

NEW

By Jim D. Babwe



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WARNING

A four-letter synonym for “metabolic waste” appears in this collection. Please document any and all damages which result from the silent reading, the spoken reading, and any related pronunciation of this relatively tiny collection of letters. If rash or irritation develops, discontinue use and contact a physician. Contents are for external use only. Use only as directed.

New

by Jim D. Babwe

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New

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I Channel the Living

I channel
the living
here and now.

Distance matters
only if I cannot be reached
by voice
and that is precisely
when space
between us
needs to remember
I can be
rebellious
enough to employ devices
to extend
the you
of there
to
the me
of whatever location
I occupy.

I channel
the living.

How it's done
is clearer than
the
why.

Haiku Prison

detained by language
sentenced by indefinite
terms the prisoner waits

complicated by
prior notions of freedom
the form guarded him

thoughts themselves transformed
into cooperative
similar patterns

emerging as if
cloned by some omnipotent
preconceived notion

language held captive
considered ways to escape
avoided exits

inherent desire
handcuffed by want of structure
resisted arrest

waited for the next
inmate or rebelliousness
to bust through the gate



Hope on A Wire

Floating peacefully
but slightly out of reach
I almost stretched too far
and glad to avoid falling in
I decided on a quick round trip--
to and from the car
for the metal hanger
I thought I'd find
and did.

Sunlight peeked over
bluffs to the east
and to the west
the ocean stayed calm
low tide
lapping sand.

Simple enough,
the hanger worked
as I saved the wallet
from darker deeper
more unpleasant fate.

Carefully balanced
and making a few adjustments
to the improvised extension
I reached
through cool shadow
hooked the slightly soggy leather
raised it to the seat
grabbed it safely
with my other hand
and in a moment
learned I held the wallet
of a very
famous man.

NEW

I found Deepak Chopra's wallet
in an outhouse at the beach.
I used an old coat hanger
to fish for what my body
could not reach.

Even in the darkest places--
including those that stink--
hope and wire
can help to fetch us from the brink.

I found Deepak Chopra's wallet
in an outhouse at the beach.
Attempts to win the lottery
have never worked--
I've had no luck
but yesterday at 6 AM or so
I snagged about two thousand bucks.



Last Request

You don't want to die
under fluorescent light.

I get it.

That makes sense to me.

I don't want to die either.

And as important as light
seems to be
to you
I don't want to die in a place
that smells
like
pee.

Light matters a lot.

I agree.

But as important as light
seems to be
to you
I don't want to die in a place
that
smells
like
pee.

I've never ingested morphine.

Well
maybe I did.

But I was probably too drunk
or too high on coke
to remember what it felt like
and I'm betting
that morphine or heroine or whatever
synthetic opioid it was
did not alter my sense of smell.

NEW

Weird dreams?

Yes.

Prolonged sleep?

Yes.

Did my farts smell
like Chanel Number 5?

No.

Squander money like Nicholas Cage.

Shock the monkey like Phil Collins.

Write like Dylan.

Tell your father to rage.

Go to a psychiatrist
lift weights
and prove to the world
you're a genius
like Henry Rollins.

Enter the spirit world
and commune with the essence
of John Lennon.

Believe him when he says
Let it be
Let it be

But don't let me die
in a place
that
smells
like
pee.



Stopping the Spread of Widespread Darkness Caused By That One Guy in Yuma

Power was out
electricity gone

Batteries were strong
so radio stayed on

Reporters reported
the spread of a widespread outage
said we should expect
the black out to last
at least until dawn
maybe longer

Extremely dark darkness
made me wonder

Will the sun come up

I wanted to know

What if it didn't

Where would it go

No television

What would I miss

Were extraterrestrials
responsible for this

What about
the ghost of Rod Serling
or instructions
from the wireless
soul of Nikolai Tesla

How could one guy in Yuma
cause this terrible mess-la

NEW

Angry dog groomers
Powerless clippers

Perturbed pinball fanatics
Powerless flippers

Warm summer wind
just two or five glasses of wine
(plus what I did)
convinced my new neighbors
I was (am) out of my mind

Suddenly
I removed most of my clothes
not all of them
because I believe
in family-friendly
power failures

I turned on the hose
ran through the sprinklers
out on the lawn
and I remember thinking

if candles I lit
burn down the house
or the sun's really gone
never returns

if our Solar System
skips dawn
we can stare at stars
or scan the sky for a moon

But instead
of sharing
those thoughts
I lied
agreed
about our return



to the grid
should have
told them
if that one guy
in Yuma
could actually
shut off the lights
maybe
experts
shouldn't
panic

shouldn't

rush
into
fixes

too
soon.

An Arm and A Leg

Half a pair of shoes
is good enough for her.
Half a pair of gloves
is good enough for me.

I drive.
She shops.
I walk to the shower.
She hops.

I lost an arm.
She lost a leg.
I lean on her.
She lends a hand.

We don't care what the neighbors think.
We don't care what the world might say.

When the sun goes down
and leaves the night.
When the sun comes up
to start the day.
We do what we can
to help the other get by.

She's my one-legged girl.
I'm her one-armed guy.

She ties the shoes.
I run to the store.
She buttons the shirts.
I mop the floor.

I pedal the bicycle built for two.
She enjoys the ride and waves at you.

I don't sew.
She doesn't jog.
She washes dishes.
I walk the dog.

Roll your eyes if you like.
Go ahead and sigh.
She's my one-legged girl.
I'm her one-armed guy.



Abandoned

Men's briefs
elastic waist band
soft gray cotton
stitched by some precision machine
dirty (no argument there)
but not obviously
destroyed or rendered useless
by any visible measure--
qualify as litter
I guess
but who decided this article of clothing
was disposable and why
did they decide
to leave this thing here
on the trail
where those of us who live nearby
walk to and from town?

Rarely does anyone
run naked or partially naked
through the streets
or along the sidewalks
meandering through the park
across the street
and maybe it's true
that the limits of reason
apply in this case.

Maybe no deeper implication exists.

Maybe it's simply
one pair of men's underwear
abandoned by the railroad tracks
and there's nothing else to the story.

Religion

let there be
islamic yoga catholics
a towel
three workouts a day
red wine (for altered consciousness during services)
light snacks

let there be
evangelical rasta buddhists
extensive travel
dank bud
no regret

let there be
jewish wiccan southern baptists
yiddish magic ice cream social
summer solstice ceremonies

let there be
hindu santeria scientologists
holy headless chickens
wander unimpeded through
the universe

let there be
jehovah's mormon voodoo witnesses
magazines, bicycles, and pins
and dolls and needles
returning to your front door

let there be
atheistic quakers
peace for no apparent reasons



Little Sister

Her friends approve
of the new more sensitive guy
who embraces his gentler side
not necessarily feminine
just kinder that's all.

Likes a floral tie
with pastel shirt
dressing up in general
and neat too.

Mom is good
with the polite part
and Dad
well you know Dale--
slower than he used to be
with the buddy buddy thing
but as long as she's happy
he's okay.

Little Sister
thinks it's cute
because the new guy turns red
when he admits to liking
Kenny C (or is it T)
the saxophone player.

You heard about
the kitchen
right?

I guess the faint aroma
turned putrid
and he found the decomposing rat
stuck in the grillwork
behind the refrigerator
covered his nose and mouth--
called an exterminator.

How about the burglar?
Dude the Intruder

NEW

breaks glass
reaches through the window
opens the door from the inside
goes in
so the new guy pulls her into the bathroom
locks the door and hides there with her
lights out
hands shaking
913, 912, 911--
got it right the third time.

He told me himself.

I know
I know
you can replace a computer
and a stack of cd's
and maybe testosterone
makes me a neanderthal
but most of the time
all you need to do
is slide a shell into the chamber.

The unique sound
registers quickly with an uninvited guest
during an unauthorized entry
and yes
the dead rat stinks
but it's already exterminated
right?

Neat and clean and tidy
is okay
and
I know
I know
some people like it that way
but what's with the lilac perfume
and the lilac powder
and the lilac soap?



That's a funeral home thing,
isn't it?

By the way
next time
she uses the word
vegetarian
ask her why fish don't count
as meat.

And maybe
one more question.

No.

I'll ask.

Maybe I am a wimpy neanderthal
but where's the sense in enduring
voluntary pain for a 400-dollar
heart on your shoulder
with the words
"peace and love forever"
needled into your skin?

I don't get it.

At least he laughed
when I called him Queequeg.

NEW

Solstice

long november shadows
sway with breezes
while summer visitors
dream of san diego
where we talk around a fire
warm our hands
and someone always
stops the story
to remind us
we know nothing of cold.

they have shoveled snow
enough to know we know nothing
of seasons.

cool december nights
warm december afternoons
create conflict
within the memories of your most frozen christmas
depicted in the photographs
you brought along from pennsylvania
and today you mention
a postcard
from friends
who miss the sun.

smiling pasadena
knows the power of the camera

early morning marching bands
stomp along the center lines
of scented psychedelic new year streets
and someone
wrapped in blankets
maybe it's New Hampshire
where they need to scrape
a little deeper for a way to fuel



the heater
promises to pack it up
and move to san diego
during next year's two weeks off
before they don't return to work.

describe your leaves
celebrate their brilliant color.

tell us stories
to prove how much
you love
your seasons.

explain exactly why
your respect
for hockey
grows from learning
how to cope with cold.

you have snow
frozen ponds
and skates

you have trees
unknown to california

you have your love of seasons
and we stop
to measure shadows
with a glance
knowing we
have seasons
too.

My Beautiful Facebook Girlfriend Has Nice Chairs

Clicking on my facebook page
I caught a glimpse of her
and hoped she wasn't under age.

I clicked a little link to her
she clicked one to me.
We were instant friends.
Some things are meant to be.

I typed a quick note to send.

She responded —
a picture of a chair on which she sits.

Would I like to see
a picture of her other chair?

My response was quick.
I asked her if she'd like to see
a picture of my chair.

She said yes—
wanted a view from right in front.
And would I like to see
a picture of her couch?

We fell in love on facebook
and we chat on Saturday nights.
We've never touched each other's skin
but I guess it's still all right.

She shows me her chairs.
I show her mine.
I still don't know how old she is
but she's my friend
and as long as distance
maintains its distance
just like this
everything's going to stay
fine fine fine.



The Proctologist and The Gastroenterologist Were Married, But Pretty Soon the Whole Thing Hit the Skids

She said
I've had enough of your shit.
Pack up your shit
and get your ass outta here.

That's a bunch of chicken shit bull shit
he replied before he added
you think your shit doesn't stink
but it does.

You're full of shit
she said
she said
you don't know shit from Shinola
shit head.

Here they were again—
both of them were
shit faced enough
to engage in another
mutual shit fit.

The neighbors
were tired of the routine—
referred to them
as shit slinging nit wits—
giving each other shit again
predictable in their exchanges of invective.

He told her
to wipe the shit-eating grin
off her face
and she beat the shit out of him.

He was all dizzy and shit
and said to himself
Yeah--
I should have known--
she's built like a brick shit house.

NEW

The shit really hit the fan
when police arrived
and informed both—
they were in
a shitload of trouble.

It got worse
when he told police
they had shit for brains.

No shit
she chipped in.

We don't take this
kind of shit from anyone
they replied as they swiftly
employed their shit-kickers
to kick the living shit out
these two disrespectful
shit-talkers.

The handcuffed couple
knew they were up shit creek
without paddles.

But cops didn't give a shit
took them both to jail--
serious shit.

In separate cells
both had a little time
to consider the depth
of the shit they'd landed in.

Deeper than ever—
and
after making bail
they were both warned
to cut this shit out.



They agreed:
this shit
has to stop.

Instead of continuing
with the bullshit
they called a time out
agreed
to fix
what they could fix
and maybe
for the first time
in a long time
(and it was about time)
they agreed
to at least work on
getting their shit together
because they were both
tired of feeling like crap.

Vacation Time

Four weeks
was long enough
so Mom and Dad
sold our little brother
last year.

Asking 20 grand
they settled for 15—
plenty for a trip
to Disneyland.

Round trip—
3200 dollars.

Hotel.
Four nights.
2450 and change.

Admission
and all the rides—
3260
(after the coupons).

Food etc.
1425
(including taxes).

Tee-shirts, sweatshirts,
jackets, hats,
and miscellaneous
this and that
not yet completely figured out.

Not a problem though
because the sun is shining.
Mom's ready to deliver any day.
And this time it's
Disneyworld
Orlando
FLA.



NOTES

1. Similar to many of the entries found in this modest collection, “Hope on a Wire” is fictional. The character whose wallet was found by the unnamed narrator is a fictional character. The anonymous narrator did not find a real wallet in a fictional outhouse adjacent to an unnamed beach. Please do not confuse fictional characters with real people whose names might appear, at first glance to be similar.
2. Young people should remember that lying is bad. At the same time, they should understand that fiction is good—even though fiction requires us to fabricate words and ideas in ways that depart from reality. Lying = bad. Making up stories = good.
3. I thought about excluding poems that some may point to as examples of bad taste. If you or someone you know is offended or otherwise inclined to minimize the literary merit of the contents, please refer to 1 and 2 above and remember that any offense taken is also fictional.



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