

The Fall of '16

The season takes a turn for the darker days
autumn gots to offer. Preacher man says; “It’s
due to upcoming elections and all the whoring
and thieving of morals that are part and parcel.”

Me thinks politicians running their gums
don’ cause the sun to seek a hidey-hole.
It gotta be related to peoples livin’ large
an’ all a sudden going under dead broke.

I’m noticing peculiar weather conditions—
roiling purple clouds ride fearsome squalls
causing trees to loose their leaves—lending
an All Hallow’s Eve feel to the landscape.

Bog fires flare ‘neath the peat marsh.
Acrid fumes mix wiff tule fog; streaking
clapboard siding like vinegar hot-ironed
onto the rump of go-to-meeting trousers.

Weevils, skinned darker than the innards
of a buried coffin, lay ruin to fiber crops.
Withered sumac, dried kudzu, and wasted
nightshade somersault into tumbleweed.

That preacher keeps rattling on; “Repent!
The end is near!” He’s been a pitching this
drivel ever since I fool ‘nough to wander
wiffin range of his baptismal font.

The day after election results git tallied, all
hell busts loose. Nightriders mount up; me, I
hightail it, leaving forty acres gone fallow and
the gov’mint mule turned out to his own kind.

Cat O' Nine Tales

(1)

I let go the yardarm, fell hard from my perch.

Cap'n Jack stood me before the mast and flogged me 'til I cried.

(2)

I stood a midnight vigil mourning shipmates lost at sea.

Cap'n Jack stood me before the mast and flogged me 'til I cried.

(3)

I harbored rumrunners fleeing a guarded coast.

Cap'n Jack stood me before the mast and flogged me 'til I cried.

(4)

I gambled ship's money—then lied to the purser.

Cap'n Jack stood me before the mast and flogged me 'til I cried.

(5)

I challenged the first-mate to a dual and persevered.

Cap'n Jack stood me before the mast and flogged me 'til I cried.

(6)

I jumped ship in a foreign port.

Cap'n Jack stood me before the mast and flogged me 'til I cried.

(7)

I consorted with trollops on the Barbary Coast.

Cap'n Jack stood me before the mast and flogged me 'til I cried.

(8)

I lay down in lust, awoke diseased.

Cap'n Jack stood me before the mast and flogged me 'til I cried.

(9)

I surrendered to death in a bilge-water lagoon.

Cap'n Jack stood Mother before the mast and joined her when she cried.

CONTINENTAL RIFT

We
stood agitated,
facing a great divide,

the grandeur of the
Rockies marred
by our rising voices.

Raptures
circled ominously,
love stumbled and lost.

We
cried out at a
clap of thunder,

sought
cover when
lightning arced.

Eyes
spilling rivulets,
we scabbled for purchase

when ground gave way.
His tears flowed east,
mine tracked west.

Waning desire

Each of our whispers is a love letter,
even those beginning: Kiss me,
because we always did,
again, and again . . . ,
and again,
again.

Until
the novelty
grew thin and
life got in the way—
feedings, diapers, and colic.
Shh we whisper, don't wake the kids.

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Special Needs

My blackened eye
and broken jaw will heal,
my stutter, probably not.

Mom's soon-to-be-ex is looking
at ten to twenty, with the
possibility of parole.

His lawyer put me on trial. *Me*,
the teenage punching bag,
the one in the way of:

his fist,
his drinking,
his uncontrolled fury.

School resumed after
Labor Day, counselors
labeled me special needs.

Rest assured,
my intellect is intact,
even though I'm about to be

deposited like an empty vessel in
a maze of compartmentalized slots,
suggestive of an old-time soda crate;

brimming with rheumy-eyed children,
fragile as gossamer threads of DNA,
unaware of individual plights.

My classmates are
a giggle of special Eds
and extra-special Wendys.

Officials label our lot
a case of empties,
not eligible

for a decent
return from the
district's resources.

