

# **Introduction to an Interior**

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Drink this

he said as he thrust honey, whisky  
and lemon juice, spilling down the mug  
like a too-strong tide towards  
the phlegmatic kid. He took  
the wet glass from a chapped hand  
and drank the strong concoction, a grimace  
when the liquor hit.

You'll learn to love it spoke the coarse voice,  
a piece of sandpaper  
smooth on the other side.

The kid put the cup down, unable to finish.

The dad picked it up  
and swigged down the remains,  
chewing on small pieces of pulp  
that break like balloons.

You'll also learn not to waste, spake the rough voice  
bending down to kiss with dried lips  
the feverish forehead. Taking out four Tylenol  
he gave one and kept three; they swallowed together.

You're not sick said the young son.

As he poured himself a whisky with no  
honey or lemon, he replied  
That's because of the medicine.

For Hannah and Andrew

The poet  
is a lonesome animal  
eating its own shit  
in an attempt to taste  
personal brilliance.

I'll tickle his catastrophe, believe you me

When he plummets down the canyon  
on the bottle, clapping his  
head against each clay rock, breaking  
each bone on jutting roots of memories  
(my face a blur due to bourbon)  
I'll be at the bottom to brush  
a feather along each wound and whisper  
the joke of his life in his ear.

Pick him up with wiggling fingers against  
a broken rib I will  
while telling the drunken stumbler that  
the fall was his fault. Never hop along  
a degree-steep trail, rubble  
won't allow for jolly jaunting,  
the rocks are serious.

Then I'll carry him up the slope he fell down,  
a hand gnawing a bleeding knee  
and when we get to the top he'll ask for  
a swig to celebrate. I'll grab his feet, tickle  
his cracked toes – he'll briefly understand  
his waxing time-wasting which will  
soon be forgotten, an opposite elephant -  
then let him go to tumble foot-over-head  
back down to the dust covered bottom.

## Porch Sitting

A black glass smashes against  
an off-white railing, red wine  
within splashing to mix with blood  
from the hand that initiated chaos.

But this all happened inside  
a mind, the man sitting still  
with a full cup, questioning

Is existence in thought or action?

as a passerby strolls in front of  
his porch. Not thinking he throws  
the mug towards the man's head  
to have it shatter, blood combining  
with wine on the sidewalk.

Empty handed he sits back in  
his wicker chair, lips stained red  
and dry mouthed as he listens to wails  
of an injured, and understands  
action is not satisfaction,  
returning to the safe and excited inside  
where he still had a cup filled.

[I hope the writer of my life is kinder than I]

I hope the writer of my life is kinder than I  
for I'll have a man walk along a wood-slatted fence,  
the sun hung just above, too bright to turn  
his head to the left as he squints an eye, peach  
in hand just bought from the grocer, moving  
closer to the end of the gum-spotted sidewalk where  
the fence stops  
to randomly have a man jacketed in leather and head of a bull  
lurch and gore this character, the peach with too much fuzz  
rolling down the road and run over  
by a bald tire with ease, the pit cracking open  
as thin blood streams down to meet the broken peach -  
I hope the writer of my life is kinder than I.

## Tar, Baby

From the mouth of the man that muttered “nigger”  
I am plucked and flicked, a little  
life still left within, while  
the dim blue dry colored sky deliquesces  
into its wet blue self above. The sun  
irradiates at my back causing my butt to scorch  
and I sink to the ground.

Trapped in his glove box, amongst the naked lady  
playing cards, a knife with grime from beneath  
fingernails still stuck to the blade, one used  
rubber and bubble gum wrappers, I existed  
in a crushed soft pack, only moving  
to the grease stained shirt pocket to  
become all too close to the heart  
that beat tar rather than blood.

But now, this man with the denim jacket  
and flask in his back pocket lumbers  
away, relieving me of the filth of his  
truck and soul. The stuck flake of his squalid  
white lip skin brushes off onto the  
coruscating concrete; now I am clean.

And I soak in life’s pulchritude of the melting skies  
and the purity of this new crisp  
air as the last thing I shall see hovers over--  
the black sole of an altruist  
coming to benevolently stomp me out.

And all think that it was I who  
stained that man’s lips.

## A Word on Romanticism

Fingers like moles  
plowed through a pocket  
sniffing for the wrinkled paper buried  
deep as she paced closer,  
an Ideal in his blind-mole eyes.

The scribbled bit came to light  
as she walked by, sick with perfume,  
eyes blacked by glasses.  
He inhaled and smiled, turned and exclaimed:

“O! bright blonde sun-glassed sun burst,  
a simple eclipse was wished to glimpse you.  
Instead I’ve let my eyes burn.”

She slowly turned, blonde hair falling  
over her shoulder like dune sand as  
she lowered her glasses to reveal  
only sockets, his mouth falling  
slower than the paper floating towards dirt.



## Marriage

A bread-winning bowl sixth fifths full  
of meat-thick chili, bits of  
corn and bean intermingling with  
a strong tomato sauce should be  
matched with, supported by  
a quaint dainty bag of mild cheddar cheese,  
melting on top so to be twisted  
in with the chili, soon becoming ooze  
inseparable from the previous ingredients;  
the perfect mix for a salivating mouth...  
and let's not leave out  
a sour cream threesome every now and then.

Hamartia, Hamartia, Hamartia

The football flies from Peter's hand and spirals out of control towards her, unsuspecting, as she strides, smile wide, through sliding glass doors, flattening her perfect nose on contact.

From happiness to misery goes she that was just asked by the best jock to the dance of her century. Declining her previous 'yes' to plain Charley she's now hideous – her hubris to blame.

As Marcia complains about her pain, Jan grins in the background, unasked to dance but unaware now. Her lips subtly proclaim "Hamartia, Hamartia, Hamartia," a much more pleasant mantra now that Marcia is no longer on top.

There are two types of people in *this* world

There are the ones who peel  
bananas and those that don't –  
yet let's not forget those that suck  
the toes of their brother  
and the few that slap salmon  
with sandy hands, grit against scales,  
red as their insides;  
the ones that dig beds  
in dirt, carving out a makeshift  
womb to sleep in, grit between  
finger and nail, and the people  
that breathe in burnt plastic, the oxygen  
surrounding a toxin;  
the scavenger who picks  
leaves off trees to sew into skin, a  
camouflage fetish, and the featherless  
winged ones, nubs protruding from the back  
like plucked chicken wings, flapping  
away in vain, and these two (or few)  
inhabit *this* world.

## We Will All Be Winners

You're feet move faster than mine, Death  
and that's the worst thing about  
You. the fact  
is You will catch me, cast me from the  
earth like a mediocre metaphor, passing  
me and not  
acknowledge my name,  
tossed as the rest of you dead were  
towards

no one knows  
when either, for  
You may come  
before this poem's

end.

red then blue lights race  
towards another of  
Your innumerable  
victims that, as marathon runners we are,  
reached the finish line first  
only I'm glad this time  
I am not the winner.

[I carry my past, an empty can]

I carry my past, an empty can,  
juice dripped down the side now dried,  
filling slowly again with black  
beans of memories needing  
to be eaten.

Instead I throw them on fire  
and watch as they dry then burn,  
and the more the can fills the more  
I pour, the teasing protein more  
useful as entertainment as beans  
wither on embers.

I am become a name

Soon you will be reduced to a tombstone  
the living continually sauntering overhead  
while you lie boxed and alone

breath-filled beings read your name, grass grown  
green over grey cement, covering a name dead  
when you are reduced to that tombstone

thuds from feet dancing penetrate your bones  
soaked through from rain, not tears shed  
as you lie boxed and alone

given to Nature, a present from the unknown  
to nourish worms, a sacrificial bread  
when, soon, you're reduced to a tombstone

afterlife lies will quickly be shown  
to the truth-bearer now empty as a pig bled  
while you lie boxed and alone

And the only comfort shall be Earth's drone  
from soil surrounding deep brown and red  
when soon you are reduced to a tombstone  
lying forever boxed and alone.

My silhouette runs  
through a meadow; vast, open.  
But I stay in place.

It's cold on the tongue,  
the individual flake;  
existence, melted.



In the fog, distant  
I see it, standing quiet;  
the ghost that is me.

Seventeen Syllables on The Sip

I should swallow ; now.  
Do you need to process yet?  
Laugh! My throat is dry.

## If Life were a Lost and Found

### I

With drunken eyes and dirt stained jeans  
he weaves back and forth towards  
the foreman's office. Squinting out  
the brightness he lumbers, opens up the  
door in search of the box within  
the wood-paneled trailer.

'Here I lost yesterday  
my job,' says the whiskey words.  
The counter man scowls and rummages  
through the lost and found, pulls out  
a filled hand to question, 'This the one?'  
The blurry eyes recognize it so.  
'That's the one,' with a burp  
and it's back to work.

### II

With red swelled eyes and coffee stains  
he mindlessly reenters the ER.  
White all around neutralizes any fear  
as he approaches the head behind the front  
desk, every appendage crossed twice.  
'I lost my wife here yesterday, wondered  
if anyone found her,' he asks.  
The clerk goes below the counter, pulls  
out an almost empty box to reveal  
a possible fit. 'This the one?'  
'That's not the one,' the still-swelled eyes  
say, retracing his steps from the previous  
day to find the one *he* lost.

[I am my shadow's soul]

I am my shadow's soul,  
a manipulator turning  
arms into sewing needles  
with a simple twist of  
straight fingers into circles,  
or beheading the silhouette  
by covering my scalp with a jacket.

I am a shadow of my soul,  
a manipulation as unaware  
as the black blank block  
that (if I pay attention to) I  
transform into a deformity.

Don't deform me soul  
as I have my shadow.

## Routine

### I

I awake to find fingers punching  
mechanical numbers, numbers  
vanish from a blued screen, a  
face more familiar than a mother  
thanks me and sends me back to sleep

### II

The vacant page becomes  
a drive driven so many  
times there's looking  
around until I've reached my

end.

III

the couch sunken from constant sitting  
lets springs touch porch floor, a cigarette  
is found in hand, the ash half longer  
than the unsmoked rest and its time  
to sleep open eyed again

IV

my routine has become as blank  
and nondescriptive  
as I have described it.

## 30 Hour Famine

Time to build the shanty town!  
sounded in the hall of fellowship  
filled with gum, juice and a slew  
of vaguely hungry verminous kids  
with lanyards hung around their necks  
holding pictures too weak to smile.

Now don't forget who you are, said  
the counselor, a thick finger tapping  
on the sternum where images  
of sharp cheek bones laid. You're  
hungry and living  
in cardboard, a third world

to children who would soon return  
to swimming pools, Tomb Raider  
and open a refrigerator full to find  
gallons of two percent half drunk  
in front of expired mayonnaise, chicken  
salad bought a week previous  
before a plastic container of slimed spinach  
while lanyard eyes gazed in dream disbelief.

## Reigning Over the Parade

He's ready. The neighbor girl  
nodded and the parade of the boy  
dressed in drag began.

Through the bedroom door we marched:  
Sister the Creator, the neighbor or  
lackey and me the queen.  
In the hall with mirrored walls I glimpsed my  
self, caught sight of the white pearl  
clip-ons and sibling's red dress draped  
over broad growing shoulders: the reflection  
smiled.

A prince turned pageant princess  
I followed my dressers, my leaders  
into the living room where the grown-ups  
played. They looked past the wide smile  
and hand held high, just to see a boy  
in girl's attire. A point of the finger  
from the father towards the room where  
the transformation took place meant one  
thing: go back to being a Man.

I imagined retreating into the room  
of conversion and disrobing, letting drop  
the gown bestowed by the Creator,  
and wiped the thought away  
like excrement from an infant.  
Dad's lap tightened as I leapt on,  
eyes emptied as he looked into mine, and  
I kissed him on the cheek, smiling  
my lipsticked smile while watching his  
right fist raise.



## Cheese Bread and the Dead

The ticking toaster went *ding* to express  
it was just the way I liked, cheese  
melted on dried bread shining with greasy delight.  
This *ding* also sounded the alarm for the seatbelt  
sign as the plane dove nose first into the high-rise.

By the time I had smashed the crumbling pieces  
together, thrown day old french fries on the dish  
and sat down in front of the Big Picture,  
pandemonium had been distributed outside.  
With the TV on mute to evade the sly words of FOX  
blaring mute mouths opened, as did mine to ingest  
the rest of the meal, each crunch of  
my teeth through crisp wheat another angle  
of carnage on screen. Feet propped up on cushioned stool,  
plate plopped on lap, a ketchup drop fell  
from a fry en route to mouth—another flung  
from the South tower—the tomato paste slapping  
against the cold white platter.

Quite full of wheat cheese and media, I flipped  
the channel button down until I found  
*Aaahh!!! Real Monsters*,  
a burp—satisfaction—before a nap.

## Xanaxdu

Come to the pill-induced paradise, where all disorder shall be forgotten in an hour, the troubles devoured by the chemical-secreting, energy-depleting substance that does more than manna. From the laboratory to your dormitory, lavatory cabinet or cabin in some silent wood, rapture will encapsulate your anxious basement of a head with one small capsule. No longer will you need to retreat from the bed. Lay all day in the thoughtlessness you've dreamt of; that dream that knows it's not a dream. Exchange clay-covered coveralls for a warm onesie with feet and cotton, softer than a baby's tear; soak in the desire to crave nothing. The only catch is there is no catch unless you strive to accomplish the semi-possibilities of conversation or contemplation, and who are you? So drown false hope in water and the tablet and kiss those pesky wishes goodbye, and say hello to paralytic paradise.