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Poets Don't Ride Motorcycles

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POETS DON'T RIDE MOTORCYCLES

by

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A THESIS

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POETS DON'T RIDE MOTORCYCLES

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University of Nebraska, 2014

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This is a collection of poems that focus more on minutia and happenstance than larger universal themes. Using free-form lines and stanzas, spare construction, and dark yet powerful imagery, these poems remind readers of the meaningful emotional impact everyday items and interactions can have. The extraordinary and unusual are important too, and form a stark contrast to the poems about the mundane. These poems are not meant to be a final collection, but are a solid base for a book-length manuscript that will expand on the themes, images, and stories contained in this thesis.

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I remember my very first poetry assignment. It was during my junior year, in my first ever poetry class, which I had taken to fulfill some random graduation requirement. The assignment was to write the worst poem ever written. I don't think I've ever had a more difficult piece of homework, and I think that it was the first time I've ever been happy to fail.

Until that first basic creative writing class, my education had been more or less akin to taking orders. I did what was required of me in grade school and middle school, and then in high school I did what people said I would be good at. I had some ability with musical instruments, and even came into college on a music scholarship. But I hated it. That is to say, I hated the practice and exercise of being a real musician. For some reason it was too personal to sit in a practice room and play the same lick over and over to get it right. Too emotional to memorize scales backwards and forwards, and too much work for no feelings of accomplishment to earn first chair or be featured in an ensemble.

That poetry class was my own personal savior, and that assignment was some kind of awakening for me. Suddenly I understood why the people around me *wanted* to work at the things they were doing. It was because they had a desire and a true passion for the work that leads to final products. They had fallen in love with the process, as I did trying to write the worst poem ever written. I still haven't succeeded at that, though my rough drafts often seem to be additional attempts.

That first poetry class also gave me my first inspirations. Of the books we read, the first one I wanted to emulate or imitate was Charles Simic's *Hotel Insomnia*. That book has a pervasive urban darkness, and goes well the ideas of grime and turmoil. Who doesn't want to be the poet talking about the depravity of his hotel room? There are some oft-versions of my early poems from that class that have made it into the creative portion of this thesis, namely "Pink," "Relativistics," and of course "Interpreting Simic's Makers of Labyrinths." I think that "Pink" might be my darkest poem, the one that best expresses what I wanted to imitate from Simic's book, a darkness that is detached and yet emotionally significant to the speaker in the poem.

"Pink" has another important source of inspiration, an influence that is a little more widespread throughout my poems: the poetry and writing exercises of the language poets, primarily Bernadette Mayer. Mayer's work can be hard to read, especially in an introductory poetry class, but her writing taught me many things about form and the function of words. While I was never the biggest fan of the extraordinarily abstract language poetry (where the sound of the words alone tells the story of the poem), I did want to be able to use space as Mayer does. There is a very pleasant visual presentation in many of her poems. I have experimented a lot with different kinds of line breaks and punctuation since I first started writing poetry, and a good deal of that can be credited to Mayer's writings.

I think that "Pink" and also "Hyde Park: (*Sonata for Real Life and Fantasy in E Major*)" are some of my poems that are the most experimental

on the page. They almost have the look of language poetry. What is less obvious to any reader is that Bernadette Mayer, in some way, inspired most of the poems in this book. Since I started writing poetry, I have used Mayer's Writing Experiments to help me write new poems. These experiments range from a suggestion to write in an altered state of mind ("Falling Asleep Dreaming of Grass," "SETI," "Just before dark"), to using found poetry ("Tail Swap: A Found Poem"), to writing a series of titles for poems that don't exist yet ("Red," "Buccaneer Red," and "Bambus Metallic").

These exercises are extremely important to me as a poet because they fill the gaps that genuine inspiration can't fill. Sometimes, I just don't have an idea or I don't know what to do with a line or a stanza I have. Mayer usually has the answer, or at least a strong suggestion of what direction to try. These experiments keep me from getting writer's block, and that has been invaluable as a poet who is still new at writing poetry when compared to his peers.

Another one of my poetic inspirations has been Tony Hoagland. The first book I read by Hoagland was *Donkey Gospel*, and of course the first poem I was introduced to in that book was "Adam and Eve." The first line of that poem was introduced to me (now in my second poetry class) and the class through the first line: "I wanted to punch her right in the mouth and that's the truth."

That has extraordinary shock value for undergraduate students. Most reacted by submitting that the line and thus the poem had to be misogynist

and sexist, but reading the poem through to the end, I argued against that. Of course, just because something is true doesn't mean it isn't offensive, but in "Adam and Eve," Hoagland showed me that there is a place for true emotion in poems, even if it is hard to read. "Adam and Eve" is about a man acting the way many men do when refused sex. He says he *wanted* to hit her. Not that he did. He then takes the rest of the poem to explore that feeling, flesh it out and make it real. How animal is man? Can we ever be safe from our animalistic feelings? These are safe questions. These are relevant questions. These are the things that poets have explored forever, and will continue to explore forever.

As I have read more of Hoagland's work and grown as an academic and a writer, I have come to describe his writings as having *recherché* masculinity. The poems may speak more to experiences of males, but there is something beyond the blind passion and loin-pumping-shock-seeking of other male poets writing like males. To me, Hoagland writes about his masculinity with a brutal honesty tempered with an educated eye. I don't ever read him as apologizing for what he is, and that was and still is extremely refreshing to me as a writer and reader. This kind of honesty is something I want to have in my own writing, and something I feel I struggle mightily with.

This last semester, I had huge difficulties writing what I wanted to. I was never able to quite get at the emotional meat of the things I wrote about. I have cited many different things as the reason for this timidity, but

eventually I think it comes down to me just being too timid. I now worry about how my poems will be thought of before I ever commit them to digital print. I don't worry about whether or not my poetry is "good", I am confident enough to gloss over that, but I do worry about being mistaken or mislabeled for something I said in one of my poems. What if something I write comes out as racist or sexist or any other -ist? That has been a big issue for me. Also I have become concerned, even borderline obsessed with the idea of whether or not I know how to write as what I am: a straight, white, American, male poet.

I hesitate to use the word "right" in this circumstance, because that word is extremely difficult to contextualize correctly, but I feel that I don't have many examples of guys like me writing about "normal" things. Normal is an even more complex word to try and fit into this conversation, but honestly, I think I mean sex and relationships. I think that the way Mark Doty speaks about sex and relationships in his poetry is the most relatable to me, but I find myself asking if I could write things similar to what he writes without coming under some kind of scrutiny. Doubtless that kind of respect and artistic license has to be earned rather than taken for granted, but I obviously am not anywhere near that level yet.

All that worry aside, I can't pretend that this hesitancy to write about sex and relationships was a bad thing. It allowed me, no, forced me, to write about things I otherwise would not have. The three topics that have reoccurred most often in my writing are cars, motorcycles, and food. These

three things are all favorites of mine, and I wanted to communicate that in my writing, but I didn't want all my poems to be odes. I wanted to write poems about those three things in ways that match my emerging voice. I would say that I write about moments in my poetry. These could be just seconds or they could be several hours in length, but I want the focus of the poem to be more on the emotion and the sensuality of those moments instead of on the narrative of the poem. I have heard my poems described as having some qualities of essays, and I think that that may be correct, but I want the narrative to be more of a framing than the driving force.

"Bryn Drive" is a good example of what I mean. It is a bit narrative heavy, but to me the images of the road and the accident speak louder than the story of the poem. Perhaps "Tan Plates" is a better example. I intended the title to set the stage for the conversation in the poem. We have all been to diners with tan plates, and I want the sound and smell of that place to take the reader over as they read the poem so I didn't have to spend a few stanzas describing the place. To me, the table layout and the types of jelly on the table shouldn't be specifically important. A sense of the peripheral atmosphere is what I want to evoke in the reader.

But on to those three topics: cars, motorcycles and food. I suppose it could be said that these three things are my main hobbies. I fell in love with cars when I got my temporary license at fifteen and a half, and have had a somewhat disappointing affair with them since. Like all kids, I loved the fast cars and the luxurious ones, but now I just want to know how to work on

them. Engineering and auto repair remain mostly closed books to me, and that makes me very sad. I know that all it would take for me to learn is the chance to work on a car, to get my hands inside the engine and transmission, but all the reading and diagrams in the world will never make sense to me until that point. What I can write about for now is what I know, and what I've experienced. This and the Bernadette Mayer list exercise was the genesis for the trio of poems "Red," "Buccaneer Red," and "Bambus Metallic." The poem titles represent the color names of first cars that all met with somewhat unseemly, or at least undignified, fates.

No matter what I drive, I know there will always be a time when I wish I were driving my first car. It was not a good car. Or a safe car. Or even a very useful car, since nobody with legs could fit in the back, but I did love it. I think there are many who do love their first cars, and many who do find that sometimes on a clear night, while they drive the road back home, they wish they were in their first car. It's a powerful emotion, one that flies in the face of all logic and knowledge that what you're driving now is a better machine. It's nostalgia and sadness and freedom and joy all rolled into one, and that is what I wanted to capture in those three poems.

The motorcycle poems are easier to explain. I am addicted to riding motorcycles, and have been since the second day of my road class. Not the first day. I hated riding the first day. I understand the common rider stigmas, but those stigmas are embraced by riders as badges of honor. For me, was a revelation to go from sitting in a car to sitting on a bike: the feel of the air

pressing against my body, the touch and response of the bike, and the knowledge that the only thing standing between you and the ground is your own abilities, including how well you understand the limits of your bike. But riding is not understood by everyone, and in my poems about riding I want to give a sense of the thrill, and also the reality that there are only two kinds of bikers: those who have been down, and those who will go down.

My passion for food is new. Just in this last year I finally taught myself how to cook, and went from the guy who burned eggs to the guy who is cooking the Christmas feast. Very quickly I learned two things, first that cooking is an almost meditative practice in presence, and second that I must have picked up some things from watching my mother cook. Once I took my head out of the equation and just went by feel, I was able to cook really well, and then slowly add the cerebral part back in to make the food even better. In my poetry about food, my hope is to capture the importance of the act of cooking, and what it signifies to me. Not just my own cooking, either, I want to signify what different kinds of fast food mean to me as well. I believe that these poems are very relatable, perhaps even more relatable than some of my other writing.

The other main themes in my writing are nature and my mother's cancer. Both of these are easy to explain. Being born in Wisconsin, most of my childhood was spent outside. I've worked for the Waukesha County Park System every summer for seven years now and I love it. There is something about being outside in that Wisconsin climate that feels very much like home

to me. I don't get that same feeling in other states. My mother is some kind of superwoman. I say that not to brag, but it is the truth. She has dealt with three separate and different cancer recurrences, and also Invasive Strep A, which required major surgery to correct, including the removal, cleaning and replacement of her occipital bone. Her close brushes with death have had an impact on me, but in ways that even I am still discovering. When I write about her, it is always more of an exploration than anything else.

When putting this poetry collection together, something that bothered me slightly is the almost total lack of any recognizable form poetry. I have sonnets and sestinas and pantoums and ghazals, but none of them seemed right for this collection. I feel that when I write in free verse, the writing tends to me more real and true to what I feel instead of shoehorned into a rhyme scheme or form. I'm not claiming that my thoughts can't be contained, what I am saying is that I censor myself far more when I write in form than when I write in free verse. In that way, these poems are more "me" than some of my other ones.

When I look at this collection of poetry, I see a poet more in transition than transformed. I am still relatively new to this poetry thing, but based on where I was when I was coming in to UNL, I see a yawning expanse of artistic growth. My poems have more focus and agency than they did, and I feel that my voice is emerging and refining itself. I have found topics that are essential to who and what I am and turned them into poems that are relatable and accessible. I can see connections between what I have read and what I write

that weren't visible to me before, and I have more poetic knowledge than I ever thought I could have: better editing skills, better communication in my own poems, clearer imagery and metaphor, etc. What I have here may not be a completely finished chapbook, but it is most of a very strong one that I would feel confident about submitting, and that might be the biggest milestone of all for me. I've never been proud of my own work in school. This stretches all the way back to grade school. But here in this thesis, I finally found something I created with my own mind and own body that I can be proud of.

SETI

On November 16, 1974,
Earth scientists shot a radio transmission
into deep space
Hoping to find extraterrestrials, other civilizations, anything.
We told them our population,
our galactic address,
how tall we are,
and the date of this transmission.
We showed them our DNA.

Imagine those energy pulses streaming relentlessly
past quasars that slowly chant back.
Past planets we might never visit.
Past the dust of existence
and experience
for years and decades, and lifetimes,
and eternities.

Arizona Haikus

Glorious
To feel the sun baking down
Unconcerned, Cactus Wrens call

When the Colorado River
Found the Colorado Plateau
Yes Here I will make wonder

Cacti are alien
Rocks and lizards too
Sand is familiar

Nebraska

I don't like Nebraska.
It's too flat here. Too open and frightening.
All the land is land I don't recognize,
land I am not comfortable living on.

Standing on almost any ground
means seeing to the far side of the Earth.
I once took a pair of binoculars to the plains,
and when I used them,
I could see around the world
to myself again in the distance.

I am used to having trees surround me
and hills hindering and hiding my movements.
True, more terrifying beasts hide in forests
than on open plains
it just stands to reason.

But here,
in Nebraska,
I see what is bearing down on me
long before it finally catches me.

Falling Asleep Dreaming of Grass

I dream of a golf course sometimes.
I see each cut level
the tall shag of the rough,
and the shorter fairway winding through it.

The authoritative cut of the tee boxes
in beautiful and bold squares,
a perfect space to survey
and take the measure of the course.

The tees are the same height as the collar
that rings the green, and oh the green cut.
Perfection.
Every stripe patient and laser straight.

From every angle there is a clean cut line,
ignoring the rise and fall of the turf,
ignoring the placement of the hole,
and never a nick into the taller collar cut.

In my dream the mower is silent as I ride it.
In my dream I can hear the birds and the wind,
the deer don't run from me
and the resident course fox just watches.

In my dream I can see each blade of grass grow
and feel the mower blade cut them
but it doesn't hurt.
It feels like shaving.

Just before dark

snow begins to fall on the land of Churchill.
The land of Shakespeare and Thatcher,
the land of Lennon and Milton,
Elizabeth, Victoria, and James.

Snow makes slurry on the steps of Regent Street Station.
The Bakerloo is 6 minutes delayed, even though no snow falls in the
Underground.
The station smells like impatience and wet concrete
would-be passengers sigh and kick at imaginary stones,
wondering if Great Portland Street Station has managed to get any closer.

Snow alights on St. Paul's angles,
draping them lightly in white chocolate.
Inside, confession and nativity:
Forgive me father for I've fallen in love,
candles, crèche,
three Our Fathers, six Hail Marys,
never mind this is the wrong place for that.

It's snowing on Indian Restaurants filled with metric tons of fake gold.
It snows over potato curry and plastic forks.
It snows around baskets of hot Naan with butter, and snow dusts
the windowsills.
It snows on the sign that proclaims TAKE AWAY ALL DAYS,
and burnt out light bulbs.

Snow settles determinedly on Parliament and the ghost of Oliver Cromwell,
staring good riddances at the last protesters to pack it in for the night.
Even though a letter from his friend Thomas Bidell tells us
Cromwell quite liked fools (at least in his not dead days),
he finds the hopping and squawking pigeon-people annoying.

It is a warm night for snow,
falling on me in clumps as I stand outside the Horse and Groom,
trying to stop the gathering flakes from slinging me back across the ocean.
How I wish I were home again.
How I wish I could be that eight-year old boy again, flopped
on the overstuffed Olive Drab couch,
bathing in tangerine glow from the Christmas lights,
hearing the fire murmur nonsensical warm.

Kettles and Moraines

I used to play kettle games,
running over and through the forest
capturing flags and rescuing princesses,
kicking cans off rocks, and searching high and low
in ultimate games of hide-and-seek.

Walking through those same forests now,
grown-up and sullen,
the trees seem smaller
and the rocks too.

I've forgotten where I buried the time capsule
complete with a Pokemon Blue cartridge
and a Brett Farve card.

Only now can I picture the glaciers
with their sheer cliffs
and terror ravines
slowly scraping over this surely sacred ground,
carving every smallest nook.

I still remember which oak
has branches perfectly spaced for a rapid ascent,
and which rock the cans used to sit on.
It is a grey and greyer slab of granite
with a flat spot about eight inches square.
Perfect.

Dove Mourning

There is an official
Mourning Dove hunting season now
in Wisconsin.

Long before that, I was a kid with a pellet gun,
trying to see what I could kill.
Seeing a pair of doves in a tree,
I took a knee like my father taught me,
looked down the scope,
aimed high and right,
and squeezed-not pulled-the trigger.
That was the best shot I've ever taken.

A through-and-through to the head.
The second dove flew off,
leaving the one I shot to flop hopelessly
in the grass below.

I rung the bird out and carried it home.
When I got back, I threw the bird in the garbage
wiped the blood in the grass
and started to cry.

Not because the bird was innocent,
not because I didn't mean to kill it,
but because I thought
I did not care that I had.

Birdwatching

My Grandmother loves to watch birds.
She sits by her picture window
just to watch her finches build nests
and raise families.
Every year she cries when the babies fly away.

I want that knowledge.
I want to know why this woman,
who raised her own children,
outlived her husband,
watched her brothers and sisters buried,
survived a stroke,
wants to watch finches
grow up and fly away
every year.

I once asked her why
and she didn't know.
She did say that the baby finches
do not remind her of her own children.

Interpolating Simic's "Makers of Labyrinths"

v.I

I must be absolutely alone when I write
And in the highest parapet
Overlooking the empty street.
The blank page a window
No,
A garish mannequin of thoughts
And if thoughts could write my poems,
I'd be a laureate.

v.II

Here in my small-windowed, low-ceilinged parapet
I can see my fantastic maze perfectly.
Interpreting,
Extracting,
I'm getting ahead of myself.
The point is that I can see, even staring down these eternal ambiguities.

v.III

If there is one thing to learn here, it is in the rubble left by colliding thoughts.
Not only the rubble of course, but in the burnt-out shells of imaginings:
That whispering table of card players
Isaac Newton among them — now a ghost.
All climb the hill we said was far too steep,
But thankfully, none of them walk alone.
Just as you realize the crowd is indeed singing a different song,
I see the old man — my father — riding Billy Sianis's pet,
tugging on your sleeve.
What is it?

Walking the Elephant Graveyard in Downing, Wisconsin

At the gloaming we wandered past destructions.

These colossal animals, once so bold and proud
perhaps even beautiful
are now strewn about themselves.
Innards vomited up or slammed down and through their throats.

These giants that once roared and strained
now cast disfigured death-scream shadows
in the shape of a rending and tearing demise.

These titans of steel and rubber and fuel
so ungainly in life, looked terrifying
and unnatural in their final rest.

I stopped at a deafening corpse
and wondered what it would take
to kill something that big.

You asked if we could leave.

Good Roads

Every good road is a failure.
Every excellent hill-climb and gorgeous corner
is a testament to the Earth beating man.

Humans like things to be straightforward
and clean-cut.
Our cities are grids,
laid out to the four directions.
These are roads that have caged in the natural
in order to express human nature.

But outside the city limits,
the land could not be broken
and so it was paved over.
The tarmac like lace
barely covering the curves of the ground,
the erotic rises
and sensuous falls.

Thrill seekers search for these roads
and these roads they learn
like a lover's body.
Tenderly, slowly,
memorizing each birthmark of the pavement
and asking it to not break their hearts.

Bryn Drive

For NAHN

Bryn is a bitch. There's no way around it.
She is twisted
and I love it.

Bryn's head is lined with mansions
and driveways full of Lincolns
and Mercedes-Benzes.
Each entrance to the road is a blind one.

Her neck is a 75 degree flat corner
with huge trees that are meant
to be crashed into.
Her torso isn't so interesting,
more houses and flat corners,
but not everything about her can be perfect.

Bryn's hips are her deadliest feature,
a wild ride that dares you to push harder
and faster, best approached from her feet up.
It's a 90 degree corner, followed by a 9 degree incline
topped off with a blind left-hander
that slants downhill
right between the Tabernacle Cemetery
and a hill lined with rocks.

She's killed her share of men, sure.
But it's not like she's trying to.
Well, not exactly trying.
I saw it happen once, near enough anyways.

I was riding one afternoon,
in a friendly race with a stranger on a Honda
when I turned on to Bryn
looking for a good time.

We rode from her feet up,
thrilling up and down her legs
until we hit her hips.
I saw the red Honda behind me
as I pulled through the corner,
and as I started tearing up the hill

he was behind me.

As I rounded past the cemetery
his bike was somersaulting,
the engine peaked and revving down
and he was in the air like a pole-vaulter.
Days passed before he hit the ground,
before I hit my brakes.

I had time to analyze the situation:
The stranger hadn't seen the corner.
He didn't know not to touch his brakes.

He touched his brakes
with the suspension unloaded from the hill.
He lost control.
He hit a rock.
His bike flipped.

It took a long time to get him to stop screaming.
To get him to stop trying to tear his helmet off
with his one working arm.
To get him to look at me
and not at his other arm.

The ambulance got there in about a year,
and Eric was in shock by then.
The driver said that this happens a lot
and I said I know.
I told one of the EMTs that I thought
we had gone to high school together.
He said yes.

The red strobes bounded
off the tombstones and summer grass in equal measure
and neither one changed what they were doing
as the ambulance screamed away
and I gave my report to the officer.

I heard Eric is fine now.
Eight broken bones,
three broken ribs,
a deflated lung,
a ruptured spleen,
internal bleeding,

a few weeks in the hospital,
a wrecked bike.

And Bryn is fine too. She didn't even notice.
I want to stay away from her.
That could have just as easily been me.
But I don't. Bryn is a siren. Bryn is incredible.
Bryn is where the ground itself
is better than you,
and it is a beautiful lesson.

Why I Ride

Jetting down the back highways of Portage County with Lee
our helmets filled with the scent of dying fall,
I discovered a reason.

The black pines made a tunnel around our hill-climb.
The bikes clawed at the pavement,
the engines swallowing gasps of the chill air.
We were numb from the waist down,
our hands frozen to the grips,
and then

we sailed onto the Wisconsin River Flowage
and bathed in fizzling sunset.

The sky faded from black to turquoise to orange
and threw itself on the river
clawing at the Earth
begging to stay with her.

Billion sparkles played at being stars, and winked
from the peaks of the cadencing water
trying to gain a glimpse of the stripping trees.
I drank deep of the glory
my visor flipped open
to catch the sudden crosswind.

We stopped next to a cornfield a little up the road
and turned the bikes off to cuddle the gathering darkness close.
We sat there until the sun fell
and the real stars lit themselves,
not pinpricks or stories of heroes
just droplets of light
too far away
to care about us at all.

Poets Don't Ride Motorcycles

By and large this is a truth
though I'm not sure why.
I'm just one of those people
who would much rather
spend hours at a bike night
in a parking lot
than walking art galleries
or library aisles.

I'd rather listen to motors
revving hard like whiskey
and feel the frame judder
on the overrun,
than listen to a lecture
on colonialism
in Modern American Literature.

I've heard that motorcycles
stick to the ground
on a patch of asphalt
no bigger than a postage stamp.
Even when your knee
is low enough to trace
the painted lines
on the road.

Maybe it's that thrill of danger,
that moment of life
on the edge of disaster,
that compels me to mount up
when the roads empty of cars
and the silent lanes beckon.
I am always more than happy
to rip the night wide open
with gushing blue flame
and Siren scream.

Maybe it's that addicting moment
that comes in a streetlight synapse.
The body shocks alert
and the next moment
I tuck elbows to knees and gun
for the dark ahead.

Ton-Up Boy

I want to be deeper than I am.
I want to be cooler, too.
I want ace bars and
I want to strip the plastics off orgiastically.

I want to understand why a subframe
is sexy.
Especially the Featherbed.
Maybe that's too blatant. Let me back up.

I want a leather jacket and a pack of Lucky Strikes
unfiltered. A pompadour
and winklepicker boots.
I want to stay always shiny side up.

I want to ride on my own machine
with my own personality.
Maybe I'd prefer a larger gas tank
swapped from a bigger bike.
Unpainted and polished up
it would strobe the sunlight
onto the ground with the pumping of the pistons.

I want to be doing a ton up on the freeway.
No cars, no crosswind,
not even any marking lines.
Just open asphalt and speed
and my own coolness.

Tail Swap: A Found Poem

Remove SUZUKI GSXR-SRAD Seat Unit & Replace with GSXR K Series Back
End

The Complete Conversion

Parts Required:

- Seat Sub frame
- Seat unit plastics
- Seats
- Rear Foot Pegs
- OEM Unit Taillight

Note: You may also choose to fit a K2 Series seat lock.

(All the parts are from either a, K1, K2 or K3 GSXR 600 or 750, or parts can come from a K1 or K2 GSXR 1000 but not a K3 1000 because these use a different frame)

The first thing is to strip the rear end of you GSXR and remove the SRAD seat sub frame.

Now you will see that the SRAD and K1 sub frames are quite different, the top rail of the sub frame is fine and needs no alterations.

It is the bottom sub frame rail that need to be shortened, Now you need to prepare the K sub frame for cutting;

see Figure 1 below.

Using a set square mark a line where the fixing lug joins the Sub frame.
And mark all the way round both of the sub frames lower legs.
Cut to a depth of 1.5mm and remove the fixing lug.
Please see figure 2.

If you want a Standard end it is a matter of fixing the Footrest to the Sub frame and then fasten the exhaust clamp to it's mounting on the foot peg.

NOTE:

The total amount of material
cut from the subframe
will be approximately 2 3/8".

**MAKE SURE IT IS TIG WELDED AND NOT MIG TIG WELDING FLOWS
BETTER**

Figure 12a.

The way I have had the lower lugs welded on the lower subframe rails.
The K series subframe
now mates up to the SRAD main frame
perfectly.

If you opted
for the raised tail look
and only cut out 1 3/4"
from the lower legs the final step
is not necessary.

Tankslapper (When All Else Fails)

I'm sick of oscillations.
Sick of death wobbles and tankslappers.
Sick of the lesson I know I haven't learned yet
The lesson I'm meant to learn:
When all else fails, let go.

Oscillations are white.
the pallor of a face under a motorcycle helmet
after losing all control and feeling the thing
try to buck you off.
the terror grip white of holding on to someone
as they turn and walk away.
Keloid white for metastasis.

That's what a tankslapper is—
an uncontrolled growth started by a small hiccup
and in an instant, it becomes a wild tremor
that makes throwing yourself to the pavement
a better option than staying on the bike.

There is a way to fix a death wobble.
Even if it makes no sense,
when all else fails, let go.

My family now has as a motto,
Liver-Lungs-Brain-Dead.
My mom taught us all that progression,
she learned from her oncologist.
Cancer moves like that, kicking in the doors,
burrowing deeper and deeper,
more and more rapidly.

She has fought, my mother.
Fought her mother,
fought breast cancer
fought my father
tried to fight off the death
of her cancer friends
fought lymphoma
fought me
fought breast cancer again.

This last time she rejected treatment.

Post-mastectomy and while on chemotherapy,
her tumor markers were climbing
into the high 90s.
So she handed the pills back to her doctor
and walked out of the hospital.
Walked to her car and drove home,
calling me and my brothers each in turn
oldest to youngest,
to tell us what she had done.

Nobody cried.
Nobody told her to go back.
She told us *All else has failed.*
So, I'm letting go, and I'm going to pray.
A month later, her markers were at 2.

Next time she might not fight.
She will deny the radiation burns
and the chemical-ravaged veins.
I don't blame her, and I won't
if the time comes. How can I?
When all else fails,
you have to let go.

Red

First car and first girlfriend:
two things I'll always miss occasionally.
No offense meant, but I'll always miss the car more.
It was a piece of shit.
But it was a red coupe with a sunroof
and manual transmission
and popup headlights.
That made it basically a Corvette
to me at 15.5 years old.

Would it be going too far to say similar things about the girl?

It was that little red Saturn that I fell in love with.
That little beater I had my first little accident in,
topped 100 MPH in,
learned to do great handbrake turns in,
and had a very solid little heartbreak in.

It died a dishonorable death,
being written off by me and the repair shop
after it was found that the engine mounts
were almost completely rusted through,
and would take more than the value of the car to repair.

So the Red Saturn was traded in
for something gray and efficient
with an automatic transmission,
no sunroof, and no popup headlights.

Would it be going too far to say similar things about the girl?

Buccaneer Red

Twenty years after he sold it,
my dad found his first car for sale again
on the side of the road next to a cornfield.

He didn't want to buy it
but he had to know if it really was his
or just a doppelganger.
It looked the same,
a '78 Firebird with the Formula pack,
white interior
Buccaneer Red exterior.

The original five-spoke wheels
and non-functional hood scoops
convinced him to call the number on the sign
and meet the guy selling it
who had bought it from another guy
who had bought it from . . .
one of those situations.

When my dad sat in the driver's seat
I could tell it was wrong.
He knew it wasn't his car.
He never even started it up,
just looked around to suggest he was deeply interested.
He checked out the back seat,
the trunk and popped the hood,
making some idle comments about this or that,
but there was no magic in his eyes, no love.
No fire to match the firebird.

Then we got back into his new SUV
with the Desert Sage exterior and the Sand interior
and drove away.
He never looked back
but I expected him to.

Bambus Metallic

For TLD

My sister kills everything I love
without remorse or any real sorrow.

I can forgive that. She doesn't mean to ruin everything.
She just happens to be clumsy.

But I will never forgive her for killing my first car.
In the driveway. The driveway!

Sure, we have a really long driveway.
Okay, it was a little bit slick out there.

But that means you slow down to avoid the deer in the woods.
You don't floor it to "Get past it quickly."

With one rather quiet thunk into a tree,
my brave Audi, the family transporter for a decade,

was killed. By my sister.
She kills everything I love.

Recognition

I think I knew the guy
who was running the window
at Taco Bell last night.
Well, I don't know his name,
but I definitely recognized him
and I know I hate him.

I'm pretty sure I almost got in a fight with him
outside a bar. He made some stupid comment.
I shoulda kicked his ass, guy was askin' for it.

Wait, maybe he's that dick who
checked out my books at the library.
He doesn't work the front desk,
but the other one. Must be a jerk
and that's why they keep him away from the entrance.

He didn't screw up my order,
but I'm sure he would have
if he had recognized me.
I really hate that guy,
At least if he's who I think he is.
I don't know what his deal is.

Repentance (Sbarro)

Instead of "Bless me Father for I have sinned,"
say "I'll take a stuffed slice combo."

If this is for anything worse than blasphemy or theft, get a Stromboli.

Instead of "It has been three months since my last confession,"
say "I'll have the breadsticks as my side."

The truly penitent will order a salad.

As for your penance, order the ranch sauce.

If this is for more than four mortal sins, get the creamy garlic sauce.

Make sure you dip the breadstick
before every bite.

Without ever stepping foot in a church,
no matter your denomination,

Absolution can be yours for less than ten bucks.

The Worst Restaurant in the World

The menu looked good online.

Great, in fact.

Lots of fancy dishes served, according to the website,

“In an atmosphere so cozy, you'll think you're home!!”

Sold. My partner and I selected it for an anniversary date.

It was pretty cute. I guess.

The place looked like a house on the outside

and on the inside. Floral wallpapers and plush carpets,

a piano in the corner, pictures on the wall.

Pictures of someone's family? No. Probably just employees or something.

And we ordered drinks and our dinner

I had never heard of Chicken Oscar before.

We talked and laughed and slowly grew more quiet.

We started to talk about the place.

It was odd, and our food hadn't come yet.

It really did look like we were eating in someone's house.

Those *were* pictures of a stranger's family. See? The kids are getting older over there.

We are the only people here under 60.

We thanked the waitress then, the food was served.

Did she have fear in her eyes?

There is a dark staircase behind that door. Where does it go?

Well, the chicken was pretty good I suppose.

My partner said her fish was undercooked.

Why does that table of elderly couples keep looking at us?

Why is there no other waitstaff?

God those pictures are so creepy.

See? That lady keeps looking over here!

And suddenly we couldn't get out of there fast enough.

And then we were both feeling sick.

Trying to hide it, and not daring to ask for the restroom.

We got the check and I threw some bills at it

and we jogged outside and ran to the car,

flanking the hood and kneeling at the edge of the parking lot,

retching and retching until we were both completely empty.

SkyMall

There is something that is being forgotten
in all the talk of security lines and bag fees.
Something often passed over
in the debate about whether to fly or drive.

Why is nobody talking about SkyMall?

SkyMall is the treasure chest hidden deep in TSA Cave.
The gleaming beacon of capitalism
that everybody adores. Who doesn't want to read
about the perennial favorite
SkyRest Travel Pillow? (Product Number 99010)
Or the Spirit of Nottingham tree decoration?

I can never decide which I want to hang on my bedroom wall:
The Tutankhamen Wall Sculpture (\$99.95) or
the Nunsmere Hall Battle Armor (\$199.00). Sure,
King Tut is cheaper, but the Battle Armor comes with swords.
Swords you can actually remove.

SkyMall is a word that isn't autocorrected
by Microsoft Word. It's the perfect intersection
of Hammacher-Schlemmer, Brookstone, Sharper Image,
and the clearance aisle of Wal-Mart.

I would walk a hundred miles to read it.
I will gladly submit to Backscatter X-Rays,
the various fees, the small seats, the lack of meal service,
and the public disrobing.

I can even tolerate the flight attendant
running out of ginger ale
as long as the latest SkyMall is waiting for me.
Tucked into the pouch of the seat in front of me,
behind the airline magazine,
and intertwined
with the air sickness bag.

Home Alone

You were sitting in a corner booth
drinking and talking with a friend.
I was standing by the pool tables
the uninvited guest of an uninvited guest
at a birthday party for a girl
who spelled her name stupidly.
Our eyes met a few times, or rather,
you caught me looking at you.
I apologize for that. I was fascinated
by the way you twirled your hair
around your fingers
and the way your smile drew up
from your chin to your eyes, dark
and dazzling
in the bar neon.

I raised a toast to you, don't know if you saw,
then spun
and slammed my drink as payment
for courage that never got delivered.

That's how the night was for me:
Gazing, drinking, gazing, waiting.
Then it was closing time.
I walked out behind you,
never said a word.
I watched you and your friend trip tipsy
to the end of the block, then walked the other way,
slogging the frigid streets back to my car.
I drove home carefully
in silence.

My apartment was cold and dark when I got there.
I wandered the rooms slowly,
too restless to sit down,
and alternated cigarettes and paid programming
to force the sun to rise.

Dreams After Waking

Infuriating.
Fingers brushing the edge
as the memory slips past.
Dreams are slick and viscous,
like honey between your fingers,
the drops stay attached, yet still try to run.
Then it's all ellipses and half-formed

It makes me wish
there were dreamcatchers for the good dreams.
If for no other reason
than to see those delicate amber drops
hanging, almost frozen in the meek morning light.
Lightly kinetic and sweet.

Hyde Park (*Sonata for Real Life and Fantasy in E Major*)

Cantabile

Every travel cliché ever is true.
 A stranger in a strange land humps his gear double-time across the most
 beautiful public
 park in the world,
 and combat-booted emotions march in formation after him:

I. *Andante Agitato*

The New American Soldier finds this country full of exotic and beautiful
 temptresses
 just like they said it would be.
 Accents like fine scotch flow tidally around him.
 A nice tumbler, two ice cubes. Lovely.
 Drink it in long smooth swallows.

II. *Moderato con fuoco*

There are no metaphors for the women themselves.
 Luxuriously smooth necks and elegant naked backs, arched ever so slightly,
 the comfortable feel of the spine sensuously rigid under lightly stroking
 fingers.
 The sloping perfection of breasts just barely covered with silken hair,
 each gorgeous draping lock perfumed with cigarettes and product.
 Slender fingers entwined in yours, now on your back, now on your chest.
 Pure Eroticism and Passion.

Someone might have said "I want to be fucked senseless,"
 And so climax is a base return to native-speak
 Muddled by ragged breaths and sweet fire.
 Carnal and Primal.

III. *Tranquillo a piacere*

So, what then?
 So leave all you know and move to a new land.
 Learn her tongue,
 Learn her language.
 Become the great English Language Poet of
 wherever.
 Your epitaph could be "Only Fools Rush In."

Alternately, run to the stationer and buy pen and paper. Write a desperate
 SOS

Message repeats.

Relativistics

I.

My grandfather used to sit outside
in his white plastic lawn chair
and watch sunsets like this
A ragged red effusive thing
Time leaking and spraying
He used to say that it was caused by night
beating at day
Trying to break through
and have its way with the world
Maybe he is saying it now and I am ten again

I am sixteen and fumbling
with my first real kisses
With the foreign shape of her lips and where
does this damn tongue go
I wonder
is this really it

I am twelve and watching my blood
flow freely down my leg into my sock
there's a lake of it in my shoe
It's strange to me
that through this much pain I can't find tears

I am twenty one and she is twenty four
I never do things like this
She kisses me through her smile
and she's already naked and her teeth
slide smoothly across my bottom lip
Her hand is on my belt
and her fingertips are inside the band of my boxers
and she says that means something

I am seven and looking up into the night sky
with my new glasses
I never knew there were so many
stars
I am eighteen and driving through my life so far
See on the left there
is the house I lost my virginity in
and on the right
a buddy I used to have lived there

and that's an ex's house
She cried so hard when I ended it I still taste her tears

I am twenty two and her Kelly eyes
are laughing at me
saying if you really want me
then find me at the bottom of that bottle
before I drown
I think I believe her
but
she tears at me and tears at me and tears at me

I am sitting outside
in my white plastic lawn chair
watching the sunset
A ragged red effusive thing

II.

7.2.1 The Lorentz transformation:

Relativity says that when two observers are in different frames of reference, each observer considers the other one's perception of time to be distorted.

We'll also see that something similar happens to their observations of distances, so both space and time are distorted.

What exactly is this distortion?

How do we even conceptualize it?

-From Simple Nature by Benjamin Crowell

Silver & Black

My hair is black
though I used to call it dark brown.
Black hair sounds so villainous
and theres no coming back from that.

My hair is silver.
More silver than either of my brothers—
thirteen and fifteen years older.
I used to pull them out,
but now I pretend each one is a scar.
A memory I've given up
remembering.

My tongue is silver
and it weighs heavy at rest in my mouth.
When called upon it flits
and darts, a wild finch,
in acrobatic circles
and dramatic lifts and drops.

My tongue is black,
but I don't remember when that happened.
It must be from curing, blaspheming,
causing pain, and corrupting.

My dreams are black.
City streets littered with refuse
and gushing with steam.
I hurry hood up through them,
headed towards the lights and sirens.

My dreams are silver,
covered in a fine lunar dust.
Then again maybe it is the dust of denial
and abandonment
I shiver mute and bald among them.
For what it's worth, I have dreamed a dream
of every promise I have ever broken.

Color Injections

The doctor said I need color injections.
That I'd become too bland.

The orderly joked that the doctor might not be able to see me,
I blended in with the dim hospital color scheme so well.

But he could see me. He showed me the tray of shots.
The whole spectrum encased in individual glass containers.

He told me they used to have only three shots: Red, Green, and Blue.
Then they switched to Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black
to keep up with technology.

But today's modern man needs more than 4 base colors.
He needs the whole spectrum.

The thick and striated Blue shot looked like it was in a turkey baster,
with a needle like a pencil tip.

The reds and oranges were in a hanging IV bag.
They needed to be introduced more slowly, to avoid adverse effects.

The purple range had twenty shots to itself, each tone in a delicate
and short needle. They needed to be injected just below the skin.

The yellows came in a jet injector.
The doctor said that yellow is the one people need most.

The greens went right into the thigh muscle.
I watched the doctor push the plunger down slowly.

After all the shots, he left me to sit in the chair
and watch the warm color IV drain into my veins.

I didn't feel any different. I didn't feel any more colorful.
It was still winter outside, and everything was still

grey.

Pink

I.
No Country for Old Men is the perfect book
 to read on a bus
 confession: I miss you
 or I think I do or
 I imagine that I think I do

I sat in the snow the snow of april 19th
 strange weather don't I think people keep asking

months from now I will read several poems about cancer
 and feel apathy

my ass is damp and cold from the snow as
 I sit in a puddle of streetlamp

II.
 I have wanted to write about cancer
 death
 blackness
 the pink ribbon of awareness
 worn like an army unit citation
 and instead when I close my eyes
 all I see
 are eyelids
 the clouds are running
 I can't keep myself in this place
 I can't keep my self in this place

I remember when my mom called
 and blurted out
 that she had cancer again
 I wept then in bursts
 hard racking sine wave sobs of despair
 chanting like a child It's not fair It's not fair
 It's not fair It's not

III.
 I am sitting here in the snow
 definitely like a fool yet
 I am inside a girl I've only met once
 on her pink bed with pink sheets
 pink walls a damn pink chair

pink perfume and pink nail polish
her panties were not pink

this girl asked me if I was DTF and nothing else
her skin hex code 7c411e
for those that need a reference:
that's somewhere between chocolate sepia copper
and bole

I hear there was a carbon monoxide leak
in her apartment
Everyone turned pink

IV.

I am eagerly awaiting a plane
that won't be landing for another two weeks

then again maybe it came in two weeks ago
or just a few days
on it is the girl I loved—
on it is the girl who loved me—
on it is a girl
we were lovers once

V.

in a medical incinerator in southeastern wisconsin
is my mother's last breast
just ashes now

it once fit exactly into the hole that she said
had been blasted into her chest
what to say more about that I
do
not know
I do not know

Lasagne

I had never heard of lasagna until third grade.
We ate lasagne at my house every Christmas,
made the way it is coded into my chromosomes.
The pasta homemade, the sauce a thick ragu, homemade
and left to blend the night before.
Fresh full-fat ricotta and stack and stack and stack.
Three pans or four, enough to feed 12 or more for at least two days.

Every surface of the main level would be invested in this endeavor.
The counters covered in flour or towels for the pasta to dry on.
The tables always half set and half in use by those waiting for the next task.
Even the garage shoe rack had its role to play, as a large walk-in fridge
full of pans of sauce.

That was my Christmas Eve Day. Cooking and heat and roll, flip and roll.
But when my brothers got married and started families, that all changed.
We started having chicken on Christmas Eve. Or frozen pizzas.
That was worse than finding out that Santa Claus wasn't real.
Losing the family is not that big of a deal, they're never gone just not present.
But even the garage shoe rack misses being a part of making lasagne.
A whole house and household working towards one single goal of enjoyment.
Two days of preparation for a 30 minute meal.

Your Balsamic Chicken

For CLS

After I taught myself to cook,
one of the last things I tried to make
was your Balsamic Chicken.

I felt like an intruder every time I thought of it.
It seemed wrong to try and make it with you not there.
Even though I'd seen you make it a dozen times
I pretended like I didn't know how.

But you're not coming back.
And I'm never going back either.
And I really want some Balsamic Chicken
even if I'll never have yours again.

So late one night I made it,
the way I watched you do it,
the way your mother made it,
and the way my children will make it.

The children that could have had you as their mother.

I won't even be able to tell anyone
that this chicken is for you.
Because of you, perhaps.

It's always yours no matter how I make it.
It always ends up like yours.
I love that.
I fucking hate that.

Tan Plates

On the morning of the first snow,
my dad and I were eating breakfast
at a local café
that serves the worst coffee
and the best food
in the civilized world.

He looked up from his pancakes and said,
It has taken me ten damn years to get over your mother.

I met his gaze and pointed my fork at him
You're still not over my mother
and it's been ten damn years

He said,
You know what? You're right.

He picked up his mug and sipped.