so they didn't know that they did without.

Now, people forget how to open a can, or to conserve matches and candles.

All at once, wouldn't it be nice to wake-up from the dream?

Wouldn't it be great to shake oneself off and resume life?

But we'll do the same tomorrow, and the one after that,

until we learn how to compromise, maybe pool resources rather than cannibalize.

Maybe one day we'll learn.

Hands Raised October 15, 2005

Nobody pays attention anymore.

The man comes and goes, smiles to himself.

He trembles, saying his blessing

while he wraps himself in his prayer shawl.

He nods to others as he leans back and forth.

In meditation, he barely whispers, arms clutching prayerbook.

In the middle of the service,

he puts his prayer book down, and outstretches his arms.

His hands are raised like Moses in front of a battle.

Some old-timers think angels hold his up, while Moses had help.

It's hard to hear him, but he says the same thing every day about this time.

One would maybe take a hint from him, maybe even G-d. Who's to know?

Eventually, maybe his tears will fill the ocean, yet he smiles and shrugs.

For all anybody knows, he's having convulsions.

Yet, he always seems genial after services.

If you heard him, you'd piece it together like the rest of us.

"G-d, why don't we reason together, Old Friend?

How about starting the world over, maybe getting it a bit better?

I'm happy to help. I can't complain, but there's things I'd change.

You've provided my every need, my job, my food, my roof.

There's nothing I lack, not friends or health. I give up.

I surrender completely, I trust Your design. (This is about where he smiles, but sobs).

Just please be merciful, Merciful One? What do you say?"

The Math Test Excuse October 15, 2005

I was there that day, when Slimy Ditchard came to class.

I will never forget what the teacher said, and why they called him Slimy.

His real name was Richard Ditchard, but he loved to play with pipes.

He took after his dad, a plumber, trying to help out around the house.

As a result, his hands got sort of grimy, the kind of dirt that wouldn't come out.

One day, we had a math test,

the scourge of every fifth grader, who didn't want to get held back.

Slimy came to class late, trudging slowly from the bathroom.

As much as he was dirty, he brushed his teeth three times a day.

No one seemed to like him, but I tried to understand.

After all, I wasn't useful, so plumbing seemed sort of handy.

Mrs. Fishmold glared at him, as he took his seat in back.

She summoned him to the front, told him it better be good this time.

Slimy is not what you'd call an over-achiever.

She'd she made it known that day.

"Class, look who joined us! We have a special guest!

What have you been doing with yourself, Mr. Ditchard?"

"Gee, Mrs. Fishmold, I-I-I'm sorry that I'm late.

But I can't take the math test today. I can't write well."

He kicked the floor and looked down, his slimy hands behind his back.

She called him a liar, and he said "It's not like that.

I was brushing my teeth and spit out a raisin.

See, I had raisin bran for breakfast.

So, I'm minding my own business, brushing my teeth,

And a raisin went down the drain, to join a lot of muck.

I turned off the water after rinsing the sink.

The water kept rising, the raisin must've gotten stuck.

But I knew what to do, my dad showed me. So I stuck my finger down,
and tried to pull it out.

I tried to wash it down, Mrs. Fishmold, and that water is extra strong when it's cold."

Then he pulled his hands out from his back and held up his right one.

Three of his fingers got stuck in the ring from the sink drain.

On the other end was the raisin in a gob of hair.

"See, I told you I tried, but even junior plumbers have trouble sometimes."

Then, he looked like he was half between crying and grinning, in a dopey nervous sweat.

Just then, no one would have thought about it, nobody would believe.

She sat up in her chair laughing. Her face turned red, and she started shaking.

Mrs. Fishmold couldn't believe it.

"Richard, that is one of the stupidest stunts I've seen in my entire life!

I can't believe it. If you weren't so pitiful, I would get out a knife,
and pry your fingers out myself or cut them off.

Go try to rub some soap on your fingers, try to slide your fingers out.

Go march to the bathroom, do not linger.

I hope you other children won't do this."

We just looked at Slimy, and shook our heads,
then even she forgot about the test.

Out of all the kids, I liked Slimy the best.

Stewing October 17, 2005

People tend to ask me,
where I get the ideas for my poetry.
I tell them it's from heaven, or sometimes a trip through hell,
but mostly it's a process, like making stew.

My poems bubble to the surface,
after slow cooking inside my head.
Sometimes, the ingredients are gathered quickly,
but sometimes shopping for ideas takes days.
When the time is right, and I've chopped and diced words and feelings,
The stew bubbles over and the top comes off – then I know it's done.

I'm less a man sometimes, than a can of tomatoes or kidney beans.
I throw in humor like green peppers or onions to make you cry.
Instead of meat, I use soy, but it's not symbolic of much.
If you don't like it, don't read this recipe.

I always spice the stew with a turn of the phrase,
since my head's usually been stewing for days and days.
Sometimes I don't rhyme, and don't waste a pun.
Once in awhile, I will sample from music or even the Bible.
I serve up something less than red pottage, but it's liable not to even rhyme.

Come on inside. Let me serve you.
My creation doesn't always taste good, but let it cool.
It will still make you full.

Black Holes October 19, 2005

I've recently read that black holes
aren't as bad as they seem to be.

They may even help give birth to stars.

But that doesn't account for White Castle burgers reaching critical mass.

It doesn't explain mis-matched socks or fairly successful blind dates,
from whom I've never heard again.

Somewhere past the moon, is a vortex waiting for me.

No sound escapes, and I've lost radar on my inner spaceship of my dreams.

In fact, on most days, only muted blips and screams can be heard on the horizon.

There is no light in there, much like in memories of college.

Like that time when....see what I mean?

If you are lying awake pondering the cosmos, I'm sorry if I've confused you.

Even if I have, read on.

Approaching G-d October 29, 2005

I come before You,
having been selected to start the morning prayers.
Somebody had to do it.
I am not all that shocked that it was my turn.

I feel small, feeble before Your presence.
Yet, I try to muster courage, and raise my voice.
I try to sound both strong and sweet, like cantors of old,
and men in color-less photos of pure speech.

I am not like the High Priest on the Day of Atonement.
I have not read and practiced the day's order of sacrifices.
Nor do I know Your correct name to utter in the Holy Of Holies.
G-d, I am relieved that I can call on You at all, despite my blemishes.

The High Priest would do the slaughter,
then splash the blood with his index finger.
He would count "one and one, one and two", up and down, seven times.
Instead, I have to count "one one-thousand, two one-thousand", sometimes up to twenty,
just to slow my prayers.

People complain that I read too slowly, most say I read too fast.
Yet, I don't hear them respond "Amen" as they talk to their neighbors,
or volunteer to start the prayers in my stead.

I can't win as I stand before You, G-d.
They don't know how my mind races,
and I barely know how to exalt You.
But long ago, You said that the prayer of our lips
should replace the sacrificial bulls.
You have not consumed me from within for offering strange fire
through the recitation of Psalms of Praise.
That amazes me daily.

I do not wear bells on my clothes.
Nobody seems to realize that I am relieved.
I return to my seat unscathed, much like the High Priest returned home.
Yet I have no wife nor family for whom to atone, just myself.
The list of my sins remains a mile long.
So when I approach You alone or for others, it is with trepidation.

Apparently, You accepted the community's prescribed prayers, which I offered.
I was not ashamed because of them, but I wonder if they would be ashamed of me,
as much as I feel sometimes.
Still, I can't help but wonder, if the congregation really knew what I thought,
or how I felt, would they want me to be their representative, for even 20 minutes?
Would my innermost thoughts be like theirs?
Would You even heed me, that I merit an "Amen?"

Jerusalem Stone October 29, 2005

I was chipped off a great rock many years ago.

Men have cut me to use for gate markers,

I have been anointed with ever-fresh oil, to serve as a temporary altar.

Dreamers have rested their heads,

offered sacrifices, grounded olives underneath my brother and sister rocks.

Erosion has colored me.

It has polished and painted me,

and rinsed off the desert dust.

People have taken little pebbles, much like my essence or my bones.

They put them in gardens or use them for jewelry.

Other types of marbles have been used as rings, or in breastplates.

Long have I been here, tried and tested.

Patient, am I. There's no reason not to be.

So, go ahead and move me if you can. Grind me to dust to blow to the seas.

Pulverize me like powder, and I will still be plentiful as the stars.

Though I am one stone, I may be dispersed. Yet, I remain one with all.

In My Hokey Dream November 8, 2005 In honor of Brent Kornblum's 40th birthday.
Inspired by the song "Big Rock Candy Mountain"

On a warm November night,
free from rain and fright,
I dreamt of Eastern European peasants, and how they start their day.
They tried to make breakfast,
Overcoming their environment most unpleasant.

As they rolled and mixed their oats,
They would wear their coats.
The serfs would stir in their water or milk,
Their gruel wasn't smooth as silk.
Instead, they let it toughen then they fried it up.
The oats would be used like cake or bread,
and in their tummies, the stuff would sit like lead,
washing it down with mud, at the bottom of the coffee cup.

The landlords harassed them,
Roughing them up and causing problems,
They'd take the girls for marriage,
But the maids would have to walk behind the carriage,
Yet none would suffer any harm,
In my hokey dream.

It could be Hungary or the Appalachian mountains,
from places to faces and rootbeer fountains,
My imagination tends to skip,
But I don't tend to nip,
Unless someone else is buying.

Give me my guitar and my C harp,
We already know my songs are warped,
You can sing deeper than me,
And play clawhammer banjo.
I don't look good in overalls,
Because people think that I eat clay.
But poetry keeps me from climbing walls,
Or drinking fermented hay.

I started writing this little song,
Thinking of nonsense words so very wrong.
Making up words for starch-laden greasy food,
Because I am a bluegrass loving wacky dude,
In my very own hokey dream.

How The Wind Does Howl November 12, 2005

How the wind does howl,
it's a high wind in Missouri.
How the wind does howl,
it's warm now but going to freeze.
If you walk alone like I do,
you'll know it's not just a breeze.

The leaves and branches, they are blasted.
They must be trembling with fear.
The leaves and branches all are shaking.
They fall broken to the ground this time each year.
If the wind blows any stronger,
It would make many a great man shed a tear.

I hear the rain's coming this evening,
Maybe it will cleanse the earth.
I hear the rain's coming this evening,
And nature will prove its worth.
Don't you know that I am grateful for my shelter,
And that I can pull the covers to my ears?

How that wind does moan,
About as much as when I was young.
Listen to it whistle,
Blowing unearthly notes ears do not know.
If brick and wood were wiped away,
I'd be feeling mean and low.

I don't have much reason for this poem.
It doesn't have much point.
I don't have much focus,
But when I walked, the words simply flowed.
The wind's blowing at my back,
Pushing me back home on up the road.

Cookie SteinStein December 23, 2005

This may be the dumbest tale you ever heard,
related in a dream by a bird.

The bird kept hitting a window so it wasn't right,
yet it sang this refrain throughout the night.

Cookie Steinstein, Cookie Steinstein
She was so keen, her food so fine.

Well, Cookie's name was Sarah, she was born in Poland.
She came over here a young girl with only a coat.
She married herself a man named Fishel.
He was a sailor, but had not a boat.

Fishel and Sarah, they worked side by side,
Peddling and scrounging, until one day he up and died.
Sarah was left alone at 23, so she could go where she chose.
Yet, she was not free.
She had Shmuel and Yitzie, her 4 yr old twins,
so she worked from her home, and let no one in.

She'd bake for the rich and give to the poor.
Though she had nothing, she always felt she had more.
One day, her neighbors came around, asking to help her get a store off the ground.
Sarah refused for a week, but she relented.
She was too excited to speak.

She'd knead and she'd roll, she'd mix and she'd bake.
She'd make the best bread and butter cake.
Her nickname came from her leftover dough,
which she'd make into cookies, and to children she'd throw.

She'd offer to neighbors and landlord to try,
who wanted the recipes but she said "Secrets you cannot buy."
They brought restaurant plans, but she said "I don't know",
then she agreed, then she did smile.

Cookie Steinstein, Cookie Steinstein
She was so keen, her food so fine.

At her place she met a suitor who sat all the while.
Ben Steinstein was the name but she got it confused.
Think fine, not mean, - to this she got used.
They raised the kids, and toiled together,
reinventing leftovers from the old country.
They catered noodle kugels and pickled their schnitzel.

"Pickled schnitzel, pickled schnitzel", on the street he would cry.
"For a dollar, you surely must try!"

She sent him to bring business from Irish and Jew,
The Italians loved her, the Romanians too.
She'd stay in the kitchen but the patrons would roar

“Let us meet our kind hostess who opened her door.”

“Cookie SteinStein, Cookie SteinStein, we love you so.

Bake us more cookies, you’re a genius with dough.”

Cookie retired, Shmuel and Yitzie took over the trade.

They learned to cater and market the success they parlayed.

They’d cry out on the street time to time

“Cookie SteinStein, Cookie SteinStein, we love the sound of the words!

Cookie SteinStein, CookieSteinStein, what a genius with dough!”

Head Cold December 27, 2005

Thoughts are a muddy pool,
melding with the iridescent oil of generic flu pills.
It shimmers around my undulating skull.

Do not attempt to reach me.
Your words cannot be heard.
I am three locked doors away from you inside my head.
You are on the other side of a mountain, or so it seems.
Go ahead and scream. I am far too numb to be startled.

Have you ever awakened early enough for work, yet you feel late?
Have you managed to wander home in your stupor, half asleep eight hours later?
Are you like me in wondering where the time went at 5:30 pm?
Such has been the quality of my week.

I cough from deep inside, but my chest isn't lighter or less filled.
The sound comes from above and outside me.
The medicine just wearies me, worsening symptoms.
How I wish that I could sacrifice my \$97.52 per day
for the sake of 4 hours extra sleep, sloppy clothes, and no customer abuse.
Though I am sick, I always rest more heavily, more warmly.
The disconnect from my head doesn't bother me at all.
If I could, I'd visit my brain in its cave, where it seems to be hiding.

The orange juice came too late.
Water passes but it doesn't phase me,
or wash out this self-inflicted bug.
My self-imposed quarantine will make for a quiet New Year.
Once again, I will laugh at my foolishness,
Falling fast asleep as my nose runs like an infant.

Out For The Evening January 12, 2006

There are times that I sit in my car,
on the way to a happy hour.
I pull over and pause, shaking, sobbing.

There I assess my blessings and curses,
whether I have disgraced my family,
whether I have any fortitude for such events.
Wiping away the tears, I tell myself to suck it up.
At least I have places to go, people to see,
however dubious situations seem.

At my destination, I buy myself the usual,
hoping my smile is tight enough, my armor strong, too.
I make the rounds, but have nothing to say.
There's not much I want to hear either,
though a few people I could happily avoid.

The ones I want to meet walk away,
I can't even throw a smile.
Both genders look at me, as I do them.
Imagine looking in the mirror and there's a crater,
where your head should be. Yes, that's you. It's me, too.
No drink or bad dream can wash it away.

I recede more into my room as you do,
slouching toward my 39th year.
Are we merely aging hipsters,
shot out of the wrong time and wrong place?
Do you wake up with cotton mouth hangover,
knowing that you are not invincible, too tired to keep up the facade?
Here, I thought it was only me.

Patriots? January 22, 2006

You go after towelheads, the olive skinned too.
You don't know one from the other,
trying to find the leaders, hoping you get a clue.

You set up pawns, telling our boys and girls how we must stay.
You buy off the country, screaming "war must be waged."
It's been over 4 years, their deputies still arise.
They multiply like a cancer, and can walk free without a disguise.
You say you know their faces,
but they don't need one when they blow themselves up.

How many promised virgins will mitigate hell?
Will the Church send knights to Jerusalem again,
since it worked so well long ago?
Will Jacob's angel defeat Esau's,
and will it take more than prayers?

You may say I'm a heretic, a traitor too.
No one can make me believe this is all for my good,
that my government must watch me,
as if I wish they should.

What type of security will it take at home and abroad?
I feel bad for our navy and infantry,
so how come no one is free?
We fought the Krauts, the Reds, and now even ourselves?
Taught to spy and be spied upon,
we sell out our civil rights, and that's wrong.
Instead of fighting one war, we find ourselves losing ten.

Our leaders are married to business,
up to their eyeballs in sin.
They sold their children for votes and for gold.
Now justice is rigged, will anybody ever win?

Food = Morphine January 31, 2006

Do you wake as I do,
with muffled cries or mumbling,
thanking G-d for restoring your soul,
but already asking more questions than the day has minutes?

Do you wake craving that special something,
a taste different than your normal cereal or bagel.
Are you numb enough to get through the day?

Though I have my coffee before prayers,
I am neither awakened nor anesthetized.
As I start work I realize that the absence of emotion
is not cessation from pain,
and the muffin I bought is no needle delivering sedative.
G-d didn't give me a generic substitute for emotional morphine.
Though I want one most days.

Big Hearted Bumpkin February 1, 2006

*I heard two songs in my head simultaneously, which inspired this poem: Elvis Presley singing "Mystery Train" and the Beatles' "And Your Bird Can Sing." It seems that the train ran down the bird.

I wake up every morning,
dress in a favorite shirt, bowtie and slacks.
Then I'm out the door ready to love, I'm ready to love.

If I could, I'd watch the squirrels
in the park as they play.
They'd tell you I'm ready to love.

People whisper behind my back
that I don't play with all my cards.
They say I'm not the sharpest knife in the set.
So I don't cut cards with them at all.
I've got no need for their hate at all.

Why should it be that I can't be friendly
to those I meet and wave at them?
It's a simple act of love, if they know how to love.

The world may be hard and filled with dark,
but it can only get worse if people don't give.
Every day I act pleasant, add a little more kindness,
then maybe I can put the gloom behind us.

They may say that I appear stupid,
with my walking stick and cowboy hat,
but certain props keep me happy on my path,
how I enjoy walking down my path.

I'm not ignoring the world. Nor am I unaware of inhumanity.
But I wish that people could just one day be cheerful,
just like me, full of love. Why not act with love?David's Garden Poem May 14, 2006

Hello little ivy, grow, grow, grow.
Don't decay! No! No! No!
I hope that you spread and make the front lawn nice,
but that you don't become food for bunnies and mice.
Please fill out the ivy beds lush and thick,
some sun and water with lots of love will do the trick.

Hello little flowers, grow, grow, grow.
I hope that you avoid the squirrels and birds.
I've put in energy to plant you, I hope that you stay strong.
With a few plant spikes, you can't go wrong.

When I can, I will sprinkle and hose you.
I will encourage you with a soft voice.
I will stand here to see how pretty you've all become.
Bring bright colors to cheer my day.
Blossom big and wide before you turn moldy and gray.

Epilogue July 7, 2008

Why save my comments until the end,
when I can stick them in close to the middle?
Why wait for wood to bend,
when you can hit it with a cast iron griddle?

My poetry may be happy or sad,
It may make you angry or glad.
Honestly, that's not my problem.
The writing makes me feel good
but it's better to have family and friends with whom to share.
If you're turned away, I'll be okay just the same.

I've thought and thought.
I thought and I will write some more.
Just as long as I don't become a bore to myself.
Excuse me while I nap to calm down from all this excitement.

People say I should be a writer,
but I don't see it as an honest living,
wearing tweed jackets, going to conventions,
giving autographs like a prize fighter.
That might take effort, travel, and money I don't have.
So I will write for free. Does that work for you?

Workplace Woes May 18, 2006

I read the paper way too much,
can no longer listen to the news.
My imagination takes over my sleep,
when I read about some former employees,
going off on a rampage.
Then, somehow, I twist my way into their thoughts.

They never meant to turn out this way,
they never thought it through, they claim.
But they saw no other solution than to bring someone else down,
to make them feel their pain.

Words don't describe the fury, the pills and booze don't quell the racing thoughts.
Nobody knows the power of their strength,
when they unleash their hurt upon the world.
Nor can they channel their frustration.
You might read that they gave up, but it's not altogether true.

I wonder about my own job some days.
Will I make it home okay, or meet up with my double
who's got a gun and a gripe?

My neighbor in the cubicle one row over
looks a lot like me: darting eyes, sunken shoulders,
mumbling to himself.
He wonders if today he'll get sacked for trying too hard at his job,
lingering too long with customers.
Yet, he smiles wanly on approach.
He eats alone all the time, stopping to write private notes to himself.

Am I at all like him, both hunter and quarry, shooter or victim?
Am I a master of impotent rage, nowhere to banish these noontime demons?
I, too am afraid to speak lest they lock me up for my thoughts.
Yet I am far too tired, too timid to raise a finger against myself nor anyone.

The bosses want quality and quantity on our calls,
but people can't be measured in minutes,
tears can't fill the ocean. Mine come close at work.
There's nowhere else to turn.
I don't read the news at work anymore. I'm sad enough.

Toothpick Crutch May 18, 2006

How long will it take until you stop sinking?
You're grasping for straw and sand each day you age.
Your money is slipping from your reach,
as if will buoy you for the future.

You cling to the illusion that more skills bring more money,
that the people you call friends will help you network for a networking job.
But you know that's a lie. No one else is deceived but you.

How many more books will you read and return,
thinking enlightenment or a simple clue are at hand?
How many more chocolate chip cookies will temporarily sate
your larger hunger? They only taste sweet a second, but you hate yourself afterward.
How many more prayers go unanswered?

You tell yourself you will exercise after work,
that you will sweat out your frustration, feel what it means to live.
But you don't. You sit there, slumping in front of the tv,
checking for email that won't come.

Do you think you can walk straight like a man,
in and out of a job you don't like?
What will you lean on to make it through the day?
Do you think that all your books and training
could ever be as strong as a toothpick crutch?

Note to the Reader: Sometimes, I am not always as dour. In fact, I am mostly harmless but biting and cynical.
See the next poem!

Are You A Call Center Employee?

(A very loose parody of "Are You Experienced" by Jimi Hendrix) June 1, 2006

If these people keep calling
one after another incessantly
I can't document their calls or give them case numbers.
My boss will be coming after me.
But first, I need to reboot my own computer,
I need to put the customer on hold.

Well, I know that this job is holding me down,
but with out any I would cry.
I want to hang up on some of these fools,
I forget why they call, and I was once like them.
The day-traders think they are a gift to the world,
and my life revolves around them.
They refuse to reboot their network connection,
and blame their ignorance on me.
So, are you a call center employee?
Have you ever been utterly abused?
Well,I have. It's almost amusing and predictable.

The only good thing from this experience,
is that I can deal with all types of people.
I can take some stories home,
but you can only liken it to retail in December.
I can hear company security coming for me,
because I wrote down these thoughts.
Ohh, but are you a call center employee?
Have you ever been a call center employee?
Not necessarily stoned but sedated.

Prayer While Driving To Work June 14, 2006

At synagogue, I rush through prayers
trying to get out early to rush to work.
I chuckle at the irony that I pray for my livelihood,
and the ability to provide for my family.
I give thanks for the daily results, not yielding large positive gains.

Then, I get stuck in early morning highway traffic.
It gives me time to think, not even caring if I listen to music.
Shudders come over me once a week, just like now.
Guilt grips me for being weak, less stoic than family and friends.
There's nowhere to turn but up.

I wonder about G-d's view of me some days.
I shake holding the wheel, crying, moaning a low scream.
Only my Maker has the plan, as I beseech mercy for me and mine.
I offer thanks and praise for the ability to work, these few minutes of release.

G-d, are You satisfied with my trials?
What about my offering of heart and lips, though I might seem an ingrate?
Will you consume me for offering strange fire in the car?
Will you burn me up inside, getting it over with, leaving my shell intact?
I can't speak to anyone about these thoughts. Only You understand me.

I can offer and murmur, cry and shout.
Here are my tears, like decorated baskets of first fruits.
Days like these, I have nothing left.
Still thanks for the strength to suck it up,
to keep myself together at work long enough for me not to cry.
As I pull into my parking spot, I leave You for awhile,
spent but tranquil.

Riding The Breeze June 14, 2006

Yesterday, I thought I saw a roasted chicken
fall out of the back of a Ford F-150.
It floated up in the air, tumbling, twisting.
Then, I realized it was a plastic bag. What a let down.
Not often chickens float on highways,
hovering in the morning rush hour.

How glad I was! My mind distracted from daily toil!
Then, I wondered what it would be like if I were that bag, or maybe a leaf.
Yes! A leaf with a brain and sensory organs.
What sights and sounds, what a sensation being aloft!

My days would require no effort, just blowing or resting.
I might have to duck from a heat source or lawnmower.
But being run over wouldn't be so bad,
it may suffice for a chiropractic adjustment.

I might see large parts of the region,
but my reverie would be cut short.
I have no way to measure distance,
much less the scale of a back yard to the world.

No, I would not be caught while raking.
Non-violent resistance is all it takes, to stay out of the burner or compost.
All, I have to do is let go, riding the breeze.
I could mock the earth and the puny men, at least before I fall.

I would be cold in winter, stuck in the mud,
or to a tree, the loner that would not drop.
I might nestle in a pile, but I wonder if I would be warm.
If I surrender my isolated feelings, my pain
I would still be thrashed and beaten, ground down.
But I would have served my purpose,
to fertilize a hosta or jonquil, or to cover a dormant tulip.

Traffic isn't so bad,
with a 68 degree temperature,
jazz on the radio. My head's in the cloud's
or at least well above my car.
Oh to be a leaf, riding the breeze.

The Chimp Cheer June 19, 2006 * Here's proof that I probably do need more sleep!

They're happy and they're wild.
They're playful like a child.
If you want to train one, you can't be a wimp.
Give me a C-H-I-M-P, that spells chimp!

Go Chimps!

Goat Song February 11, 2007 *See definition below.

I just turned 40 yesterday, found myself looking around.

Taking stock has gotten easier, so I've found.

Not much has changed since high school, though I don't fit clothes as well.

I know as much as I knew then, just more of the same, though I thought I knew it all.

That's okay, it's to be expected.

I have the same bemused look on my face, for a solid 22 years.

People may think I need to check in an asylum,

but for all they know, I'm just checking them out.

It's a little irritating, I haven't lost it yet.

The jobs have changed, and friends I've called.

The names start to blur, but so do the words.

Can you tell I've fallen from the poetry game?

Despite my age, I feel 15 years younger.

I'm cautious, but willing to take on the day.

At work, I feel a little scorn, tired of my waste of talent.

In love, I don't feel much at all.

I've learned to subdue myself for my career,

I've become a lot more reserved these 40 years.

I don't look too far ahead,

I'm trying to stay in the moment.

Thoughts are fleeting, like coffee shops or storefronts.

So I don't get used to much, and have less disappointments.

I feel like the world's my stage, but all I get is goat cheese.

It may be nice for an appetizer, but it doesn't meet my needs.

Sometimes I stay up too late,

like I'm sure I'll do again.

I will play throughout the night on guitar not Pan flute.

Then I'll throw my head back, chuckle at my own vanity.

My life's not some goat song, but sometimes makes as much sense as squirrels chattering.

*From Wikipedia.org: The word's origin is Greek tragōidiā (Classical Greek τραγωδία) contracted from trag(o)-aoidiā = "goat song" from tragos = "goat" and aeidein = "to sing". This meaning may have referred to any of these:

Goat-like costumes worn by actors who played the satyrs.

A goat being presented as a prize at a song contest.

The actors are paid a goat as their pay for appearing on stage.

The "tragic" sound of the goats that were sacrificed on the festival days, thus "goat song"

Bleak July 4, 2007

I lift my head each morning,
ready for another fix,
ready to roll the dice again.
Some have their cigarette, some their coffee.
I gamble that my prayers are heard.

They say I'm crazy,
even my thoughts and family think so.
But I know a different truth,
which did not chain me,
nor did it free.
I don't need them to say they share that feeling,
being too late for that.

I have no use for death by truck, or cop, or my own hand.
I am much too stubborn,
far too curious, wanting to see how my movie goes.
I am acting, but long ago I threw away the script,
written in invisible ink.

When I head to work, I often scream,
for none to hear, nor do I seek their attention.
Wet sloppy tears fall, like sheets of rain on the inside window.
My words, don't seem to shake Heaven, much less my actions.
I've been told they're precious, but I'd like some evidence.

It's all I can do to listen to people,
much less my own head.
My cries and prayers ring hollow,
but I keep hoping for an answer, even a shut door.
No commandment, deed nor charity can equalize
the dread I feel inside.
Though it's all fruitless and try to press on.

I don't expect an answer,
feeling cast from family and faith.
No apologies needed to or from me, people or G-d.
I'm too far past that.

I stand alone so I'm used to not relying on others,
nor wanting others to depend on me.
There's no one to call to ease my way,
but then I want no one really to hear me like this.
I do not trust they'll listen, certainly not myself.

Each day feels like a losing game,
I can't say how they look, how they treat me.
I clench my fist not to strike, but to choke it all in,
as if I can receive a transfusion, or keep my true voice down.
No doctor can cure that ache with more blood or a leeching.
No Psalm nor song can soothe, anybody in a suit to rebuke me.
but each morning, fool that I am, I still bet I can change.

Pickle Juice Wine April 9, 2008

My love where did you put the pickles, the pickles, the pickles?
Where did you store the pickles, that I bought at the store today?

I poured all the juice into the bathtub, the bathtub, the bathtub.
I mixed it with a little yeast, to start fermenting pickle juice wine.

Why would you make it into wine, into wine, into wine?
I needed it to moisten a cake and to add to my wrinkle cream.

You told me how much you love wine, you love wine, you love wine.
And you said you loved your hot kosher dills and hamburger slices too.

When will the wine be ready for parties, for parties, for parties?
When will it be ready to bottle and present to our friends.

The elixir should be ready in 6 months, in 6 months, in 6 months.
While it's aging in the bathtub, we can use the shower downstairs.

And what did you do with the pickles, the pickles, the pickles?
How did you store the pickles that were left in the jars?

I cut them all into slices, into slices, into slices.
I put them all on sandwiches of rye bread and cheddar cheese.

How many sandwiches did you think we need, we need, we need?
How many could possibly satisfy us, until we start sneezing cheese?

I made 432 sandwiches and put them in the freezer, the freezer, the freezer.
Aren't you proud that we'll have enough lunches to last all the year?

What if the power's lost and they thaw, they thaw, they they thaw?
The sandwiches won't taste so good with frost and a moldy film.

My dear, they won't get moldy, get moldy, get moldy.
I put spicy mustard on each one to retard any strange growth.

You are so wonderful, so wonderful, so wonderful.
I am glad you are my spouse and that you thought ahead.

I have but one wish right now my love, my love, my love.
Oh if only the pickle juice wine were fit to drink right now.

We'll drink it together, together, together.
We'll sip it on the porch swing in the sweet by and by.

* Inspired by The Spanish Merchant's Daughter as performed by the Stoneman Family from
"The Anthology Of American Folk Music."

Well, I've Got Me... April 12, 2008

Well, I've got me a six string banjo,
Well, I've got me a six string banjo.
I have me a guitar, Jew's harp and harmonica.
Be glad I don't record them all on a cd,
Or you'll want to lay hands on my six string banjo.

Well, I've got me some lint in my navel.
Yes, I've got me some lint in my navel.
It's turning so hard, the docs will haul me off to a ward,
And somebody will stick me on the 6 O'Clock news.

Well, I've got me my health and my home.
Well, I've got me my health and my home.
I'm so fortunate that I don't need to worry and roam.
I've got me my health and my home.

Well, I've got me help from above,
Yes, I've got me a lot of help from above.
Even when things are at their worst and I want to curse.
I know that everything is done with love.

Well I've got me my friends and family.
Well, I've got me my friends and family.
I wish we could go picking underneath my backyard tree,
And share some diet lemonade in the shade.

Well, I've got me new will to see the dawn.
Well, I've got me new will to see the dawn.
I'm getting kind of bored, so this tune must not go on.
But at least I'm grateful for all I've got.

My Internal Café April 13, 2008

How I wish I could take you,
where you'd never expect to dine.
It's in the playful recesses of my imagination,
far past the road out of my internal hell,
but firmly rooted in my mind.

I know a place where we could tarry,
how I wish you could walk with me inside.
As the wind blows the calico curtains,
cardamom and garlic waft by.

The guests can draw on placemats.
Puppet shows will welcome you to tea.
There's a special almost every night,
And you're my guest for the grand re-opening.

Sundays are for salad bars,
Mondays moonpies are free.
Tuesdays are for Tacos,
On Wild Mountain Wednesdays, the pasta can't be beat.
Thursdays feature Thai food.
Fridays have falafel and hummous for lunch.
Saturdays are closed for rest, but re-open at night
With light desserts.

I've spent many a good day here,
drying from the rain,
awaiting prescriptions,
as I read old magazines.

Old friends smile,
sipping mocha variations,
teen girls giggle flirting with waiters.
This is my living room and a public bus
all at once everyone headed the same way.

Don't shake me from my reverie.
Please don't disturb my deep breathing and the peace I crave.
I'm not hurting one, rather I'm safe here.
Just for a few minutes, let me finish my tea.
I'll be down to join you from up in my head.
At least the torrent of thoughts stopped,
and the quiet in my internal café
was the sweetest, most delicious treat of all.

Bird In The Rain May 11, 2008

Up all night from the hard wind blowing
Rain was pouring, thunder cracking.
It amazes me to look out my window.
I see a small speck standing on the walk.

How'd that bird get there,
frozen in time?
It doesn't move or fly
It doesn't bend over to curl or die.
Maybe it's lost, maybe it's calculating
the best place to travel next.
I wish I could hear it think as I wonder,
if it's just glad for a little rest.

The wind blows on, I've got things to do.
I say my morning prayers, and every so often
check on my new little friend. He's still frozen there
as if waiting permission to move or a rock to startle him.
Maybe he will guide his family, though there's no shelter nearby.

How I wish I were like him,
like in my heartier days.
Rain and wind made me bolder,
made me feel more resilient though still alone.
Now I'm glad to hide away, and let that scrappy runt take my place.

How I'm stuck, rarely getting a move into the day.
The sun goes up and down, and I'm less ready to ramble.
Having found a place and dropped my wings, settling's no so bad.
I've been used to doing it alone.

Scary Man-Child (My Take on "Poor, Wayfaring Stranger") May 21, 2008

I am a scary man-child,

While traveling to the hardware store.

Yet I'm not filled with guilt or anger

In my backyard which I consider wild.

I'm going there to trim the bushes.

I'm going there to water the lawn.

I'm only going over to a bookstore,

I'm only going to flirt with the barista.

I know that people think I'm freakish.

Neither dog nor woman friend to me..

But I play several instruments,

When I'm not trying to pick up dates with poetry.

I'm going out to meet another,

To compare myself to less of a bum.

I wish I were free from my job.,

My body sleep in the office chair;

I'll drop my head back zonked on Clonazepam

And be walked out by security.

I'm going out to see my attorney,

To file any possible lawsuit and work no more.

Mad At My Brain June 22, 2008

How I wish you'd work since I can't get a trade-in.
You rarely idle, you only choke or flood.
How I wish you'd not go into overdrive, stripping gears.
You run too fast or not at all.

I've tried all but drilling and jump starting,
and I can't turn you off, much as I'd like.
There's no replacement parts, not even a spark plug,
Believe me, I checked the catalog 5 times.

Maybe you can use your onboard self-diagnostic computer,
or the black box I can't reach.
Tell me where it hurts.
I've tried too hard I guess,
and the instruction manual was from 1967.

What more is there to say?
No mechanic's helped you,
no instant fix can be found.
You keep trudging, sometimes in 4th gear,
more often I feel I'm in reverse.

Wandering June 29, 2008 I awoke to hear Joan Baez dictating these words in song, as if in a vision.

I left my birthplace for the desert,
for a city of gold in heaven and of earth.
Through snow and rain, I used to travel,
from tent to bricks, only myself to guide.

I used to call on my Maker
in open fields, a Temple, and synagogue and my room.
Now I've found no building brings comfort,
They're full of voices, but no room to weep or scream.
Numbing does not work, so where am I meant to be?
I no longer feel G-d's presence, where I once prayed.

For so long, I've learned to channel all my words,
to pray silently, avoid others' stares.
I've found no solace in crowds,
and my community does not bring relation to the Most High.

How long, L-rd, will this go on?
I wanted to hear Your voice, but only heard my own head.
I sought You through prayer, study and singing,
and I did my tithes much as I could. No reward appeared, not even good feelings.
Where did we go, that we separated? Are You hiding?

Some talk of groups, and leaving one's place.
Many caution it's rough out there,
but it's equally hard inside their walls and my own brain.
I am not a blasphemer, but a misguided seeker.
Who can I trust beside You?
I can only describe what can't be touched, I've lost or never had,
Rarely it's Your light I've found.

I may return to my last place, but I'm reluctant and afraid.
If I call, will You hear me, through quiet or crowd, acknowledging me?
You have may have marked me, but worse others can't relate.
Now I have no refuge, no sense of meeting You or brethren,
certainly finding no pre-ordained mate.

How many times must I surrender?
I used to revel in meditation as if hearing Your voice.
Now my ideas race, and I can't focus.
Cursed by false prophecy and evil inclination,
I turn alone to to question, never awakening to answers.

How many times will I pray or fast?
How many texts must I read?
Have I been sealed for torment,
quicksand from which to drag myself?
Have I been ordained to wander through life?

My mind is clouded.
I am lost despite a clear path ahead
Now dreams have faded, so have friends.

They don't bother calling, but they want to think I'm fine.
Your people doesn't listen, they don't hear me.
Adding their voices to my own, all I get is noise.
I can no longer tune in to preaching.
Where should I go now?

I Shot The Neighbor's Cat July 6, 2008. Apologies to the estate of Bob Marley.

I shot the neighbor's cat
But I meant to shoot his loud donkey, oh no! oh!
I shot the neighbor's cat
But I didnt shoot loud donkey, ooh, ooh, oo-oo.)
Yeah! all around in my home town,
They're tryin' to hunt me down;
They say they want to bring me in guilty
For the killing of loud donkey,
For the life of loud donkey.
But I say:

Oh, now, now. oh!
(I shot the neighbor's cat.) - the neighbor's cat.
(but I swear it kept me up all night.)
Oh, no! (ooh, ooh, oo-oh) yeah!
I say: I shot the neighbor's cat - oh, lord! -
(and it tore down my new fence.)
Yeah! (ooh, ooh, oo-oh) yeah!

The neighbor Joe Blow always hated me,
For what, I don't know:
Every time I cut my lawn,
He said kill it before it grow -
He said kill the sod patches before they grow.
And so:

Read it in the news:
(I shot the neighbor's cat.) oh, man!
(but I swear it was going to bite.)
Where was the donkey? (oo-oo-oh)
I say: I shot the neighbor's cat,
But I swear the donkey brayed all night. (oo-oh) yeah!

Retribution came my way one day
And I started out of town, yeah!
All of a sudden I saw the neighbor's donkey
Aiming to run me down,
So I missed - I shot - I shot the cat down and I say:
If I am guilty I will pay.

(I shot the neighbor's cat,)
But I say (but I didnt shoot loud donkey),
I meant to shoot the loud donkey (oh, no-oh), oh no!
(I shot the neighbor's cat.) I did!
But I didnt shoot the loud donkey. oh! (oo-oo-oo)

Trigger finger had got the better of me
And what is to be must be:
Every day his donkey feeds on my garden,
I want to smack it on the head,
I want to smack it on the head.

I say:

I - I - I - I shot the neighbor's cat.

But , I tried to shoot the loud donkey. yeah!

I - I (shot the neighbor's cat) -

But I missed the loud donkey, yeah! no, yeah!

*This piece was inspired by donkeys and peacocks awakening me when I was on a kibbutz in 1985, that is where reality ends. No animals were harmed in the writing of this parody.

Old-Timey Radio Romance July 6, 2008

I'm borrowing pictures, themes in my head.
Someone else's soundtrack plays on the radio,
reminding me of The Waltons and Andy Griffith,
a good dose of Flannery O'Connor and Eudora Welty.
Throw a little Lake Wobegone in for good measure.

I start tapping my feet,
playing air banjo or dobro,
at every stop light, keeping time to the right turn blinker.
I dream of you, wherever you are,
my un-named muse - the idea of being in love.

There's always the radio, or MP3
making me wish for simpler times.
When we could court, and gas cost less.
When we could leave doors open, and neighbors were all friends.

We could have met at the general store,
maybe the post office, or the county dance.
We'd cruise around in a beat-up Ford,
calling each other honey-dear.

We would sing "You Are My Sunshine."
You would request of me "Good Night, Irene."
We'd sit on the parlor or the porch,
gladly trading TV for the cool breeze.

How we would drive,
around the back roads,
through rustic neighborhoods.
We would play that old-time radio,
taking us back before we were born.

We would stop for ice cream, humming to the guitar
You'd laugh at chocolate on my face and my warbling.
We would giggle like little children,
then we'd turn around and I'd drop you home.

Those dreams are in my head,
they make up my reverie.
I hope some day to share this sweetness,
whether in my car or in my den.
We would reminisce about our own old times,
clapping or dancing to our favorite songs.
I would tell you how it's heaven on earth,
enjoying our simple life, like people used to do.

Mrs. Jones' Cheese Monkeys July 17, 2008

If only I had rhythm, if only I had time.

If only I could tune my instruments or change chords on a dime.

You can guess I'd get together with buddies
to play some old time melodies.

We would have a fiddle, standup bass and mandolin.

The people on guitar, banjo and dobro would always sport a grin.

We'd play our own songs and old favorites too.

We could interpret jazz standards and sing of grass that's blue.

Now people think I'm always sad and dour.

But they don't see me in such a happy state.

There's no need for them to run and cower,
even though my rhyme's not great.

I've quickly stopped to think what to call my band.

Only a few have come to mind.

They have be of the quirky kind,
so people will remember throughout the land.

I want a band name that will intrigue and please.

I am thinking of Mrs. Jones' Cheese Monkeys.

After considering Zed, The Undigested, and With Guest To Be Announced.

I decided that my choice shouldn't be denounced.

Now I just have to learn how to sing

maybe a nifty blue-sequined suit would be money well spent

and find some others with a love for strings

and the missing ingredient called talent.

Woohoo!

* I was thinking of a few fun and silly band names for a bluegrass band. I also realized how I try not to use forced rhyme so I did it on purpose for kicks. Also, I thought of both Mrs. Allison's cookies and Cheetos Puffs in monkey shapes. :-)

Racing Thoughts July 24, 2008

It's beautiful here

Seventy-Five light wind sunny

Grandstand is now packed

Today Celexa

Lexepro, Zoloft leading

Guilt, Ruminations

Delusions of Grandeur too.

David Schwartz riding

Tranquility Now.

My money's on Schwartz.

They're off! It's Bad Thoughts

Who runs into Celexa.

Both are down, taken out.

Ruminations leading

Guilt, Delusions falling back.

OCD ahead.

Schwartz is pushing hard,

Tranquility shakes.

He may fall off her.

He's holding on tight.

Reins taut in hands, body tense.

Last run for the roses.

Will he leave a winner?

Ruminations behind now.

OCD inching.

OCD then Schwartz.

Guilt knocks out OCD

Tranquility leads.

OCD by hair

pushing neck and neck

against Schwartz.

Tranquility takes the lead.

Schwartz smiling, winning.

He takes victory.

He may give a speech.

He said My Demons worst foe,
worst among others.

He'll cherish this win.

He wants to coach young riders, help them through the ranks.

Fireflies August 3, 2008

The sky and lawn are darker, more silent and still.
The sound of crickets and birds gone,
and the smell of fresh cut lawn too.

When I look outside,
the street lamp has never been brighter.
Nothing moves but the humid air seems to fall and gag me
like a python.

There used to be brightness from the time I was 11
until the last 5 years at least.
I used to capture fireflies, dissect a few,
let others go to come again the next night.
Holding life in my hand, I felt all powerful
but afraid of the twittering, squirming being.
I'd be out of breath chasing them,
returning inside all sweaty.

Now there's not much left to catch,
Only weeds to pick from the ivy.
The fireflies are gone,
probably packed it in for a better neighborhood.
All I feel is a palpable darkness when I look inside and outside.

About The Poet July 24, 2008

David was raised amidst feral suburbanites,
learning to fend for himself.

He persevered despite being impaired by grade school musicals,
singing "Up With People" and "It's A Marshmallow World In The Winter."

As he grew, he was forced to do square roots and learn about Sino-Soviet relations,
the French-Indian War, and how to make Benedict's Solution.

But he cultivated his sardonic wit and harvested dangling participles,
alliteration and intentional non-sequiturs.

He became prolific and took high school and college poetry courses.

Despite these too, he kept writing, realizing he would not sell his work.

At least he could share it with love. Up he urps his hope and woe like 2 am cold pizza.

This then is his latest tome of wry, depressing, enlightening, humorous mad faux Beat poetry
without the sex, drugs, cheap Tokay wine in old cars behind warehouses

having never been to San Francisco but imagining riding a run-on sentence train

straight into a local loft reading. Bam! Go the words though this is no slam nor truly crafted collection.

These pieces were forced out like Medusa from Zeus' noggin.

What a headache! But David can't afford the Iowa Writers' Institute which Flannery O'Connor attended
nor the holy crowd at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics nor telecommute.

How he longs for Boulder's Birkenstock crowd.

If you can't follow along, don't worry. There may be another book one day.

Don't take him too seriously, he mostly writes the stuff and lets it go.

He says he wants to do that with the rest of his thoughts. Sedate him already!

Yet More About the Author:

David M. Schwartz was born and raised in the St. Louis County, Missouri area. He went to Clayton public schools and earned his B.A. in Judaic Studies from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Subsequently, he earned his MSW from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. He continues to remain an active writer and songwriter, and has taken up harmonica, 6 string banjo, Dobro and Jew's Harp in addition to acoustic guitar. Since late 1999, he has worked in the computer field, trying to wed his technological and people skills with both disastrous and amusing results. He may very well end up in social work again unless the Powerball comes through.



What went wrong?! ☺