



**(o) = (!)**

HA HA HA HA

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- J.D. Nelson

## americanEyes

-17-

I see through these americanEyes  
There's a poor man forgotten  
He was exiled by his own country  
For the crime of being homeless  
They don't see him anymore  
No one sees him anymore  
He walks around like the walking dead  
                    like the invisible man  
Foreclosures are all the rage on the news  
Because they are real  
Funny how there's not a lot of reality  
On the news  
Probably why I don't watch it  
Truth is we are all a step away  
From being him  
From joining him  
He's saved a space for you  
Right in the front  
He was exiled by his own country  
He sleeps in the park  
He sleeps in his car  
He sleeps by the river  
He sleeps in the woods  
He sleeps in the streets  
He sleeps in a shelter  
He sleeps in an abandoned building  
He sleeps on steam grates  
Leaving a burn on his body  
He sleeps on a bench  
He sleeps where he can  
He could be sleeping in your neighborhood  
I know he's sleeping in mine  
Truth is we are all a step away  
From being him  
From joining him  
No matter how hard we all try  
To walk away from him  
& I want to go blind  
Seeing the World through americanEyes

- Michael Grover

## 1.5 Tuaca, 1 Gin, .5 Lemon, 4 Blackberries, Soda, Mint

This notebook once belonged  
to a bartender,  
or a student at a bartending school,  
or a mixologist  
in San Diego,  
until I came along  
and absconded with everything  
he or she knew about  
the trade.

I read their notes and wonder:

'What will you do now without  
the ingredients for a  
B-55,  
or a  
Cream Sicle  
or a  
Tuaca Berry Fizz...  
a Tuaca Whiskey Punch  
or a  
Tuaca/Watermelon?'

I feel completely parched  
just thinking about  
the rammifications,  
and I guess I should expect some kind of  
karmaic payback  
in the form of a Sour Whiskey  
or a flat Rum & Coke  
or a stout Bourbon that will burn my lungs  
and give me the worst case of liquor shits  
I've ever experienced...

But I only drink beer these days.

So when I picture them  
frantically searching their room or their car  
or their significant others' closet for a  
notebook that looks as if it should belong to a  
kid in middle school,

when I see the floor plans for their  
future establishment,  
the entrance way measuring somewhere around 6 ft in width  
and 8'6" in length,

or the 8 empty stools at the bar  
and the corners allotted for the men's & ladies room

when I see Tim Stevens' phone number  
(726) 472-0825  
as well as his email address:  
tim@prohibition.com

I can only laugh to myself,  
wet my whistle  
& say:

"FinderS, kEEPers.  
Shit out of luck."

- Frankie Metro

## **Various Tessellations 52**

—after David Maisel's photograph, *The Forest 2*

Folded, skeletal. Blame. Abandoned.

Partial

hard-swollen miracles have dissipated, devolved

reconstructed through death of color

enamored

occupation.

- Felino A. Soriano

## **“Free of All”**

Pilate birds hover close by,  
strain long necks for a sight, a noise,  
waiting, watching for any movement,  
any sign at all.

Timid birds, edge slowly forward,  
throats stretched toward  
curiosity, food, drink.

Indecisive birds, ever cautious,  
come late to waterhole,  
wet-beaked, feather-slickened,  
eyes raised skyward,  
free of all duty, responsibility, a  
crippling sense of guilt.

- J.B. Hogan

## **Bluebell**

You re-roll cigarettes sat on dead trees nothing but discarded paper.  
Imagining some trapper or tracker coming across –  
listening for the snap of a human foot.

These woods are empty:  
the tent you spotted walking here, as I passed three Asians (who fired up fake  
conversation) has soaked up the earth darkening its sides like a cold sweat.

Three trees,  
camouflage tarp sags under the weight of leaves,  
and someone left their jumper.

A town is down there.  
Cranes collide with a steeple  
as it climbs out of the mist.

- Jack Cooper

## Key of A

Fiddles tuned to the  
key of A  
as the guitar strums steady  
like a grouse calling  
for a mate.  
The piney air sticks  
in your lungs  
like fresh tarmac.  
I stumble to the bathroom,  
after a final  
drink in the honky-tonk.  
If this is the end,  
thank god  
I left home so long ago,  
seeing everything,  
and made it back to a drowsy town  
full of people  
who can tune by ear.  
- Zach Fishel

## **Wormwood, Poppy, And Nightshade Go Postal**

The sting is realization -  
That all you do is bring the mail,  
And empty packages,  
While someone else delivers.

It must be overwhelming.  
It leaves you only with bills and junk mail

A wrong step in the wrong direction  
Could make a dog named Narcissus bite your leg.  
Ripping your ego to shreds.

Perhaps a bottle or two of Absinthe,  
Or a flower called belladonna  
Would make you feel much better.

I know I would.

Seek out ultimate sin in Sinless City.  
Or go away quietly.  
There is nothing left for you  
Where the flat-lands meet the mountains.

It's too far off your route to deliver there.  
You'd have to do it alone – with yourself.

There is a warehouse full of pages  
About how you'd feel about that.  
You bought it, now pay for it.

And drink up, knowing  
No teenage Chicanos are allowed in Paris.  
No Jaguars in Vegas, No Cougars in Mormon town.

No one home when you deliver  
The next package of words,  
From the Lie of the month club.

You less than kindly  
Asked them to leave,

Believing they'd come crawling back.  
You imagined the Texas one really cared  
With no commitment.

Secretly, you cried while  
Your last chance turned to dust  
On furniture behind her locked door.

Why fret?

There was one before the other,  
Before the other,  
And one before that.

The two or three you imagine?  
At least they will always be there.

How sad.

Tell Mommy we all said hello.  
Whisper it in her ear while she sleeps.  
After.

The dog Narcissus chews the heart  
Of the Postman again for lunch.  
One too many false moves.

Perhaps a bottle or two of Absinthe,  
And a flower called poppy  
Would make you feel much better.

Seek out ultimate sin in Sinless City.  
Ah, sweet relief after flowers.

Who wants to be around  
someone like you?  
I'm tired of hearing you talk about it.

Just do it.  
Seek out the ultimate sin.

- Jack Varnell

## Not Only Don Duck

not only only only  
gobs ozzit

fractals & laxatives  
grapefruit chews

w.

wou.

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would.

the james gang as  
a kitten

no dollar 80 for  
a coke

- J.D. Nelson

## Self-Propelled Audacity

Composed mainly of invisibility  
restricted area economics  
indefinitely elevated with stock options  
no monetary impulse control  
miniaturized mindset radar  
piratical rage validated and concealed  
collegiality convoys escorting your  
cash overseas simultaneously  
detonating the depth charges inside  
impoverished families certain  
teens scramble for remaining tunnel light  
end up inside torpedo tubes and post  
military industrial complex dreams  
larger than their discarded selves

- David S. Pointer

## Empty

The coffers crept away  
leaving formulas for failure  
scripted in bled out ink  
impotent as your word,  
your marker, your johnny  
hancock come lately much  
too late for happily  
ever after the final heist

- Barbara Moore

## Various Tessellations 53

—after David Maisel's photograph, *Oblivion 3n*

roads  
resemble

smiles

similar extracts  
to the foreign regard of analytical

revelations;

these boundaries of physical implementation  
angle  
arguments' tonal mirage of  
directional momentum, ideological movement  
- Felino A. Soriano

## **William's magnets**

and i make a  
good team on  
wednesday nights

elastic hands carve  
wood like water  
while birds  
sleep standing up  
on a ball of wire

this is what they  
were singing about

- Dustin Holland

## The Age of Change

"Stop the world; I want to get off!" - Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley (1961)

not the first to rue  
centrifugal time hurling wayward history  
faded sun's pallid sepia luster cast  
on yesterday like yesteryear

not alone to view  
a butterfly spun from a dustbin's chrysalis  
unfurl its dewy wings and, flapping,  
send tremors through tomorrow

my own face my father  
shaved today; no other's fingers clawlike  
laced the skates of children born to a world  
that thinks me an afterthought

until its mind changes  
until I shave  
my children

- Ronald Fischman

## Religiously

In Sunday School today I thought I saw  
a halo around Miss Hooker's head. She's  
my teacher and I love her and not just  
love her but want to marry her--*that* kind  
of love, the kind that makes babies. I  
don't know how yet but one day I'll learn and  
never forget, I guess, though old people  
seem to--Grandfather and Grandmother had  
Father but that was a long time ago.  
The same for Mother's side of the family.  
But when I'm 100 I hope to be

still turning them out, if that's possible.  
I don't see any reason to stop. But  
Miss Hooker's already getting up there,  
25 I'd say, and I'm just 10 so  
the numbers aren't in our favor and she  
could die on me when she gets past 30.  
I guess I'll be grown-up when I'm 16  
and can ask her to marry me but then  
she'll be 31 and even Jesus  
didn't make it past 33, she says,  
though that may be different since He was

murdered and not just murdered but murdered  
by crucifixion. He hangs on the wall  
behind Miss Hooker. He looks thin and weak  
but then He's dead but the thing about Him  
is that He's the Son of God and sits at  
the right hand. Or left. He's not still dead now.  
Being dead He's supposed to remind us  
of something, which I guess is that He's not.  
Dead, that is. I'd like to see Him alive,  
in Heaven I mean, but to do that I  
have to die myself and I'm not ready  
even though sometimes I just can't wait. One  
day I will--die I mean--and see Him if  
only for a second, if there's time up  
there, before He judges me, or is that  
God Who does that, I forget and I hope

that's not a sin, and sends me to Hell, where  
I'll burn and burn but never be consumed,  
kind of like the burning bush but somehow  
in reverse. Miss Hooker on the other  
hand will go to Heaven sure and so she'll

*dwell in the House of the Lord forever.*

So if I'm going to keep any time  
with her it had better be in this life  
and not the life to come. I still have some  
coming to me in this one, before I  
die, but it doesn't count as eternal  
as far as I know. But I don't know much,  
only what they teach me in regular  
school Monday through Friday, and Sundays here.  
And on Saturday night I don't give a fig  
for anything. That's when I do my best

sinning. It's like being free, like being  
God, but I try to atone on Sunday  
and put my brain back to work on Monday.  
Maybe on Miss Hooker's head it wasn't  
a halo. Maybe I had something in my  
eye. Maybe it was the light shining off  
her red hair, or a new shampoo. I'd ask  
but I love a mystery best when it  
can't be solved. No wonder I'm religious.

--Gale Acuff

**NITE OF 100 HYPHENS**

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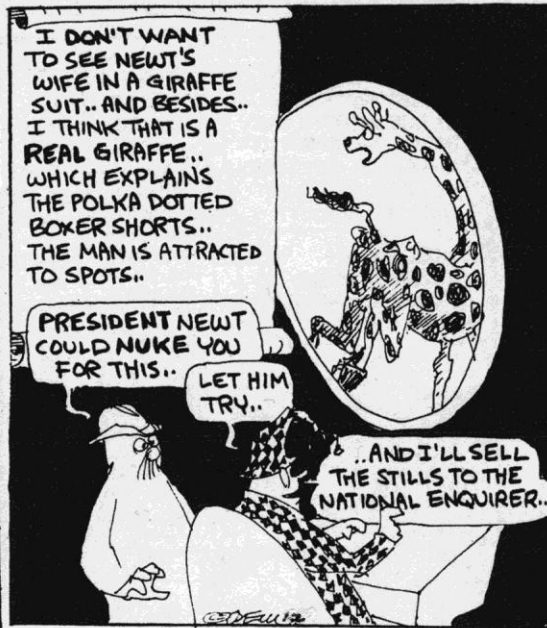
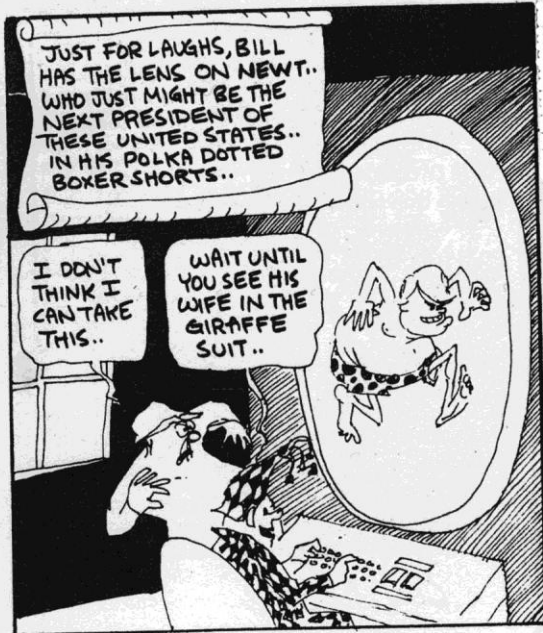
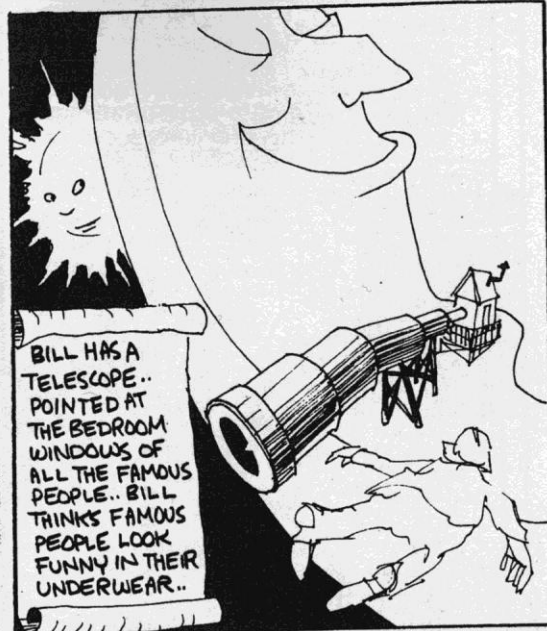
- J.D. Nelson

## **“I Thought I Heard”**

Emily Dickinson buzz when I died,  
but how could I be sure  
with all those other voices clamoring,  
competing for the last thought?  
as anyone i had lived in a pretty how town  
with up so floating many bells down alright,  
but I was still compelled to rage, rage  
against the dying of the light,  
even when I stood beyond my good neighbor’s fence  
with so many miles to go before I slept.  
What does it mean, mister, I wondered  
when a man crashes out?  
Does it mean I was there where Ma could  
look at me and see I’ve made it – top of the world?  
Yet I had not gone into the deep two-hearted water  
fishing for the depths of my soul  
nor plucked Dewey Dell’s fecund jewel;  
the grave’s a fine and private place,  
I reasoned, but still I hoped to go out  
with a bang and not a whimper.  
Oh, death, I said, I see thou sting,  
but let me see the sun rise  
just one more time.  
Yet, I didn’t hear a fly buzz  
when I died but the hiss  
of the fly crashing out in a  
glorious final flash of man-made  
lightning in the backyard  
electronic insect killer.

- J.B. Hogan

# Odd Bodkins



Something to check out if you're in the area

February 19, 2012, 2pm  
The Dedication of  
**The Scott Wannberg Reading Room**  
at Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center  
681 Venice Blvd. Venice, CA 90291  
Installation of Scott's Portrait by Louie Metz  
Screening of 7 Men From Now

February 20, 2012, 7:30pm

**The Scott Wannberg Uninvitational Birthday Read Indeed!**

Skylight Books 1818 N. Vermont Ave.

Los Angeles, CA 90027

Bring A Poem To Read By Or About Scott



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