



Peter
Magliocco

Down in the Dirt
2011 chapbook

Ghost Dancers
Leaping from a Tome

scars www.hopwoodend.com

For JON BUSH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Some of these poems were published previously (or are scheduled to be published) at: *Tryst, The Beatnik, Heeltap, Nothing.No One.Nowhere, Media Virus, The Medulla Review, Deuce Coupe, The Camel Saloon, Poetic Medicine, Ocho, Catapult to Mars, Asphodel Madness, This, The Rainbow Rose, Amaranthine Muses, Poets Democracy, Raven Images, Media Virus* and *Symmetry Pebbles*.

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Benazir Bhutto

In sleep your disarray of hair
Patterns like seaweed in nocturnal mode
Old waterways across the country you led,
& your face in quiet repose gleams
Under moonlight the sky casts down.
What is drawn to fire in fields
Now bristles at your visions
Only unworldly dreamers harvest.
Lilting songs parade over villages
Of the silent martyrs you joined
Singing the national anthem.
Who'll lead the still living citizenry
In pursuit of justice now remains
A mystery poised, perhaps, on your lips
Dawn will patiently seal
Under its wilting flower.

Weight of the Long Darkness

(after a line from Rachel Wetzsteon)

Is it possible there's no grace
In being sober when things go wrong
In lives jinxed from the start?
Dismaying ages wrap their garments
Like petty entrapments around us.
Blink once, twice, to see nothing
In the long run.
Luxury of making art
Threatens to disbar us
From its elitist lifestyle
While our impoverished spirits
Fashion bold imitations
Of one another.

What's more comfortable
Than the hand of goodness
Splaying itself over vernal fields
Our eyes pale from?
I want airs of reborn truth
To emblazon multitudes of color
Along our journey's long darkness,
What leads to unfathomable
Flight beyond
Our graying skin textures;
There dreams like shadows
Interface our cosmic blight,
& desperately we call
For wild cards of existence
To win our hopes back.
In a world given
To common ends
Events leave us
To become endless data,
Until we realize
To age becomes
A process of irrecoverable
Distance
From what we
Can never weigh again.

Media Day for Misnomers

Pallid tricksters text your messages,
Gather to declare the end of government
As an authentic art form.
They organize exhibits
On lips of sunken loan sharks
& the false teeth of old dwarfs,
Waiting to be born right again.

There are those
Who believe our
Fate rested in
Bukowski's room
With the prayer of the roaches ... yet
I have asked for grace
Simply to witness that surcease
Of loose tongues spinning
Everywhere, in daredevil turmoil,
Warning about central intelligence
Stealing back
Our digital transmissions.

The only words that matter
Are those sentenced to oblivion
In the stream of our unconsciousness

Uttered by
The screaming revolutionaries
Of political freedom

Some historians
Will call clowns,
For the record.

Glass

The way things merge
In our conscious memories
As time passes, & we're trying
To remember just what it is
Worth recalling in
The current mess of our lives.

We light our cigars
While drinking bottled beer
By the apartment pool.
Signs everywhere say No Glass,
Which we disregard with tired eyes
Invisible, as black holes in space,
Behind our nerd sunglasses.
The boom-buster vibrates with retro-rock
Of caterwauling extremists.

“Wouldn't be prudent,” you say,
“to vote for any tea party president!”
There we are, drinking & mimicking
Mannerisms of post-“W” colonials
As a teen vixen slips voluptuously into the spa.
She beckons through the mist
For our ulcerous yuppie egos,
Like surgically enhanced sex organs,
To dive in again
Through the grid-locked years,

& laughingly
We drink
One more
Broken

Bottle
of
tears

one too many mornings & a thousand miles behind

when youth is taken
like an expendable organ
from ordinary people
it drains the sum of all parts
in one's human odometer
remonstrating us for continuing

to live so long
taxing our skin with wrinkles
to pilfer any beauty left
when age takes desire
it does so with cruelty
casting molecules to sepulchral winds

slowing down vital functions
rendering us pale imitations
of known former selves
billing us for staid passions
still dwelling in psychic reservoirs
like carburetor sludge

in the heart's faulty engine
age wears down the human touch
leaving remnants of feeling
worse for the wear
on the pallbearer's
speeding shadow

Clay Pot with Stagnant Water

His work pants were clay-caked
(& stood up by themselves almost)
When he shed them each night
Before my five-year-old eyes.
Where is that long gaze of fate,
Invisibly watching, while
We amble slowly through life.
Molding clay for his pottery kiln
Into the common sculpture
Of ourselves parsed
By his hand to mine.
Wearing his blue yacht captain's hat
& the stained brown shirt,
With cigarette pack bulging pocket,
He's the Dad of my errant childhood
Watching me from sepia photos
Yet to be snapped in infinity;
The smiling father in his twenties,
Not yet completely bald
But knowing time is corrupting
His lineage indefinitely
From the fountain of youth
I was baptized in.

The Sodden Bones

If we are not drunk then
What waves to us through
The fortress of fragile bones
We inhabit?
Let me kick the can outside
In the trash-strewn yard
Bad things are buried beneath.
Through all the mock burials
We laugh
Reading our heartfelt tributes
To the abused animal kingdom, no less,
The sodden yard now infested
With dead insects in mud puddles
Dogs drink from.
If we are not plague victims
Or adults still children
In the making,
Thanks to the fluctuating truth
(or lies) of religion
& medical science, then our games
Pale before the lugubrious slaughter
Of phylum, of brown mollusk,
Whatever is the unoriginal sin
Of our backyard cosmos
The worms turn from,
Disdaining even our bodies making love
Now, after judgment comes.

Through a Lens of Cracked Eternity

When they went
To the john
Seeking
The arc of rap heaven
They never saw
Listening
To mouth harps,

Wailing ways
For collective
Unconscious hearts
Opening
Laser knives
To suture
A suite of ventricles,

Or pulsing out rhyme
Our witch doctors
Failed to excise
Your taboos
Vulgarly
Entwined
Together,

Overshadowed by
Media reports
Of war dead
With those
Female soldiers
Smiling
Through a

Bullet-holed lens
Of cracked
Eternity, then
You saw
The peephole
Of god
Vanish.

In Eyes of Creation

Would you picture bearing anew
Your silicone breasts fully
In the afterlife mothers go to
When children are still-born?
In eyes of creation a knife slices

Away ire of dark rainfall, yet
For an eternity we're bleeding
To feel that utmost hope reborn
In hands reaching beyond us
To see what sleep does not rend.

waterboarding at the sex spa

you have forgotten me in tetherhooks
bloodied by machinations we rue
so slick like legislators trying
to define the term *torture*
(or its meaningful ramification)
you wait on a busy life raft while
the sex police taser you again
shouting their leering shock-litany
the fun couples enjoy such cruelty
interrupting soggy old lovemaking
for fun or profit who really knows
why bloodlust rules the body politic
& lifeguards wear Old Glory thongs
as we swim in statutory sleaze
with dead salmon all around us

The Mortal Vision

Now the outcast woman has come to me
In a reverie mapped
With fading details,
A mode my charcoal stick draws.
A maternal face (once
Glimpsed regularly)
Turns to unfold itself into
Shadows flesh retreats from.
Not fearfully, but with reverence

A portrait of creation
One living hand
Disfigures
Into Art,
The deceiving object
Of truth & beauty

My dead spirit
never
sees

Go to the Deaf Singers

I am Mayakovsky in resonating firmament
Seeking a destiny of my beginning,
The initial stirrings of rebirth
In a country not mine now.

Strange to see the fast food dominions
In a place where people devour
Ground beef in endless hunger.
The way many fervent faithful

Lap up the pharmaceutical host
Onto their obedient tongues?
The way some sing chants of ages
While we, in deafness, don't hear

False organ keys striking down
As the player swoons above us,
With rectitude, his tongue & lips dry.
I am Walt Whitman, too, high on love,

Yet unable to recognize this once native
Land given to autos & vast machinery
Obliterating the last poetic reckonings.
Here routine citizens drably huddle

Around digital orbs of computer ports
Seeking contact with galactic megabytes.
What keeps us properly anchored
To necessary deception shimmering

As planets once revolved overhead
To wise men singing?
Now we are adrift in silent spirits,
Far from the land's founding ideals

With lies passing for profundities,
& whoever hears truly the tolling hour
Must wander alone over fey landscapes
Beyond the shadow of fallen stars.

The Spoiled Plums

To leave her apartment then coldly
In such a hurry, a sink full
Of dirty dishes with food crumbs
Caking to flowered porcelain
Left under a leaking faucet,
Just morose tokens
For an unfinished meal.
The scene of my mother's
Abandoned apartment when
The paramedics took her
To the hospital for the last time.
I've come to clean it days later.
A sad task, she lived alone,
A widow for so long
Her ritual chores were done
With great difficulty in extremis.
I feel her presence, nonetheless,
Inhabiting the kitchen counter
I sweep clear of fruit
She left in mid-meal.
Those decaying remnants for
A metaphysical feast of shadows,
Whose odor infiltrates the days'
Residual air of past longing?
Her purpled plums in disarray,
Now bruised by blackness, uneaten,
Encroach something once edible
With invisible rings of the worm
Her own cremated fresh frustrated.
So many strands of her long gray hair
Yet clung to the carpet's shag,
Enough copious to weave an empty nest.

I am hungry, Mother.

Microbism

Now I wonder how the stars
Regard us majestically
During the long midnights
Of summer, when we contemplate
The enormity of space.

Do astral sentient beings stare
Back through their own telescopes?
Those living in stellar architecture
Vacuum stardust from the cold
Landscapes of desolate silence,

Perhaps like ghosts waiting
To manifest themselves someday.
Draining energy from our future
Digital instruments, waiting
For our knowledge to equal

Their own erudite scences.
Those ancestral gods will awake
From a long, cosmic hibernation
To scan the heavens at last.
Will their bulbous eyes be peeled

Through squamous orifices,
Writing new testaments in
Words of alien language
Describing the last remnants
Of earth's inhospitable barrenness?

A geography toppled by some
Civilization nearly extinct,
Except for the lingering microbes
Of human origin, now hiding in
Terrestrial oceans of dust.

The Way of All Flesh

To gambol nude with wunderkind
Freefalling in a pagan bacchanal on Main Street
Was what we fantasized about.
To exult with ladyboy Bacchus
About the babes, boyish centaurs
& bold harlequins in showgirl attires
Became a reality of drug-induced dreams
Sanctioned by medical marijuana.
Split clean the bounds of bourgeois hypocrisy
In extremis, by taking it
To the streets
Where true freedom awaits;
What will weave sonnets of lust
In the braided hair
Of dark fallen sybarites
For the everyday extravaganza,
& the hell with stressed society
Gone wrong, waiting for terrorists
To spring up, just flowers of evil everywhere
In interstices of electric mist.
Nattering nimrods of Sarah Palin be damned,
Splattering to bits stray canines for fun
With mammoth shotguns
While pretending to slay Russian bears.
Yet when my pot card permanently expired
The police crashed our revolting parties.
Media wags deemed revolutions archaic,
The brittle spoils of beheaded queens
Who, behind royal masques, danced ferally
On the gallows of history.

Don't we know the 21st century achieved
The great martial enlightenment of limited warfare?
To march naked thereafter with my fellow man
In Abu Ghraib became grimly workmanlike:
Torturing so many into perverse submission
Became a way of empowerment,
The way of all flesh beyond
Its own corruption
In
Hedonistic
Prisons
Of
Patriotic
Ends.

The Sound of Muzak

“Can’t you see I want your body of pooh
To spice up my toilet humiliation rituals?”
The tranny pro emailed me one night.
“Double your pleasure at half-price, my man!”

When they’re that far gone it’s hard
To humor the hustlers, harder still
To mine lodestones of sizzling desire
From back door holes strap-on sullied.

My cell phone was once fisted into her anus
During a moment’s frustrated wrath,
& ringtones chimed through farting anguish
Despite the deeply buried digital devices.

But my long-distance minutes were used up
Anyway, dear dawgs, leaving me with
The last spent orgasmic rush of heavy metal
To forever silence her body’s squawk box.

Droid

All things in due time, she announces.
“When the elements of age consume us
The last martyr will confront you,”
Pointing to a broken clock face
Behind which mold slowly grows.
The minute hand hangs as God’s teardrop.
Will you sing at my liberation? she asks.
I swore I saw her years ago, perhaps
In a dream spoiled by sleeplessness.
When we were both texting at mid-terms?
But now recognizing my female double
Threatens my manhood’s last vestige.
She tells me that I’m her “sex robot,”
Expensively made by digital engineering,
& she’s been waiting a long time for me.
“Hi Jesus,” she purrs, kissing my cheek.

I Ain't No Fortunate Son

I took a walk the other day,
Thinking I would see the city
As it once was – far from
Its grossly banal architecture
& crass commercial obsessions –
With that nectar of gaming
Revenue particularly blameworthy.

They bitch on Christmas Eve,
Those neglected street dudes
Ambling along, beer cans upraised
To mockingly toast unkind fate.
I'm without family too, no wife
Or kids, no living relatives
Within miles of Nevada's border.

The sweet bird of youth left too,
Having flown its way to oblivion,
Leaving behind an aging straggler
To figure what's what in a world
Rife with recession, unemployment,
Crime so rampant minds must reel
From this sheer bloated cancer of life.

Nearby the Strip I light a cigarette,
Knowing the clinic doctor disapproves
Of anything spiking high blood pressure.
I know my youth rots in yesterday's karma,
My smoke only an inkling of crematory ovens
Incinerating sad remnants of flesh & bone.
A billboard showgirl winks at me nonetheless,

Her giant eye staring down at my misshapen form
Time has played cruel tricks on.
Her wink illustrates a monumental lust
On a street where human spirit languishes.
Its monopoly board is full of jails & travails,
With chisellers like Madoff flipping you off
For not joining the living dead billionaires

In a Shangri-la of desert sage & dustbowls;
There a nuclear cloud-to-be hangs its gloom
Reigning down the cosmic ash of ages
Spent from the bankrupt vaults of desire.
So simply wink back, wandering losers,
Then leer too at a gaggle of hookers wanting
To have sex with your smoking hot remains.

Thieving for Adam or Scooby Doo

They share the night
That does not harvest them.
Villains of some moldy madness
Who criminalize your neighborhood,
Vandalize your cars, steal your children
To refashion them as kidnapped video icons.

My father was not Tolstoy
But I think of them both
Dying in some lonely place of the spirit.
Both thought that words once freed them
From the hypocritical entrapment
Started by a single lie of biblical genesis
Some still laugh about.
As a boy in Pacoima I remember
The fig trees in our backyard,
How you could eat them off the tree
As you do apples in everyday gardens.
To open the green-bulb fig
& expose its pulpy fruit was special.
An offering like no other
With its magical textures,
Seeds the tongue siphoned off
Into a mouth's river of saliva.
Only my father's look broke the spell,
His eye of authority making it clear

The gravity of reaping fruit
Was something stolen
From the gods.

The Spirit Rock

It is whatever hardens
The nocturne of beauty
Eluding you like a Tennessee Williams
Heroine. Making your own play
Up during life's boring moments,
At work in the pedestrian pawn shop
Dominated by amber mugs & ashtrays.
Rising like pernicious Indian spirits at Red Rock
Fast as febrile airs
Perambulating through Vegas streets
You loved to cruise with boyfriends,
Even your dialogue was premeditated
& meticulously scripted for
Any routine noir felon
To emulate.
Long ago you figured out
The perfect crime
All thieves dream about
Casing the expensive jewelry
So many customers ogled, daily.
Despite how common in-house theft is,
"We'll get away with it," you winked;
"we'll kiss this rat race adios, man,
& travel the Caribbean beaches forever."
Far from these deserts where scorpions
Lurk under a plethora of chiseled rocks,
Waiting endlessly, their crooked tails
Yellowing from venom's excess.
One bit you in the form of a real policeman,
& whatever spoils esthetic distance
Did you in, whatever illusions
Real existence unkindly disseminates
To draw down a curtain on
A wannabe porn star
Whose dreams
Some disease vitiates.

Then security cams
Catch you, red-handed
Clutching diamonds,
To portray your final role
Stealing a forbidden stone
Where eternal deserts burn.

I See Your Naked Body in Tinsel Tabloids

Who rehabs all the overweight flesh
Which passes for a Hollywood star's brain-span:
Charlie Sheen's commercial circumambulates
The nether-parts his Hanes' briefs
Fail to cover ... Tiger Woods swigs
Back the endless ambrosia of Gatorade
To perpetuate multiple acts of adultery.
Lash Brangelina for too many adoptions
Of interracial children on the broken half-shell,
Just like Li'l Wayne
Takin' a bad rap for the 'hood
Send all the oversexed celebrities
To that jail of jails
For the anonymous
Where nobody
Gets out alive,
Not even the beautiful ghosts
Haunting the last movie set

Of
bankrupt
eternity

The Defiling

Rain revolves around me as I jog
Over the precipice of hillsides.
Somewhere in the German forests
I watch the depot workers arrive

Each morning to begin work,
Molding the natural edifice
Into a thousand barked sentinels
Of sap & shadow, still resilient

To their touch from rooted ages
Falling rain bleeds life into.
What my booted feet tramp over
In a luxury of motion we caress

Rich soil preparing its saturation,
For whatever humanity defiles,
The way I once did a lover's skin
So endlessly fecund beneath me.

Easter

Some days I awake
& think I will live forever.
Enamored of time & its rivers,
Of that cross-splintered faith
Your mother bore to her glory.
Risen again, she is
In the aftermath of our thought
About the coming of finer things.
She spreads a sumptuous dinner
For us, expensive chinaware
Where turkey is coddled
Until our silver knives & forks
Sever her offerings,
And she disappears
From new memory again.
Though joined to sleepers wading
Marsh birds skim.

Drowning with God (& Howdy Doody)

Now there is no hurry.
Marsh weeds break
From the shore of thought,
Spreading themselves over
The young victim's body.
Male or female doesn't matter
In this moment's desecration
& its forever aftermath.
In light of the unstoppable,
Nothing, not even a train wreck, matters.
You, the investigating official,
Poking my body, my remains.
Softly comes the medical examiner's
Intrusion of tools within me.
Then I awake, realizing the bad
Dream of everyday fossils
In my bedroom, the fluttering T.V.
Skipping its horizontal hold.
The year's still black & white, 1963;
I am fifteen.
The world aches from tragedy.
You who had died only
To be rudely born again,
At the touch of rustic river beds.
What took us beyond Dallas
Or the Cold War, what humbled
The room's dry stillness for an instant,
Until I kneeled before your presence
& time's freckled passing.

the broken-down amusement park ride

it trembles, time riding over us
with hooves silent as silicone
easing into a body cavity,
protoplasmic jelly-like
invisible cellular organisms
coagulated in the first dawn
blooming beneath the sea
when dying you take a ferry
on waves a naked eye descends
caressing her forbidden breast, O
brine goddess my sweet mermaid
swims after the fey craft,
priceless yacht once owned
by countless Hollywood stars
renting it out for the occasion
all good children sailing
(if in halting, chaotic wend
to that great pier salt-crust
with saliva of past lovers
calling a warning from some-
where a great notion lives
still to contemplate our voyage
Hart Crane spawned it's said,
bridging an unkind shore
before the jaded gondolier
cursing attempts to abuse us
in the name of missing fathers
somehow silent & drowned
by this shipwrecked dream)
in WWII my father clung to
a raft from torpedoed wreckage
as his sleep joins mine:

together we share
a raft going nowhere,
yet eternally spiraling back
into unclear fury
of wars' unknown
beginnings

The Eclipse of Love

Take back the light
From the face of time
& what do you get?
The same whiners
Wondering where all
The action goes to make
The earth revolve around the sun

Until everything is illuminated
By a natural truth, sans
All the internet experts.
Like photosynthesis every day

For all living things –

But somehow humanity avoids it,
Preferring an unnatural blindness.
That comfort of lies & illusions
So cleverly bundled into
A daily regimen of speakeasy spiel.

The whore who is my wife on Thursdays
Drinks to all this, knowing the twilight of truth
Is the best refuge to hide naked in

As her bruises slowly fade
& implanted breasts implode
Into that suborbital dysfunction of being,

Darkening
my unseen
hell.

Windshear in the Smoking Lounge

“Bukowski was a dog from hell,
I’m sure,” she said, “but you’re a cat
Straight from the landfill of lost souls.”
So, what gratitude
After buying a drink for her,
Bosomy flight attendant for United,
Not too long after September 11th
When directions to a sane world vanished:
When so many psyches lost definition
Deep within double jeopardy.
Lighting her cigarette later
She funnels smoke back at me;
We’ve retreated to the concourse
Smoking section, leaving behind
Annoying slot machine sounds
& all the Vegas airport bustle;
There are days & nights now
When nobody’s dealt a royal flush
& fond reminiscences clog memory
Like a damaging blood clot.
“And Celine, what a dark
Vulgar bastard,” she goes on,
Oblivious to the beauty of real thought
Gone from collective brains now falling
From whatever windshears cut wings
Of the same planes
To nowhere, the closest thing to love
Or smoldering enlightenment
Scratched from smoke-free flight plans.

The Last Laugh

Just wish I were in high school again:
Think of it, this middle-aged fart
(overweight, unshaven, pate balding)
Daring to overcome his past regret

Telling his fellow young students
Life's all one big mistake,
A simple twist of natural error

Nothing really to get hung about,
Bent out of shape either,

I'd forgive the history teacher
Who believed me too dense
To understand old world cartography,
I'd salute the gym coach
& mimic chugging an invisible beer,
Wasted face smiling,
And I'd promise them I wouldn't
Later drop out of college
To join the soldiers in the Nam, too.

But there are things we know nothing of,
Dreams that violate our youth
Turning us old too quickly.

When fate has the last laugh
My old school's empty of students,
But spirits linger in radioactive dust
Inhaled from some invisible bong,
Choking me into dumb silence

The Happy Hour of Heaven or Hell

The bury the muck of their lives
In the insolent wine rooms
Where obscenity weaves a cruel thread
& anything goes. They see
Very little in their cups
With minds stricken by conformity.
Now I join them, still sober,
& make the mistake of conversing
With the aplomb of past ages
Graying in my beard.
“Hear me out before I shoot up the bar!”
I shout into the band’s microphone,
Pushing away a blatant harp player.
Is this the happy hour of heaven or hell?
No one knows, no one tells me
As the night is raddled by spirits

& I cry for all the craven saviors
Hiding in our collective subconscious,
Afraid to make amends
With damaged bladders

Like mine, bleeding from
An unknown source of
Pixel poison, with pent-up urine
Their tongues lap up

As if house wine
(in vino veritas)
From dead seas

The Soddan Sleep

Bleed, bleed
For all the Somali pirate victims,
My shallow kin,
Before this ghost departs
Your unholy body of water.
Take with you
The fallen night's
Residue of crime
In a barbarity's crass tabernacle
Of empty scullery cans!
Through the lips
Of your endangered deity
Come words spanking themselves
To be born
As the sea burnishes
The bay of dreams
Or the equator takes back
All the lonely sailors
Who dare cross it.

Blue Christmas

Images of velvet cupcakes
Make us puke
Into metaphysical waste bins,
Yet still I spread my fingers
Through her silken hair
With each pelvic thrust
My divining rod allows.
To be a trespasser in the garden
Of ontological eternity
The hips of Britney
Are ensnared by.
Then give her the sacrilegious
X-mass card depicting
Our sex act in the manger,
As the holy child watches
& the Virgin Mary masturbates
With a candlestick:
Then *Oh!* Censor my fantasies
You yuletide felons of lust,
Witness the birth

of lovers
beyond
sin

Burn the Last Tabloid

I think of the poet
Who has published thousands of poems
But only one will matter on his gravestone.
And the people you can't save with reason
But will accept Jesus like long distance charges.
Think of the one politician
Who seems smarter than the others,
Yet when elected becomes a twittering retard
Fathering an illegitimate kid,
Or harboring a secretly lurid sex life
The Enquirer drools about.

Last month I escaped
From an academic prison
Where we make digital license plates.
“Who will dream in the Tuscan night
Of Leonardo's sex life?” I ask.
Tell me, do the newsprint pundits
Know what it's like to destroy
All your art school paintings
At three in the morning, dead drunk:
To will the faulty body back
To life without pills, or to
Toast those reflections in a blind eye
Blinking like a red light
At the railroad crossing
For this train wreck called life?

A Guide to Conservative Values

They do not rush from our heart of darkness
Which is the national debt
To tell us it can never be paid
Without cutting our balls off

While liberals are all in drag disguise
& there are only god-fearing conservatives
Worth believing in a cyberspace of lies
Terminally infected by unemployed hackers

Or that all the blind satanic Christians
Should be burned at the altar of capitalism
Before they molest any other gullible children
& become more like defiled democrats daily

Wanting to rip the clothing off Ann Coulter
Or tell Rachel Ray to drop her cooked drawers
Before the invasion of patriotic spermicides
& flee from the tainted executioner's needles

O say can you see all the turncoat bimbos
Ready to switch parties and celebrate
The conversion of the Jews on Friday the 13th
For the fright wing's *Flea Party* agenda?

A Primer for Aerospace Trivia

The airline bitches are something
Beyond belief, & the night stinks
Of tremulous paranormal refuse.
No one believes the criminally insane
Are smarter than us.
There are times when the human heart
Is spiked by 9-inch nails
Just for the hell of it.

And me? I sit in
The airport cafeteria at three a.m.,
Drinking bad-break coffee,
Knowing the aviation world

Betrays itself
In small & large ways
Every day,

That tyrants of the mind
Infiltrate the very stale air
Passengers inhale daily
In their flights of fancy.
So why do I think
Of Lord Byron's club foot
As the county custodian
Shuffles his whisk broom
Too close to my feet?
To make another Post-It note
Out of all this, to tape
These words on the backside
Of my obsolete thoughts

before crashing
on the runway
again.

Save Me the Cannibal Dance

How on earth,
With the pinioned gaze
Of fate watching us,
Do we get anything done
In this dystopic world?
Life is just an act of the gods
She said: “a divertimento”
Before the grand rerun of death.
Hell, give me the facts again,
I tell her. Give me something
To remember life by if,
Like my mother, I get stuck
In a coma sometime near
The end of my lifetime channel.
Save me the cannibal dance
Before all the good rhythm leaves.
Let my unconsciousness be
Filled with loving visions
Of child-like splendor ...
Let’s eat one another
Like we’re gingerbread –
Eternally sweet & nourishing,
One with the foodstuff of our desire;
To awake again, fully fed,
Before tripping over banana peels
On that slippery dance floor
Where old skeletons dance.

What Really Happened at Walden Pond

Come to the glen foraging
For something spelling
Resurrection of being
(in more than
a terrestrial nutshell?).
Beg the moonlit night
To silver the lake's surface
With a residue of love's desire.
Something we all share,
Every being that is re-
Generative in essence.
The valley is iridescent
At morning... & Breaking camp,
The pine needles scattered about
Still smell of a piquant sap.
The pus too is a nectar
Inebriating boisterous bird life
With new morning songs,
Until Thoreau wakes
From the desuetude of ages
To hunt for the cunning Spirit
Who swims away from him,
A force churning green currents
To splash out Zen music at dawn.
What seeks the lake's drowned lady
Who beckons from maternal dreams,
Her ghostly sorrow begging
For water of wine to silence
All snakelike tongues.

Birth of a Nation

Somehow I'm seeing myself as an extra
In a bad silent movie starring
A queen of the silents.
The days of filming have
Seeded bare laments
In their arboreal backgrounds
Of cheap scenery the birds decry.
The portly foreign director
Treats us badly, almost disparaging
This patriotic drama
He's lost control of.
I yearn to be one of the actors
In a grinning close-up
Showing my pearly dentures.
Wowing my pretty love interest
With a rose between teeth,
Just like Chaplin, long before
Love's destroyed by commerce
& the need of the empowered
To make us feel sexually
The transience of historical events.
We are martyrs in the cause
Of something greater than ourselves,
With Jehovah in a green-eyed lens
Choosing new fated actors –
Then disappearing in a cloud
Before the screen's eternity swallows us
With red, white, & blue politics-of-porn.

The Buddha's Invisible Grin at Midnite

Now touch my harlot's translucent flesh
downy with the birds of fallen feather.
Why do the poets speak of silent fugues
on the eve of their destruction?
The light leaves a heraldic swath for
contusions of animal flesh to
cover in brittle sands
of a cold hue,

& you write these words
(meaningful nothing-turds)
on the Berlin Wall's memory
History cannot expunge

from the tumid nightscape.
Buried by humid bones
of your soul's pornography
I languish like a spent penny,
then see the horny deities wend
thru your spirit's roadblock
to find the glint of salvation

In a skin mag's
dirt-seed & dumb
mantra

Back in the U.S.S.R.

There are no excuses in life or death,
Only the aftermath of avowals.
Visions of Johanna pale before
Configurations of unheavenly bodies.
Some still pine for the Neanderthal

& the days of wine & Moses.
Persecuted poets were once a given;
the gilded cathedral steeples
reflected an unreasoning light
dwindling under fascist shadows.

In America, Rock & Roll was born
To shake off Cold War shackles.
You ain't nothin' but a hound dog,
Comrade, in a heartbreak hotel
Of genocide, race riots, prisons

Beyond the veldt or prairie vale.
The revolution spawned party songs
But, like a universal rolling stone,
Sounds of silence gather moss
In mouths of the grateful dead.

Eclipse

The rage inherent in nature
Brings us to the crossroads
Where direction is meaningless.
The contumely of summer shadows
Erases obscenity in unheroic hearts.
We brace for the truth of ages,
Hidden in distant sunspots
Volatile with fiery mayhem.
We share the same nature
As these unbound elements
Let loose on tides of being
As our eyes become blinded,

& Casanova's fingers strafe
the tender flesh
of captive lovers

on the dark side
of a hidden
moon

Immortal Lines

Lines filched from lips of corpses
Are what I bring you tonight,
The true poetry of the unspeaking
Who nonetheless mouth
All the little profundities

The dead are heir to.
Go figure the murkiness
Of vowel syndrome,
Why communication relies more
On a facial frozen expression

Than any glittering consonant
Surging from a live diva's throat.
Hell, the body of truth haunts us!
Perhaps the true ways need reviving,
For the dead speakers are ventriloquists

Striving to make us their dummies.
Hoping we'll never tell them
The real facts again
So they'll never return
To give us lip about.

The Beauty of Time

That winter we discarded our spirits
Because they were outmoded
(things stuck in the ether
Of previous generations) as
We went about our business.
How your mother talked about
Being in a state of grace
Just before she converted
Meant nothing to us. We were
Not cloudy with illusions,
As she was; but still
Her beliefs remained palpably
Strong as something beyond
Any comatose dreaming.

You sketched her ashen face
To attempt preserving
All that she talked about.
The mercy extant
In every living thing
Evaded your charcoal lines,
But you persevered because
Art outlives us all,
Proof that something
Remains more immortal
Than flesh-made man.

The beauty of time
Is that it stops for no one,
Living or dead.
It is like a law of nature,
Infinite as space,
& just as indivisible,
she said before dying;

but our spirits had
preceded her
to become

the purity
of
snow

truth plundered by art

proud as night's glistening
on the silvered backs of clouds
adrift in the hemisphere of dreams

I stroll through the art museum
as if it were a safe haven
from the world's vulgarity

sailing with painted pirates
on dangerous frigates burning
with might plundering visions

of every imaginable description
on a sea of everyday duplicity
we wade through blockades

men have erected for centuries
on the earth's canvas facade
blood-splashed from Goya's brush

before my lust for you finally sinks
broken like a canon-blistered galleon
the great sea's bottom awaits

BIO

— Peter Magliocco writes from Las Vegas, Nevada, where he's edited the lit-zine ART:MAG for over 20 years. He has recent poetry in online & print publications like SCYTHE, GOLD DUST, DEAD SNAKES, ASCENT ASPIRATIONS, THE BEAT, THUNDER SANDWICH, GNOME, SCARS, and elsewhere. He's been Pushcart Prize nominated for poetry three times, and his most recent chapbooks are *Imparadised* (Nerve Calliope Media), *Nude Poetry Garage Sale* (Virgogray Press), *The Heaven of Words* (Propaganda Press), and *Discarded Poems* (Scars Publications)... His latest novel is *The Burgher of Virtual Eden* from Publish America. A recent story of his was collected in the sci-fi anthology, *Dead Neon: Tales of Near-future Las Vegas* from the University of Nevada Press. He's also been Pushcart nominated for fiction ...

Ghost Dancers Leaping from a Tome

Peter Magliocco

scarspublications

Down in the Dirt magazine

ISSN 1554-9623

(Internet ISSN 1554-9666)

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

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