

America The Beautiful

Election Day

Palmetto bugs
perch dead still
or fly right at you.

The day after,
I woke in the dark
to a loud scraping.
It was perched on a foam cup
rubbing its jaw on the lip.

Another time,
I cut one in half with a hoe --
both ends scrambled
into the grass.

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Just Another Sinner

If I am a liar, a lecher, a pervert,
hateful, graceless, for sale,
and a vicious coward,

how could you not despise me,
you who know so much
but do not know the Lord.

If I am all these
that we live His Word,
name love *Abomination*,
save a life at all cost,
the dying and the unborn,
even the unmale,

am I not just a sinner
doing His holy work.

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Patriot Act Three Times

- *The Patriot Act was signed into law on October 26, 2001.*
- *The United States invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003.*
- *The Department of Justice's first priority is to prevent future terrorist attacks, September 11, 2019.*

Colin Powell, our best and brightest,
sold our self-respect,
twenty billion in war work
for Cheney's cronies.

Three hundred thousand fought,
four hundred thousand of theirs.
Five thousand died,
thirty thousand of theirs
and a hundred thousand innocents,

We embrace 9/11's outrage,
excuse for freedoms surrendered,
we and our tormentors, bound as one
in fear, delirium, and dogma.

We covet our portion of hatred,
we, the people. May we forget
America the beautiful still cowed
by nineteen dead felons.

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White Out Three Times

After the wedding I puked,
then slept in the bushes. At first light
I drove east, no good bye, the sun
bright as a bomb. By eight

it was snowing. By ten
I was alone running sixty
in the left lane, the others
behind slow trucks or on the shoulder.

This weekend a white boy
drove into the crowd
and killed somebody. Other boys
with credit cards, K-Mart torches,
mommy's clean muscle shirts, chanted,

You ... won't ... erase ... us.

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Precious Payload

Jack was a rocket scientist. He often travelled to the Wallops Island test range with a payload we built, a mass spectrometer or a Langmuir probe. Sometimes they mated it to the rocket with duct tape, the stuff you can get at any hardware store. Then they waited for good weather, fired it into the sky and gone.

He often talked of his kids, how they came faster and faster, the last one, forty minutes start to finish. That's when he got the vasectomy.

He spoke too of his friend's daughter, arrested for speeding on Huron River Drive. *It's so wrong*, his friend said, *I got her a lawyer*. As he told the story, Jack was shaking his head and laughing, *They're our children and we love them, but they could do anything*.