

# APOTHEOSIS

## JOURNAL OF THE POETIC GENIUS SOCIETY

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NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2002 ISSUE  
VOLUME III – NUMBER 6

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DR. GREG A. GROVE  
PGS FOUNDER

Members, please send submissions to:

[marknorm@adelphia.net](mailto:marknorm@adelphia.net)



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*This e-publication is an open forum for the members of the Poetic Genius Society. Material presenting views or opinions are those of the artists and may or may not be representative of the group as a whole.*

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# POETRY

## **Pain knows no memory - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

Pain knows no memory, I've heard,  
But 't is a foul deceit,  
An empty consolation hurled  
By those not in receipt.

Agony builds strong character,  
If it does not kill you--  
Words no agonized would ever  
Utter, if he pain knew.

"Consider the pain of others  
And how much more it is,"  
Some thoughtless knave always mutters  
Because this pain's not his.

Let this pain strengthen someone else;  
Take him instead, O Lord,

For one more moment of this curse  
I hardly can afford.

Put all my aching bones to peace,  
My character is made,  
From this agony please release,  
End this too sharp tirade.

But if You shall not, this I ask,  
At least do not forget  
That I have suffered at this task  
And have such torture met,

So when the crowns are handed out,  
At least I, too, shall wear,  
Something fitting of this, my gout,  
And all I do forbear.

### **The Trench at the Bottom of the Day - Jonathan Marin**

It's the hour when children wet their beds  
And gargoyle shrieks resound in heads  
That quake with ruptured conscience.  
It's the drainhole hour, the nadir hour,  
The hour before the sun comes up,  
When dreamers rue dishonored vows  
And swearing not to vow again  
Renew them.

Defeated moments, wan and drab  
Collect like stains on a spill-marred slab.  
The squandered minutes days slough off  
Form a life-thick coat of chances lost,  
A grimy, cracked and mottled crust,  
Like a flattened Hooperesque collage,  
Pimpled and pitted with oily rust  
On the grease-streaked floor of an old garage.  
Scrapings and shavings of hard-nosed hours  
That knew no ease and brooked no sloth  
All sink and settle in the drainhole trough  
And encrust the hole with a hardening froth.  
Powerplays, mindgames,  
Put-downs, push-backs,  
Schedules, timeframes,  
Dodges and fall-backs,  
Form as a fog of choking lint,  
Dry as calcite, fierce as flint  
That grinds the echoes of the trench  
Like cursewords cut in a concrete bench.

From infinite unfocussed depths  
Of gray translucent cheerless light  
Regrets march out in festive dress.  
Forgotten failures flaunt themselves:  
They hoot and leer,  
They taunt and sneer  
At mornings spent on what to wear,  
At afternoons spent coiffing hair,  
At evenings squandered to TV,  
At lives spent planning what to be.  
They moon and fart, they gorge and wallow,  
They cheer as wasted moments follow  
To float and drift and slither and sink  
In the hour before the sun comes up  
-- The trench at the bottom of the day.

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### **Renewed Faith - Tine Wilde**

My mother used to know  
exactly how things stood:  
the seventh day was the end of the week  
and apples rarely hit the dish.

Now that she is standing  
so close before death's door  
she goes again -  
in total accordance with modern times  
attending course.

The stories from Testament -  
we should not take them all too literally,  
the modernistic preacher patiently explained,  
and prophets are called journalists these days.

Now this clears up a lot at once!  
It is just like making crossword puzzles in the paper,  
she confides me somewhat secretly,  
You can read the solution every other week -  
always on the seventh page.

## **Grenaded Spam - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

Spam I am, Spam I am,  
Would you like to read some spam?

I do not like grenaded spam,  
I do not like it, Spam I am.

Would you, could you,  
with disclaimers?

I would not, could not,  
with disclaimers.

I do not like grenaded spam,  
I do not like it, Spam I am.

Would you, could you,  
with hot pictures?

I would not, could not,  
with hot pictures.

I do NOT like grenaded spam,  
I do not like it, Spam I am.

Would you, could you  
caught off guard?

I will not, shall not  
be off my guard.

I so detest grenaded spam,  
I'd rather eat Green Eggs and Ham!

I would not, could not, with disclaimers.  
I would not, could not, with hot pictures.  
I shall not, will not be off my guard!  
So shove that disclaimer really hard!

Spam I am, Spam I am,  
I will not buy your hidden cam!  
If you try just ONE more spam  
I'll slaughter you faster than the lamb,  
So scam, scam, scam, and take your scam  
And get the hell from me, you sham!

Would you, could you ....

BLAM BLAM BLAM

## **The Art of the Poem - Jonathan Marin**

If you want to write poetry  
That serious journals will accept  
You must acknowledge that it is  
An art you have to work at  
But if you practice diligently  
It isn't hard.

What you have to do is write simple prose  
Always remembering to hit carriage return  
Instead of waiting for lines to wrap  
And then make sure to capitalize whatever word comes  
Next  
Or editors will accuse you of imitating Cummings and  
dismiss you as derivative  
unless you're already famous.

Every so often hit carriage return twice.  
Then you have a stanza.  
Some poets just set their margins narrow  
And it comes out pretty much the same  
But purists frown on that and  
It really does seem a little like cheating.

Be sure to include some nice word-pictures.  
They can be strings of nouns and adjectives  
Verbs don't count for much.  
The pictures don't have to connect with each other  
But it's not a problem if some of them do.

Use a thesaurus to amass clumps of related words.  
Your job as poet is to spray them out  
Like a mist collecting around an idea  
(Not to splash them  
Like drizzle in a mudpuddle)  
Though some poets prefer to spread them gently  
Like the morning dew on a city landfill.  
As long as it seems that a feeling or thought  
Is in really in there somewhere  
It's up to the reader to tease it out.  
A poet can only do so much.

Invest in a big dictionary  
The biggest you can afford  
So you use can use words few readers will understand.  
Readers will think you're smart  
And concede they can't hope to understand your thought

If they can't understand your words.  
Most will have the humility to acknowledge  
That it must be a very profound thought indeed  
If even you, smart as you are,  
Cannot quite express it.

It takes courage to admit to not understanding something  
When others say they do.  
You can count on most people  
Not to have it  
And on those who don't to ridicule those who do.  
When people begin to publish speculations  
About what you are really trying to say  
Your reputation is assured.

Now you know.

### **Spam - C.L Frost**

If Yahoo serves us lots of spam,  
Why not also toast and jam,  
Eggs steaming on a breakfast tray,  
Espresso for a hopping day?

Though bacon makes 'em smack 'em  
And slick fried chicken makes 'em lick 'em,  
Spam and ham are fat and salty;  
Give me Ovaltine, sweet and malty.  
If you do, here's what I'll do -  
I'll give my lard-lush spam to you  
Gratis, free, no need to pay.  
(So, is there a deal between us two?)

### **Art of the Poem - proliferates (Addendum) - Jonathan Marin**

Some successful poets like to sit in the bathtub  
Free-associating to a tape recorder  
Plugged into the socket above the light  
Instead of the electric razor.  
This is a perfectly workable approach  
Especially for poets with beards  
But to keep the dictionary and thesaurus from getting wet  
It's best not to fill the bathtub.

## Ars(e) Poetica - Quinn Tyler Jackson

### I

Ah christalmighty man, give me a break!  
I bust my ars to make my poems rhyme,  
And some Joe Blow gets published all the time,  
Yet he's obviously some lazy fake!  
Christalmighty man, lead me to the wake  
Of the Muse, since 'tis obvious some crime  
Has been committed: She's been snuffed. The time  
Was when it took a little while to make  
Poetry — now it's fallen to that pack  
Of Sunday writers who never would have  
Been printed in the past. Who the hell  
Do they think they are? Someone smart should smack  
Their stuff in a pile and light it, or have  
Laws been passed to protect against the smell?

### II

To all those who claim the Sonnet is dead,  
That it's outlived its function, that people  
Don't want rhyme so you have to be careful  
To splatter words until the reader's head  
Is so battered he doesn't know he read  
A poem, I say: Who wants a work full  
Of wandering and muttering and bull  
That doesn't hold together with a thread?  
(Of course, to be good such "poems" are shaped like  
Bells or trees, or whatever one desires  
To convey. Instead of saying, "The tree  
Grew high," these writers show us what it's like,  
So when I read it to my friend, he stares  
And says, "I don't follow what I can't see!")

### III

Is that the root of poetry at all?  
(And when I say root, I don't have to draw  
The tree that grows from it!) In its most raw  
State, poetry is spoken to enthrall  
With its sounds and the images they call  
To the mind of the listener. The law  
Before writing was to sit 'round a braw  
Fire and listen to the bards' many tall  
Poetic tales. With no writing, they could  
Only be recalled through meter and rhyme.  
(For the poems were very long then.) In  
Those days, one couldn't shape the scop's spoke word  
Into Eiffel Tower or the sublime

Mountain spruce. This they could not imagine.

#### IV

If you make a prose piece too short to be  
Printed as prose, and break it up into  
Fits and starts that rhyme only rarely, you  
Still have a prose piece and not poetry.  
And, even if it calls to mind two, three,  
Or even more images, when you're through  
With your writing, no matter what you do,  
It is still prose, just prose shaped like a tree!  
"But people don't want to read the Sonnet!"  
Some concrete writer will surely yell loud;  
"They have had enough of meter and rhyme!"  
If good ones were written today, I'd bet  
By modern poetics they'd be allowed,

But rhyming "moon" with "June" has seen its time.

#### V

Well, it doesn't even have to rhyme, since  
There's always devices that steal the need  
For the "moons" and "Junes;" if they would just read  
A bit they would discover assonance,  
Alliteration, and the like. The dense  
And numerous volumes from the past, indeed  
Any poem written before the seed  
Of e.e. cummings' crowd landed, would cleanse  
Their minds of the belief that poems require  
Obscurity to be profound. Classes  
At the local university would  
Put them straight and get them out of the dire  
Habits that they've acquired in great masses.  
Then their poetry would ring like it should.

#### VI

Nor does today's Sonnet need the "thous"  
Or "doths," words which are often in misuse  
From the repetition and harsh abuse  
Of those who would some nostalgia arouse  
In us. But the Sonnet form still allows  
For more modern words and rhyme that's more loose  
Than old convention would admit. The Muse  
Does not have to be outdated in vows  
For a sonnet to be good; for indeed,  
Shakespeare's clowns very colloquially spoke  
On subjects that were as vulgar's could be,  
Yet somehow, the Bard managed to include  
A rhyme that summed the essence of the joke  
So well, though not anachronistically.

## VII

That is, in Shakespeare's time, the words he threw  
About did not fall heavily on th' tongue  
As they do now. Since the Sonnet's still sung,  
I say to cummings and his merry crew  
Who so often ramble, scramble, and screw  
About the page: Your messy work has stung  
Us with its novelty, but what is young  
Is not always what has stronger sinew  
Holding it together. When the Muse comes,  
Pouring great visions in your head, it's best  
To do those visions justice. Drawing tree  
Or tower is for the painter — it comes  
From practice with brushes. Make your quest  
An honest one: write some real poetry!

### **Flagellate - by Ann Franklin**

She likens me to some  
Single-celled organism  
Which wears its' primitive heart  
Upon a transparent membrane or two.  
In the admittance of sins  
Both past and present  
I am purged by the whirling  
Of my own cilia.

### **On scary days - Melinda Frye**

On scary days like this  
I want to bury my head in the sand,  
To have the sound of sirens  
Drowned out by a marching band...  
To pull my dress over my head,  
To shut my eyes and have one long kiss...  
Yeah, I'd almost rather be dead  
On scary days like this.

## Poetic License - Quinn Tyler Jackson

Poets can say  
anything and get  
off scot-free,  
or can we?

Can we speak the pain  
in our bones so loudly  
that the reader wants  
to have his legs  
amputated now damnit  
now cut the damned  
things off?

Can we cry about  
inconsequence,  
or do we have to  
say something royal  
if we are to be heard  
by reality?

Can we tell ourselves  
what we really think  
or do we have to  
muddle and mutter  
it up, butter it up,  
clutter up our words  
so no one really  
has a damned clue  
what we really, really  
think?

Can we dance on the precipice  
at two in the morning,  
wondering if we'll ever get  
to sleep, and say that?

Poets can say anything  
and get away  
almost free of scot,  
or can we?

## **A Resurrection - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

a boring story about  
a boy and his dog  
and coffee drinking  
and chain-smoking  
did you come expecting  
more from this tale  
than that

a drawn out recollection  
of a young man and his cat  
and coffee drinking  
and chain-smoking  
did you expect insurrection  
and get the mundane  
in its stead

the yawning memoirs  
of a man and his vodka  
and coffee drinking  
and chain-smoking  
did you expect a thrill  
and get let down  
by the truth

a boy and his dog  
a young man and his cat  
a man and his vodka

that is all there is to tell  
is it the story of my life  
sure as hell not  
but what i can tell you about  
is coffee drinking  
and chain-smoking

no dog  
no cat  
no vodka

but pull up a seat  
and suffer the indignation  
of my black coffee breath  
and the kiss of death  
that is chain-smoking  
and we will have  
a resurrection

**T**

### **this is the Art I Seek - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

this is the art i seek  
not something i can put  
only my mind to  
but that puts its mind  
to me

this is the place i seek  
not a where i can be  
only in place  
but nowhere and everywhere  
inside outside  
for the ride of me

this is the mind i break  
through neural osmosis  
once twice thrice  
into and beyond  
ripples on the ponder  
beyond wonderful

this is the promise i make  
to myself and around  
beyond boundaries  
putting my mind  
aloud beyond  
what has been  
allowed me

this is the part i seek  
nothing i can describe  
only a kind of  
christmas wrapping  
unopened until  
the time comes  
to be

### **i wish the world - Trivik Bhavnani**

i wish the world  
could not  
i wish the world  
did not

i wish the world  
chose not  
to make me  
cry

## **In My Bones - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

there's a solid  
weariness  
in my bones  
an emptiness that  
won't leave me  
alone as i consider  
choices i have made  
in this  
my life's far too  
noisy parade

is a man all  
he is made out to be  
and if so  
just who  
must do the making  
is a tear  
drawn from some  
remembered hurt  
easily erased  
as it draws its line  
down across  
his torn masculinity  
drawing his yesterdays  
to a breaking  
can it be  
covered up  
with a happy art  
or drunk to  
nothingness  
with any wine

## **Rapsodia Concordia - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

no money no gin  
no rest for the wicked  
if this heaven  
i sure didn't pick it

just honor just pride  
a truck load of fuck all  
just here for the ride  
and hell bent to appall

aspirations few  
just greatness and glory  
a dollar or two  
a nice glass of brandy

no money no grub  
and no rest for the tired  
if this ain't the rub  
my contract's expired

arguments many  
like a daily repeat  
ain't got a penny  
just shoes on my feet

the blind man can't see  
and the cripple can't dance  
say ... if you were me  
would you leave it to chance?

no money no time  
and no rest for my brain  
if life were a rhyme  
it would all sound the same

the whole world groans out  
with a gnashing of teeth  
i shall without doubt  
push, continue, and breathe

### **Overqualified - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

they said you're overqualified  
you won't be happy here  
i could have gone and outright lied  
removed nine tenths to spare

the cv's long but life ain't free  
account's an empty well  
what are they afraid of from me --  
i'll do the job TOO well?

save a penny spend a dollar  
pay all the higher up  
put the grunt in tight bound collar  
and pay him like a schlep

they say i'm overqualified  
that i'll move on some day  
and this is how they justified  
not hiring me today

i promise that i'll screw up then  
at least three times a week  
make them shine in comparison  
practice well thought out meek

i do not want to have their job  
i want one of my own  
i'll be a tool i'll be a knob  
i'll play the corp'rate clone

anyway and here is my gist  
as they their quotas meet  
i've five mouths on my feeding list  
not to skilled to eat

### **Night thief - C.L. Frost**

Jumping off the hypomania train  
To railside bedding on cement terrain;  
Whistles shrill from far and deep;  
Night lights are burglars of my sleep.

Sneak thief, sneak peep,  
Sneaker squeak, sneak creak;  
Sleek beak's trill, startled beep;  
Night rhymes brew and slyly seep.  
Night songs are burglars of my sleep.

### **All's Good - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

pol pot khmer rouge  
mai lai agent orange  
auschwitz leibensraum  
napalm atom bomb

nagasaki hiroshima  
vlad the impaler dracula  
emperor chin ghangis khan  
bow and arrow gatling gun

and you tell me  
in an innocent voice  
man is basically  
good given the choice

and you insist  
in an innocent tone  
these were the acts  
of madmen alone

lock step goose step  
brown shirts guns at hip  
pep rallies for the masses  
manufactured poisoned gasses

mao tse tung giant leap  
forward backward army jeep  
d day dieppe falaise  
drop the bombs and watch the blaze

and you contest  
going to great pains  
man shows his best  
as madness reigns

and you have said  
with your innocent glance  
man ain't half bad  
given half a chance

### **November - S.L. MacNiven**

Cinnamon and wine  
And nutmeg and cloves,  
Chestnuts all roasted  
On fires and stoves...

Gluhwein in chipped mugs,  
Hot soups and rum teas,  
Snowflakes descended  
On conifer trees...

eanies and scarves for  
The cold northern wind,  
Coffee and rum for  
The Winter within...

### **Soul Sale - C.L. Frost**

Better wry comments on a dried-out age,  
The meditative musings of a sage,  
Than rantings rhymed in a drunken rage,  
Wrists spurting bloodwords from a floodlit stage -  
Though they pay fame and glossy royalties  
For angst that outdoes last week's agonies.

We might call marketers of self-help pap "profit-tears". Just as those  
who make millions from encouraging apocalyptic fears are propheteers.  
Or we might wax poetic with a bitty ditty:

On every bookshelf, self-help profit-tears;  
On every screen, apocalyptic propheteers;  
In every city, twinkling tiers -  
High rise jewels from wholesale fears.

### **Life - Brennen Martin**

Life is never ending, it is always, life has no escape, and not even the gaps between  
lifetimes can one be free. However, life is perfect.

Life is more precise than exact, more defined than it is real; its machine like design  
transcends power both spiritual and physical. It is furnace forever-perfect life is  
perfect.

Life is like a chessboard, the pawns that roam its angelic surface, act as within a  
steady glimpse, and subtle movement from the beholders well executed move.

Life itself is bewildered by how it came to be, though life seemingly has many shapes  
and sizes, the truth is to be heard, life is everything, it is every imaginable shape,  
size and colour, constant euphoria mingles within its beauty. However, life is  
perfect.

Life itself is bewildered by how it came to be, though life seemingly has many shapes and sizes, the truth is to be heard, life is everything, it is every imaginable shape, size and colour, constant euphoria mingles with its beauty. However, life is perfect.

Life is like a biosphere, life trapped in life and rounded off to create a peaceful prison. Life is like all our senses combined, no one to record has thought of it the way I have. Where others run, I stand my ground. I want to grasp its proverbial brilliance within my hands, know it better than one ever thought possible.

Bitter but sweet, life is like a matrix. We are the pips, if life were truly good to us it would show us a life from outside the apple...THE REAL LIFE. If life were truly good to us it would free us, give us emancipation. Only then would life really and truly be perfect.

Life is the pen, by which we forge our own destinies with. We are as much in tune with life, as life is with us. We are equals.

Life is scarred, as the inevitable breakthrough of life's awesome barrier draws near, one can only laugh a polysyllabic tune. Life is scarred by the fact that we now know too much, and that we no longer need its eyes gazing upon us 24/7.

Life will sleep, birds will turp, and people will smile for we all agree that the way of life is now overwhelmingly true, and freedom is anything but new. Everyone will stand high and marvel at life's ingenious. We will forget the old life, move on, read and re-read this poem. The start of a new beginning is here. The life of life is perfect, this poem is perfect, and life is perfect.... I JUST WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH!

### **Misère, misère, et désespoir, - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

Misère, misère, et désespoir,  
Quand je regarde dans le miroir,  
Ce n'est pas mon propre visage,  
C'est un étranger, cet image,  
Et, dommage, quoique je fasse,  
Je reste toujours à mon espace,  
Tout effraie et tout effroi  
C'est la vérité tout à moi.

Misère, misère, c'est toute complète,  
J'oublie tout ce que je regrette,  
Mais si tu vois mon visage blanc,  
Et si tu comprends là-dedans,  
N'oublie pas que toutes mes batailles,  
Mes chaînes, mes blessures, mes orgueils,

Toutes ces choses noires qui tellement blessent,  
Ne se sont rien contre ta caresse.

Et je chuchote, "Ton nom, c'est quoi?"  
Toutes mes douleurs, un grand "Pourquoi?"  
Toutes mes misères se disparaissent,  
Quand tu souffles ta douce tendresse;  
Quand je me vois dans tes yeux claires  
Je ne sens plus de ma misère,  
Et j'arrive à cette toute fine borde,  
Ton nom, c'est Dame Miséricorde.

### **Roachy - C.L. Frost**

Attach a leash to your roach,  
Strut proudly in the lead.  
When critics gawk and reproach,  
Say "He's an exotic breed,  
Sired specially and pedigreed",  
That you've the papers to prove it  
To all who would reprove it.

Say "My roach is not an 'it' - a 'he'  
And he's very cheap to feed.  
So I pamper him with luxery -  
A hotel where he and wife can breed.

### **Jingle Joy - C.L. Frost**

Breezes raced me to the Jingle-berry tree  
Where bronze leaves played in symphonies;  
The wind beat its baton to pace  
The rhythm of the humming harmonies.  
Jingle leaves gleamed as they danced,  
And jingle berries glinted as they drummed  
For my jingle-joy on the dazzle-dappled grass.

Today, they just tinkle at my glance;  
The windchimes were made of brass.  
Now none would stay to hear and see  
The jingle jangle of a chain-hung tree.

### **Soul Sale - C.L. Frost**

Better wry comments on a dried-out age,  
The meditative musings of a sage,  
Than rantings rhymed in a drunken rage,  
Wrists spurting bloodwords from a floodlit stage -  
Though they pay fame and glossy royalties  
For angst that outdoes last week's agonies.

On every bookshelf, self-help profit-tears;  
On every screen, apocalyptic propheteers;  
In every city, twinkling tiers -  
High rise jewels from wholesale fears.

### **Lit. - C.L. Frost**

THE poem arose  
massing on the brow of shells  
carping for order.

Polemics saw fit  
to defend a lesser cause.  
It's taken enough.

Here's one, here's another.  
Yea, yea, nay, nay.  
Prose, its duty did.

### **The Existentialist - Katherine Wetz**

Passing void of life,  
Neither rich nor poor;  
Not suffering strife,  
Existing, no more

Meaning unsought,  
Tears never cried;  
Thinking no thought  
Of suicide

Sin unconfessed,  
Knowing no Fall;  
Undisturbed rest,  
Being is all

### **Iconoclast - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

My mind's a blast

It's such a pain  
This quickened brain

I did not ask  
To wear this mask

I hide behind  
This seething mind

While deep inside  
I check my pride

On the extern  
I boil and burn

It would be nice  
To freeze like ice

And just this once  
Act all the dunce

But I've laid claim  
And staked my name

And took flatter  
On gray matter

So though I tire  
Of smart attire

I'll push forth yet  
Without regret

And raise my drink  
To all who think.

### **Welcome to the midnight hour - Mark Norman**

Welcome to the midnight hour  
my show is quite simplistic  
showered with blood shot sheep  
sleepless in Ohio, screw Seattle  
hopeless, I just can't get to sleep

That laughing goblin  
glowing red numbers for eyes  
perched upon my dresser  
mocks, winking new numbers  
I curse it beneath my sighs

Prim in a coffin type fashion  
I lay myself out  
fetal or full gainer, I still lash out  
in one then another passioned, tangled  
bed sheet wrestling bout

So tired yet no sleep  
condemned to roam this night  
A zombie or vampire, my looks  
pasty and bloodshot  
same such fright I cause, oh what a sight

It had to be that  
devil's elixir, that tonic  
of the coming sunrise  
that last mocha delight  
before I went to bed this curse'ed night

### **Were it Not All - Trivik Bhavneni**

were it not all  
i can not find a call  
ing

each time i perk  
i feel like a jerk  
off

2,207,520,000 seconds  
10<sup>31</sup> particles bekon  
to me

i must be blind  
there is none be

### **Il y a Des Choses en Moi - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

Il y a des choses en moi  
dont je ne parlerais jamais;  
les oreilles du monde  
ne veulent pas les écouter.

Il y a des mots en moi  
qui pèsent trop pour mon âme;  
ils restent sans son, sans haleine,  
sans même écho dedans.

Il y a des désirs dont  
je n'oserais jamais respirer;  
ma langue de plomb ne bouge pas  
donc ils restent introuvables.

Il y a des épreuves  
de mon esprit indomptable  
dont il n'y a pas d'abécédaire,  
donc elles restent improuvables

### **Roll it up and Smoke It - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

Nobody cares  
about your scores  
all that they want  
is some dumb grunt  
to fill the time  
until five's chime.

You're too damn smart  
right from the start  
and some poor slob

will lose his job  
if they hire you,  
with your IQ.

Yes, you were born  
to live this scorn  
to get shafted  
because you're "gifted"  
but don't complain,  
you too smart brain.

It's just a test  
and you're the best  
of all the cream;  
you want to scream,  
"What can I do,  
with my IQ?"

Roll it up, lad,  
in a long wad,  
while others watch  
you strike a match;  
don't throw a fit--  
light, then smoke it.

### **The Truth about Xmas - C.L. Frost**

Rudolf refused a simple nose job,  
And so was abducted by a cop;  
The Yonkers lights had all gone bonkers;  
Rudy's nose blinked traffic to a stop.

The elves read a Workers' Manifesto  
And skate on glaciers while on strike;  
Santa advertises for cheap labor,  
Cursing every greedy griping groping tyke.

Mrs. Claus, 3 centuries married,  
Bored, is filing for divorce;  
The Old man can keep the igloo  
And elves (Their manners are too course)

Santa, age 400, has got brain rot,  
And too much belly for scales to weigh.  
Someday he'll die of a stroke  
Or break high rise windows with his sleigh.

### **Beyond the Crisis - John Sweeney**

Look beyond the flash,  
the flash that blinds  
into obscurity -  
reality, purpose, meaning;  
for beyond the crisis,  
a new beginning,  
yes, a leaving behind  
of the old,  
to be reborn  
into the arms of understanding,  
confidence, regeneration.  
Be not a victim,  
but a victor  
and stand triumphant  
on yonder side  
of this, your darkness  
which is but a veil  
through which, to a world unfolding  
for you to claim,  
that others like you,  
with hope, be given,  
for to you, a pioneer,  
will they look.  
For such souls then,  
with despair, be burdened,  
beckon them, show the way.

### **Poetry Rand-ified - Mark Normam**

I know not of you, and care  
not of opinions.  
Not of their condemnations, nor  
of their blessings.

I know what is good, for  
it pleases me. The blue  
pencil preserve, for  
its marks be damned.

Meter, rhythm are my steel.  
Emotions the furnace, fired  
from the fuel of

experience.

With the purest of commodities,  
love and vengeance, I toil.  
My own two hands creating  
what no man can tear down.

The exalted `They' say it must be  
built upon the ages.  
Good is what  
good has always been.

I cry, "Fools open thy eyes to  
the beauty of free form. Forums  
of the ages be damned. The  
Renaissance is now, today."

I will create until I  
cry or laugh. For others  
will too. Still others will  
scowl at the dismissal of rules, so be it.

We are the true poets, the Roarks  
of the twenty first century. Do not  
bow to or stone us. Simply step  
aside and let us create.

### **Year End Poem - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

It's been my tradition  
at each year's completion  
to summarize it in verse,

as if one can fairly  
each nigh-January  
know the better or the worse.

I've had me some better  
of both days and weather,  
knocks harder I've rarely known,

but thank God that in there  
a kindness and dime spare,  
occasional kindness shown.

My pride and my stature  
and high nomenclature  
didn't spare me hidden tears;

Though my pride oft' towered,  
My enemy cowered,  
and hit me with my own fears.

The money ran sparely,  
the cupboard full rarely,  
it was rice instead of lamb.

But although I lacked gold,  
it's not all, I am told,  
so I'll settle as I am.

It's been my tradition  
at each year's completion  
to sum it up square and neat,

but this year was harder,  
with its empty larder,  
and doesn't feel quite complete,

so when the year's over,  
and I'm in the silver,  
then I'll tell you how it went,

but until that fine day  
it shall not end this way,  
e'en if space and time are bent.

### **Out on Me - Quinn Tyler Jackson**

fuddy bluck my life is muck  
nothing in the fridge to eat  
cuddy blunt it's all want want  
and wet shoes on my feet

chrizuz jeest while in the east  
they flart and fip their wigs  
and plan to blow us all to frick  
with jigs and jags and nuclear zigs

the rucking foof is dripping drap  
as january rain the blucket bucking fills

the mortgage due is half of it  
the other half is twice the pain

angst angst angst worm sturm gloom  
it's not depression don't you see  
it's just that god got real poff iced  
and took his piss-off out on m

### **Homecoming - Thomas Hadley**

My Home is wherever  
You are  
Your Heart is my refuge  
Your eyes my solace, my inspiration  
When we travel far  
Roaming to explore  
I am wholly Present  
By compliment of your spirit's  
Field of Energy  
As mine empowers Yours...  
Now, I understand better  
That this has always been so  
Between us/within Us  
As though, indeed,  
'twas meant to Be:  
We are Blessed  
We are Home

### **Imagine Light - Thomas Hadley**

So white, so intensely bright  
When you look away  
You see spots  
Like stars exploding

This light's not only in Space-Time's cosmic fabric;  
It is temporarily encapsulated  
In this four dimensional Body  
Whose fingers nimbly weave  
Or are hopelessly entangled  
Whose minds eye can clearly see  
Or is cocooned in dreams, deception  
This mind that can conceive of Eden  
Then plot its very annihilation

This corporeal Light caught in your  
Parents' eyes and put in a jar of clay  
Shall also be broken some day  
When that light escapes to shine again  
In Night's sky or dance upon a sparkling bay  
To glance upon the apple's red or glow a cherry blossom  
Shall we honour that one day  
It shone from your eyes to another

That it shone from sister to brother  
That it was Life, a wife, a father?  
Shall we see that it still does shine  
In a child's laughter, or a storm of temper?

Perhaps 'tis better yet if we recall  
As we metamorphosize from one form to another  
That, yes, our light did shine  
Our love was received by at least  
One another.

### **Look at the Sunset - Thomas Hadley**

look at the sunset  
you think not you see only feel  
pink purplegray coolduskyblue a ribbon of red  
you just feel "thank you"  
and let a breath release  
long long  
and so  
you breathe in  
the sunset  
love is like that  
you just breathe it in  
you are like that sunset  
your lover breathes you in  
as you in return  
you just let it be as it is

watching patiently  
enjoying the moment  
for after all  
that is all that ever truly Is.

# PROSE

## **Milk Abusers Anonymous - Paul Nachbar**

A young friend of mine recently learned my deep, dark secret, which for many years I had hidden under layers of denial...It's almost too humiliating for this netizen, member of various prestigious societies online, and the editor of three wacky anthologies to admit this..to come out of the closet with such a profound issue. In fact, it is only with assured support that I can bring myself to inform this so kind and lovely though disparate group that I am....a milk abuser. Indeed, that I have been one for many years.

And so, kind members of Milk Abusers Anonymous, I pledge myself to this group and to the Higher Power which guides everything. I will tell all, I will tell all...despite the shame, guilt, fear and humiliation. How for so many years, decades in fact, I hid this vile habit from friends, family, my coworkers and even my beloved doctors. And how, over this long period --punctuated by brief eras of lucid abstinence--I truly wasted my life over such a vile substance....as milk. Alas <sniff> a truly wasted life, for milk has been my ....downfall.

Here have I avoided reality, responsibility, discipline ,sincerity, honesty, authenticity, goodness, purity, conformity, organization and clarity in the tense, addictive, passionate and impaired search for more...and more milk. And of course, though I cannot bring myself to share the specific details of this pain, from milk of every possible source. Yes, yes...it is shameful, I know. Yes, yes, it is tragic. And has led to so many terrible things, so many shattered relationships, so much deceit and lies and horror.. A milk abuser..What a loathsome thing.. what a terrible unforgivable thing..

Please..please ..forgive me. I knew not what I did. I am trying very hard here.. I really am...this is so difficult for me to talk about...I am trying very hard here to keep a straight face. Amen  
And may the forces that be be with you.  
Blessings..

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## Awakenings 1 - C.L. Frost

Mother's gritty voice, from the kitchen just beyond the archway, stopped her; Claire clutched the banister, one with the eavesdropping shadows.

"Well, you have to preserve their self-esteem; that's what all the books say", the gritty voice gargled. A coil of smoke unraveled into a gray veil over mother's face; clouds of earlier smoke lingered, muting the yellow light into a bilious choking haze.

"Hmm," the man grunted, his back a murky silhouette in the smog.

Earlier that evening, Claire had danced into the kitchen, caressed by the aroma of simmering spaghetti sauce, the golden light twinkling off brass lamps, and her teacher's praise. She hadn't colored completely within the lines, hadn't drawn uniform patches of color as the older kids were able to do. But she'd copied from Christine, the best artist in the class, drawn scalloped circles for the clouds and foliage, added billowy pink curtains to all the windows, and it was good. The teacher had said so, had tacked her picture in the center of the bulletin board with a gold star beside the yellow sun.

"Look what I made!", she exclaimed as she lept into the bus.

"Ah, let's see, "the old driver drawled, "Very nice; you're a real artist."

"Look what I drew!", she shouted as she clattered into the house.

"Don't slam the door, " her mother growled. "And hang up your coat."

"Look at my picture!", she sang a few minutes later.

Mother glanced fleetingly at the neighbor lady and crushed her butt.

"OK, let's see," she sighed.

"Oh, honey, it's marvelous!", the neighbor lady caroled as she squinted through her bifocals. "If you were my child - why, I'd put it in a frame and hang it in my living room right over the sofa!"

"Yes, very nice," mother grunted. "A gold star too, the teacher liked it. Yes, very nice indeed.....why don't you tape it to the refrigerator, so that everyone can see."

Mother lit another cigarette, waving it like a baton as she turned to the neighbor lady.

"Like I said before," she muttered, "I'm all against this new zoning. I don't care how much revenue it brings in, it'll bring in the riffraff - trailer parks and modular homes that fall apart in 10 years. It won't be a nice quiet town anymore, you'll see; we'll have to worry about bikers and beebie guns and ....."

Claire had pressed each strip of scotch tape carefully along her picture's margins, each aligned parallel with the freezer's sides and top. She'd pushed the brashly yellow and screaming red magnets far to the right, where they wouldn't clash with the timid pink of her breeze ruffled curtains. She'd pushed the calendar, with its grimy winter sky etched by twisted branches, down, far from her lawn of sun stroked clover. She'd scrubbed away fingerprints with her knuckles and scratched away a streak of dried tomato juice as the adults jabbered about something boring, something she couldn't hear anyway as she soared into the sky's unblemished blue. Gleaming white porcelain sparking gold highlights, the sweetly lulling scent of brewing basil and the hum of contralto voices murmuring incomprehensible nothings had framed her latest creation.

Now Claire, heavy from so much pasta, shuffled towards the archway through the shadows.

"So," the gritty voice continued, "If you want them to be confident later, you've got to feed their self esteem when they're young. Dole out some praise when they try hard."

"Mmmmm". A rumble from the silhouetted back.

"So, even if it's not an A+ performance, you've got to encourage them. The books say that low self-esteem is the biggest cause of depression in America today -"

"Look, Jeanne," the man interrupted, "Why don't you just forget all that crap? Who ever heard of parenting by recipe?; isn't there some instinct involved?"

Claire stole closer. A snake of smoke meandered through the archway, tickling her nose.

"What I'm trying to say, if you'd listen, is that I don't like the thing any more than you do." Mother's coffee cup clattered shrilly against the saucer. "I don't like looking at the kid's scribbles either. So, we'll just leave it up a day, the self esteem thing. Then we'll take it down tomorrow; she won't even notice."

Encased in smoke, Claire coughed; she couldn't suppress it.

"Oh, there she is!", mother stammered. "Uh, I was just telling your father all about your lovely picture. Right, Sam?"

Claire turned towards the refrigerator, popped open the door and stared at the shelves. The air in the room seemed so heavy and thick with words, muggy with warm phrases and the vapor of dissolving promises, putrid with praises that crumbled to ash like the silvery smoke. The cool refrigerator air felt refreshing against her sweaty neck.

"Are you looking for something, honey?"

Claire held up a Coke. Squinting over the can as she sipped, she noticed the glazed eyes above a lipsticked smile, the jiggling knee beneath the elegantly arched wrist. She memorized the slump of her father's back and the parched folds sagging under his hooded turtle-eyes as he grunted through his part. She wondered when his body had begun folding in on itself, and when her mother's face had split in half, the bottom fixed in a pink smile while the top shifted between frowns and squints and laser stares; she wondered when legs had begun talking more honestly than the mouth. What she wanted couldn't be held up, couldn't be described to these people, couldn't be found in this room, perhaps couldn't be found anywhere at all.

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### **The Purple Berry Tree - C.L. Frost**

Nancy lived up the block, behind the scratched door which was behind the stacked tires, the rusted bikes and the wet mattresses with springs sticking out like spikes.

The purple berry trees lived everywhere on the block. Mother said that they were only bushes, but they loomed over me, their thousand dust-coated berries dangling like Xmas balls. When I plucked one and squashed it between my fingers, purple juice streamed down my palm and painted my arm violet.

"Don't go near that Nancy," mother said, "She's a bad influence. I don't want to hear that you've been playing with her"

"Don't do that," mother said, when I squashed the purple berry. "You'll stain everything you touch, that stuff'll never come out".

I skipped towards Marie's house, just up the block. Warm sun, bugs buzzing in the haze, the faint scent of distant lilac, cars belching heady fumes. A day for swinging, kicking up dust eddies as we ran, then forgetting what we'd done. I knocked on Marie's door. Knocked again. Waited and knocked again. No answer from any of the 8 sisters. I crossed the street to the purple berry tree in front of Nancy's house, and to Nancy.

We shuffled in our sneakers, jumped over the cracks that would break a mother's back, then began plucking purple berries. No words; just a

single glance upward, then the conspiratorial act. We each crushed one berry underfoot; purple seeped into the hot cement. Then we grabbed handfuls, scattered these over the pavement, and hopped in place atop each. Handful after handful, plucking the tree barren. The purple specks joined to form purple splotches. Splotches joined splotches to make a purple figure, a primitive purple man with a blotch head, a big purple belly, and streaked legs. The purple juice would never wash out. The purple man, born of the purple berry tree and the first creation by me and bad Nancy, would lie there through rain and snow. My first mark upon the world would live until bulldozers came to kill the sidewalk, perhaps live longer than my mother and all her warnings about purple berry trees.

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### **Practice Session # 306 - C.L. Frost**

In that other room, water hissed into the sink, a newscaster's baritone jabbered with staccato urgency, a coffee cup chimed on impact with its saucer. Below, in the dark damp cellar, the furnace groaned awake. Claire pulled the bench closer to the organ; its legs scratched plaintively across the floor boards and a hinge somewhere in its casing whined. Seated, she clicked the little black switch to "on", then chipped at tan grime encrusting a key as she considered whether to hit the "vibrato" or "tremulo" tab, whether to hear her scales rise from a lusty french horn or fall like silver tears from a pleading piccolo. Whatever she did, the electronic notes would sound plastic, as though coated with textureless vinyl and stinking of the factory.

"I don't hear that organ," mother yelled, as she did every night. "What are you doing in there, staring at the walls?"

The organ had been a compromise for a kid with no musical ability; Mother had declared "I know you don't have any talent here, you'll never have \*my\* keen ear. But you'll thank me for the lessons when you get older and need to entertain people". It was a compromise between a mother's conviction that all children should learn to play an instrument and a kid's reluctance to practice. The organ, supposedly not requiring the acrobatic fingerwork of a piano or violin, had been placed in the least distracting room of the house - what Mother called "the den" but what the kid called "the room of shame", "the room of emptiness", the "hollow room". The four blank walls, sallow in light filtered through a stained lamp shade, closed around the organ; the throw rug was frosted gray with years of dust. Mother talked of someday paneling the room with oak planks, bought cheap from an aging artisan and carved with designs of wandering vines, but these, dropped in a basement corner, had been softened by creeping moisture long ago.

Claire pushed the "flute" tab and poked her way up the scale, pecking especially hard at the stuck keys; the sounds seemed stale, as

weary as the drab yellow light. The furnace gurgled and moaned as it belched hot fumes through the vent; cigarette smoke crept under the door, its prickly scent rising to mix with the clinging stench of mildew and hot oil. Claire trudged back down the scale, pausing to graze her fingertip over patches of grit. Then she reached behind the music stand and quietly pulled the palmistry book from under stacks of score sheets.

"Palmistry, How to know people through their hands," she read. The gilding had chipped off the title, leaving pale tan words embossed in a faded green canvass cover smudged with grease and sticky spots from months of being read by the organ. She cracked open the spine, wedged the book into her lap and scanned a page smeared with grape and cherry fingerprints.

"The mount of Venus lies at the base of the thumb; those with a strong mount of Venus are drawn to the romantic." She winced. Her own mount of Venus bulged and she had no interest in gooey love stories. And her mount of Mars, associated with warfare and aggression, stood out plumply, even though she ran from the school bullies. Father had always said that palmistry was mumbo jumbo, a farce just like her weekly music lessons.

"Where's that organ music?" Mother bellowed. "Those lessons cost money and I'm not paying for nothing. Miss Dutton says you haven't shown much progress."

"I'm playing, I'm playing," Claire stuttered back, "It's just hard to hear over the TV".

The furnace sputtered to a stop. The smoke hovered in horizontal wisps; TV voices mumbled monotonously; the shadow of her raised hand loomed as tall and dark as a sentry against the bland wall. She wished that the practice hour were over - wishing her life away, mother would say; if such wishes were granted, she'd be an adult by now, and dead by the time she'd otherwise be voting age.

"I don't hear anything," the husky voice called.

"Ok...OK," she sighed.

She reached behind the music stand again, quietly pulled a small tape player from under the sheets, popped in the cassette she'd hidden in a pocket, and pushed "play". Sunday's practice session, 60 plodding minutes of scales, wailed from the speaker. The hands in the machine fretted up and down the keyboard, toppled into wrong notes and stumbled through reruns as she read.

"Those with a strong mount of Mercury are verbal, clever, and expert in the arts of deception". She glanced at the fleshy cushion under her little finger, almost as plump as the pad by her thumb.

Clever at deception, clever enough to know how to use a tape recorder, she smirked, then returned to her reading and her lesson

### **Matchmaker - C.L. Frost**

"Romance", Anne thought, "Is highly overrated." Those red roses might be pretty, but she had 5 bushes out back - and those didn't shed petals all over the countertop; when they shed, the wind swept the debris away, did her housecleaning for her. She was supposed to appreciate (and get the hint from) the black lace underwear that last guy brought, but she really would have preferred dremel bits; if he knew her so well, as he was proud of declaring, why didn't he know that she was a wrench wench? And then, there were those interminable conversations, better over the phone where dear dearie couldn't see that she was sketching bats at war, of "Do you love me?; do you really, really love me? Say the words, I want to be sure that you really, really really really love me....."

Now that Wanda woman was after her again. "Don't you get lonely in that house, all alone? Don't you know it's not healthy to be all alone?". The Wanda woman was always out there, raking leaves or pruning the sidewalk hedges before the frost; Anne heard from her whenever she checked her mailbox or climbed into the car. "There's a guy at work, single, your age, really nice with thick dark hair; I've told him all about you, how lonely you are...."

But did she want a man, even the good man who's hard to find? She'd have to shake her horsehair out of its habitual bun, scrub her scalp free of dandruff and curl the split ends. A man could get away with a \$10 crew cut. Her own father had worn hair blotched orange and gray, with jagged edges in back, to work. He'd bought dye to hide the gray, applied it haphazardly without reading the instructions, and rinsed it off when he'd grown bored with waiting. "The right side's orange and the left side's gray", Mother had exclaimed, "You can't go out like that!". Coppertone orange. But father had glanced in the mirror, said "Looks fine to me" and driven to the lab. Mother, who always looked meticulous, had complained "Why should I cut his hair, play barber, when he never even combs it?" And Anne had thought "He doesn't, I never noticed". "Why," she asked herself now, "Couldn't a woman be more like a man?"

"His name's Bill," Wanda had whispered yesterday, "He owns the video store - his own store, and he knows all about videos. And funny as all get-out, I told him to expect you around 8."

Anne sighed. Hopefully she'd find that long suede skirt in her thrift shop bin; otherwise, she'd have to shave her legs. Hopefully, she'd find a matching blouse in one of her piles. She hadn't gone clothes shopping in years - too lazy, cheap and practical. She'd even once calculated that, if her weight didn't change, she'd accumulated enough thrift shop clothes to last her until she died. Some of those \$1 sweaters might be frayed and stained, but everyone would blame the scruffiness on Alzheimer's, not on her. They'd probably just see the wrinkles and not notice anything else at all; old hags got dismissed, became invisible and free in a land of hallowed youth denying any hint of mortality.

"And dress nice," Wanda had added. "Bill's got good taste. He's an artist on the side and you know how artists are - like color, something unique."

At least the shoes wouldn't be a problem, Anne thought. She'd do what she'd done for that New Year's party - spray paint them. For New Year's, she'd sprayed her flat slippers and a pair of pantyhose gold; tonight, she'd spray them with Premium Decor colonial-red decorative enamel. The enamel was meant for metal and wood but had stuck well to leather so far. If all the layers of paint started peeling away before she met this artistic Bill Somebody, she'd tell him that the splattered look was the newest fad in Paris; you just wait and see, Bill Somebody, next year this will be the rage in New York. He, being someone who liked the unique, would appreciate the novelty.

Makeup? She'd thrown away those Revlon kits that her mother sent her routinely at Christmas. Staring at her mirrored sallow face, she imagined talking to Wanda. "Wanda dear," she'd drawl while poking her foot into a pile of papery tan leaves, "Once I flashed my toothless grin, he forgot that I wasn't wearing lipstick. Besides, he was already too busy stroking my hairy legs, soft as a dog's paw with all that fur and him being a natural man. And he really appreciated how practical the hair was - stopped ticks before they could crawl up to warmer darker private parts."

She placed the red shoes next to the suede skirt and a crimson blouse scrounged from the dollar bin. The colors would match in candle light. And that, she nodded smugly, was as good as it got from a woman who had her own roses and could entertain herself anytime by exploring Home Depot.

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He couldn't fire her. She was so reliable, arrived on time even during a blizzard, could file away videos even more efficiently than he could. But Wanda was afflicted with verbal diarrhea. Thought in, comment out, and everyone had to live with the stink.

"So Bill," Wanda yapped, "Why don't you have a girl yet? I keep telling you - a nice looking guy like you should be working on children by now, not living all alone with his 2 cats, 2 chihuahas, 1 hairy mut and 5 hens. And why do you wear sweaters with gold threads in them? Don't you know that this is a \*conservative\* town, only 2

Democrats registered in the whole county?"

She doesn't know what I have at home, Bill smirked to himself. A hot-pink feather boa, a silver sequinned shirt that jingled as he shimmied at the New Year's Eve ball. And his hair hadn't always been neatly cropped at the nape of his neck; that had been a concession to the Republicans and his role as respectable shopkeeper.

"So," Wanda squawked for all the customers to hear, "I decided to do something about it, if you wouldn't"

"Hmmm...what?"

"I decided to shop around for a girl for you," Wanda exclaimed proudly. "Now, I know you don't like the cheap ones, a guy with your taste. No fake boobs or silicon lips for you. So I found someone, and right next door! She's a little plain, but she's got depth. Oh, I know what you're thinking - how can a bigmouthed booby like me see depth? Well, I'm not as shallow as you think. I see things, I see it in her eyes. She'll be good for you, kinda grows on you...."

Like mold, Bill thought. If only Jay were eavesdropping, playing fly on the wall; tonight, when they lay together like spoons under the plump eiderfown quilt and the blue light from the faintly murmuring TV spilled over them, he'd tell Jay all about it.

"I told her to meet you here tonight," Wanda continued. "Tonight - that way you can't run away. You have a date. Her name's Anne."

Jay would want to hear all about the plain girl with real breasts who was sent to save Bill's soul. If this Anne was quiet, knew what had to be kept secret in the village, he might tell her about his past as a beauty queen, about how he'd starred as Miss Gay Louisiana in his youth and played Diana Rossetti dancing to "Stop, In the Name of Love" at an AIDS fundraiser. The boxes filled with stage make-up were still stacked on his top closet shelf - enough creams, blushes, fake eyelashes and eyebrow pencils to make anyone look any age and any race.

"But don't you have a different sweater?" Wanda barked, "One that doesn't have \*gold\* in it? A thick brown wool one? Or...with your build, you'd look spiffy in a turtleneck"

If Anne liked the gold weave in his sweater, maybe he'd give her a sneak peek at his boa. If she liked the boa, maybe he'd show her his collection of fur collars, including those vintage minks from some grandmother's attic, with pasted-on glass eyes above a real mink mouth that clamped down on a real mink tail. If she liked the minks, maybe he'd drive her all the way to the mall for a real girls' night on the town; if she was also a mall junkie, as addicted to plumes and sparkle as he was, they'd pick through clothes until the lights dimmed and a security guard hustled them out.

A spiffy brown turtleneck? One of his "get down and be dirty in"

work sweaters, now splattered with teal and yellow from housepainting, had once been pure brown. He and Jay had planned for a quiet night at home, savoring Jay's home cooked spaghetti while mellow blues drifted softly over them; when Wanda left, he'd have to call Jay and listen to him snicker. And Anne would probably just be a village girl; he probably wouldn't even be able to greet her with his "Hello, here's everything about me" speech about how his fluffy mut was mothered by a keeshond who was raped by a golden retriever and about how he'd named his guard-dog chihuahas "Killer" and "Spike",

He sighed. He'd have to wait, as twilight dimmed into night, dutifully obeying the orders of his employee

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### **Empathy, Compassion and Blame - Paul Nachbar**

One of the issues which, now that I reflect upon it, has been a very deep one for me most of my life has been the distinction between empathy and compassion and the related issue of blame. I would be curious about other peoples' thoughts on this matter too.

Now, of course words have very slippery meanings and one person's empathy can be another person's compassion. I guess there are people who say and sincerely mean to say that they are without compassion and/or empathy or that such qualities do not really exist in the spectrum of human emotions and motivations. I am not sure here, however, if argumentation gets one anywhere with this issue. In fact, it seems that this issue is somewhat analogous to the way different people perceive and feel differences in temperature. From some 'points of view', for instance, a temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit might be quite warm; from other 'points of view' it might be nearly frigid.

Humanity does fight among themselves --or , of course ourselves---and fighting is of course a big part of history, not to speak of contemporary reality. But of course we are not only fighters, else we probably would not have invented the concepts of empathy and compassion. Well, yes, of course, some people do 'fake it' but it seems highly improbable to me that 'everybody fakes it' towards some devious ends. I might add here that "fighting" about the definitions of empathy and compassion or regarding who is suitably empathetic and compassionate and who is not---which occupies, it seems, much space in high IQ dialogues- does not seem to be able to be so readily reduced either. Obviously we fight, we take sides and because we take sides, our enemy, whoever that is, is to blame. But we also have another side, which is confusing to ourselves and perhaps even confusing to our enemy, who is sometimes though not always of course just a so-called enemy.

I mean, I don't mean to be too optimistic here, because I'm not..

Empathy of course seems like the stronger or more intense partner of compassion. Well, it seems that way from the dictionary definitions I've found online and perhaps what I've experienced in my life. To say that one actually feels what another feels, which is the claim of at least some empathy, seems to me a stronger statement of a certain type of emotion than saying that one is compassionate, which seems to presuppose a greater distance between oneself and the object of one's empathy or compassion. Again, I'm not sure if there are many hard and fast rules here, because "infinite compassion" seems to be the goal of certain types of religious

faith, sentiment and aspirations..

I am not, as you might know, an especially religious or spiritual man, though I do , naturally, have an imagination and a fairly big, though sometimes disorganized one at that. That is, although I do think of the concept of God --well, for and against-- I think more about Man. And here, I think, I reached a somewhat sketchy conclusion tonight: that it is possible to blame humanity or human nature per se---unless, of course, one is advocating or fighting for one particular group against another--- but it is not so easy to really blame individuals per se for almost all of the things they do , that is, granted a relatively full knowledge of all the factors which went into their

so-called "behaviors" and exactly how their "situations" may be like and unlike one's own. I am not going to try to prove this, because I am also not a big believer in philosophical proofs outside of the realm of logic and mathematics-like philosophy; I just state it as a tentative conclusion about my own species.

Here again, I could say--and often do--that the species is lacking in one thing or another or has too much of one or another quality--and is hence deficient. Or, to put it more bluntly, I do have my misanthropic moods, despite my basically sociable character. But what do these lead to? Not much of course, since I really do not wish harm upon my own species on any grand scale or myself on a more minor scale. Thus, I grant myself the right --and especially among my friends on and offline-- to have those moods, which are nearly inevitable and not, among friends, to be papered up with wrapping paper and covered with bits of tinsel--though I guess there is a time and place for that too.

So I'll just conclude I guess with a small self-evaluation of these three "traits": empathy, compassion and blaming---hoping that somebody out there joins me in this discussion. That is, I probably am on a balance more compassionate than truly empathetic. And I'd add here that I have leaned more towards defining myself as

empathetic than "merely" compassionate because of the various types of blame that I have received over the years. Then I'd add, finally, that I have also "blamed" - --and harshly blamed ---though often only or mainly the sorts of people who apparently have blamed me or who saw me as less than a complete human being, also equipped with as much natural compassion and empathy much as they possessed. My wiser self --kind of a recent addition I suppose---shows that in those rare but extremely painful cases where I had my share of battles over such subjects, the 'enemy' was no more or less INTRINSICALLY blaming,compassionate or empathetic than I was. This I have learned through a long analysis of some of these conflicts, of all the "information" I received about their causes and perhaps as I said, from the drop or two of wisdom which have accumulated over time.

But unfortunately, wisdom alas seldom seems to prevail, whether among or inside of individuals or among those larger groups we have formed, including tribes, races, religions, ethnicities, businesses and other corporate bodies,nation-states and blocs of political and economic allies. Much to my regret...

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# NEW MEMBERS

Name: **Brennan Martin**

Email: [dataonline1986@hotmail.com](mailto:dataonline1986@hotmail.com)

Qualifying Score: G-Test

Bio: 16 years old, residing in Wellington NZ. Love: poetry, intelligence and the theories and history of intelligence, computers, technology, most sports and the many arts - in particular the performing arts. Diversity is one of my many commonalities on life. I'm trying to find the truth to our existence, and such questions arise like

"Why are we here?"

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Name: **Katherine Wetz**

Email: [kmwetz@juno.com](mailto:kmwetz@juno.com)

Qualifying Score: WAIS-III

Bio: I am 33 yrs old and I live in the Dayton, OH area. I belong to the Dayton Area Mensa and to Region 1 of Intertel. I am also in the process of joining the Triple Nine Society. I am in graduate school part time at seminary. I work part time as a substitute teacher. I like to play GBA video games, but I really like to play the "L-Game" invented by DeBono. My father and two of my friends play it with me, but I beat them a lot. I would really, really like to correspond with other "highly/exceptionally gifted people." I am fluent in American Sign Language and conversational in Pidgin Sign English. I can read ancient Greek, some Hebrew, and I can translate classical Latin and theological German. My BA is in Classical Latin. I like to discuss Latin, Hebrew, and Greek biblical issues with a friend at the seminary. I can play flute, piccolo, snare drum, cymbal(s), and various other percussion instruments. I am teaching myself to play the clarinet. After that, I would ! like to learn to play the trombone. I occasionally write descants or harmonies for songs used in the seminary chapel services. I sing in the seminary choir. I

learned how to play in a handbell choir when I was in college. I read books all the time; sometimes 6 at once! It drives my grandmother nuts. I also like to yack on the phone with my other gifted friends.

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