

METAMERICANA

SETH ABRAMSON

BLAZEVOX[BOOKS]

Buffalo, New York

Metamericana
by Seth Abramson
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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Trigger warning for 9/11. Trigger warning for ableism. Trigger warning for abusive relationship. Trigger warning for ageism. Trigger warning for alcoholism. Trigger warning for amputation. Trigger warning for animal abuse. Trigger warning for animal death. Trigger warning for animal violence. Trigger warning for blood (gore). Trigger warning for blood (minor). Trigger warning for bodies/corpses. Trigger warning for bones (animal). Trigger warning for bullying. Trigger warning for car accident. Trigger warning for child abuse. Trigger warning for childbirth. Trigger warning for classism. Trigger warning for cyberbullying. Trigger warning for death/dying. Trigger warning for death penalty. Trigger warning for dental trauma. Trigger warning for domestic abuse (emotional). Trigger warning for domestic abuse (physical). Trigger warning for domestic abuse (sexual). Trigger warning for domestic abuse (verbal). Trigger warning for drinking (recreational). Trigger warning for drug use (intravenous). Trigger warning for drug use (prescription). Trigger warning for ED (anorexia). Trigger warning for ED (binge eating). Trigger warning for ED (bulimia). Trigger warning for fatphobia. Trigger warning for forced captivity. Trigger warning for graphic sex. Trigger warning for guns. Trigger warning for Holocaust (discussion). Trigger warning for Holocaust (images). Trigger warning for homophobia. Trigger warning for hospitalization. Trigger warning for hostages. Trigger warning for hunting. Trigger warning for incest. Trigger warning for insects. Trigger warning for kidnapping. Trigger warning for medical procedures. Trigger warning for misgendering. Trigger warning for murder. Trigger warning for murder (attempted). Trigger warning for Nazism. Trigger warning for needles. Trigger warning for overdose (accidental). Trigger warning for overdose (fatal). Trigger warning for overdose (intentional). Trigger warning for pedophilia. Trigger warning for poisoning. Trigger warning for pregnancy. Trigger warning for prostitution. Trigger warning for PTSD. Trigger warning for racism. Trigger warning for rape. Trigger warning for rape (attempted). Trigger warning for scarification. Trigger warning for self-harm (cutting). Trigger warning for serious injury. Trigger warning for sexism. Trigger warning for sexual abuse. Trigger warning for skeletons. Trigger warning for skulls. Trigger warning for slurs. Trigger warning for smoking. Trigger warning for snakes. Trigger warning for spiders. Trigger warning for suicidal thoughts. Trigger warning for suicide. Trigger warning for suicide (attempted). Trigger warning for swearing. Trigger warning for terminal illness. Trigger warning for terrorism. Trigger warning for transphobia. Trigger warning for trigger warnings. Trigger warning for violence. Trigger warning for vomit. Trigger warning for warfare.

GENESIS

Much made of little. Little made of knowledge. Knowledge made of scholarship. Scholarship made of textbooks. Textbooks made of terms. Terms made of semesters. Semesters made of weeks. Weeks made of days. Days made of decisions. Decisions made of mistakes. Mistakes made of love. Love made of mistakes. Mistakes made of blindness. Blindness made of darkness. Darkness made of curtains. Curtains made of dresses. Dresses made of flags. Flags made of nations. Nations made of wars. Wars made of beliefs. Beliefs made of Bibles. Bibles made of envelopes. Envelopes made of dust jackets. Dust jackets made of manuscripts. Manuscripts made of skin. Skin made of genetics. Genetics made of chromosomes. Chromosomes made of DNA. DNA made of nucleotides. Nucleotides made of adenine. Adenine made of $C_5H_5N_5$. $C_5H_5N_5$ made of molecules. Molecules made of atoms. Atoms made of protons, neutrons, and electrons. Protons and neutrons made of quarks and gluons. Quarks and gluons made of guesses. Guesses made of uncertainty. Uncertainty made of humanity. Humanity made of God. God made of Bibles. Bibles made of paper. Paper made of trees. Trees made of wood. Wood made of rings. Rings made of silver. Silver made of moonlight. Moonlight made of fantasy. Fantasy made of cleverness. Cleverness made of ridicule. Ridicule made of Hondas. Hondas made of steel. Steel made of Superman. Superman made of Marvel. Marvel made of DC. DC made of politicians. Politicians made of turkey. Turkey made of banks. Banks made of efficacy. Efficacy made of ink. Ink made of blood. Blood made of chocolate. Chocolate made of God. God made of Bibles. Bibles made of laws. Laws made of men. Men made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women.

WII

We're like Anthony and Cleopatra. We're like Lewis and Clark. We're like Leopold and Loeb. We're like Abbott and Costello. We're like Gilbert and Sullivan. We're like John and Paul. We're like John and Yoko. We're like Sonny and Cher. We're like Ike and Tina. We're like Diana and Dodi. We're like Thelma and Louise. We're like Jay and Silent Bob. We're like Batman and Robin. We're like Holmes and Watson. We're like Bert and Ernie. We're like Ken and Barbie. We're like Bugs and Daffy. We're like Beavis and Butthead. We're like Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum. We're like Hansel and Gretel. We're like Dick and Jane.

We're like Jack and Jill. We're like Jan & Dean. We're like Simon & Garfunkel. We're like Captain & Tennille. We're like Cheech & Chong. We're like Donny & Marie. We're like Hall & Oates. We're like Starsky & Hutch. We're like Mork & Mindy. We're like Laverne & Shirley. We're like Penn & Teller. We're like Bill & Ted. We're like Ben & Jerry. We're like Tom & Jerry. We're like Chip & Dale. We're like Ren & Stimpy. We're like Pinky & the Brain. We're like Itchy & Scratchy. We're like Terrance & Phillip.

We're like Rocky & Bullwinkle. Like Bonnie and Clyde. Like Harold and Maude. Like Regis and Kathie Lee. Like Arnold and Willis. Like Zach and Screech. Like Urkel and Laura. Like Will and Carlton. Like Dorian and Turk. Like Jim and Dwight. Like Karen and Jack. Like Sam and Neal. Like George and Barbara. Like Robert and Claudia. Like all my exes and me.

Like AT&T. S&M. T&A. M&M. A&E. B&N. S&P. A&M. D&D. A&P. B&B. P&G.P&J. R&R. D&G. H&M. M&A. A&F. P&W. B&E. A&S. W&M. J&J. B&O.

OMG. CEO. IBM. FYI. TMI. FAQ. KKK. MLB. GMC. TNT. TSA. DOA. MMA. DWI. EMT. FCC. LLC. AIG. XXX. PVC. PNC. ENT. NIH. TWA. RPI. TDK. AGI. OMB. US.

ID. AC. TD. IQ. HD. GE. FX. GQ. DQ. AA. NA. BJ. BM. MD. KO. ET. OD. AI. LP. RN. IP. VD. YA. AV. EZ. XX. NH. MS. JP. LB. SB. PA. WC. MJ. AD.

CC. Id. Pi. Bi. Ed. Op. Lo. Da. Ba. Ay. Oy. Um. Uh. Ah. Hm. Mm. Er. Eh. Aw. Om. Sh.

THE HISTORY OF DAIRY QUEEN

- 1939: Hitler invades Poland.
- 1940: First Dairy Queen® store opens in Joliet, Illinois.
- 1949: DQ® introduces malts and shakes.
- 1951: Banana splits appear on the DQ® menu.
- 1953: First DQ® store opens in Canada.
- 1955: The Dilly® Bar debuts.
- 1957: The Dairy Queen®/Brazier® concept is introduced.
- 1958: Dairy Queen®/Brazier® food products are introduced.
- 1961: The Mr. Misty® slush treat cools throats in the warm South.
- 1962: International Dairy Queen, Inc. (IDQ) is formed.
- 1965: First radio advertising sends out DQ® message 169 million times weekly.
- 1966: First national TV commercial, “Live a Little,” is aired.
- 1968: The Buster Bar® Treat bursts forth.
- 1972: First DQ® store opens in Japan.
- 1973: Say “Scrumpdillyishus®!” and get a Peanut Buster® Parfait for 49¢.
- 1979: The DQ® system debuts in the Middle East.
- 1980: “We Treat You Right®” tagline debuts.
- 1985: More than 175 million Blizzard® Treats sold in its first year.
- 1989: Dairy Queen® ranked America’s number one treat chain.
- 1991: First DQ® store opens in Mexico.
- 1995: DQ® Treatzza Pizza® and Chicken Strip Basket make their debuts.
- 1999: Pecan Mudslide® Treat is introduced.
- 1999: A DQ® operator builds the world’s largest blended treat (5,316.6 pounds).
- 2001: Crispy Chicken Salad is introduced.
- 2001: The first DQ Grill & Chill® restaurant opens in Chattanooga, Tennessee.
- 2002: Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban manages a Texas DQ® for the day.
- 2003: The Blizzard® of the Month program kicks off.
- 2004: The MooLatte® Frozen Coffee Flavored Beverage line debuts.
- 2004: Award-winning DQ® commercials can be seen throughout the country.
- 2005: GrillBurgers™ are introduced to consumers on national TV.
- 2005: On June 21, a new World’s Largest Blizzard® Treat is built in Springfield, Massachusetts. It weighs 8,224.85 pounds and is 22 feet tall.

#SADTOYS

Careless Bears. Not Wheels. Gobots. Optimus Meh. Tickle-Me Eeyore. Speak and Autocorrect. Mr. Pothead. Arby's Dream House. Taser Tag. Managed Care Bears. Upper G.I. Joe. Where Did He Touch You Elmo. Tickle Me Emo. Risk-Averse. Solitaire Confinement. Serf Village. Microscopic Machines. Speak and Dwell.

Simon Begg. Garfunkel Says. Raggedy Andy Dick. Sobby Horse. Barbie Dream Doublewide. Her Little Pony. Average Average Princess. Etsy Sketch. Baby's First Dali. Easy Bake Dutch Oven. Goodbye Kitty. Chatty Catheter. The #Sadtoys game is very revealing of your age, FYI. Sullen Putty. Mr. Potato. Rainbow Spite. FIFA 1939. Teenage Mutant Ninjas. Sitar Hero. Lego Pompeii. Lego Alderaan. Mii. Ping. Yo. Mousse Trap. Sad toys are dirty ones; remember that, ladies. Gobots. (Amirite?)

Nixon Logs. Pogs. Ex-box. Xbox 180. Sega Saturn. Sega Leviticus. Sega Dreamcast. Settlers for Catan. Oregon Trail. (Seriously, go back and play it—everyone dies of terrible shit.) Hungry Hungry Humans. France France Revolution. Matchbox Le Cars. Civil War Operation. Operation: Iraqi Freedom. Army Men on Leave. Junior Shake Weight. Tragic Eightball. Class-Action Figures. iTouchy. Sim Detroit. Topio
#Trending Topics: 1: #SadToys 2: #CraigforCongress 3: #ThisCouldBeUsButImFat
#RedNation #wcv #MattsVideoOftheWeek Sorry, This Doesn't Usually Happen.

Really Sorry! Unsuccessful Operation. Inoperable. Life With An Incurable Disease. Autopsy. A Ouija board to bring dad back. The good die young, and the ungrateful have everything. Cribbage. Pick-up Stick. Kick the Crayon. Don't Wake Stepdaddy.

Jumped rope. Toystore-bought musical instruments. A recorder. My First Crucifix. Dreidels. Yellow snow. A dead bird you found down by the creek. Toy boats that can't float. An empty refrigerator. Books. Money. A stick. My dick. Sidewalk chalk outlines. A bag of broken glass. My stepmother's lighter. Mouse crap. Cigarettes. A bowl of condoms. A dirty extension cord. Some bullshit, handcrafted wooden toy (when my friends all got Nintendos). Colorful household cleaners. Dolls made of Kleenex. A phone cord tied to a hairbrush. A pill bottle. Rocks. Broken glass. Jump rope and a stool. Plastic bags. A knife. Shopping for a car in Wichita? 2013 Suzuki SX4 Sportback Base Hatchback. Please Read and Share: "Such a Waste: Don't Let Fame Take You By Surprise, Prepare for It!" My heart. Your imagination.

HOW LONG IT TAKES

Your Yahoo! group receives your message. A cash deposit at an ATM clears. A laser treatment for cellulite achieves results. A DS1 communication is detected by planetary receivers. Moonlight reaches Earth. Your MCAT scores are sent through THx to a institutional recipient. A bounced email appears in your in-box.

Changes to your CloudFlare zone push out. Your nail polish dries. Participants in a SurveyMonkey survey receive their invitation. A spider finishes spinning its web. Your Viagra kicks in. Your Cialis kicks in.

Your SSL installation concludes. Hormone uptake from your removed Nuva Ring ceases. Your LinkedIn ad is approved. The chao in your *Sonic Adventure 2* game evolves. Your dog's Frontline application begins killing fleas. Consumed food is incorporated into your breast milk.

Your ejaculated sperm fertilizes a female egg. An online bill payment reaches your biller. Your webpage is listed as "protected" under the Protected Pages list in the DMCA Protection Portal. You receive a badge for being especially helpful to users of the Meta Stack Exchange.

DNS propagation completes. Nicotine leaves your bloodstream after the cessation of your smoking habit. Your diflucan kicks in. Your muscles begin recovery after a prolonged and strenuous workout. A check deposit at an ATM clears. Google Places updates newly verified listings, business names, addresses, phone numbers, website URLs, descriptions, pin marker moves, and categories. Corrections to your FAFSA are processed. A turkey thaws. A small canyon is formed. Stripe payments are transferred to your bank account. The quick of your dog's nail recedes after a trimming of the tip. A Hepatitis B virus, lacking a human host, becomes inert. Google Places updates your photos and videos.

Your breast milk dries up after the cessation of breast-feeding. A database of cell phone towers is updated. Your Fiverr payment clears. A bird egg hatches. Google Places updates your duplicate and merged listings. Soft tissue heals after a tooth extraction. Your approved student loan is disbursed. Marijuana leaves your bloodstream. Your Amazon Visa rewards card points get credited. A credit transaction

is reported to a credit reporting agency. A credit card payment is reported to a credit reporting agency. You begin to ovulate after removing your Nuva Ring.

The tomatoes you planted are ready to be harvested. A corporate merger goes through. A black hole consumes an object that originated at a point in space a hundred million miles distant. Your cat gives birth to a new litter. Your Hepatitis B completes its incubation period. An African child whose education and nourishment you sponsor receives your letter. Your divorce becomes final. Retinoids begin beneficially affecting the quality of your skin. You finish healing from your dental implant procedure. A hen begins laying eggs. A medical debt is sent to collection.

The IRS approves an organization's 501(c)(3) status. Plastic photodegrades. The period for cashing in EE savings bonds begins. Your damaged credit progresses to "fair," and you receive an unsecured credit card in the mail.

Epilepsy becomes intractable. HIV develops into AIDS. A genetically modified food product passes governmental safety tests and appears in stores nationwide.

Secondary-progressive Multiple Sclerosis develops.

An animal fossilizes.

Plastic biodegrades.

THINGS IN LOS ANGELES TONIGHT

Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Kings, queens, princesses, swords, bows, arrows, staves, horses, doublets, tridents, daggers, stilettos, axes, clubs, Mace, Lances, partisans, ships, pike, slings, spears, assassins, magicians, thieves, rogues, clerics, soldiers, knights, bishops, pawns, crowns, flags, banners, trolls, ogres, fools, dwarves, bards, brownies, harps, lutes, gowns, wizards, fairies, deer, legends, hunters, rangers, wolves, poisons, pixies, muses, Sprites, elves, hags, witches, imps, wanderers, nomads, devils, farriers, fletchers, cobblers, jesters, spirits, haunts, inns, barkeeps, sailors, mutton, vampires, harpies, hounds, satyrs, sphinxes, sirens, gargoyles, incubuses, serpents, chimeras, golems, ghouls, skeletons, tombs, Cyclops, heroes, villains, Drakes, gorgons, nymphs, virgins, ballads, dungeons, whips, gremlins, angels, myths, behemoths, monsters, Griffins, man-eaters, hellhounds, outlaws, Raiders, mummies, doppelgangers, zombies, travelers, *Poltergeist*, *Leprechaun*, fantasies, aliens, lasers, cowboys, Indians, robots, explorers, spacecraft, gamma rays, chivalry, ghoulishness, gigantism, caves, mincemeat, *Joust*, Fireballs, acrobats, portals, maps, adventurers, role-playing, characters, modules, manuals, dice. A knife in the back and a death by fire.

**TWENTY UNRELATED BUT TRUE STATEMENTS
ABOUT WEST LONDON IN 1999**

- This place is too crowded.
- It feels like a perfect night to dress up like hipsters.
- It seems like one of those nights we should ditch the whole scene.
- It feels like one of those nights we won't be sleeping.
- We'll end up dreaming instead of sleeping.
- It feels like a perfect night for breakfast at midnight.
- There are too many cool kids here.
- Everything will be all right if we just keep dancing.
- It feels like a perfect night to fall in love with strangers.
- We're happy, free, confused, and lonely at the same time.
- Everything will be all right if you keep me next to you.
- I don't know about you, but I'm feeling twenty-two.
- You look like bad news.
- Tonight's the night we forget about deadlines.
- Tonight's the night we forget about heartbreaks.
- It's miserable and magical.
- It feels like a perfect night to make fun of our exes.
- ...
- ...
- You don't know about me, but I bet you want to.
- I've got to have you.
- It's time.

THE TOP 50 MOMENTS OF THE 2014
WINTER OLYMPICS

*(written in real time between February 7th
and February 23rd, 2014)*

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And this one.

ZERO KOOL

The recovery of the world economy may very well depend on science finding a way to harness the power of the Cuil (/ˈku:l/KOOL).

Cuil theory is cutting edge.

Advances in the field of Cuil theory are occurring at an unheard-of pace.

Cuil theory lampoons the search engine capabilities of the Cuil search engine, while providing a functional and intellectually stimulating framework for considering the interrelationship of tangents.

Example: You ask me for a hamburger.

-1 Cuil: Postmodernism.

o Cuil: You ask me for a hamburger. I hand you the epitome of a hamburger, down to the most minute detail. Note that humans inhabiting a o Cuil state experience the Cuil Paradox, in which the ratio of asked-for and received hamburger is so close to 1:1 that reality is no longer plausible.

1 Cuil: You ask me for a hamburger. I give you a raccoon.

2 Cuils: You ask me for a hamburger, but I don't exist. Where once I stood sits a picture of a hamburger.

3 Cuils: You awake as a hamburger. The world is in sepia.

4 Cuils: Why are we speaking German? A mime whimpers as he cradles a young cow. Your grandfather stares at you. The cow falls apart into patties. You look down to see me sitting on the ground. I have pickles for eyes. I sing a song that gives birth to the universe.

5 Cuils: You ask for a hamburger. I give you a hamburger. You raise it to your lips and take a bite. Your eye twitches involuntarily. Across the street a father of three falls down the stairs. You swallow and look down at the hamburger in your hands. I give you a hamburger. You swallow and look down at the hamburger in your hands. You cannot swallow. There are children at the top of the stairs. A pickle shifts uneasily under the bun. I give you a hamburger. You look at my face, and I begin to plead with you. The children are crying now. You raise the hamburger to your lips. Tears stream down your face as you take a bite. I give you a hamburger. You are on your knees. You plead with me to go across the street. I hear only children's laughter. I give you a hamburger. You are screaming as you fall down the stairs. I am your child. You cannot see anything. You take a bite of the hamburger. The concrete rushes up to meet you. You awake with a start in your own bed. Your eye twitches involuntarily. I give you a hamburger. I make no sound when you kill me. I give you a hamburger.

6 Cuils: You ask me for a hamburger. My response is cut short as all electrons are removed from my body. Across a variety of hidden dimensions, you are dismayed. John Lennon hands me an apple, but it slips through my fingers. I am reborn as an ocelot. You disapprove. A crack echoes through the universe in defiance of physics. Cosmological background noise shifts from randomness to a perfect A-flat. Children everywhere stop what they are doing and hum along. Birds fall from the sky as the sun engulfs the earth. You hesitate, then allow yourself to become the locus of all knowledge. Entropy crumbles as you peruse the hard data of the universe. A small library in Phoenix ceases to exist. You stumble under the weight of all extant masses. Your mouth opens up to cry out, then collapses around your body. You depart a particular spatial plane. You exist only in the fourth dimension. The fountainhead of all knowledge rolls along the ground and collides with a small dog. My head tastes sideways as space-time is reestablished. You blink back into the corporeal world disoriented. I hand you a hamburger as my body collapses under the strain of its reconstitution. The universe reasserts itself. A particular small dog is fed steak for the rest of its natural life. You die in a freak accident. Your spirit inhabits the returns desk of the Phoenix Public Library. You disapprove. Your disapproval sends ripples through the dimensional void between Life and Death. A small child begins to cry as he walks toward the stairway where his father stands.

7 Cuils: I give you a hamburger. The universe is engulfed within itself. A bus advertising hot dogs drives by a Papillon. It disapproves. An unknown force reverses Earth's gravity. You ask for a hamburger. I reply by handing you a mildly convulsing potato. You disapprove. Your disapproval enacts a cosmic shift in the void between Life and Birth. You ask for a hamburger. A particular small dog feasts on hamburger patties for the remainder of its unnaturally long lifespan. Your constant disapproval sends silence through everything. A contrived beast becomes omnipotent. You ask for a hamburger. I give you a hamburger. Your body is a shivering blob of nothingness that slowly divides into three parts. The Papillon barks. The universe realigns itself. You, the Papillon, and the hamburger disapprove. This condemnation stops the realignment. Hades freezes. A pig is launched by a specific hamburger into the unoccupied existence between space and time. You ask for a hamburger. I disapprove and condemn you to an eternity in a certain void where a certain pig and its specific hamburger are now located. You are locked away and are fed hamburgers for the rest of your natural life. A pickle refuses to break down during the process of digestion. You die in a freak accident. A certain pickle lives the rest of its natural life in a comatose state. Your spirit disapproves. Down the street a child cries as a hamburger gets stuck in her esophagus. You ask again for a hamburger. I refuse to hand you one. I remind you that this is the New World Order. Only Papillons exist now. You demand legal representation. Your name is added to a list of sins. Blasphemy. You ask for a hamburger. Realignment begins. You beg for a hamburger. A certain Papillon's name is written on an obelisk in Egypt. Mumble. Peasants worship the obelisk. Your corpse dances. Hamburgers are banned worldwide. The sun implodes. The planets never existed. Mercury. Venus. Earth. Mars. Jupiter. Saturn. Uranus. Neptune. Pluto is the only mass remaining. You are on vacation there. Your hunger for a hamburger reestablishes space-time. Earth is reborn under your rule. Hamburgers are your army.

You wake up.

Clowns. Clowns everywhere.

POEM

“So, in a nation in which face-to-face interaction in general and public oration specifically is becoming less and less common, and in which the opportunity to speak to a group of people about art is even less common than that, I’m going to perform for you now some joyless, self-aggrandizing, derivative ephemera? Instead of telling you that (a) poets are the very worst readers and synthesizers of poetry, as they feel the most entitled to its history but are by far the least avid or tutored consumers of that history; (b) American poetry in particular is suffused with a terminal smugness born of the cultural oblivion to which it has willfully, self-righteously, even orgasmically confined itself; (c) avant-garde poetry in America has, in plain view and for forty years now, been the stillborn bastard of careerist scholars in the American academy, its ambitions so lifeless that even those who crow about it on social media and at listless circle-jerk quasi-scholarly conferences can’t be bothered to even *pretend* to harbor any plausible enthusiasm for it, it’s [sic] readers, or its ostensible ideological underpinnings, other than to hope upon hope that some turgid nugget of Continental theory or warmed-over Cagean experiment they orate at a Bed-Stuy cookout next month will somehow score them half a page in the third edition of the *Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Poetry*; (d) worst of all are the many purveyors of so-called “experimental writing,” who obscure their provincial and retrograde formal biases with a skin-deep commitment to risk that somehow never arouses a modicum of emotional consternation or the slightest suspicion of real courage from any reader anywhere; and finally (e) all of the above is performed with such noxious, nauseating faux sincerity and/or fey irony that it’s become impossible to believe that any poet still uses daily and with such simpering good cheer the very social media platforms that are so evidently killing their spirit, their ambition, and their clarity of vision regarding the only abidingly important task art has allotted them: fucking with not just literary but cultural conventions.

Fine.

Fine.

Here’s a poem.”

METAPOETICA

Dear Poetry Ma Poem to be read silently. Poem to be muttered. Poem to cut. Poem to be read by two people simultaneously. Poem to be read by a twelve year-old black girl in Jackson, Mississippi. Poem to be read only once. Poem to be read while “Sister Christian” plays. Poem to be played on a water park loudspeaker. Poem not to be read. Poem to be mailed to an address in Georgia. Poem to be read at half speed. Poem to be memorized and recited to a mirror. Poem to burn after reading. Poem to gain entry to Marquee *I hope you will con* on 10th Avenue. Poem to fall from love to. Poem to stain with coffee and tea. Poem to sustain interest in a subway wall. Poem to be read after yoga. Poem to prop your table. Poem to pay your bill. Poem to be read by my mother if I die first. Poem to staple to a hand. Poem to save a life. Poem to hamper. *from my fourth man* Poem to cue your memory of a clearing in a garden. Poem to sit you down. Poem to snarl. Poem to tear at the corners of. Poem to snivel. Poem to resurrect a conversation *been working in a new paradigm* in a fogged-up Honda behind your house. Poem to throw in water. Poem to be read by a priest to a parishioner, and a parishioner to a child, and a child to an imaginary friend, and that friend to no one. Poem to hold in a hospital bed. Poem to be read after dark. Poem to be read with breakfast. Poem to be texted. Poem to be reviewed for tenure. *I realize. But I believe that* Poem in the hopper. Poem to disappear after seven seconds. Poem to be read by friends and followers and subscribers only. Poem to be left at the door of a stranger. Poem to get her back. Poem to keep in the back of your wallet. Poem to be left on the printer at work. Poem to quit to. Poem to be misread. Poem to be remixed.

Poem to apologize. Poem to be kept at the bank.
Poem to be inherited. Poem to be published by *The New York Times* as a Letter to the Editor. Poem to risk execution for *and metamodernism may be*. Poem that might have been. Poem to stuff in a bottle at sea. Poem to stuff in a bottle and light and throw. Poem to land with a reader fifty years on. Poem to be fished from the trash. Poem to be close-read. Poem stolen. Poem. Poem to be workshopped. Poem to shred. Poem. Poem to be read by a Nazi sympathizer *Thank you for your time* in Argentina. Poem published and retracted. Poem. Poem to be read by my father when I disappoint him. Poem. Poem to eulogize. Poem as Joaquin Phoenix. Poem as Pol Pot. Poem on the fifty-third page of the first draft of your screenplay, adapted from page 209 of your novel. Poem. Poem. Poem to be translated into Urdu. Poem. Poem to be read by a news anchor. Poem. Poem disavowed. Poem. Poem to ward off disaster at sea. Poem. Poem. Poem to celebrate a holiday you don't celebrate. Poem. Poem. Poem. Poem to gift. Poem. Poem to steal. Poem. Poem to leave on a pillow. Poem to sleep on. Poem. Poem to be dreamt. Poem. Poem to poet. Poem. Poem to posterity. Poem. Poem. Poem forgotten. Poem. Poem. Poem. Poem. Poem to be sung. Poem. Poem. Poem to be shouted. Poem. Poem. Poem. Poem. Poem. Poem to march to, *Seth Abramson*.

WHO IS SETH ABRAMSON?

I.

In March of 1776, wee robots appeared in Concord, Massachusetts. Composed entirely of tools, they searched suburban American farms for mass murderer Lance Cole. On March 12th, he was found riding in the woods. His last words: “Shun biography! Learn is! Learn of!”

Northerners, his ghost searches for you on the road to Dartmouth.

II.

A thievery at Harvard University in 1833 resulted in a worldwide search for Howard Jay. Found in Iowa—huffing over a hill—by Don Bieber, a journalist, Jay addressed the thievery via song: “Shun biography—just learn is and of!”

Bieber shared the song with just six people: a jazz man, a critic, a metamodernist author (Ronald Abramson), an editor, a Dartmouth graduate (Ray Swensen), and a poet (Roger Trout).

And the attorney for Harvard—who shared it with the world.

III.

Born “Seth Abramson” in 1976, I can see that every word circles back: *Free. Abramson. Jazz.*

A series of phrases, too: *Text not available. Net plus. The wide world.*

Wide world is a lie. The world is only one spot in the universe. Just one. A precise location. Ogle it and see which.