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**DEFENESTRATION**  
~ A Poem by A.J. Huffman ~

Because defenestration  
is frowned upon in civilized societies,  
I have removed temptation, nailed  
all of our windows shut. Claustrophobic  
and stewing in my own rage, I ponder possible  
alternatives: *evisceration*, *exsanguination*.  
I remember the hammer in my hand. *Crucifixion*.  
The thought holds my attention too long. I drop  
my key and my hardware at the door as I  
leave for good.

**STABBED****~ A Poem by Wayne F. Burke ~**

I told her while we were  
lying in bed:  
told her it was over.  
She started to weep and  
I wanted to comfort her  
but could not, would not  
and got up and went out  
to the kitchen  
and poured myself a drink  
and she came out of the room  
a little later,  
dry-eyed,  
and without any clothes on,  
but not really naked,  
and said "If I'd had a knife  
when you told me  
I'd of stabbed you"  
and how glad I was  
then  
that I had told her in bed  
and not in a restaurant.

**PINK BISMUTH**  
~ A Poem by Mitch Grabois ~

It thought that  
when you took Pepto-Bismal  
your shits would turn pink  
a childish notion

As everyone knows  
they turn black

I'd gone through several boxes  
before I thought to go to the doctor  
I thought that the hollow feeling in my stomach  
might be existential dread  
my painful recognition  
that hell is other people

but it was really stomach cancer  
inoperable

When you were a kid did you ever play a game during recess  
in which you pitched pennies against a wall  
and the one who got the closest won  
all the pennies?

I do that now with pink bismuth tablets  
I have no opponents  
so I always win

**LAWNMOWER**  
~ A Poem by G. David Schwartz ~

A lawnmower crackling right out side  
I hope it is on fire  
I hope the flames are on it  
and they well grow much higher  
It's not that I like weeds  
Or don't like the boys  
It's just that lawnmowers  
Make so darn much noise

**TWO POEMS by Jeremiah Walton**

\*

**WHEN THE SUN ROSE**

When the sun rose  
it brought locusts with it.

They did not sound like violins  
—or metaphors—  
no, they sounded like locusts.

Like hungry. Like  
hipsters eating out San Francisco.  
Like a shotgun wedding where everyone actually brought shotguns  
and the pregnancy was aborted due to a misunderstanding.

Like The Plastic Clown's last performance.  
Like romance biting its teeth as candle wax drips in its lower lips dips.

Like hungry locusts.  
Like hungry locusts.

\*

**MOON MOTEL**

I am an amphibian  
a nobody

cast out of the world of fish.

I checked into a motel on the moon because the lights of humans are becoming  
brighter than the moon

The illumination is of Lucifer, luciferous sky lines

New York City burrows deep into clouds

San Francisco refuses due to fault

Tokyo cries cries I don't understand

because I don't speak Japanese.

But the moon

The moon is a cradle

And I am smiling here.

You can't see that smile

because Earth is too bright.

**TWO POEMS by B.Z. Niditch**

\*

**OPEN CITY**

Watching the film *Open City*  
*Città Aperta*  
while it is freezing  
outside the Roman marquee  
escaping street icicles  
by a found xmas sweater  
in the cold theater  
my xanthic case is lost  
along with l'estranger,  
until I approach  
my expected taxi driver  
I call Camus  
who drove me here  
and promised to give me  
a ride to my performance  
when the movie is over  
who hands me my sax  
right next to me  
wondering if other poets  
or jazz musicians  
have such Beat chances  
of exceptional acts of fate  
as I invite my driver  
to be my guest  
while a Mingus tape  
plays his riffs  
and snow kisses  
the defrosted windows.



\*

**PROUST'S NIGHT OUT**

Eyebrows raise  
in the French club  
after dark  
you change glasses  
waving hands  
only at the clock's solitude  
at sounds of silence  
brushing the warm scarf  
of a feathery night  
your humor casting  
out negatives  
at the faces mirror  
near the bar  
keeping your gestures  
as memory grimaces  
in the glare of Paris'  
street lights  
feeling like a saboteur  
of your own time's  
delirium  
as a cat  
over snowy footsteps  
on your ride home  
the bedroom slippers  
rustle on your feet  
of suspended hours.

**TWO POEMS by Christopher Barnes**

\*

**HOT WASH**

Pigment beaching slurs the Hotpoint.  
Emulsifiers thwart careening luminosity.  
Any whirl deluded lighting, a dye's splash.  
Do vapours suffuse the clotheshorse?

\*

**THE HULLABALOO GOES STEREOPHONIC**

Sohini nose-flairs at this nocturnal visitation.  
A wrong-way rub, flesh-thorned danger.  
Otherworldly malevolents stride,  
Grounded in rapid-eye scryings.  
A banshee excruciates,  
Clamouring for mouth-foamed backlash.

**CAUSES OF INSOMNIA**  
~ A Prose Piece by Eric Howerton ~

Intro Quantum Mechanics, Union Building #8: Professor stands & reveals: *If the speed of light changed fractionally, infinitesimally, minutely every atom in the student body's bodies would burst apart. A nihilistic, boisterous flash.*

They imagine electrons & quarks & whatever else makes substrata from substrate swallowed in cosmic disjointment. The everything turns nothing, fills the ethereal beyond.

They remember this, dimming bulbs in bedside lamps, preparing for a solid night's rest.

**DATE WITH A RAMONE**  
~ A Prose Piece by Bradford Middleton ~

Jack is sat in a bar in the depths of New Cross, one of south-east London's grottier areas, on a Saturday afternoon and it being the very early 1990's he is early twenties. That evening he and his group of friends, who had been laying claim to both the jukebox and pool table for a considerable part of the afternoon, were to go to a gig in Camden, one of the grottier but more fashionable areas of north London. Jack was with Steve and Chris, two of a small smattering of people who he'd stayed in touch with from school, and they were half-way through playing the third side of the Ramones magnum opus live album *It's Alive* having successfully completed the first two sides without any complaints from either the locals or the bar staff.

"Guys," Jack slurred a little, "...this has got to be one of the best moments ever. Sat in a pub with this playing, with my best mates and tonight I get to see a real Ramone for the first time ever."

"Damn right," Steve concurred, "...tonight's going to blow yr mind mate!"

Jack grabbed the pool cue, for it was his turn, and proceeded to pot three successive balls much to everyone's amazement. Jack loved playing pool but had never been good. He did seem to have the knack for some great jammy play when he'd had a few beers and the music was good and loud. He naturally missed the fourth, the easiest of the bunch and handed the cue over to Steve.

Chris was sat by the jukebox, singing along quietly to himself, looking even drunker than Jack felt.

"You alright buddy?" Jack asked, knowing he'd probably offered Steve the perfect opportunity to clear the pool table.

"Well, yeah I should be really happy but..."

"Oh yeah, you got some juicy gossip I ain't heard?" Jack asked; his interest piqued.

"Well, it's just that girl Louise... you know the one I mean?"

"Yeah of course I do, that cute gothy girl I saw you talking to last weekend?"

“Sure, well... we went out this week on a date...”

“That’s excellent!” Jack exclaimed.

“...but she kind of has a really scary boyfriend who occasionally drinks in here.”

Jack’s mind recoiled in horror at the thought of the man, for he may have only been a few years older than them but he was certainly a man, he’d been to a prison for one just to prove it. A maddening flash-back to the horror that was the whole early 80’s punk vibe; his rotten hair in an awful mohican style, rotten decomposing clothes, smelly and a real bad interest in really bad drugs. It was the drugs that really turned Jack off; heroin had already stolen from him one friend and he had decided to never touch the stuff. Jack was happy with his booze and the occasional toke on a joint.

As The Ramones mad rampage through their, at that point, limited back catalogue came to its inevitable conclusion Steve actually managed to lose a game of pool and suddenly there was a palpable change in the atmosphere of the pub. Normally it was full of punk-rockers nursing their beers and moaning about the price that lived, invariably, in the many squats or cheap houses that dominated New Cross. The scene developing in the other bar, a few raised voices, sounded like nothing out of the ordinary but with the group ready to leave Chris went and retrieved his coat from a nearby stool and glanced round the corner. Turning swiftly he made a quick dart for the door and exited. His friends followed when suddenly Chris turned to them.

“Shit guys, you ain’t going to believe what I just saw, we need to shift right now and I mean quick.”

“What!?! What did you see” Jack asked, panicked by his friends anxiety-ridden face. As they walked towards the park a voice heckled them from behind.

“Ah, there they are, the boys I’ve been looking for!”

Jack turned his head and couldn’t believe what he saw. There was the guy he’d only learned was called Jake with a wild dog on a rope and a large gun pointed right at him and his friends. Jack was physically sick at that point and his friends, in particular Chris, looked scared for their lives. Jack knew what they had to do and he just hoped nothing bad would happen. He had known the guys for practically half his life and he’d been in similar situations before, just never with a heroin-addicted nutcase carrying a gun, but they all knew instinctively what to do. They ran, they ran for their lives and Jack ran with the thought that tonight he was to see a real Ramone for the first time and nothing was going to stop that, not even

some gun-totting punk junkie. As he ran he heard a couple of bullets being shot but he was happy soon after when they all finally made it to the train station in one piece, one of the good things about being chased by a junkie is you know he ain't going to out-run you.

That night the group of friends enjoyed Dee Dee greatly and decided not to venture back to New Cross and realized that maybe Camden wasn't as bad as people made out. The people out there seemed to be cool and the bars were definitely a lot different.

**THE PSEUDO MAN**  
~ A Storiella by Jerry Vilhotti ~

My mother's brother, Deo, was a sort of libertarian. He wanted less government and he wanted to pay less or no taxes. He did, however, want government subsidized housing, welfare, free healthcare, and other cost-assisted living sponsored by Social Security. Deo suspected that Social Security was some kind of socialistic idea created to undermine the capitalist system. This raw capitalist—what's in for me—system served him well while he piled up the bucks making delicious red meat gravies for pasta and a sauce, without meats, for pizza. Deo's gravies were known all over the city from Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn to Arthur Avenues in The Bronx.

It was decided by our mother to take Deo, who was named after the great Mozart and boasted that his great grandfather was The Count of Monty Cielo, on this—our fifth visit to see Leny “One N” and his cell mate and partner in all things The East Bronx kid, Talfie, in the penitentiary near Amish country. Leny was a mainly unsuccessful thief who blamed society's constraints for all of his failures. He like his uncle called them regulations. One of his inmates—a guy called *Mad Off*—had bilked billions from rich folk and so had to go to prison for being so brash as to rob the plutocracy when a close friend of his when a GOP senator took off regulations so making the market go into a frenzy before it collapsed as it did during the Great Depression becoming the godfather of the Greater One. He became the economic advisor to a Hoover-like candidate who said the economy was strong as it was going over cliff in Arizona.

Leny deliberately took his time getting to the visiting room as a punishment to us for not coming on a monthly basis—even though he knew it was a full three hundred mile trip from where we began to where he was residing at the Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary—getting free room and board. While we waited, Deo spouted off about one thing or another—like saying this prison system was copying the uniform he had to wear when he was serving time as a twenty year old in the old country. All the while, as he spoke, he kept looking at my father's zipper. He recalled, in a small compartment of his brain, the advice he had given to our mother

many years before... “I tell you he’s cheating on you! He’s got all the whores around Third Avenue chasing after him! Throw the bum out!” That very night a very pretty woman with a beautiful smile had come to their apartment asking our mother if she would allow her husband to go out for just a teensy bitsy little while...

Our father said, “You know, you were lucky that the Federal Bureau of Incompetency couldn’t or wouldn’t take the time to figure out your *Pel Ob* meant Pearl Harbor and how happy you were that the Japanese imperialists had slammed the bully in the mouth. They would have arrested you for treason and put you away in some red state concentration camp with other New York fascists—leaving many innocent Japanese-American people alone!” Our father then punched himself in the head with a closed fist recalling how he had changed Uncle Deo’s face when they were teenagers. Uncle Deo told him to stay away from his sister much in the same way a bother-cousin of ours named Carrado had told Jake the raging bull to stay away from our sister, Tina. Tina of the Troy was thought by many to be the knock-out of all knockouts in The Bronx. Carrado had his face changed that night, too, in the lavatory of a Fordham Road nightclub by the young kid who hadn’t turned pro yet but would after a reform school stint in upstate New York.

Needless to say, Talfie didn’t much like Uncle Deo. All during our uncle’s pontificating, Talfie made Mussolini types of faces: mocking, contempt, cocky, condescending and various degrees of shock.

“At least El Duce was man enough to stand up to Hitler and back his armies down at the Austrian border while the Divided States of America for the most part were being cowards!” Uncle Deo said. He thought FDR started the Second World War and often said so.

“But Uncle Deo do you remember when some fascist guys were shot coming down the Mount Carmel church stairs, full of God and feeling that their Pope was siding with the dictator?” Talfie said, using a Mussolini smirk.

“This country was founded by monarchists and fornicating Founding Fathers and is still ruled by the beasts who steal our hard earned money,” Uncle Deo retaliated.

Although Uncle Deo was one roaring pain in the ass and almost everyone disliked his opinionated way—no one had ever squealed on him for the reward granted to anyone who turned in a tax dodger. Only the very wealthy, who lived on islands off the coast did not have to pay anything to a place that allowed them to make billions of dollars on the backs of others, were immune to any such threats.



Leny, Tommy Tom Tom, my other older brother, went to the soda machine to talk with the ghost of Jimmy Hoffa who was loading it with bottles of soda. I thought they were going to tell Jimmy, about Uncle Deo.

Our father held his tongue as Uncle Deo continued to snare flies out of the air while expressing all his ideas.

Talfie said: “That buffoon of yours was just a tin horn trying to bring back the glory days of Rome and didn’t care a piss about his people!”

“That so called buffoon gave his people Social Security and your Communist president stole it from him and contaminated your people making them be takers!” Uncle Deo shouted back.

“What’s the dance about now?” Leny said as he joined us again. Uncle Deo always lent Leny money when he was short and had a great need to feed the horses at Yonkers Raceway. Leny always paid him back; unlike our parents. Our father often said Leny was even obligated to the rocks he walked upon.

“Hey, I know that song that Jersey mayor is whistling. He’s doing five years. It’s called *It Had to Be Me*.”

“No, *It Had to Be You*”, I said. I was the last born coming in on a crash landing from our mother’s thirty-nine year old body.

“Yeah, that’s what I said!” Leny said; not blinking an eye.

Red in the face, Uncle Deo shouted that Talfie was nothing but a petty thief and for all anybody knew was Leny’s girlfriend!

This did get a long blanket of silence to emerge. Then, among a flurry of tic-full movements of hugs and half-missed kisses—a departure was undertaken.

It was a long silent ride back home as Uncle Deo swatted imaginary flies trying to attack his mouth.

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