



*Valentine's 2018*

*By Paul Wyatt*

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*corporatism sucks, but modifying a corporate logo to abide by  
fair use laws and use as a cover for a Valentine's Day chapbook  
in an attempt to make a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the  
commodification of love is pretty cool, I guess.*

Dedicated to:

Mum, McDonald's and the friends who  
read my poems and tell me which ones  
aren't shitty.

I need to stop writing  
About you.

I know you know  
That I know  
How things are,

But that won't stop me  
From staring for so long,  
Hoping you're so sloshed  
You won't see  
(  
Even if you did,  
I doubt you'd mind).

I know you know  
When a poem is about you;  
(Your eyes gift a peek  
Past your persona.)  
And I'll play it off  
As if it were about someone  
You didn't know.

Maybe you don't know, though.  
Maybe you just inspire good poetry.

Someone  
(I think a former first lady)  
Said something like  
Shit art makes you feel nothing  
While good art reminds you of  
Things you've felt and been.  
Great art, though, evokes  
Emotions you've never seen.

If that's true,  
She  
(Not the former first lady  
But the woman who inspired this,  
Who'll be referred to as She  
To preserve her integrity  
And this poem's relevance in posterity)  
Lives as high art.

Until tonight,  
I'd never known the  
Joy and amazement  
I found  
In her willingness to  
'Cooch'  
Contraband during  
Contacts with cops.

Next time we drive  
I'll bring my bong,  
Blow by a speed trap  
And make her put  
Her money where  
Her Cooch is at.

I'm not sure this form, Tom Wyatt's Sonnet,  
Is appropriate to convey the proper tone  
Of the sentiments I'm trying to make known -  
Not that I could ever know the phonics  
To make this more than histrionics -  
But I haven't yet been thrown  
From this situation I can't bemoan -  
One that is refreshingly exotic.  
I sometimes think her being here tonight  
Is just a step in some diabolical plan -  
I know just how easily she can  
Have me wrapped around her finger, tight.

They say the way to a man's heart is a meal  
or through the chest,  
She can cook, I know, but maybe  
I should also wear a vest.

She was helping me sort  
My shite from aight poems  
As she passed one for the aight pile  
With a glimmer in her passing glare  
And maybe a palm-muted giggle.

It was a poem about her,  
About nights like this night.

Nights of sexual tension  
And stupid videos  
And getting sloshed on vodka  
Despite her plan to leave two or three drinks  
ago.

Inevitably she will head home  
And I'll take that shit  
I've been holding ten hours now  
And check to see if she ate all the Chinese  
take-out.

Cruising in my convertible -  
Which was cool  
Before worn brakes and leaking exhaust  
Cried out  
Like a cacophony of cats  
Crying in heat -  
I'm deafened by acceleration as  
The October wind whips  
And bites my bald head  
And bare hands -  
And for barely an instant  
I felt perfection.

Radio not working,  
I listened to the roar  
Of my hopty -  
The wind's bite was sharp,  
But not sharp enough to shiver -  
I don't remember what I was thinking,  
Nothing? Maybe another memory  
Of some other seconds of satisfaction.

Maybe it was that night  
She was adding Fanta to the Manhattan  
I'd made her myself -  
Saying, 'it's not bad!  
It's just strong!'  
As she's

Standing in my kitchen -  
Wearing a jean jacket  
Made elegant with her mother's  
High school embroidery  
I tried to tell her  
That this was one of those times -  
Praying she'd share  
One of life's perfect moments -  
But I was too drunk  
To explain,

And  
She was too drunk  
To understand.

Bukowski said  
Writing poetry should  
Never be forced,  
But should explode  
From your chest.

Write when you realize  
That keeping your  
Voice within your head  
Leaves you exploding -  
Fearful you'll forget  
And let the most lovely linguistic twist  
Or profound point on whatever  
Melt from memory.

Hedberg said,  
Sometimes you'll have an idea, Realizing it's good shit

At the same time realizing Your pen

Was your idea really that good?  
Nah,

Just convince yourself  
That if it matters,  
You'll remember it,  
Before moving on with the day.

Maybe Lester had the right idea.  
Life is beautiful,  
It's overwhelmingly beautiful,  
Sometimes to the point  
Where you fear you might burst,

But in those moments,  
Just relax, and let the beauty  
And profundity  
And good shit  
Flow through you.

No one can own  
Those perfect not-too-cool fall breezes,  
You can't capture  
The stars for that perfect person  
Sitting,  
Star-gazing in your arms.

Artists outline the shadow of beauty,

Poets, alchemists of art,  
Transmute beauty  
Into symbols and similes.

In art and poetry,  
Sometimes,  
We may glimpse  
Something that can't be framed.

Admittedly, I don't know much about art, but  
Poetry is hard,

It has to explode from you,  
It best be fresh,

Let the poetry explode from your chest,  
Write of the nipping autumn breeze

And how it reminds you  
Of whatever,

Write of the stars being brighter

In the eyes of your perfect lover

Than any in any cloudless sky.

But don't forget to experience,  
To enjoy, to learn, The Beauty of Reality.

You can write about it later.

Capturing the intangibles  
Of her beauty  
Is a lot harder  
Without whiskey,  
But it's too early  
To drink  
And unlike her  
Grace and  
Smile and  
Eyes,  
My poetry  
Isn't perfect.

Somewhere between  
Caffeinated couplets  
And  
Liquored-up lines,  
I can't get her off  
My mind

These bitches  
Are faker  
Than the drugs  
I'm trying  
To sell them.

Sushi for dinner,  
Cocaine for dessert.

What a way  
To start  
Oktoberfest

I just toked,  
But I'll admit  
I was stoked  
To watch the wild  
Ways these guys  
Get high. I can't really say  
Why I liked seeing it.

That's not my thing, though.

Tonight I learned:  
The best way to abuse  
Suboxone  
Starts with slicing  
The strip into  
Eight small squares;  
Turn the sink  
To a light stream  
Of slightly warmer than lukewarm  
Water;  
Place your square in the spoon,  
Swirl with a toothpick  
Until dissolved;  
Tilt your head back as far as it goes  
And dump that shit down your nose.

She's writing poetry!

Tonight I learned:  
That she was just as stoked  
Watching dedicated drug abuse  
As I,  
Also adamant about  
Sticking with her weed high;

And probably wondering why  
She liked seeing it.

Tonight I learned:  
She sees the tragic beauty  
In life and it's absurdity;  
She's noticing and cherishing  
The twenty-four characters  
Between A and Z;

The light bends weird  
In these mountains.

Thinking I see opposing headlights,  
Again and again,  
I think  
I'll drive with mine off for awhile.

Let's see how long I can enjoy  
The calm of 3 AM navy blue skies  
And rolling black coal hills.

Probably not too long.

These roads can be slippery,  
And I'd like to get home alive.

'Listening to Friday I'm in Love,  
Realizing yesterday was Friday  
And she spends Weekends  
With her boyfriend.

Friday, I may not have been in love,  
But  
I'll spare you the details  
Of Wednesday and Thursday!'

He said with a wink.

The tape deck keeps skipping  
During this classic love song  
As I drive way too fast  
Past lights I hope aren't cops.

It's a good birthday so far,  
But it's only 3am

The vodka is burning  
My chest  
And finishing this smoke makes  
For fashionable lateness.

I think I'm celebrating,  
Who knows anymore.

They can see  
On my sweating face  
That I drove drunk home,  
If I even went home,  
Last night.

It'll catch up to me  
Someday,  
But the only consequence  
Today  
Is a clammy handshake.

Homeward bound,  
With nose stuffy from blowing  
And craving this week's bath.

My jeans need washed,  
And my only bags  
Are under my eyes.

I hope I never get too old  
For this kind of shit.

It's 4:15  
and I just got her home;

With a .45 ACP in my pocket,  
My poetry in her purse  
And her friend sick in the back,

I drove as we lit menthols,  
Unable to tell the difference  
Between breath and smoke.

My face hurting  
From hours of smiling  
(From hours with her  
(From the drugs)),  
I spent the drive home  
Trying to describe tonight.

‘It makes sense’  
Is the best I could surmise.

It makes sense,  
Somewhat to my surprise,  
That I turned out alright.

The Stones said it: no satisfaction.  
Things have been swell, yet still it  
Don't matter what for, I still want more.  
The dark is nice, but the room's ill lit;

I miss sight, but just to be higher  
Would make this weeknight better.  
I still want more, don't matter what for.  
"Join me, drink up! Call me an abettor!"

But none will answer that drunken call,  
They have jobs and loves and cares -  
Don't matter what for, I still want more  
Risks, tomfoolery, foolhardy dares.

It's early now, and I'm still alone.  
Benzos, wine have taken hold.  
I still want more, don't matter what for,  
I'll forget soon, if I am so bold.

Today  
We sat down for lunch  
(Building a buzz at an Irish bar)  
With a window behind her  
And me across.  
At first I thought of moving  
To sit next to her - with the sun  
To the back of my head -  
But then, while my eyes  
Were adjusting from bar lighting  
To the sun's abrasion,  
I found her - again -  
With the light framing  
Her face (focused on  
Mine fighting to focus on hers)

I should visit  
An optometrist.

Mixing tonight's last cocktail  
Nude  
In the kitchen somewhere  
Around 3am on a Friday,

My mind racing,  
Me praying,  
'Please god,  
Don't let my roommate  
Wake up and walk out!'

As I crush ice in the blender.

I walk weird when I'm watched.

Leaving a little late,  
Walking the unlit walkway  
Away from her kitchen,  
Heading to my car,

I couldn't keep my stride.  
Not stumbling,  
Just some (likely unseen)  
Insecurity.

Sitting in my car,  
I see she was watching,  
Wishing I'd stay just  
A while later.

The thought of being a crook  
Has always had its appeal.  
Just imagine how it would feel  
To know each trick in the book,  
With nothing I'd overlook,  
Nothing I wouldn't conceal,  
A fate I will not let seal  
Until the day I'm overtook -

At which point I'll pay my debt  
Knowing I have lived a life  
Full of victory and strife,  
A life I wouldn't regret.

I realize it's all just a fantasy,  
But I just don't want a life that's not crazy.

I told her I knew her;  
I had her all figured out.  
She told me I was wrong,  
And that I thought too much.

And I do,  
And she was right,  
I don't know her,  
But I know her well enough  
To keep her on her toes -

As she does I -

I find myself in the midnight hours  
Following a day spent mostly with her  
Anxious and anticipating the next  
Chance for us to meet.

But today was a great day,  
And if I were never again to see  
The fire in her brown eyes,  
I'd be content with the memory.

I might not know her,  
But I know today we both enjoyed ourselves.  
I know we laughed and traded stories,  
And I know I want to do it all again -  
And I think she does too.

24 years old plus one day,  
I don't know how we let it happen,  
But I'm still okay.

I should have had my say  
When they mentioned weapons.  
I was 24 years plus one day.

I could not let them have their way,  
Half-stepped when there's no half-steppin',  
But I'm still OK.

They ran, they shot, we did not stay  
My fight or flight had set in  
On year 24 plus one day.

I'm hearing noises from every way,  
Needing to get back on the wagon,  
But I'm still pretty okay.

I survived and somehow got away,  
But I'm still crawling out of my skin.  
At 24 years plus one day,  
I need to know I'm ok.

You're not so vain  
That you'd know this  
Poem is about you,  
And - shit - that's a relief.

If and when you read -  
Or listen to me read -  
This poem,  
You won't know -  
Though you may suspect -  
If this was written for you  
Or one of the dozens  
Of other dames  
I've written to.

All I'll tell you is that  
Not only am I a  
Cunning linguist -  
I also eat pussy.