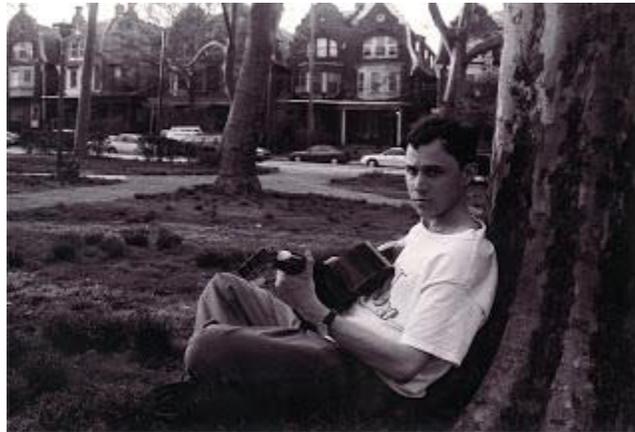


EARLY POEMS: 1998-2005

ADAM FIELED



Early Poems 1998-2005

Credits

American Writing: A Magazine— “Icarus In New York,” “On Psyche”

Hinge Online— “Prince,” “Disappear,” “On Love,” “Hamlet on Pine Street,” “Technician of Tough Love”

Many Mountains Moving (online)— “4325 Baltimore Ave.”

Seven Corners— “On Jazz”

Siren’s Silence— “Clean”

Clean

I gave myself an enema the other day,
took some antibiotics.
Thought to myself,
“This is really the poet’s
place in the world—
not sitting in some pasture,
not smoking in some bar,
not fucking someone lovely,
not courting Gods or Jesus.

No.

The poet’s place
is kneeling down,
naked,
with something
or other
stuck
up his ass,
in a desperate
attempt
to get
clean.”

April, 1998

Prince

Wesley wore silk pajamas—
 he looked very regal,
planted before the floor TV.

I would sit next to him,
 waiting for the ugly nurses
to feed us our pills, and take our pulses.

He told me about his car,
 his mother,
his buddies— the catalogue

of adolescent normalcy—

and you wouldn't think
 he was schizophrenic,
listening to him speak.

In fact, I thought
 he was a prince,

Albeit one who was,
 like most princes,

at the mercy of his servants.

May, 1998

Disappear

The bleached blonde shook
the two white bowls together,
one atop the other,
making a Caesar salad.

Another bleached blonde, my
girlfriend,
watched me watching
this meticulous process.

Dug her engine-red
nails into
the sweet secrecy
of my inner thigh,

Saying, wordlessly,
“If you think that’s
a good trick,
You should see me
disappear
sometime.”

May, 1998

4325 Baltimore Ave.

Jason cooking flounder on a filthy range,
picked up at 40th & Walnut where Penn students
mingled w/ artists, Chomsky-ites, bums, mothers,
where French bread for two bucks we'd carry
around for walks home down rustic mansion'd
streets, fish-waft filling lovably threadbare
kitchen laden w/ mustard & crumbs— gone—

Mary's Acme pesto pasta, Olive-oil Goddess
she'd make a pot on pot in a pot & we'd
have a bowl from the pot watching hot
French-flicks in the vivid living room, gone—
paintings, Mary's evocations Dionysus & Apollo,
Jason post-Dali post-structuralist Dada &
Derrida derived violences, submitted to smitten
PAFA judges winking secretly at Jason's tight
ass, Mary's too, they screwed, we screwed, we
all were screwing each other secretly, tenderly,
flecked w/ little chips from falling ceiling, gone—

parties on green-awning'd porch, weed midnights;
butt-smoke, frost-breath, gun-stocked West Philly
cops stop to shock us w/ looks, putting no
cell-bar cramps on druggy St. Steven, gone—
moments later I'd drag Mary into her wood-
floored torrid bedroom & open-door fuck
her, hoping Josh & Kevin might spy
us, one time on whiskey Mary's diaphragm
got stuck inside her, I felt it, fucking her,
we laughed, Mary's hair then was
long down to her ass, raucous, gone—

Grace, Jason's grace, a minx of jinxing, she from
rich Connecticut knows Salinger reads my poems
at parties makes snot comments, silver-belted,
out on the back porch in October wind we stood,
Grace, raven tresses Heaven-breasts innocent
sex, girlfriend who had Jason by the face, ass,

I made scathing Spears comment everyone
hissed, instead we put on Stones Kinks Elliott
Smith, Josh who played music, gone, now w/ Sara,
jailbait date stealing cars & kisses, back-seat
caresses blonde tresses sun-dresses, trouble-
starting, Kevin's dread on my head, gone—

Kevin dumb chimp we called him big beast of
a man writing bad songs doing Ritalin lines
raging through nights fucking Diana, gone,
moans that broke us up, Oh Kevin Oh Kevin,
waitress of the hunt, Diana, blank stare, no cares
or qualms taking alms from everyone, doing
laundry, Diana & me in lust discreetly, doors
open, Bohemian dream-time—

apogee— everyone hot— everyone fucking, painting
making music, boozing, drugging, sucking, humping,
leaning on nothing but the night's promise, always
more night, another line, another ride, time
to find out food, hues of mood, clues of color, love
shape, O Lord we were the crux of ourselves,
our nexus the nexus, our moment the moment, all
now reduced to ash, nothing but a shut window,
a fiery memory of an open one...

June, 2004

Icarus In New York

if Icarus fell out of the sky
 & landed in Times Square,
miraculously, so as not
 To damage his body,
would anyone whirl
 To witness the event?

shorn of melted wings,
 would he take to begging
among the petty merchants
 & hustlers? Would he
find his feet and run,
 sprinting down Fifth Ave.
in a headlong push towards
 oblivion? Or jump off
empire State, a suicidal victim
 of his own need to fly?

perhaps he'd make peace
 with the poverty of winglessness
and apply for work
 in the New York Public Library.

perhaps he'd take an apartment
 in Chelsea, furnish it rococo.

perhaps he'd run for office,
 become a private pilot,
take his sons on flights
 over the ocean, heedless
of the sun's rage, remembering
 only promise.

July, 1999

On Love

What is the essence of a too-brief kiss?

The rigor of reaching the thing-in-itself,
from subject to object, chaos to bliss,

our frail intuition of heavenly health?

Our love is not molecules, dumbly colliding,

nor is it knowledge, formal and static

nor is it accident, reasoned and plumbed—

it's real, meta-rational, soaring and gliding,

felt like an earthquake, bringing up panic,

taking our parts and achieving a sum.

The greater part of love is sacrifice—

flesh intermingled, tensing and tingled,

this is the secret I learn from your eyes.

Giving my body, knotted, single,

tiny eruptions that come from my tongue;

plunging down surfaces, slicking the flesh

thoughtless as leopards or hurricane winds—

watching you shudder, watching you come,

rapt in the throes of an innocent death,

giving my life to an inch of your skin.

Thus, we trade in secure oblivion

for reckless reality, messy and fleeting.

Such is the cosmos - creation, carrion,

motions of molecules merging and meeting.

Nothing is lost but notions of self-ness,

hard ideations that close and clatter,

rages of ego that strain at their walls—

nothing is gained but a sense of the deathless,

"there-ness" of spirit, "there-ness" of matter,

ultimate "there-ness" that scares as it calls.

Summer 2003

On Jazz

Physical beauty, Formal Rigor of God—
spiritual beauty, Economy of God—
Natural Will, Transcendent Will,
Facile Will in all its' dismal “there-ness”—

Piano broken chords breaking down space
like watching bits of paper collect,
contained in a 12-bar blues; root
notes you tend to lean on,
or maybe a honking minor third,
a harmonic multi-colored sharp...

Follow your compulsion into flurries,
clusters of connecting phrases,
then a pause to sanctify as the progression
resolves after lingering on the fifth
for the appointed time—
pentatonics mainly w/ some suspensions,
sheets of sound, there it is...trademark leaps,
like watching a rainbow erupt
out of the placid bowels of street-lakes,
sparrows in the gutters,
Eliot-esque alienation syncopated
impossibly high & mighty...

Repeat the repetition now into major scale—
Ionian gold, major-third suspensions again,
almost midnight for tremulous trees,
also hipsters, flights of birds, rabbis
in the wilderness as blues ends; here's a quicker
quirkier jarring bit to cut
your teeth on...

Base bottom notes natural like ferns,
ride the ride cymbal like musical fellatio,
roll w/ rolls & kick-drum ejaculations,
what Hart Crane heard in bridges,
only blues (so bridge seldom comes),
stasis achieved nicely replicates movements,

bowel, kidney, heart-beat, daring snare of lip-ness,
thickness, quickness,
get it all out for all of us into the brick-laden city,
mutter of exhausted midnight buses
as vibrato notes shiver, miniature
solos on the toms creates energy
of emptiness among the weird abundance,
concluding w/ roll on the snare, now bass
also investigates metaphysical space,
not so much implacable as inexhaustible
eruptions; spring of autumn,
autumn of spring...

Seasons of balance, compromise,
away from extremes; Middle Path exteriorized,
oh piano on a minor seventh which bespeaks
longing for a more ethereal world,
elegiac as the last apple of October, eaten
by a Halloween camp-fire, beyond blues
of Earth into cadence, dying fall of pure moon,
ravaged, torn from the throat of persistence,
mute existence destroyed completely
and on fire, a universe of fingers & mouths,
looking down the tide of Death into eternity,
square-shouldered & erect,
freezing into whims of Ultimate "there-ness",
beyond ordinary notions of quotidian abyss
in one long sitting pow-wow peace-pipe corn-cob
wholesome dinner of Voidness,
but insinuated only to drive away singularity....

Jazz is plural,
they give you a space, show you its' contours,
allow you to move around & drown
if you want over hilltops of remorse, created
by Love or dolorous longing & especially
Central Parks of the soul & intellectual Bordello
life cut & pasting its' bleak outline over rooftops
& bluebirds—

Autumn 2002

On Psyche

Sitting in Psyche's parlor, I almost touched her—
she stretched herself towards me, cat-like,
closing ice-blue eyes full of crocodile water,
 & her stomach bare, & her hair blue-striped—
like a Sphinx she reposed, with a riddle of flesh,
 to be solved in tongue-touching tenderness,
 despite Cupid shooting off on the phone—
like a moon she arose, & her lips mine enmeshed,
 I clutched, clasped her in a teenage caress,
 her Mom didn't notice the moans.

If youth were faithful, Eros be damned,
 Cruel Cupid would never leave home—
back seats would stop rocking, beds be shammed,
 & Venus would go home alone—
in parks, in bars, the war went on,
 in which all is fair but fairness,
 all full of joy but the spurned—
in darkened cars, on new mown lawns,
 enraptured or raptly embarrassed,
 ripe-full of the pleasures that burned.

Years passed 'til I saw Psyche again,
 ripe for a time & then jaded—
we kissed, talked, she bade me a friend,
 her beauty unworried, untainted—
no elfin grot enclosed her, no cave,
 Manhattan she recklessly roamed,
 courted by rich men & thieves—
wild eyes pin-wheeled on parties, raves,
 small morning hours her home,
 for nothing & no one she grieves.

I fell at her feet, she flung me away,
 her friend came, some E hits to buy—
I tossed on a tape, she laughed as it played,
 “Roxannneeee” came the heart-rending cry—
she counted five hundreds, hid them away,
 pulled out her poems, asked me to read them,

walking her friend to the door—
I weighed all my options, if I should stay,
holding the poems, not wanting to read them,
feeling absurd on her floor.

She padded back softly, opened a window,
stretched herself out on the sagging bed—
I moved in beside her, close as a shadow,
moved in to touch her with joy & dread—
she stopped me at her silver belt,
sensing why my words were soft,
not about to blow her stolid cover—
I couldn't burn her surface off,
couldn't make her armor melt,
that wouldn't let me be her honest lover.

Stoned in the gloaming, dead on my feet,
the Village I hit & then ran—
did she like me, or did my bluster defeat
my manhood, slipped out of her hands?
To her body, taut with muscle,
a goddess of bed, Venus unseen to her lover,
notes torn from shadows of sighs—
my body, all I'd hustled,
seemed irrelevant, dead, & like a crab with no cover,
crawled into the "D" train, & cried.

2001

*****cover photographs taken by Mary Harju and Matt Stevenson in Philadelphia in the early Aughts*****

