

Tom Yuill

Submission of five poems in response to nomination to the post of Cambridge Poet Populist

**Bit: An Ode with the Rolling Stones Playing in the Background\***

The king squirms, on the spot.

Each remark makes a wound, like a mouth.

Each hot thought grins like a raccoon.

Each moment heats itself against another moment.

Each things fucks. Each thing wants.

Waste and pain again and again.

They got me with a fine they didn't tell me was a fine.

They got people like teeth whose job is being sharp.

"They got people dressed in plastic bags directing traffic."

Wake up, King! Wake up the Son of Man.

The sex between the sexes hasn't stopped.

The drinking of the drunkards hasn't stopped.

The King inspects his mud flaps, then anoints his beets.

Each mouth slobbers. Each mouth eats.

\*line 9 written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards

**Dallas Skinheads**

Heads shaved to give advantage during fist-  
Fights at soccer games in Manchester or

Berlin became shaved heads in Addison or  
Farmer's Branch, decorticated smooth to piss

On both "Thou Shalt" and "Thou Shalt Not."  
Oh, skinheads of the early eighties, yes, you had

A weird joie de vivre. Stomping and  
Swinging with torpid disinterest. Bloodshot

Eyes crossing from indifferent headbutting  
Of windshields and indifferent gobbling of

Acid and Ecstasy. Not even drunken, wobbling love,  
Just wanting whatever the next sting

Was. Oh, rasberries blown at ennui in the form  
Of noses burst to bloom by redneck fists,

Were you mostly piss? Ah, Dionysus  
In the eighties. Hairspray paisleyed on bangs, storms

At dinner tables in St. Louis, in Ann Arbor.  
Long sleeve paisley shirts covering tracks

In Plano. No to the bond salesman father, yes to smack

After dinner. The death rattle should be adored,

She'd think, if she had the words. Another Self

Recorded in London, in New York, gives her

Her words. Dreams yielding, death seekers voting for

Reagan again, her own words not shelved,

Just not there. Grandmother dies suddenly, and dying

Floats in beneath Mom's shoulder blades.

Then she starts to smoke again, in secret. No charades

From Dionysus last. In the eighties people heard no crying.

"Get six jolly cowboys to carry my coffin,

Get six dancehall maidens to bear up my pall.

Throw bunches of roses all over my coffin,

Roses to deaden the clods as they fall."

Heads without hair in the cancer ward. Under knit

Caps, under silk scarves. Under the wog she wore

As she said, "I love you, too," and, unsure,

Tried not to cry as she walked in quick polite

Steps toward the hospital door, and he saw this, he

Saw this, he saw this, then got in the car

To go on to the concert. Are teenagers

A good idea or not? Hast thou

Made the ulcers your idea? The Dallas skinhead

I knew swapped an Escort radar detector he stole

At 5pm for seven hits of acid, which, poor mole,

He dropped, rubbing his head.

"It's always something with you, John," said his Mom

To her husband of twenty-two years, and he,

Tuning his car, heard nothing. O Mimesis, flue

For thistly mote, pearly cell or bomb,

Or migrating idea. Was he just infected, a Hell of Thought

In which no thoughts were his? What sign of Christ

Within his poor scalped hand as he gazes at the light

Which shivers in the hollow, vacant lot?

## Lovers

The air is hot, it whispers, it has lips.

It whispers like good news...*the beer is cold.*

She lumbers for one more. "Eywhere'd she go?"

He thinks, but turns and thinks, "oh, there she is."

He's sitting by her on the floor with lime-

Peels, open tubes of paint; some Jonathan

Richman's playing. One of them's been painting.

*Dos Equis* are being knocked back. He finds

He knows where she is. She sees him. It's summer,

They're on the floor. The music's like good news.

"I get a facial tic when I drink too

Much Coke," he says. "Each time I brush

My teeth I think about Wisconsin," she nods.

They whisper, purse their lips, it's all good news.

## Coyote

My friend, I could wander

Around out here for years,

Shaking my head for letting him out,

Swearing not to forgive myself

If anything should happen.  
He slipped out in the rain  
While I slept. I followed,  
Desperate, with a picture, asking people,  
*Have you seen this coyote?*  
He went across the ocean  
On a freight ship, sat in the corners  
Of doorways on Rue Montmartre,  
On Aston Quay, and in London,  
Slumped, head between his knees,  
Longing for the familiar woods,  
Longing for the last red glimpse of sun  
On the lake. He says he is a coyote  
Who does what he likes. He likes  
To stay outside. Tonight under the evening  
Clouds in their cold, silver raiment  
He sits there, alone,  
And I must go out to find him.

**1621-1627**

***Villon***

Vivisectionous frost, vivacious wind, my bread is baked.  
I'm shocked, like Margot. Like us all.  
Like angels, like Villon: we're praying naked.  
Like a rat trap needs a rat to maul

Open-mouthed. We're on our knees, wine-soaked,

No stopping Time. We choke

Giving each other meat and drink here in our Hall.