

Ian Ganassi

TEN CARD MONTE

It's easy to see the impermanence of physical states,
How the pop tart dissolves on the pavement in the rain.

I wondered how she fit into the "tits and feathers" scene,
Having no tits to speak of, which is true enough but kind of mean.

How many reminders do we need that a flower looks like a vagina?
It's enough to make you want to wear a blindfold

To the doctor's office. But on the bus, "The front seat
Is the place to be, if you don't want to observe the amenities."

The nasty pocket compasses, the heavy industry of bullshit;
It's freezing cold in here, among other reasons to bitch.

The hardest thing about the camping trip was the massive swarm
Of sweat bees coming in my direction. Running frantically down

The path, at least I got warmed up a bit. Hooking the fish
And gutting them, hanging them out to dry, I was almost

Like a real Indian, beneath an uneventful sky. Despite our
Attempts at asceticism, we're stuck with need. What it takes to

Fail is also what it takes to succeed. And squeaking of speaking,
Why not blurt out the old first thing? Was the dog's bite more

Frightening than the bee's sting? *Sufficient to the day*
Is the evil thereof. Neither lucky at cards nor lucky at love.

FORKED TONGUE

Let me say this about that.
For that matter
Let me say that about this.

It would have made a prettier picture,
And a more lucid point of entry.

“Shut up and get in the elevator.”

The dentist is waiting
With his curious drill.

Curiouser and curiouser.

“Let us gather by the river.”

The tulip bulbs
Exploding into bloom.

In Zoroaster’s playbook the key was fire.

What memory does is left to the imagination.

Obliquity of the eyebrows under suffering.

And my apartment is cold because it’s warm outside.

Mark Nobody, his mark.

A target tattooed on his bald spot.

Stepping into the root cellar only to find
The casket burst open.

It was on the schedule for the day, the rostrum, the plectrum.

The tornado spared one photograph—Praise the Lord.

YOUR LAST CHANCE

Sometimes apt and sometimes adder.

Sometimes glue and sometimes ladder.

Whose bark is worse than its bite.

But if you can't spell "pedagogue" there's no hope.

Just remember it rhymes with demagogue.

Nope, no number of dictionaries can save you now.

And how.

Dare you proceed on the dole?

Never you mind;

For now just close the door.

The bald eagle is in the tree,

Feeling important with a live snake in its mouth.

The adder. Or ladder.

My money is on the mastiff, hard as it is to say.

Marry come up, this ain't no cock fight here.

It's not an emotional or esthetic decision,

As expressed in doubloons.

And still to go home blind.

ADJUSTMENT DISORDER

The management doesn't like doo dads on the side.

But that's no excuse not to play the game.

He sat at the lunch table, waiting.

The presentiment only lasts as long as it's due.

Fortunately, the gambler dug his way through the rubble.

Unfortunately, he emerged in a hornet's nest.

After that it's time to make up batting practice.

"Make it or make it up."

I have been to the garbage and never made it back in one piece.

The popsicle abandoned a big chunk of itself on the way out of its wrapping.

But let's not take such metaphors too seriously.

They warned me that there are conditions.

Either you were too sick to reply or you were beyond that.

How in the world did you get zinc poisoning?

It's been a brave visit, Mr. Megalith,

And you better believe it.

It's not a quilt I'm being here.

CLOWN SCHOOL

Certain things we thought were the best
Turned out to be as boring as the rest.

My bad mood wants to carry us all away,
Which is the way it is, when it gets that way.

Sometimes we can't help but put our feet in our mouths.
Lame excuses only send us further south.

Diving drunk off city bridges and climbing cell phone towers,
The pure products of America could feel their power.

This isn't something you can get with a lot of physical
Origination; it also puts the mind in a distinctly risible

Position. Sex sells and socks smell. Socks also sell
And sex also smells. Their domains, however, are not so well

Delineated. *Isn't it good Norwegian wood?* Pay attention,
I'm asking you a question; don't answer with condescension.

It can be boiled down to pragmatism, and spare ribs
And beer at the game. I can't find my bagels or my bib;

Is there something we can do about all this?
Only in America, but made elsewhere, can you find the bliss

You're supposed to follow. There's a clown for every act, but
Like eating at McDonald's, it's as much fun as a heart attack.