



Hallowed Be
Thy Halloween

Todd Matson

2003 Chapbook
Scars Publications

A Child's Nightmare

Sound most frightening,
heard in the dark bed
of night. Not some precarious
toy off the sofa's edge
falling, nor eery scratching,
tree-branch scraping
in the howling whistling wind.
Nor footsteps fading,
furnace clicking,
sheets rustling,
dog barking;
nor the night house creaking,
cracking, settling, breathing.

Sound most frightening
heard in the dark bed
with heart racing,
blood sweat dripping,
under covers hiding:
a single note emanating
from the old bedroom
piano.

Sound, horror ringing,
through nights and years
can still be heard,
accompanied by
vision of an ethereal boy
locked frantically in
his best impression
of boy sleeping too deeply
to hear the sound.

Alphabet of Insanity

absurd
beliefs
conspire

don't
ever
feel
gods
have
imminent
jurisdiction

kaleidoscopic
luminescence
makes
naturally
occurring
protoplasm
quake
remorseless
seismic
tyranny
unmasking
virulent
wanton
xenophobic
yellow-dog
zeitgeist



Cat House

she came scratching
on my bedpost last night
after i told her too many times
to stop
to go away
to get off my lap
to cease and desist with the
unsolicited and self-serving
licking and pawing
of my neck and chest
after making sport of me
for her own gratification
never once with so much
as an inquisitive meow
to ask if it was
good for me too
the narcissist
if she had weighed
several hundred pounds
she would have undoubtedly
made quick work of me
devoured me completely
and sat licking her chops
with all the pleasure
of a human smoking
a cigarette after sex
the sociopath
the feline audacity of her
to come scratching
on my bedpost
after dying on my carpet
damn cat, get out!

Cemeterians

the courage
can be found
among the
cemeterians
where the
pecking orders
are no more
where the
playing fields
are level
where the
realization
chrystalizes
that there is
nothing to lose
that is not lost
by everyone
where even
John and Jane Doe
can find their feet
on equal footing
with everyone else
living and dead
and do so
before their toes
are pointed
skyward

Frog in the Throat

they taste like chicken
but i don't like them
not because they
taste like chicken
but because i can never
forget what happened
the morning after
i first ate one
where shall i begin?
out in the field
where two young lads
were sleeping out?
out at the pond
where we caught
the biggest frog
we had ever seen?
beside the camp fire
where we bludgeoned
the frog to death
with a hammer and
hacked its legs off
with an axe?
yes, let me begin there
we buried the remains
of a very dead frog
roasted frog legs
big as chicken wings
over the camp fire

ate one leg each
agreed that they were
"finger licking good"
and went to sleep
in the morning i
awoke to discover
it had dug itself out
of its shallow grave
skull fractured
head caved in
left eye popping out
back legs amputated
but still breathing
defiantly breathing
and i saw a fly land
on its disfigured face
now, i can never be sure
but i believe the fly
was eating the frog

Lullaburrito

they called her “senorita of sids”
because sids took the babies
she took tender loving care of
but if you ask me it was never
sudden infant death syndrome
i would bet my life that every
one of those babies died of
something much more sinister
just like my baby brother did
when she was his nanny
they found tortilla in his throat
a conspicuous, swollen wad of tortilla
had closed his throat off completely
and if all those “sids babies” were
exhumed and autopsied
i bet the same thing would be
found in their tiny throats
and may lightning strike
the grave of my brother
if senorita did not sing to
each of them the same lullaby
i heard her sing to my brother
lullaburrito into your mouth
when you will die
your soul will go south
when you will wake
this much will be true
lullaburrito is waiting for you

Never a House More Haunted

never a house more haunted
pews crowded with folks who
refuse to give up their seats
long after their bodies
have been layed to rest
hymns impossible to sing
without hearing voices
silenced by the grave
prayers impossible to pray
without hearing the muffled
amens of the dead
pulpit possessed by
preachers past who still
know not when to stop
choir a cacophony of
sopranos, altos and tenors
gone many cantatas ago
sunday school rooms
overflowing with pupils
who refuse to graduate
corridors alive with the
hustle and bustle of
no one there
sometimes when the sun
shines in just the right way
through the stained glass
the spirits can be seen
dancing in the light
of this house haunted
by the ghost of God



Sanctuarium

if ever you enter
the sanctuarium
thirsting for
life everlasting
promised to all
who drink from
the fountain of
living water
flowing freely
from the altar

enter before dusk
gaze upon those
who have drank
from the fountain
and now worship
in their colonial
and victorian garb
smelling of mildew
and moth balls
split ends dyed
blonde and brown
black and blue
age spots rotting
relentlessly to the
ticking of the clock
eye sockets empty

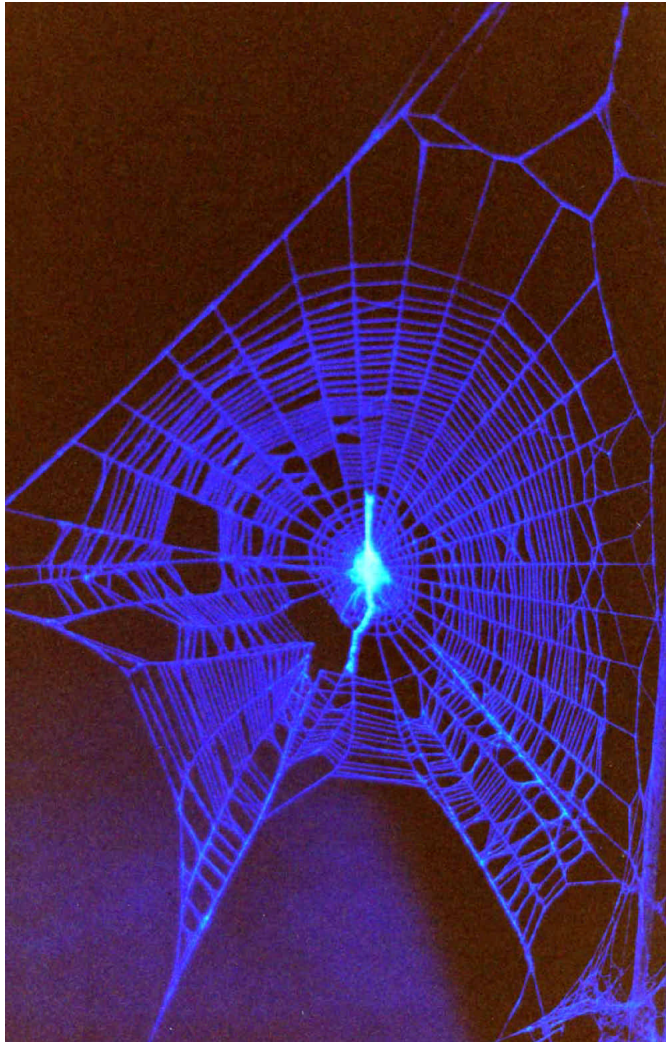
brain cavities full
of worms as immortal
as their hosts
ever aging
never dying
forever lusting
after bread and cup
like vampires
stalking
young blood

hear me now
if ever you enter
the sanctuarium
you must leave
before night falls
for when darkness reigns
all seekers must choose
to drink or die
drink from the fountain
or die before dawn
and the blood in the cup
the body broken for bread
will be your own

Spiders

they play innocent
but I know the truth
the naked truth
which is never more clear
than when I am
naked in the shower
and there it is
on the curtain
taunting me
sending a chill
up my spine
which not even
hot water can warm
sending a panic
through my soul
which activates
a shock wave
of adrenaline
for fight or flight
sending a shudder
through my body
which only a sudden
burst of rage can subdue
they play innocent
but I know the truth
which is never more clear
than when I am
naked in the shower
and there it is
and there is nowhere to go
it is it or me
and it must die
for I know that if it lives
it will remember
it will remember the place

it will remember me
it will know I meant it ill
it will be back
it will not be alone
I know the naked truth
about spiders



The Murder of Mother

she screamed the most shrill
deafening, heart-stopping flurry
of blood curdling screams
sent a tidal wave of adrenaline
into my young boyhood blood
and forevermore opened an
unwanted window into what
it sounds like to have one's
mother brutally hacked up
by a deranged axe murderer
and all it took was for
some innocent little tike
to inadvertently leave
a toad in a cup
in the kitchen sink



Wink

wink while no one is watching but me
as i make my way across this crowded room
as i drink in your face as i have all my life
wink as if i'm the only one who can see you
a wink and a prayer is all i'll need
to get me through the night
wink and we'll keep it just between us
i'll tell no one what i see when i see you wink
wink and consider it a covert communication
a secret between the best of friends and lovers
a private message encoded in a simple wink
a silent conspiracy to tell me everything
and tell nothing to anyone but me
wink while i wait for you to flick an eyelash
and give me a flicker of hope
that love is a promise kept forever
wink, wink, wink while i wait and stare
wink and i'll take it as a come on sign
i'll take it as a yes, i'll take it as an I do
i'll take it as your solemn vow to me
that you are not dead

Teenage Cyborg

his walkman has weaved its circuitry
into his hip just as his headphones
have sent wiry tentacles into his ear
canal where they have spliced themselves
to nerve fibers which carry a steady stream
of heavy metal music directly to a silicon
chip in the pleasure center of his brain
which is also inundated by a plethora of
violent images continuously generated by
video games he compulsively plays in virtual
reality with joy sticks serving as prosthetic
fingers and telescoping lenses as prosthetic
eyes wired to the nerve fibers of his constantly
upgraded retinas which make my blood run
cold when they become fixed on me and i get
the uncanny sense that i have morphed into
some nameless fiend in one of his video
games and i wonder if the hairs on the back
of my neck are caught in the cross-hairs of
a bad dream when he comes to me wired to
the gills in the computer-generated voice
of Stephen Hawking and says:
Cut the blue wire and I'll blow.
Cut the red wire and I'll bleed.

Possum

they say he saw
possums
dead ones
as he drove
home
that day
one here
one there
two to
his right
three to
his left
dozens dead
in his rearview
mirror
until he arrived
home
where possums
lay dead
by the
hundreds

they say when he
went inside and
slit his wrists
he didn't really
want to die
he just wanted to
play possum
unfortunately
he got lost
in the role

LSD does that
sometimes

Beware of the Sitting Duck

think twice children
before declaring
open season on an ugly
duckling or targeting an
odd duck for ridicule
or hurling sticks or stones
or words at any duck
that sits still for it
for i remember a boy
who walked and quacked
like just such a duck
he was a sitting duck for
ridicule and humiliation
ugly face, ugly clothes
ugly sitting duck
in eighth grade hell
easy prey for all
the preppy predators
with all his odd duck
attempts to fight back
only serving to make him
more of a target for more
ridicule and humiliation
dead duck walking
dead ugly duck walking

ugly dead odd duck walking
ugly dead odd duck sitting
and then one day he did
the ugliest and oddest
dead duck thing of all
he shot his little sister's
baby-sitter through the heart
and then put the barrel of
the shotgun in his mouth
and blew his brains onto
his bedroom wall leaving
what was left of his naked
dead duck body laying in
his own cold duck blood

A Most Unhappy Halloween

the year i first went trick-or-treat alone
was for me a most unhappy halloween
with my mother making a dead boy of me
with my older brother and sister insisting
trick-or-treat is just for little dead boys
will you come with me father?
i said with a chill running down my spine
as i stepped out into the still and frosty night
i'm sorry my precious little pumpkin head,
but i must carve the pumpkins
he whispered with a smile which was
somehow both creepy and comforting
and i scurried away into the eerie blackness
with my bag and my heart in my hand
and i surprised myself by the courage
i was able to conjure up from deep within
as i told myself that being dead
and alone in the dark
is not so bad
and i tricked and treated myself
to a bag full of candy
until i returned to my own house again
for a trick and a treat or two
only to find the light dim and flickering
the house more still and silent
than the night itself
and as i turned from the hall
into the family room
my knees buckled with horror
and i too fell silent, as one truly dead
for my mother, brother and sister
were all lined up on the couch
with their heads hollowed out
with candles burning behind their eyes
and my father was glaring at me
with eyes round as pumpkins
with an axe and a candle in his hands



Have a Most
Unhappy Halloween

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Have a Most Unhappy Halloween.

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