

WHAT ROUGH BEAST

POEMS ON TRUMP AND TRUMPISM



CULTURE

 **MATTERS**

What Rough Beast

Poems on Trump and Trumpism



Selected and edited by
Rip Bulkeley and
Merryn Williams

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Introduction

‘Do not follow a crowd in doing wrong’: we are currently witnessing the continued relevance of this blunt advice from the Book of Exodus. Like the poets in this anthology, the American electorate is fully aware of the character of Donald Trump, of his tendencies to ‘Subvert elections, bribe,coerce,/ Assassinate, invade’ (Peter Branson) and be a ‘Migrant-hater, Kamala-baiter,/ Wall-builder, liberal loather,’ (Rebecca Lowe).

Voters know he is ‘A liar, fraudster, racist, misogynist’ (Mike Jenkins) and ‘A braggart, bankrupt and a liar,/ Coronavirus-plague denier / Manipulator of the truth,/ A fantasist from early youth’ (Duncan Forbes).

American workers are also well placed to compare how much they were promised in 2016 with how much was actually delivered. Donald Trump’s campaigning skills are formidable, like Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s. But as with Johnson, the all-important question is how those skills have been or will be deployed.

The election is taking place in the context of the urgent global problems of climate change, inequalities of wealth, famine and war. Together, these factors are slowly driving humanity beyond inadequate international responses, towards trans- or eventually, post-national arrangements, and potentially a democratic world government enabled by near-instant remote sensing and telecommunications.

Although this has long been anticipated or condemned in science fiction, most people do not yet perceive it; but they begin to feel it, and to fear it. With good reason, because the widespread nationalist backlash against it, of which Trumpism is a part, can only make the process more violent and less likely to succeed, with catastrophic results for us all. Which is why it is so important ‘to destroy their destruction/ before it destroys us all,’ (Sam Friedman).

As the uneasy historical truce between Capital and the nation-state falls under increasing strain, Capital tries to improve its position by pushing for greater freedom of movement for labour. Hence for example the notion canvassed in the 1990s, that Russia might join NATO, which would inevitably have led to closer economic ties. Meanwhile, with ever more peripheral economies being recruited into the globalized world economy, they no longer provide enough extracted value, stolen by armed force, for metropolitan Capital to appease its exploited employees—‘those who feel left behind’ as

Alan Morrison writes.

The falling standard of living, aided by the lack of moral fibre in the mainstream media, predisposes working people to listen to bogus claims and promises from demagogues like Boris Johnson and Donald Trump. The 21st century has become an age of inhumane border barriers, erected by country after country from Austria to the United Kingdom (in Gibraltar) and the United States.

In 2022 **Culture Matters** published the anthology *A Fish Rots from the Head*, which mocked and repudiated the myopic pretensions and little-England perspective of Boris Johnson. Johnson is now little more than a bad smell in British public memory, but the prospect of a second presidential term for Donald Trump is a much, much greater threat to such scraps of peace and democracy as remain in our damaged world.

In this book poets and artists from eleven countries have joined in deploring and denouncing Trumpism, past, present and now threatening us all with its malign resurgence. Democracy and decency must be protected from ‘remote-controlled thugs who in one brief afternoon/ would storm the Capitol, overpower the police,/ & attempt to smash up American democracy/ as easily as crushing meringue’ (Alan Morrison).

All in all, 5 November 2024 will be a day for American voters to show their moral mettle, if ever there was one. As Alexandra Citron says, ‘It’s easy to forget. What’s important here/ is who the hell let him in the room. I mean/ it’s up to us, you know, to set this straight/ —fix this failed spliff of a man, this bad trip.’

Fred Voss is a metal machinist in California as well as a poet, and when the welder in Voss’s ‘Nero Nation’ says that ‘What we need is a President who cares’, he surely speaks not only for his class and his country, but for humanity as a whole.

Rip Bulkeley
Merryn Williams
October 2024

*For the walled-out, wandering victims of famine, war, rape, pillage and racism
across the world, thousands of whom have died while these words were being
written and images created.*



The Second Coming

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.*

*Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

William Butler Yeats

1919

Who We Are

Let us again assure you
The murder of your families
Is not who we are

For the avoidance of doubt
The torture of your neighbours
Is not who we are

And it goes without saying
The detention of your children
Is not who we are

So setting the record straight
Collective punishment
Is not who we are

As in serving a higher purpose
The desecration of your dead
Is not who we are

We trust this allays any fears
As to who we are
And the values we uphold

Paul Laughlin
Derry, Ireland

Trump-ton

Will you be
at the book burning?
No more
Maya Angelou, or
beardy weirdy Ginsberg
and Dylan — we're
coming for you ...
We'll melt CDs
and vinyl too —
no more
Grandmaster Flash.
My daddy was
a real Grandmaster ...
of the Klan.
We'll build
a Siegfried Line
for Mexicans
to hang their
washing on.
No more books!
We have
'Reality TV'.
Entertainment
for the masses ...
It's just like
the last days
of Rome,
with its gladiators.
Now that Nero
was a genuine

mother fucker...

*Des Mannay
Newport, Wales*

Civics Lesson for Moral Jurors

What is a cop?
Someone serving time 'til retirement,
well trained in lying
since gun-toting officers
stand at their backs.

And what is evidence?
Fingerprints, DNA and all that jazz
get collected, processed,
by time-serving liars, too,
and lab techs get ahead
by going along
with the liars in blue.

And who is that judge,
majestic before you?
An ambitious liar
in fancy garb
as she praises a Constitution
enacted by rich white men
who profited through
the slavery of 'others'
with dark maligned skin.

And the laws she asks you to empower
by convicting someone like me or like you?
They were passed in decades of Jim Crow,
voter suppression, Ku Klux lynchings,
when hired goons repressed workers' voices, women's thoughts,

and laws that lie to defend genocide,
call loving life and freedom
terrorism,
anti-Semitic,
at the bidding of the billionaires' own Congress

and the liars in the Oval Office.

And so, when these worthies
ask you to convict me

what will you do?

Sam Friedman
New Jersey, USA

Senza Pari

!Morte che avanza
Morte che bellamente danza
Morte coi suoi Rappresentanti

Morte nel Portone
Morte del comune
Morte col teschio
Morte in corpo

Morte senza Chiesa
Morte peregrina brutta
Stracciona distesa tra i Murales

Morte senza genere
Sosta senza cenere
Morte senza pari!

Erminia Passannanti
Salerno, Italy

Without Equals

Death approaching
Death dancing beautifully
Death with its Representatives

Death at the Gate
Death in the City Hall
Death with its Skull
Death in the Body

Death without Church
Death, ghastly Wanderer
Ragged Drifter sprawled amidst Murals

Death without Gender
Death without Ashes
Death without Equals

Oval Reflections

This wall has ears. Not Tricky Dick's recording system,
now hard-wired as permanent after fifty years;

nor the solitary nanobug overlooked by the USSS,
institutionally inhibited from its discovery;

nor yet the haughty triple-glazed windows
screened from shotgun mics by vibration scramblers.

But so much intensity, much of it criminal, has perfused
the fabric with shearing forces, sensed reciprocally

as pre-conscious cognition, mute but not surd,
not forming as sequenced words, more as tone.

White Tower and Witch House only endure because
iniquity was sluiced out of them generations ago.

Debilitated by the Ohio Gang, the first Oval Office
was half-destroyed even before the 1929 fire;

the second Oval, formed from stouter clay, may seem
to have weathered My Lai, Watergate, Iran-Contra,

Lewinsky, and impeachments, but an unseen malaise
will slowly tip the subsequence beneath the glide path.

More masonry disgust than fatigue, no structure
can bear astringent moral jangling indefinitely,

though whether corruption, *covfefe* climate denial,
coup or collaboration will snap the truss anchors

to collapse this volume of evil power into second
catastrophe, cannot be clearly foreseen. What does

feel certain is that its shoddy cuboid replacement
will serve only briefly. *Resolute* desk, Seymour clock,

all of it will be tsunamied off by an unmaking
history that no one will care to record.

Rip Bulkeley
Oxford, England

Capitol Hill Epiphany

with thanks to William Carlos Williams

The news from poems is not new, but despised
for its lack of newness, its blunt truthiness that calls

us to the greater Good.

My mother would declaim at the dinner table
that Good was great, but too many neglected

or swapped the moral choice for something shiny

telling untruths that made some feel
they weren't bad, but broken

by others. The corpse

flower opens its fetid bloom to lure
carrion eaters. It has a rotten stink,

not the moral odor of asphodel

welcoming bees to drink from it.
The corpse spathe attracts disciples

who open their mouths to the putrid

stench of rotting fish
for a night of feeding.

They will die from what is found there.

*Jamie O'Halloran
Connemara, Ireland*

Advisors

Listen for the whispers/ here come the ghosts
of the children / massacred in Gaza
With a similar silvery translucence / to Hiroshima skin
they join hands now / so many around the Pentagon
and they dance / four steps to the left
five steps to the right

A slow orbit theirs
four steps to the left / five to the right

Days all-encompassing grey / sad as the rain
slip by / The ghosts of Gaza mothers
and fathers / older brothers and sisters too
have come crouching to search / the pavements
of Brussels Rome / London Washington
their ghost heads turned aside / listening

Clouds reach to the ground / black roads unshined
wet legs busily / brush by the searching ghosts
Trouser cuffs get snagged / skirts briefly caught
as bent-over mothers / and fathers peer into
the mortar / between the paving slabs

And around the Pentagon / the ghost children's
slow dance / goes on
four steps to the left / five to the right

Sam Smith
Blaengarw, South Wales

My Banjo on My Knee

tune: 'Oh! Susanna'

For liberty and happiness,
Forever and a day.
Bless Elvis, Buddy, Janice, Bruce,
The good old U.S.A.

*Sing chicken, fries and apple pie
Like gran'ma used to bake,
With Top Cat, Tom 'n' Jerry,
Ice cream sundae, chocolate cake.*

Their super hero characters
In films and comic cuts,
No time for legal niceties,
No truck with ifs or buts.

chorus repeats throughout

Think Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull,
Chief Joseph and Cochise,
First Nation tribes they civilised
With bullets and disease.

Post slavery, there's old Jim Crow,
The white man still the boss,
The Klan decide where justice lies
With noose and fiery cross.

Folk heroes of the wild frontier,
McCarthy as their guide,
Stray way beyond the bounds of law,
James Monroe by their side.

Around the globe, the American way,
Whatever it may take,

Subvert elections, bribe, coerce,
Assassinate, invade.

From Yalta to the present tense,
That same old tired refrain,
Though God is marching by their side,
The times they haven't changed!

For Disneyland and Donald Trump,
Black ops, the CIA,
Blood orange isolation suits,
Cry Hi Ho Silver Away!

*Sing chicken, fries and apple pie
Like gran'ma used to bake,
With Top Cat, Tom 'n' Jerry,
Ice cream sundae, chocolate cake!*

*Peter Branson
Stoke-on-Trent
England*

What is a ruler but a target for wrath?

I remember the joys
when crowds deposed rulers
in Argentina some twenty years ago,
in Tunis and Cairo in 2011,
and Ukraine some three years on,
more recently in Algeria, Sudan and Puerto Rico.
What parties! What glee!
And what savage let-downs
when the taskmasters of business
and the clocks of working time
still ruled.
And though I muse on our many defeats after victories,
I yet lust for crowds to oust
the Trumps, Orbans, Modis, Macrons, Putins,
and on and on and on,
and relish the chance to try to change the ending,
the savage letdown,

to destroy their destruction
before it destroys us all.

Sam Friedman
New Jersey, USA



Beneath a Watch Tower

John Geoffrey Walker

A Wall

*'And the wall keeps out the enemy
And we build the wall to keep us free.'*

A wond'rous vision of a wall—
One that is totally impervious
Like the visage of Ozymandias.
A wall no light can pierce,
Topped all along with gleaming razor-wire,
Stretching East to West
Through plain, desert, forest.
One with no ears
To hear the cries and shouts
Of scrambling refugees,
With no eyes save
The cross-hairs on watchtowers.
A grey, uniform wall
Offering no answers.

*Mike Jenkins
Merthyr Tydfil
Wales*

An Address to Beelzebub

after Robert Burns

I woke this morning, careworn, sick,
Dreams haunted by the rhetoric
Of a presidential speech (its schtick
 Bombast, hot air)
Delivered by a lunatic
 With ugly hair.

He says he'll make the country great,
Believes he's been ordained by fate
But how can he hope to heal when hate's
 Polluting
His words and those of his best mate,
 Vladimir Putin?

Some think he's Russia's puppet Prez,
Some cite conflicting interests
And deem his close alliances
 Depraved, necrotic.
But all of that's untrue, he says:
 He's patriotic.

Buy American only, he explains,
To boost the dollar's rate of exchange.
And yet the labels remain the same
 On the designer
Shirts and ties of his signature range:
 Made in China.

But this is the man who stacked up tall
A brickwork of promises—a wall—
And none of them mean bugger all:
 The guy's two-faced.
Plain facts do the job of this doggerel
 And state the case.

But facts are things for him to fritter,
Tear up, discard, flush down the shitter.
Political spin is blinged-up glitter
 While facts are nude.
Repeat a lie enough on Twitter,
 You'll make it true.

When even Facebook proves too broad
As canvas for the written word
Is the pen's resilience to the sword
 Now in retreat?
Is the only message that strikes a chord
 A lousy tweet?

A hundred-and-forty character limit's
Unconducive to the message within it
Yet those in a war of words seek to win it
 With an epithet
Worth less than a flyer the moment you bin it
 Or a deleted text.

So where to look for nuance and depth,
Objectivity and analysis?
Don't rely on the mainstream press
 To undermine
The elite. Uncrusading journalists
 Just toe the line.

Big business backs the candidate
Who's willing and able to fulminate
Against what the voter's told to hate
 By sloganeering,
Who promises to make things great
 And gets 'em cheering.

But the morning after's cold and grey
And regret's the order of the day
As promises get stowed away,
 Not made good on.
Small hands conduct the state of play:
 Hands there'll be blood on.

Beelzebub: for what it's worth:
The hours's not yours, though hope's in dearth
And anger lubricates the mirth
 Of this standard habbie—
To hell with you and your minions on earth.
 I'll drink to Rabbie!

Neil Fulwood
Nottingham, England

Drain the Swamp

Now white supremacists are doing Nazi-style salutes
To Donald Trump, *Sieg Heil*-ing in Washington DC
Quite openly for all to see on mobile phone footage—
Not blue collars or rust-belt rednecks but dapper
Men in sharp suits, Hugo Boss wardrobed businessmen—
Self-made plutocratic products of the globalization
Of capitalism that they promise to stamp out from
The nation on behalf of those who feel left behind,
Whom they left behind to fill up their carpet-bags
To spilling point, now they'll find a place for them,
The put-upon lumpenproletariat of the United States,
Simply by dumping on numberless of their own
Compatriots: immigrants, foreigners, homosexuals,
People of colour, Mexicans, Blacks, Moslems,
Native Americans, and in their place will come
New opportunities for blue collars and red necks
Of the dispossessed rust-belts and dustbowls who'll
Dust off the cobwebs of those pointy white hoods,
While the white supremacists rampantly promote
Their race of Aryan evangelicals in a bid
To '*make America great again*'—but what that means
Depends on how many memes make five and on what
Humpty Dumpty Trump says and whatever it means—
All America waits to see if he'll drain that swamp,
Build that wall, or make a mount out of a hill of beans...

Alan Morrison
Bognor Regis, England

Sure

It is the morning after Donald Trump was elected president of the United States and I
am at my machine and I grip my machine's handle
with my palm
the steel handle is still solid and hard
against my soft flesh
a racist hate-filled egomaniac dictatorial sexual predator swindler infant
elected to lead
310 million people
and I turn the handle to my machine and my machine table moves exactly
100 thousandths of an inch
I want to believe that a thousandth of an inch is still a thousandth of an inch
rivers flow downhill
a dinosaur bone
is 65 million years old he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword but
Donald Trump
will soon have his finger on the nuclear trigger and Nero fiddled
while Rome burned and I put on my leather gloves and grab
a 50-pound block of 4130 steel and drop it
into my vise bolted to my milling machine table and send the carbide
teeth of a shell mill
plowing through the raw steel
I want to believe when ice melts it still turns into water
Lady Macbeth
still can't wash those drops of blood off her hand
I want to believe Christ and Buddha
knew something
Beethoven's
moonlight sonata is still beautiful roses
still open train wheels
still can't roll without the hands of men like me
who make them
I plant my feet on this concrete machine shop floor
surely the mockingbird has not forgotten how to sing
surely a human being still knows

right from wrong surely
the sun still rises steel is still hard and men like Trump fall
in the end
sure as my hammerhead ringing out when I strike it
against steel
sure as Victor Hugo's statue
Nelson Mandela's heart
the cat sitting in the sun on your windowsill
the sweat on the back of every workingman on earth
and the stars still there shining
in the sky.

Frederick Voss
California, USA

Trumpet

So bashed from its last fall I can't remove
the mouthpiece. A mouthpiece I got from a man
on the demo when mine fell out on the Tube.

I don't need it back he said. We were 'Trumpets
Against Trump' and I had not been practising
so was all too easily able to get the discordant

eponymous noise the contingent was aiming for
long after some got fed up and started playing
actual music. I marched head high, proud

with my little clip-on lyre holding the notes
down Regent Street, where we were joined
by Drag Queens against Trump and Soho Radio Allstars.

By Trafalgar Square I was foot and mouth sore.
The sun shone and an orange baby floated above.

*Anna Robinson
London, England*



Trumpets Martin Gollan

Scenes From A Playground while Trump is President

Bat and ball on a bench,
father and son on a swing,
pumping past stares and judgment,
the dangers they face day by day,
now the father's muscled hands hold
the swing's chains, promises not to let go,
his son's joy is a shriek in the wind
on this jacket-less October morning.

The swing reaches an unsteady height,
and the boy believes he can touch
the sky's frontier, where everyone is safe
and boundless encased in a winter wary breeze.

The father tells his son to hold tight,
as if what we hold on to will protect
a father's promise, but a vow is not enough
as a veil of fear surrounds them.

Soon, they will be gone,
but the swing, taken by a ruthless wind, still sways.

Laurie Kuntz
Florida, USA

For the Rising

They came from Arizona to Merthyr
The two brothers
For our Rising festival
For Red Poets reading as ever,
Amazingly, one a Trump supporter
The other a leftie like ourselves.

For two years we met them
For a pint in *Spoons* after,
Two sides of the US of America
Brothers and comrades
We talked together
To make sense of how
A liar, fraudster, racist, misogynist
(We ran out of epithets!)
Could be elected President.

I don't know if these conversations
Or our *cerddi* mattered.
The Rising is no more
And I wonder if those brothers
Remain friends: one determined
To make America great again,
The other all for the workers.

Mike Jenkins
Merthyr Tydfil
Wales

Trumped

Sump on the blink, dumping
sewage over dirt, brown
on brown; we're submerged
in a mire of filth, big stink.

It pumps from your mouth,
your rump, scum that rises
fast and sticks, dirty tricks,
a load of shit you sell it—

fools' gold, chip off the old
cock sucker, mother fucker
where do you get off...
get off this earth before

you throw it. Tub thump,
rumpty tump, you blow
a fuse, a furious fart,
you tear the earth apart

and we suck it up, chumps,
your faithful chimps
trashing the House.
No quick fix.

Tamar Yoseloff
London, England

It Couldn't Be But It Is

They wait outside the school
some with their heads in their hands
others with raw eyes
there are shots
somewhere
surely it's the police
then more shots
why here
why our school
a teenager they said
that's the rumour
I hear a car radio
Trump promises NRA
no one will lay a finger on your firearms
the bulletin ends
an advert intervenes
Bills Autos
we're almost giving them away
another shot
somewhere
maybe somebody just dropped something heavy
then another
my knuckles are white
the yellow tape cordon blows in the wind
along with the tattered wind damaged flag
above us
the one just inside the school fence
another shot
our heads turn
along with the officers patrolling the tape
parents gasp
yelp
in disbelief
I put my head in my hands again
and wait for the worst.

*Declan Geraghty
Dublin, Ireland*

he lit out of Waco and deleted his history
the espaliered oranges of the Mueller inquiry
Yo-Semites in Thighland debanking covfefe

they said sir you should perhaps try dating Ivanka
JD Vance in an airport lounge talking dirty to a couch
Hannibal Lecter mortally stalked by battery-powered sharks

bone spurs in a prize fight with the Arlington Cemetery
when you turn Black they'll blow woke up your ass
weird-small-dick-energy ruined vacations y'all

Clay Thistleton
New South Wales
Australia

No More Mister Nice Guy

Donald Trump

advised a family member
with a disabled child who
required expensive treatment
to let the child die and move
on down to Florida.

You can see what Donald meant.

Florida is one of the most popular
destinations in America. Sunshine. Disney.

Beach front property.

Gated communities with private security.

Steven Taylor
London, England

Nero Nation

Covid-19

was in the air between the tin walls of our machine shop

'It will go away like a miracle,'

Trump kept saying

and doing nothing

as the deadly virus spread

and we couldn't grip it

with our channel-lock pliers or see it

on a blueprint

and we put on our masks and stayed 6 feet apart and washed our hands

religiously but

we couldn't turn

a long-necked high-powered flashlight on it and scrub it

away

we couldn't sweep chips of it off the concrete floor and dump them into

a chip barrel

like we could steel and brass and bronze and beryllium copper and

aluminum

'One day just like that it will be gone...'

Trump told the nation

and did nothing

and suddenly Lou on the horizontal boring mill wasn't there

and we heard he had it

and we couldn't grip it between lathe chuck jaws

or pick it up with forklift forks

or tie it with steel bands or swing it from a crane

or hammer it or saw it or melt it in a blast furnace or slide it

between the barrel and anvil of a micrometer

and measure it

and we looked over our masks deeply into each other's eyes

and didn't know what to say

as Trump told us to inject bleach into our veins

and suddenly Lupita on the buffing wheel and Carl

on the solvent tanks and Herman

the shipping clerk and Benito with his massive chest on the 6,000-ton

bending machine

were gone
and Trump smiled
and Nero fiddled
and Napoleon sent a million soldiers into Russia to freeze to death
and Hitler put a gun to his head in his bunker
and Vincente
finally put down his welding rod and wandered over to our machines
and shouted,
'What we need is a president
WHO CARES!'

Who said a welder
with steel dust all over his hands
couldn't be eloquent
as Shakespeare?

*Frederick Voss
California, USA*

orange is the new bat

batman is alive and well although
he's grown fat and old
the bat-utility belt barely
girdling the bloated bat-paunch
wispy tufts of orange
fringe
the bat-hood mask
which sits atop
pink eyes and vein blown cheeks
askew

nana-nana nana-nana
nana-nana nana-nana
batma-aan

is alive and well
has swapped
the gloomy dank and dingy
bat-cave for the White House where
bat-booted heels have scuffed
the polished desktop
in the Oval Office

there
screaming insults
at the world
the spitting image
of our darkest fear
batman is alive and well
and all the rage

Colin Scott
Mauchline
Scotland

if in doubt, bomb

Whether travel-bannin, health-denyin, or buildin his Wall
poor Trump can't cut no evil deals at all.
Thank MOAB for a swing at that good ol' death penalty—
just gotta scale its execution up to the planetary.

'Kill the Arctic, drink its oil
Trouble rubble and double the spoils;
Fuck Korea, can't back down—
The world is not a big enough town.'

Although our monsters may count up the ways
to economically kill their millions—
by bombs or gas, famines or climate change,
beneath their nails remains the one vermilion.

'Orbán, Erdogan, Putin, Xi—
These are the guys that think like me.
Grab LePen and come what May,
The world is mine to sign away.'

*Bill Herbert
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
England*

Shock and Denial

Rufus Hornblower,
the 'it's only the flu',
'it's your sovereign right not to wear a mask',
'vaccination's a plot' guy,
DJT's favorite shock jock,
woke up on a hospital trolley in a warehouse.
He'd gone to ER.
Severe breathing difficulties.
A doctor wearing full PPE observed him closely,
taking copious notes.
'Ah, Mr. Hornblower, you're back with us; are you feeling better?'
'No, I'm getting worse by the minute,
maybe even dying from that plague thing,
so why aren't you giving me any treatment?'
'Oh, Mr. Hornblower,
you can't die from an imaginary disease,
so we're moving you to the big circus tent we've set up
behind the hospital,
or as we call it,
the Centre for Observing Victims of Imaginary Diseases,
or COVID for short.
You'll enjoy your time there,
what with the clown school,
the acrobats teaching backflips,
tightrope walking lessons
and, of course, lyin' taming.'

*Doug Jacquier
Victor Harbor
South Australia*

One Lie

Some people do their daily exercise. Every day I try to tell at least one lie. I prattle about my enemies, how they prey on kids, sell missiles to lurking Chinese spies. If I say it, they'll believe. I trained them—boasted that I had the biggest crowds. It was pure hypnosis, repeating lies until they had the ring of truth. Until my troops were ready to accept that invaders coming from the south were aiming for their jobs, their lives—the black and brown would overcome the white heart of our native land. I counseled them to tote their guns to work and school, took millions from Egyptian rulers, offered deals to many others you haven't heard about just yet, didn't care who knew. When papers outed me, I told my base that *journalists* were dangerous, as if it were a crime to tell the truth. It wasn't hard to do. They had been taught to mind, to keep opinions to themselves, or better yet, have none at all. Remember what the teacher said in elementary school? Obey your parents, senators, your god. I add *Let your favorite president tell you what to think*. I'm infallible, could shoot down people on the street. No one would be surprised. This land is my land now.

Robbi Nester
California, USA



Jumping the Shark Martin Gollan

storming the Capitol for a Facebook-tagged selfie
live-streaming on Insta in a bison-horned helmet
Rambos in the Senate cosplay with their zip cuffs

when in insurrection please do not touch the statues
where Donald J. Trump has been jumping the shark
the flayed skin of democracy as a casual jacket

a mortal last stand in the crush at the Speaker's Lobby
a star-spangled thread count in Brian Sicknick's lifeblood
the teargas hangs heavy with airborne diseases

Clay Thistleton
New South Wales
Australia

Welcoming The Donald

So good to meet you, our beloved
and much revered ex-president
of this great nation, US of A
I love that you love our country
America first, always first!

You only wanted to protect us
with your fine American wall—
keep out those rascally Mexicans
trying to infiltrate our land.
Throw them back in the river, I say.

What a splendid idea this wall
was for our glorious country.
It will put that one in China
right in its place. America
will have the greatest of them all.

So, to celebrate your success
with the first completed section
We'd like you to stand on the wall
modelling your orange jump suit
for the official photographs.

You don't need to be concerned—
the guns, they are to protect you.
And the crocodiles in the moat,
they're just for dramatic effect—
a great image for your next mugs.

That's it, Donald, stand just over there.
Don't worry about a damn thing.
Ready? Oh dear, did you not hear?
Or think you were invincible?
I did call a warning—Donald, Duck!

Val Ormrod
Alvington, England

Pantoum for a Pernicious Panjandrum

Who the hell let him in the room? I mean
who the hell? A joke, a spoiler, a puffed up
spliff of a man. A bad trip, a failed fix—
a trumped up lie of the land.

Who? The hell of a joke. A spoiler. A puffed up
hot-air balloon over the prairies. C'mon,
a trumped up lie. Of all the land
this was the answer, the best we could do?

Hot-air balloons over the prairies—come on—
trailing a sky-sign could do better.
This was the answer? The best we can do is
go back to square one and start again

trailing a sky-sign 'Could do better!'
because this ain't gonna work I tell you.
Go back to square one. Start again.
Screw all the money. Where's the smarts?

Because this ain't gonna work. I tell you
they get vertigo just thinking up so high.
Screw all the money. We need smarts
and not this joker lying his way through.

They get vertigo just thinking. Up so high
it's easy to forget what's important here
and not. This joker? Lied his way through.
Up to us you know to set this straight.

It's easy to forget. What's important here
is who the hell let him in the room. I mean
it's up to us, you know, to set this straight—
fix this failed spliff of a man, this bad trip.

Alexandra Citron
London, England

Baked Alaska

Emperor Trump's mob took him at his word,
stormed the Capitol, seat of American democracy,
Vandals sacking Rome, Spartans spilling into Athens,
barbarians at the gates in red baseball caps branded
with the legend: *MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!*
Barbarians from within, chanting empty mantras
& chauvinistic rhetoric—'*Stop the Steal!*'
Amongst the gold-braided Vikings and buffalo-horned
Visigoths, one key agitator known by the moniker
of 'Baked Alaska', an Alt Right conspiracy theorist,
real name Anthime 'Tim' Gionet, who set about
trying to prove how fragile American democracy
actually is when push comes to shove & punch—
that the Capitol could be, at least symbolically,
crushed like meringue, shattered glass & debris
littering the East Steps, it was simply too good
an opportunity to miss for White Supremacists
& shadowy pugilists to gather together in broad
Washington daylight & march on that impertinent
neoclassical edifice whose wedding-cake dome
overpowers its own porticos, as it did their Rust
Belt hopes—how dare that building play host
to the temerity of representative democracy
when it didn't represent them, the Sunburnt White
Privileged, Rednecks, Confederates—a president
coaxing his supporters into insurrection:

*'We're going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue—
I love Pennsylvania Avenue—& we're going to
the Capitol'*—only no *'we're'* about it: the perma-
tanned rabble-rouser would be safely tucked behind
his Oval Office desk, orange thumbs poised
to punch out more catalytic tirades on Twitter—
It would be *They*, his underlings, Myrmidons,
remote-controlled thugs who in one brief afternoon

would storm the Capitol, overpower the police,
& attempt to smash up American democracy
as easily as crushing meringue, too tempting
an opportunity to pass up, too much of a coup,
a scoop—that impertinent Capitol dome
stacked there like a Baked Alaska, seemed in need
of caramelising, singeing, or blowtorching,
just long enough to tan & tarnish its exterior
without completely melting its ice-cream insides...

Alan Morrison
Bognor Regis
England



Me, the People Howard McWilliam

Insurrectionist

How can one say Republican
Of that grotesque despotic man,
A megalomaniac microbrain
And would-be emperor Citizen Kane?
A mafioso and a bruiser,
You're fired' his watchword but a loser,
Litigious irreligious type
Who feeds on junk food and on hype,
A braggart, bankrupt and a liar,
Coronavirus-plague denier
But self-admitted germophobe,
A microbe who infects the globe.
And has he read a book for real?
Who really wrote *Art of the Deal*?
For Donald Trump read Tony Schwartz
And visit YouTube for his thoughts.

Manipulator of the truth,
A fantasist from early youth,
His orange hair a fraudster's lie
Like red and phallic length of tie,
How could you re-elect that man
And not impose a total ban?
In overcoat horse-blanket size
From chest to rump and neck to thighs,
He walked up steps to Air Force One
Still having narcissistic fun
By giving marines a flip salute,
Melania mutinously mute.
The Stormy Daniels hurricane
Blew over quickly and in vain.

The over-reacher over-reached
And twice the bigot was impeached
And twice acquitted (by what right?).

Recall the speech to fight, fight, fight,
And then a mob beyond control
Stormed up the steps to the Capitol
And in the chaos that he bred
The riots left five people dead.
To think he had at his command
The nuclear codes and near to hand,
Ready to unleash fire and fury,
Regardless of the judge and jury,
Such as the world has never seen.
One thinks what is and might have been
And is it tempting fate to say
He's gone for good. Thank God. Hooray?

Duncan Forbes
Cheltenham, England

The Orator

He teases with smug questions,
like someone stroking a dog.
So you like that, do you? What about
this word, then? Or this one?
The belly. The ears. The scruff.
Everything receives an avid cheer
but his gauge for difference is acute.
With perfect scale, he distinguishes
the minutest scintilla of decibel
from its logarithmic neighbour.
But one election he can never win,
the one for a place beside Allende,
Kennedy, King, Devi, Lumumba, Palme,
Cox, Dando, Kennedy, Hammarskjöld,
Sadat, Jara—all the disappeared,
dispatched, stadium-butchered souls
of the past two generations. No, for that
one he would not have been eligible.

Rip Bulkeley
Oxford, England

This Is Just To Say

after William Carlos Williams

I have not taken
the documents that
were in the White House
that were not marked

Secret Confidential
Top Secret evil was
planting in my beautiful
golf club Although I

did take the documents
the beautiful documents
that were in the White
House all declassified

Forgive me they were
covfefe so sweet
and so planted in
Florida resort For

a reasonable fee
you too can access
big words the best words
from our bigly omelette

station buffet Top Secret
compartmented but anyway
declassified by my mind
words you were saving

only to eat them
yourselves and anyway
they're my words and
anyway so sweet and
so cold such beautiful

words I did not take
they were planted For
give me still your President

Steven Waling
Manchester, England

Taking a shit, I
briefly forget about
Donald J. Trump.

Sparrow X Carter
New York, USA

Whoppers of Boss Tweet...

A thief
a thug
Clown in a rug
A tweet
deceit
A lie
a cheat—
Embellish, embroider:
a lying disorder...

A myth
a fable
a bit unstable
Flimflam, claptrap
bunkum—bull crap!
An empty wagon
a puffed up dragon...

A whopper
a fib
You peeped
from your crib!
A sham
a fake
a major 'mistake—'
Pathological lying
false-flag flying...

A grope
a trope
Bad jokes
breaststrokes
A grope of the crotch—
another 'man notch'
where they debauch
over water and scotch...

A trumped up story—

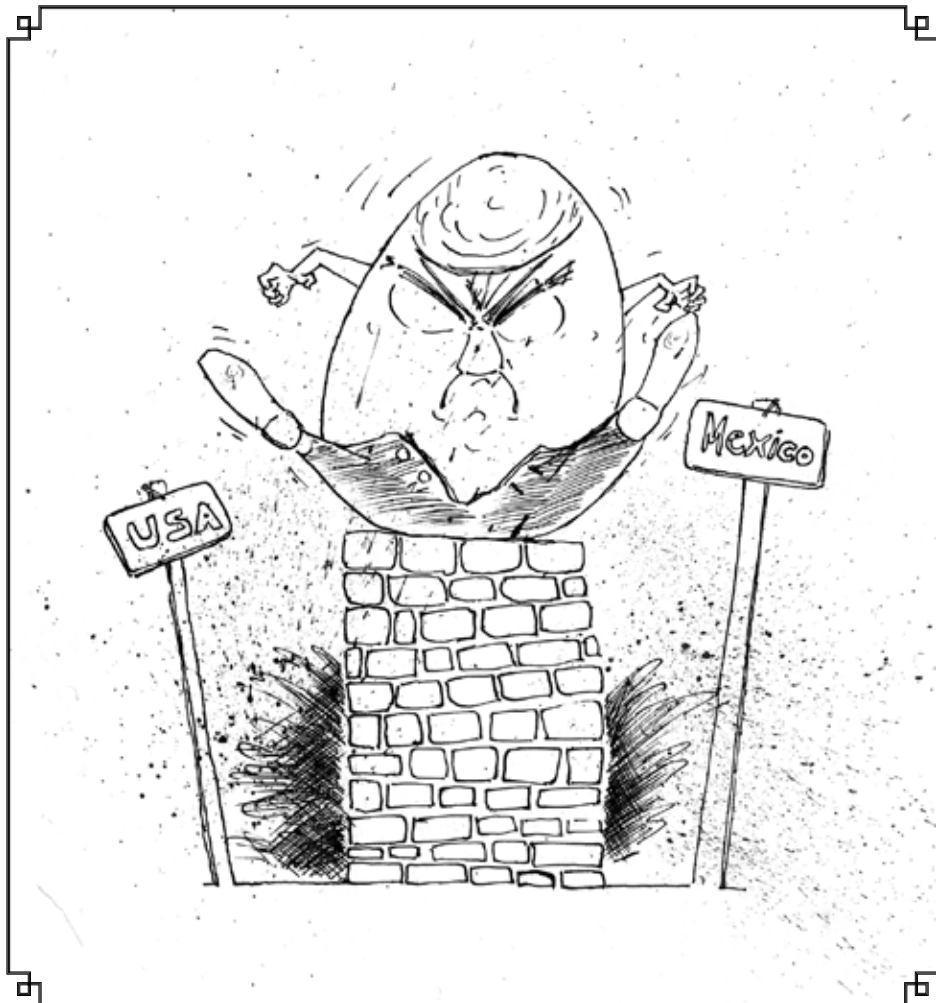
cock-and-bull glory
A foot in the mouth
for strategy south

Pie in the sky—
a barefaced lie
A pig in disguise
fooling some eyes...
Playing fast and loose
with Jim Jones Juice
A masquerade—
a Nazi parade
A fake 'great nation'
same plantation

A bug in the hall
a fly on the wall
A great big whale
an ongoing tale
A parade in July
another big lie
A wink of an eye—
enough outcry?

A thief
a thug
Clown in a rug
A tweet
deceit
A lie
a cheat—
Time for feet
in the street
Sustaining...
...street heat!!

Raymond Nat Turner
New York City, USA



Trumpty Dumpty Martin Gollan

Humpty-Trumpty

Humpty-Trumpty sat on his Wall
Humpty-Trumpty shat on us all
Not all of his money
 Nor all of his hate
Should let Humpty-Trumpty
 Re-inaugurate

*Paul Lewen
Cahors, France*

A Chance Encounter

I was walking down the shadows under a moonless sky,
when I saw two men in the alley, I couldn't believe my eyes:
one looked like Martin Luther King, with suffering
etched in his brow, the other I could have sworn was
Donald Trump, shuffling a deck of cards under his scowl.

Trump slipped off his watch and rings
and tossed them on the ground, whipped out
a wad of C-notes and threw them down.
'It's all yours, one draw of the deck.'
He flashed a terrible grin.

Martin replied, 'Raise the stakes:
I'll leave forever if you win but if my card's high
you leave and never come back again.'

Martin crossed his arms one way then the other.
Trump hunched his shoulders with a little shudder,
and muttered, 'You draw first.'

Martin's eyes were shining, his lips pursed;
his craggy fingers turned the card:
an ace of hearts faced the light.

Trump swallowed hard, drew his cape up tight,
reached slowly toward the deck, smirking like a stockbroker,
when suddenly Martin grabbed his wrist:
'I saw you palm that Joker!'

Indeed Trump clutched a Joker, where it came from I didn't see.
'Don't ever ...,' Trump gasped, 'Don't ever touch me!'
and lunged at Martin savagely.

Martin deftly sidestepped and Trump crashed
into the garbage cans, then staggered to his feet,
the Joker still trembling in his hand.

He threw the Joker on top of the stake,
raised one finger into the air.
Three shots rang suddenly out.
They seemed to come from nowhere.

Blood dripped down Martin's neck,
blood dripped down his side.
Martin raised both arms.
'I'll be back someday,' he cried,
and collapsed into my tears.

Trump clutched his right ear,
picked up the cards and bills and watch and ring,
brushed off his dark striped suit,
slipped into the shadows and disappeared.

So when you're walking down the shadows,
under a moonless sky,
when you see two men in an alley,
you better trust your eyes.

And when you're dealing with a Gambler,
aces don't enforce the laws of chance;
and when you're dueling with a Joker,
keep your eyes on both his hands.

John Curl
California, USA

Attention: Void

Lectern, cameras, mikes
relieves himself openly
of un/truth, yet oddly
in the high-ceilinged
a self's noisy spatter
thud of an I AM as a
translate, or to proffer
latest delectable free-
estimate the fizz in this,
safety as it expires, of the
every kind
marking
hectic word
as off it flies:
shoring up
our own.

*Anne Rouse
St Leonards-on-Sea
England*

deceive as the speaker
of speech, of yea/nays,
is, beyond all others
room, sure-footed round
of needs. POM goes the
dozen aides fumble to
a lacquered tray of the
doms. Do not under -
the thermal heft of each
done, undone and take
of care, then, in
each

Poor is he whose fustian
Ego makes him sound
Trite, whose every
Unhinged utterance
Lays bare the braggart,
Arraigned by his own
Narcissistic
Trumpfantilism.

John Liddy
Madrid, Spain

Trump on Poetry

Not one of your poems is worth a brick in one of my towers.

How much is a book worth anyway, unless I wrote it?

It made no sense, it wasn't even language.

I've read what some of you deadbeat thugs would call poetry.

Every time I speak it is a poem to the American people (the Republican American people).

Poets aren't exactly messiahs, touched by angels.

Are you writing this down, do you want me to spell it out for you?

Feelings? I eat them for breakfast.

I'm like you in one way only, it doesn't have to rhyme.

I'm writing a book of crimes against the American people. You should read it.

One of your deadbeat poet friends said poets are the *unacknowledged legislators of the world*.

I produce the world.

Also said that the first poems were wailing songs for the dead.

And you know what? From the very beginning they were crying out for me.

*James Byrne
London, England*

Just Say You're Sorry

It's not that hard.
It doesn't mean you are
weak.
Just human—
not godlike
(because you will die).
Pick something small
some peccadillo like:
not paying your contractors
or
paying for porn star's silence
or
lies,
and
more lies.
Own it—you at least have a sense
of pride of ownership
(in a perverse way)
so:
access your memory tapes
or
financial records (which may not help)
or
talk to yourself in the mirror.
It's hard to do
after living a life
disconnected
from oneself.
Just say
'I'm sorry'
to the audience
of one.

*Cris Hernández
California, USA*

Alt-Prayer

I hope he wakes screaming with his teeth all fallen out
on the pillow of the dreams that were stolen overnight.
I hope the taste upon his tongue is iron mixed with salt
crossed with brickdust, faulty locks and crucified hate.

I hope for him a long life, epiphanies of bad faith.
I wish for him a hunger never silent or asleep.
I hope for him an ever-present thirst to be included
on a menu made of marching leather boots.

May he swallow hungry tongues caked in sand, clay and dust.
May he feast upon a million futures.
May the throat of a stoat replace the brass neck of greed,
may it tighten and suspend every morsel.

Then we'll put him in the shadow of the wall and the world,
cover up the blowfly binge.
Open up the eyes to the wind and the wails,
and let the last minute be infinity.

Laura Taylor
Merseyside, England

Trump

Bloviating oompa loompa,
Tight-lipped bile spouter,
Sharp-shouldered pusher-outer,
Puffed up pigeon, poltroon,
Venomous flesh-monger,
Bickering braggard,
Rapscallion rogue,
Squamous toad, obfuscator,
Squatting octopus,
Walking slogan,
One-man brand,
The poor man's rich man,
Dripping with designer tat
Painted playboy,
Mouthy mansion,
Expansionist empire,
Migrant-hater, Kamala-baiter,
Wall-builder, liberal loather,
Do-badder,
Froth-mouthed fury stirrer
Gargantuan bog hopper,
Spittle-jawed master of lies,
Halloween's Trumpkin,
Scooped out, spitting pips,
Hollow eyed, angry lipped,
And empty, so empty inside.

Rebecca Lowe
Swansea, Wales

worthy

critics say:
the emperor is
nude, no matter
how many outfits
he cycles through

choleric, malcontent,
relentlessly belligerent
these detractors
impervious
to his shifting,
styled in finery
to charm
to tickle and gratify
the emperor experimented broadly, but
inventory was never taken...

driven from his kingdom,
he left his vast wardrobe
garmentless,
without a crown,
he found a life,
glistening,
wearing only a smile

Alison Whittenberg
Philadelphia, USA

Hey, Mr. Tangerine Man ...

'If one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected—those, precisely, who need the law's protection most!—and listens to their testimony.'

—James Baldwin

Hey, Mr. Tangerine Man—
Cook your books for US
Use 'felon' as a plus
Babble on ... and fuss ...
Come to court by bus ...

Hey, Mr. Tangerine Man—
Four criminal cases—
You still in our faces
Like 800 bases
Keep us in our places?

Hey, Mr. Tangerine Man—
aka Boss Tweet—
Tool of the rich elite
Fox-box at your feet—
Find your gray bar suite

Hey, Mr. Tangerine Man—
Playin' the Reich Card—
Not burnin' off some lard
Runnin' on the yard—
Paced by your bodyguard

Hey, Mr. Tangerine Man—
Run a RICO \$campaign
\$election white as Maine ...
Weaponize Uncle Toms!
Like Ol' Schmo's bombs ...

Hey Mr. Tangerine Man—
aka Orange Julius Caesar—
Capitalist crowd pleaser
What's your October Surprise?
More Goebbels big lies?
State machine your prize?

Hey, Mr. Tangerine Man—
Right a wrong for WE
WE know freedom ain't free
You won't rule us by decree—
Terrorist cult nominee ...

Hey, Mr. Tangerine Man—
WE'RE not sleepy—
Ain't Blinken
Or Biden our time—
For either walking War Crime!

Raymond Nat Turner
New York City
USA

The Cursing

May your water be the spit of Mexicans.
May cheeseburgers give you cramps.
May you have diarrhoea on your gold-plated toilet seat.
May you have an obstruction every time you abuse power.
May your balls be forever in the sand dunes.
May your creosote tan give you zits.
May there be wind at your back to blow your comb over.

May you get whiplash every time you utter fake news.
May your Real Estate be taken from you to house immigrant families.
May your wealth pay towards slavery reparation.
May you take the knee to women and them take it in turn to punch you.
May transgender people queue up then to kick you.
May you become disabled and have the gait.
May every dying bumblebee sting you.

May you disappear like flu.
May you wear a soundproof mask.
May your champagne taste of Clorox.
May your small thumbs fall off, so you cannot Tweet.
May you be a dummy in Minnesota Police Training for nine minutes.

May you be interned with only Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-Un for company,
and may even they snub you.

*Anita Gracey
Belfast, Ireland*

Melania Fair

Oh Melania! Silent soulful Melania!
You speak six languages but your silence persists.
What are you thinking, my lovely?

Statuesque Melania! Tallest girl in Slovenia!
Tall as Michelle O or Eleanor R!
Beautiful secretive Melania!

Simon Cowell was a wedding guest.
So were Hil n Bill.
Your immobilizing wedding-gown was soon shed,

for its embroidery weighed a ton.
There's a tad of Morticia Adams 'bout you, Queen Melania,
you've cast your spell on me!

Oh that Inauguration smile of yours!
Thy rose hath no canker, Super-duper Melania,

Do you suspect how subject old men are to lying?
Is that what your silence is saying?

Daughter of far Novo Mesto,
Sibyl of the fashion and cosmetics world,
let me be the dust under your shoe.

No one in my hearing will dare call you
a hollow pampered jade,
or fie you from news both fake and true.

While your lord and master mammoths away
to the general weariness of the world,
how do you spend your days, sweet Melania?

What do you behold through those hand-crafted lashes?
Vistas of horror and regret?

Ah but you persist, my gorgeous Flotus,
as doth the raven o'er the infected house.

Is your heart a stone? If *he* should strike it,
will it hurt his hand? Let us hope.

I don't think you plan
to sing the sweetness out of that bear.
Instead, you'll wait till your mockery king of snow
melts to a White House puddle.

Then you'll walk away, my Melania.

Penelope Shuttle
Cornwall, England



Trump Piñata Dalton Javier Avalos Ramirez

Cucuy Piñata

Papier-mâché and hollow,
usually a famous cartoon character,

but this one's an unpopular buffoon,
a thing to be beaten. Hanged from a tree branch

orange face with a yelling mouth atop
wrinkled black suit, red tissue tie,

slow spinning temptation,
voting aged adults line up to take a whack.

In 7th grade I poked a stick
into a bloated, dead cat;

now, as I swing back to crack
the fluttering yellow-papered head,

I swear I get that same whiff of Hell.

Yvonne M. Estrada
Los Angeles, USA

Hallelujah President Trump

once more with apologies to Leonard Cohen ...

It never was a secret plan
The rise to power of Macho Man
He never used a subtle schmooze to woo you
Behold the hero of the hour
The billionaire who fought the power
The phoney rebel called out Hallelujah

Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah

He'd raise the nation from its knees
And kick the gays and refugees
And drive a wedge of bigotry right through you
He'll build a wall to keep you safe
Cut your tax, defend the faith
And preachers of the right sing Hallelujah

Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah

He promised he would save your jobs
To win the votes of angry mobs
But once the creep's in office, he will screw you
Two million fewer votes but we
Must all respect democracy
It's a shameful and a broken Hallelujah

Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah

The footage of far-right salutes
Shows straightened arms in finest suits
You don't all wear the pointy hats now, do you?
He waves across the ocean then
Wilders, Hofer and LePen
All raise their hands to sing the Hallelujah

Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah

*Janine Booth
Brighton, England*

No Abuse

Most of the time I just cannot believe it:
Trump supporters being interviewed.
I am hard-pressed to stop laughing and crying simultaneously.
Why submit these people to this humiliation?
See Trump waving to empty spaces, pretending there is more at his rallies.
This man is not standing as a committee member at our working men's club.
We know he wants, for the second time, to be the leader of the 'free world'.
I decide I am going to have a one-sided conversation with me dad.
'Tell me again what happened when Mosley's train stopped at Jarrow?'
Dad shakes his head. A prelude to telling his tale. I buy him another pint.
'Him and his black-shirted mates wor on their way to South Shields,
the Sand Dancers scattered him.' And so did Jarrow.
The black shirts tried to have a meeting near the railway station.
'We chased then back on the train.'
He does not mention Mosley waving à la Trump from the leaving train.
Mosley died in 1980, one of his sons said there was,
'No abuse. That was a long time ago'.

*Tom Kelly
South Shields
England*

End Times

And the trumpet shall sound and Judgement separate
horny goats from sacrificial lambs:
for these poor innocents fires will be lit
the cloven-footed goats will stoke the flames.
S/he who is not with us is against us
tweets the Messiah from his golden throne
into the pit with all rebels and traitors—
all those who try to live by truth alone.

What is truth? *It's what we say it is*
the MAGA faithful cry, the women-haters,
white supremacists, macho gun-toters.
The world tilts rightwards on its creaking axis.
The climate's out of step, wars flare and boom;
the trumpeters proclaim the Day of Doom.

A.C. Clarke
Glasgow
Scotland

Knackery

The beast is lowing at the abattoir door, plump
and ready for the stun-gun, the stagger, slump,
the slug behind the ear. Hooves are lopped, stumps
shorn of meat, ribs cracked open. A Latino with a pump
sucks up the entrails of America, glistening in the sump.
All is rendered to an acceptable carcass, fit to be dumped
while in the tower, waiters serve prime cuts. Diners thump
the tables, call for sweetbreads, offal, the head, the rump.

Andy Jackson
Errol, Scotland

Campaign Song

Said Trumpo to Hamlet,
what the hell is an arras?
Is this play in the pay of Kamala Harris?

Said Trumpo to Hitler,
we'll always have Paris—
that and the laughter of Kamala Harris.

Said Trumpo to Stormy,
here's the nub: I'm embarrassed,
I can't lay a glove on that Kamala Harris.

Said Trumpo to Putin,
how near, Vlad, too far is.
I'd blow up the world—would Kamala Harris?

Bill Herbert
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
England

Dark Mirror

Where are you now, my 'perfect' [ha-ha] cousin?
And now? Setting fire to a library or a mosque?
What do you believe in if not this?

How do you select your bricks to throw?
Is it by palm feel or just what's handy?
How do you come by them? From the walls

that are falling down around you here
and now or do you come equipped, stuffing
them in a rucksack and running to keep fit?

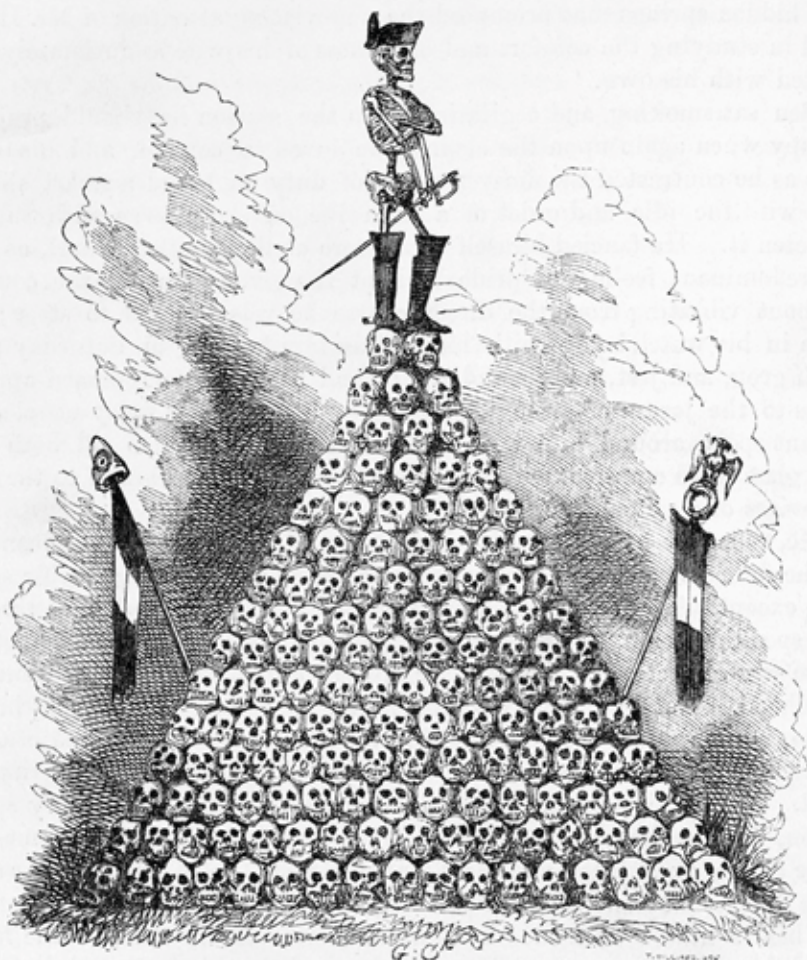
How do you choose where to throw them?
Do you stand there facing out—rock
in hand—as if on some hilltop and then let fly?

The man you follow, you say you love him
because he's honest. That he's like you.
But does he sit for hours on a motorway

going nowhere with a cargo he doesn't own?
He would step on you, get his man to wipe
you off his shoe. His world is not the paras,

the terraces or prison. Come the day—
and that might be today, we'll stand
facing off against each other—lines
of blood drawn; one life lived in two ways.

Anna Robinson
London, England



MONUMENT TO NAPOLEON!

Monument to Napoleon! George Cruikshank

The Elephant

So, finally we get to see it too.
No one told me it has orange hair
and wears a folksy red tie. To hide the
blood? Wants to be taken for a red
badge of outrage, perhaps. And I
thought they were gentle, had a sense
of humour. Just goes to show my
impervious ignorance. It certainly
shouts the way I expected,
and keeps its big ears shut,
what's left of them. I wonder
with so many other engagements
from Palestine to Mexico, Nigeria
to Kashmir, will it really be our turn
next, after decades of torpor,
or will China queue-barge this time,
the way Japan did back in 1937,
when one of the soldiers they just
happened to have at Wanping went AWOL
for a call of nature and they stormed
the Fougou Bridge? After which
they led out the elephant across
the North China Plain, before
releasing it for a world-wide tour.
Whatever, unhappy days,
are surely here again.

*Rip Bulkeley
Oxford, England*

The Darkling Trump

after Thomas Hardy

He vomits forth his bile and scorn
At rallies packed his way
Though Rudy's daughter stands to warn
Against the failing day.
His tantrummed slanders score the sky
Like strings of broken lies,
As the world he's sought to petrify
Sees through his alibis.

The land's sharp features seem to be
This Delinquent's corpse outleant,
His home the penitentiary,
The truth his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of fact and worth
Is beating fast and free
Though every spirit upon earth
Breathes far from easily.

At once a voice uplifts among
The branches overhead
In a full-throated evensong
Of joy illimited:
A Harris-bird, primed for the poll,
In blast-bedazzled plume,
Has chosen thus to fling her soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolling
Of such emphatic sound
Is written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around.
Yet Trump now fears there rallies through
His truthless orange glare
Some blessed Hope whereof we knew
While he was unaware.

*Harry Owen
Stellenbosch, South Africa*

Trump's Adviser

You shouldn't leave
it till the last moment. What on earth
were you thinking: better dead than red?
It wasn't wise
to tweet a non-existent border
could be closed. Never state

your views about The State
when in a state. Don't leave
it till you're on the wrong side of the border
between consciousness and un. Earth
your ire in sleep, otherwise
you'll regret it. Have you read

the latest memo? Important bits in red
so even you can't miss them. Some states
are threatening to block it. So wise
up—leave
the small print to me. I'll unearth
some stats and figures about borders,

walls, etc, a history that borders
on the boring. Bored
folk don't bother reading. Earth
could go up in flames, those with big estates
don't know or care, think they can leave
and find a safe, exclusive place, price wise.

I think they'll discover otherwise.
We are merely boarders
on this planet, foolish to believe
otherwise. Whatever hue your politics, red
blue or green, nothing and no-one can state
with certainty they're saved. This Earth

oh, this poor Earth is heading towards the end. Wise
men of the Fourth Estate
write: don't sit on the fence, border,
wall, whatever. Be scared. Be very scared.

I'll leave
you to consider the wise option re- the border
leave it up to you, though I doubt you've read
anything I've written about the state the earth is in.

Ellen Phethean
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
England

and um

Leon Elon
Alan Alam
key to my mental
accu ... punctured ... racy

is ... this ... yes
this physricician yes ...
really told me
I am as strong as
two orangutangs

orangs ... way ... yes
key to me my
mental de forest sendecency
... extery is

this ... keep up ... there'll be
an insurrection

orange ... a ... tang
yes he ... really thissy
fit said that ... the
pha ... the pho ... fizz
magician ... SAID

THERE WILL ... MUST BE
See ... A ... RECKNING ... THEN
NO MORE NEED FOR NO ...
MORE ... ELECTORIANS

Neverneeded.
again o tang

WHEN I'll ... re-be-recogniszed
world wide ... phocket man

to Fad ... the impala ... likes me

for who I am.

Napolean ... I'VE A BONE
TO PICK WITH

everyone says
and HE ... and me
leon... my fend ... fiend
find ... him ready to direct the
Dept of Dep ... ment ... Development

Send ... us ... very stable ...
horse man ... and ... bug ... bear ...
by the way that IS ANOTHER BEAST

and WE' LL MAKE
mumble stumble grate AGAIN

that's and a vap ... or ... wraith ...

a vape poor smoke blown up

my claims.
I love me all.
and ...

*Jeff Kemp
Musselburgh
Scotland*

Nero Rebop

Tell your dog, I bite.

Tell your Jesus
I too have a blood-wet diaper
and a tendency to fall in love
with stray women at art galleries.

I got a hair net for my halo.
A bag for my jokes.
A side kick who smirks and slaps himself
in time to a vicious disco beat
our punk drummer makes.

Tell it. Go tell it on the mountain
and in our over-stuffed malls.
I have a mandate, a kill order from the Big Boss
who says it's open season on Right wing nut jobs
the unvaccinated unwashed masses,
those Libertarians with large ass paychecks
and a need to protect liberties of all fascists, Daddy's
simpering boys in perfect jackets and PTA booster clubs.

I have a diorama to explain blood loss and gerrymandering
to the proper Philistines of 2024 and 2025.
The sacred code of Robin Hood and Johnny Appleseed
will be published in time and tagged on billboards on Sunset.

Meanwhile I'm taking notes on jazz fusion and nostalgia.
Escape routes.

I have a pink slip to the Titanic
coughing up wet dust from ocean floor,
the sheet music Nero followed
in unholy bebop
head bobbing off time with flat feet.

It's all plugged in and ready to go.
I found the keys to Daddy's Cadillac
the notes for Sunday sermon.
I've got pre-headband Springsteen
on washed-out cassette
in the glove compartment,
a blunt, empty pistol, a bottle of Brut
to cover the smell of desire that keeps leaking out
between the buttons of my shirt
marking me as human and in play
for the end game and big prize.
There's a road map we follow on our phones
into an unbroken world.
It never dies.

Dan Murphy
Los Angeles, USA

SUMMER

FIREFLIES IN THE FOREST FAIRFIELD COUNTY CT CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY
FAITH AND HERITAGE **FERNS** FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH & MINISTRY FAITH EDUCATION
COMMERCE (FEC UNITED) FAITH 2 ACTION FAITHFUL WORD BAPTIST CHURCH
FLEABANE FAMILY ACTION COUNCIL OF TENNESSEE THE FAMILY FOUNDATION OF
VIRGINIA **FIELD YARROW** FAMILY HOME NORTHWEST FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL
FAMILY RESEARCH INSTITUTE **A FAMILY DOLLAR WITH BARS ACROSS ITS FRONT
WINDOWS** FAMILY WATCH INTERNATIONAL FASCIST FORGE FATIMA CRUSADER
/ INTERNATIONAL FATIMA ROSARY SOCIETY FAUQUIER COUNTY VA CHAPTER
MOMS FOR LIBERTY FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM (FAIR)
/ IMMIGRATION REFORM LAW INSTITUTE **SOUNDS MORE LIKE FIREWORKS
OR FIRECRACKERS** FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE FIGHT WHITE
GENOCIDE FIRM ²² FIRST PENNSYLVANIA MOUNTAIN REGIMENT FIRST STATE
PATHFINDERS **AFTER THE FOURTH OF JULY** ¹ ST WEST VIRGINIA VOLUNTEER
MOUNTAIN INFANTRY (1STWVWV) FIRST WORKS BAPTIST CHURCH EL MONTE
CALIFORNIA **FIRING RANGES** FITZGERALD GRIFFIN FOUNDATION FLAGLER
COUNTY FL CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **FIRING SQUADS** FLORENCE COUNTY
SC CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY FLORIDA FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL FLORIDA
MILITIA FLORIDIANS FOR IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT **SHOTS FIRED** FOLKS
FRONT / FOLKISH RESISTANCE MOVEMENT FORD COUNTY KS CHAPTER MOMS FOR
LIBERTY **TRUMP 2024 FUCK YOUR FEELINGS FLAG** THE FORSAKE MOTORCYCLE
CLUB FORSYTH COUNTY NC CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY FORT BEND COUNTY
TX CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **A RISE IN CHRISTO-FASCISM** FORZA NUOVA
USA THE FOUNDATION FOUNDATION FOR ADVOCATING CHRISTIAN TRUTH /
ACTS ¹⁷ APOLOGETICS FOUNDATION FOR THE MARKET-PLACE OF IDEAS **FATHER
CALLED THE POLICE** THE FOUNDRY ¹⁴ FIRST FRANKLIN COUNTY OH CHAPTER
MOMS FOR LIBERTY FRANKLIN COUNTY PA CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **43
VISITS TO THE GUN GLUB** FRATERNAL ORDER OF THE CROSS FREDERICK COUNTY
MD CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY FREE AMERICA RALLY FREE AMERICAN FREE
EDGAR STEELE FREE MISSISSIPPI FREE NORTH CAROLINA **FREEDOM FRIES** FREE PA
CAPITAL AREA CHAPTER FREE PA CUMBERLAND COUNTY FREE PA FREE LEBANON/
PENNSYLVANIANS FOR FREEDOM FREE PA LANCASTER COUNTY AND SOUTH END
CHAPTERS FREE PA MONTGOMERY COUNTY FREE PA PERRY COUNTY FREE PA
SCHUYKILL COUNTY FREE PA YORK COUNTY FREEDOM BOUND INTERNATIONAL
HIS FAMILY OWNED MORE THAN A DOZEN FIREARMS FREEDOM COALITION
FREEDOM FIRST SOCIETY FREEDOM FROM GOVERNMENT FREEDOM LAW SCHOOL
FREEDOM RISING SUN/FREEDOM RISING SON **FREEDOM FLIES A TRUMP FLAG**
FREEDOM SCHOOL **RAISED HIS FIST** FREEDOM YELL FREESTAR TR FRIENDSHOP
ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH FRONT RANGE ACTIVE CLUB FRONTLINE POLICY
COUNCIL THE FRONTIERSMEN **FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT** FUHRERNET FULL HAUS
FULTON COUNTY GA CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **AMERICA FIRST**

GAB GARDEN STATE 2A GRASSROOTS ORG-ANIZATION
GOLDENROD GARFIELD COUNTY CO CHAPTER MOMS
FOR LIBERTY GARFIELD COUNTY OK CHAPTER MOMS FOR
LIBERTY GASTON COUNTY NC CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY
GAYS AGAINST GROOMERS GENERATIONS / GENERATIONS
WITH VISION**LET'S GO BRANDON** GENESEE COUNTY
VOLUNTEER MILITIA GENESIS COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK
GENSPECT GEORGIA KNIGHT RIDERS OF THE KU KLUX
KLAN GEORGIA THREE PERCENT MARTYRS GIDEON KNOX
GROUP/MT DAILY GAZETTE GILLESPIE COUNTY TX CHAPTER
MOMS FOR LIBERTY **HE GRABBED HIS EAR** GOLDEN DAWN
GOLDEN STATE 45/KINDRED 45 GOLDEN STATE SKINHEADS
GOLDEN STATE SOLIDARITY GORILLA LEARNING INSTITUTE
GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY MI CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY
CANADIAN GEESE GREAT MILLSTONE GLOBAL CRUSADERS
ORDER OF THE KU KLUX KLAN GOLDEN TRIANGLE MILITIA
GOOD CITIZEN MILITIA GOYFUNDME GRANITEGROK GREAT
LAKES KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN **GOING DOWN THE
STAIRS TO HIS MOTORCADE** GREEN MOUNTAIN MILITIA
GREENE COUNTY MO CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY GREENE
COUNTY NY CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY GREENEVILLE
COUNTY SC CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY GUILFORD
COUNTY NC CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **WHERE WAS THE
BULLETPROOF GLASS** GUN OWNERS OF AMERICAGWINNETT
COUNTY GA CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **GASLIGHTING**

H.L. MENCKEN CLUB HALL COUNTY GA CHAPTER MOMS FOR
LIBERTY**'HE'S REAL SCRAWNY'** HAMILTON COUNTY IN CHAPTER
MOMS FOR LIBERTY HAMILTON COUNTY OH CHAPTER MOMS FOR
LIBERTY HAMILTON COUNTY TN CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY
HAMMERSKINS**'HE'S GOT GLASSES & LONG HAIR'** HARFORD
COUNTY MD CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY HARTFORD COUNTY
CT CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY HATE CRIME STREETWEAR
PRODUCTIONS THE HATED **WHITE HANDS** HATED AND PROUD
SKINS HEALTHY AMERICAN HEATHENS MOTORCYCLE CLUB
HEARTLAND DEFENDERS**'HE'S GOT A GUN'** HEARTLAND PATRIOTS
H8 PROPAGANDA ARTHEIRS TO THE CONFEDERACY HELP RESCUE
OUR CHILDREN**IT'S COMMON AROUND HERE** HELP SAVE
MARYLAND HENRY COUNTY IL CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY
HERITAGE AND DESTINY HERNANDO COUNTY FL CHAPTER MOMS
FOR **♀ MAGAGIRL ♀** LIBERTY HETERO-SEXUALS ORGANIZED FOR
A MORAL ENVIRONMENT **HE USED HVAC AIR CONDITIONING
UNITS TO HOIST HIMSELF ONTO THE ROOF** HIGHLANDS COUNTY
FL CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY NH
CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FL CHAPTER
MOMS FOR LIBERTY HISADVOCATES.ORG **HUNGER GAMES**
HOLY ORDER MINISTRY **HOPELESSNESS** HOMELAND INSTITUTE
HOMELAND SECURITY HONOLULU HI COUNTY CHAPTER MOMS
FOR LIBERTY **HEPATITIS C** HONORABLE SACRED KNIGHTS OF THE
KU KLUX KLAN **HUNGARY LOVES YOU** HORRY COUNTY SC CHAPTER
MOMS FOR LIBERTY **'HOW DID HE LEARN TO BUILD THOSE IED'S'**
HOT SPRINGS COUNTY WY CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **'HOW
DID HE LEARN TO BUILD REMOTE DETONATORS'** HOWARD
COUNTY IN CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **ENDLESS HYSTERIA**
HOWARD COUNTY MD CHAPTER MOMS FOR LIBERTY **HE WAS
TWENTY YEARS OLD** HUGHES COUNTY SD CHAPTER MOMS FOR
LIBERTY **WASH YOUR HANDS OF IT**

*Mark Nowak
New York, USA*

Unpresidented

it may be a comfort to know
when it's all over
we saw it coming

the mind's eye butted up against the eyepiece
three hundred million sights
were trained on the man who made it great again

to take a handful of womanhood whenever
i remember seeing him at school
mocking the seven-year-old's mother in hijab

somebody
murdered somebody's father on fathers' day
i think it was him

in the cages he held the children back
with his own hands
he stayed up all night just to make sure

and at home he wasn't missed
he was upstairs in the living-room with my landlord
just the other night

i saw him hanging on the lips of a british bank clerk
and then later in the bushes he was there
when the girl in the park was taken down

by someone who didn't vote for him
who didn't even like him that much
they will say it was a time of unprecedented freedoms

or like having no president at all

it may be a comfort to know

although it will never be over
we saw it coming

F.A. Daniell
Falmouth, England

done biden our time
is hope making a comeback
in more states this time

Andy Crichton
Ladybank, Scotland

he confirmed his credentials
as someone prudent statesmanlike and presidential
he undermined belief
in urgent straightforward humanitarian hurricane relief

Paul Lewen
Cahors, France

I Will Build A Great, Great,Great,Great,Great,Great,Great,Great,Great,Great...

I will build a great, great wallaby on our southern bore
and I will have Mexico pay for that wallaby
I will build a great, great wallet on our southern borehole
and I will have Mexico pay for that wallet
I will build a great, great wallflower on our southern borough
and I will have Mexico pay for that wallflower
I will build a great, great wallop on our southern borrow
and I will have Mexico pay for that wallop
I will build a great, great wallpaper on our southern borstal
and I will have Mexico pay for that wallpaper
I will build a great, great wally on our southern bosom
and I will have Mexico pay for that wally
I will build a great, great walnut on our southern boss
and I will have Mexico pay for that walnut
I will build a great, great walrus on our southern bosun
and I will have Mexico pay for that walrus
I will build a great, great waltz on our southern botanist
and I will have Mexico pay for that waltz
I will build a great, great wand on our southern botch
and I will have Mexico pay for that wand
I will build a great, great wandering on our southern bottleneck
and I will have Mexico pay for that wandering
I will build a great, great wane on our southern bottom
and I will have Mexico pay for that wane
I will build a great, great wankfest on our southern boudoir
and I will have Mexico pay for that wankfest
I will build a great, great wannabe on our southern bouffant
and I will have Mexico pay for that wannabe
I will build a great, great wantonness on our southern bougainvillea
and I will have Mexico pay for that wantonness
I will build a great, great wantwit on our southern bouillabaisse
and I will have Mexico pay for that wantwit
I will build a great, great wapentake on our southern boulder

and I will have Mexico pay for that wapentake
I will build a great, great war on our southern bouzouki
and I will have Mexico pay for that war ...

Maggie Sawkins
Isle of Wight, England

Misdirection

I'm transfixed by him
which might be the point,
that he is the glamorous assistant.

The audience cannot stop pointing out
his unusual gestures,
locution, hairdo and Twitter style.

But his genius at inarticulacy
is nothing but a sequinned leotard
distracting me while the magician
disappears my watch.

Will Holloway
London, England

Synopsis

In the modern espionage novel

If the CIA analyst can discover where Vladimir Putin
Is investing his money, America might (God willing)
Be able to blackmail him into doing something differently.

We never quite discover what, exactly
But whatever it is, it will be good for Western democracy.

Democracy is the label attached to American Imperialism.

The previous American President had no problem
With the Russians. He said he liked them. Loved them.

Thought them splendid.

Putin, in particular.

Rumour has it the Russians had film of Donald
With women who were urinating. On the bed
Where the Obamas had slept, previously
And on each other. Trump is watching, laughing.

Loves it (like I said).

That would not explain the ending.

The CIA analyst and a beautiful woman
Are running across the frozen tundra pursued by reindeer.

Hollywood is interested.

Everything depends on the forthcoming election.

Steven Taylor
London, England

Notes

‘Oval Reflections’. Several of the politicians and industrialists who were associated with President Warren G. Harding in the early 1920s became involved in financial scandals. They were known as ‘the Ohio Gang’.

‘Capitol Hill Epiphany’ is a tribute to William Carlos William’s sequence ‘Asphodel, That Greeny Flower’.

‘Advisors’. By 1963 there were about 11,000 American troops in Vietnam. They were euphemized as ‘advisors’.

‘My Banjo on My Knee’. The original song, ‘Oh! Susanna’, was written by Stephen Foster (1826—64) in 1847.

‘A Wall’ quotes from ‘Why we Build the Wall’ by Anais Mitchell.

‘An Address to Beelzebub’ picks a bone with Satan for trying to overshadow Burns Night by simultaneously installing Donald J. Trump in the White House.

In ‘For the Rising’, cerddi means ‘poems’.

‘This Is Just To Say’ is a tribute to William Carlos William’s poem with the same title.

‘Cucuy Piñata’. A cucuyor coco is a scary monster like the Bogey Man.

In ‘No Abuse’, ‘sand dancers’ is a colloquialism for people from South Shields, a town in the North-East of England.

‘The Elephant’. One meaning of the phrase ‘to see the elephant’ is to experience front-line combat for the first time.

‘The Darkling Trump’ is a tribute to Hardy’s poem ‘The Darkling Thrush’.

SUMMER is taken from the last of four seasonal sequences documenting recent events in the United States. The greyscale background comes largely from the list of American hate groups compiled by the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, AL.

Acknowledgements

Neil Fulwood's 'An Address to Beelzebub' was first published online in *New Boots and Pantisocracies*. Bill Herbert's 'if in doubt, bomb' was published in *The Wreck of the Fathership* (Bloodaxe, 2020). Doug Jacquier's 'Shock and Denial' was published on *WordCityLit* in 2022. Paul Laughlin's 'Who We Are' appeared in the *Morning Star's* 21st Century poetry feature in January 2024. Des Mannay's 'Trump-ton' was published in the blogzine *I Am Not A Silent Poet* on 20/01/2017, to coincide with Trump's inauguration. Alan Morrison's 'Drain the Swamp' was first published in the *Morning Star*. Alan Morrison's 'Baked Alaska' was first published in the author's collection *Wolves Come Grovelling* (Culture Matters, 2023). Mark Nowak's 'SUMMER' is forthcoming in the author's ... *AGAIN* (Coffee House). Ellen Phethean's 'Trump's Adviser' was first published online in *New Boots and Pantisocracies*. Penelope Shuttle's 'Melania Fair' was first published online in *New Boots and Pantisocracies*. Laura Taylor's 'Alt-Prayer' was first published in the author's collection *Fault Lines* (Flapjack, 2018). Clay Thistleton's 'storming the Capitol...' was first published on *The Five-Two* website in January 2023. Raymond Nat Turner's 'Whoppers of Boss Tweet...' was first published in *Black Agenda Report* in February 2018, since when it has been republished on numerous websites. Raymond Nat Turner's 'Hey Mr Tangerine Man...' was first published in *Black Agenda Report* in June 2024. Tamar Yoseloff's 'Trumped' was first published online in *New Boots and Pantisocracies*. Will Holloway's 'Misdirection' was first published in *Better than Paradise* (Smokestack, 2018).

Picture Credits

Our dramatic cover was created by Martin Gollan, who also contributed *Rough Beast*, *Trumpets*, *Jumping the Shark* and *Trumpty Dumpty*. John Geoffrey Walker's photograph, *Beneath a Watch Tower*, is from his Flickr album *Graffiti on the Apartheid Wall in Bethlehem*. Howard McWilliam's *Me, the People* was first published in *The Week*. The editors and publisher are extremely grateful for the engagement of these living artists with the project. The Mexican artist Dalton Javier Avalos Ramirez created and photographed his Trump piñata in 2015, after which the picture was widely circulated in the press. Our attempts to reach him by email and Instagram having failed, he is invited to contact Culture Matters as soon as possible. George Cruikshank's *Monument to Napoleon!*, evoking the iniquitous massacre of Turkish prisoners at Jaffa in 1799, was his response to the state funeral of Emperor Napoleon I. It was accessed online in Cruikshank's *Omnibus* (1842), through the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford.

About the editors

Rip Bulkeley has edited seven previous anthologies, starting with *Edges* (Khartoum, 1976); the two most recent were *A Fish Rots from the Head* and *Dungheap Cockerel*, both for Culture Matters. He is currently writing a group of poems set in a world shared by humans with globally-networked AI androids, a development which has affected English grammar amongst other things.

Merryn Williams was the founding editor of *The Interpreter's House* magazine. Her latest poetry collection is *After Hastings* (Shoestring, 2023), and she has edited *Poems for Jeremy Corbyn* (2016), *Poems for the Year 2020: Eighty Poets on the Pandemic* (2021), and Ruth Bidgood's *Chosen Poems* (2024), with a memoir by herself.

The prospect of a second presidential term for Donald Trump is a real threat to such scraps of peace and democracy as remain in our damaged world. In this book, poets and artists from several countries have joined in deploring and denouncing Trumpism, past, present and now threatening us all with its malign resurgence.

The contributors to **What Rough Beast** go for the jugular—the Mexican wall, white supremacism, replacement theory, racism, COVID, the assault on the Capitol, neo-fascism, and the appalling circus of stupidity, ignorance, narcissism, lies and gibberish that Trump and Trumpism spew out.

It's a rich and varied collection, serious and silly, horrified and horrifying, of understatements and exaggerations, parodies and rants, slapstick and analysis of the moral and intellectual crisis in US politics from which Trumpism draws its power.

—Andy Croft

***What Rough Beast** is a collective expression of protest. It is a rejection of Trump and the smug inertia that allowed him to slither into our dimension in the first place. The poems, by turns playful, impassioned, and incendiary, show a determination to resist the necrotised supremacy of Trump, Trumpism, and the seemingly unkillable zombie capitalism he represents. With energy and inventiveness, the poems in **What Rough Beast** keep on swinging, reminding us that although said beast assumes distorted and outlandish proportions, his is a fallible, human power that can and must be overcome.*

—Fran Lock

What have poets to say in a time of multiple, near-global crises? What use poetry when the upcoming US election offers a choice between full-blown neo-fascism and its 'moderate', mumbling and shamefaced alternative? One answer is this timely collection, where poets face up to the current situation squarely and steadily. They also respond—as befits all socialists—with great reserves of sanity-preserving humour and wit. It's a truly revitalising book and one to keep handy over these next few months of predictably hectic and probably momentous political events.

—Christopher Norris

