

# The War of Art



**Chris Butler**

**Down in the Dirt**  
2010 Chapbook

The poems featured in *The War of Art*  
have been previously published in the following publications:

*Asphodel Madness*  
*bear creek haiku*  
*The Beatnik Cowboy*  
*The Blue Fog Journal*  
*children, churches and daddies magazine*  
*Leaf Garden Press*  
*Opium Poetry 2.0*  
*Shoots and Vines*  
*Zygote in my Coffee*

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## Reader Friendly

I've dumbed myself  
down  
to a nub  
for the entertainment  
of an obedient audience,

applauding this  
devolving disembowelment  
of vowels and inconsistent  
constant of clustered consonants;

so I sometimes write why.

## Poetry is my Fetus

These are the words of Sam Hammil,  
but most poets swallow the pill  
the morning after  
to abort their poem,  
rather than giving birth  
to flippers.

# I Wrote This Poem Whilst I Was Sitting on the Toilet

I wrote this poem  
whilst I was sitting on the  
toilet,

as an act which you might  
consider to be the equivalent  
of taking a shit,

but I'd prefer to refer to it  
as giving birth to words in  
the form of a turd.

## Yellow Snow

Whoa!

Look at  
it go!

Writing rhymes  
in the snow  
with flowing  
yellow  
ink,  
stinking  
of dehydrated  
asparagus,  
before my  
memory  
disappears  
with the  
rebirth  
of everything  
in spring.

## I Got Blisters on my Brain!

The friction from  
my constant mental  
exertions of repetitive  
motions on the page  
forms brain blisters, and  
following full filling the  
needing feeling of  
cutting just to bleed  
with a rusted razor  
blade, I must drain  
the buckets of  
bloody puss and/  
or clear serum,  
from the exposed  
epidermis to the  
lowest layers of  
swollen skin.

Soaking bruised  
lobes in a tepid tub,  
my scabs ripen for  
the harvest picking;  
healing peeling  
red dye number five  
skinless sheets  
and clotted carotid  
arteries of deflated veins,  
as cerebral strokes  
contribute critical thinking  
to curb the surging  
creative hemorrhage.

## Urge

I am submerged in a homonym binge.  
As I pierce my protruding purple vein, I cringe,  
then plunge the English language from my Bic syringe.

## Only Dead Poets Are Famous

This poem is to be published  
a lifetime after my timely death,

when jaundiced papyrus curl the  
corners of cigarette-burnt edges;  
surrounding scratches cut and  
pasted together without wasting  
whited-out words on artificially-  
intelligent electronic screens  
exhaling synthetically heated breezes,  
before I suffocate under gray hairs  
from unburied balding dust bunnies.

Only dead poets are famous,  
but obsolete art can't save us.

## The Last Poem I'll Ever Write

How much poetry  
will it take to  
kill all of the trees,  
or at least  
keep me busy  
long enough  
until I no longer  
notice that I've  
stopped breathing?

## Seppuku

Samurai suicide  
is an honorable  
way to die,  
but I would  
probably end up  
spilling my guts.

## Only Publish This Poem When I'm Dead

When I imagine  
that I've died,  
I know exactly  
what will be of me,

but what of death  
can one envision?

Dark  
dirt/  
digging  
worms,  
and the endless mumblings  
of lawnmowers over my ceiling  
or the moaning of Sunday morning's  
mourning,

or the hiss of piss against the wind,  
left to sit adrift  
as a buoy in an ocean of whale carcasses  
and swimmers' urine,

but I wish that you just don't burn  
my paper skin.

## Burn This Book

Burn this book,  
and forget you  
ever read it,  
as repressed  
memories to  
reappear as  
fractured  
fragments of  
expression when  
the future is here.

Cremate these pages  
over opened orange  
flames, then scrape  
up the remains with  
a spade shovel, before  
smoking the ashes and  
snorting the leftover  
embers embedded  
in charred coals;  
starting destructive  
fires inspires creation.

Bubbling ink,  
at about four-  
hundred degrees  
Fahrenheit,  
runs in random  
directions, creating  
cartoons for the  
psychotic minds  
of my generation;  
an accurate depiction.

Give yourself  
a lobotomy,  
and pan fry the  
spongy gristle in  
lemon pepper  
seasonings,  
garnish with  
parsley and eat  
using chopsticks,  
that section of  
your brain which  
pictured my words.

## OCD

I've rewritten this poem,  
this word, so many times that  
I forget where it began;  
initial ideas inside  
sequential thought bubbles, burst  
over their impure circles,  
so I scribble each letter  
three times-three times-three damn times,  
until I write the next-next-next,  
waiting for that final line-  
whiting out unwritten lines-  
to find the ultimate line.

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## other publications from Scars:

**Magazines:** *Children, Churches and Daddies* (cc&d magazine), founded June 1993; *Down in the Dirt*, conceived 1994, founded 2000

**Books:** *Hope Chest in the Attic*, *the Window*, *Close Cover Before Striking*, *(Woman.)*, *Autumn Reason*, *Contents Under Pressure*, *the Average Guy's Guide (to Feminism)*, *Changing Gears*, *the Key to Believing*, *Domestic Blisters, Etc.*, *Oeuvre*, *Exaro Versus*, *L'arte*, *The Other Side*, *The Boss Lady's Editorials*, *The Boss Lady's Editorials (2005 Expanded Edition)*, *Duality*, *Seeing Things Differently*, *Change/Rearrange*, *Death Comes in Threes*, *Moving Performances*, *Six Eleven*, *Life at Cafe Aloha*, *Creams*, *Rough Mixes*, *The Entropy Project*, *The Other Side (2006 Edition)*, *Stop.*, *Sing Your Life*, *The Beauty and the Destruction*, cc&d v167.5 (*Writing to Honour & Cherish*, editor edition), *Blister & Burn (the Kuypers edition)*, *S&M*, cc&d v170.5 *Distinguished Writings* editor edition, *Living in Chaos*, *Silent Screams*, *Taking It All In*, *It All Comes Down*, *Rising to the Surface*, *Galapagos*, Chapter 38 (v1, v2 & v2), *Finally*, *Literature for the Snotty and Elite* (v1, v2 & part 1), *a Wake-Up Call From Tradition*, (*recovery*), *Dqark Matter: the Mind of Janet Kuypers*, *Evolution*, *Sulphur & Sawdust*, *Slate & Marrow*, *Blister & Burn*, *Rinse & Repeat*, *Survive & Thrive*, (*not so*) *Warm & Fuzzy*, *Torture & Triumph*, *Oh, the Elements*, *Side A/Side B*, *Balance*, *Chaos Theory*, *Writing To Honour & Cherish*, *Distinguished Writings*, *Breaking Silences*, *Unlocking the Mysteries*, *the Book of Scars*, *We The Poets*, *Life on the Edge*, *Revealing all your Dirty Little Secrets*, *Decrepit Remains*, *Charred Remnants*, *Hope & Creation*, *Bending the Curve*, *Layers of Creation*, *Dark Matter*, *Survival of the Fittest*, *Crawling Through the Dirt*, *Laying the Groundwork*, *Weathered*, *echo*, *Ink in my Blood*, *Infamous in our Prime*, *Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art*, *the Electronic Windmill*, *Changing Woman*, *the Swan Road*, *the Significance of the Frontier*, *The Svetasvatara Upanishad*, *Harvest of Gems*, *the Little Monk*, *Death in Malaga*, *Memento Mori*, *In the Palace of Creation*, *R.I.P.*, *Bob the Bumble Bee*, *Remnants and Shadows*, *I Saw This*, *the Drive*, *Thomas at Tea*, *Crashing Down Nineteenth*, *Blue Collar Ballet*, *nopoem*, "In Your Heart, the Apostrophe's Teardrops of God"

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