

The
Thin
Book
of
Poems

By
Lach

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So help you God.

And by 'God' we mean Loki.

In 82

In 82, I was in the West Village getting
kicked out of folk music clubs for playing
my acoustic too fast and too true

In 82, I was a bar back at high fashion disco
with unknown Bruce Willis as doorman and
after-hours coke parties with Boy George

In 82, I pined for LA girl who promised to
return and to this day still hasn't

In 82, I was less than zero in the bright
lights of the big city

In 82, I wore black pointy shoes, tight black
pants and a white T-shirt with the word
FOLK circled in red with a slash through it

In 82, I spied strange cartoon chalk stories
in subway while tagging cars with my name
A year later Keith Haring ate fame

In 82, I was gonna make it anysecondnow

The First Time I Cried

In 82, I lived in mafia sublet at \$180 a
month on Bleeker and McDougal
until landlady one day
said to me after a
long baleful pause
"You're not Italian."

In 82, before aids,
I still used condoms from baby fears
of age and suburbia

In 82, I cooked spaghetti
in apartment kitchen
and ate in hot, claw foot, freestanding tub
neighbors talked across alley windows and
I played vinyl records of Sinatra
and Lou Reed

In 82, I was electric
in the last days of Pompeii

That'd be birth
Then all those baby times
left out of the game
having to go to bed
not getting the blooper ball
from the nickel machine
But the first time art
moved me to tears
was when Will Robinson
decided to run away with
The Galactic Circus
and before leaving
he gave his sister
Penny
his blue frog to take care of
without telling her why
Lost in space I was
Lost in space

“Is This Seat Taken?”

a stranger said.
And I thought of the untaken thoughts
in my head
and the untaken loves
in my unshaken bed
and how every single moment has
infinite doors
and I always opened the ones I had
opened before
expecting to see something different inside
but reused dreams have nothing to hide
and with one foot in and one heart out
I circled and circled
between faith and doubt
and I can't stand it watching my years
fall like the leaves of November
Damn safety!
Damn knowledge and all it encumbers!
O, yes, this seat is untaken and free
and I'd love to have you sit next to me

Birthday Weather

It's always wet on my birthday
A November sky
Golden tears plastered
on windshields
Pavement puddles
leaf-canoes capsized
I'd splosh through
smiles pinned like
donkey tails on
family faces
And giant step past
windows wishing
for mind readers to choose
the perfect present
the toy that would shine
like the sun
burning grey cloud to ash
leaving me a new
pristine chance
of a day

Ballad Of The Thinning Man

Cold are the dreams
I've been living on
I've been hauling my amp
down St. Marks
Everything's changed
everyone's gone
I close down the bars
as they close down the parks

I feel like the stadium
after the ninth inning
Must have been all that
hairspray and amphetamine
The punks ask for change
and I say with a grin, "Change only comes
from within."

And I'm thinning

Legs wrapped in cotton
I'm a poor man's Johnny Rotten
I'm a skinny, peglegged, skeleton man
You might see me haunting some fool
hootenanny saying, "Johnny Cash, yeah, he
once played with my band."

And if you buy me some gin to help wash
the sin out of the back of my mind
And then toss in a salad
I'll sing you this ballad
and just like most of its rhymes
I'm thinning

I'm thinning like my jokes
like the smoke from a bong
like a song gone on too long
I'm thinning like the plot
never got hot
Everyone knew I was the killer
from the beginning

And I'm thinning

Charm

From the cathedral
like a goat
made of stars
I hob-step down
to the cafes

My burnished beard stuck
with eucalyptus leaves
My eyes like Pluto
dark and magnetic
create orbits
I am passing through
whole histories of Man
as I pass each man

I dip into brainwaves
diving deep into dreams and
up again
to whip my hair about
the chill San Francisco sky

I arrive and enter
after tying my immediate past
to the rail outside

My fear of people transforms itself
into a herd of children
darting about like puppies
jumping onto laps, suckling
breasts and licking feet

Let us embrace one another tonight
and warm our years over
the campfire of soul
For I have brought this charm
this poem
this leap into the void
to break the ice of habit
to burn away deforming conformity
to turn nervous giggles
into sensuous laughter
to coax hallucination
to create theater
to bind us all to a contract of make-believe
where anything is possible

This Is Not An Open Mike

This is a celebration
A carnival ride through the night
Don't waste yr time and tickets waiting on
line for the big ride
Three hours for a three-minute
splash of the dizzies
The parachute jump when bumper cars and
Ferris wheels are screaming out yr name
When cotton candy vendors hold rights to
a mystery date
Hell, take anything from the top shelf
Everyone's a winner!

This is not an open mike
This is a bordello rented from yr
secret dreams
A Pocket Book fantasy of what could be
with Poe and Toulouse Lautrec at the beck
and call of the Oscar Wilde
Each act a room of possibilities
Turn yr sorry songs into harlots and fire-
eaters

Get out yr bullwhip and beat yr superego,
parent-pleasing soul into a frenzy of
dropped chords, false bridges

and sly mistakes

This is not an open mike
I am not on a number
You are not a number
This club has long ago
severed its tether
and slipped into the ether
We are in Dorothy's house
spinning madly towards Oz
Laws of gravity have been
replaced with laws of levity
There is no job
no cubicle
no sitcom
no on-line
no reality
for you to return to

Time is flying

This is not an open mike
You are sitting next to
a breathing human being
Miles of arteries
and a heart
red and juicy
pumping blood
filled with oxygenated cells
Bioelectricity shooting
at the speed of thought
Storehouses of billions of moments
Each one a poem
of God and love
That is why you are singing
That is why you are going to get on stage
This is not an open mike
This is your life!

Bread

The peeling wood pastel blue
and special like it was baked
The white-laced curtains
shifting like musical phrases
and the smell of apples
and peanut butter
as we ate afterwards

The smiles on the faces of people
in the street
and at the cafes
lifting glasses
and nodding to us
as if we had just entered
a new civilization

The sound of motors
in cars outside our window
whirling and washing against the city
Buildings wading like peasant women
holding their skirts and awnings
up above their doorway ankles

How our sweet love transformed the world
into a curiosity for our delight!

Who would chose books over romance?

Schedules over stars?

Security over freedom?

Not us!

Give us a world as a banquet

of divine laughter

A child's color adorning the

skeleton of reality

The finite made infinite

The ordinary made particular

Send us poets to map out a new language

for our sojourn through life

For death is our spurring rod and love our

bread and I am hungry and I won't be

satiated by looks or by compliments

or by courtesies or compromise

But only by you, my darling

Your breath, your eyes, your skin, your

hair, your tears, your hunger

Yes, your hunger is the bread

that saves me from starvation and despair

Indie

Indie

Die in

Dying

Alternative

Alter native

Fervent

Fevered

Contagious

Indie

Help me

Indie

Music

Sick muse

Band photo

in Magnet

in Mojo

Indie

In die

Yes, that's it!

Die Magazine!

Complete coverage of whining bands

you wish would just as soon die

Hey, are you in Die?

Poster War

Ya got a gig
Dig
Ya want th crew down
Doncha know
At th show
Y'know what I'm sayin
Where you be playin
So, like th town crier
Ya make up yr flyer
Up on th light pole
Out-of-control scene
Ya know what I mean
It's a poster war!
You cover mine and I'll cover yours!
Fuck Terminator and Club Boomerang
I rip em down
It ain't no thing
Their shows are whack, slacker crap
I hit em with a thumbtack attack

Paradise Lounge and Bottom of the Hill
I got my ill fill
Move in for th kill
Cause it's a poster war!
You dis mine, baby, I'll dis yours!
(Scuse me, while I dis this guy!)Gotta love th Haight
Ego inflate with masking tape
Staple and paste
Waste that tree
A paper raper I'm out on a poster caper
Hittin every pole, mailbox, and window
Lettin em know about the Antifolk show
Cause it's a poster war!

Man, this scene can't get any tighter
I wish I had my butane lighter
Flash this trash
Burn this scene in effigy
In th key of see ya later
Ignite the night, unite, light poles on fire
Purify th scene
I'm a hero for hire
Cause it's a poster war!
You cover mine and I'll cover yours!

Return To Exuberance

Lace up those teenage sneakers
Slam suburban doors of conformity
And race into your life

Tumble upon the ground
Wet leaves in hair
Cheeks apple red and breathless

Crow and flap arms
Beak bopping off beats
And think sexy like a crush

Yeah, get a crush on like-minded,
Flying by your eyesight,
Fellow human voyagers
Reach out
Ask for the dance

Because an infinite hallway
Of lost minutes
Stands like doomed soldiers
Looming over your
Tombstone days

Only you
Now
Can announce surrender
Right now always

And watch all armaments
Crash to the ground
Leaving your 'all-times'
Liberated, joyous and
Grateful

One Artist's Prayer

Dear God, The Inevitable, Coincidental,
Natural Flow of Goodness,

Make me more relaxed and patient to
hear your direction

Fill me with confidence and lightness to
see your direction

Bring me to cool flow of events to
feel your love and protection

Slow me to appreciate and attune and
smell the bloom of my labor

Affix me to the important tasks that
taste of kind success

Amen

Rosh Hashonah 5754

The President is blowing sax wide and loud
and the White House is turned on
as the insomniac Prez breaks sound codes
and aides and congressmen flit about
in the glow like violet neon fish
and Hillary is laughing cross-legged on the
Lincoln bed the nation's health-care plan
spread before her
like a cut-up of the fifty states
like a final paper
two hours before class time
and Ol' Bill is naked except for a loincloth
made from a Palestinian scarf
that Yasser gave him
and he lays into The One O'Clock Jump
as the transcendent
First Lady moves up behind him
pressing her breasts against his back
her arms encircling him
her hands caressing his chest

**Only Loving Poetry Will Defeat
Fire And Steel**

and the TV is on
showing Yitzhak and Yasser
shaking hands
shaking history
and Bill is getting hard
and switching keys wildly as
Hillary's hands move downward
and Tom Brokaw is smiling at them
and announcing the historic moment
and Bill is blaring scales like a
rabbi on a ram's horn
and it's peace in the Middle East!
It's peace in the Middle East!
It's peace in the Middle East!
Happy fucking New Year!

Only warriors, honest, free and strong, are
capable of true art
Loving Earth, sex and storms for their
violent release
Poetry, wrestled from the hand of Heaven
Will, forged hard against the heat
of God's fury
Defeat, never an option in a circle of
incarnation
Fire your arrows of lyric protest and faint
challenge
And the warrior will laugh as he goes on to
Steal Apollo's light and transform it into
golden invention

(For Bob Randolph)

Path Of The Sun

The lazy path
of Dionysus
celebrated by the
weak and diseased
finding false
comfort midst
stagnant breeze

Give me Apollo's
test though
militant and hard
an awakened breast
to climb over
the thrown
bodies of revel
to the sun

The air the
sweet clear
air

Snow Melts

It is hard
I don't walk I trudge
lifting tank-like legs
vine covered, dripping swamp ooze
I let my trunk drop down
sinking into cookie dough
into a life that feels like endless winter
vision iced, hearing muffled
Where is the sun?
With heaving chest and dizzy mind
I pause
Numb hand reaches to lean and I touch
the revealed bark of a pine tree
wet and steaming
true wood
Bewildered my eyes defrost
and I look up to see icicles dripping
Prismatic diamonds becoming water
against a brightening cloud
The yellow thumbprint of the sun
And I recall
in absolute wonder that
snow melts

Spring

Honey floats my tongue
golden bubbles gone fishing
for baubles hidden
under kisses

Cherry coats my cheeks
caught blushing
apple orchards of prickle heat
beneath gazes

I am enamored
and gleaming

The Bachelor

Yeah, make it sound sophisticated
Give it a French twist
Thick coffee in charming blue squalor
The city clamoring like an excited dog
yapping for my scruffy company
Living life like it was already a memory
Women as chapters, as bottles of wine
Young names gathered and heaped upon
the floor and furniture like lingerie

Yeah, turn sad, boring, horny years
into a Gene Kelly romp of color
Bustling, witty escapades
full of Parisian charm
and immortal blood
As if this were a chosen life like,
"Oh God, what do all these women
want from me?"

The Master's Table

If only they'd stop with this
warm caring manner
distilling harsh mornings
into gentle hours

As if bachelorhood was a
neighborhood of eternal
Pinocchio pleasures and
vibrant lily dreams

As if I weren't waking
scared and small
in a huge continent of a bed
with my soul divided
limping toward
the dreadful afternoon

Oh God, the day is so big and
I am so alone

No draft for the men of my generation
All the windows closed
All the doors shut
Bunched into living rooms
Bathed and burning
Under television stars
Hot gymnasium weather
Cramped encampments
High school kennels
Squeezed yellow tube
Buses of boys dashing home for
Lost in Space and jelly sandwiches
Little League
Basketball teams
Swimming teams
Learning to smoke
Learning to drink
Suffocating
Drowning
Getting hard
Hard soldiers turning
Distant girl's heads
No

no

There is no draft

No enemy faraway in glory

Righteous crusade

King's guard and Queen's honor

God's blessing on our violent liberation

Horses and bugles

And the birth of great nations

No

We live softly

With tyrants invisible

In hallways and offices, wages and juries

Surveys and polls, articles and talk shows

Until we are wounded by peace

Caged by decency, hollowed by conformity

Jesus

I'd love to see a Senator bare-chested and

Sweating in the dirt

Bloodied and shining like Mars

Fighting for his country and his people

But my men only fight one another now

Domestic dogs squabbling over scraps

Trickled down from the master's table

Babyland

Your face shows

gravity's weight

as you reel off

a line or two

The barstools in here

hold flesh

rushed with beer

Each person joking

in separate aisles of pain

making conversation

like minor sitcom dialogue

like photo captions for

the yearbook graveyard

Y'all are horses stalled!

Confused and brain-fat!

Mistaking death

for revolution

Partying

for life

Lenny Let It Flow

I feel like you're each
a movie projected
on yourselves
Pieces of film flapping
about like ousted fish

You stand in the middle
of your life crying
and your tears are ashes
and no one is laughing for the right jokes

But
everyone is laughing
everyone is laughing
everyone is laughing
as the nation crumples
amongst its hypocritical
ineffectual youth

Orange juice squoze upon
Vargas girl lips
Lyrics drip like volcanic ice
Lenny let it flow

Turnaround in the cinema
See Bogart reflections
Float on eyeglass ponds
Lenny let it flow

Hear chimes in dinner talk
Great candy melodies
Inside heart agape
Lenny let it blow

Cartoon factory whistle your
Shrunken worker soul
Days done, night's begun
Lenny let it glow

Lost camp glimmers in
Mind's pine forest
Where magic is counselor
Lenny let it grow

Outside you as if Big Self is
A whappy bounding dog
Licking your balls
Lenny let it crow

Sun landing on rooster brain
Like a matinee rocket
No choice involved
Lenny let it below

Gnarly Ginsberg snakes
choke spinal sparks
Give Professor Pumpkin the heave-ho
And race, race, race in open Kerouac car
No point
No goal
No audience
Just the feel of the flow
through bone and soul

Birthday

A heigh! A ho! A banquet has been laid
A table of wonder 'neath noon time shade
To what do we owe this delicate parade?
A birthday! *Your* birthday!
The day that you were made

Sit tall at table's head
A crown upon your brow
As songsters and poet's
Join you e'en now
And know that all well wishes
Are true and most sincere
For it is on birthdays
We recall who we hold dear

12/29/10

The Christmas tree is making me itchy
Frozen time expiry December 31

Impatient week, hangover sloths
And then, finally, we can work again

How I Approach Change

Sometimes like a sand castle
Sometimes like a clown
Sometimes like a dictator
Or a voyeur with a crown
Oft times like a child
Bouncing twixt petulance and glee
Rarely like the sober gent
I strive so hard to be

Life Sighs

Spring fever has sprung
and I am restless
Crazy stirrings wiggle
across a sappy brain
Heart is thick
with tulip sightings
Crack open a car
and pour me in
Time to hit
the road again

iMpatience

Even the fifteen-second
elevator ride
to my studio
whips my impatient mind
I grab onto anything I can find to read
Menus, coupons, lost mail

Once inside I turn it all on
iMac, iPhone,
iNsanity
Constant noise to drown
the stale sentences
clogging my sorry head

After You Left

the girl you had chosen
the guy you had chosen
the fantasy you dabbled
looked to where you had been
and you were gone

After you left
the record exec
found the pen to write
yr number down

After you left the
drinks were sweeter
the P.A. was crisper
and Dylan came in

After you left the joint
really started jumping
All colors were brighter
and the fire door
flew open to reveal
we had landed
on a planet of pleasure

After you left
we played naked Jello twister
We smoked bong
made of mahogany
filled with Italian burgundy

Yes, after you left
there was the time of your life
There was a group song about Vanilla Ice
The Humans dressed in drag
The cat was let out of the bag
The Novellas got three encores
Mr. Scarecrow did a tap dance
Jen's Revenge got married
to a pair of triplets
George Moore sang
Philadelphia Freedom
in Latin
The tip jar turned into a bird
and flew around the room screaming
"Free the Fast Folk Five!"

Plans

After you left
it pains me to say
the TV came on
and a newscast did play
It showed you at home
turning small into dreams
getting up early and
like a slow movie scream
you went into the dull routine
of a life that you
have never
left

After all
I should be in Paris
Clothed in romance and carelessness
Everything is augmented
and defined by travel
Sour grief becomes sweet
on foreign tongues

So now a plan has formed
New York in October
France in November
Christmas a mystery

I let all claims both jealous and deserved go
My San Francisco experiment concluded
It is time to move on
Take me deep future
into a new winter

Hypernation

Thick bear grumping
Shoulders humping
Down December's slope

Hercules clouds
Christmas crowds
Throat's a knotted rope

Duck and cover
With a lover
Let the whole world fade

Thanksgiving's done
The Pilgrims won
Let 'em have their parade

Death Is Cool

You all be cool, unperturbed, above
I wanna be warm and wrapped in love
Breathing with conflict and ecstasy
I wanna be a warm man for the ladies
Aggressive and safe
Warm like a sax or cello
Warm in alleys with the anti-generation
Filled with color
No black and white eight-millimeter
wraparound shades and cigarettes
Pot haze and forgetfulness
No, I'm warm with forest eyes
and heart-crowning chest
Warm with a lover
Warm with super-real conversation
filled with emotion
like playgrounds of family animal heat
Hair for petting not for setting
I wanna be warm and let you in
like Whitman
Glorious and triumphant

Cool is dead
Cool is played
Cool is old and captured in shops and ads
Warm is rebellious and alive
Be warm with me
Leave your cool life behind
Give it flowers and an ashtray
and send cool away
Rub your soul and circulate your blood
Be warm
Be atomic
Scintillate and shine

7/10/10

In smallest styles the universe winks
A giggle at a funeral
A step that isn't there

In a meadow by the roadside
sweating from changing a flat
a car slowed to ask if I was alright
and then
I was

Smoke

Janine's legs hold my heart and youth
Truth is an unsigned band
Splattered by mail
Across the scarred country
Janine's hands signed secret codes
Roads connect nowhere
Quilted farms vein virgin fields
And the smoke trains my sight
And the trains smoke my night

Girlfriend you never were
Lover and mirror yes
How could my sister
Fill me with such bitterness
Janine welcomes me back with gifts
Lifts me out of body
Plastered like honey above the sacred town
Janine vanishes with weirdoes
There goes my baby
Jilted and jailed, I'm on the rails
And the smoke trains my sight
And the trains smoke my night
(For Sander)

Winterier

It's a winterier winter this year
Winds biting harder
Snow a clenched fist
No soft stroke of kitten's paw

Market aisle's
sharp shelves
cut cheeks red
and laugh
like insects drunk
on cattle blood

Welcome winter
hard-breasted guest
Bittersweet bedside
chocolates await in
a porcelain white dish

Look

It's all art
Music and theatre
Passion and poetry
Orgasms are cool
Orgasm are fine
Orgasm is essential
But isn't everything?
A cool breeze in August bleachers
Your lover's laughter
The lights going from dim to black
as the feature presentation begins
The fresh, cold underside of the pillow
just turned to hot, summer face
The blare of jazz
stripped across the big beat
The secret hit and god rush of marijuana
The sober acquirement of knowledge
Self-knowledge
Ain't it all a gas?
Give up the empty habit of sexual
search and destroy
It'll happen
We all come

Traces

But what song will you
sing in the morning?
What breakfast will you
holy-down and share?
What carnival temple
will you make of the day?

Whose hand will you praise?

Hold me

Hold me close

Hold me up

Teach me the story of your
crying dreams and glory

Tell me

Tell me now

I'm all ears

She studies my body
Knows its beeps and bops
Has indexed its
bumps and beauty spots

Her fingers swing ballets
across my lips

My frail anatomy's braille
speaks volumes to her

Staying Sober Tonight In North Beach

You took me to the circus
Ladies chained to limo scenes
We smoked up on the corner
watching red turn to green
You took me to the movie
where the poet sold some ink
to a feathered serpent
that was posing as his shrink
and I'm staying sober tonight
in North Beach

A tourist bumped my shoulder
in New York there'd be a fight
but I am getting older
and I'm trying to be polite
It's hard to be a new man when
the clowns all hold your heart
Every time I hit a finish line
it vanishes with a start
and I'm staying sober tonight
in North Beach

Hallelujah!

I'm tired and I'm lonely
My atoms have lost their spin
It's hard to be romantic
when you're paying for your sin
Send me to the sleepy car
Give me a kiss goodnight
My head is filled with stars
My body's filled with light
and I'm staying sober tonight
in North Beach

I am in the arena
I am raw but rectified
I am feeling serener
but a bit mystified
by the angel who's floating
gently by my side
She says,
"Life is only given to
Those who have died."
and I'm staying sober tonight
in North Beach

Hallelujah!

Standing in Kinko's copy shop
Chopping flyers for the Antihoot
Cute girl asks me do I wanna enlarge?
Charge or cash?
Flashback kicked
Licked my eyes like a big ol' reality dog
Fog robbed the scene of all civil rules
Fools and apes the other customers became
And I asked myself,
"How did I get to this place
Making flyers for open-mike?
Like I care about creating
Yet another lame,
Brain-drain
Music game?"
And the consumers
Became mice running
Around computers
And paper cutters
And I was on
NO DRUGS
Just blindingly
Clear
Sober
Insanity

The day I went insane became a week
Bleak, sleek streets with
No left turns allowed
Cowed me onto Broadway
North Beach circus
Lust and blue mist
Kissed my trigger
I figured some nude dancers were in order
Borders I'd never crossed needed exploding
So, in I slinked
Blinked
In the raincoat dark
Heart hammering
Dick chattering
In booth
Window sliding and
BAM
Naked, giggling, watery women
Swimming on stage
Me, in cage, pumping
Quarters into slots
And, oh, I'm hot and gone
But feeling cool
Like I was finally free
From the goddamn children's table

Cradle rocked
I hit Vesuvio's Bar
And bum a Camel
From Paul Kantner
Banter with afternoon drunks
Plunking more quarters into juke-box
Rocks with Sinatra and Gilberto Gil
Money a memory
I go up to balcony
Kickback and smoke
Joke with blonde fire
Who knows poets
I know
And she's real
She's not behind a glass
Fast talk and numbers swapped
I bop out and back to porn palace
Wishing it was the girl herself
From Vesuvio's
Twitching
Swishing
Wishing
I was sex itself

The day I went insane was today
and I'm a mad, bad, sad, lad crouched
inside my name and age
raging at the nineties recovery zombies
who threw me a lifesaver
of the wrong flavor
Behavior sanctioned into boxes too small
for my psychedelic soul
and I want out
and I want to be demon and angel both
Don't divide me!
I went to the sculptor
and he forged me two wings
He set them on my shoulders
then he told me two things
The first that I was lucky, yeah,
I'm blessed to be alive
The second, turn to your old life
and wave bye-bye

And I'm staying sober tonight
in North Beach.

Hallelujah!

Antithesis

(Anti is pronounced 'an/tie')

(Antis is pronounced 'an/ties')

Antisongs radiate triumphant defeat

Antisongs go at the speed of night

Antiwriters cherish the cast out

Anti is by fame destroyed

Anti would rather

sleep than write

fuck than write

drug than write

But they write anyway

and most of their songs

are about

sleeping

fucking

and drugging

Anti couples always break up

Young antis are kings

Old Antis are priests

Anti is made out of wood and rope

Anti can never sell out

As soon as it does it ceases to be Anti

Anti is wounded

Women Antis attract male harems

An Anti woman is Mrs. Peel with a guitar

An Anti man is the fifth Beatle

Sober or drunk an Anti is intoxicated

Antifolk is Hank Williams meets

The Sex Pistols

Antifolk is PEOPLE WHO ARE AGAINST

Anti is not cool

Anti is always about to leave wherever it is

There is no anti fashion

All fashion is reaction and

Anti doesn't react

It responds

This is what is known as Antireactionary

1/1/11

We are wisps of consciousness

Constantly flickering

Gusts of the past

Dreams of the future

**"Doesn't Anyone Know How To Play This
Game?" ***

Where are the New York poets?
Under what edifice do they lie like
newts, wet and proud?

On bubble-pink paper a poetry calendar
announces readings in italics
But I expected more
I expected colossal welcomings upon
my arrival
Mad, rushing priests of prose
conducting cabals
of free love and revolution

I implore you thieves, "Death notices!"
Do not fool with this
Do not plan gigs and put up flyers
Do not send out press releases
and publish pamphlets
Do not allow cameras
and journalists into the games

I beg of you to show yourselves to me
Give me a throw of the random bones
Let me place my feeble legs
upon the shores of your shoulders
My hands steadying my body
with pianist fingers
entwined in your knotty mane
My spine unfolding, extending, raising my
head high above the metropolis
The air clear and salty
The stars delicious
My whole being infused with the challenge
of art and the freedom of life

New York poets are Stengel's team
full of spirit and spit
Leading the league in errors
Newborn, stumbling and eager
And I'm on the bench in a borrowed
uniform drumming my feet
kneading my mitt and screaming
"Put me in coach, put me in! Doesn't
anyone know how to play this game?"

*Casey Stengel - 1st manager of the NY Mets

Apple Days

Apple days are here
Pumpkin nights not far behind
Summer's gone, I fear
Sunsets rich as wine

Soon I'll smell winter's silver wind
And chimney smoke of oak and pine
And as each season passes dear
These things to me grow more divine

Farewell To Amnesia

It's time to remember
Time to let it all back in
Like the tide lapping
Upon the shores of Asia
Some things need to end
So others may begin

Planet Ludlow

The bars of Planet Ludlow are involved
with lost eyes, crushed dreams
in crushed velvet

Lanky lips grip bottles and tongues
like numb thumbs

Pool balls clack, colliding like mutant
atoms, like humans in a packed bar,
careening against felt air, slipping into lives

Me, all gawky and goofy
and along for the ride
Like the feeling of clothes shopping
with mom
My friend, Shelly, tugging
my arm and saying,
“We have to leave now, let’s check out Max
Fish!”

And I'm in a mental pause
a psychic rewind
remembering the first time I hit these
streets years ago
escaping the Disneyland of Greenwich
into the furtive arms of Loisaida
when artists and Anti
walked Stanton Street
and ABC No Rio and No Se No and The Fort
formed the long remedial corridor
of the Rivington School

And I must have been crazy
to walk those streets feeling
high and star-filled
with no convenient
indie rock bar to skip into
No groups of white, goateed gangs
to blend in with

This must be what's called
sober reflection
for it all seems so far from me
I am
detached

A separate foundation insulates me from
this new generation.

And everyone looks like a magazine article
or a commercial or an art project
And all the eyes are on the charts and
I'm not upset
and I don't miss anything, anyone, anytime

I am bemused
I am a being with muse

I am dumbfounded
I am dumb and I am found
amongst the bars of Planet Ludlow

Beach On A Cloudy Day

endless in its completeness
fading eternity
beach on a cloudy day
forever with an ending
rolling clouds content to roll
churning waves content to churn
sky gray in its grayness

sand swallows you, dumping you into
yourself shooting over timeless waves
the waves are so constant in loudness that
they're silent
warmth of rhythm flows to touch each
grain of sand
each sparkle planned to fine beauty

the sand so overwhelming as to project
infinity
though each grain is intricately different
alone
bounded in itself
finite infinity

1/10/11

Raise a joyous noise!
The sun hath risen once again!
Fear or faith brain?
Fight or flight brain?
Oh, chemical stew
What you gonna do?

1/3/11

Long legs yardstick
and click clack down
East Village avenues
Lift me up
on stage to read

Sing!

and back out down Delancey
to hear friend

Sing!

and see friends' welcoming faces
and strangers' eyes lit with
liquor

Sing!

Estonia

Her face in theirs
looking through years
through granny's wars
and parent's grey tunnel
to glasnost
to young brother's red-cheeked cheeriness
Hope brought in by CDs and MTV

We snuck cigarettes outside on porch
with falling snow
with cold fingers
We gave and received gifts
both solid and
intangible

A smile slyly acknowledging
the coincidence below
the day's beating heart

We are all canvas awaiting
the eyes that paint us

Sleep Soft

A wisp of hair
delicately placed
framing with an angel's grace
the sleeping beauty
in my baby's face

And I'm born again
each morning when
I turn to see her there

I die a little death
each night when
she takes my breath again

Watercolors stated slightly
lightly play upon her skin
As she dream travels
my soul unravels
I arise to let the daylight in

First Poem

The joy of it

Lifting silver ladder

Working simple hammer

Sore shoulder and splinters in fingers

Skin baked brown and red in the sun

New colors for pale, Lower East Side poet

Now armed with tools, nails, and screws

Free of word weight and music fame game

Feathers

Let me leave Heaven's thin, cold air

And fall to Earth, a fiery star

The disciplines of the ascetic masters

Lose enchantment next to ecstasy's luster

Upon my death I'll seek salvation

But in life let me live unchained

I am here for glory and sensation

Birthered in blood, joy and pain

Turn away all mother and nation pity

My friends, please relinquish me

I want to gorge my years with wonder

And leave tombstones called poetry

All laws are feathers and morals dust

Beneath the light of liberty

I am Pan tumbling through the forest

Drunk on Beauty's melody

It's my calling this singing songs

Fueled by love's liquorish kiss

As you meditate upon your virtue

Remember, I was always this

In 03

In 03 Aaron OD'd on heroin at 26 years of age and his pale blue-eyed face slaps into my dreams and city walks like a constant metronome ticking away at my mortality

In 03 I workaholic'd like a speeding urban boho bee running a music venue, completed my fourth album, multi-tasked so hard I couldn't be in an elevator for ten seconds unless I had something to read: mail, supermarket coupons, backs of keys

In 03 I managed a new act into major record deal only to have it turn into lawyers and sadness, joyous adventure corrupted by greed and madness

In 03 I meditated on a Tuesday night for 20 minutes and after the first 90 seconds of stillness I saw The Towers exploding again and felt frightened, scared and knew why I couldn't sit still anymore

In 03 my record label, Fortified, released the *Testosterone Kills* album to rave reviews and I cherish the importance of songs that can banish loneliness to its feeble hiding place

In 03 TK and I watched Ani DiFranco and Hamell On Trial sing out as Iraq was bombed and gentle songwriter friend snapped with knife drawn in downtown club

In 03 young brother-in-law from Estonia visited and cracked his knuckles and got on our nerves and made us smile as his goofy innocence melted our frustration

In 03 I read *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* and the collected Sunday strips of Krazy Kat and Ignatz

In 03 my wife and I talked of terror, careers and baby possibilities in spite of everything, in spite of it all, for love is the last defiance, the true revolution

In 03 the blackout pulled an old Star Trek
model off of my shelf and I finally glued it
together as a turtledove built a nest and
birthed a clutch of pale blue-white eggs

In 03 I gave away my TV

These poems were originally designed for
USA letter size format. They were then
remodeled for publication in the UK. Some
alteration of the original text design and
flow has occurred as a result. Feel free to
use this as a metaphor for life.

Lach Links:

facebook.com/lachworld

Twitter: @lachtoday

Listen and buy Lach Tunes:

lach.bandcamp.com

Or Just Google Lach

The Thin Book Of Poems

is dedicated

to you

Love

Lach

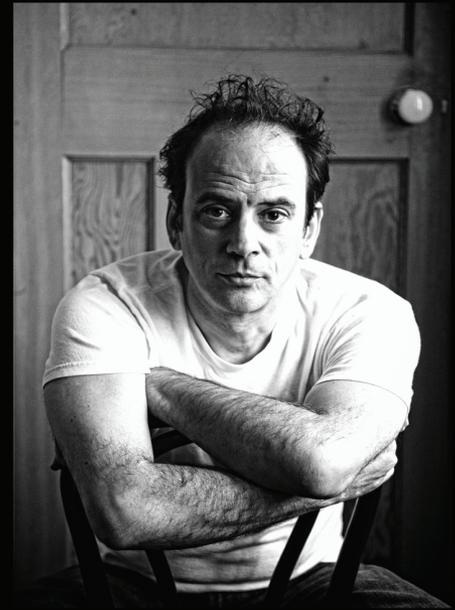
The Thin Book of Poems

“Lach is the mastermind of Antifolk, ilke a Lower East Side rendezvous of Bob Dylan and Patti Smith. Like black snow, stalled subway cars and random violence, Lach is a Manhattan institution.” - NY Times

“Lach is so what the East Village used to be all about. He's a gruff and tough punk turned poet with a heart o'gold ” - Timeout NY

“NYC's living legend” - Timeout London

“Lach is incredibly bright, influential, poetic and funny. He's got his own counter-culture charm. Take the time to read his lyrics. There's always some beautiful bit of thoughtfulness there or something unexpected. He's become part of New York folklore.” - Suzanne Vega



**Featuring selections from the BBC Radio 4
hit series The Lach Chronicles**



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