

The Hell & the Halcyon & Pulp Ran with the Ghost: Poems

By

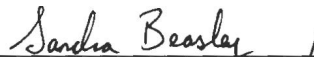
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Abstract

The Hell and the Halcyon is a documentary poem based on evidence related to the Columbine High School shooting. In keeping with the nature of documentary poetry, The Hell and the Halcyon is unabashedly subjective and experimental, refusing the restrictive qualities associated with typical documentarian work. It is comprised of subsections that each refocus the narrative by shifting back and forth between observatory third person and visceral first-person narratives. This piece draws inspiration from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and CD Wright's *One Big Self*, as well as from Rammstein and Nine Inch Nails lyrics. It is a flirtation with cacophonous sound that celebrates the sonic and tonal aesthetics of plain, albeit impassioned speech.

Pulp Ran with the Ghost is a collection of sixteen poems that range from confessional to mythological and folktale-inspired. The collection features guest appearances from Elvis Presley's former girlfriend, an alcoholic mermaid, and even a gingerroot named "Tom." Pulp Ran with The Ghost embraces the dark and the absurd, utilizing unexpected metaphors as points of entry into pits of both humor and despair.

The Hell & the Halcyon

“Evil that arises out of ordinary thinking and is committed by ordinary people is the norm, not the exception.”

— Philip G. Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*

Author's Note

I was inspired to write this after reading Sue Klebold's *A Mother's Reckoning: Living In The Aftermath of Tragedy*. In her brutally honest and enlightening memoir, Klebold writes about her son Dylan who was one of the Columbine shooters. Klebold shares her experience living in the wake of the devastation he caused and coming to terms with the reality of his suicide. I found myself struck by her fearlessness in revisiting her own trauma and grief, her dedication to suicide awareness, and most of all, her enduring love for Dylan.

I came to look very differently at the Columbine massacre. Klebold addresses many of misconceptions perpetuated by the media such as the beliefs that the shooting was a direct result of violent videogames, movies, or music. Her side of the story is one that I hadn't considered, and it made me want to explore the events leading up to the attack. I wanted to understand what could possibly motivate someone to commit such an atrocity. It also dawned on me that my own son is going to be seventeen one day, and I can't imagine there would be many things more hellish than losing him.

It is not my desire to excuse or fetishize Dylan Klebold or his accomplice, Eric Harris, nor is it my intent to romanticize the shooting. In my mind, Harris and Klebold represent so many societal dilemmas concerning behavioral health. My goal in writing this is to draw attention to the escalation of their ideations and feelings by interacting with their own words to create poetry. The section entitled

“NBK” contains writing by both Harris and Klebold that I have polished, shaped into dialogue, reordered, and supplemented with information from the eyewitness accounts including, but not limited to Sue Klebold and Brooks Brown, the author of *No Easy Answers: The Truth Behind Death at Columbine*. The other sections were written based on my analysis of video evidence.

It is important to note that documentary poetry is a beautifully futile endeavor. *The Hell & The Halcyon* is a poetic interpretation of research and police evidence. It is not the same as a documentary film because instead of using a camera, the documentary poet replicates their impressions of source materials. I think approaching this subject matter from the standpoint of a poet has proved advantageous. Feeling unencumbered by formal constraints made it easier for me to immerse myself in the language used in the journals and employ the not so scientific elements of my own intuition, empathy, and curiosity. However, extensive psychological research informed the way I chose to write this piece.

Klebold was diagnosed posthumously with Schizotypal Personality Disorder while Harris was diagnosed with Anti-Social Personality Disorder or ASPD, (commonly referred to as “psychopathy”). Their individual conditions are very apparent in their writing. Harris’ lack of empathy as well as depression, anger, and grandiosity are well-represented in his writing.

Something that initially puzzled me is that although Harris presents many of the classic symptoms of psychopathy/ASPD, he seems to fall into the category of “secondary psychopathy.” Secondary psychopaths present as depressed, anxious, hot-headed, but are capable of empathy and can be responsive to

treatment. Secondary psychopaths tend to be products of their environment. Conversely, a primary psychopath is often born that way or becomes that way through events such as frontal lobe trauma. Primary psychopaths are not likely to be responsive to treatment.

Although I am not a mental health professional, I strongly believe that based on his symptoms, Eric Harris was probably a secondary psychopath and therefore more likely to respond to the appropriate treatment. I also think that his narcissistic symptoms were much more pervasive than his anti-social ones. He acted out of self-image more than he acted out of self-interest which is consistent with Narcissistic Personality Disorder, most likely Malignant Narcissistic Personality Disorder in Harris' case.

Eric Harris' fragile sense of self is reflected throughout his journal and other writing. I disagree with those who say he was past the point of saving. Although there is no doubt that his ability to empathize was severely stunted, he was not completely devoid of emotions or empathy which makes the massacre even harder to understand.

As I delved further into Dylan Klebold's writing, I noticed a gradual decline in empathy and rationality. His often illogical writing is reflective of emerging symptoms of psychosis and its effect on his executive functioning. One of my biggest goals for processing Klebold's journal was to find some of the clarity he was incapable of when he wrote it. Although I do not suffer from Schizotypal Personality Disorder, I do have Schizoaffective Disorder which is also a mental health diagnosis characterized by psychosis that falls on the

schizophrenic spectrum of disorders. I recognized the horror, shame and confusion in Klebold's writing. Though psychotic, he was unquestionably capable of distinguishing right from wrong. Although I agree with people who have emphasized Harris' persuasive capabilities, the reality is that Klebold acted on his own volition. He was more driven by suicide than Harris, but both of them were heavily motivated by sadism.

On April 20th 1999, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris callously took the lives of Cassie Bernall, Steven Curnow, Corey DePooter, Kelly Fleming, Matthew Kechter, Daniel Mauser, Dave Sanders, Rachel Scott, Isaiah Shoels, John Tomlin, Lauren Townsend, and Kyle Velasquez. I would like to reiterate that I do not believe there is any excuse for what Klebold and Harris did. I do, however, think that empathy for both victims and perpetrators is essential for the prevention of future tragedies and acts of violence. Additionally, anonymous tip programs for students such as Colorado's Safe2Tell should become nationwide resources for students to safely report peers whom they suspect are in danger of committing violence in schools.

This isn't just about school shootings, though. This is about learning to recognize the behavioral signs that indicate when a person is in crisis. In her memoir, Klebold emphasizes the importance of recognizing not only the signs that an individual might commit suicide, but the signs that they might commit homicide as well. Promoting and understanding behavioral health is perhaps more vital now than ever. I believe that documentary poetry is a great way of shedding light on the behavioral patterns of Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris. Though they

are extreme cases, there is a lot to be learned by examining how and why they both reached points of crisis that left such an unfathomable wake of tragedy and trauma.

The Basement Tapes

“Is evil something you are? Or is it something you do?”

— Bret Easton Ellis, *American Psycho*

The following contains material and dialogue from the infamous “Basement Tapes.” The Basement Tapes include assorted footage of Klebold and Harris firing their weapons, making a project for school, and more. They are called “The Basement Tapes” because many of them were filmed in the basement of the Harris home. The poems: “Hitmen for Hire,” “Suckiest School In The World,” “Radioactive Clothing,” “Rampart Range,” and “Green Chevelle” are based on the tapes that were made available to the general public. The first poem, “Hitmen For Hire” is a seven-minute film that Eric Harris, Dylan Klebold, and friends made for a school assignment. In the film, Klebold and Harris play the roles of hitmen offering “protection” to the victims of bullying.

Hitmen for Hire

1.
 they march like soldiers
 in the throes of rigor mortis
 wet with static skimmed from a fiery lake
 it's a school day in December 1998

sporting black trench-coats
 and wire-rimmed sunglasses
 the pair moves toward the camera
 at a pace so slow it's comical

students emerge from a classroom
 and run back inside
 when they notice the camera
 and the "hitmen" advancing

the guy on the right
 trying not to smile
 is tall and shaggy
 but emphatically unimposing

his name is Dylan Klebold
 but his friends call him "Vodka"

flanking him on the left
 is Eric Harris

under his trench-coat
 he is spring-loaded
 like an assault rifle

wound tightly as if to deflect
 attention from his slight frame

he answers to "Reb"

with a voice measured
 as if poured from a heavy jug
 he says:

“we can protect you, but for a cost”

2.

Dylan wears a backwards
black Boston Red Sox hat
the hard angles of his face
fill the camera frame

“no, you goddamn
bitch-ass piece of shit!”

laughter breaks his incantation of rage

conferring with the cameraman
he says “god damnit,” starts again:

“do not even screw with that little kid
if you do, I’ll rip off your goddamn head
shove it so far up your ass...”

for a second in time the boy is canine
trench-coat sleeves
whipped into a frenzy like bat wings

then, hands to hips, he withers
of course, he thinks
fucked it up again he thinks
fucked it up just like I fuck up everything

“no, you goddamn piece of punk-ass shit
do not mess with that freakin’ kid...”

this is the take
rage contorts his face
lips recede, he flashes teeth
from his left ear lobe hangs a silver ring

“I’ll rip off your head
shove it so far up your ass..”

forcing the remaining breath from his lungs
in an act of respiratory violence
he guarantees that:

“you’ll be coughing up

dandruff for four freaking months!”

3.

Eric takes his turn under a fluorescent sun
somewhere in the thick of the school
invading its vital organs

“look, I don’t care what you say
touch him again, I’ll freaking kill you!”

his unblinking eyes
grow like headlights late at night

“gonna pull out a goddamn shotgun
blow your damn head off
you little worthless piece of crap!”

his predatory promise reverberates

4.

a couple scenes later
that vicious snarling voice
pours quietly again

“blown up?
well, I don’t know about that
it’s pretty messy
guts all over the place
then the janitors get mad
a pistol, yeah, it’ll do the job

but you know we can’t have weapons in school”

Suckiest School in the World

adrift in the cafeteria's white linoleum sea
 Eric wears a 1997 KMFDM tour shirt
 that conceals his slightly concave chest
 its black sleeves hang down to his elbows

directed by defiant shoulders
 his ivory-white arms
 swing mechanically

I hate most people

a girl tells him a story
 about cockroaches hatching
 in a human mouth
 he listens with rapt attention
 to the threadbare urban legend

picks at the dead skin on his palms
 spins his phone on the tabletop
 gets lost in its little revolutions
 glances up at every girl coming down the stairs

"go get her, Eric
 there she goes, Eric"

he's glued to his seat

in a sing-song-y schoolyard way
 someone informs him
 that he's going to get

"jacked up the ass"

his dark eyes widen
 with a sudden electricity behind them

"I don't know about that, dude!"

no one seems to notice the vitriol sloshing

threatening to break a levee inside him

I wanna rip his head off and eat it

the tightness in his face
slackens when he seizes the chance
to join in a chant of:

“JACK-OFF!”

“JACK-OFF!”

“JACK-OFF!”

a neighboring table of girls stand up at once
he eagerly jumps to his feet
follows behind them

the dudes around him
are quick to tease

unfazed, Eric looks at his watch, mutters:

“well, it’s 8:16”

Radioactive Clothing

1.
 in the backseat, an elite
 post-apocalyptic fight team
 is salty as they talk
 about the atomic bombs they dropped
 at the start of this nuclear apocalypse

this a government mission
 to eliminate deadly radioactive articles of clothing

here's the place

2.
 pink shirt, face-blurred
 mom: still and silent at a kitchen table
 teenage boys fanning out around her
 their various weapons drawn

shoot everything that moves

keep up and don't get killed

hair pulled back, Dylan prowls the house

never gets easier
losing comrades to radioactive clothes

3.
 Eric bends at the waist
 the reticulations of his spine
 roiling beneath a white t-shirt

three pairs of hands
 throw laundry at a front-loaded washing machine

BB gun barrels hook the garments midair
 the frenzied storm of airborne polyester and cotton

elicits unanimous giggling

4.

standing beside Eric
Dylan holds an unlit cigarette

“don’t got a light, do you got one?”

“yeah me first, though”

it’s a bright day in Littleton, Colorado

they stand in the street
casting clouds silently

The Green Chevelle

a green Chevelle guns it
brakes hard at a front yard

“here we go baby”

Dylan sprints at the car
stopping awkwardly
to open the passenger door

Eric films from the backseat

windows down
the sunrise over the dash
is like warring flavors of cotton candy

light strikes Dylan’s hair
strands of wildfire everywhere
silver ring winking on his finger
he whistles, snaps

*counting flowers on the wall
that don’t bother me at all¹*

the camera tilts from side to side
in time with the song

rolling past the marching band
they whip into Columbine High

¹ “Counting Flowers on The Wall” is a song performed by The Statler Brothers

Rampart Range

a bowling pin wedged between trees
pump-actions, patchy snow
upon impact, bark is blown apart
pulpy, splinter fingers reach out
frayed and frantic

“dude, imagine that in someone’s fucking brain”

“hurt my wrist like a sonuvabitch”

“I bet it did”

collar of his coat turned up
Dylan raises the Tec-9, cocks it to one side
assuming a posture of cinematic vindication

Eric fingers the bowling pin
points out entrance and exit wounds for the camera

sawed-offs are cradled in their arms
the rough-cut barrels bite

there in the snow
the first blood shed is their own

NBK (*Natural Born Killers*)

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”

---Alexsandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* 1918-1956

REB Missions

REB [Eric Harris]:
 we're the night animals
 in your neighborhood
 running wild until our shoes
 are bloody inside

V [Dylan Klebold]:
 eyes wet, mouths dry
 we rouse you with the peal
 of fireworks after midnight

REB:
 we get big cups from Mickey D's
 dodge the headlights of cars
 moonlight helps us decide
 what our first strike will be

bottle-rockets, strips of black cats

sometimes we go with a cigarette fuse
 I am the fastest in the group
 so I usually light

V:
 I stand watch

REB:
 nighttime traditions
 beautiful rockets, barking dogs

piss us off, we do a little deed
 eggs, teepees, superglue
 we have a lot of enemies
 at Columbine High School

*can you see us in the sky?
 we are afraid and alone
 God knows I don't want to be an angel²*

² English translation of a lyric from the band Rammstein's song "Engel" or "Angel"

V:
 always expecting
 a few chicks to come
 but they never do

REB:
 we smoke cigars
 down the q-shaped trail

 start back the way we came
 tired as priests after an all-night orgy

 it's intoxicating
 being free like that

V:
 got a sawed-off BB gun
 we take turns shooting
 at trees and houses

REB:
 we were almost home once
 when we had an incident
 walking down the sidewalk
 4 in the morning

 garage door opened
 so we ran into the yard
 ducked down
 man came out for his paper
 looked around and went back in
 I tried to signal
 but Vodka didn't see me

 few minutes later
 man got in his car
 started down the driveway
 the flood of his headlights betrayed us

 he was like "who are you?!"
 we got up, said we were just passing though
 hauled assholes and elbows home

that mission was dry
thanks to a narc
fucker told my parents
I keep booze and shit in my room
had to toss every last bottle
lie like a salesman to my parents
because he thought I put a little nick
in his windshield with a snowball

V:
but still we were conquerors
lonely men striking with
absolute rage

Some God I am

REB:

I buy donuts at Safeway
I smoke cigarettes at the Rock N' Bowl
I wanna leave a lasting impression on this world

I'm just a nice guy
who hates it when people
open their pop cans just a little

and I really don't give
a good god damn
what you think is right
and what you think is wrong
no remorse, no sense of shame
I don't care if I live or die

ich bin gott

I am god

V:

I cleanse myself
for the unattainable purity

I cleanse myself
spiritually, morally

no more pornography
cut down on the liquor
and don't pick on kids anymore

I can't let the deity eat at me

REB:

when we go NBK
they'll call it a tragedy

blah blah, fucking blah
a man driving home one day
crashes into a school bus full of kiddies
they all burn to death
it's only a tragedy if you think it is

V:

I am a man who walks
with untold purpose
as he prepares to watch
droplets of blood
fly away from skulls
my name is Vodka

*Head like a hole
black as your soul
I'd rather die
than give you control³*

REB:

you're probably wondering
what we were thinking
let me start by telling you
that my family brought me up
just fucking fine
reality is that it's either you or me
and dead people can't do many things
like narc or whine

V:

I never wanna live
in a zombie bliss

REB:

you fucking people
with your standards
this is *your* fault
someone told you violence is bad
your stupid ass believed them

I would rather die
than betray my own mind

³ Lyric from Nine Inch Nails song "Head like a Hole," Dylan wrote NIN lyrics in multiple places in his journal.

V:
you seem a lot like me
at least for a zombie

you're pensive, quiet
an observer

you want so much more
than this world has to offer
don't you?

Eat Napalm and Lead

REB:

natural selection
makes the world go round

kill the weak
people spend millions
saving lives
I don't buy into that shit

kill the weak
put them out of their misery
they're only a waste of time and money
people say they're human, too

no, they're not

kill the weak
because a human knows
when he's a waste
and a fucking burden, too

V:

almost no one would condone
the shit we've done
we got caught for our crimes

REB:

isn't America the home of the free?
how come if I'm free
I can't deprive some dumb shit
of his possessions?
he left them in the front seat
of his unlocked van
on a Friday in the middle of fucking nowhere
fucker oughta be shot

no one is worthy of this planet
only me and who ever I choose.
everyone should be shot out into space and
only the people I say should be left behind

*anger management was helpful in many ways
I learned that thousands of suggestions
are worthless if you still believe in violence⁴*

V:
she doesn't know
that I'm a criminal
with nothing to live for

she doesn't know
consciously who I am
but the world would be a better place
if she loved me as I do her

she doesn't know it
but fate has put me in need of her
I love her, it's all I think about
the halcyon and on and on
we could have everything

REB:
I know what all you fuckers are thinking about
how to make you feel bad
how to piss you off

get the fuck out of my way
or I'll come to your house
with a friggin' sawed-off shotgun
blow your snotty-ass head off

V:
locked in this little insane asylum
I watch the meek get trampled on
the assholes prevail while the gods
conspire to deceive me

⁴ Excerpt from essay Eric wrote for the diversion program that he and Dylan were enrolled in following their convictions for burglarizing a van.

REB:
 “sorry” is just a word
 that doesn’t mean shit to me

V:
 inside my electrified mind
 I try to find a plug to pull
 from an outlet somewhere in my skull
 but the music keeps playing

suicide gives me hope
 that I'll be in my place wherever I go

REB:
 before I leave this worthless place
 I will kill the ones who wronged me

I could get shot by a cop
 after only killing a single person
 that would be my only fault

V.
 I cut myself tonight
 imagined endless sun, me
 the blade and a field of wheat

I have no ambitions
 but to be accepted
 not look so weird
 or act so shy

the greatest punishment
 in the history of the world
 is life, and without Eric
 I'd have less than nothing

REB:
 fuck it, why should I
 have to explain myself to survivors?

I said kill mankind
no one should've survived

V:
cigarette in hand
snow on my trench-coat

I don't know what to say
to the girls who pass me by

I never know what to do, can't speak
why should I open my mouth?

the weather replicates my thoughts perfectly

REB:
these shits won't understand half of what we say
if they can, then whoop-dee fucking do
if I can't pound it into every single person's head
then it is pointless
fuck mercy, fuck justice
fuck morals, fuck rules
fuck laws, fuck you
eat napalm and lead!

Fears, Doubts, and Zombie-Based Thoughts

V:
 she has a good body
 an almost perfect face
 I hope she likes techno

I was delusional
 I thought she waved to me
 on the last day of school

REB:
 remember freshman year
 when that chick I took to homecoming
 didn't want to see me anymore?

I stood in front of that bitch
 pretended to slit my wrists
 writhed on the ground
 watched her dumb face
 as the fake blood baptized me

V:
 I cut myself tonight
 and prayers spilled out of me
 I didn't know who I was praying to

halfway to the halcyon
 my candle was lit
 the stars burned out
 I sent my hope on a journey
 wanting to be pure

REB:
 my doctor wants to start me on Luvox
 to stop me from thinking
 and getting pissed off

I think anyone who doesn't like me
 the way that I am
 is bullshitting themselves

V:

I understand almost everything now
 the zombies and their society band together
 try to destroy what is superior
 what they don't understand
 and are afraid of

REB:
 kids always making fun
 of how I look and
 the way I wear my weakness

I *will* get you back
 I have always hated how I look

everyone is ub-fucking-sessed
 with Hollywood and anything famous
 give earth back to the animals
 people aren't worth saving

V:
 I know that I am different
 but I can't explain how

to most people
 I appear, well, almost scary
 but that's just who I appear to be
 people fear what they don't understand

I never wanted them to be afraid of me

I denied who I was for a long time
 never wanted to be a jock

I'm six-foot four
 no one messes with me anymore
 but they sure give Eric hell

REB:
 if people would give me more compliments
 all of this might still be avoidable

probably not, though

*I can't fight anymore
 I'll stay here on my little moon
 with my squad of dead soldiers
 and let the aliens take Earth⁵*

V:
 hey zombie
 I tried to call you last night
 but you must've been asleep

you probably think I'm crazy
 want to stay as far away as possible
 if that's the case, I'm sorry
 for involving an innocent person
 in my problems

say the word and I promise
 I won't ever bother you again

REB:
 listen up, you pathetic fools
 school is society's way of shaping us
 making us into good little robots
 and full-time factory workers
 that's why we sit in desks in rows
 abide by a bell schedule

V:
 this calculus shit doesn't
 matter anymore

⁵ Excerpt from a story Eric wrote for his creative writing class in the months leading up to the shooting.

REB:
your bell doesn't call our names anymore

drop the beliefs and views and ideas
that have been burned into your head
try to think about why you're here

V:
I think I don't care
human side is disconnected
something cut the wires

I must overcome all fears
doubts and zombie-based thoughts

REB:
can't get enough of the swastika
the SS, and the iron cross
I take pleasure in my color
you're gonna drown in my spilled milk

V:
I'm Jewish

REB:
that's too bad

Hitler and his head boys fucked up
and it cost them the war

V:
the fight between good and evil continues
though, this fight can never end
people see it as a battle they can win

ha! fuckin' morons

REB:

I'm showing too much of myself
people might start to wonder

me and V. started a fire
where we work
at Blackjack Pizza

I brought in a pipe bomb
and we both got sacked

my dad found out
took me to a creek bed
where we watched the PVC explode
and I promised never again

I hate lying to him
but I will do anything
to keep my own ass out of the water

it's time for me to put on
one helluva mask
and fool you all some more

V:

through the warmest seas of
happiness limitless,
nothing will stop us
from destroying you

REB:

there's no such thing
as true good or true evil
it's relative to the observer

utopia don't exist
humans are made
of flaws like this

V:

I am a true god
catching elbows in the hall
longing for humanity

*bow down before the one you serve
you're gonna get what you deserve⁶*

⁶ Another lyric from the Nine Inch Nails song "Head like a Hole"

The World is a Filthy Fucking Place

REB:

me and V plan to kick natural selection
up a notch or two
sometime in April

it'll be like riots in LA
and the Oklahoma City bombing
combined with WWII, Vietnam, and Doom

napalm running down
the sides of skyscrapers
gas tanks exploding
that would be beautiful.

it'll be tricky getting supplies
then having to hide them

if we get busted at any time
we start killing then and there
we ain't going down without a fight

when we are trapped
with absolutely no way out

V:

we swallow crickets
chase them with chlorine gas

REB:

when we die, so will anyone close to us

anything to cause more devastation

*I must be crazy to fight this war
I must be out of my battered mind⁷*

⁷ Another excerpt from Eric's creative writing story

V:
 semiautomatic, send me
 back to where I started:
 a state of unknowing
 blind to the world

give me sanctuary in the dark
 and a red place to rest my head

REB:
 and if you're reading this
 you're lucky to be alive
 because we wanted to kill you, too

V:
 my friends walked all over me
 to reach their plateaus
 I helped, so why can't they?
 I am still alone

*in this place
 it seems like such a shame
 though it all looks different now
 I know it's still the same*

*everywhere I look
 you're all I see
 just a fading fucking reminder
 of who I used to be⁸*

REB:
 maybe we'll hijack some car
 drive off, start torching houses with Molotov cocktails

if by some weird luck me and V. survive and escape
 we will move to an island somewhere

⁸ Lyrics from Nine Inch Nails song "Something I Can Never Have"

V:

we could be inseparable
if not in this life
then maybe in the next

I would survive for you⁹
maybe I still could
if you'd only leave a note in my locker

this is Dylan
English, back row
last semester
locker #837

REB:

it's a shame about all the hot dead chicks
who were bitches, sure
but they mighta been good fucks

V:

love is a completion of oneself
I hate those who choose to destroy it
the assholes that take it for granted
I want love more than anything
instead I watch it wasted
on undeserving zombies

REB:

think they'll write a book about us?
better be fucking good if they do

better catch the symbolism
double meanings, themes
appearance vs reality etc.

⁹ Dylan Klebold had a considerable amount of crushes during his years at Columbine Highschool. He never had one significant girlfriend, but participated in group dating with friends according to his mother, Sue Klebold. There are declarations of love to various girls throughout his journals. This is part of a note that was never sent to an object of his affection.

V:
I'm going away soon
this is my decision
mine and nobody else's

REB:
don't blame this on anyone
except me and V
the world is a filthy fucking place

V:
are you one of the innocents?
or are you me in a way?
maybe you feel like I do, Zombie

REB:
the first pipe bombs
made by the rebels
were taken to the creek bed
where the motherfuckers blew big

hearts pounding in our guts
brains twitching electrically

insanely cool
to make the ground beneath us move

V:
gawd, maybe going NBK with Eric
really is my way to break free

The Hell and the Halcyon

REB:

as of this date

I have roughly enough explosives
to kill a hundred human souls

and that just isn't enough!

I am attacking the human race

I fucking hate the human equation

all I want is a couple guns

but thanks to the fucking Brady bill

I probably won't get them

do I *look* like the type of person

who would go on a shooting spree?

maybe I just need to get laid

V:

I just want something I can never have

my crushes are shotgun shells

of the girls I thought they were

they all played the meanest trick:

gave me hope

slashed heart-shaped holes

in the ozone of my halcyon

REB:

ich liebe fleisch

I love flesh

I am a fucking dog

I just want to take someone

fuck them hard and strong

I want to be surrounded

by the flesh of a woman

I guess the question is:

who can I trick into my room first?

I can sweep some chick off her feet
 tell her what she wants to hear
 all nice and sweet

V:
 my human side
 has a love for bondage
 but also feet
 and I'm forever sorry
 about the pornos

REB:
 I want to grab some weak little freshman
 tear them apart like a fucking wolf
 show them who is god

strangle him, squish his head
 bite his temples
 until the tips of my teeth
 find his skull
 cracking bones and ripping flesh

ich bin gott

V:
 soon we will control your pain
 become godlike fiends

REB:
 I want to tear a throat out
 with my own teeth
 like a pop can

I want to gut someone
 with my hands

I want to rip the system
 decapitate the government
 and tear its lungs from its chest

I'm a natural born killer

V:
 acceptance is pain
 my revenge is born from sorrow
 death will be my only reprieve

carry my weight
 carry me

when I am human
 I know that I'm about to die

triviality has infected everything

REB:
 had a lot of fun at the gun show
 would have loved it
 if you were there
 could've bonded
 like you always wanted

alas, you found out about my flask
 I am showing too much of myself
 and you're gonna be on my ass
 more than ever before

if I could be sorry
 I would be sorry, dad

V:
 humanity was a test, blessed god
 killing the zombies
 will prove that our love is genuine

to receive our reward, we have to die
 in the final battle
 the pain of humanity
 will feel like love to us

REB:

I sawed off my shotgun
 smash-kissed her barrel lips
 popped a cherry red shell
 down deep in her chamber
 like a gag down the throat of a stranger
 I named her Arlene

V:

you're not a gay-shit bible god
 but a true controller
 you created Reb and me

five days, five more eternities
 death awaits at the end of this race

I want to follow my heart to the halcyon
 so help me, god

REB:

here I am taping nails to propane tanks
 still trying to get fucked and failing
 why can't I get any?

I'm considerate and all that shit
 I think I try too hard
 but I kinda have to
 NBK is closing in

V:

as I wait, I watch the zombies
 in their pursuit of acceptance
 oozing with greed
 the way I used to be

REB:

a man driving home one day
 crashes into a school bus full of kiddies
 they all burn to death
 it's only a tragedy if you think it is

*They all missed the point of the story.
 I wasn't crazy. But when I was holding the shotgun,
 it all became clear.
 I realized for the first time
 my one true calling in life¹⁰*

V:
 walk in, set bombs at 11:09 for 11:17
 leave
 drive to clement park, gear up
 get back by 11:15
 park cars, set car bombs for 11:18
 get out, go to outside hill, wait
 when first bombs go off, attack
 have fun!

REB:
 I hate you people
 for leaving me out
 of so many fun things
 you had my number

 but I guess you never wanted
 that weird-looking Eric kid
 to come along

 of-fucking-course not

*soon I will walk through broken doors
 and realize that this hell is almost over¹¹*

V:
 I feel fat with all the gear
 under my trench coat
 I'll have to take the damn thing off
 but I *like* the coat

¹⁰ Quote from *Natural Born Killers* (Mickey Knox)

¹¹ Excerpt from Eric's creative writing story

it was bullshit
reading those poems in class today

in these final days
I won't lift my head from my desk
don't fucking look at me like that

REB:
I'm just a nice guy
who hates it when people
open their pop cans just a little
and I want her¹² to have that fly CD

shout out to the Blackjack Pizza crew
sorry dudes, I did what I had to do

V:
in death, I will at last
know the halcyon
these moments here will be lost

and the little human zombie fags
will know what they did wrong
their suffering and mourning
will be everlasting HAHAA

REB:
I can't help it
if I want to tear a throat open
with my teeth like a pop can

I know my mom and dad
will be just fucking shocked beyond belief

I'm sorry, all right?
I can't help myself

*when the invasion stopped
all of the aliens were dead
and whatever wasn't dead
was waiting for me ahead¹³*

¹² This "her" refers to a junior at Columbine High School who watched a movie with Eric during the weekend prior to the shooting. He left her a CD in one of the final basement tapes.

¹³ Creative writing story excerpt by Eric

V:
 30 minutes 'til judgement day
 I wanted to apologize
 I gotta go, mom
 my existence was hell
 and so rarely halcyon
 I'm headed for a better place
 I'll be happy wherever the fuck I go
 so I'm gone

*the man unloaded the pistol
 on the innocents who dropped
 with a speed remarkable even to me*

*he smiled and in that instant
 through no endeavor of my own
 I understood his actions¹⁴*

¹⁴ Excerpt from Dylan's creative writing story. The teacher, although somehow unconcerned with Eric's story, was worried enough about Dylan's to contact Sue Klebold. Unfortunately, while there was a parent/teacher conference, the teacher never gave a copy of the story to Sue Klebold, so she was unaware of how alarmingly violent it actually was. This assignment was submitted shortly before the shooting.

Zero Hour

out of the duffle bags
the timebombs
refused to speak

the shooters drained the white linoleum sea
saliva spattering, they warred with the sound
of the hysterical fire-alarm

out of the trench-coats
wearing t-shirts that broadcasted:
“natural selection” and “wrath”

the shooters drank from cups
abandoned by classmates
who had the audacity to flee

out of hope, they carried defeat
with the weight of their weapons
and a bomb exploded on CCTV

pretending not to hear
the death knells in their ears
the rebels walked on
to make hell out of a halcyon

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Pulp Ran With The Ghost: Poems

Mindy the Mermaid

on the banks of The Weeki Wachee
lived a mermaid
who always smelled
like brackish water & bullshit

she sucked air from a hose
got water in her eyes
sand in her bras
and glitter between her toes

every season
thousands of noses
pressed against her glass

at night that little mermaid
wrapped her lips around Sailor Jerry
as tourists picked sequins from her tail

Southern-Fried Sacraments

I grew up, a filthy thing
in paint-by-number pastoral scenes

mama spoke in tongues
with analogue angels
whose homogenous grace
spread like Country Crock
on Christ's Wonder Bread body

she swatted flies to the hiss of bologna
and when daddy ran out, she prayed
for the laparoscopic band of the lord
to be her deliverance

Saturday after the Apalachicola Forest Burned

in the dust at the abandoned plantation
you accused my tongue
of trying to impale yours
upon consummation
I did a Borat impression

seventeen tasted like ugly cries salting fries
in the ghost hours at Whataburger

felt like being first to sink
our feet into the blackened earth

Of Love & Domino Sugar

the sugared ruins
were laid to waste for us on the waterfront

me and a boy with a machine-fed hand
that touched me even more perfectly
than his whole one

the sugar man ghosts paid no mind
as they waited to punch the clock

we'd cut class to lose our jacket buttons
& suckle glass pipes until
our eyes rolled into The Hudson

we became impurities
lost through pinholes
in sugar bags

Unsung Astronaut

my blood pumped like a V-2 Rocket
my heart was combustible
my naked feet pushed the earth away

I was up so high
that I gnawed on the stars
between my grinding jaws

my parachute collapsed like a lung

so I waited on my back in celestial grass
for the galaxy to fall upon me

Dear Jailbird

can't do this no more

it ain't the broken nose-
cartilage question marks

or the yella teeth you knocked out the mouth
of a man who disrespected your mama

baby, it ain't your orange jumpsuit
or that subpoena neither

sugar, I'm sorry
this is the only obstacle:

when you go upstate
them visits ain't conjugal

He Finds Me Asleep

his headlights wash the driveway

my eyes, already bobbing heavy
mark the channels
in a dark sea of dopamine

wearing jet fuel cologne on his coveralls
his tiptoes upstairs

at the shore of our bed
his jaunty unzipping dance
to the whirl of the ceiling fan

we chase the tide to sleep
he rolls away from me

reminds me
that he's the ocean
that I'm the oil spill

cirque du you and me

crack me open
like a peanut shell

let the circus fall out of me

I am an untamed lioness at large
and you are the human cannonball

we're showmen now
climbing the rungs of our sins
walking a tight rope of rosary beads

now we're acrobats, asshole
try and shake me from this flying trapeze

for the price of admission
the audience devours
the spectacular circus of our dreams
as if it were wisps of cotton candy

Honduran Food Truck

the sun's heat pumped over us
like a bright, arterial burst

we waited for chicharron and fried yucca

sat in the lacquered rainbow
chairs outside the forgotten laundromat

you were a mosquito pinprick
beside the mole on my clavicle

sweet-like anti-freeze leaking

and I drank you with voracious thirst
like a stray dog

you: my prayer unanswered
and my back-alley deathbed

Tom The Ginger Root Voodoo Doll

the ginger root you left behind
has evolved into a naked voodoo doll!

I named him Tom

he reminded me of our days
the primetime medical dramas
big chunks of Tom floating
in your fussy gin cocktails

when I found him, he was ragged
and seeking the company of elderly otter pops
at the bottom of the deep freezer
inert as a body on Everest

I held Tom in my fist
felt his cold bite thaw
squeezed until pulp ran with the ghost
of your fingers through mine

Fragments of A Gift Horse

have you seen his teeth?
have you felt the ominous rhythm
of his fists against his chest?
have you heard him scream
red-faced decibels
while the child alive inside you
tells your womb to contract
threaten expulsion
and leave you with him
& his pinball eye whites
glazed wet like a mad dog's?

the baby who waited it out
in my belly
& clung to me when I cried
wouldn't know what to say now
if I asked him:
has Daddy shown his teeth?

to our shared son
teeth are for smiling
& brushing with green
Ninja Turtles toothpaste

& so I appeal to you:
the new wife of that mad dog
passing through the closing threshold
with a fresh cut diamond
on your lovely, polished finger

have you seen his teeth yet?

I can show you what they've done

Uncommon Prayer

his hobbyhorse cum matriarch is dying
but all I can think about
is that plastic-eyed serenity
and the feral way she looked at me
before she open-mouth kissing him

in coming months he'll watch
her hair spread like more
cancer on the floor

time will acquaint him
with the shape of her skull
and he'll wish he could trade
my life for hers

Lord knows how hate
can feel so sorry

why are you single?

I was gutted
like a fucking deer
through a zippery caesarean slash

hanging by one leg, I became
the most unholy pendulum

a tenant inside
my own taxidermized remains
stuffed with itchy artifice

catching a lonely light
with the white crescent wildness
of my marble eyes

Linda Thompson

unflinching, he shoots out the TV
I ask for a southern-fried piece of immortality
from the kitchen at Graceland

in the jungle room
I am the mouse behind
soft, honeyed curtains
asking the king to show me
again and again how to karate-kick
in a white, embellished jumpsuit

through cigarillo smoke
I pluck grey hairs
from his body, over-tanned
kiss the spittle-wet corner of his smile
loaded in the cabin of The Lisa Marie
nestled up to him

'77 finds me
crying in my velour
knowing he was my loss
more than he was yours

Love Concession

this grief is a gameshow
and I'm trying to buzz my way
to winning Kübler Ross

you're the show's host
in all your handlebar mustache
itchy, tweed bravado glory

go ahead and shower me with confetti
made from the upcycled remains
of your fucking past due bills

I don't care what backstage snatch
you've managed to get lost in
don't you come 'round here
when her baby-pink lips
can't buy your vowels

When I Was Stalked by Rose of The Cimarron

Oh, Soiled Dove
you made a western woman outta me

my fingers know the deadbolt and my six-shooter
like they've known sinewy outlaws and whiskey decanters

how are you doing, Wag-Tail?
your minivan no longer circles my neck
of the woods at high noon

try and scorch me
with rage meaner than rope burn

you know you could back a buzzard off a gut wagon
Painted Cat, you sure are ugly, but I don't begrudge you

still grittin' your teeth like you could bite the sights off a six-gun?
make sure you do it 500 ft from my home, school, workplace and family members

all to pieces,

-me