

Suburban Rhythm

by Maxwell Baumbach



a cc&d 2010 chapbook
scars publications

*For Eleanor,
The nicest woman I have ever known
who showed me
how to live, love,
and most of all,
cheat in Monopoly.*

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Image Depressed

today
there was a commercial on TV
for a diuretic
aimed toward women
telling them
that
when it is a certain time of the month
they could take this medicine
and fit into their
favorite pair of jeans

might as well be selling
a finger down the throat
but
you look
beautiful
the way you are

Paint Chips for Breakfast

I was told
by a
college student
that
America
is the ONLY COUNTRY
in national debt
and that is because
EVERY PERSON
IN AMERICA
IS IN DEBT

I am less worried
about
fast food dinners
than I am
about
these kids
eating paint chips
for breakfast

The Diamond

he picked up the diamond
& slipped it
into his pocket
because he could

when he was bored
he always had the diamond

sometimes
that made him smile

most of the time
though
he kept it
tucked away
because
after all
how great
can a diamond really be?

The Romance Poet

the romance poet
sits at his desk
gazing at the picture
of his muse
his purpose
or
as he often calls her
in such a trite manor
his
“damsel in distress”

but
no one told
this romance poet
that she
like most women
is strong enough
to stand on her own
and does not need
him
to put on
the shining armor

Far Off

there are these
glasses
that I
am only supposed to wear
when I
drive

I am not able
to see
that far

but
when I put them on
everything
is outlined
in flawless trim

distant things
now clear

most of the time
I take them off

what is in the distance
I am not
supposed to see
and that
is fine with me

Nice Guy

the people
I know
are flawed
but
that politician
on TV
seems
like
a nice guy

Decency

most people
have the common decency
to fancy up their words
& sugar coat
the way that a baker would
but unfortunately
I dress casual
& have no culinary skills

I want to rip
his heart out
& piss on it

then

flip off his corpse
as I scream at it

decency
can rot in hell
next to him

Oops

when I told her
the joke
she forgot
to marvel
at my humor
and
give me her number

About the Shoes

she won't let you
walk in her shoes
but she will
let you
in her pants
if that
is any consolation
but
that is more of a reward
since no one
really cares about the shoes
any more

A Cold Confusion

I do
understand
that the world
is a cold place
but
I do not
understand
why we need
two hundred dollar
cashmere sweaters
and
two hundred dollar
ugg boots
to keep ourselves warm

Stolen

I wanna love
somebody like you

I stole that from a song
that I heard
yesterday
but
you said
you loved that song
& it used to sing you to sleep
so I put it
in a poem
hoping
that some day
you can read this
before
you go to sleep

Army Days

he's
not as strong
as he was
back in his
army days
but
he still stands
as firm as he can
in his state
with his chest puffed out

glaring
from his porch
in his jeans
& plain white shirt
inhaling
every last bit
of his cigarette
before
tossing it
into what was once
a flower pot
where his wife
would grow
lilacs

My Dad Could Beat Up Your Dad

when children argue
they will say
that their dad
can beat up
the other one's dad

but
the parents
rarely fight
&
even when they do
it does not change
that
when the children grow up
the world
will beat the shit out of them
anyway

as she ascended up the staircase
I remember feeling strange
looking at her

the black rims of her glasses gave depth
to her moss colored soul windows
her stomach protruded
slightly
from the rest of her frame
hidden beneath her tie-dye t-shirt
& her hair thrown into a messy bun

there was nothing
breathtaking
about her
but
I did feel an overwhelming urge
to tell her
that she is beautiful

Staircase Slight

certainly
I would mean nothing by it
I had no interest in her
and she was my friend's older sister

there was nothing I had to gain
and
even less to lose
but for whatever reason
the inner-knife I put to my throat
in an effort to force out those words
could not get the job done

she walked into her room living another mundane day
in her mundane life
that I could have
at least
made different
but instead
fear made my day
a bit disappointing

If People

if people
love you
that
is wonderful

and

if people
hate you
that
is even better

but

if people
nothing you
that
is when you are without purpose

Hush Hush

I had a
fling
with a
church girl
that we kept
hush hush

I wrote her a poem
and gave it to her
between classes

a year later
when she was dating
someone else
she asked me
for another copy

and for all you know
you could be
her boyfriend
that isn't cutting it

The Perks of Being Maxwell Baumbach

I have seen
numerous movie
and read
numerous books
about
a high school kid
who loved to read
& write
& stood out
from the rest
so his/her teacher
would give
extra books
to the student
for reading
outside of class

none of the teachers
at my high school
knew

I wrote poetry
and were
surprised
when they would
read my papers
because I liked to
goof off
and have fun
so they
expected
little of me

they never gave me
extra books
though

yay for less reading

Shelter

ring
on her finger
but she
is yet to live
on her own

eighteen
and engaged
naive smiles
of inexperience
and hope

she pulls the blanket
over her eyes
when
the sun goes away

Really Good Poem

my friends will tell me
they were
going through something
& had these emotions
& decided to write a poem
& it is really good
& they want me to read it

most of the time
I think
they suck

I will write these poems
when I am going through something
& I have all these emotions
& decide to write a poem
& think it is really good
& I send it to an editor

most of the time
they think
I suck

R-E-S-P forget it

self respect
is for people
who
do not get
respect
from anyone else

or something
like that

What's Easier

if it takes less muscles to smile
than it does to frown
does that mean
it is easier to put on a front?

time for work
so grin big
sunshine

family function
sweep those follies
off a cliff

after that
take a deep breath
or maybe
a shallow one
since
its less work

Despite My Academic Excellence, There Are Times When I Mess Up

I feel like a
dumb ass
when I misspell
intelligence

My Seat

there was a man
on the train
who took the spot
I usually sit in

does this jerk
not know the order of things?

I give him
a snide grin
to clue him in

yet he stays
in MY seat

I turn to another regular
and point at the
thief

can you believe this guy
I ask him

he sluggishly batted his eyelids twice
as he faced me
saying

that used to be my spot
before you got here
but I didn't feel entitled
to it

Never Again

when he tried to walk
at seven months
he planted
on his face
& never dared it again
not for the rest
of his life
even as he grew old
in his stubborn nature
he refused to try it
because of what happened
the first time

they say
insanity
is trying the same thing
over & over
expecting
different results;

I say
insanity
is trying once
& quitting

The Suburban Rhythm of Things

the football guys
play their game
and bang bunches
of girls

the cheerleaders
yell from the sidelines
and pass notes
during class

the emo kids
sit behind the bleachers
and listen to
whiny music

when they go to bed
they all lay down
and pray to their suburban Jesus
about their horrible problems

Fashion Sense

I was advised
to wear a different pair of pants
because mine were not
modern
enough

I wish I could keep up with fashion
I really really do
but unfortunately
I have not found room
in my busy schedule
to sit down
and be influenced all the time

Playground

there are
jungle gyms
drenched in lighter fluid
next to
swimming pools of fire
thumbtack covered
monkey bars
attached to
razor blade slides
and
stove-top tire swings
above shark infested waters

this is one
beautiful playground
we have given our children

A Country Morning

I can see the sky
for a million miles

the crops
are newly sprouting

the sun
looms in the air
like an orange
on a string
held up by
a delighted child

maybe I was
misplaced
in the suburbs

this country morning
is beautiful
but all I can think about
is the country girl
sitting on my lap

Suburban Rhythm

by Maxwell Baumbach

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