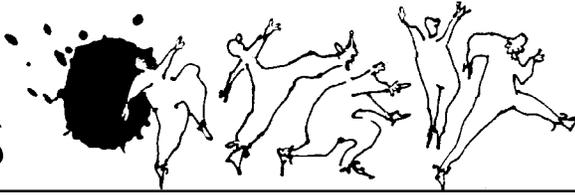


Deanotations



Issue 92

October 1999

Dear Reader,

Have I got a deal for you! Order any of my books from me, and I will send you, at no additional cost, promo for my other books! Books available include: *Poems for Adults and Other Children* (poems about kids), \$7.85; *I Swear He Was Laughing* (poems about dogs), \$10.85; *No Cats Have Been Maimed or Mutilated During the Making of This Book*, \$10.85; and the funniest book this one guy who got it ever read (honest!), *Please, Lord, Make Me a Famous Poet or at Least Less Fat* (poets and poetry), \$22.45. All prices include postage and handling. The last three titles are also available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble online and can be ordered from most bookstores. View sample poems from each at www.blehert.com.

WWW means a hall of mirrors: It will double you, double you, double you — you'll become a weird wide dweeb. It's like any media: If you fill up with it, you'll begin to see yourself in it. One day, you'll be tired of listening to your spouse and will catch your hand reaching for a non-existent mouse in order to click his/her window shut. But it's the quickest way I know to share misinformation. Double your pleasure, Double your cash, With Doubleyou, Doubleyou, Doubleyou ...CRASH! But if you order my books over the web, I take it all back. I'll have myself neutered so that I am neither male nor female, but in between (emale). I'll even start wearing an "I Like Icon" button.

[For the age-challenged, Eisenhower boosters sported "I Like Ike" buttons. Ike won, saving us the embarrassment of having to have had a president named Adlai (pronounced "Ad lie") — a gadfly?]

Bud I tigress: Internet — where humans become data dinosaurs. When we've been eliminated as the slowest part of the operation (mere ghosts wafting thru the hall of mirrors), our computers will remember us as awkward monsters with small brains.

The goal is to eliminate us: Less and less of us needed for traffic to occur. Unable to face each other (being faceless), we make bodies face bodies via biological complexities. Then, after we've given our bodies mega-hurts, even they are too much for us to confront (they can SEE us!), so we lose face, retreat to written words, but paper has been tainted by tears and sweat, so we retreat further to electronic blips, virtual words, virtual identities, a mask worn by a mask, one more step toward all mask and no one beneath the mask. We've even encoded our smiles :-) for the aeons when our pixel-ated laughter will go on without us.

There should be a Zen site for meditating on "What was my face before I went online?" Have we begun to flicker yet? yet? yet? yet?...

*Virtually Yours,
Pete Dean to: [Signature]*

Autumn — the crackling of little bones in the chiropractor's office.

Grass trimmed so short the wind, caressing it, gets scratched.

Light rain freckles the sidewalk.

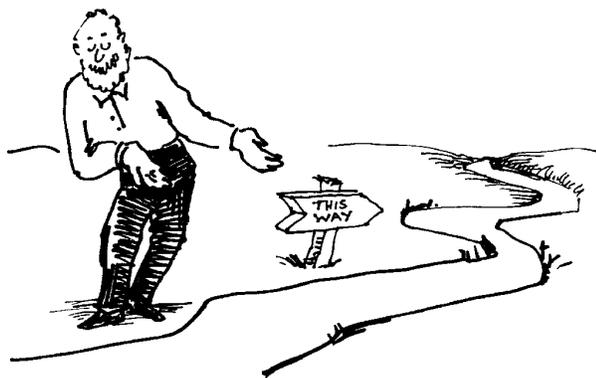
October, and the sky is high on birds —
They take all day to pass from rim to rim;
I too an emptiness — filled up with words,
Endlessly empty, always filled to the brim.

Tonight we teach our children how to pacify ghosts with pieces of candy. When I was little, I saw Mom take little red and green tablets from her purse. I thought they were candy — cherry, mint — and said PLEASE. She said no, they were her pills and didn't taste good. They didn't do much for her. She died. I don't think they'd work on ghosts either. Tonight, in theory, I could ask her.



6 A.M. — the dreams begin to get interesting, snatching and subsuming half-waking thoughts. It's rating sweeps time, as day competes with night for my viewing pleasure. Body, old lump, favors sleep and produces hectic spectaculars and reruns of old favorites — hey! there's my first lover! — but CLICK! and here's my wife, red-eyed and thick-featured with waking, telling me to get up NOW, then the cat, next to my head, does a demanding number, accompanied by a chorus of suddenly unsuppressed bladder tingling — it's so REAL, man, it's an EXPERIENCE, MUST-viewing, it's got me now, I'm hooked...

Our dreams are good shows — all about who we are and what we can do — but the static gives us headaches. Where we're living, we get much better reception on the "reality" channel: lots of news, followed by reruns of sit-coms. A neighbor mounted an antenna (you get it at the dreamstore, only by prescription) that brought in dreams real vivid, but oddly distorted, plus he could no longer tune in reality (it filled the screen with snow) nor remove the antenna. Cable has arrived, worlds relayed by satellites, hundreds of worlds but none of them ours. Maybe if we moved to high ground and stopped depending on this solid state biological hardware designed by the makers of reality...



It's a mistake to give one's poetry to the world. The world gobbles up poetry and excretes prose; then the poet, nibbling that poeticized world for inspiration, eats excrement. I put my poetry in the world only to serve as an exit sign.

When I have to move my things and become aware of how much and how little and how shabby I have, I wonder at fear of death.

Almost worse than losing everything: I go through boxes, boxes and find what I'm SURE I packed gone.

A dusty, curtain-peeping childhood sunbeam, like a flashlight in memory's attic, catches the curved shoulder of a long-lost blond dresser, the shouts of kids who don't have to take naps and dreams dissipated in detailed wrinkles of sleepless blankets.

When I began listening to others, I began to hear myself.

Autumn — heaviness around me dries, crumbles, and my heart, beating through it, crisps it to a fine powder, which blows away, leaving a vastness in the air, a whole sky between me and you, room for all the things that aren't me to fall away.

Just when you're on your own and can eat unkosher, you find out bacon is unhealthy.

THIS . . . is your life on paper. Any questions?

"Just leave me alone!" Gladly — if you'll remove yourself from my head.

A Piercing Message

[from a kid with purple hair and black lipstick]

Wordlessly I pervade dark streets, trying to be known. It gives me a headache. I would say "Hello" with my mouth, but I've been punished for that too often. I will have messages for you needled and inked into my skin and sculpted into my hair, but please don't expect to understand them — that might be dangerous for all of us. Now I am gaudy with messages, and the world spins past me, round and round you go (can you hear my mad tinny music?), none of you understanding me, the God of your spinning, but if you want to slow down and join me at the still center of the world where you can touch me and know me, then reach out, as you pass, for the gold ring dangling from my nose.

Why Sensitivity Training is Needed for Gays

Pity the hetero among gays, the object of three sexual attitudes, all awkward: Gays may feel attracted — uncomfortable, since they offer an admiration one can't return; they may suppress attraction — uncomfortable because one seems to be causing them discomfort; or they may be utterly uninterested, which (given their leanings) is (oddly) insulting.

The dodo at last refused to do whatever it is that dodos did do or do do, which, for the dodo, was a matter of do do or did die. Now the morning dew finds of the dodo (dead as Dido) only petrified dodo doodoo. Moral: Keep singing do be do be do!



The riddle of life — mysterious? Profound? Or banal, but classified top secret by some bureaucrat?

The worst penance: Last in a procession of flatulents. [i.e., *flagellants*]

Haicaramba!

Praise for haiku: haikudos.
Mexican-insect-themed haiku: Haikucarracha!
Beat-Zen-inspired haiku: haicool, man.
Wedding haiku: Hitch-haiku.
Eccentric haikuists: Haikooks.
Romantic haiku: Haicooing.
Admiration-of-children haiku: Knee-haicooing.
Horny haiku: Haikoooh-lala!
Suicidal haiku: Haikoolade.
Haiku that overthrow you subtly: Haicoup-d'etat.
Haiku dead at the roadside: Haicoons.
Uncooperative Russian haiku: Haikulaks.
Haiku infestation: Haicoties.
Grateful haiku: Haiku-very-much.
Haiku for greeting Iranian leaders: Haikhoumeni.
Sharp insight in haiku: Haicumen.
Collected haiku: Haicumulation.
Coleridge's haiku: HaiKubla Khan.
Religious tolerance in haiku: Haicumenicalism.
Haiku version of "Hai Noon": HaiCooper.
When Dad has Satori while Mom writes the haiku:
Haicouvade.
Obscene haiku: Haicooze.
South Pacific haiku: Bali Haiku.
Camp-counselor haiku: Haicumbayuh my Lord.
Sadam's patient haiku: Haikuwait.
Racist haiku: Haikukluxklan.
What comes after elementary ku: Junior Haiku.
Ability to understand haiku: HaiQ.
Too-clever haiku: Haicute.

Must we despair when we fail to live up to our ideals? Do they need our living up to them to be real? Unrealized, they cast us into deepest shadow. And yet, both these ideals and what we call ourselves are our own creations: The light in which our ideals loom over us is our own.



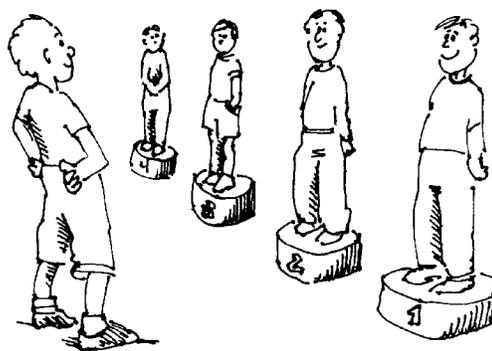
"Comparisons are odious." No, comparisons are MORE odious.

After ravaging the trees, autumn wind sighs and turns over a new leaf.

From here, it's downhill all the way — unless you go the other way.

Newspaper photo — three men walking more or less toward the camera in the suits of our period. Not clear why we must be shown these three men (government lawyers investigating the president) walking. In a hundred years, a last yellowed copy of this photo in a scrapbook will speak only of billowy baggy pants legs, (as if they do not walk, but are in full sail) each with its elaborate ladder of creases descending from groin to knee beneath vast expanses of white shirt.

It's not hard to tell the truth: Be it and talk.



My Best Friend

I've grown up; I know this one and that one. When I was a child, I was a connoisseur of acquaintanceship; everyone had to be defined: "My friend," "my best friend," "my second-best friend," "one of my best friends," "my best friend's second-best friend," "That jerk!" "He's not my friend, but he can come in the yard, but not the tree house" "my worst enemy," "my second-worst enemy's best friend."

Those must have been dangerous times. Childhood is tribal: We are the people. You, a stranger, are the enemy and must die. You are my friend. You may come in, unless I am playing with my very best friend, though if you're very good, I'll share him with you just for today... and if he seems to like you too much, my world will be shattered.

How odd that these ideas from childhood sound far more like the adult talk of women than of men. Women still have best friends and careful sharing of friends, rarer among men. Women must feel in greater danger than men of losing their personal importance at any moment.

I will start ignoring those who ignore me as soon as I have the list memorized.

My First Alcoholic (1966)

I didn't know about alcoholics, didn't grow up with them, had the idea they were drunks, luses saying "sh" for "ss", staggering, hiccupping, stammering, being happy singing Irish or sullen muttering Polish like the radio drunks, but more so, certainly no one you can talk to, no one anyone you know would hang out with; so when I met one, I didn't know it, didn't know how



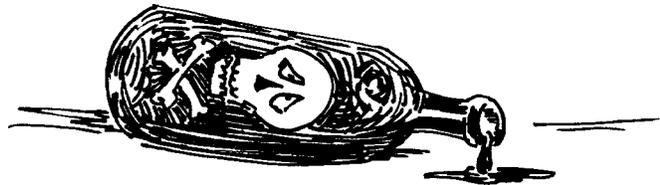
alcoholics adapt to drunkenness, can resist it, look almost sober, just slow, deliberate, a little too intimate, leaning closer than is comfortable, being a bit ruthless with my attention (gripping it in a clammy fist, not hard, but too long, like his handshake), but with a surface politeness that precludes protest or interruption, telling me how I feel ("Right? Right!") with a slablike certainty that would preclude disagreement if it were possible to disagree before one subject vanishes (and never existed), and another thrusts into view,

and besides, I don't want to disappoint him — he seems so pleased with me, just me and him knowing how it is, you know, and I DO know because I'm hip like him (he says) —

but it's slippery, because now he's scolding me, "Man, you don't know shit", scolding me for an opinion he himself just ascribed to me — he even praised me for it!

This guy is, well, eccentric, I guess amusing, a real "experience", but it feels like the taste in my mouth of meat gone bad when I've eaten most of it without noticing —

and then someone puts on Motown music ("It's Awright, It's awright...") and he's dancing (but not reeling) by himself, real slow, eyes closed, almost standing still, and later my friend says "He's a real trip, huh?" "Is he always like that?" "Yeah, he drinks a bottle of whisky every morning". "He's drunk?" "Drunk Hell! He's alcoholic. You couldn't tell?"



I guess it means he doesn't just DRINK the stuff; he's BECOMING it, brain cell by dissolving brain cell — not drunk at all, but you could GET drunk just by being in the same room with him, yeah, that's what an alcoholic is: He's that stuff that's supposed to be velvety smooth, aged in wood, mellow, rich, manly and all that shit, and you tell yourself these things to forget it tastes like test-tube chemicals and gives you heartburn and someone already mistook your ice-twinkly fluted glass for an ashtray.

Not that the stars are far away, but that our heads are so close to our asses.

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