

# *Ygdrasil*

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# Introduction

**AE Wasserman**

11 July ·

Dear Diary (2020 Recap Edition),

In January, Australia was on fire. I don't even know if that fire was put out, because we straight up almost went to war with Iran. We might actually still be almost at war with them. I don't know, because Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt spoke to one another at an awards show and everyone flipped the f--- out, but then there was this thing happening in China, then Prince Harry and Megan peaced out of the Royal family, and there was the whole impeachment trial, and then corona virus showed up in the US "officially," but then Kobe died and UK peaced out of the European Union.

In February, Iowa crapped itself with the caucus results and the president was acquitted and the Speaker of the House took ten years to rip up a speech, but then WHO decided to give this virus a name COVID-19, which confused some really important people in charge of, like, our lives, into thinking there were 18 other versions before it, but then Harvey Weinstein was found guilty, and Americans started asking if Corona beer was safe to drink, and everyone on Facebook became a doctor who just knew the flu like killed way more people than COVID 1 through 18.

In March, shit hit the fan. Warren dropped out of the presidential race and Sanders was like Bernie or bust, but then Italy shut its whole ass down, and then COVID Not 1 through 18 officially become what everyone already realized, a pandemic and then a nationwide state of emergency was declared in the US, but it didn't really change anything, so everyone was confused or thought it was still just a flu, but then COVID Not 18 was like ya'll not taking me seriously? I'm gonna infect the one celebrity everyone loves and totally infected Tom Hanks, but then the DOW took a shit on itself, and most of us still don't understand why the stock market is so important or even a thing (I still don't), but then we were all introduced to Tiger King (Carol totally killed her husband), and Netflix was like you're welcome, and we all realized there was no way we were washing our hands enough in the first place because all of our hands are now dry and gross.

In April, Bernie finally busted himself out of the presidential race, but then NYC became the set of The Walking Dead and we learned that no one has face masks, ventilators, or toilet paper, or THE FREAKING SWIFFER WET JET LIQUID, but then Kim Jong-Un died, but then he came back to life... or did he? Who knows, because then the Pentagon released videos of UFOs and nobody cared, and we were like man, it's only April....

In May, the biblical end times kicked off historical locust swarms and then we learned of murder hornets and realized that 2020 was the start of the Hunger Games but people forgot to let us know, but then people legit protested lockdown measures with AR-15s, and then sports events were cancelled everywhere. But then people all over America finally reached a breaking point with race issues and violence. There were protests in every city, but then people forgot about the pandemic called COVID Not 1 Through 18. Media struggled with how to focus on two important things at once, but then people in general struggle to focus on more than one important thing, and a dead whale was found in the middle of the Amazon rain forest after monkeys stole COVID 1 Through 19 from a lab and ran off with them, and either in May or April (no one is keeping track of time now) a giant asteroid narrowly missed Earth.

In June, science and common sense just got thrown straight out the window and somehow wearing masks became a political thing, but then a whole lot of people realized the south was actually the most unpatriotic thing ever and actually lost the civil war, and there are a large amount of people who feel that statues they don't even know the name of are needed for ... history reasons..... but then everyone sort of remembered there

was a pandemic, but then decided that not wearing a mask was somehow a God given right (still haven't found that part in the Bible or even in the Constitution), but then scientists announced they found a mysterious undiscovered mass at the center of the earth, and everyone was like DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH IT, but then everyone took a pause to realize that people actually believed Gone With The Wind was non-fiction, but then it was also announced that there is a strange radio signal coming from somewhere in the universe that repeats itself every so many days, and everyone was like DON'T YOU DARE ATTEMPT TO COMMUNICATE WITH IT, but then America reopened from the shut down that actually wasn't even a shut down, and so far, things have gone spectacularly not that great, but everyone is on Facebook arguing that masks kill because no one knows how breathing works, but then Florida was like hold my beer and let me show you how we're number one in all things, including new Not Corona Beer Corona Virus. Trump decides now is a good time to ask the Supreme Court to shut down Obama Care because what better time to do so than in the middle of a pandemic, but then we learned there was a massive dust cloud coming straight at us from the Sahara Desert, which is totally normal, but this is 2020, so the ghost mummy thing is most likely in that dust cloud, but then I learned of meth-gators, and I'm like that is so not on my f-ing 2020 Bingo card, but then we learned that the Congo's worst ever Ebola outbreak is over, and we were all like, there was an Ebola outbreak that was the worst ever?

In July.... Aliens? Asteroids? Artificial Intelligence becomes self aware?

Thanks to whoever started this for the copy and paste. If anyone knows the author I will gladly credit them. (Copied and pasted so it will show up on my notifications next year to remind me of what happened before July 2020 - not that I could ever forget)

But (This is A.E. here) I must add. In July, a dear friend, [Elisa Fortise Christensen](#), had to shoot a paint gun at a big cinnamon-colored black bear to keep it from coming in her house. She scared it so much, it pissed itself. So there's that already.... Plus all the other things that have already happened the first 11 days of this 7th month of 2020. I'll let you add that.

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# Bob Ezergailis

70720A

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Skin care ritual  
dust off alabaster  
commercial melt  
buttery cream down  
slide over smooth  
jiggle mould  
jelly bared  
advertising door  
knockers rap  
and window dressing  
naked in the light  
of eternal salesman.

It is all artificial  
and perfectly lucky  
squeeze through  
end of tube  
never wins out  
calculus probabilities  
at the big gamble up  
against loaded bones  
all coming out  
and always on top  
riding the lists  
of pure wantedness.

Clown suited  
mental carted  
wheels push along  
from happenstance  
give get go dissonance  
scored pure abrasions  
crystallized letter  
box or legal format  
world of choices  
for sale or rent loss  
of souls emporiums  
decrypting myths.

It feels like death  
held over  
repeat engagements  
nights spent feeling  
mortuary bedded  
toss and turn cycle  
slabs of chill out

the ambition remains  
clutter specimens  
collected disarray  
labelled misplacement  
and emptied bottles.

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170720B

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The not being  
of an anyone  
touched along  
edges of social  
tear away responses  
questionnaire survey  
pay cheque stub  
payment remissions  
confessing to late  
undead relations.

Inventory report  
adds the has been  
reward points  
to unclaimed love  
held miscellanies  
unsorted trivia  
search strategies  
and other investments  
into failures  
of time and place.

Mortuary report  
bank statements  
dictate penny pinch  
regulated spend  
habits rolled tight  
wad estranged  
and passed off  
doled around  
friendship fixes  
threats of overdose.

All the beginnings  
spun out ends  
of forever  
ghost footsteps  
pavement side of real  
follow along plans  
on the never meet  
chanced by design  
into strictly segregated  
forms of affliction.

Lands of the rich  
and always healthy  
sanitary in  
and out of it  
keeping it all up  
in good neighbourhoods  
of the perfect spend  
prompted tongue wag  
detail polish spread  
and tight medicated.

Pigeon drop news  
bombed too close  
to staining lived edges  
of the attractive  
soiled category sift  
out catalogue spoils  
into the non options  
of stimulated wants  
in unmet heaps  
of everyone else.

Playground monitors  
whistle blow  
out of bounds  
careless moments  
of play gone offside  
and bench penalty  
box forgotten  
sit it out life  
past the end zone  
of dreaming big.

-----  
190720A  
-----

Injured words  
bleed their ink  
into carpet stain  
bound gashes  
manuscript bandage  
wrapped around  
accrued stigmata  
points of infection.

Lanced concepts  
ooze of ideas  
stabs distressed play  
along teased fibres  
marginalized notes  
horror verged  
muffle utterances  
drained into empty.

Cotton ball squeeze  
stuffed vertigo drip

into trepan bowls  
shell break suction  
out the grey  
matter into alien  
beaked orifices  
of close examination.

Occasions bloodied  
spitting capitulate  
territories stricken  
social mapping  
estrangements past  
cut off lines  
pointed ambush  
jumped opportunities.

Corpse body  
mental flagellate  
held brow beat  
down against  
it goes hard up  
under the no pull  
down drop menu  
of usual ignorance.

-----  
190720B  
-----

Nothing interesting  
to offer  
to your disinterest  
fixated as it is  
on otherwise  
entirely ordinary  
shop and drop apple  
cored relations.

Rot barrel bop  
grab bag cultured  
string along pearls  
of plastic expression  
bar stool gargoyle  
made up looking  
powder keg  
on a short fuse.

Bared teeth  
and claw hellos  
of goodbye nod  
fast tracked  
on the never stop  
standard inquiries  
gone don't say  
and never tell.

Used to know  
the do not know how  
of it anymore  
along the drop off  
ignorance pooled  
self store routine  
compiled directories  
of mass disregard.

Pop goes the culture  
stripped wings  
broken off shatter  
collected toss  
into the dull down  
mix up to nothing  
asked or given  
personally sidelined.

Cold fish  
nets of clammy  
stiff disregard  
nether of don't  
worlds of never  
goes past dirty  
dark deed places  
in the jumble up.

Nothing to say  
into selective services  
of deaf lobes  
dropping hints  
into the crotchety  
gizzard grind  
smoothed talking  
of crack filler.

Painted layers  
white dirty up  
into bubbled  
wrinkles of scrape  
ash flake ends  
of gather toss  
scrubbed life  
in star spatter.

Sad forever  
clutched vestiges  
of the once matter  
dissolves into clear  
liquid eye channels  
illegally tuned  
wrong station  
of crumble crust.

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210720A

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A last refuge  
of the mad capped  
sack held ties  
overboard into  
flip a lid stretch  
endless in only  
along a no one  
chatter accumulate  
sides of wanting  
drifts the down  
streamed hassles  
into blot memoirs  
of being emptied.

Death rattled  
shrivel of thought  
dagger plunge  
into deep nameless  
faceless cut  
away from any  
have of mattered  
met in passages  
cold trail single  
statue freeze off  
against the walls  
of blindfold drop  
and dragged exits.

Treaty attempts  
into the hostile  
tribe thrash  
of no one know  
pain wilderness  
tangled in formalities  
wasteland sentenced  
down to terminal  
formulated longings  
committed survey  
plots of wish list  
becoming ignored  
as statistics.

Lemon tea  
inked secret  
drips wax turns  
of molten  
skinned wash out  
held back places  
on neuro mapped  
touch line broke  
frag of landscapes

at never goes  
and lead ball shot  
down the straight  
terms of passage.

Gut wrenching  
truth of jazz  
abandons left  
all the normals  
music and can't  
take any generation  
normal people  
doing small bore  
things and lives  
until overload trips  
the social breaker  
blowing out the line.

Impossible to make  
any arrangements  
based at left out  
perched far edge  
of that much under  
stand and outer  
space jump off  
into glide along loss  
on culture currents  
into any up close  
past gather round  
of might have been  
a real something.

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These are social poems. Poems meant to disturb large groups. Alternatively they could be chanted, screamed or yelled at crowds. Not that it would do any real good, but only to say that someone could get away with that as being therapeutic. A poetry action taking poetry well beyond the intellectual process of its originating production into a more meta-physical, and thus practical, materialization as effective sonic weaponry.

# Denis Robillard

Hello Klaus. I must admit it has been a while since I last sent poems your way. I delved back into Ygdrasil recently to see what is happening. Thanks for constantly giving a leg up to all of the neophyte writers out there who would not have a voice without magazines like yours. I truly appreciate it. I especially took notice of the note by Cordelia Hudson about her personal experience with the COVID symptoms while in France and the poems of Simon Perchik. I have been reading his poems in the small magazines of Canada and the USA for over a decade now. Truly a strong poet. I was also very intrigued by the well written essay called Macbeth and Schizophrenia. A real eye opener and very useful to a teacher like myself. Like everyone else on the planet, we all have been affected by the CODID virus. When it hit us hard in the spring, I began to take daily notes and jots down simply as an exercise to keep my mind focused while working at home. I have included a few of these poems here for your consideration. Hopefully they will fit the scope of what you have been posting the last few months.

All the best.

Bright blessings and stay safe in Ottawa!

Denis Robillard  
Windsor, Ontario

^^^^^^ La Vida Covida ^^^^^^

On the 67<sup>th</sup> day of my imprisonment I came down from the mountain to cut my hair at home. I sat on the front porch in the late May sun sitting in the red canvas folding chair, letting my wife trim my unruly salt and pepper locks. As they cascade to the ground, the unsure clumps of my anxiety cling to their frosted forest. I realize I have now become an old man. One who postulates his body in the mirror. Gray haired and frail, makes deals with God. Recalls the younger days of younger bones in my ancient and satisfied conquering.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

On the 50<sup>th</sup> day of our captivity we drove over town to see the little one. He hid behind his mother's skirt still afraid of perpetual Halloween. We brought cheap plastic toys (stores were still closed) and some candy to placate the waves. We sat six feet apart on the picnic table. But it was really a million.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

In your mind your soul meanders down quiet streets and careless intersections of your city. You are compelled by instinct alone to trace your steps. Fed by the sunlight you take your first tentative steps into civilization.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

On the 87<sup>th</sup> day of our imprisonment we drove down the highway looking for a place to breathe without a mask on. No itinerary. Nor real destination. Only the radio on to heal the miles between us. With the cameras silken eye we check for ghost passengers in wayward windows.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

We set out by car to the county, driving just driving, our first attempts at buoyancy to right the ship to even keel. The magic became the moving. The cure became the sun forging new pathways in the blood. Counting the rolling carpet of miles behind us and between us. To seek reprieve from psychic cages, to seek freedom in the road ahead. To find tiny comfort in the amnesia of driving.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

You play this endless loop over and over in your mind. Say to yourself: I will go where the wind takes me to seek my rest. I must find my Eden, my eternal vacation spot. My Elysian fields where I will gaze upon the broad silver slopes where white water flashes up and down the valley. Like Horace nowadays we banish our troubles with food, wine and song. Even in the midst of this war we fuck and fight and laugh. Under the pandemic of false weather we sleep with golden fishes, chase our tails around endless rooms. Sparked by the amnesia of electricity we get lulled into robot complacency.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Sunday cleaned the house. Folded some laundry, did the dishes. Went to Niagara Falls in my mind. Reading books for hours on end now. My brain gone to mush. I have unplugged the fear creeping in our wires. I am wearing new slippers and a t-shirt. We both tried a new wine in the fridge. Now reading seven old emails from friends trying to keep my mind from folding in.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

I read somewhere today that when doppelganger blink it brings on death. Norman Levine once said "All life once lived is fiction." Where is the end of this ink trail? Where is the turnaround point to slow this moving nightmare to a screeching halt?

# Joseph Farley

## Honey Do

I waste my time with poetry  
because it's something to do.  
Rain is drowning the street  
and television isn't my thing.  
I could do something practical  
like plugging a leak  
or cleaning the sink,  
but I won't. No, don't ask.  
I have a pen now and paper.  
No. You'll just have to wait  
until I am through  
wasting the hours  
I could have spent  
doing things for you.

## Embers in the ash

There was a season  
when you loved me,  
but that ended.  
The sun grew hot  
and dried the garden,  
turning all to sand.

Cold came later.  
That barren space  
became something  
I could not look upon.

Gnarled now, old,  
limbs inflamed,  
I dwell on memories,  
good but brief.

How distant all that was,  
the green years,  
when young legs ran,  
the touch before  
it was forbidden,  
the heart before  
it grew thorns.

## The Purge

Books burned. Statues smashed.  
This happens now and happened in the past.  
Generations later scholars will lament,  
as some lament now,  
but who listens to learned fools  
in the time of frenzy?  
Who has the power to say no  
to the almighty rulers, the zealots, the mob?  
Why not fall and shatter with the rest?  
It so much easier to forget,  
just grab a broom and sweep up the mess.  
All is permitted for fear and truth,  
and Truth when written large  
tolerates no questioning.  
The inquisition is now on line  
and never stops its gaze.  
Who will really miss what is gone?  
Not many, easily silenced or ignored.  
The new stasis will become the new complacency,  
waiting for the next eruption,  
from above or below,  
with blind eyes and deaf ears.

## When the cows come home

They'll be carrying tubas,  
And ringing bells  
Between their horns.  
The milk shall taste no better,  
But the grass in the meadow  
Will never feel like same.

### Not Semaphore

A slice of orange  
a split of the sun,  
a smile in passing  
an eye  
    meeting yours

The language we speak,  
so much better than words

but just as difficult  
to understand

### Concert in Millersville

Musicians gather  
like crows in a cornfield  
all in black,  
making such noise  
the farmers must stop  
the harvest  
and listen.

### Current state of the beast

The bones on which  
    I hang my skin  
Have stood up for me  
    so far

through snow and wind  
    and summer heat  
and an autumn cursed  
    by man and god.

I'm satisfied with  
    the price I paid,  
and the usage  
    to this date.

I would like another  
    two hundred thousand miles,  
though years would be preferred.

I doubt this skeleton

and all it supports  
will last as long as tree  
found deep in a swamp  
or mountain range  
away from meddling axes.

I shall keep it  
as long as I can,  
put it through its paces.  
No chance of a trade in  
or a new one I can purchase

Perhaps a gift for charity  
when there are no roads left  
to travel.

It was what I had.  
It did its best  
to serve the purpose chosen.

It would be right for me  
to remember it  
when it is gone,  
but I don't think I'll be able.

Such gifts as these,  
while not the best,  
do us well for so long,  
it is right to take them with us,  
a faithful servant in the grave

except that damnable knee  
that always gave out  
when needed.

# John Grey

## DROUGHT TIMES

In drought, the mind conjures up dragons,  
great fire-breathing sky monsters,  
flames scorching the land  
and an appetite for even the merest of clouds.

But here, down in the wheat fields,  
there are no knights, armor-clad,  
emerging from the withered crop  
to battle the beast, no Saint George  
to slay the endless dry, merit his  
own celebratory day in this small  
mid-western town.

In drought, there's also the bankers,  
not serpent-like, not legendary,  
just the kind of ordinary folks  
who wear suits in hot weather  
and answer to some faceless VP  
in a distant city when it comes to  
who's booted from their farm and who's not.

No one beheads them though a guy  
got drunk once and took a pot shot  
at the repo men who'd come to  
haul away his tractor.

It rains eventually  
So the dragon goes back into its cave.  
The gun is locked in its case.  
But they're not going anywhere.

## WHAT MY FATHER NEVER SAID

Hear this.

I have a confession to make.

There's no such thing as the man of the house.

Or a family hierarchy

where what I say is gospel,

and orders that begin with me

are delegated

to you miserable bunch of kids.

You've been used all these years.

Manipulated.

Caged by your own fear,

your own ignorance

into this place you find yourself.

You're like the faceless denizens

of a dictatorship,

the inmates of a prison.

But no more of that.

I quit.

You're free.

All of you.

No, he never said any of that.

And yet still we sat there, didn't move.

He wasn't even in the room at the time.

So no way we could hear  
what he never said.

## THE DISTANCES

Too sad to even blow her nose.  
That's the truth of the matter.  
And it has to start snowing,  
blanketing the oil stains in the driveway.  
What's a face at the window to do?

He's gone and so has the center of the universe.  
He could be a mile away or ten thousand.  
Distances double with each tear.

Since they've been together,  
she's known a thousand ways of him leaving.  
Sometimes he goes to work.  
Or to a buddy's house for a Friday night poker game.  
And she always forgets that he'll be back.

Sun's setting.  
There's more of her face in the glass.  
Reflection was designed for solitude.  
From the eyes to the mouth,  
it's like a map of the years she's lived.  
And no matter how much she's looks.  
there's only ever her in there.

Then he pulls into the drive.  
But even his return feels temporary.  
She has no idea what he's done  
every moment he's been away.  
So many of them, she's sure,  
excuses for keeping the two of them apart,  
As she hears the key in the lock,  
she finally wipes her face.  
She doesn't want him seeing her  
the way she sees herself.

## **WHEN I CALLED HER BETH INSTEAD OF SUE**

She leapt from the bed,  
grabbed madly at her scattered clothes,  
roughly donned underwear,  
dragged a dress down over her body  
then slipped on her shoes,  
one huff at a time.

When I called her Beth instead of Sue.  
I could have kicked myself.  
But I learned my lesson.  
When I pleaded stay instead of go,  
she didn't hear it from me.

## YESTERDAY, CAUGHT IN THE ACT

It's a language I don't remember speaking  
but surely I once did.  
It's half-spoken, half-shouted,  
by children in the schoolyard,  
high-pitched, even the boys,  
uncouth and tactless,  
though not so much the girls.

A stroll by my old school  
reconnects me with that first day,  
the sheer terror of letting go my mother's hand.  
She says I talked it up for weeks  
before I started.  
But then, when the day came,  
and she dressed me in that  
yellow and gray school uniform,  
I was all obedience and panic.

A teacher stands off to the side of the action.  
She's young. She almost seems friendly.  
But I couldn't judge ages when I was a kid.  
Everyone was older - much older.  
And fearsome.  
Even the simplest suggestion  
sounded like a military order.

I wonder which of these boys  
is the bully,  
who is the runt that gets pushed around.  
I took my share of punishment  
until I finally excelled at something -  
being witty (for someone my age at least.)  
Everybody loves a clown, so they say.  
At least, nobody steals a clown's lunch money.

I can remember, in grade six or seven,  
having a window seat, drawing doodles  
in my notebook, glancing every now and then  
at girls playing basketball,  
setting aside how much I despised the opposite sex  
for a moment  
to dwell on that kiss at the end  
of the movie I saw on the previous weekend.

I'm not ghost hunting here.  
Nor am I wallowing in nostalgia.  
But there's no getting past  
the giant fig tree, the concrete cricket pitch,  
the old wooden buildings  
where I learned to read and spell.  
Every now and then, I come by here,  
spend time with a little of my yesterdays.  
It does no harm  
and it saves me the trouble of forgetting.

# Tomms Sanches Hidalgo

## Lolitas Store

It's usually argued:

the Old World descends, say, from Jerusalem, from Athens;  
misogynist really, since the dawn of time,  
i.e. droit du seigneur, or burning of adulteresses.

In Ancient Greece,  
the nobles had a predilection for their ephebos  
(from behind... is that love too?),  
with the females relegated to a secondary circle;  
in the sacred scriptures they're referred to as vipers,  
synonym of perdition  
(word of God).

Taking it to an extreme and familiar case,  
we find misogynists like **Voltaire, like Frederick the Great,**  
proponents of enlightened absolutism.

Ehh...I'm not sure,  
in the same boat as well, perhaps, Mallarmé  
("Perdition was my Beatrice").

In that way even Marx, even **Engels:**  
**women stopped then from being marked territory.**

Are you not going directly home today, sir?

Well... You can always hire someone.

## Dead bullfighter in front of a mirror

The roses don't work,

I'm dead I'm ashamed,

in my left side, too red, the blood doesn't work,

no tears, the infinite awaits:

you, surrounded by bulls,

you had just recently been unaware of it:

the patient gods yearn to submerge themselves in our fears.

# Rustin Larson

## Chinese Convenience Store

The mysterious Chinese convenience store,  
whose second door opens upon the darkened China  
of the imagination, is right here,

its tea some sort of excursion as it enters your lips,  
this fragmentation, what will only make whatever  
possible, published

in a few journals, my authorship,  
very little money, but the tea  
temporarily deals with the depression,

not permanent,

I found out, but temporary, even earth  
someday and Shakespeare  
reinvented, on another relatively cool day.

I think I am coming out  
of the tunnel of myself,  
this life, a Rustin Larson--

echoing back in my subconscious, though--  
snatches of French and German--  
online with a green  
windfall tomato-- an image  
of dueling in my mind,

fencers suspended by hot-air balloons  
over the English Channel.

Another mist, there are roadways

to walk within me. Some apparition--  
hitchhiker waving a flashlight--  
driver makes the long slow stop

on the deserted Devonshire highway.  
The rider boards, wants to be left off  
at the bridge, disembarks, vanishes.

The masks we wear now,  
these bodies, this flesh. They say  
that somewhere there are men made

half out of machinery-- watch parts,  
microscopes, assorted gizmos--  
say these poor creatures mourn

for the chance to be us-- to see with our eyes--  
for our greatest moment of pain  
they would surrender their souls.

I want to walk out into the change.  
The earth's odometer clicks another digit,  
not sure what I'm looking for,

Nathaniel Hawthorne, maybe,  
lighting a couple pitch-pines on fire  
like huge candles in the woods near the reservoir,

on that wooded path past the new  
sub-division and condominiums.  
I should just get up and walk.  
O Mitochondria

Decided Walden was the book for me.

Portrait of the Artist was oppressing my brain.  
So I quit mid-novel and moved out to Thoreau.

On September 11, 2001, my first inclination  
was to not turn on the television all day long.  
And then my daughter Katie called.

All the rest is spin and typography.  
No it's another school day, Sarah twiddling  
a pencil over her spelling, Julia with a teacher

she loves, and Katie in Art History,  
hopefully digging it to death.  
On my walk I saw lots of small sunflowers

leaning over the path-- plants bloomed  
and overgrown since I last walked there.  
Black-eyed Susans. There has been a lot of rain lately

and so I rounded the turnstile at reservoir #2  
and made my way back, maybe about two miles today.  
There were crows rasping in the branches above me,

there was a beautiful black butterfly  
floating in a patch of light between the trees.  
Things that live in the forest are black sometimes.

But the butterfly iridesced with blue and shimmers  
of yellow and red.  
The colors of nature are frequently prismatic

like crystals: butterfly wings, the feathers  
of a bird. I can see the grass  
from where I sit. Succulent, verdant.

It has been that way all summer.

The dingle berry tree will lose its leaves,  
but not its dingle berries.

People will go to the football game  
in black V-neck sweaters with a large orange  
"F" on the left breast.

Clouds are watching us.  
Angela came to visit Sarah  
and now they are on the other side.

I make a silent dialogue with the aches in various places.  
I wish someone would fold a paper crane for me.  
I am determined as ever, but, as you can see, diffuse.

## Masonite

A 14x18 slab of Masonite costs about 75cents  
at the lumberyard:  
All-metal signboards: slogans from the 1940s:  
Mule Shingles, They Haven't Kicked in a Million Feet.  
Incomprehensible. I guess there might be a secret  
handshake involved in lumberyards,  
but I don't know any of them. They were able  
to cut the Masonite from a piece of scrap  
and now Katie will have something to paint upon  
at her lesson tonight. Like a woman  
drinking coffee at a sidewalk table, I am  
indulging in my journal. That is, there  
are ghosts around me proclaiming I should  
work at a lumberyard. The guy didn't look  
too busy to me-- cutting a measly piece  
of Masonite at 10:20 in the morning.  
I think he should keep a journal, call it  
The Lumberyard Chronicles. In time,  
he'll start sipping mochas and menstruating.  
The cleaning woman is vacuuming the hallway.  
12:05 pm. She, on the other hand, is way too  
busy for a journal. I'm not even going to suggest it.  
For her?-- evening church services and volunteer work.  
Why flirt with creative writing? It only makes  
you temperamental, and I don't like that  
in a cleaning lady. The lumberyard guy, however,  
needs just a touch of introspective  
and a whisper of aesthetic flamboyance.  
He should keep a journal and maybe change  
his eyewear to café glasses. Now that  
would be funky. He'd acquire a small cult  
of devotees who would listen to his journal rants  
in-between cuts of Masonite. They could  
install a cappuccino machine amidst all

the saw dust. It could be the next Thing.

Real Peace

Sun brightly shining, or the entire city  
banked in fog, in Amsterdam, someone eating a thinly sliced,  
cold breakfast bacon, yellow cheese with coffee,  
croissants. Someone will make his way  
to a marijuana café and see specks of light  
as the trains run more or less on time.  
Clocks will chime on mantels trimmed with blue tiles.  
For five seconds of real time, no  
violence anywhere.  
An eternity in God's eyes.  
Peace. The trick to continuously  
relive five seconds like  
Scrooge keeping Christmas (the spirit of)  
365 days of the year, perpetuating that  
like how the carpet needs to be vacuumed,  
laundry put away, collectively speaking,  
an at-risk household. In 1972,  
I was some sort of turkey-killing Davy Crockett,  
my friend and I waging battles  
with toy muskets on the earthen dome  
of Katie's root cellar,  
she blind with diabetes  
and living in a shack attached  
to that mound of earth. We patiently  
accepted her bug-dented and half-green apples  
as treats on Halloween, standing  
in her dark shack and inspected by her blind witch's fingers.  
She couldn't see,  
but saw deeply what we could only vaguely sense,  
making the hairs rise on the hackles  
of our necks. Wind blew  
out the jagged smile of the pumpkins.  
Somewhere in black spits

of rain, a cat screamed.

On Sundays, I lit the candles  
at Good Shepherd, balked at lifting the lid of the baptismal font,  
envisioning a green ball of snakes writhing in the water,  
was criticized for lighting the candles too slowly,  
praised for lighting the candles  
with much reverence and dignity. If I moved  
too quickly, truth be told, I'd extinguish the flame  
on the thingamajig. (I never truly knew its name.)

## California

My friends and I fantasized, calculated  
how many peanut-butter sandwiches  
and Fritos it would take to get there. Running  
away from home meant packing a bandanna  
full of toys and hiding behind the huge  
elm on the playground until noon. We skirted  
around it, its huge roots, imagining  
a narrow mountain pass. In winter, frozen  
puddles on the roots were lakes as seen  
from 10,000. Our scarves were oxygen  
masks. Small branches were hiking staffs. Christmas  
came but once a year and it was the X  
on our treasure map: A Johnny Eagle  
safari rifle with telescope showed  
how to take down the big game, a bull  
elephant collapsing into the dust.  
Nebraska was number one, playing  
in the Orange Bowl. There were cookies  
and caramel-covered marshmallows. The darkness  
of night would bring a stranger to the door.  
No room at the inn. We would light Wednesday-  
night candles in church so the baby Jesus  
could find his way to the manger. Every  
winter a child was born, and every spring  
a young man died at 3 a.m. on McVicar  
Freeway & the circus came with junior  
lion-tamer's whips for \$3 and plastic  
megaphones. Spring's grave grew thick with grass;  
the sun grew hot. We emerged from chlorine  
blue shirtless and whole and nine years old  
with Monet in Venice for water flowing  
out of our pool-clouded vision, and Vermeer,  
the gist of his metaphor, the light not  
only from the stillness but from inside the eye.

# Julian Gallo

## **Wednesday morning, 7:30am**

We are descending deeper into a national madness, day by day, and yet there's a sizable portion of the population who are fully on board. What can one say, really other than you make your bed, be prepared to lie in it? I'm increasingly disgusted, mentally and emotionally exhausted with all of it, and am losing any sense of giving a shit and just want to turn off, to be perfectly honest. It's as if we all exist in a dark satire, it's script written by madmen.

The president is now retweeting videos of a 'doctor' who believes in demon sex and alien DNA and his followers just go along with it, sharing it along with him, not even taking a moment to consider its truthfulness, not even taking a moment to realize what it is they're even spreading around, so long as it validates their point of view. It's all driven by a slavish adherence to ideology, naturally, this cult-like obedience to both man and idea.

There's no shortage of this mindlessness, though, and there's enough to go around for everyone, since it isn't only the president and his supporters. Everyone is preaching to their own choirs and believing they're 'making a difference'. All anyone is doing is shouting at one another and basking in applause from those that already agree with them. No actual discussion is being had on how to retreat from this insanity. Perhaps we've reached the end of our rope and we are simply watching a culture collapse in real time. The ultimate reality show — the one everyone had been preparing for over the past twenty-odd years of viewing and emotionally participating in.

This year, thus far, has been hard on everyone but there comes a point where one needs to turn away from it all. Life's too short for this idiocy and I, for one, have had enough of it. If it's not the steady drumbeat of idiocy, it's the mindset of those who wake up each day and instead of celebrating being alive (150,000 people didn't get that chance), choose to do battle with everything and everyone around them, some of whom, despite my warnings not to do so, continue to send me this bullshit via private messages in their desperate attempts to either spread their idiotic conspiracy theories and/or to continue to bang the drum for their chosen messiahs, not to mention 'fish' for my opinions, which they're not going to get. Needless to say, as promised, those folks have been jettisoned.

I'm just fucking done with it all. There comes a point when enough is enough.

As you were...

# Bob Ezergailis

270720A

-----

Depend on  
undependable things  
and on anyone  
packaged in with them  
comes along  
for the ride  
that takes you down  
into the lonely with.

Hate to admit  
you do not like  
any of the what  
that someone chose  
to flesh into  
the cosy corners  
you tried to defend  
from hostile takeovers.

All that ever meant  
is special dislikes  
makes for friends  
to keep distance  
comfort zoned  
table arranged  
at the rub elbows  
of the don't want.

Erogenous drugs  
jacking off places  
in mind drift  
sticky banter dances  
making celebration  
of dead subjects  
reconfigure being  
into placeholders.

Wanting someone  
in the usual crowds  
of the not there  
takes it all down  
arranged singular  
blasts of social  
dismemberments  
on the mind fields.

Chatter boxed in  
to stuffed full  
with not  
having any  
that really feels

like anything  
closer than over  
a sliver of Moon.

-----

270720B

-----

Killed it  
before the get up  
and the after  
of parting shot  
wipe outs  
in allegations  
of the valleys  
of pelvis.

Nearly met  
beloveds  
in the scatter  
heaped  
of otherness  
pointless looks  
for the unreal  
of a real thing.

No one  
was the only  
truly of sincere  
around about it  
all takes time  
to dying out  
without better  
sorted options.

Cut off dead  
line thin  
shorted ropes  
of strangle projects  
at stumble start  
turned cancel  
for a laugh  
culture.

Don't know  
in the never will  
phase outs  
of anticipations  
past the blocked  
off tragedies  
waste of the best  
of times.

Leaves at  
trying to forget  
being a discard  
wrap up

to that maximum  
of get  
breaking away  
the was not yet.

A build up  
along borders  
of silence waved  
good bye  
sampled hostilities  
all gone intent  
ways and means  
differences.

It never grew  
from stunted  
scrubbed missions  
tangle of no  
body really  
left at far out  
shock wave  
let downs.

-----

270720C

-----

Thought curdling  
silent scream  
spikes the dulled  
out of context  
conditions pressed  
out seedy spurt  
ejection of catch  
culture subsistence  
ventures of discouragement.

Eat a heart crush  
out of hollow  
candy shelled  
empty run on  
records of searched  
for the never found  
and each starburst  
along the go to  
in the never reached.

Incessant climb  
crashed looks  
life goes for  
take out  
shaped containers  
tempted sugar  
talk sweets  
grind habit sorts  
of fixes.

All the teardrops  
in the world  
cried for no one  
in me love you  
statements of mind  
filled up  
salt shaker full  
white scratches  
of sprinkle.

charcoal blacked  
burnt crisp suffers  
deactivated down  
distillate to isolate  
might have been  
raw ingredient  
failed at don't  
know what ever  
of really about.

Psychology plea  
bargain of versions  
revised modern  
explanations why  
we don't ever  
and never could  
really get that  
way out of our  
owned minds.

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010820A

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Time ticks on  
swallowed up  
in the don't know  
what and to do  
about and around  
wander anything  
place to taken  
on spin rides  
in make dizzy  
take downs  
confusion clog  
of that way  
and this way  
to no way at all.

The do you in  
to the only  
to do you out  
of any possible  
choose from  
bits of cancel  
cultured options

snap rubber  
band plays  
its dead song  
deep sting  
broken rip  
sawed remains  
of snap soul.

Little doll  
trapped pin  
sharp pain  
of no one  
in the nowhere  
cries the lone  
stuck at no way  
to go forward  
or go back  
gets nothing  
but a laugh  
on the run down  
run over route  
of a two way.

Taking damage  
both sides  
of cannot solve  
the primal  
equation variables  
ends at factored  
out of it all  
clock ticking  
the dead line  
roster drop  
beat down  
into stale dated  
trash cornered  
dream bursts.

They exploded  
the dreamt  
welcome sorts  
of any real  
and wanted  
in the ever after  
writing out  
of torment scene  
left to fail  
attempted gone  
the jump off  
point blank  
imagined freed  
at no chance.

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010820B

-----

Woman's prerogative  
catch glance of say  
out of flash floods  
quicken humanity  
along rush overs  
routed detour void  
brush aside winged  
death angels passing  
in hush conversation  
avoidance of any  
alien contact.

Wilt into invisible  
horror of soft touch  
picked at bone  
near the poison  
of watering hole  
crowded slickers  
in the babble same  
pull string repeat  
limits of tonal range  
tongue depressed  
coin slot phrases.

Nothing to say  
through the cracks  
between interrupts  
so hold your tongue  
and stick it in  
your own pocket  
where it can play  
a death rattle  
of wondering if  
you are wanted  
poster material.

Heartless deck  
of poker face hands  
shifty eyed gleams  
at the scuttlebutt  
and boast wager  
brow damp rush  
felt distant scream  
losing streak  
at the take away  
turned bum's rush  
concrete terms.

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It is a mad, mad, world. Try as hard as you might, to really connect where you would really want to connect to, it remains all about the disconnections. No point playing postman anymore. There is nothing personal in that mail box. No point waiting for that phone to ring. When the bells toll, they toll for you, but it is nothing personal.

# Post Scriptum

## Bruce Wise

OxArm

by Seer Ablicudew

"You will attack the Westland."

—Marduk, Babylonian inscription

It was a social cult of insurrectionality  
that idolized and worshipped but one personality;  
He was put in, installed as such. He was Comrade OxArm.  
He was protector of the masses for whom he'd do harm  
to any enemy who did not follow him awoke,  
to any enemy who would not fall before his yoke.  
Indoctrination followed fast initiation's work,  
all freedoms banned for any who did not obey his Word.  
His justice was terrific, his global mobs proclaimed,  
and everywhere he went was universally acclaimed.

Seer Ablicudew is a poet of prophecy.

A Lover of Pound,

Bruce Dale Wise

Show original message

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