



running
out

Scars
Publications
2002
chapbook

Charlie Newman

doubletake

I want to take a trip
no
a voyage
I want to take a voyage
a long voyage
I want to go home
for a quick glimpse of infinity
a smack of recognition
an instant of insight
a new coat of paint inside my noggin
and I want to take you with me
somehow

I want you to see my dreams
of past ecstasies
of crumbling marble slabs
of tumbling second-rate circus acts
of bumbling borsht-belt boogie board bob-a-louies
of tossed off late night barb wire epics
that glow like fire flies
on Saturday Evening Post covers
by Norman Rockwell
and I want you to see them
through my eyes
s'il vous plait

I want to take you
away from the boredom
I want you to walk
where the dead talk
in tongues
and laugh out loud
and I want you to get the joke
(take my life...please)
and after we're done
I want you to tell me
it was worth it

I want to read you
like the Bible, Baby,
and jot notes in your margins
I want to speed read you
while my finger traces your lines
and my radiant glass eyes
scan your colors
until I'm out of sight
and you're out of words

I want to take you somewhere
over the rainbow
under the boardwalk
around the block
through Mr. Magoo
and beyond the blue horizon
I want to take you everywhere
nobody wants me to take you

I want you to see what I look like
with hands instead of fists
and feel my lips instead of teeth
and hear my sighs
instead of alibis
and I want you to be touched
by my sweet smell of success

I want you to take the easy way out with me
on the road to ruin
and I want you to coast with me

until the coast is clear
I want to take you
almost anywhere
there's a corner
of this and that
I want to take you somewhere
where there's no here
no there
no borders
no limits
no time
no date
and I want you to mark it on your calendar

exit: stage left

my blood
rises
sarcastically
the law of life and the law of death
cannot be negotiated

my lips
whisper
pitifully
of the stabbing
I he she you they we
commit over and over and over
until it is bigger and more beautiful than we could imagine

my ears
hear
you
being overturned overthrown overcome
struggling to lengthen your short time
every man and woman young and old here and there now and then
loosens their grip
to prove their bravery gaze at the unknown grab a blessing
no matter how small no matter how well hidden
in today's great collapse

my eyes
erase
all your accumulated dust
I eat your food snatch warm from your fire sleep your rest
take the name you gave
your little conscience epidemic
changing my expression
until you can no longer recognize me

my handwriting
takes
a little of this and a little of that and still
it falls like a stone
and brings me nothing
[my prayers are no better]
my wandering my wondering
are pretty tame
in the face of the unrequited beauty
I burn

here we go again

here we go again
we go again
go again
again
here we go again
go again
again
go
here we go again

one more time like the one more time before that
and the one more time before that
and the one more time before that
and the one more time before that
and the one more time before that
and etcetera and etcetera and etcetera
and so forth
and so on
ad infinitum
ad nauseum
ad hoc locked and loaded

the technology changes
the speech changes
the face changes
the flag changes
the line changes
the whole melting morphing anything but stalling ball of wax changes
every time like every other every time

but it's always the same:
wills against wills
words against words
steel on steel
flesh on flesh
breath on breath
death on death on death on death
and it always ends the same:

the innocents fall by the wall
the innocents roll down the hole
the innocents drop till it stops

roaches do better than this sorry scene

and so we go
here
here we go
here we go again
we go again
go again
again
go
we go
we go again
here
here we go
here we go again

giving what for for what for
in this wholly holy war
to settle the score
once...
...and for all
twice...
...and for all
time after time after time...
...and for all
and for what?

for ambitious bastards
who bring messages
of gloom doom and not enough room
who are dying to break big news
with film at 11
whatever the world can't live without
boiled down to 25 words or less
between fast food commercials
and soap opera promos
in glorious surround sound meaning nothing
lingering over nothing

passing through nothing
intensifying nothing
sensitizing nothing
leaving me to anguish over
nothing
noth...ing
instead of
some...thing
any...thing
and so it goes:
garbage in garbage out garbage recycled
like plastic and glass and — yeah — sightings of Elvis

and still...somewhere
someone
somehow
touches on reality

now what?

the news
all the news
all the news that fits
all the news that fits the minute
all the news that fits the column
all the news that fits the hour
all the news that fits the page
all the news that fits the space between commercials
all the news that fits the section
all the news that fits the day part
all the news that fits the paper
all the news that fits the brain
all the news that fits the politics
all the news that fits the portfolio
all the news that fits the sponsor's best interest
all the news that fits...
...who?
...what?
...where?
...when?
...why?
...how?

and how!
and how now...
...because now...
we go again
us
we go again
dueling dudes at 50 paces
we go again
here
we go again
now
we go again
because it needs to be done
we go again
mano a mano
bomb-o a bomb-o
day-o...
day-ay-ay-o...
day night come and me wanna go home
because home is where the heart is
or home was where the heart is
of home is where the heart was
and you cannot go home again
because here we go again
here we go
here we
here
we go
we go again
here we go again
love it or leave it
you better believe it
here we go
here we go again

the night

the night is young
and the great golden moon is beautiful

somewhere someone clings to life
or despair

somewhere someone used to dance
or believe

rich people in quiet cars cruise by
without so much as a howdy do for the likes of us

resident aliens keep off the streets
reaching death before their time
binding
poverty to
severed histories

somewhere someone is up for this scene
or not

it's nothing new

my heart is a fist
and I am hungry

how
I was
how
I am
how
I will be
same old same old

somewhere someone is courteous
or in love
and the rest of the world
is just so much texture
or mulch
or muck
or mire
or milk

somewhere someone imitates a snake
or tames a serpent

somewhere someone is stabbed
or hacked to pieces
and
on their day off
they dream of summering with reptiles

somewhere someone is a zero
or a dog
or a storm
of terrors
in the dark American night

somewhere someone is in a camp
or a bank
throwing money over his shoulder
or
rubbing it against her soft smooth skin

just close your eyes

you're there

twenty-six

-one-
it's as if the last unforgettable ad campaign
& the following hyped-out fad
& the final passing fancy
& the NEXT BIG THING
all conspired
against me

all

conspired

against me

against
ME!

ain't it
ain't it
ain't it as if
as if i wrote the ad campaign
that spread the word
& shared the pain
with elegant manipulation
cold seduction
strangulation
&
a double your money back guarantee

as if

-two-
we see before we speak
hear before we see
feel before we hear
&
we live drowning
in words
&
images
guaranteed to make feeling
vanish
like a Blackstone pigeon
replaced
by the appearance of feelings
that are easier
for the old heart
&
soul
to live with
day by ever-lovin' day

and so i write the words you hear
convincing you that cars & beer
will give your soul a smile you can't deny
a bargain here
a purchase there
some cool designer underwear
reality is just a shuck n jive

-three-
my arsenal consists of
26 letters
(20 consonants
5 vowels
&
1 bi-)
26 letters
forming syllables
hundreds of syllables
thousands of syllables
forming words

thousands of words
millions of words
forming phrases
forming sentences
forming paragraphs
filling pages
filling volumes
filling libraries
filling heads
& hearts
with wants
with craves
with myths
&
fancies
at fancy-dan prices
and easy payments
that can break
you
in
two
for the price of one plus a dollar
operators are waiting
(& HOW!)
call while supplies last
be the fir...
be the fir...
be the first on your block
&
receive
(at no additional cost)
both upper-
&
lower-case letters
as well as
numbers
& PUNCTUATION
!

(or not)

-four-

I am a child

I make
my wind-up toys
play
heart-wrenching mini-dramas
while
keeping my distance
as they
poke holes in each other
knock off their corners
round out their eyes
trade starving kisses
for torn-off coupons
&
reveal
the irresistible
subterfuge
of reality

-five-

negative space

is

negative

only if

crowded full close tight narrow cramped thick packed cluttered

is

positive

and so I fill negative space with

letters syllables words phrases sentences paragraphs chapters verses

& integrated multimedia marketing extravaganzas

that shift the hunger to high gear

and send the public far and near

to shopping centers and strip malls

forever wandering through spare halls

awards are won and products sold

to rich and poor and young and old

I send them running in the race

until they reach their negative space

-six-
 after the sale
 (or the end of civilization as we know it, which ever comes first)
 there is the question of the spent coupons
 the clipped ammo
 the shelled fodder
 there is the issue of redemption
 or the lack thereof
 there is the minimum waiting period
 maximized in his her your mine our their best interest
 there is the inevitable problem of returns
 met with questions of who used what
 when
 where
 why
 how

questions followed by “?” question marks

questions accompanied by raised eyebrows and lowered expectations

questions answered with lies and alibis and sighs of deep
 commercial
 sorrow

after the sale?:
 the numbers
 numbers spelled with letters
 letters costing nothing
 except lives

be there

it’s the after the sale event you can’t afford to miss

-seven-
 I know
 you think
 this is all about:
 ADVERTISING
 comparing things to things
 this to that

flying
into buildings

this
is about
suicide bombers

this
is about
tanks crushing homes

this
is about
life as a commodity
a cheap commodity
traded with arms flailing
and limbs flying
and screams escaping lips

and this
is about
what you do
with 26 letters
and more syllables than you can count
and endless ever-expanding stockpile of
words
and phrases
and sentences
and paragraphs
and pages
and you get the idea

if there's life after death why bother dying?

pigs
racehorses
elephants of consciousness
Charlie Parker
ultimately proud in life
everybody dies

in the heat of the moment love lost out guilt played out desire hung out
[greedy to distraction for a piece of the action] overcome by visions of par-
adise in expectation of devastation denied caresses accepted like carcasses
at the morgue agony given like another old testament plague generous to
a fault or relentless to a virtue everyone got what everyone wanted if they
didn't know what they wanted [some didn't know what it was or why it was
theirs even after it was] you were there as fashionably late as I was com-
pulsively early surrounded by the usual cast of faux-sophisticated charac-
ters ever-so-carefully draped out beneath their stations in black cotton
linen wool silk leather and lace tulle awaiting the arrival of photographers
from various supermarket tabloids interlopers in some real gone world

pinned ears
rosy flesh
every picture tells a story
one cigarette too many
centered in my memory
upon a delicious night
publicly displayed
in the past
edged in gold
destiny is one bum trip

you blenderheaded me in your gentle tender gender fender bender fantasy
stew until I was as lost in you as you eternally overheated hyperbolic and
blissed out on endless repetitious psycho somnambulistic passion relentlessly
eternally unendurably prolonged chinese fire drill in the grey room unheard
warnings ignored unknown meanings avoided eye contact evaded a photo-
graph of you and me in a silver frame under gauze on a bed of rose petals

police cars
 ruthless whores
 elegant candor
 optional treachery
 Chester Burnett sings the blues
 can you hear me?
 unless you possess yourself
 incest is inevitable
 eventually you will submit
 you touched me with your lips your eyes your soul your unpublished agen-
 da your sad undeserved history the way you said my name I caved in like
 a house trailer in a tornado all twisted remnants of happy days in a bor-
 rowed garden nights in heaven pawned for a quick fix in the alley between
 the old mortuary and the new movie theater where forlorn pornography
 played to small groups of dedicated educators politicians cremation artists
 redundant participants in failed social experiments and those not at all
 ashamed of their unendurable cravings easy choices flowered into intricate
 regrets overnight and by morning the garden was choked with weeds
 one blessing sustained
 shadows sought
 eyes shunned
 sorrows swallowed
 in darkness
 or neutrality
 or occupied territory
 buzzwords
 stress straining at the leash
 expressionless faces
 said is said she said
 in love or in loneliness
 or in the numskull fairy tale forest
 and the voice on the radio droned on and on and on saying nothing that
 meant anything while everyone who was anyone listened hypnotized like
 lemmings on the edge of their cliff except you except me except us
 entranced as we were by the voluptuous disintegration of hope in the black
 hole of our obsession terminating temptation by relinquishing to it single
 bullet theory quick and simple
 gentle moments in the heart of darkness
 everybody turns away
 nobody exempts themselves
 like there is nothing left
 except extenuating circumstances

MeBop Deluxe

I'm mad
I'm sad
I'm bad
I'm hot
I'm not
I'm what
I see a beautiful lady
and I'm lost in dreamland
I see a beautiful man
and I go home alone
where does it say
that I can or I cannot act this way
I'm looking for someone
who's no one like I've ever known
I'm here
I'm near
I'm clear
I'm cold
I'm sold
I'm told
I'm with a woman who pulls my strings
easy as breathing
I'm with a woman whose strings
are so easy to pull
who's to say how much is real
and how much is imagined
I don't really know
and I don't really care on my own
I'm grown
I'm known
I'm stoned
I'm one
I'm fun
I'm done

25.01.00 — another America

America
I got my own self
to think about
if you don't mind
my own shadow to cast
my own mistakes to make

America
I'm set in my ways
and I like it
that way
so just

leave me alone
if you please

America
I'm an accident
waiting to happen
a wire
wrapped
too
damn
tight

a song
that needs
a little
singing
and no one knows
where

the goddamn choir
is at the mo

America
I am confused
by the array
of deadly weapons
on the kitchen table

next to the vegetables
 and I think
 this is not
 one good sign
 America
 your child is missing
 and lonely and
 battered and
 broken
 in a crowded lobby
 awaiting a
 shiny
 straight-from-the-assembly-line-new
 virgin
 body
 America
 you talk trash
 even though
 you could talk treasure
 if you would
 if you would
 America
 your sheets
 are not lily white
 and
 you are so
 so distant
 you hold me
 by the long arm of the law
 and stare into my beady eyes

and dare me
 to tell your secrets
 as if anyone
 would believe
 me
 where you are concerned
 America
 I will not
 be dish rag
 if
 I cannot
 be table cloth
 and that is all
 I have to say
 about it

I'm running out

I'm running out of space and it's so bad I find myself face-to-face with myself more often than not these days and I don't necessarily like what I'm seeing and I've had it up to here (holding my hand just under my nose parallel to the floor) and I'm maybe an eyelash from going postal and, trust me, you don't want to hang around for that so I'll see if I can make this quick:

I'm running out of space and

I'm running out of time and the damn ticking inside my head inside my head inside inside inside my head the damn ticking inside my head is deafening and I can't get anywhere because there's no "where" to go and no "when" to leave and no one told me that I had to check in or clock out and I can't look back because time's a-wastin' time's a-wastin' time time time's a-wastin and the time to look back is past and I'm not at all sure the safety is engaged because

I'm running out of space and

I'm running out of time and

I'm running out of chances and I think I need a good kick in the ass to get me to ditch the insanity and get down to earning the big bucks the big bliss the big bonanza that's waitin' for me somewhere over the rainbow and, man, I think I got my message from the real Yahweh the one Yahweh the only Yahweh so long ago it's dyin' of old age Alzheimer's as the lights go out and the brain drains and here I sit and there you are and when will I see it clean and clear from far and near for all to hear and all to know and the thing that really bugs me in all this is the simple fact that

I'm running out of space and

I'm running out of time and

I'm running out of chances and

I'm running out of excuses and what'll I do without them without excuses without regrets without apologies because without excuses without regrets without apologies there's no pardon there's no absolution there's no forgiveness there's no amnesty there's no quiet way home and life on the road is no life at all it's travel it's all hotel no-tell motel rooms with pictures screwed to walls and phone cords and shower curtains that are just too short to reach and last night's mayhem hidden in the mattress and I want to go home no matter who says I can't and

I'm running out of space and

I'm running out of time and

I'm running out of chances and

I'm running out of excuses and

I'm running out of patience -- wanna make something of it or would you rather just let me get on with this little piece of work and lean your gossip lips up to the closest eager ear and say "the thing is this" and "the thing is that" and "the thing is the other" and "the thing is the thing" and "the thing is not the thing" and the thing is all things" and "the thing is no thing" and the play's the thing and the every thing is beautiful in the eye of the beholder and

I'm running out of space and

I'm running out of time and

I'm running out of chances and

I'm running out of excuses and

I'm running out of patience and

I'm running out of energy

I'm running

I'm running out

I'm running out of energy

I'm running out of energy and I'm running out of reasons to go on

I'm running out of energy and I'm running out of reasons

I'm running out of energy and I'm running out of reasons to

I'm running out of energy and I'm running out of reasons to go on

I'm running out of energy and I'm running out of reasons to go on

and when there's no reason to go on there's no going on and when

there's no going on there's going off and so I'm going off I'm going

off drugs and I'm going off booze and I'm going off the air and I'm

going off the deep end and I'm going...

air and I'm going off the deep end and I going...

air and I'm going off the deep end and I gone and

I'm not running out of space and

I'm not running out of time and

I'm not running out of chances and

I'm not running out of excuses and

I'm not running out of patience and

I'm not running out of energy

cause, Baby, you can't run out of what you've never had and

cause, Baby, you can't run out of where you've never been and

cause, Baby, you can't run out of nothing

this one's for you

this one's for you
you

you who's bustin' hump today just to make it to tomorrow you...not conservative religious right Republican rapists pillagers plunderers who talk a good game but play it bean ball high and inside you

you who's drivin' the rush hour bus on asphalt poured by other whos so all the whos sitting and standing jammed one-on-the-other like yellow number two pencils eraser side up in a box on a shelf can bust hump just to make it to tomorrow too you...not look like liberal Democrats who are conservative Republicans in Mother Theresa drag voguing for all the chumps in the cheap seats no more no less you

you who's sendin' the kids to school every morning and playin' it straight every day and payin' the bills every night and forkin' over every bloody cent of your taxes every year on what's laughably called a living wage without big buck stock option golden parachute capital gain bonus safety nets build on fancy schmancy bookkeeping no one this side of Einstein can begin to translate into addition and subtraction that makes sense because you make it with sweat above the table in plain sight so everyone can see with nothing to hide you...not manipulative multi-millionaire me-first-last-and-always moguls pumping out genuine imitation guaranteed to last a lifetime or less whichever comes first government-approved gizmos gadgets doodads and thing-a-mabobs you

this one's for you whose eye for beauty isn't blinded by cosmetic enhancements

this one's for you whose ear for harmony isn't blocked by hot wax war songs

this one's for you whose nose for news isn't clogged with the phlegm of phony morals

this one's for you whose throat whispers "I love you" like you mean it...because you do

this
this one
this one's for you
you

you who's doin' what you can when you can the best way you can...not givin' 110% takin' it to the next level goin' out of the box stretchin' the envelope to create the next big thing you

you whose brain is so crammed with yesterday's regrets and today's fears that there's no room for tomorrow's hopes you...not leave it to Beaver father knows best I love Lucy three's company love boat everything's going to get better in the blink of a sponsor's eye just before the closing commercial so the demographi-

cally psychographically econographically correct target group can sleep in peace
 with giant grins slapped across their kissers you
 you who's got one life to live two ways to go three card Monte futures foregone
 conclusions five and dime treats six pack pleasures seventh heaven aspirations
 eight ball expectations and nine'll get you none you...not infinite opportunity sil-
 ver spoon silk scarf rich Corinthian leather pre-school prep school Yale Harvard
 Oxford board of directors magnum of vintage champagne celebration picture in
 the social section of the daily rag summer in the Hamptons you

 this one's for you whose here today just may be gone tomorrow

 this one's for you whose fanciest fantasy wears sensible shoes

this one's for you whose dearest dream isn't built on the debris of denial

this one's for you whose golden eternity isn't past tense in a New York second

this one's for you whose golden eternity isn't past tense in a New

this one's for you whose golden eternity isn't past tense in a New York

this one's for you whose golden eternity isn't past tense in a New York second

this one's for you, Girl

 you

you who's watchin the seconds tick by like water through a sieve you...not cryo-
 genically saved like some exhibit in the museum of unnatural science you

you who's struttin' as if life were some sinuous life-or-death ho-walk you...not
 cosmetic surgery out the ying-yang what did you look like before you looked like
 a botox personality cheap plastic android you

you who's walkin' through dangerous doors of guilt innocent as the dawn unblink-
 ing eyes wide open brain wide open mouth slapped shut...not gold card A-list
 posin' for the paparazzi complaining while lookin' through yesterday's society
 page to see if they caught your good side you

 this one's for you who had parent's once upon a time and

 this one's for you who had a future in the past and

 this one's for you who had the right words at the right time and

 this one's for you who had enough before you had more and

 this

 this one

 this one's for you

 you, Baby

 you

 you know

 you know who

 you know who you are

 and you know this one

 this one's for you

the dream

The American Dream
keeps us running in circles
getting ours [getting ours]
serving up hell time in family sized portions
remembering numb non responsive answers to callous cold hearted questions
shining caskets
no one wants
BAM! BAM! BAM! SLAMming lids shut
moments before SHOW TIME!
dying motherfucker dying
counting vacancies
marking places in the long line
thinking and
singing and
writing greedy little forget me nots
can you hear me
can you hear me
can you hear the pennies rattle in my skull
can you hear
The American Dream
email messages
to be memorized [remember?]
accurately [don't fuck up]
keeping the grist
substituting gristle for feeling
recording itself for posterity
or prosperity
or whatever it may be called
reciting the deeds of men
or the word of God
or whatever it may be called
to the CLANK! CLANK! CLANK! of industry's tank
or history's thunder
or whatever it may be called
pounding
loneliness
in like a nail
so hard

it splits
it spits
blood on
The American Dream
shrink-wrapped like
so much souse or
so much headcheese or
so much of whatever it may be called
tattooed
erased
met
and left like
mantras on lips shut tight
so where is your American Dream God now?
sucking up margaritas on some sun soaked
island with undertakers from Oshkosh?
putting down the sound in some shithole stu-
dio with Rastafarians from the Bronx?
Gaming the cold hard imagination of cyber-
space with defrocked trekkies from
Nowheresville?
all ones
all zeroes
all zeroes and ones
all ones and zeroes
all bought
all paid for
all paid off
all gone
gone with
The American Dream
which keeps us running
long after
it ran out of steam
it ran out on us
it ran out of the picture
exit stage left
you dig?

running out a chapbook by charlie newman

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You can't be free or strong until you can speak up



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