

Jeffrey Letterly

[Devil starts to eat an apple a day]

DEVIL STARTS TO EAT AN APPLE A DAY, Red Delicious ones, special ordered from Michigan, doesn't care for the taste or texture, but admires their deep red, thinks this new habit will keep doctors away, like it's been said to for years, shaves his beard, wife thinks it makes him look ten years younger, but she doesn't say it, he pays attention to sodium and sugars, goes for a walk every morning, two miles, four miles, to the old movie theater and back, never noticed how uneven sidewalks are, how many weeds pop up all over the place, notices his pants aren't as tight in the waist, notices that he now sleeps through the night, realizes how last Tuesday everything started to taste like tacos, the apples like tacos, salad like tacos, oatmeal like tacos, green tea like tacos, buttered raisin toast like tacos, pan-seared halibut with lemon caper sauce like tacos, and when his cat meowed, it sounded like *taco*, then the news anchormen talking, the cashiers, his coworkers, his wife, everything tasting and sounding the same, for a good long time.

[Scratch off]

SCRATCH OFF, not a winner, scratch off, not a winner, scratch off, not a winner, scratch off, one dollar, scratch off, not a winner, scratch off, five dollars, scratch off, not a winner, scratch off, not a winner, scratch off, a pitchfork, scratch off, horns and hooves and thick grin and wild eyes and pointed eyebrows and pointed chin and pointed tail, the penny used to scratch off the silver-grey latex now shredded, copper-coated zinc mangled, Lincoln and his memorial reduced to splinters, filings, fingertip prick, blood on the ticket, *aww shit*, devil's uncovered smirk now tripled.

[Yellow devil stays up too late]

YELLOW DEVIL STAYS UP TOO LATE, drinks too much coffee, eats too much fried food, smokes too many cheap cigars, drives recklessly and dies too many times, wakes up, just about every morning, socks and pants missing, front door open, left cheek in a puddle of his own sorrow, painkillers in one hand, antacids in the other, Styrofoam containers of cold fries on the nightstand, flat diet cherry cola, burning his dirty laundry in the tub, pigeons coming in through the window, salad mix now a bag of sludge, an endless amount of one dollar bills dripping through a weakened spot in the floor.

[Lazy eye]

LAZY EYE, squinting, tilting the head, brain favor, refractive error, every striped devil has one, never gets fixed, untreated, incomplete, not discreet, they're sent to a home, on a dead end street, all those striped lazy-eyed devils crowded in a house, cramming the rooms, laid in recliners, or standing with arms folded, *are you looking at me or him*, all day long, *me or him*, tiresome song, something wrong, delete and delete and delete.