

ABSTRACT

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Brent McCafferty, Master of Fine Arts, 2009

Directed By: Professor Elizabeth Arnold, Department of English

The thesis's title section moves among Montana cities (Havre, Polson, Missoula), animals (grouse), drugs (meth), and yacht spots (Whitefish River). Through the voices of an anhedonic son and his parents I try, as George Oppen puts it in "Myth of the Blaze," "to know//what I have said to myself."

CHALK TALK

By

Brent McCafferty

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Elizabeth Arnold, Chair

Professor Michael Collier

Professor Stanley Plumly

Professor Joshua Weiner

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Discovering Elk

The saurian ribcage hanging

in our garage.

If brave you could touch

cool rings

of muscle. You could feel each concave bone

that'd held the heart

tight

in the chest. In

its bower of mowers and shearers, scooters

and kicksleds,

the body felt

profane. I remember

the way with a wind the half-elk—

legless, headless torso

hollow

as the hull of a kayak, slick

with drying ichor—

did a dance

in whose violence

I felt complicit. Over-

head

the wapiti

tried to shake free

of coir cables that tethered it

to the rafters. The cavity

from which a hand had

shucked

the kidneys

became a mouth

whose tongue caught

clots

of Leopard Moths

and flies.

Hairs became icicles

shaking on a Sable's

tailpipe.

At dinner my father called me inside.

With a lover's compulsion

I stroked the ungulate's

side

another minute. Then

I brushed the fur

from my fish shirt. I got

the lights

and left the garage. The elk's attar

stayed on my skin

like a carcinoma

I scrubbed but couldn't slough

all weekend.

1. Chalk Talk

Ice equals $\frac{1}{16}$ oz., ketamine $\frac{1}{8}$.

Josh is to be met with the bindle.

All those assholes better

watch out.

Josh is to be met with the bindle.

I take the quartz movement of my

watch out

and wind the wheel

a quarter turn.

*Target pharmacists only let you buy 2 Vicks
nasal inhalers a month. Repay 5 friends for
the other 10. Crack each with an axe poll
and remove the cotton ball. Store the cotton
balls in an 8 oz. honey bear.*

Onomatology

swerve – a reflex

linda – disassembles the cable box

tina – picks at her filtrum

talkie – ampersand ampersand ampersand

hank – leases his Highwoods chalet to a love cook

agua – alternative to Coke

icee – available in butterscotch

blizzard – peach

Every Saturday the ordeal
of my room: vacuuming (no precursors)
pubic hair off the juicer,
loess the fridge, avocado skins the sill.

Why does detox make us do it?
That they think any of this stuff—atomic clock,
furze, seven-by-five of the fauxhawk
I cropped on ice—is valuable is batshit.

None of that means nothing to me.
I wish whether Mom prefers ?uestlove
to Courtney made dopamine.
Whether the shit in Josh's stool
is serious. Crystal is of
what I smoke the only thing that's made me cool.

Put on a couple pairs of PVC gloves unless you want to burn your palms off. Add $\frac{2}{3}$ oz. hydrochloric acid and $1\frac{1}{3}$ oz. tap water to the Oster mixing bowl in which you've seen those infomercial actors beat the batter for lefse at Christmas. Unscrew the lid of the honey bear and remove the cotton balls. Knead 5 minutes in the acid-and-water solution. Squeeze each cotton ball dry and toss it.

The Foxy Pheasant Bar

My chalk square and pool cues.
My kelly carpet. Its balls
and Budweiser lamp. My jukebox,
chock with way too much Public Enemy
and Bruce, by the BUCKAROOS bathroom.
My taxidermy moose. My Moose Drool
on tap. My menu with nine entrees,
eight of which varieties
of Freschetta pizza. My Buck Hunter
arcade the grade-school tubaist stuffs
with lunch money. My cement floor granular
with last year's Cheez-Its. My assistant
bartender, Kendra, trying to mix
a whiskey sour. She spills the Georgia Moon,
mistakes sea salt for sugar, forgets
the lemon wedge. I should've suspected
a tweak kick. Lip pimple. Pocks
stuffed with cake makeup.
Ammonial tulle. Ulna
scabbed apple. Might've hired her because

I suspected. I'm soft like that. "Sweetie,
too fucking tart."

After lining an aluminum coffee cone with a clean filter secure it above one of those thrift-store coffee pots on whose handle you find a pterodactyl decal. Strain the stuff from the Oster mixing bowl. If it doesn't clarify do it again.

The Foxy Pheasant Bar (2)

Thank god Mark likes staying
with Steven. I'd sleep at the bar
if it had napped towels and a shower.

Mark's foie gras, ot-six—

I got tired of all that. Steven's
puke in the playpen.

I've always loved uncomplicated things—a corolla of snow,
this morning on the drive over,
blooming from the roof of an orange Fanta semi.

Onomatology (2)

annie – feverish

chalk – washes into the lower Whitefish

debbie – burns her cereal spoon

dizzy d – the blue the white the blue the white the blue the white the blue

homework – cut a line in your quadrille notebook

clear vision – for just twenty bucks

lily – “It don’t cure my arrhythmia”

candy – vanilla

On my dad's favorite poster a clawed frog,
caught by a crane, strains from inside the bill
to wring the shit out of the sandhill's
neck. NEVER GIVE UP, the poster says in Lapdog
font. Mom—she wouldn't want me to talk
about this, but hey—Mom's back off the pill.
Claims when I graduate, start at the sawmill,
she'll use Rosetta Stone to learn Tagalog.
Over my bedroom's fire alarm Marty
ties his bandana. From the bowl (a cored
lightbulb bored by a straw at the butt)
I suck cold go smoke. A blood-whump.
Sweat dries and—man, you seen my hoodie?
I think I feel a bee on my nose.

I think I feel a bee on my nose.

Or, not a bee: bees. The hairs of each tongue,

leg, tegula move up the septum.

Then into, somehow. You seen those

two dudes on that Meth Project billboard?

The one, dolled in moon boots, schleps a plasma

to his pickup. The other drums

a couple credit cards from silk cords.

If I'm complicit, me—

Pour the coffee into one of those quart-jars in which they can carrots. After adding $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Drano Kitchen Crystals seal the jar and shake it until they dissolve. Add, seal, and shake until the coffee clouds.

Havre High Lunch Break

Forty-five minutes till Social Studies.
Mom at the Pheasant. Dad fishing
for ghost carp. A Ziploc
on the table in front of us, Russ and I,
in my bedroom. Russ, the pro,
cores a light bulb—snicks the silver cap
with pliers, dumps the tungsten
and ceramic insulation—and files
a raisin-size hole at the base
of the bulb with steel wool.
He doubles the end of a straw
on itself and tapes it in place.
Sticks the straw in the hole
to complete the pipe. Funnels
the Ziploc's ice into the straw.
I've heard to hold it four seconds.
More than that and it kills you.
Recrystallizes in the lungs.
It sounds awesome. I put my lips
on the straw. Russ whips

out a Zippo. Says, "Let's go, man."

Lights the ice. White suck.

Phlox smoke. So sweet. Cold.

Onomatology (3)

jasmine – a tweaker

jack – eighty boxes of bronchodilators

speed – the elbow's brio

crystal – twelve-year-old dealer of the kid they call "Pink Taco"

scooby snax – the first batch of which tastes like banana

bomb – the speciousness of

new paxil – curbs the reuptake of norepinephrine

ice cream – lemon

Fill the rest of the way with ether. Seal and shake eight minutes. Let the stuff resolve into thin top and bottom layers and a thick middle. To thin that middle flick the side of the glass with a lunula.

“Mr. Mom”

Nobody says it too chilly.

Still, I know from five years as a perfume clerk

at Penney’s—the job I quit to watch

our son, Steven, when my wife decided

to start a bar—some stuff doesn’t go over

in Havre. Except the Blue Pony

goalie I never saw a guy sample anything

with apricot or rose. Always pine tar.

Tobacco. The note on our Kenmore’s

dry-erase board says, GROUSE.

From the Saran Wrap in the fruit crisper I take

two breasts big as shuffleboard pucks.

Balm in milk, and flour, and egg,

and bread crumbs and cook fifteen minutes

at three-fifty. When done I daub

with duck sauce and give one

to Steven, the other myself. Two Aquafinas.

I flip to the game on the game-room TV.

A fan, on the front of whose heather jersey

a silver MONTANA, cheers the touchdown

that ends the quarter. An ad
after the extra point shows a sock-wearing
rhesus sliding on pine. Another
stay-at-home dad—the dad you see
at IGA comparing Lucky Charms’
carbs-per-serving to those of the knockoff,
Marshmallow Mateys—would call
this “a perfect evening”: snow dredging
the jalousie window, grouse,
the Griz up three. Not me. When Steven
sleeps at a friend’s
I play Scrabble online from five
until my wife’s truck choughs up the alley.
One time I make *kangaroo*
with the *k* on a triple-letter score.

After collecting the top with an eyedropper toss the rest. Wash a 2 L bottle of Fanta and fill with water, twenty drops of hydrochloric acid, and the stuff you collected. If the bottle smells like Vaporole that's normal.

“Mr. Mom” (2)

A Griz completion. Steven says,
“Do I gotta eat this?” His grouse cool.
In ten years fixing dinner,
during which no nostalgia for perfume
or the pay, I’ve cooled to him—
flip scrip in the laundry;
Clearasil staining my Walkman
muffs orange; how, after learning
to masturbate last December
while camping in Polson, he does it sometimes
on the lawn. On the lawn.

*Shake the Fanta two minutes. Suction the film
and flush into a Le Creuset serving dish. On
a Bunsen burner heat until you've got nothing
but crystal.*

“Mr. Mom” (3)

I think of a guy
from kitchen appliances, Jeff,
who left before I did. While reshelving
an Oster he slipped
a cervical disc. When he quit
he quit everything—pickup soccer
Sundays at Deaconess Park,
the Palace happy hour, feeding
his danios. On break
in the back you’d hear what he
tweaked: a gram
of crank diluted with Stevia,
straight ephedrine, Flush N’ Sparkle, a combination
of Dexatrim and the iodine from a water-
purification kit. I saw
him this Christmas
at KFC. His face a dumpster
cantaloupe. Collapsed at the temples.
Flensed. Pocked. Scrofulous. Packed in pus
and bluish effluvia. When I waved

he waved back. Then back to our separate
potato skins. I think, sometimes, about how he can't
quit cold. How he must
miss his daughter. Steven dumps
his grouse under the sink
and says, "Don't we got no real food?"
I say, "PB and H?"
On a slice of Fleischmann's five-seed
I spread Jif Crunchy. I put the honey on HIGH
and like the bear's spin.

Onomatology (4)

pieta – holy

bianca – whose girlfriend's sink smells like kerosene

cookies – butter pecan

skitz – click and unclick and click and unclick and click the trial subscription

buggs – an antecubital moth

billy – leverages rim jobs

crissy – “I ain't got too big of a issue”

twizzlers – blue

When my son says “You don’t know how to chill” he means by how, why.

“How you gonna play me like that,” if.

Josh,

The bindle was my bad. Didnt no you wanted a whole gram. thats alot! If your around I will bring it by Friday, 5.

Bytheway you only need like 1 bag of cat litter, not twelve. Just a heads up.

-S

This is the rune by which he'd have me made Dad.

2.

The Dement

His penis head a purple bell
that rests, perversely, upside down.
And held against his leg, as well,
by boxer briefs that countervail

the corybantic carillon.

Or maybe, to his way of thought,
a toadstool that now thickly grown
with thriving neurotoxins, can

effect remaining brain to rot.

Yet even more outlandish, could
it stand for some mephitic plot
to take his life? A hollow point?

An H-bomb cap? He looks inside
his whitest underwear and broods
on what he sees as if on fields
tormented by tremendous birds.

A Post-Feminist Critique of Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

All these salmon stripped of their scales.

Nudity was a prerequisite, am told, of 5th-century Scientologists.

The clock struck one.

The knight, oh the knight ran away with the cheese.

The dish and the spoon divorced themselves from The Right Holy Church of the
Prenuptial Agreement.

Everyone did that new dance with the elbow thing.

You know the one.

Who, who am I to impugn the monostich's cocksmanship?

At the center of an elm is something that runs wilder, oh wilder than the kidney.

But you object.

Everyone stamps and stammers her little crumb.

I've been hungrier than a hippo for days, which isn't saying much.

You, you there, put on your fish shirt and remain inconspicuous.

If you knew what were good for you, if I knew what were good for me.

But then.

Alright, mister, we'd anticipated a coupla swashbucklers like you and are really quite
quite.

Oh, houseboat days!

The mirror has two faces if you dig that sorta stuff.

In the maroon there, why pensive?

You're lefthanded, which leads me to peaceable eructations.

Very berry, indeed—almost too.

Ah, ah, here comes the scone.

Pop quiz: Why goose the goose?

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Holter Lake

1.

How come the ballast

fin wobbles?

No blast

to build over it combs.

2.

It's gotta be still here.