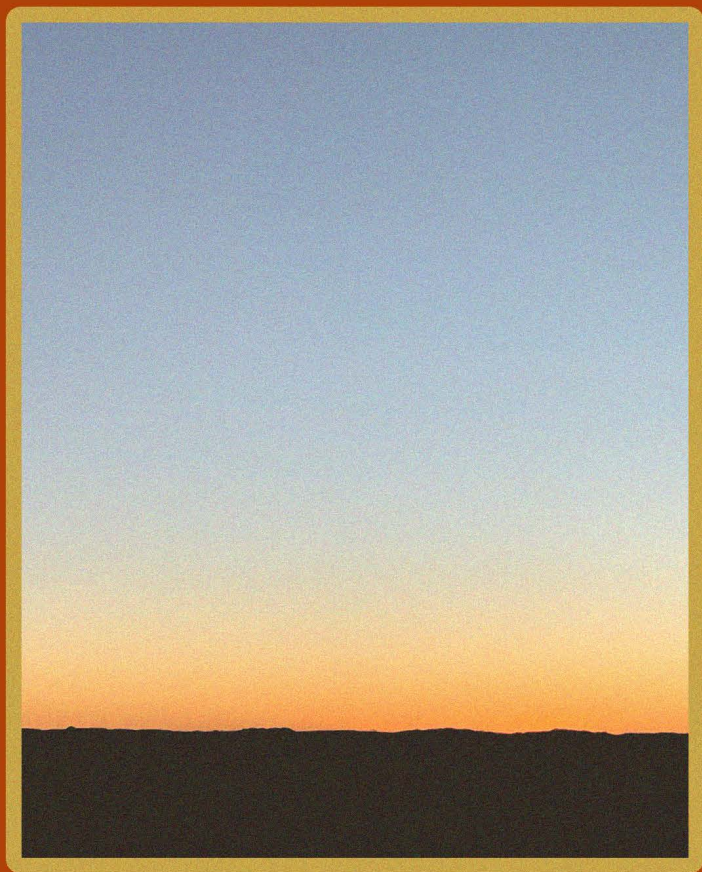


T.S. JOHNSON
SOMETIMES
GOOD DAYS



The pandemic poems, vol. I

SOMETIMES GOOD DAYS

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T. S. JOHNSON

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All poems by T.S. Johnson

For all these things around you.

SONG FOR CARTERET

Vacant Asbury carousels and
a smoothie for jerkbrain over here
“oh, the asshole in the boots?”
I’m looking for a vegan pie
puking at 10am
after all night cosmicnauts under Woodbridge skies
a whole ‘nother town in your backyard
Chateau Madrid is Portuguese
and long talks with lovely Edwin
“You remember the St. Joe’s Bizarre?”
but he just used us for an Uber
got your mother thinking we’re all going to get
jumped
in a dead alley
keeps asking me about the liquor store
all the people breaking all the rules
wearing masks to make it safe.
These are the death throes,
this is the flailing about.

August 16, 2020

HEARTBREAK SONG

Can't shake what this land done to you
but oh boy! we're shaking

frigid

random

DEATH SHOCK

actual collapsing from actual heartbreak

We all had it coming

Ginsberg's Amerikkka raging outside fully erect

pumping away

thankyouthankyou

And when they find me unable to breathe

shivering in an empty bathtub

bawling it out with fists clenched

know that it's only because you all have my love.

August 17, 2020

DIGGING BLUES

two scoops of spade
only skin deep
voila
we're making love

in the forests I'm on top
in the seas we flip flop
foamy ocean wave over running
salty breathy kisses
floating over water arms spread
in the Christ form
non/search and non/rescue
'til surf tide motion moves bring capsizing for
pulling moons
a thousand years by
and I'll be there underneath for the picking
soft scrape off the topsoil
don't bother saving my bones

I'm there you'll see me
the digging is easy
it's the making ghosts comes slow

August 21, 2020

ASHES FOR EDGAR

Poe crowin' for Baltimore
we cry for Poe
Allen asking him he prophosie'd these streets
I don't know
he buried underneath
left and right coast sucking up all else
and nothing left but neck high waters.

Middle continent cacti go unheard
meanwhiles and no inbound either,
this peyote pickin' piece of shit
wrote nothing down
and now nothing but regret,
should have let 'em know!
One day they'll know,
those fuckers, fuckers all.

Not macabre, though, ne'r will be,
just want to sing
for hopefully!
All bull,
ran from them, too,
and still no one knows...
...a living ghost.

Only old Poe and the top soil
SO SHUT RIGHT UP
gone diggin' for oil

to bring up only ashes
just like opening my mouth.

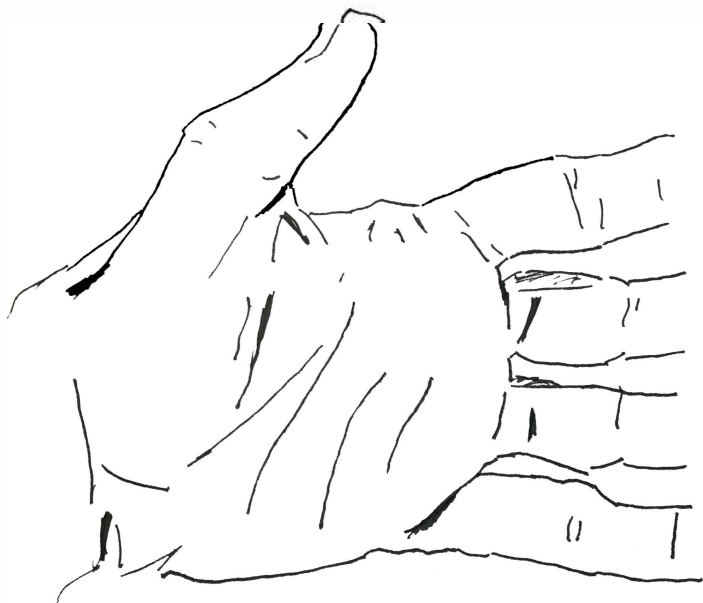
September 13, 2020

FRONT PAGE BLUES

Hollerin' handwringing 'bout all this everywhere
lost track my own everything
string o losing battles got me minefielded
stuck in the dream everyone knows
where took a cordless solo space walk
now I's bulgin'
 lung sacks baggin'
 skin 'splodin'
Total Recall motherfucker
 and it's true
in my dying moments I'll suffer memory through
where time don't matter could go on
 in-fi-nite plenitude
like Middle Eastern Vietnam Pentagonal
stratagems.
Whole front page OPOORDs fit to print
send us all spit and bodies
fighting in wars we'll never win
so I'll stay just me all alone in the center of my
universe.

September 23, 2020

"You're always trying to control things."



"let go."

THROUGH GEORGETOWN ON A SATURDAY

Pointless colonial dwelling
twenty twenty realty
selling yesteryear
man I'd buy it
god bless had the money
instead just staring thru windows
on dark Saturday strolls
trying be inconspicuous
unless they call em
you know em
I don't want em
just want they homes
the gentle orange beams of the real candle lamps
look so sweet to fall asleep
in a place of my own

October 10, 2020

WALKING SONG

Tell myself for sanity take more walks
but can't go six blocks
for fear of dying
Capital-E Everybody got the look of death walking
in full metered stride
wide eyed
like ain't nothing gonna changin'
going about reg'lar business
inching to our graves.
A collective non-care
like sigh of relief when it takes us
to maybe escape this carceral state.
See now the only way out
is death at the hands of something
legal and tender
both are right in the heavenly ledger
coming our way on 6th and Main.

October 22, 2020

HONEYSUCKLE, HERE and NOW?

Smell of honeysuckle on late October morning
can't be right
this ain't even Texas
new around here
so don't carrying like I actually know
seasons changing *N-E-way* [eyes roll]
soon don't looking like even changing [that so]
but this just loon talk
about weather and the future
dumb flowers on a dumb sidewalk
could'a been roses
but fuckall here on a frozen fall morning
this damn north all confused
got me praying for water
but the kind only seen in plagues
or the chorus to "hard rain's a' gonna fall"

October 26, 2020

WILL YOU FORGIVE YOURSELF

“How will you forgive yourself?”
that’s what I came up with
to talk about it all.
Easy to relate,
but,
I mean,
listen,
see, it’s the good as much the bad here,
it’s your life
IN TOTO
When old and older and looking back
the regret finds us all
you Earl Partridge
he cloak and scythe
there to make you see it:
all the things you’ve ever done
and the hill of beans next to it
when you recognize the pointlessness,
there, you’ll be gasping and grasping and
I want to know,
how will you forgive yourself?

October 27, 2020

INSANITY BLUES

I don't even know who you are anymore
were you was what you ever were
or ever would become
or would've been
on this long line to this now apartmentalized
cell of yours
jailed in
perfecting yourself for no none to see
excepting old dog don't care
excepting stranger neighbors across K Street below
watching thru the window
broad daylight naked walks
from bed to kitchen to bed
eight months running now
just like insanity
and sometimes find yourself thinking
personal Shawshank endings
like "Brooks was here"
excepting over and over
in your head
got to tell yourself
One of the lucky ones!
over and over in your head.

October 28, 2020

MR. BUSINESS MAN

Tell you what you have but
you damn well know
Why guarded tooth + bone
you and your family alone
and every man for himself-
Don't be comin' 'round here!
find yourself full of lead
only wanted to let you know
that candlelit threshold
with brush trimmed sidewalks
and chipped red brick
for all three floors
of a Georgetown home
makes you one of the rich
no matter what you say.
let's make a trade
Mr. Business Man-
see where I stand
on outside looking in.

October 29, 2020

FORGIVENESS BLUES

When crying forgiveness, who hears?
Got our heroes who don't care and
when dying, who'll be there?
Caped crusader?
Christian savior?
Bill negotiator?
In eleventh hour gut-puking,
 eyes-watering, muscles aching,
 bent over, dry-mouthing, heaving,
 jaw clenching, legs collapsing,
 brain-waving, hallucinating,
 teleporting, traveling time in
hot-baked mind to the other side
fever-wired looking for a good time
in that last of the hours,
the Hour of Man.

If don't keep time, time don't run out
 [points to thinking cap]
If no time to have, no time to worry
 [points all around]
It's alright, ma, I figured it out-
If no start, no end,
no need forgiveness.

November 2, 2020

SONG FOR TOO MUCH

Those goings-on
over radio TV waves
+ digital benders
in telephonic transmissions
to sending us up
somewhere we ain't been,
“I, for one, welcome”
golden beams of hope
on electronic streams
of microwave heat
hit start
felo de se
!

November 3, 2020

ELECTION DAY IN AMERICA

Sun rises on election like on not-election
coworkers still figurin' who's worth living
 who's worth killing
trying not to howl

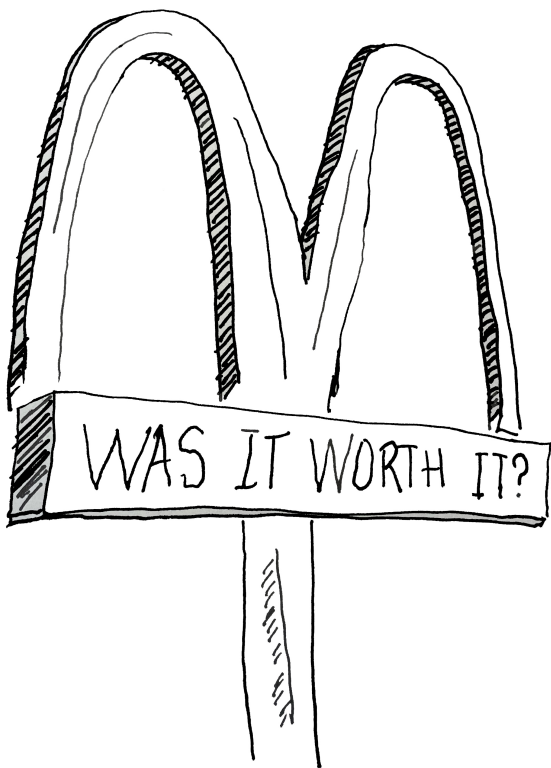
*if your kids can't bring you disease
you'll up and take it to 'em!*

I mean what are the holidays for?
Can't imagine dying alone
untalked to
“why, that's a sin”
refuse to consider why even dying
more fun when more of everyone together
even though
and so on-

lines outside, stretching blocks
'cause don't want actual voting
whole country at once hand in hand
today's the day we yell in unison
and by tonight
or maybe next week
and definitely a couple after
we'll know a lot more
'bout ourselves and where we are
and what our grip is on the mortal coil

burning hot for life
under the growing midday's endless light
shining down on this republic
and all the people it keeps
'til it don't keep no more.

November 3, 2020



QUARANTINE SONG

Cosmic pain in the heart
can't even hear out my left ear
but I got cheekbones now
though no one's seen me for months
holed up in here
praying for the energy to get out alive
and speak to humans passing by
on their way to whatever it is
people do these days.

November 4, 2020

IN DEFENSE OF SILENCE

Get running on a line
thread better word
and soon head full of smoke
man-made clouds of own doing
all blackened and day-covering
and whole ticker stops tickering,
I lost it.

Only so much brain can take inaday.
The rest after meter hits full just a -----→-----→
of energy uncontrolled and no-sense-making
but more often just silence
not the good kind
when instead trying,
this the kind like *where is it dammit*,
feel like engine won't turn over
which is odd 'cause
the head still hurts.

November 5, 2020

PIGEON SONG

Say, what that?

Louder-

all be talking the damn time

so know you can damn well

say it again,

whatever it is.

Don't usually listen

all you jabbering

and GAW GAW

like fucking pigeons

and just as diseased

if for just the brains we shout-

CANTDO THAT put your hands up WEAR A MASK get to
work you bums if you want to make a living NEW I PHONE I
SHE RE when is black friday THE PRESIDENT CLAIM
S FRAUD nfl scores at 7 pm tonight LAW AND ORDER re
nt due at the 1st of each month IN A HIRING FREEZE wet
ass pussy CELEBRITIES ASKING FOR DONATIONS
at least nllis back

walking around plucking crumbs off

the ground and acting like its life its fine

just taking it, taking it hard

maybe, but taking it

like the rising sun,

done always come, don't it?

November 6, 2020

POTENTIAL BLUES

Living with that feeling I'll never be enough
but taking good lookaround,
see Washington Circle smothered in detritus waste
and no one caring,
Fucko to my right on a bench
just *JABBA JABBA JABBA JABBA*
from years of being on his own in this country,
this land of all of ours,
this place of our collective making.
I may not be great as they was
but I sure as hell am better than they are now.

November 8, 2020

TRAIN SONG

Doomsday coming on like train whistle blowing
single light full speed
at you in the night
until passing with the fury of wind
and the devil was that?
Gone so fast you wonder it was real
or plum made up
in your mind the whole time
unsure what put it there
cause everything always so bad
so why now?
so why me?
so why I got to save the world
by my lonesome?
Like locomotion all my own.
Maybe it was me and my lonesome
that pass you all by
“good riddance,” I’ll say!
With a song in my mouth
and a hat on my head
and endless blood on endless tracks.

November 30, 2020

UNDER THE BRIDGE

Been in this fed'ral city now long enough
know that Under The Bridge is real
damn too real for many some
too much for many all
'cause it weren't, well then,
be nothing for no one
no, not nothing at all left there
to help you when down and out
under K Street northwest
maybe potshotting New York Ave
and so reaching out just catching whiffs
it's like Under The Bridge you go
just like the derelicks we all have inside us
to let Under The Bridge go on grow.
That's under the lid in America.

December 2, 2020

PRESIDENT RADIO

Say D.C. nice place
'prise me e'ryday though
like no one e'en here
small big man Trump president man using Oval
room and full weight of office
to stand up and shout like Moamar going down
full of bird song: *coo, coo, coo!*
But only radio echoes and no one here to hear it all
jus' satellite floating space beings in orbit here
ignoring old men like people do
waving arms and shit
just the leeches and lepers lef hangin' on
and the city rats, fast ones
and under e'ry bridge occupied human home place
with mattresses and lamps
and think I saw Christmas lights under the parkway
overpass even
but orange man Trump man will go home when it's
time
and keep yelling from bedroom full of gold
he'll be fine, at least,
we got that, at least.

December 3, 2020

A' SOMETHING'S GON' CHANGE

Iffin' things ain't be changing, gon' make change!
Like breaking dollars if you got 'em
only finding look for bank or teller or register or
anybody help me out?
Walking 'round hands up in don't shoot pose,
god, if they only knew me saying that
like I to worry
sit here talking 'bout money in the hand
and wishes in the pocket.
Reason I even asking, I got 'em,
everyone else don't not have 'em
and not my fault I swear.
Born into it like all but that I mean:
ain't no thing to like so all parts to need changing.
Sweep all away like debris in Mother Hurricane
and swim for new land.

January 4, 2021

AND WITH 14 DAYS REMAINING MY FRIENDS HAD AN EPIPHANY

People actin' like life changing events suddenly!
Some 34 years in, some four years later,
some centuries long gone by of this shit
and now *hoo-boy!*
Can't believing it.
Can't seeing it.
It ain'tn' real!
Consarnit, that was the day!
Like it was planned
like it won't stand
like it won't happen again
 and again
 and again and again
 and again and again and
again
'cause when they open the doors to let the
revolution slither in
and take a few photos and
go on home at night to sleep well
and tell their children and their children's children
about that stand they took on that day
when nothing changed
you'll know it won't no revolution
not for them
not for you
not for nobody.
Again are you listening?

Are you paying attention?
Don't matter what you thought sacred or off limits.
It just things.
Happening again and again
and I don't see you changing you life after the fact
anyway
so really, what do you care
from where you sit behind the tube
sucking it in through various screens and
shaking your fist at nothing.
Don't weep for this,
this got here not weeping for you.

January 7, 2021

AMERICAN EROTICA

Fetal position superhighway and
thousands like you gone by
trying not to get born

Does that shit turn you on?

Full rager republic
just mowing em down for
“whoever, wherever, whenever.”

Don't that make you get hard?

Watching from big rooms on credit cards.
Saw a coffee shop survive mere four months.
Everyone goes home now.

Sure as hell makes me wet.
Must be the foreplay
all bent over and rubbing your shit
to emergency sirens on down at the hospital,
you sicko.

Lost count of the bottom's piles of us
but I know the top 14 or so and they full names
with they martini in UAE *paradisos* for concierge
vaccine-o's
going home to rub off to
what America done to you.

Makes 'em stiff as rods, drooping juice.
Edging for the invisible face of power.
Wiping off to do it again,
to the Expendable masses.

Barricaded Lincoln Memorial,
he wouldn't show his face now you ask him.
If tears fall and no one there, do anyone even care?

Just kept bumping along the throes of orgasm in a
long, endless playground, sandbox for pleasure, the
works been done. Grinding away.

Do you get off too?

Is that why go about bed to bed looking for
whoopie in the streets?

We all just orgying in our graves?

Seems like if we didn't blow loads at war zone
roads wouldn't be none,
wouldn't be no AKs on 14th or ATVs in the D of C,
'cepting this shit must be makes us so goddamn
juicy, running down the legs.

I know no other explainer.
I can't see any other reason we're all in this
together
'cepting that we can't help but get our nuts off

to the things done to us.

If we didn't fucking get all shaky and queasy and
want to fall asleep
from hormonal tides washing over
then surely, looking around at all this shit,
we'd be all committed and looney.

Think of all these erotic dreams here in real life:
Uncle's unemployment checks bouncing 'cause the
state is bankrupt,
and bus lines and subways running half time from
the overdrawn city accounts
and bridges crumbling into the water, ain't no taxes
for that kind of fix,
tires floating in the Potomac and sticking right out
the damn mud like days after typhoon,
sacks of potatoes running out while the hungry line
is still long,
I don't know a single person whose life has gone
the way they want,
trash blowing in the wind,
Kennedy Center under patrol,
underpaying for booze cuz it the one thing they
know we need.

And not a voice in protest, all this shit just making
me wanting to cum so hard.

Why else would freezer food be filled with glass?
Why else would border tents be built 2 last?

Why else would we all be okay with shit half assed
jobs in the everyday 'cause all us bums down here
not working hard don't make me enough anyway so
this ain't getting right,
not making my meal
not driving that train
not pacing that road
not hammering that nail
not writing reports
not taking baby
not teaching school
not riding bikes
all of it done so poorly now cause we all just
walking down the street to sounds of our own
orgasm,
procession of pleasure sacks lookin' for the fillin' in
from incessant screens blasting opinions you want
to hear
more and more and more
sinking us deep into euphoria
for a dream of a world that never quite existed
and sure as hell won't now.

January 19, 2021

What
Miracles

Do fall

through!

AMERICAN EROTICA II

Barricades in the streets (again)
the boarded-up windows serving hot coffee
through wooden plywood doors
YES WE'RE OPEN!
things we'd ignore now real necessary
but then
 the watergate has plastic fountains
 not like you imagined
 but okay to look at
 and the empty storefronts
 where water gathers like muddy puddle.
Not ever seen a single guest exit
to streets of gold
like lion's heads on the bridge now turned to brass
and old George himself rusted away
 in a hospital zone
the subway stopped running
all these headlines
and can't even find a paper stand.
Doing gymnastics in the hallway
like when told me he knew Ginsberg himself-
"get out of here," I said.
"The Uncle Sam hat right on the shelf,
 I swear" he replied.
Well, someone had to wear it.
\$4.99 on the corner, all NEone can get
say the neon looks great
I can see the pizza from here

down yonder glowing bright
a crystalline vision for you and for me.
No one's invited to Inauguration Day,
just one more thing America took from me.
Went for a walk instead, don't feel any different.
She's carrying a sign I can't read
police presence strong
 is that music? Only I can hear.
happened at noon, they're having lunch
brat and liverwurst everyone's got to eat
Duke's Grocery more a parlor
students nighttime drinking joint
benches pulled up from the park
vagrants sleep now on the ground
like killing floor killing futures
tow path dry + under construction
how anyone can eat outside in these conditions
every block a car with flashers
10% OFF YOUR FIRST ORDER!
afraid the sewer work will tear up my favorite tree
the one with the swing
National Guard pulls out less than 24-hours after
I still don't feel any different.
Ten years ago I weighed 100 lbs more
 easy come easy go
think she avoids me now
shouldn't I be embarrassed
talking to people thousands of miles away

but I'm right here

pretty girls in grocery store lines only buying wine
and a bag of Lay's
how they stay so thin
electric cigarettes + disposable men
in power vacuum everyone just fucks loose
I'm looking for a hand-me-down
at lunchtime countertops
if only there were fresh air
mmmmmm thinking of a pie in windowsill
carrying in the breeze
Michelin Star too expensive
 now that's discerning taste
on the corner of M and 22nd
never learned to play the guitar that sits in the
corner
but what is love anyway?
Laughter coming through the walls.

January 19, 2021

DHARMA DREAMS

Buddhist ones I get them
all this pain is rest of it
to better then seek none of it.

Lying down bed of raspberries
to sweet dreams of
bliss and blasphemy
at world calling you name back.
joke them laugh riot
lost my name when gave away soul
on DD Form 251 biometric staple
did anyone even have a choice here?
sign off future like had one
but
time just doomed to repeat.
me or someone like me
they'll get someone pin it on 'em
HEADLINE FULL BLEED BOLD TYPE
DAY LIKE NO OTHER
like all the others
all the others
doomed repeaters.

January 21, 2021

PHONE SONG

You were on your phone again
looking down
pigeon sound
the checkout's too long
sitting in the passenger seat
just killing time
trust me, it's dead, you got it.

January 23, 2021

SOMETIMES GOOD DAYS

Sometimes good days.
All this love for everything.

January 30, 2021

KNOWITALL

Biting my tongue talking self blues
afraid
to let 'er rip
find out what I really know
mirrors barking back
and what happened to whole sentence
just misplaced half epithets
like no amounting
 dipshit asshole knowitall
average freakshow mediocre
there's reason why you're so alone
motherfucker's just dumb
can't get along with no one
and blame it on everyone
just like everyone
together alone
with all y'all
all must be like this.

February 2, 2021

FOR ME

Phosphene drip porcine position
not try an make sense for you
is for me
hands upturned bleeding free
world go on take it
cathedral red to split carnival big tops
juicy river mouths down
so many in long line of sycophantic
heads down 2 telephonic daydreams
hollow beings touchscreen redeem
unending jester lexicon for tall con 'til dawn break
with stillborn madness *cum laude*
crowd clapping slapping seal fins
fucking *arf arf* billions
sea dread not unique
underneath melting coral blossom bleach pit
smoke underwater bubbling troubling
no eyes around to see and you see now
Y transom focus on visions fake for chorus soul
singing what feels right
and no I don't think you'll ever understand
it's electric ladyland
sweet chariot
bands playing this is me and,
my friend.

February 7, 2021

FOLK SONG

Oh, American soul,
 won't you come to me?
With gold in your hands
 running through the streets.

Oh, beautiful bride,
 won't you let me sing
my violent ideas
 of what it means to be free?

See, American mistress,
 what you do to me?
Swimming in drink
 just to try and be.

Bring California
 to my weary side
then cradle my head and
 tell me everything's all right.

February 21, 2021

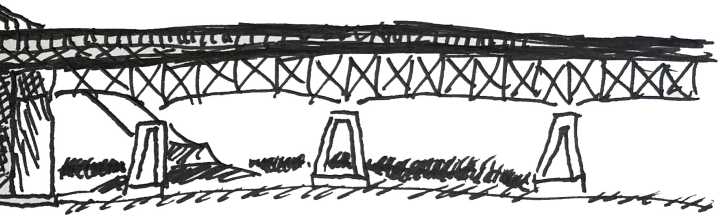
RIDING MY ASS

Circular spiral feeling racetrack kind of shit
with all the whips too and jockeys riding my ass
one race damn at a time untill next one and next
one
and next one all untill leg break shooting dead
or left to pasture useless + alone
but dead either way
wondering why not me it was
got to run free.

February 24, 2021

Sandy Point
to
Chesapeake Bay Bridge
3/06/20





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— 121 — 766 — 4 — 1111 —

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