

Poetry Series

**Aaron Graham**  
**- poems -**

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**Aaron Graham(02/25/1986)**

## □ Truck Stop Prophecies ~a Sestina~

I sit in the corner of my all night diner  
Listening to some twenty-something Catholic  
Profess to someone, a friend perhaps,  
God's ability to protect him life's dangers,  
And how God makes him tingle with His presence.  
While he lights another Marlboro Cigarette.

I resent his words and light my cigarette,  
The only smoking-sanctuary left, my diner  
My confessional, my liturgy. My mass: Catholic.  
There was a time, lost to history, where perhaps  
I was ignorant or inured to life and its dangers.  
Shrapnel burns replace His tingling Presence,

The underside of war, exists beyond his Presence  
Where my only solace was found in cigarette  
Smoke. Privations, make me long for my diner  
Whose meager comforts, seem ornate as Catholic  
Sanctum's holy alters. My life, a sacrifice, perhaps  
Will be offered, mitigating accrued sins' dangers.

For safety, I indulged in moral dangers.  
Live in schism with the concept of Presence.  
Penance will be measured in burnt cigarettes.  
Forgiveness to be ordered, a la carte, at my diner.  
The OIF-MRE-freeze-dried -cafeteria Catholic.  
Preservatives to keep life: murder, Damnation perhaps.

To lengthen life's pain, I sold my soul, perhaps.  
Unless God doesn't exist. Unless the Catholic,  
Beatific, Vision is lie. And nothing beyond my diner,  
Awaits the dead. Incense, sacral as a smoking cigarette.  
If God exists, He's either too weak to rebuke life's dangers  
Or a bastard, tormenting me, denying me His Presence.

I walk through a valley, the shadow of His Presence  
Is a plague on my peripheral sanity, hooded, perhaps:  
I cannot see the Man, woman, but recall my Catholic

Dogma, but know The Waste Land, smell the diner  
Where I studied each allusion, smoking my cigarette  
So I know I walk to my death, numbed by life's dangers.

Marching, Lighting a final Cigarette, Ashes to ashes, my dust: Catholic.  
Enduring evangelism in my diner, remembering life's myriad of dangers.  
Tonight I resent God's Presence; Sunday I'll go to Mass, perhaps.

Aaron Graham

## ...They All Go Into The Dark

Corpses dragging each lifeless body to the sea—waves of charred flesh—  
Dark Dark Dark we all go into the dark  
and kiss each lifeless face we see  
while the dead breath life into our suffering  
until our lips meet our own lips and the dream is broken  
like a femur split by shrapnel  
that marks us among the casualties  
but from time to time I still hear...

Aaron Graham

# 10 Days,9 Nights

We defiled the tomb that wasn't there  
Of the man who does not exist  
Now he hunts me while I'm sleeping  
I can feel his sightless eye's stare  
Given up for the thousandth time, still I persist  
His unseen form my peripheries see creeping

And till today I run away  
From the man who does not exist  
Because I know he will come for me  
When I least expect it  
So sleepless watch I've kept 10 days.  
Avoiding my punishment.  
I blinked but once, my throat in the clutch.  
His hands cold as the west-winds touch.

Aaron Graham

## 8jul1822~ Livorno, Italy (Sonnet)

The Olive Branch grew without winter's wisdom

Though Plow-shear fingers strokd' dead-earth: bulging.

Throbd' throngs, outcast of heaven, twice lonesome

Absence: pangs soles, each day disaffecting

Follow hangd -man past Dartmore, past Widecombe

Poets pen portends sibylline scripts. of Nine

Six pyred and lost. Tacticus' cost-

Dans: Le jeste de prince D'Aquintaine.

Prodigals return home to die: end creation

Not reflect ship-wreck-ruins, which fill Styx's shore

You lack faith, pray; I'll give you no more

You, don't dare die death's deaf duration

I hear of light in silence, no salvation

He still do police in different voices.

Aaron Graham

# Baghdad Battles Beset By Bakke Bills

Baghdad Battles Beset by Bakke Bills

Some gave all, and all gave some,

And we gave it all away. Lost,

Under the rays of a beating sun,

The sound of the fuddle, and the gun.

And the fading rhythm of the war drum.

Those who've gone, have gone.

What's done, is done.

But we'll not rest till each

Missions stands complete,

Each injustice in undone.

Then each man may come home.

Until then, no battle's won.

Till that day, ill guard my own

My healthcare plan, a gun.

~Aaron Graham

Aaron Graham

# Eulogy: For The Assembly And Disposal Of The Dead

The dead ones, actually death too: couldn't interest me less  
Tell the truth, I hate'em. Hate they're still here  
Stillness is chaos. This chaos was never even motion's beauty.  
Ungainly, they lay about  
Broken bits somehow attached to impossible angles. Waiting  
For someone to collect'em, each one, each piece. Then doing,  
I can's guess and prefer not to know what. Rotting,  
Just there. Clusters of sprawling decay midst dead ground. Arraying,  
Erratic Chaos. If bunch of hippies at a Jethro Tull Concert. on LSD  
Or the room of typewriting monkeys, toil. Recreating,  
War and Peace that breed of random no one ever sees happening.  
No one can ever hope to prevent, you didn't prevent.  
Because, you weren't fast enough.  
Never fast enough.  
Us in the getting, or them now rotting.  
They're ours now. I guess. Time winnows on: never fast enough,  
In Najaf living are damned, the damned assail all living, time dies,  
Is dead, the dead don't give a damn,  
Only they have time.  
Tell we, who thought to walk so blithely  
through Death's Kingdom, :  
Our dead word, Turning  
Ashen crossing desolation  
when passed, time is passing,  
Eexistents-forhold.  
The same fools way we  
Follow The Amealian Way  
We follow the same fools way;  
Circle through scattered silicate seas'  
Circe seeming endlessly distant;  
Her shore unprowed our skiff's run.  
Boots, now impotent, invade, limitless mare:  
Death's Kingdom in life.  
I pray to see our breath, passion,  
Stir their dust to consciousness,  
Wake their ashes to our pain,  
Exist—more—Scenery of our hell- the living.



# Fall Break: Freshman Year

The strangest thing about it was

The scene seemed so mundane.

They didn't even seem to mind, really.

Nor, for that matter, did any from among the crowd

They were startled by the sound.

Still, not as much we were startled; by their unnerving complacency.

Their eyes seemed to have a questioning, what is this, reflection.

And, their question having been answered, reflections became pure surface,

Pools of resignation; perhaps even understanding.

We went snowmobiling afterwards, and got shit-faced that night

but it was our freshman year in college, so that was to be expected

Still; its memory remains a splinter in my mind's eye.

Irritating when played with.

Some problems are best left alone.

Unlike the cats in Joe Surwald's barn

Life's about doing what needs to be done

Aaron Graham

# Follow The Spirit Road, The Corpse Path, The End

Saint Edmund was for England.

Saint Dennis was for France.

I'll be no saint, but I'll follow thee.

If you give me half a chance.

Beneath our shallow's red sky, come take my hand,

As we wind down this spirit road you will gaze,

Specters of seers, naked in the silence of shadeless sea.

Markers of place and time, the cairns, burial mounds, and masonry

Erected by our patriarchs in due time; the sublime, old fashion.

Relived by the breakers racing towards the sea, vicariously

From where they were first seen: at Brecka.

This path, carved in the earth with shades' step; unison through time.

In time, is one with paths paved by disquiet magma's malice.

Flowing still beneath our feet, unfelt, seen only when the struggle;

against numbing cold, halts its rage midstride steam.

Molten stillness is still stillness, and is still peace.

The disambiguated cousin of Wyoming's agony, cold reality.

Which, itself, has stayed so many worthy dreams, ambitions

And plans; no matter how well conceived, lie flash-frozen and still.

Are silent, resplendent, stiffly unrealized, discarded, and saved

Our Flash-frozen dreams and freezer burned vegetables  
Preserved in the height of their decay for all time, destiny delayed.  
Never to return to the earth. Just as well, for today no one today knows,  
Where, and if they did they long ago ceased to care,  
What happens to ice-cycle-failures.  
That if, drawn to an arctic Elephant Graveyard  
Where the wind sweeps the zero, the waste  
Stirring no infertile dust clouds to obscure the display.  
Of fragmented forgotten failures.  
A mausoleum for plasticized sculptures, frozen fears,  
Unrealized hopes, opalescent despairs.  
Preserved and hidden, as our age demands.  
Forgotten, and disowned, our original position.  
And I tread this spirit road, which grows ever fainter.  
Keep my hand if you will, I walk on in this trance  
Till truths discovered by men who've past  
Are thawed from glaciers of medieval romance  
One the blank page, at the end of all roads:  
I'll read of my half a chance.

Aaron Graham

# Footfalls On Ieds

I thought I was out, was home, that I was free.

Thought id paid my debt, to home, to god, and country.

But part of my soul was sold to the sands,

Just to survive. I part I couldn't see.

Till I'm home, was with my girl, and brushed strands

Of beads hanging in her door, or smell a spice or incense

and deep-desert-contact freeze. I've heard coffin nails dropp since.

They sound like shell casings, or footfalls on I.E.D.s

Aaron Graham

# Heirophany

Hierophany

Non c'è felicità in questo mondo  
C'è solo disonore e la morte

Here, the end of the natural world—  
Here, auroras' scarlet ringlet signatures-  
Ionized particles trace our circumference  
Suggest a diadem.  
Suspended axis mundi

Here, men connect with gods  
Infinity touches you.  
Everything has changed—  
Now the train is gone.  
Were you at school?

Our train is gone now-

And my brother writes beautiful poetry.  
Our train is gone—  
But since his fire burnt out  
The train is gone—  
And Mary has torn her red dress  
The train—Our train—  
Ember months blaze all the same  
Our Train is gone now—

But they sold us tickets to watch sailors tell sea stories.  
We bought them cause our village lies at the bottom of a mountain,  
Where we still pray before and after meals.  
It is an album full of old-fashioned pictures:  
Here, she still speaks very indistinctly.  
There, you can see ribbons he earned in the war.  
Look! See, they glitter when he laughs  
Like when he came back,

But he never—  
He didn't really come back,

They're all gone now.  
This frozen lifeless place  
They that held infinity in a gaze—  
and blinked.  
Cosmogony.  
The wind never blows as cold again.

Your train has gone.  
Were you at school?

Aaron Graham

# Here Be Gods

The Weak Corner of a Picture's Splintered Frame

Part II. ~ "Here Be Gods"

The Aeolian wind blows now.

In days, in time, past- it crippled the yew:

Rending it from its home. Broke that

Which broke the backs of man and titan alike?

And all looked upon it and despaired

At the unnatural 45DEG, less than acute

Forms a bridge across ages that lye strewn,

About the annals of time, this unreal post-waste-

Cityscape, serves as the resting place for the gods

Gods who- likely- ruled the nothingness, and

They too lost hope, somewhere in the process of

Becoming, too- despaired, of facing-

The unflinching nature of nothingness.

The Atelic winds still blow now- as before-

The gods- and after- In nothingness

Aaron Graham

# I Believe In Shakespeare: The Man From Stratford, The Bard, The Wit

In the aftermath, the storm finds its rest  
Ariel, still bound to his timeless post  
Mouthing a demotic broken angelus.  
No more can I do with language, but lust.

Much of your language I learned, detest!  
Shackles' frail, frame me the weaker, and engross,  
Monumental ambitions cleaved just Pyrrhus,  
As a man: bound to drift as dust, after time: dust.

Still I have all than man may will.  
Will, I drive until will begets the wrack.  
Of vengeance, retributions, birthed the Italianate.  
Sundered against stones' learned mercy in time.

Only mercy's forgiveness can hell's tempest still.  
Saving the condemned saves revenger in kind's lack  
And so doubles reflections: sibylline masques prostrate  
Full five fathoms deep. splintered staff his knells chime.

The spell diffused in an airy elemental song.  
These rocks also crumble. Leaving dust: grinds  
Smooth pearls perfection from once sinful eyes.  
Morose, macabre atrophy: so coral see change

Eructation of what evil there remains.  
Wit spins, turning the fool. Whose wit defines  
Rebirth: Death. But: Me thinks this lady is my child.  
before barbarous kingdom perverse ravish, enforced.

Natural order of earth: lechery. Unnatural my magic wanes.  
I leave a legacy in the dust that be entombed there.  
While numerous Imperfections purging pangs, never mild.  
Lest intercession may loose my incorporeal snare

And mercy resolve this eternal affair.  
Not ever denying just rite disdains

Until the tempest-base-passion tames  
Man is but foul. and foul is fair.

Look but again and all's slipped into air.

Aaron Graham

# Inspection Arms

- 1) Butt-stock high in shoulder
- I) Break the hand-guard
- 2) Good chipmunk cheek
- II) Pull the handle back
- 3) Good sight picture
- III) Check Chamber: ALL CLEAR
- 4) Slow, Steady Squeeze
- IV) Move to the button push  
    In the marine corps
- V) Move to the cover close  
    There are fewer counts involved
- VI) move to the trigger, squeeze  
    In killing man
- VII) Click! Pop!  
    Than in Inspection Arms
- VII) All the way down.  
    We drill to kill
- VIII) And cut.

Aaron Graham

# Know Not The Day

As time's rhythm Drums a painful  
Toll on us all We busy ourselves  
In wait but never know When it will arrive.  
It arrives on time as the unexpected always do.  
And departs to soon, as the desired always seem.  
    Now the train is gone.  
    Were you at school?

Our train is gone now.

And my brother writes beautiful poetry.  
Our train is gone and marry has torn her red dress.  
The train is gone, and Ember months blaze all the same  
But they have sold us tickets, to watch sailors tell sea stories,  
We bought cause our village lies at the bottom of a mountain.  
Where we still pray before and after meals.  
It is an album full of old-fashioned pictures

□

    Squirrels gather, eat, gather, save, and gather nuts...

    Here, she still speaks very indistinctly

    There, you can still see he had life's fire in his eyes.

Your train has gone.

Were you at school?

Aaron Graham

# Love And War

Love and War

Abiit Iam et Reverti Debet

(He has been gone for long and must once return)

Prelude, Kuwait

Despite both faith and hope in times of love and of war—

Loneliness becomes a disease no medicine can cure.

In its final stages, always fatal—

A malignancy I battled before.

When we were in love.

When I was at war.

□

The Desert

My fortress built in a picture frame—

Allowed me to endure.

Forty times a day I would see within

What lay a lifetime, a gulf, and an ocean away:

My cure, my strength

Peace.

When I had been hidden from life's restless daggers

And lay beside you, my exact counterpoint

I fit.

That was, itself, contentment.

If anyone asked me if I was happy

I would, unflinching, look them in the eye and say

Yes.

The Desert and Nowhere

When I was still able to see the picture

Our oak entertainment center, built at zero-drunk-thirty

That had some upside down shelves.

tan particle board and black paint clash.

Because I clash with directions.

Citrus candles: cause you hated that I smoke.

Your issues of Cosmopolitan stacked on our mismatched shelves.  
I loved it all.  
Even the TV  
We stole from Jake's trailer when he left town.

Nowhere  
The picture frame broke  
Too small to hold Contentment or peace  
Wishes, and might-have-beens are a dead limb.  
Best amputated before sepsis sets in.  
I cut mine to late.  
Life is full of betrayal  
And I'm too full of life.

□

San Diego, California  
The fear of being alone

□□

Nowhere, California  
Post operative care  
There's a funny duality in that.  
A single note on official hospital stationary  
Wife called.  
Couldn't stand these past 6 months.  
Being alone.  
She would have preferred me.  
But—being alone—  
She drove our car  
To be with him  
and not alone.

Kept my last name, but replaced

Me

□

Nowhere, Nowhere  
Life is helplessness in the pain of betrayal.  
And I am still too full of life.

I am told what I say is bleak, dark,  
And will only harden my heart.  
Some people end up alone in life.  
I am never to know the reason.  
Wounds crust in time-salt.  
There is poetry in despair

And life in the nothing that is not there  
And the nothing that is.

Aaron Graham

# Magi On The Frontier

The Weak Corner of a Picture's Splintered Frame

Part III ~ Magi on the Frontier

The raw edge of this Attic land that managed

To carve but a small notch in the Aether.

For a civilization that could not survive-

Today's trial- to see

Tomorrow's promises fulfilled. Are remembered,

In terms of yesterday's antiquity

Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow.

From the barren, failed culvert's desolation

To the resting place of tired deities

To a dead and dying frontier;

Forms a triangle, and if a triangle

Create the base of a pyramid,

Ziggurat- housing sizzling, cryptic serpents

Their voice echoes in the ear of my Genesis, 'Zanadu! '

Reminding only of what I've failed to create

With my temporal words.

Aaron Graham

# Meditation: On Modern Deconstructionism

Meditation: On Modern Deconstructionism

A stage for &#945; &#954; &#961; &#945; &#963; &#953; &#945; to hold  
truth's trial,

By turning the screw: bound hands on a dial,

Raking the count, toll'd on grandfather clocks.

Macabre, kabuki masks their face of death.

Behind the Italianate shadowbox

Scenes. See shades of actors', &#945; &#961; &#949; &#964; &#951; at war.  
Or

Hear screams loosed on- exasperated breath-

As but whimpers. "The Horror! ", "The Horror! "

Still stalks streets of wrestles eyes. Dying mind's

Images trill: Lines of a long dead song.

Somewhere midst the lyrics, fixity finds.

The Catharsis -seen through cigarette smoke-

Lingers: the last line of a one line joke.

Its refrain: "home is nowhere". Sing along.

~Aaron Graham

Aaron Graham

# My Windswept Remains

I'm home for good,

But I don't go home anymore

The blood on my body, it stains.

My sheets, my walls, my floors

And my girls. I always dream I could

Go back over and find my remains.

Aaron Graham

# No Peace In Knowledge. Still, Rest Fills Its Void.

Moss grows on but one side of a tree.  
As before- stripped by the roll of a stone-  
This caldera of disquiet, alone.

□

Here- I was supposed to feel free.  
See fear in a patch of lichen. Alarms,  
Incased in the folds of the inlet's arms;

Only feels, is only aware of the  
Angry aqueous confluence-raging,  
Benedictine pacts- of retribution.

No more aware of menace: spray or stream  
Than is inveterate seed of its ground-  
Cradle, coffin, Prometheus Unbound.

Terror that knows no reprise, no eddy  
Is unknown, seeping groundwater: The wind  
In the door exsanguinates respired air.

Yet seed and lichen have learned to- simply-  
Exist, unfettered by the unknown fears,  
And so truly exist-beyond the years.

Perhaps La Chute removed ubiquity  
Left as The Exile exits The Kingdom,  
Leaving awakens articulate death.

Aware, absent pretense, eat of this tree!  
Now, truly aware, is, truly, to die.  
Our whirring, chattering world: too aware.

Obsessed with knowing; obsessed with dying,  
Is dying. I could swim in, fall- free- with  
The confluence, but I am to aware.

And am dying of awareness' disease.  
Before I too become to like the dead

I would raise my atrophied hand; to light

A final Cigarette, whose ash entombs.  
My anemic seed neath earthen mound, there,  
(Unaware of this world) would begin life.

Aaron Graham

# Ode To The Dagger Between Cy And Poplar

Almost too easy to cut the umbilical  
rid ourselves of sprawling void's, shaded brown,  
that expand to infinity, and of Casper Mt.'s shadow  
So, the first night, of our last summer, drank  
CLC, toasted our memories, and our escape:  
Class of '04: football state champions.  
Where summers wield apocalyptic winds.  
And frostbitten nuclear holocaust skies  
Obey winters command, noting endures.

And Casper cheered when the first Starbucks went up.  
Gary my coffee guy, who I vowed in youth to  
Appoint to my staff, were I to become president  
Manages the drive at through Hill-top bank.  
While we drink idealized despair at 5 dollars a cup  
And wonder how there got to be traffic in Wyoming.  
We built it. They came. I guess it took two  
Wall-marts to kill Casper's all mom and pops'.  
Their graves lay in a field of STILL MORE CONSTRUCTION,  
Adorned without flowers, just more orange road cones.

Aaron Graham

# Snow Angel

I saw your image in the melting snow  
Before you were born.  
Before I was born.

And though you don't like the verse of melancholy poets  
or the cries of colic children

the way I am  
the way I was

I was and am dying  
Before you were born  
Before I was born.

The painkillers take everything

Except the disaffection.

Aaron Graham

# Solstice In Stasis□

The Weak Corner of a Picture's Splintered Frame

Part I ~ 'Solstice in Stasis'□

The banner of this barren plane forgot  
Finitey, in pure surface-absent the  
Ruddy angel's slope-canted in time  
It absorbs light once reflected by  
The surface of its pane, which holds near- each  
Particulate grain- each a mirror for  
Possible worlds, slopes unchanging.  
Unchanging as the break of a sphere.  
Yet as varied as the break of a Gail.  
As it carries on pinions- time, age, and year.  
Yet, only through time, is such dominion broke,  
Is each chimera sent back to the room-?  
Where each first heard its own voice playing, playing  
On the perpetual tape recorder. The voice  
Which each had stolen, in a bitter note,  
From the swords as they danced in the violet light.  
Stolen, suspended, spring- in a snow-globe spell  
Frazier suspended as if he were Damocles' knell  
Which sounds in a barren infinity;  
So smooth is the void, unnoticeable its slash,  
Clawing the ivory, terra cotta titans:  
Who's scars form the knot and eternal pentacle.

Aaron Graham

# The Beauty Of The Woman

## The Beauty of the Woman

The beauty of the woman is behind her touch  
In the space between her fingers and the son's  
As he takes his first steps  
Between her hand and the daughter's  
As the father leads her down the aisle

The beauty of the woman is behind her eyes.  
In the circumference of each teardrop  
Which shrunk: keeping pace with the contractions.  
And disappeared when the daughter  
Kicking and screaming was laid on her chest  
Which became a stream of awe—wondrous

Even as the daughter found comfort on her breast  
The beauty of the woman is behind her smile  
Which she held through sleepless nights  
Teething, feeding, monsters, and proms□  
Through the holding and the swaddling  
Even the letting go...

The beauty of the woman is in the strength  
To hold, to watch, in love-eternally  
To spend eternity letting go  
Of the hand that grasped her pinky  
And each little piggy-toe  
The hand she felt inside her  
Which made her beauty glow

The beauty of the woman is  
Something I've only seen  
Something I know incompletely  
But touch with my own hands  
but the beauty fall between my fingers  
and the beauty behind her hands.



# The Iraqi Cantos~ I. Death From Above (Death By Unanticipated Technologic Regression)

Adaptation, survival, ROE, COC: abstractions;  
Mean nothing.  
Mean what your perception finds In them.  
So, mean nothing.  
Unless,  
3k from Al Qi'am,  
Find your advancement, steps behind  
A wicked shaped charge,  
Desperation takes shape.  
A Stielgranate 24  
Blood crusted, formerly-digi-cami-swath-  
Lanced at each corner  
By strands of hand-span-long-scrap.  
Constantia wire, blasting fuse  
A bloodied dog-tag-chain,  
Braided shreds of still smouldering American flags;  
All duct-taped to the handle.  
Which, once a handrail, rested  
In a, formerly two-story, home.  
All but forgotten midst ruins of what,  
Till 27hrs prior,  
Resembled A Fallujah city block,  
Now canted away from its mark at an acute angle.  
That is, presuming center was the mark,  
Waiting for the suspended, macabre, parachute  
To gracefully ease the blood-coated-charge  
ever nearer the instant of my destruction.

Despite the stark reality  
Impending annihilation would seem to pose,  
It was the abstract  
That clenched my mind.  
It's lock-jawed malevolence preventing  
(or perhaps prolonging) death's ordeal.  
Meaningless.  
Useless.  
I Found myself in my crumbling,

Dilapidated theater of memory.  
Knowing the level of revolt critics portrayed,  
And out of morose, Morbid, masochistic, curiosity  
Unable to look away.  
Sheer agony.

Aaron Graham

# The Iraqi Cantos~ II. Transfer Credit

Watching Lcpl. Mayeiux,

(The Shit-Bag POG from motor T,  
-Convinced he'd mastered spatial and experimental physics,  
After, on his 3rd attempt at MCI#27-  
Math For Marines,  
Finally, earned a passing mark:  
Answering 71 of the 86 questions correctly.)

Drive a three-ton; up armored, Hummvee  
over two food palates,  
Aligned haphazardly,  
Resting on paired Connex boxes,  
Placed To resemble, roughly, a 40' incline  
(give or take 7) ',  
He approximated Would provide trajectory  
Sufficient to propel Mayeiux, in his Hummvee  
Across the breadth of The Euphrates  
At the Qal'at al Sadan flats.

I learned,  
Geometry and physics are not evaluated in that MCI

He abashedly asked what his grade was,  
I showed him a method,  
waited,  
When ten minutes of agony lapsed,  
thumb, forefinger, Neanderthal Brow's wrinkles,  
All remaining, unflinchingly etched in stone.  
Ignorance had an expression.

I came unglued, absconding roars expertly aimed;  
"86%! You got a fucking 86%!  
It would be a fucking 'C' in college"

In retrospect, a polemic:  
Outlining how math for marines content would  
Prove insufficient as proof of equivalency  
-for mathematic proficiency on the echelon of 4th grade-

And, would be plain unacceptable,  
Even found humorous,  
Under auspices of Community College,  
(Who are traditionally required To dispose of any sense of humor prior to  
receiving formal accreditation.)

Instead I watched my mind's eye's replay.

The Hummvee, ten feet from the bank,  
Ass-end ~up to the diver's door~ sunk slowly into silt.  
Perhaps he wouldn't have been as baffled,  
(As the MPs declared the vehicle a loss, and responsibility  
Was determined to be our resident mathematician's.)

MayeiuX, may not Have been surprised,  
How his journey ended 256ft. short of his predication.

Either way, he wouldn't have ever calculated  
so her would have never known,  
He traveled 4% of predicted,  
His expertise result, a glaring 97% error.

Perhaps, he pondered the reasons  
I offered these fun bits of trivia so elatedly,  
While he was Loaded aboard SATO Air's only flight  
with nonstop service From Al Asad  
To Fort Leavenworth.

However, I'm 98% certain  
He pondered how I knew the distance traveled  
as a percentage, and how I was able  
To prove it impossible to calculate a %error.  
At least For me,  
Who had yet to take MCI#27:  
Math For Marines.

Aaron Graham

## The Iraqi Cantos~ Iii. A Mental Game Of Chess

Time is abstract, time is linear, has no form, no fixed construct.  
Time refuses to lengthen for man. Within man  
Between there is space to unfold time's spirals.  
Elongate seconds' spiroid cartography to fill the void  
Where seconds' deepen and become timeless: apart  
From reality, a part of reality, apart from man, of man  
A second will pass though it seemed a month when trapped.  
Here, here in your mind's eye rejoice for saving seconds  
Not staving man's death, live eons in empty space  
Unable to effect or best time effect anything  
Wisdom amassed from many thousand lives, fills  
Even this bottomless void. You'd despair were you to see  
A Second's depth. Gaze over abyssal brink: listen, look, feel  
In your mind's eye. Reflects the abyss in a second's spiral-  
Pointmass. Passes from time into infinity's drift: as mind  
Affixed, seals eyes as you leave the void of a second.  
Enter the brief insignificance of time temporal. Leave  
Vacant the void. Innumerable experiences compressed  
Reverted to the seconds, source of each sense's survey  
Of experiential scenes. Distill wisdom from thought,  
shrink wisdom to fit seconds elapsed in time's construct.  
Lifetimes blur, born of nanoseconds, to ethereal flickers.  
Enter time and leave devoid the space once cloyed.  
For man can stand but a fraction of reality. Yet that instant  
Specters, Fictions, sirens, past revelations fill, dominate.  
My mind's eye: fixated by probability and fate on fantasy.  
Tied by trivialities, Enchained in Irrelevance: Seen in clarity  
Unrivalled in reality, import surpassed by even epitomic frivolity:  
Mind's eye slows to a frame crawl the Hummvee tires  
Spewing silicate daggers, a demon unearthing itself from its  
Sandy prison: dual tires scything jagged rents, as they spin, spit sand.  
and barrel towards the river, furiously, never, reaching 38kmph.  
60 wouldn't have done it either, even slower, the Hummvee hit the  
Food palates. Images freeze, skew, reorient: to aid my Mind's eye,  
Focus so intense the scene blazed, branded, scared my mental retina.  
Eternal specters outlines from a moment months past, mostly forgotten  
Contribute an indelible, arcane, epitaph of meaningless mania thereafter:  
Faded-blue, heinously centered, label; stamped across food-palate-proxies  
Pressed into service as launch pads. Words I won't forget, yet absent meaning:

“Property of The United Nations” \*Authorized use only\*  
UNSECC/UNICEFF: Oil For Food Program.  
Unauthorized use Prohibited by Federal Law.

Along with the manifests of the support-strut-connex-boxes.  
Which were never opened, yet I know, its still meaningless,  
Psychic perhaps, but certainly a vacuum of meaning.  
I am even aware of the pejoratives used by the Jr. Enlisted  
Venture capitalist who had procured and listed the manifest  
Items. Labeled “Souvenirs.” “Acquired” from the voluntary  
Coalescing” and “Brief interview” of individuals said to be  
“Moderate, ” Muslims. “On Holliday Outings” despite absence  
Of any holiday, and month before an Islamic one. Visiting:  
Ramadi, Tikrit, Basra, and Najaf Belue. To relax from Chaotic  
Situations and feeling unsafe in Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain,  
Abu Dhabi, Egypt, or UAE. Remarkably, the chaotically dangerous  
Places requiring they seek respite. All claimed ignorance of the  
Existence of any group or ideological movement known as:  
Islamic Jihad, PLO, Feta, Hamas, M-ramp or Dragoon STAAAMs  
Which one can not fault them for, as they obviously spent their days  
Becoming experts on every caveat of Geneva Convention, POW, and Detainee  
Accords, Current Benchmark precedents relating to “ AL IDHR”  
Noncombatant Extradition Treaties, Roe’s, P.P.E.s, rank structures.  
Uncovered methodic tenants for the politically motivated, orchestrated  
Genesis of the Perpetual Red Tape Holocausts and The Systematic  
Genocide in store for the Junior Enlisted. Carried out soft-spoken senate  
Chambers and exclusive DC Martini Bars. Executed on the other  
Side of the world. The inevitable fate solders without bullets face.  
Confessed by the enemy in Perfect-Sand-blown-clear,  
Kings-formal-English. The sort of language cultivated only  
In Pupils of the best PhD’s of Oxford, Columbia, and Cambridge.

Aaron Graham

# The Revenger's Question

And I too have stood in the grove, listening:  
More an antique Roman than image of a man.  
Straining, hearing only the wind: driving dust,

to Hecuba.

I, as hush as death: wait, wane, atrophy  
But as is I? often see against some storm  
silence struck in faculty and motion I do nothing.

The rack indeed stands still.

Can you stand the post tonight?  
I, I'm so terribly cold.  
And of late seem to have lost my mirth

Ney, Lets go together;  
I alone should not stand guard.  
Nor in vestiges mock'd and be touted: king

If I waiver, if my sight fails then  
indirections alone find directions out.  
I cannot live to hear the news form England

My antique passions rebellious to my duty fall repugnant  
When faced with the action I must pursue  
Care I if I am damned in the process?  
I don't. Were I wrong, and this right

A thousand times damned I would rather be  
Than uphold this right,  
such a malignant thing as I  
to play Pyrrhus.

And drive on Priam  
Though my quarry cry havoc  
And I draw breath in pain  
Ill have an answer in action

If by chance, tonight it will walk again.

Aaron Graham

# The Weak Corner Of A Fading Picture

The Weak Corner of a Picture's Splintered Frame

Part IV: The Weak Corner of a Fading Picture

Though cigarette burns against my lungs,

I don't mind it. Its caustic plume- memories

Servant- professes to me a supplicant's promise.

That, with due patience,

I'm but among the dead as well.

Just as well, I neither suited nor worthy

To play god to utopist civilizations

Still as a jar, unworthy to play fourth piece

In the quartets.

They were here before I, and will be here after.

The fourth, the weak corner will break.

Failing and disappearing- its rightful place-

Hopefully time's whims will assign some

Permanent brace, for I have but seconds.

Seconds to shoulder my piece of the burden

-in vain-

I wish there were a civilization to live

Where my mind has placed shadows.

Here in my mental fertile crescent, cemented

Only by words.

And only their inevitable suffering would awaken.

Me- to the myriad imperfections I never noticed

In the world

In time.

For this imperfection, never fulfilled,

Only reflects my imperfection;

Which plays like lake-ripples

Across this eternal landscape.

Aaron Graham

# Those Damn Birds

The Damn Birds,

I heard them again this morning

Every morning, the horror, the horror:

Inescapable anywhere, but its worse in Wyoming.

The tell my vices of their virtue's victory.

Slow my dwindling aspiration, spiraling towards apathy.

Sleepless nights don't breed continuity with natural law.

Irregularity hates productivity.

As do 9 to 5's. Tailing sleepless nights.

I am not disconsolate, a malcontent. The world shall make a niche

Among the listless, the crowds: addicts, drunks, premed students.

And those who partake in the demotic debauch.

Never, will I be among that number. I envy them this torturous noise.

The Damn Birds can be heard as they escape:

Behind blaring jukeboxes

In recorded nephrology lectures;

Under half-moan screams (made in ecstasy, liable, or forgery)

Oblivious to these damn birds.

I guess this chitterling twittering trill is not- itself- appalling.

However, its assaults my muslin excuses, self-loathing

Justifications why I've collected nothing but:

A studio apartment packed with unfulfilled potential,

Cosmetic scars, and ancient dust, that fine grime

Which always floats on Wyoming winds, sticking to everything

It fills my nose, just so it can keep those hellish melodies company

Though they desire no compassion, no company, mulling round

Their filthy eternity, riding a foul, hellish breeze. Chirping

A Siren's song, sending a shrill shriek, to anemic aspirations,

Now apathy. I suppose I'll take the dole,

Damn birds.

~Aaron Graham

Aaron Graham

# Usa Yearbook -2009-

USA Yearbook -2009-

LP/OP location undisclosed

Counting the disaffecteded,

Torn, battered, tattered -clothed

Victim of religious sects, factioned

Searching the hooded nameless masses

Trudging a path of sand-print passes

Across dunes the wind blows clean

Erasing the work, and with it, time each took.

So each day starts, pristine.

With a new page in our log book.

And thus another chapter of human history is closed (Formatted to meet to newest MLA specs.)

In 12 point Times New Roman, with a single footnote

Auto-formatted with a hotkey^

The inscription reads:

^On with the motley!

~Aaron Graham



## Zero Sum Game (Italian Sonnet)

No more shall elms sleep: their ageless sentience  
Slows scenes; wisdom's eternal ecliptic  
Brink of man's mortal event horizon  
Resolves: Catharsis of life's macabre dance  
Poets pen scribes a dirge: love is romance  
Tyrant's test: time's decree, prides defiance.  
a Three-faced, ethereal muse: recourse for  
Kings' desire. Offer legions on its pyre

□

Men sought t'pass time's end: found themselves no more:  
Their derelict rhetoric litter Styx's shore,  
Faster had Ramses built an interstate  
Than Shelly's hand mockd': laws of time and fate  
Even pedestalled warnings, men ignore  
Chides Charon, who tongues his Marlboro, and waits.

Aaron Graham