



π publications | 2004

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Acknowledgements

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I breathe and a poem jumps up.
—Tomaz Salamun

DOGS & NEIGHBORHOODS

to Bowzer

Borzoï in Silver Lake
Bulldog in Mount Hope
Cocker Spaniel in Mount Pleasant
Beagle on Thayer
Husky on East Side
Fox Terrier in Foxpoint
Jack Russell on Charles Street
German Shepherd in North End
Pinscher in Federal Hill
Greyhound on Wickenden
Basset off Hope
Chihuahua at Angell
Corgi on Congdon
Boxer on Blackstone
Dachhund in Elmhurst
Pulitzer in Pawtucket
Alsatian in Elmwood
Dalmatian in Edgewood
Wolfhound at Kennedy Plaza
Shih-Tzu in Smith Hill
Schnitzler in Fruit Hill
Schnapps in Downtown
Schnozzle in Knob Hill
Poodle in Capitol Hill
Pug in Armory
Setter in West End
Collie in Washington Park

“CRUMBLE TOUCH”

- Always arrive in town 2 years after property prices go up?
You’ve got “CRUMBLE TOUCH”
- Always sign on the dotted line the day before interest rates come down?
You may have “CRUMBLE TOUCH”
- Always on the wrong side of the cut-off date, rate, income or city limit?
Could you be a victim of “CRUMBLE TOUCH”?
- Too old to win the Yale Younger Poets even though your poetry is FUCKING BRILLIANT? The problem may be “CRUMBLE TOUCH”
- Have all your significant sexual relationships been with alcoholics and/or the mentally ill? Ever consider “CRUMBLE TOUCH”?
- Is life an unending struggle? Chances are you’re riddled with “CRUMBLE TOUCH”
- Ever feel your luck has run out or was delivered to you in a leaky bag all those years ago? That’s “CRUMBLE TOUCH”

HELP IS AT HAND

TAKE “**RIGIDITY**”: THE FIXATIVE FOR FIXING YOUR LIFE

PUT BACK-BONE BACK INTO YOUR FINGER-TIPS

NO MORE “**CRUMBLE TOUCH**”

ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES LIKE A NINE-PIN

LAUGH IN THE FACE OF THE FATES HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

BE DEVIL-MAY-CARE LET YOUR HAIR BLOW IN YOUR FACE AS YOU

ENJOY THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE IN THE CONVERTIBLE OF THE NEW YOU!

RIGIDITY! YOUR TICKET TO PEACHINESS

CARPE DIEM WITH A GOLDEN HANDSHAKE TODAY

THE EATEN BAGEL

THE EATEN BAGEL
Is swallowed by
The Designated
OWNER
Of THE EATEN BAGEL

(THE ONE to whom THE BAGEL
Is assigned
THE ONE who has THE RIGHT)

THE EATEN BAGEL is hidden
THE EATEN BAGEL is a lump in the throat
THE EATER *of* THE BAGEL is gleeful

THE EATEN BAGEL is secreted
All over THE BODY of THE
CONVERSATION *of* THE
BAGEL'S anticipation—

In THE CURVE between
CHIN & NECK

In **THE ARM-PIT**
Between THE BREASTS

THE EATEN BAGEL is
EATEN much more thoroughly
By its ANTICIPATOR

THE ONE
Who did not
EAT THE BAGEL

Than by the one who got to **EAT**
The **EATEN BAGEL**

BONKERS

I would have gone to work today
But I AM **BONKERS**

I would have cooked a fat warm stew
But I AM **BONKERS**

I would have done my taxes
But I'M **BONKERS**

I would have caught the T to the BLT
But you see I'M **BONKERS**

I'M BONKERS

I would have worn my square suit
Cut draped tweaked flexed

Too perfectly except
I'M **BONKERS**

SHRUBS & PREPOSITIONS

Azalea—about
Blackthorn—above
Box—according to
Broom—across
Buckbrush—after
Coralberry—after
Indian Currant—after
Buddleia—against
Buttonbrush—along
Honey-balls—along
Globe-flowers—along
Pond Dogwood—along
Camellia—among
Carolina Buckthorn—amongst
Indian Cherry—amongst
Yellowwood—amongst
Polecat Tree—amongst
Cotoneaster—around
Dog-rose—at
Dogwood—because of
Field-rose—before
Forsythia—behind
Furze—below
Gorse—below
Whin—below
Gardenia—beneath
Hawthorn—beside
May—beside
Hazel—between
Holly—beyond
Honeysuckle—by
Hibiscus—by way of
Hydrangea—concerning
Japonica—despite
Juniper—down
Lilac—during
Mesquite—except
Mistletoe—for
Mormon-Tea—from
New Jersey Tea—in
Oleander—in front of
Prairie Rose—in spite of
Pyracantha—inside
Red Root—into
Rhododendron—like
Rusty Blackhaw—near

Sagebrush—of
Salt Cedar—off
French Tamarisk—off
Sand Plum—on
Chickasaw Plum—on
Shrubby St. John's Wort—onto
Skunkbush—onward
Fragrant Sumac—onward
Polecat Bush—onward
Smooth Sumac—out
Scarlet Sumac—out
Snowberry—out of
Spindle—outside
Texas Buckeye—over
Ohio Buckeye—over
White Buckeye—over
Horse Chestnut—over
Texas Persimmon—past
Texas Sophora—to
Eve's Necklace—to
Viburnum—through
Whitebrush—toward
Beebrush—towards
Wild Pear—with
Wild Privet—within
Wild Snowball—without

PUBLISHING HORSES

Kazzia Press
Wince Press
Sleepytime Books
Bosra Sham & Company
Hatoof Books
Pebble Press
Ma Biche Poetry
Fairy Footsteps Poetry Press
Mrs McArdy Books
Refuse to Bend Books
Rock of Gibraltar Press
El Gran Senor Publishing Co
Zino Books
Known Fact Press
Wollow Books
Bolkonski & Company
Bindaree Books
Red Marauder Books
Bobbyio Books
Lord Gyllene Publishing, Inc
Royal Athlete Press
Mr. Frisk Press
Rhyme N Reason Poetry Press
Last Suspect Press
Hallo Dandy Books
Red Rum Books
Well to Do Books
Gay Trip Press
Nicolas Silver Publications
Oxo Books
Mr. What & Co.
Freebooter Press
Caughoo Books
Looks Like Trouble & Co
See More Business, Inc
Master Oats Press
The Thinker Press
Dawn Run Press
Little Owl Books
Rooster Booster Books
Istabraq Books
Make A Stand Books
Flakey Dove Publishing
Royal Gait Publications
Kribensis Press
See You Then Press

Night Nurse Press
Reams of Verse Publishing
Moonshell Press
Intrepidity Press
Jet Ski Lady Press
Diminuendo Press
Circus Plume Books
Scintillate Press
Galileo Press
Oath Books
Benny the Dip Books
Lammtarra Press
Generous Press
Quest for Fame Poetry Press
Reference Point Press
Slip Anchor Books
Secret Books
Teenoso Press
Golden Fleece Publishing Corp
Shergar Press
Henbit Books
The Minstrel Press
Grundy Press
Nijinsky Press
Larkspur Press
Hard Ridden Books
Never Say Die Books
Nimbus Press
Airborne Books
Mutafaweq Poetry Press
Nedawi Press
Classic Cliche Books
User Friendly Books
Touch Wood Books
Cut Above Books
Light Cavalry Press
Son of Love Books
Snurge Press

TITLES FOR FUTURE WORKS

Buckwheat Cakes.
Little Breeches.
The Dead Baby.
Jim Bludsoe.
Two Sharpshooters.
Three Saints.
We are coming, Father.
Poet Let Loose.
Topside Gullah.
My Little Wife.
Pat and Biddy.
Adoon the Lane.
Done For.
Autumn.
Moss.
The Old Canoe.
Three Bugs.
Smack in School.
Desolate.

NEW YEAR LETTERS

1

Martha,

It is a long time since we saw you. The cold is terrible. John is engaged.
God bless and best wishes for 1002.

Avery

2

Jim,

Do you remember "coby"? We had a laugh.
Very best wishes for 957.

Harold

3

Nixie,

Deb said to write you. You know what I want to say. What is your answer?
The very best in 1604.

Frank

4

Dervilleen,

When will we see you? Bring butter if you can. God bless and best wishes for
1371.

Kratz

5

Joe,

Tyrone is upset with you about the horse. There's not much to do here.
Happy 1749.

Campbell

6

Genna,

If you get this say so. We missed you at Christmas. Take care and best for 1410.

Anka

7

Millie,

Your violin case is being sent with Bertha. Can you collect it. Happy New Year and all the best in 2031.

Terence

8

Francis,

I think you should listen to Molly. What's it like there? With every good wish for 1916.

Sarah

9

John,

Do you like these "boots"? I thought they'd suit fine. Thinking of you and wishing you all the best in 1799.

Grant

MEET STEVE

This is Steve. Don't let the Anglo name fool you. Steve's name is really Stefan. And don't let that fool you either. Steve looks a lot like Franky G. in *Wonderland*. Uh-huh. Steve is a fireman and a realtor, both full-time.

Steve is a good-tempered man. He's not one to whine. Steve is the sort of guy who puts others' needs before his own. You know the type: he'll bring you chicken noodle soup in bed even when he's got the flu himself. He's just kind & generous & considerate. I know guys like Steve are a dime a dozen but for me there's just something kinda special about Steve.

Steve is also a part-time Dell technician. If you spill ginger ale on your laptop, for example, Steve's your man. Steve runs a workshop from his backyard. There's very little he can't fix. Computers, cars, plumbing, electrical work: all fun & games to Steve. Steve is willing & able to help with light construction, insulation, window winterizing, any sort of painting & decoration, and of course—hauling out the garbage. He's a good cook and, from his time in the Navy, knows how to keep a kitchen—and a house—spick and span. Steve might be the only man you ever meet who'll gladly clean a toilet—and do a more thorough job than you.

Of course it's not all hard work & decency with Steve. He's a demon in bed. You know the sort of strong, powerful guy who's also very gentle. Very passionate, very sexual, very loving, very affectionate. He's one of those guys who can't stop cuddling. The only thing he likes more than a cuddle is a good chat. Or better still a simultaneous cuddle & chat. He's a hell of a listener, is Steve. Probably his strongest point however is his insatiable appetite for sex.

And he's a wonderful father. You know, one of those very loving, gentle men who spend time with their children, trying to put the little tykes first. I'm not saying it's easy but he's always there for them, even with the fireman and realtor jobs, the workshop in the garage, and bubblebaths with me. He's just a truly great father. You know the type.

Well I guess you probably know a million guys like Steve so I won't go on and on about it. That's it from me.

PITCH

Okay so there's this poet—Gerald Manley Hopkins—who's a priest, a convert, his family are a little starchy about that, and he's marooned in Ireland for part of the movie. He does his best to be Welsh in Wales and Irish in Ireland but ends up dead of exhaustion and damp instead. And there's this other poet—Robert Bridges—and he's really mediocre and bombastic but what do you know he's incredibly successful and feted and honored, poet laureate and everything, and get this: Gerald and Robert carry on a lifelong friendship. What do you think? Two poets, one (Bridges (hey maybe we could get Jeff Bridges to play him)) honored in his lifetime and completely forgotten now more or less. And the other (Hopkins (Bono? Ralph Fiennes? Marty Feldman? Martin Short?)) completely obscure in his lifetime but blazing like an acetylene torch right through the 20th century to the 21st. Can you see it? Ralph Fiennes as GMH slaving away grading papers in the depths of Newman House in the coldest wettest winter in Irish history. OK maybe uh John Lynch as Fr. Hopkins. Maybe uh that Heathcliffy guy Rufus Sewell. Hey maybe Helena Bonham-Carter! That'd be something. Well definitely Bridges as Bridges. Sort of like *Thelma & Louise* slash *Chariots of Fire* slash *Fairies at the Bottom of the Garden* or whatever that movie was called—hey man this is **DYNAMITE!**

PITCH

Okay so there's this woman, let's say Catherine Zeta-Jones, and she's buying a house, so she finds this house and it's really beautiful, everything you could want so she goes get a mortgage—no hang on—actually here's the thing: she's already pre-approved. So get this: *she's already pre-approved* but she doesn't have a realtor. She's found the house by herself. So okay now she has to find a realtor. That's the sub-plot. There's this realtor and that realtor—four realtors—and none of them works out until eventually she finds Sam (think Matthew Broderick so the chemistry's not there but there's a Johnny Depp type later on). Meanwhile the results of the inspection and the appraisal come in and they're both looking good. Okay so picture this: Catherine Zeta-Jones is saving furiously, can't even buy lunch anymore so she passes out at the check-out in *Au Bon Pain* just as she's counting pennies for coffee and she's revived by, you got it, the Johnny Depp type who is actually a banker standing in line. So he has the inside scoop on interest rates about to go down. They have lunch and she refinances at a better rate. Then the bomb hits: property taxes go up and Catherine's budget is out of whack. So Catherine and Matthew and Johnny all go down to City Hall where they meet with endless officials. Well that's really material for the sequel actually. The sequel is more of an action flick. This one is straight romance. What do you think?

GO TO SLEEP

Go to sleep suddenly
Go to sleep pronto
Go to sleep now
Go to sleep
Sleep!
Immediately!
Go to sleep
Sleep Sleep Sleep
Schlepp to sleep
Subito
Go to sleep
Sleep now
High-jump into sleep
Vault to sleep
Canter into sleep
Gallop to sleep
Quickly
I say do a 100-meter dash to sleep
Race to sleep
Do not collect \$100
Sleep!
Do not pack bags
Fly to sleep
Carry on your baggage
Do not check in
Check out
Now
Hurtle into sleep
Take the Concorde
Wrestle sleep down
Rummage
Tunnel into sleep
Leap
No kidding
Get there
Git
Vamoose
GO!

DOWNTOWN CROSSING

A cup of coffee can be a mother.
A cigarette can be a mother.
A blanket can be a mother.
A wool cap can be a mother.
A coat can be a mother.
A booth can be a mother.
A warm grating can be a mother.
You can be your own mother.

TO CONQUER FEAR

Put a big prize on the other side of fear:

Heaven
On the other side of death

Home
On the other side of the snowstorm

An address
On the other side of this tangle of streets

ALRIGHT

Dave's right & you're right Dave's right & you're right & I'm right
We're all right & I'm right & you're right & we're all alright &
Dave's a bit of all right & alright I'll write rightio Dave'll write &
I'll write & you'll write we'll all write alright that's right rightio
Dave'll write right-o & I'll write rightio & you'll write that's right
we'll all write rightio that's right we'll write right Dave'll write
& I'll write & you'll write & you're a bit of alright you're alright
right-o I'll write right you are Write Dave'll right Dave's alright
I'm right & alright & I'll write-write right alright I'll write right
That's right Dave Dave you you I I write right rightio that's right

STOP

THAT'S ENOUGH **STOP** I HAVE FOUND EVERYTHING I'M INTERESTED IN **STOP**
FREDERICK DOUGLASS FLUXUS FAMINE CONCRETE VISUAL SOUND KINETIC
CYBERNETIC POETRY HOPKINS SWENSON TOLSON HUGHES REZNIKOFF
ITALY MAINE NATIVITY PAINTING LUINI COLOR CHILDBIRTH METAPHOR
EXAMPLE RHETORIC CATEGORIES CICADAS KOSOVO IRAQ **STOP** IRAQ **STOP**
IRAQ **STOP** I HAVE TO HIBERNATE NOW A THOUSAND YEARS I AM MOVING
INTO THE INTERNET **STOP** I AM MOVING INTO THE FUNNY FURRY HILLS OF
MY BLOG **STOP** I AM FLEEING FROM LIFE OUT THERE MIGRATING TO LIFE IN
HERE **STOP** WHERE EVERYTHING IS FLUID & SLICK & SHADY & DUSKY & FLAT

TRADITIONAL~IRISH~POEM

The next poem is a poem I got from a great fiddle-player James Kelly of Capel Street one night in Inis Oirr when he was out there playing with John Blake, a wonderful musician too. You might hear hints of a poet who has influenced us all Willie Yeats who had a castle there in Thoor Ballylee many's the grand night we had there with George and Anne and Michael a great family—that was before the summer school. And I'm indebted of course to Paddy Kavanagh from Iniskeen and Baggot Street, the sweetest melodeon player you ever did hear that used to play there up in McDaid's and Nesbitt's I was there hanging on every note. And all the great sessions around Dublin and Dundalk that are recorded on the old 78s I remember the excitement when a new batch of them would be brought home and fair play to all the men and women who collected them. It's through them I heard the music of Allen Ginsberg of Newark New Jersey and Alan Dugan from Brooklyn New York and Allen Grossman in Baltimore there and Alan Sondheim of Manhattan Island and all the Allens, a magnificent family, second only to the Alices. And Charles Reznikoff a great walker also of New York, and Harry Crane from Chagrin Falls and Susie Howe, one of the Howes and Fanny her sister, felicitous poets both of them, and May Swenson that we all loved and Muriel too, and Langston Hughes up there in Harlem, I tried to get him to come to Áras Éanna many's the time but no dice and Gus Young in London and Trevor Joyce who published Gus and Trevor's Uncle Jimmy a truly great poet though not necessarily when he said so and Marcel Duchamp and Pierre Reverdy and Artie Rimbaud and Paul Muldoon his *Incantata* was only massive and Paul Celan with his *Todesfuge* and Paulie Durcan from Leinster Square a very prolific poet and all the Pauls, another great family. And Tom Raworth God bless him and Hugo Ball and Randolph Healy from outside Bray and Micheal O hAirtneid from Newcastlewest no longer with us unfortunately but a wonderful poet and player we remember fondly and Ger Hopkins that used work up there in Newman House on his sprung rhythm and Eavan out in Dundrum many's the cup of coffee I had at her kitchen counter and Crystal Williams I played with her in the Big Red Barn one time at Cornell it was powerful and Rachel Loden in San Francisco and Gabriel Gudding with whom I wrote *The Clio Reel* some of you may know it we're still dancing to that one. So for all the men and women of poetry and John Donne here goes:



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is the author of two plays, a short book on James Joyce, two books of interviews with Irish painters, and a collection of poetry, *Nelson & The Huruburu Bird* (Wild Honey Press 2003). She was a journalist for eight years, in Ireland and the United States. She earned a PhD in Theory & Cultural Studies from Purdue University in 2001 and her current research concerns

Frederick Douglass's lecture tour of Ireland, 1845-1846. She is an assistant professor of English teaching poetry at Rhode Island School of Design. If you ever want a poem she's got one for you.

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