

Slices of Life

Dollops and Fragments

No one understands.
I cringe while they
Rebut my apprehensions.
And I discharge disjointed droplets.

The air collapses within itself
Creating an opportune moment
To breathe savory oxygen once more,
This time from my brown paper bag.

Life Impaired from Clan Carnival

Barreling, jumping, wailing
All over creation.
Family ruckus, er, I mean delight.

Playing the lava game—
Instantaneous death
From simple contact with the floor

Playing the alligator game—
Increased adrenaline with attempts
To escape the ravenous alligator

Designing games
To develop liveliness

The news casting game—
The executive holds try-outs,
But makes ridiculous faces.
If you laugh, he says “Next!”

Kingdom’s unfortunate events—
Peasants plead for the king
To unhook them
From their tragic condition
In which they are glued together

Wall ball.
Rules: No pushing,
No shoving,
And no lollygagging!
(Last line requirement: turn,
grab butts, and shake.)

The trust game—
Close eyes and fall
Face first
Into the arms of a beloved sibling

Yes, it’s all fun and festive...

Until someone gets pushed
Into instantaneous death;

Until increased adrenaline
Causes a collision
Of face to bed post;

Until frustration seeps from all
Trying to land the
News caster job

Until the king
Rejects the peasants' request;

Until broken pictures
And clocks consume the floor;

Until the sting of betrayal
Bites your face,
As it hits the ground,
With your eyes still closed;

I have a deviated septum—
a crooked nose.

Take a wild guess
Which changed my life forever.

I have a deviated septum;
I don't breathe easily
Through my nose;

I can't sleep at night,
And I still snore.

Family ruckus, er, I mean fun
Isn't it great?!

Thanks Reality for Keeping Me Alive

When I have my work,
And I don't want to do it,
I just close my eyes
And let the poppies sooth me.

As I drift
More closely to my death,
I'm reminded of what I might never wake to.

Graduation, success,
All pour down the drain,
As I let the poppies
Overtake my breath.

Soon enough
My dream is over
And the poppies
Never graced me.

They never saved me from my homework;
They never gave me comfort;
Nay all they did was seduce me
Into thinking I could fake it.

Oh how I'm glad
I abruptly woke
From this distant dream,

For overall I'd rather live
And do my sickly work
Than die, perhaps an unfulfilled

And rather sleepless death,
From devilish,
Soothing poppies.

Unity with Pride

Marching, marching, marching.

Heel to toe, perfectly rolling the feet on each step.
No, on each march.

Sweat dripping down your face,

But you can't move, can't touch it.

It slips down to your mouth and that salty taste hits your tongue.

The sun burns in the cloudless morning,

Which beats notoriously against your skin.

Don't close your eyes

Keep them open, stay in step.

Don't let little mistakes stop the progress.

Don't give *him* any reasons to stop the progress.

Never stop. Keep working.

Perfect steps, perfect marching.

Keep your chin in the air.

Act arrogant.

That's how you win in this business.

Gathering together

Listening.

Standing at the ready.

No moving, head down, feet apart.

As you hear the signal, feet are together, chest is out, shoulders are back, chin is up, eyes carry

The pride for your section, for your family.

Family is everything.

Stay in step, play the right notes.

Never give anyone cause to say those dreadful words that never ring true: "One more time."

That's the biggest lie.

Get ready to perform it again and again.

At least five times or six.

Working, always working.

Because that's what we're told to do.

And that's what we do.

It's who we are.

It's who we become.

Because “practice doesn’t make perfect,” he’d say,
“perfect practice makes perfect.”
Over and over again, until it’s perfect.

Stay in step, play the right notes.
Keep the formation.
Listen to *him*.
Always.

Never forget, never forget.
Listen to everyone around you.
Let the melody be heard.

Cover down, cover down.
Always cover down.
Keep the formation.
Never compromise the formation.

The torture of it all flashes through your memories
And yet,
After it’s all over...you wish only to do it again
Year after year.

Why put up with everything?
Why put up with *him*?
Why torture yourself with early summer mornings of marching, marching, marching.
With covering down and playing the songs over and over again?

Why?

Because there’s nothing sweeter
Nothing that makes you turn your chin higher in the air
In arrogance, in pride
Than the sound of the judges’ voices
Declaring that your school, your family
Earned the Grand Champion title.

The most prestigious award,
An honor above all the rest
And your family,
The ones you cried with,
The ones you laughed with,
The ones you sweated and spit with,
Earned the privilege
To claim what you deserve
In celebration and in love

Moreover, the best feeling
Of all of the feelings we bore
In love, in trust, in faith
Is hearing *him*
Declare with pride one word:
Superior!

Through everything,
We all become a part of a family,
Even *he* is a part of it too.

Yes, we owe everything to *him*.
Because *he* is...
The Band Director.