

## FIVE POEMS FROM 'THE PROFFER-SEAS'

### That Shirt

Which will it be?  
True blue red  
plaid not-hot pink  
knife-in-the-back black

button-down button up  
zip, slip, moody standard hoodie:

Choose well.  
Necessary, not accessory  
unless to crimes. And contrary  
to popular lie, you will  
be wearing that shirt  
on day you die.

WTFolk?

Bespoke, Goodwill-found, token.  
Supple body tightly woven.  
Signifies, say the wiseguys,  
more than fatal email,  
attachment.

Evergreen green?  
Blue heaven, red hell,  
terracotta in-between:  
Choose well.

## Monkey Business

Everybody knows a businessman  
even when it's a woman.  
I mean: you have some money;  
you get some money; you figure  
a way to get more. "Making  
money," honey. No?

Along the way therefore  
you may make things; you  
make things up; you help  
one, immiserate another  
as necessary. You build up  
capital. You keep it up.  
You "get it up" and when  
it's big enough: success.

Otherwise, your demise.  
But as gangsters and other  
organizational personages say,  
*it's not personal.*

Then what is it? Personnel?

Not so simple okay.  
There are two sides to every cliché.

And sorry, Norm, we reject such norms.  
(By the way, Thelonious, this is  
way too euphonious.)

So let's get down to business, yes?  
Are mathematicians smarter,  
more interesting, less self-interested  
than the businessmen who hire them?  
Smart enough to see that Goldman sucks  
up PhD's faster than a Dyson cyclone?

It is a dirty business,  
warring gangs of quants while Quantz  
and his flutes are matters of no repute.  
Moody's, however, is always in the mood.

*Quantify. Cast a cold eye.*  
*Subtract. Contract. Be United Fruit*  
*and multiply. Money-junky.*  
*Insult to monkeys. Business.*

## Death's Door

1.

Ah, dark wood,  
deeply stained. Inscriptions  
venerable, fearful, near illegible.

Immense. One stands before,  
a tremor travels the grain.  
If not welcome, the only welcome.

Leonard stood there. *Damn.*  
*That's how you want it? Who knew*  
*such darkness was legit?*

Well might you wonder  
what Leonard saw,  
but when you come before,  
you will not wonder;  
you will not remember.

2.

The silver moon sails  
against black, and gray,  
and its own silver shadow.  
You may see a galleon  
and its coastline of torn clouds.  
You may see a pale demon  
with a pale lantern.

All rises and falls, now  
bright, now invisible,  
as a planet revolves  
over sheltering cove.

You will not see them, the black  
towers, wave upon wave upon wave.

## **Weather, or Not**

High in the forties  
with a chance of rain  
and then more rain  
and more, and then some.

Get out of here.  
Take your umbrella,  
which is full of holes.  
Set out of here under sail;  
halloo a pod of whales  
and sharp shoals.

Your weather outlook is brought to you  
by Amalgamated Life  
accumulated strife  
and old King Coal.

High on compensation  
paper-based and not,  
sick with thick extraction,  
left, fish-like, to rot,  
quick! Hold on to your undies.

For a month and more of Sundays,  
the freaking forecast is Hot.

## **From the Homeland Manual**

He did, or made, an imitation of the human.  
We do not intend that he was not-human,  
however our kind is ill-defined amidst  
a million recalcitrant variations, instructions,  
and simulacra. Why, we had iteration refined  
by veteran functionaries down to the last detail  
when he, unfortunately, was deployed  
on that final patrol. Chewed up by hostile fire,  
refined by refining fire, consigned to everlasting.

It seemed required, in the tactical situation,  
to subordinate the so-called Good to salient cant,  
persiflage, armored Energizer bunnies advancing  
in arrayed crystal displays of indifference.  
To salivate. Remember, what else you forget, this:

All verities, objectives accomplished, vanish.  
Insurgencies must be crushed, the relevant zombies  
freed to campaign and devour, now they can  
tread upright again in the light and open air.