

Pushing 40: 10 Things I've regretted not doing

Ten

Forty is way too old to knock over a liquor store.
Even 39 is ridiculous.
That window has closed.

Nein

I thought you were supposed to sober up
before you went to rehab.
Nobody told me
showing up drunk
and doing lines in the parking lot
was an option.

Ate

The Buddha informs us
that all things, without exception,
are subject to the law
of arising and decay.
That notwithstanding,
playing house with
the twenty-one year old girl
I met on Casual Encounters
still might have kept me young.

Seaven

Why didn't I move to New York
when I was thinking about it in 2003?
It's true the geographic cure never works,
but I ended up smoking crack
with tranny hookers anyway.
How much worse could it have been?

Sicks

Even before addiction really got going,
On any given day in San Diego
I could have gotten in my car at lunchtime
and, without so much as a call
to work or future ex-wife,
disappeared for a month
into the seedy underbelly
of Los Angeles.

Fife

Making out with an old

high school crush
shortly before I got married
was good.
Calling off the wedding
after a month of guilty, sweaty sex
would have been better.

Fore
Instead of teaching English in Japan
to save for an MBA
after graduating from Berkeley,
I could have dropped out,
worked in a comic store,
and published zines.

Tree
I abhor violence, but,
at some point in a childhood
of being swung into trees and walls,
whaling away on one of my oppressors
with a sharpened pencil
would have made some kind of change
in my life.

Too
While I have attempted to do it
in distorted ways
ever since,
ten would have been the ideal age
to run away from home.

Wan
I should have gone toward
the pure white light
in the Bardo Thodol
instead of fixating
on all these fucking animals and humans,
thereby reincarnating
into this whole mess again
to begin with.

Secret Washington

In Spring in Secret Washington all those pretty cherry blossoms hide hideous exigencies.

What do you think they were trying to keep inside when they built the Department of Defense as a giant pentagram? Where do you think it escaped to when the sacred circle was breached by a plane on that September morning?

That was *not* a Bible open on the stand inside the ruined wall.

In Secret Washington, NASA is trying to keep us from getting to Mars for ten very good reasons. The first two alone would drive anyone who knew them mad. This has by and large already happened.

To give you a hint about the Novo Ordo Seclorum, there is more than one world holding the New Order together.

The eye inside the pyramid has been watching for longer than you know.

In Secret Washington JFK said he wanted to abolish the Federal Reserve and scatter the CIA to the four winds. He was dead within six months.

Androids are more sophisticated than you realize. It is no accident that they had to keep Cheney out of direct sunlight.

Ronald, Wilson & Reagan each have 6 letters and we are still living under the Mark of that Beast.

In Secret Washington, the Chupacabras and Mothman have their own handlers at Langley. Sasquatch is not even up for discussion.

The statue of Lincoln in the Memorial is hollow, and I can not tell you what's inside.

What goes on in the basement of the Smithsonian at night is unspeakable.

Every day Secret Washington becomes a little more open. The things that everybody suspects but nobody knows soon will be plain to see.

And the nations shall look on them and mourn.

Poem From The Week Josh Died

Clement Street, between 11th & 12th:
Police motorcycle, lights flashing blue-white-red
parked next to Linen Outlet.
12th Avenue, between Clement & Geary:
Motorcycle cop, big and tough in black leather
pulls over little gray Japanese car.
Geary Avenue, corner with 12th:
Two police bikes have pulled over two cars
another hums up the street past me,
policeman suspiciously eyeing the green Perrier
I drink from a brown paper bag.
11th Avenue, just before it crosses Geary:
Three police motorcycles pull up to the corner.
Geary, on the bus now, passing 10th Avenue:
Police bike, lights blazing, roars past us.
Why do I fear this symmetry?

Walking back from Jen's
squinting in morning sun,
the smell of her still on my hands,
a familiar sense of dread bubbles up
as I switch my phone back on.
I double down on it
when I see my parent's number,
and hear the dark tone in their voices.
Even before I call back, I know.
I always knew this call would come one day.
I pick up a bottle of Jack Daniels on the way home,
and hold a wake for him,
listening to Guns n' Roses
until afternoon collapses into dusk.
Where do we go?
Where do we go now,
Sweet child of mine...

Girl laughing behind the counter
talking with a young man
in white shirt
about his spicy lunch

as we drop off my brother's picture
for the obituary
makes me smile
at the gorgeous stupidity
of life.

On the way to my brother's memorial
Caltrain slides past
twisted scrap heaps of junked cars
rusting loading cranes
squat graffitied warehouses
and wooden piers rotting
in brackish looking waterways
the color of steel.
Weird scenes
on the leeward side of the Bay.

We buried Josh
this liquid gray foggy morning
at the small cemetery in Moss Landing.
The minister from my Mother's church
sang Amazing Grace
as a striped seabird
squawked and alighted nearby,
and a small black and white cat
watched from the weeds
of the windswept field
just one dune down
from the ocean.

Caltrain home from the burial
watching sunset on the hills
of South San Francisco.
Golden curves
and soft shadows,
like a woman's body.

The square green park

between Jackson & Front Streets
was full of birds this afternoon.
Unseen squawks, chirps, twitters
seethe from the dark spaces
in the trees
like a tidal surge
that, just for a moment, washes out
thoughts of my brother
and carries me back to life,
which insists on going on.
Brazenly.
Urgently.
Loudly.
No matter how unwelcome it is.

I Think It Came In Through the Window

The egress through which I let it in
seemed small,
too small
to do any real harm:
Just a scotch on the windowsill,
gleaming gold around ice-cube boulders
in blue-tinged plastic tumbler.
Volumes of poetry
lay scattered on the comforter,
their words a swarm of mosquitoes
that congealed
into a buzzing acquaintance
with darkness.

In the darkness I ordered another.
And another.
And another.
Just one more, until,

one shaky morning,
I found I had ordered a box of maladies
that daily unpacked thirsty demands,
swatted the mosquitoes,
and left the sweat-soaked comforter
littered with dead words.

If I don't drink tonight

If I don't drink tonight, can I be Allen Ginsberg?

(Although he was often unhappy, I'd be willing to be
unhappy, fat and balding in exchange for just one "Howl".)

If I don't drink tonight, will somebody buy me peanuts
the next time I go to the ballpark?

(Or will I become secure enough in my manhood to admit
that I never go to the ballpark, or even watch baseball on TV?)

If I don't drink tonight, will my novel publish itself
with effortless aplomb?

(I don't mind reading *Herman's Guide to Publishers, Editors
& Literary Agents*, but effortless aplomb is better.)

If I don't drink tonight, will you finally love me,
Dear Lady whose ardor animates the Universe?

(Or will I begin to learn, at long last,
to love myself?)

If I don't drink tonight, will I be able to get to sleep?