SUMMER BLOCK [ 4 ] Sixth Grade Rock Collection
JIM BEHRLE [ 5 ] It Serves Me Right to Suffer
MACGREGOR CARD [ 7 ] What Am I Not a Maker
EMILY ANDERSON [ 12 ] Sestina
AARON BELZ [ 14 ] The Ultimate Love Poem
CODY WALKER [ 16 ] A Long Time Ago, in Italy
CHRISTOPHER SALERNO [ 17 ] Parks, Recreation
AMICK BOONE [ 18 ] Pray
ADAM CLAY [ 19 ] Grief and Its Source
CHRISTOPHER SALERNO [ 20 ] American Funeral
BUCK DOWNS [ 21 ] a drop in pleasure
STEPHANIE ANDERSON [ 22 ] All the Rascalit of the World
MARK BIBBINS [ 23 ] Confidence
OWEN BARKER [ 24 ] Selling Limes
CHRISTOPHER SALERNO [ 28 ] At the Municipal Pond
ADAM CLAY [ 29 ] Psalm for the Silence in the Air Before the Newspaper Hits the Ground
CODY WALKER [ 30 ] Haiku
CACONRAD [ 31 ] (Soma)tic Poetry Exercise & Poem

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SIXTH GRADE ROCK COLLECTION

A teddy bear is too full of meaning
to pour more meaning into
but this warm liquid thing
brimming through your workday
which you could carry
sloshing through a graveyard
now breaks like a wave
careful over polished stone
IT SERVES ME RIGHT TO SUFFER

Get ready for Mercury Retrograde

The 9/11 lights are on

Come with the fall / elf shot lame witch

We are chanting “Moloch!” “Moloch!”

Carry me from mansion to mansion

I’m gonna flush you down the toilet

Like a tampon / You can read all about

It in my new book “Endless Balls”

And Coltrane plays “Bwah Bwab Bwah Bwah Bwah”

No one should ever die because they

Can’t afford health care, or because

Of robot werewolves, or for lack of

A kung-fu grip—if you agree post

This as your status for the rest of the day

I probably only want to sleep with

You once, for like a minute

Love is an illusion designed to make you

A better consumer / She was perfect the

Way she was: shaky, tragic and smelling
Vaguely like crayon / What do people
Deserve to die from? The cooties
My students line the streets with flowers
To celebrate my descent / My friends
Think my poems are top notch, but it
Serves me right to suffer
My libido just gave two weeks’ notice
WHAT AM I NOT A MAKER

Here is your balloon tree
dog, that bicycle I made for you
was wrong—I should have made it
for the bear

Here is your balloon ear
kid, that bee I made for you
was wrong—I should have meant it
for your feet

That bicycle was wrong
And bee for you was wrong
That poem I spent on you
UNCALLED FOR
don’t apologize
inside a house of commerce, notice
what your agitations risk
efficiency at any tone
and thank you
for one empty carton of punk hay
after another, sorry
how do you say
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA in labrador
or strong provincial gallery
in yugo-scotia
every kind of song was feeling wrong
that you could listen
to expand the wrong direction, touching, out
Intend them for my stupid feet
Don’t track them that way, in
and don’t apologize for youth
inside a house of commerce, notice

Made in the shade
Late in the day
Young in the wood
Laid in the bed
Dead in the shade
Young in the shoe

Play me a tune
Never to shiver
Dead in the water

Made in the shade
Dead in the wood

Show me a tune
Made in the future

Laid in the timber
Dead in the wood

Show me a future
Tool in the shed
Lay in the water
Dead in the water
Young in the wood

Show me your tool
Made in the future

Never to shiver
Long in the shade

Young in the future
Long in the shade
Made in the wood
Never to shiver
Dead in the timber
Show me a tune

Gallery timbers!
Shiver me
Gallery timbers!

Tree bee bear    Dog bee dog
Tree bear kid    Kid dog ear

Dog bee dog
  Bee bee bee
  Bee dog bee
  Dog dog dog

Tree bear bee
  Bee dog kid
Kid dog ear
  Ear bear bee

Dog bee dog
  Ear bee ear
  Bee bee bee
  Tree tree tree

Kid kid dog
  Kid kid ear
Kid kid bee
  Kid tree tree

Dog dog kid
  Ear dog kid
Bee dog kid
  Tree tree kid

beeeeeeeeeeeeeee
dooodoodoooodog

A beeeeeeeeeeeet
  dooodoooodoog
A beeeeeeeee
doooolllllllllllloog

A beeeeeeeee
A dooooolllllloog

A A A beeeeeeeee
A A A dooooolllllloog
beeeeee
beee

beee eee eee elee eee
dooog
beee

dog

beee
feels undermined by every morning
he sleeps through. Honky is straightening
things out in Honduras. Honky intercepts.
When Honky kicks it on K Street, cocks
look up for miles around and lengthen
their lunch meetings. Honky see, Honky do
you hear what I hear. The stem of time
shoots through Honky’s shoe
and into the soil, watered by the goatsmilk
of regret. Honky’s gift theory: gimme that.
When Honky finds a business partner
to dick him over near allegory’s end,
he empties his meds into the commode.
Jeebus grant us ice hockey centerfolds
and iron pyrite winking from the wall
of an abandoned mine in which Honky
is slowly but exquisitely canarying.
When Honky drops a hankie,
please to pick it up. Honky made it
past the menacing hurdle of his poor
spelling. The gravity of Honky’s project
makes a difference everywhere he rubs it.
A backhoe ran over Honky, uneasy
to undo. Honky must occupy himself
with looking at this fucking honky.
Honky leaves on your abdomen
a hickey the shape of Sicily
and plays several other instruments
with parasitic enthusiasm. Last year,
Honky trended toward the dark meat, ate
the equivalent of 17 five-legged chickens,
but left 80 three-egg omelets undisturbed.
If a sign says yield, trust Honky to gun it.
Huffy Honkey, you can’t just repackage
a premise. The Honky is painted on both sides.
As often as cosmology and Honky intersect,
we have not yet determined how to loosen
the red shrinkwrap around our sibling sphere.
If spectacle breaks out, Honky is there,
siren screaming, a volunteer fireman on fire.
SESTINA

Yellow tree in marshlight, green.
A sparrow leaves.
My fare: comma,
a crossing to my astronomer:
my hairs on his coat—Berenice’s Coma.
Clever, deciduous love.

I slept love.
You pricked your eyes’ green
husks to spy coma,
sowed heresy among the rose leaves
with spikenard gazes. Farsighted astronomer,
beneath your feet stars sleep, dark, curled commas.

“We are cut and yet comma
space—love.”
Play doctor, play astronomer.
Dictate my pale green
bruises, stamped leaves
for writing exponents into their comas.

We fall in. Dark. Breathe sweet coma
skies, inverted commas,
hair in my mouth. He leaves.
Thanksgiving shivers. A pink bath. Love
is over. The silver cups, your forgetting green
damask: register, astronomer.

Hear, astronomer.
Tell my true coma,
moss green
with no stone, no comma:
a toothless love
who (invisible) leaves.
You are shriveling leaves
flapping on a desk on a hilltop, astronomer.
Even in the wind I love
unseen unbeing; I love coma,
a dead star growing hair, the rooted comet
who fell when our tree was green.

Bird or star or falling leaf? The astronomer
has hair in his eyes, trails of coma, love’s
heartbeats, green blinking commas.
THE ULTIMATE LOVE POEM

People had told me that you
aren’t very interesting to talk to.

Then I met you, and I have to say
that they were right, at least partly.

Some of the ways you opine
are somewhat interesting. Borderline

very. In fact, on a scale of one to Kevin
Bacon, I’d rate you at about a seven.

The thing is, who really needs this?
I’m semi-interesting enough as it is,

and I have to spend my whole life with me,
taking long lonely walks by the sea,

talking through each day’s events
in a way that even remotely makes sense.

I’m the one who puts on an Oxford shirt and slacks
and a stripey tie and Oxford shoes and then acts

like it’s unique and nobody else does it.
Adding your personal brand of semi-illiterate

chitchat to the mix would be like buttering
a lump of margarine, or spraying

it with Pam. I guess I’m admitting to being
sad enough as I am without adding

you and your running commentary.
Also—no offense—you’re kind of hairy.
SELF PORTRAIT IN A VELVET DRESS

Wrong sex, you sing.
Eh? Don’t they know what they’re doing at an autopsy?
I’ll probably have to hold my tongue, literally.

And anyway, why shouldn’t the neighbors’ dogs bark, their skinks play basketball till all hours?
Thank God it’s Friday.

Thank God for crisp white wine, and pee.
If flotillas of good lucks came trolling my way, I’d simply say: I’m sick.

Even before I was ill, I was disgusted.
Please please yourself, to paraphrase wrongly James Brown, the sill.

Sometimes when you think you’re being reasonable you are ranting, you minx.
I’m composing a bloody raw list of things I dare not mention.

That’s where the whole show ends, they say. Gone are the noses of yesterday!
A LONG TIME AGO, IN ITALY

A Portuguese sot, pumped up with Madeira,
Paid seventy-thousand lire
To schtup a cup of oxtail stew.
Distasteful, but true.
PARKS, RECREATION

Except for clearing the land by fire, not much is legal.

To create tension, debris lay on one third of an acre.

I’m wrong. This bottle was left here by kids. They are more afraid of you than you are of them, and lay flat as a banner for soldiers flying over.

We put our blanket down in the fog.

Our kite holds a mirror to nature. We’re dead. Our days are pressed into slides. I must be coming down with something—

you are standing right there in the clearing:

tight white headband, racket between your thighs.

When I’m wrong, a blush awakens in the sky.
PRAY

A delicate hole

carved in red, too raw
Started slender rotting with:
This is what I think of you
I took this with no asking

Now unhinged, what it manufactures:

Mind’s a pretty chaos, true

Said I feel like some church
then a lavender mouthful
which

My eyes smell sweet
not
spider on the ceiling

ugh I’ll never sleep

Take me for a house
with a whole lotta porch

When you
put me up there
I’m like a little mother wish

and it moves me
GRIEF AND ITS SOURCE

A classical sky made from glass and a view from above the earth,
refracted back, a view of an explosion pipelined back at itself,

back at the dull moon
still visible along the arc of noon-time.

Do I think the well has gone dry,
the bucket to be bottomless, the well’s bottom rising up and up
with the clouds in the sky slowly filling with briny rain,
meant to poison the well?

And then the spinning world ceases to—
And the memory of a lake always looms larger than the lake itself.
American Funeral

Weight I gain
 gambols
 above leather.
 Leaned against it,
 you, like
 before the bulb
 gave light
 to mise en scène,
 to anything
 from the parlor drape.
 Work, I could stay
 awake for days,
 word up
 in my mouth,
 moon over
 the Credit Union
 all alone.
dancing's version
of running
and what the fucking
thought it means

I been waiting for you to leave
ever since you came back
but not like that—

new marginal hay

dropping a card
in an old school way
accept this gift
whether or not
you like it

even by my own standards
I spent the holidays hammered
it was a time
for gratitude
and I was grateful
**ALL THE RASCALITY OF THE WORLD**

Rum assisted in making a hero

Notwithstanding their cleverest precaution
They fared sumptuously
A seemingly superhuman vigilance in ferreting

All three possession-related variables

The dog was a necessary adjunct
An early training of muscular energy
Significantly more prevalent in relatives of hoarding

My absence saved the pork
CONFIDENCE

This looks almost like tomorrow
when we make it here, “this” being
today or a month yet to be named.
When a woman comes into my store,

points at me and says to her child,
Tell the man what you want, I turn
around to see where the man is.
No use telling a child, please, no:

I’m a disaster and you break, to use
a phrase you might elsewhere have
heard, my heart. Visit me someday
in the Home for the Wildly Inarticulate,

for the Destroyed, for the Actual Man
Standing Where I Cannot Reach Him.
Don’t expect I’ve seen the epicenter
of anything, though I have been privy
to enough bizarre exchanges to do
with hygiene: henceforth I ban you,
letter-shaped body parts, from
my purview. Our last conversation

left in my mouth the taste of buckshot.
It’s early again, and late, when the birds
have taken a tone not exactly mocking
or judgmental, but something about

their exuberance is oppressive
as it follows me home. The holes
in my roof embody all the information
you require about this place. I just

make the occasional collage that falls
apart when it rains, wield my black
umbrella like a sword, and charge
as drunk soldiers would into the storm.
SELLING LIMES

I

audio branch claire does tilly
mort & matador hallal
mars moans chancy spirituals
voldemort parmesan gorillas
cue north sing rye nose veins
voice enchanter last vines
let ceiling joy commune an age
laser is loud community
jet soars sun rayon my blouse
jet succubus surly mouse

quone patient quone sentence
serial troops simple my pines
jet view queues late dramatics
my lie a son charred fortune
quite particular buttercup nature
amounts sell money nulls jets mirror
along quills burger cents droll
murray a pooh-pooh mound

jets view ben quick seasons amusement
a toy nature jets rend
ma fame enters my surf
sylvan path nourishment abbreviated
rain of rain new milestone
seven roar axe parents quantum sold
mars jets new view rises rain
a library sit certain unfortunes
olive jetpilot
a trout of service
parma delicatessen
joy pardon my view
alcohol temporary fine
owl core suppose

jet swiss ditch lassie
quotients violet
sams promise
denver hates joy
quiet rain turret
august retreat

aint fate patient
la quinta jubilee
cranes & soufflés
add sense snot party
lavender soft insane
obscure my velvet vanity

aint anazasi prairie
a double life
grandee & flourish
descend & diary
ah bourbon pharaoh
descamisados not much

a mile vague
dollarize poverty aims
quaint images
take care knots dame
essence of prize wine
laser merry

olive jetpilot
ttrue assent
poor delicates
jape not my view
alcohol temporary blinds
owls cry supreme
elle macpherson retro
who eternity
sells the sea alone
avoids the sale

anime sentiments
murmur avenue
delicate norse noodge
the jury in flames

humane suffering
communism elates
late to disengage
involved salon

pink various sails
brazen satin
the devil exhales
sands quiet maldive elfin

lapland desperation
null order
science avers pattern
supply a star

elle macpherson retrovirus
whom eternity
settles the sea
a vacant sun
quincunx void
troubadour angel
ill sage demon
vermin explains

a million quests
quiet ram
name too found
quack & folly

recognize the hour
sigil smiles your face
& visible all sky through
the chant which hell

reckon the door
signs so faint
centuries quake flower
simile families

puss-in-boots
eastern fruitcake marvel
bob saget demands
verily your suspect

chants the instant
sour helen
don’t tell bro paris
my ardent peace

the moon is vice
the sky is taint
visit me a few
obscure tunafish

joy shatters palace
joy of you & claire
some ageless esther
a northern grand

chant outside me
multiple scores for voice
past the true public
glory of place
As in a lick of yellow reeds, 
what we ferry from the mud
is no good to eat. We spread out, stuff
our fingernails with mint. Slowly, sun burns
the forehead largely mute. Longing
returns. A three-day thought held open.
There’s no finer hypnosis: a small girl
wades into the pond. The hole she’s dug
has a gold fleck in it. I have been trying
to be that gold fleck. Plenty
of game shuttles to the wildflowers
and back. The pond covers up.
**PSALM FOR THE SILENCE IN THE AIR BEFORE THE NEWSPAPER HITS THE GROUND**

Where was it that I found myself, face near the sand
looking for a grain of sand
among a million others? And did

I dare to remove a puzzle piece
from the yard so carefully pruned,

    the yard that would have seemed
savage a year ago to any passerby but myself?

Bereft of perception,
what is the ideal curtain-call
of diesel fumes and worn-out railroad ties

spoken in the hinge of darkness
outside every door? At what point

do we pause to worship
the ringing phone no one else can hear?
HAiku

I’m a mountain and
you’re a new weather pattern
that crushes mountains.
(SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISE & POEM

CONFETTI TEST KIT

Is there a deceased poet who was alive in your own lifetime but you never saw one another, and you wish you had met? A poet you would LOVE to correspond with, but it’s too late? Take notes about this missed opportunity. What is your favorite poem by this poet? Write it on unlined paper by hand (no typing). If we were gods we wouldn’t need to invent beautiful poems, and that’s why our lives are more interesting, and that’s why the gods are always meddling in our affairs out of boredom. It’s like the fascination the rich have with the poor, as Alice Notley says, “the poor are universally more interesting.” This poem was written by a human poet, and we humans love our poets, if we have any sense. Does something strike flint in you from the process of engaging your body to write this poem you know and love? Notes, notes, take notes. The poet for me in doing this exercise is Jim Brodey, and his poem “Little Light,” which he wrote in the bathtub while listening to the music of Eric Dolphy, masturbating in the middle of the poem, “while the soot-tinted noise of too-full streets echoes / and I pick up the quietly diminishing soap & do / myself again.” Take the handwritten version of the poem and cut it into tiny confetti. Heat olive oil in a frying pan and toss the confetti poem in. Add garlic, onion, parsnip, whatever you want, pepper it, salt it, serve it over noodles or rice. Eat the delicious poem with a nice glass of red wine, pausing to read it out loud, and to toast the poet, “MANY APOLOGIES FOR NOT TOASTING YOU WHEN YOU WERE ALIVE!” Take notes while slowly chewing the poem. Chew slowly so your saliva breaks the poem down before it slides into your belly to feed your blood and cells of your body. Gather your notes, write your poem.
LOVE LETTER TO JIM BRODEY

Dear Jim

for

those whose

acid trips were a success

only twice

I’ve met men who

are high exactly

as they are sober

both became my lovers

both died one like

you died Jim he

played music too

loud at parties to

gather us into a

single frequency feel

healed for the length

of a song

nothing works forever

there was something in

the air that year Jim

and you put it there

a rapt center in

pivot looking

to face

love again

learning to

accept what’s offered

without guilt

to be reminded

of nothing

my favorite day not dragging

the dead around

they’re looking

for Lorca in the Valley

of the Fallen

........................................................................................................

CACONRAD

[ 32 ]

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Franco’s thugs would understand
“developing countries” means
getting them ready for
mining diamonds drilling oil
teaching them to make a
decent cup of coffee for
visiting executives

if I’m not going
to live like this
anymore I must will
every cell to

stand away

the History of Madness
725 pages is too much to
not be normal

scorn is very
motivating

I’m vegetarian unless
angels are on the
menu mouth watering
depth fried wings
shove greasy bones in
their trumpets

the cost of
scorn is
often unexpected

I see my fascist
neighbor from downstairs
“Did my boyfriend and
I make too much
noise last night?”

his glare the
YES that keeps
me smiling
We don’t want no gangboss
We want to equalise

We don’t need no gangboss
We need to equalize

The Clash