

**D O N      B E R G E R****Poetry & Society: A *Cha* Reading****The Bear's Name Is Francis Donoghue**

The time had come to liberate Norfolk, the time of why I am telling you.  
You could see how the wind was shaking all the cameras,  
The natural movement of air along the ground. My horse  
Experienced this conversation and forgot his running,  
Forgot his hay, forgot any thought of bed.  
Over the far, fat, miscellaneous, life-murdering, trouble-seeking  
Land caked with yellow, the water wanted to float the foot,  
While the birds flew around inside the wagon  
Making even more weight with the punch of air from their wings.  
So that the missing weight of their bodies didn't mean as much.  
Then someone came out of the birdgrass  
Whomping the trailhead with a hammer.  
The world was always a little raw, but the field was safe in it.  
I need to do more with people, I said.  
How many people have read *Moby Dick* so far  
This past year? Seven? I said, and the light lit up  
Like butter mixed with margarine.

Words sprung from their definitions  
Returned, from the arm hair, from the ribs  
Between now and the next time we come.  
In the gray sky peeled too quickly,  
Q with his trumpet belted calling to see if I'd failed  
As much as he hoped I had.  
The surface in blue, dark yellow, deep level green,  
The waves up top sweeping down the other way,  
The woods a great cross between having nothing to do  
And feeling a song coming on.  
Sometimes a man peeped out  
From behind the old label, in Kane, black cherry capital  
Of the world. I thought of the rain hitting, the night hard to pin,  
Night into which music could be written,  
Of such parties as battlefields, of June in the heart.

## Written While Walking

It used to be that people  
Were enough—you could show them  
Something, a piece of marble  
Lifted from a can of suds,  
And they still might  
Say something to you  
That would stick  
And you'd be glad.

In a beautiful room  
My feeling runs  
And I remember the day I didn't  
Have to be as liquid  
As you were good,  
Or half as brave.

But now the bee is in the other  
Bonnet. People die  
Living for what they don't do,  
Trees that seem to trip over themselves  
In an effort to say they're occupied.

It's true, isn't it, the numbness  
In my ring finger hasn't spread  
To my arm in fifteen years, but the breathing  
I've learned is only good for as long as you can remember it.

I lie on the couch  
In the afternoons, thinking of the parts  
Of days when I could dial  
And a real person would answer.

Do you remember that time  
I called and invited you to have something to eat  
And we both agreed how busy we both are, or were?  
I'm not even sure that it still stands.  
I see you speed past my house  
On foot or in the car  
We talked about, that you said you might have to save up and buy.  
Still our minds like to take us places  
Where we don't live.

## Superman

Marlon Brando is Superman's real father  
 But when the baby lands on the earth, forming a crater,  
 He's adopted by Glenn Ford and his wife  
 And Glenn Ford has a heart attack and dies  
 Before the boy ever becomes Superman,  
 Who then goes over the top of the earth  
 Through ice and stops by an icy stream  
 And throws his kryptonite, and Brando his father  
 Appears to him and says You don't remember me  
 The first day Superman's shot at  
 In New York he catches the bullet

He passes Lois Lane a note that says YOUR HOUSE AT NIGHT  
 I HOPE, and when he flies in she's waiting there  
 At the table in formal dress  
 Don't move, she says, no, you can move!  
 She starts to light a cigarette but Superman says she shouldn't smoke  
 So she stops  
 Superman's shy, but attentive  
 She asks him ten or fifteen questions  
 She writes down the word Krypton  
 Why are you here?  
 The bedroom over her shoulder  
 Then he flies, holding her while she covers her eyes  
 Soon she drops her hands  
 At the Twin Towers  
 And the Statue of Liberty, whose head they stare at

New York Harbor, summer, 1978  
 He lets go of her, she falls  
 He dives down, catches her  
 She talks to herself  
 And to him, through us  
 Can you read my mind?  
 Can you picture the things I'm thinking of?  
 Like a spaceship, the couple reads each others' minds  
 A wait for the kiss  
 It doesn't come for another hour  
 Clark Kent's at the door  
 Nervous about tonight

And almost confesses

At the very end Lois dies  
But Superman does fifty fast laps around the earth  
That starts spinning backwards  
Until everything goes back in time  
To the point where she's alive  
And they apologize to each other and he flies off again  
After awhile when reality resumes its plea  
Lois Lane eventually asks him, Who are you?  
And he doesn't say Clark Kent, or Superman or Christopher Reeve  
His face hides the same weakness yours and mine does

### **At 10:38 You Wrote**

The nose prepares air for the lungs  
And zebras don't get as depressed  
As we do, their stress attenuated  
By their dying in the leopard's jaw.

When I am not invited to the White House  
You are not invited to the White House.  
When I laugh at something awful  
You open your mouth, too,

And the same not-so-terrifying noise climbs out.

## A Hatred of Cars

Suspected of being Egyptian, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Chinese, Japanese, Welsh,  
Irish,  
I sat in the movie theater, and later waited for my food.

I hope that when I remember my life, not the goal in life, like ice  
Turned back to water, that I'll live quietly in its season for once, with music especially.

One of my poems came back with mustard on it, another was bent at the bottom  
Where somebody might have gripped it, as if to shrink it, because they liked it.

I don't know what love is, I mean I do know what it is, but when I say it I don't feel  
Like a poet anymore, so that it comes out, as though people are pleased with it.

I'm glad you were born, the actor said on the screen, while bombing.  
I will always be there for you, I said to myself.

People with faces in their chests, now that's  
Greek, and they are supposed to be in heaven or else in hell.

Life is too short, but not short enough, or else it's too long, you get the wrong thing  
On your plate, and people get mad at you.

I might even seem to exploit the slightest amount of warmth.  
The light falls on the arm of the couch, just as it does in real life.

## The Guide

So I asked the guide how did you become  
a guide and he said I had  
to learn to walk with pants and shoes,  
so the first one I watched who was wearing

shoes had a limp so I watched him and walked  
with a limp, when I had the shoes  
till someone someone else a tourist asked me  
What's wrong with your leg and there was nothing

wrong with it so I started walking without it the limp  
Then I got the pants too and started  
walking with both of them the shoes and the pants  
got better at it started to teach myself

English saying "May I...?" and repeating  
"May I...?" to ask if I could  
go with them into the forest, got better and better,  
learned the species

and wrote them down the species of the birds  
I started to watch with my grandfather  
who never wrote the names who only  
wanted to know where they were

## The Ball

For you to make  
7 million then  
be suspended and lose  
95,000,  
three days' pay.  
What was I  
Playing? I hate  
Basketball, I hate

Baseball, everything  
Except the ball.

## As Possible

All you can think is  
"When is he going to kiss her?"  
Even while he's out killing people  
With his arrows.  
Cate Blanchett's  
Lady Marian to the t,  
Out ploughing the field  
Of Nottingham, and worrying where all the  
Seed's going to come from.

From overhead it always shows where they are  
On the coast of France or in a village  
About to burn. Life looks  
Hard there, the father can't see  
And tells Robin to come closer  
So he can see him, meaning with his fingers  
Feel his face.

And even when he Robin puts Marian's booted  
Foot into the stirrup, and she feels the vibe,  
They look at each other and keep riding  
Places, next to each other. More on this  
As it comes. Friar Tuck has bees and makes  
The honeyed wine. They put a nice piece  
Of cloth over the crown when Robin hands it  
To the queen, that the King is dead, that's it.  
Where men sing, bouncing around.  
They ride through the surf and somewhere  
Get the horses into the boat.

## Notifications

Jared Corner marked himself safe during Hurricane Matthew—South Carolina.  
 Jeffrey Presser Art shared Harried Devil's event with me: Walter P. Cisco Prize  
 (deadline Moon 1).

Harriet Patricia Ciprio shared a link.

Mick Custer shared a link.

Kevin G. Destani invited me to his old Page, **Few Empty Toes.**

Mia Hoskins shared **The Snaymico Review's** photo.

Did I know David Pomegrant?

Did I know Jim Daily Heal?

Did I know Sheila Pounder-Crase?

Did I know Bob Jenerko?

Sammy Newton commented on her photo.

Did I know Shenai Preed?

Did I know Jana Income?

Nelly Lojack updated her status.

Jeb O'Broom added a new photo.

Hans Pleasureman invited me to like his Page **Remove.**

Sallycaroline Thonkton shared a link.

Shumpton Mikolofskin invited me to his event **A Table Brother and Shane Oldman  
 at Usual's Nooks and Feathers.**

Jess Onion shared his event with you: **Open-faced Noon: Scenery Silent from Bill  
 Quarter and Lenny Ace.**

Did I know Eileen Varastus?

Hoosan Orly added a new photo.

Principal Laundryjuice was at Joint, Utah.

Molotov Wee Churchingness updated his status.

Wen Jivoltree commented on **Quisty Ainge's** photo.

Manual Polis invited me to **Sea Refusal.**

Barley Drick updated his status.

Did I know Mistard Hizzly?

Did I know Zebra Flowshot?

Piston McEenson also commented on **Eunice Perch's** status.

Houston Perch liked my comment: "Epistolary handprint—onerous number..."

One Day Porch invited me to like his rock **Kazoo.**

Weff Ropplon invited me to like Weff Ropplon.

Love Lonny invited me to like his Page **Your Bones Aren't Me.**

Did I know Legg Jibb?

Shoepile Rotors liked my comment "Your naps!"

Shishpile Rotors posted on my Skinline.

Rushton Rotors liked a photo I am buried with.

### **If I Say Something (an excerpt)**

If you say something and I turn my head, it means I don't know what you're going to say.

If you force a laugh, it can usually turn into real laughter.

If you forget which season it is, you don't have to ask someone.

If there are only one or two stars and maybe only one planet, know that a lot more is coming.

If your notebook is full, go and buy another of the exact same kind.

If you don't know what's going to happen next, think of what just happened then split from that

and take a breath and wait there.

If you're undecided or skeptical about art, keep going, make more art.

If Rome is the capital of Italy, among other things, there is also the city of Rome in New York.

If I'm walking fast I'm not in any real hurry.

If I open the Bible I'm reading it as literature.

If an earthquake comes I already know what an earthquake feels like.

If it's good in summer it's going to be even better in fall.

If there's a topic you like, choose it.

If someone else has already chosen your idea, stick with it, don't bury it.

If you're writing for an outside audience, don't contact them beforehand, go right at it.

If you write with different purposes, dress as you normally do.

If you pass an old milestone there will be a number chiseled on it.

If you think it's been two weeks and it's really one been week, it's normal, there's nothing wrong.

### **Spirited**

For girls to have the same as boys, for millions  
 Of girls tragedy pumped with unforgettable names,  
 Dropping the age from fourteen to ten, email  
 From the afterlife. The last day of your life

Wasn't as sad for you, you said, on the taxi's  
Quick ride. Smoke rises in the hand-held  
Area known as the air. They did shoot it down  
And the Earth flipped out, frozen Jesus,  
At the fight for the airport. Propelled by dream  
The economy shot ahead, key witnesses  
From the dismal winter begged for rest, consumers  
Traded wallets. The risk of staying together  
Will live on and keep water alive,  
With no severe fuel, or the smashing of shrines.

### **The Nice Woman Phones**

The nice woman phones the small man.

The little sister knows the ugly man.

The loud man visits the small mother.

The large boy buys the pretty picture.

The nice, beautiful woman eats the hot noodles.

The loud teacher drinks cold cola.

The nice woman knows the ugly man.

The rich man visits the loud mother.

The beautiful woman eats the hot noodles.

The nice teacher drinks cold cola.

### **How to Be a Man**

Stay strong on your hind legs, know your front legs are really arms, the paws on the front legs hands. Know you're from home, and know you know. If you're from the world, look down at don't be afraid. Stay kind, look it up in the books, fearless, kind, don't torture anyone, don't smell, don't cheat.

### **You Have Nothing to Do**

You have nothing to do.  
You don't worry too much.  
You make me laugh  
at inappropriate times.

### **Wallet on the Bus**

I left my wallet on the bus and  
the bus brought it back.

### **Hanoi**

Someone lights a fire in a busy lane,  
the singer sings and rolls his giant speaker across the road.

Should Someone Tell the Man to Take His Feet Off the Couch in the Reading  
Room?

*for Andrew Miller*

Should someone tell the man to take his feet off the couch in the reading room?  
Yes.

### **Rita's Hand**

What about the night  
When I was holding Rita's hand  
And by mistake kissed my own?

### **Fallon Said**

She's too beautiful  
for Baltimore.

### **The Heart**

Athena—that was her  
name—told me at the doctor's  
that the heart or parts of it  
the ventricles from sadness do turn  
downward so it really breaks.

### **The Strongman**

The strongman was found  
in the same pit as the acrobat.

### **Where**

Where does everyone  
come from?  
Why did I think France?

### **I Care**

I care if the guy in the checkered shirt  
walks into the cockpit.

### **For Baltimore**

The monkey is quiet for Baltimore.

### **Home**

I come from hills  
of sub shops.

### **Blue Girl**

Blue Girl, Blue Girl,  
they named a beer for you.

Baltimore Ceasefire: Sign in a Window

NOBODY KILL ANYONE  
MAY 11-13

16

T-shirt

To like everything or even love  
i.e. the word "background" on a t-shirt all in lower case  
or DUNK LIFE

Clouds Gang Up

Clouds gang up on the sun.  
The hills are really social.

Thank You

Thank you for the note and for returning the keys.  
Not sure who you are but I absolutely love your handwriting and am  
wondering if I could hire you to do some lettering for a graphic art  
project I am working on. Not kidding!

Pizza Necklace

Tomorrow morning  
there will be a new president.

Now I See

17

Now I see some ocean  
through the trees. I think I hear "Mike Tyson,"  
but they're speaking Chinese.

Natalie

I miss someone  
but I don't know who.

Earth

What is your favorite planet, Earth? So is mine.

I Met

I met  
no one this year, but now that I think about it,  
birds still sing in the bare branches.  
A car pulls up that isn't mine.