



Trigger Happy Warnings

Andreas Gripp

Trigger Happy Warnings

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Andreas Gripp

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I was spry and 35 when I released my first chapbook. A somber 62 as this full-length—my forty-fourth—has appeared. 27 years is quite a long time to write. Others, of course, have done it for much longer, but I tend to do things in a flash; blinded, perhaps, by the things I've felt and seen, jotting them down before the gods have clouded things over once again, and breath is the only thing left me. Thank you for reading these newest poems—good or bad, they will be all that remain one day.

Andreas Gripp
2026



Upon Catching the Avian Flu

We need to end this
nonsense about the birds.
These early-morning
sirens. Devoting half
our petty verses
to their honour.

I realize I'll be booted
from the guild, seen
as a bitter bard,
renounced as
a blasphemer,

but I'll waggle my
duke at the sky
like Grampa Simpson,
scowling while one *flits*
on her merry way,
flapping her gorgeous
plumes, always looking *forward*,

never peering
to the ground
at our transgressions —

our stepping around the
tippler on the pedway,
taking his emptied
bottle to the store
for twenty cents;

the body of a
missing ingénue, composting
in the bowels of
the forest, while
her parents offer prayer;

and a home that's blown
to motes amid the sand,
in the name of *Abraham*, or
his God she's yet to see
inside the clouds,

aloof
as spray & thunder, an
entreated deity.

The Tartans

You've heard your kid's
6-7, deliberately vague
but not. *It's just*
a passing phase
your mother said
and she should know.

She walked in Scottish
plaid in '75-
'76, just as Rollermania
had dropped into the
schoolyard. Wedged
between the days of
rock and disco.

I say I thought they
sucked, the Bay City
Rollers, who'd never even
set a tartaned leg
in Michigan, especially
S-a-

t-u-r-

d-a-y

Night!

You tell me that
six-seven is
utter guff. It'll last
until it's merched.
Until their grandmas
take it over
and it's the antithesis
of *cool, hip, groovy*;

when nary one
will say it again,
propelled into
the lacuna of
fallen words, before
we've deciphered the
code, if it's the derision of
you're actually minus one,
notched below the
zero; or an unlucky
13 at life;

or maybe it has *nothing* remotely
to do with mathematics.

I never knew a kid
who liked its problems:

Jenny has
a half-dozen
roses. Banks them on
a roll of loaded
dice. If it comes up
three and four
what has she won?
What has she lost?
Is it more traumatic
than having never loved at all?

Fonts

My handwriting's
worsened as I've aged.
Chicken scrawl in
subduction is
calligraphy
when juxtaposed.

I've seen
the loop of letters
in those classic
books you buy, from the shop that's
cobbed in dust, the swirl
from a fountain pen:

To Samantha
Love Charles, 1826 —

akin to swanky
litho, in a font
beyond the offerings
of my laptop.

Be rest assured, neither Chuck
nor Sam had ever
been acquainted
with *Comic Sans*, *Juice*
ITC,

or ol' *French Script MT*,
its delusion of
elegance, pretending
to be cursive when it's
not, something you could
type in seven seconds,
claiming the pulse
of passion, your bosom
bled on paper,
a missive
to be read
in two hundred years.

On Fortuity, or Why I've Never Played the Lotto

A study in the U.S. asked how many people do you know by name and found the average person knows 611. Let's assume you are more *social* than the average, are acquainted with 800 people. In a world of 8 billion, this means you know 0.00001% of the population. A 100,000th of one percent.

—Max Roser

You are *less* than a social person—
the honorary Poobah
of the League of
Misanthropes.

It's possible that
your fortune has been shite.
You only meet the Karens,
the asshat/hee-haw bunch.
It's conceivable that the
reason you are single is
you've failed to find that soul
to perfectly love.

Perhaps 99.99999%
are actually wonderful humans.
Not the ones who've launched
the wars; butted into line,
demanding to assail the owner, Mr.
Schlepp; while your sherbet's
lost its cool, running rivers
down your pants
because the carton had been torn.

It's within the realm of *maybe*
they've never tossed their litter
in a stream, kicked a pup or
kitten with their boots; stomped
into your home with muddy prints—
presenting wires for the cable
you'd expected the day before—
just in time to see the 7th game.
Well, *there's always next year.*

In a dozen months, you'll meet
another 4—
decide to take a risk, think it
serendipitous,

host them all for dinner
with the pizza on its way.

All will glean the olives
from their cheese, offer them up to
you as a sign of peace—

and you'll call them on their
bullshit, know they just can't stand
the taste, refused to embrace the bad
with all the good, though
there's a snowball's luck in Tucson

that the folks there will give thanks
for whatever's set before them:
to the migrants, to the farmers,
even *your* idea of God, some meld of
chance & fate.

Hands, or The First Monday in November

I refuse to live my
life in Standard Time.
Fall an hour back
because the light's
a fickle mofo.

I'll play the early warbler,
chew my breakfast full of worms,
or at least my Cap'n Crunch.
I'll pour yours out
as well while you're a-snore,
make it Sergeant Soggy
with my milk.

You can watch
my sardonic wave
from the mountaintop,
inhaling my cup of java
you've yet to forge,
skiing down the slope
you've still to climb. I don't care
if there's snow or not.

When I was your age, I went trick-or-treating in a blizzard. Of course in naked feet. Folks will give the most peculiar looks — when you say you're just a streaker. I guess that's not a thing these days and I have obviously digressed.

My past will be your present,
my in-the-now
a future you'll wait to touch —
shove *that* in your Birkenstocks,
you would-be Buddhist bums.

I pity the bleating muttons
who do what they are told,
pulling the big hand back
like it's the brake on a bullet
train, then shunting in reverse
only to live the same hour
again. Take a flying leap. I was
retching in the bathroom
from some just-expired chicken.

There isn't any way
I am going through that again.
This isn't *Groundhog Day*.
But go behind, be Bill
fucking Murray if you want.

I swear y'all have blood
upon your hands. Someone's death
might not have happened if you
left things as they were.
The school bus at the crossing
where it otherwise wouldn't
be, sideswiped past the guardrails,
children tumbling *over*
like they're bones
in a game of craps,

when they should have been snug
& safe within their desks—
learning about the dials of the sun,
trustworthiness of shadows,
that the rooster is more reliable
than us all—

not dependant on the driver
with his foot stomped on the pedal
as the cacophony begins:

the blink & flash of scarlet;
the brash & clangy bells;

thinking that he's gotta
take a risk, worried he will surely
lose his job,

has to save some time already gone.

Tuesday Night Nachos

We both hate
billionaires. Say if we had
their kind of money we'd be
feeding every starveling
in the world. Christen clinics
in West Darfur; rebuild
the homes of Gaza in a jiffy.

We see a *homeless*
& *hungry* sign
on the way to the pub,
eschew the *discomforting*
meeting of eyes with
every step,
feigning we spot a swallow
scoot roof-to-roof,

know we've planned
this affable evening
for a week,
have just enough change
for beer,
hope to harp & grumble

about the likes of Galen
Weston / Elon Musk,

the Bezos / Rockefellers,

howling as our Coronas
hit the spot, paying with our
Visas as if our wallets
had been bled by a
sanguisuge; not wishing
to lance this moment
with our pangs of hypocrisy,
mislay that gleeful feeling
we're better than they.

The Ring

You don't really
need to take a
vow *for better*.
Only just *for worse*.

No one has to give
an oath *for richer* —
the jet skis, the chalets,
that house on the Riviera,
pouring champagne on
your morning *Oatie-O's*.

It's *the poorer*
that entices you to
leave; upon that
shitty futon full of fleas,
your stomach all a-
rumble from that slice
from Quickie-Mart,
knowing it *spun* all after-
noon beneath the lamp,
waving to the wieners
which you'll down for lunch
next day.

In health you'll leap &
run, rolling in the leaves
with your beloved,
in the gold of an Autumn
day.

In sickness
you will think it's time
to flee, hop onto
the red-eye to Québec,
dream of some garçon
or mademoiselle,
thunder under the
covers, know nothing of
pain & meds;

but temptation is
a *fleeting* thing, doesn't stick
around like love & promise;

and you'll slump by the
hospital bed, pray the
flatline starts to bump,
hold her fragile hand

like you did that
distant day, remove
her wedding band,
note the blanch
amid the tan,
place it on *again*
in the hope she'll stay.

Chemo

You began to
shave your head—
before the diagnosis—
peering through the
smooth of crystal ball.

Cancer claimed them all:

mother, son, husband,

your aunt *Felicity*,

who, when you were only
just a *sprout* upon her lap,
laughed about the
merits of being bald:

it makes the morning easy,
no fussing with a brush
or coloured tresses,

the hat stays on—
even in the wind,

saying her locks of
Toni Red
would blind her in a storm,
sticking to her visage
like spaghetti in the rain,

racing to catch her Tilley
amid the gale,
the one that stripped
the leaves away from *even*
her favourite willow:

Don't say that I am weeping.

*The world is simply capsized;
my smile, overturned.*

Sinéad was never as
lovely as when her crown
had held no shadow,
the shine from lack of
stubble, looming
like newborn grass,

when you've goosebumps
on your scalp
in summer's balm,

from the snuggle
of an evening waft;
its benign
and solace kiss.

Siesta at 68

Perishing in your sleep
is the only route to
leave this mortal slinky.

It's clear that no one wants
to die of suffocation;
consumed by fire
or as food, by that lion in its
cage which on its own

is a pretty miserable
place to cash your chips.

If given the choice
on how I bid you
toodle-oo, I'd sure as hell
wouldn't opt for "natural
causes," just a neatly
shrouded betoken
for *old age*—

the dragging of the years,
like a gall or kidney stone,

or a lump inside your *breast*,
furrowed like a raisin
from a box, sticky to the
touch, like everything *else*
you'll eat: jam & knockoff
syrup; honey in your tea;

then the grit of Metamucil
in your glass, needing some-
one else to swab the aftermath,
tell you that your crossword's
upside-down,
though that's *not* the
case in dreams—

where both you &
your string of letters
somersault in the air,
dentures turn to teeth
by which you'll chomp on
peanut brittle,

like you did as an earnest
moppet, knowing your missing
pearly white would rise again,
like a Sunday morning Messiah,

who knew full well that
thorns & nails & wood was
just the shittiest way to go.

“Anorexic Annie”

Your sister draws nothing
but stick figures,
boasts that she’s an
artist, claims that *each*
is truly human:

Letter O
a bulging head, dis-
proportionate —
our brains are
most important, after all;

its torso either L
in lower case
or possibly capital I —
it depends on the
level of pressure
that you place upon
the lead;

the legs each slant of
A, always far apart,
as if a virgin
yearning sex;

the arms a stroke
of V as though in Pentecostal
prayer, perhaps her
supplication
for a mate.

They called her
scraggy pencil
in Creative Arts, sandwiched
in the morning
between Calculus
& her lunch,
scant as it may have
been,

said they couldn't
decipher her body
from the 6H shaft
she held, that if Annie
had been thinner
she wouldn't need a
rubber,

eraser

she would murmur
out of earshot,
depicting someone
that she'd swear was
more than bones.

On Tenacity, or The Bergamasco

When Aurora passed
away, you swore that
this is it. Nothing but her
ashes on your desk. The
unpaid, final notice
from the Vet, who dogged
you like some Vito
from Sicily.

When the collections
agent arrived, he noted
your brand-new leash,
your *Gotta Getta Gund*,
the tins of puppy treats;

that even though your
sofa had been sold,
there was a pet
bed three feet wide—

no fur which needed
grooming, no bags to
tote her business,
and a stunted, knotty
branch that served as
stick.

I don't really
expect her to fetch
it, you shrugged to
his dismay.
But you tell him
once she did,
in the penumbra
of the dawn, that
her mouth had opened
up, drool *cascading*
from her tongue like
the Fontana di Trevi,

licking you like a girl
does her gelato,
barking *arrivederci*

which Aurora never could,
too weak to lift her face
when the moment came,
blinking only once
but in amore, her paw in the
palm of your hand —
or *mano nella mano* —

your never letting go
these many years, for even the
mongrels attest to
celestial kingdoms,
to ghostly, ethereal kisses
from the sky.

Mooning Past the Waning Gibbous

The wolves inside Algonquin
have tired of the toads.

The never-ending bragging,
when it comes to their
command of oxygen—

we breathe it under water
just as good—

then mocking their silly
worship of the moon,
saying their croak is
far superior to any
howl.

All of this is
payback, for when a
wolf had watched a toad
being flattened by a wheel,
baying not
because of Luna,
but the quips
within the earshot of the
pond:

*that's why they rhyme
with road*

*it's the only way they croak,
since no one wants to eat
them*

*even the French
will stop at frogs*

You tell me
this is the most bone-
headed story you've ever
heard. Why you'll never
take me *near*
a provincial park—

*"you'd embarrass me to
death in front of birders"* —

who'd raise their crinkled
noses to the air,
at my *tale* of the
Bobbleheaded
Bunting,

seldom adept
to lift itself
off the ground,
the disparity of its
skull that leaves it
lagging, hungry;

unable to *swoop*
for seed, always
eyeing starlings
snag the worms;

never inhaling the
scent that wafts aloft,
loiters like a pitted
ball, that's pompous
from our reverence,

granting nothing but a
half-assed *glow*
to guide the night.

**Elements, or
Just Another Sidereal Sunday**

4 is a fabulous number.
Of Beatles and of Fire—
Earth & Air & Water.

The seasons; the directions
of the wind; the wheels of your
Saturn Vue, rusting in the rubbish
now that you've set your sight
on stars.

Perspectives. Everything
is different
come degrees. Tip your
painting over 45,
see what you failed to
breaths before.
How the spectral will
lean as we spin & never feel it.
There is Axis and there is *Axis*.
I'm not speaking
of trifectas: German,
Japanese; a sprinkle of
Italian on the side.

Timmy wants to go
to outer space. Is the
Earth in outer space?
Roger that. Then he's
already there &
doesn't know it.

We spend a third of
our years asleep, say
a day is 24 hours.
But it's 23 hours, 56
minutes, 4.09 seconds.

What happens
to what is left? The length of a
pop song perhaps—
The Bangles' *Eternal Flame*,
that was snuffed in a fleeting
instant—perched at the top
of a chart, whirling at the poles,
spying what's below;

then ciphering how far
away you can possibly get
at the speed of light,
the sluggishness
of sound.

The Fifty Billionth Birdie-in-a-Treetop Poem

Well, not really.
The bird has flapped away.
Spooked by a
snarling chainsaw.
Probably dead by now.
Makita isn't what
it used to be.

The tree was *earmarked*
for removal.
Something 'bout
curtailing *Dutch Elm*
Disease. The fungus is Dutch,
not the tree. It came from a
pack of Voortman. Cookies
make a monster. The rattle of
ping-pong eyes.

Now AI has butted in:
"The synonym for table tennis
comes from its onomatopoeic
nature." Who uses such a word?
Who's it trying to impress?

We've come a long way
from Sesame Street. What's next?
Is Big Bird now Brobding-
nagian Avis? Doesn't exactly
spew off the tongue—
like your Oma's godawful
Stroopwafel.

How did this morph
to a poem on sport & biscuit?
The latter comes from Latin—
biscoctus, twice-baked—
who has time for that?
Do it right on your very first
go, grandpappy always
said. Give the discards
to the birds. *They'll shit*
them on the trees. Guaranteed
to keep them healthy.
I think it pertained to both.
Means this actually
counts.

Mining the Higgs Boson, or Overstating Yesterday

It's safe to assume
you're observant.
Beyond the
Sherlockian.

*There's a grain of sand
that's missing from the beach.*

Or maybe it's neurosis.

*The ocean's lost a drop
since last July.*

It's not only where we
vacay. You're a *savant*
in our own backyard:

*Our maple's bereft
of a leaf. One less seed
for the grandkids.
An attosecond less
of raking.*

When I mention
we don't have offspring,
you speak of eggs
& sperm, the odds
of forming zygotes,
how living's
sextillion-to-one.

We take a morning amble
to St. Matthew's,
inspect the lonely plot
we bought online.

*It's a nanometre
deeper than they said.*

When I say that this is
good, that we're getting a
bit of a bargain, you insist
that we are not,
that you were simply
rounding off, it's actually
even worse.

*We'll never hear
the rustle
when she visits,*

the lamenting from
our eldest, lost as
an embryo, her sob the sound
of scintilla
snagged in air.

Nostalgia

No one has ever said
these are the good ol' days—
in the moments they're
occurring.

The skies are always cobalt
on our memory's other side.
The rain more mist than grief.
The flooding just a puddle
which got a little
carried away; snow the weight
of bubbles—toys that wouldn't break
unless you broke 'em—on purpose;

and you on the hospital
bed, thrusting out your baby
while you shrieked, yet never half as
painful as the gallstones
yet to come. Forceps
made of silver—or a blade of

tinsel's gold, a sliced & sectioned
C that brought bikinis to an
end. The one-
piece always safer
mama said.

Everyone
flaunts their navel
nowadays.

You needed to hop a *bus*
to go to the bank
& get some cash.
It was only 20 cents,
your coughing fit of
laughter from the smoke.
An hour to the
athenaeum
just to answer which is older —
Morocco or Mexico.

They don't make 'em
like they used to,
great-grandma
always mumbled through
her dentures. Her teeth could
only take so many
punches-to-the-jaw.
Men were men &
folks were always white.

Now the baristas
are mostly brown —
someone spelt her name
wrong 15 minutes before
she passed. Hospitals
never used to have
Tim Horton's. The bro
just played defence
for the Maple Leafs. Back
when even *they*
could win the cup.

Today my hands are
all a-tremor while I scroll,
snorting at the
piglet gone astray,
running through the concourse
of another abandoned mall,
the laces of my Sambas
hanging down, knowing it never
gets any better than this.

"Icky Loves Katrina"

Ichabod never caught on.
I mean the name,
not some dimwit
doing the opposite
in *Simon Says*.

The fact it starts with
Ich might have a little
something to do with it.
No one would envisage
Rock Hudson's
doppelgänger.

In Hebrew, the moniker
means "no glory."
Kind of a piss-
poor way to start
a budding life.

At school they called
you *Icky*; asked you if
you wanted pumpkin pie.
Its shoving in your face
which burst their seams,

only served to *aggravate*
your acne.

On Hallows Eve
they dressed you
as a horse, taunting that
Katrina hates your guts,
forcing you to neigh—
bend & render rides
to all the fattest kids
in class. Even the teachers
chortled.

You staggered
through the forest
after dark. The one that scared
you shitless, hoping the *ghouls*
would never find you—
not the haunting by the dead,
but the spectres of the living.
They kill you in a manner
which the departed never can.
Laughing you'd be less *ugly* if
you didn't have a head;
your gaping, sickly smile
when you wept.

Chasing Leopold

The poet
you aspire to be
is forever a step ahead.

There he is, *Bardy*
McBardface, lodging his
bloody ensign
in the summit of
Olympus Mons; Monarch
of the Martians, just seconds
after your scale of Everest.

He'll humble-brag he's in
The Paris Review,
use the pages of your
chapbook to wipe his ass.

He'll upstage your
latest broadside, counter your
simple text with
whistling bells, 3-D
animatronics, allow
quadruple space
for his autograph.

Eat my solar dust,
he'll tease as he's off
again, nya-nya-
nya-nyaing like the kid who
snagged the chair at the
front of the class, in the glint
before you could, smirking
at your failure in the rear.

He'll ask your girl
to rumba
while you squat to lift
galoshes; smack a homer
off your screwball which will
dither at the plate—
in the spark of a *Big Bang*
breath.

He's the match
to your dripping candle,
the light to your cigarette;
the smoke from which
arises while you cough
like a barking seal,
always in the shadow
of his mane.

He'll be the inferno
in the hilltops, he's *set*
& come to quench—
the fireman to your hose,
the shirtless, August pin-up—
while you wait until December
in your portly Santa suit.

He'll come up with that killer
close, his footprints in the sand
that carry you, leave you in the
path so gravely worn, while he veers
to make the difference
you never do;

the star of every *Norton*,
fondled by jeune femme,
who shunned
your gravitas, your fucked-
up suicide poem in
seventh grade.

The Burden

You were *five*
when you had spelled
your family name — aloft
with crow & owl —

Fisher & Son,

and you without
a brother, though you'd wait
for years for one, hoping
he'd take the pressure
off your shoulders,
like Simon of Cyrene
the cross of Christ;

and it surely wouldn't
have been as bad as that:
beatings till you swelled,
thorns inside your toque,
a hammer thumping nails
into your wrists and not the
barn.

Instead of evening chores,
you lay upon the straw as if
a manger —

the *Saviour* for his farm,
encircled by geese & goats,
the lilt from a fatted calf—
not a lamb that is fated
for the slaughter—but a heifer
which is milked unto the
bone, *fenced* on every side,
fettered in a maze of soaring
corn;

looking to a moon you'll never
visit—foregoing *astronaut*,
your dream of *engineer*,
unable to sing of its glow
to the girl of your choice—
or *boy* if you prefer
and I think you do—

asking if he'll kiss you
on the cheek,
bleeding from your
brow you'll say is sweat
from a hard day's work.

Author, Author, or
The Night Before Hilal

This evening,
you'll finally be the writer
you've striven to be.
Your name will land
at last in the local paper.
The New York Times?
Maybe if you'd stayed
in Greenwich Village. For now,
this hamlet will suffice.
A pressman's ink is
nothing to belittle. Newsprint
feels the same the
planet over.

Your latest which had flopped
will spring to life, like a rabbit
hearing the snap of a hunter's
step, dashes to the crest of the
highest bluff, an opus
even *Powell's*
will claw to stock.

Your rivals will judder their
heads, *this time he really*
did it.

They'll fret
their publicists will urge
they do the same. Suggest
they guzzle brandy
just before. Leap out
from the bottom like a
Jack that's cranked too much.

This evening, you will step
ahead of a *Mazda*
speeding east. We'll think you didn't
see it coming, the peril of a *highway*
sans the moon, headlights
like the orbs of
approaching Smaug, vaulting
over the hood & to the air,
like the blinding
pyrotechnics over Sydney —

which had rung in Y2K, the rest of
us in the distance —

sighing away our
catharsis, believing
we were safe within
some umbrage bottomed-
up;

toasting to the
grails which lay ahead,
ever-elusive laurels
while we live.

Immortality, or Farewell, St. Sebastian

For some it's
progeny. For others, the
house they built. An Oscar
on their mantel or a painting
in the Louvre. For me a
book of scribbles. My pulse
in the pith of
psalm.

My friend in second
grade wrote *Dave was here*.
Using the teacher's
indelible marker.

If you'd asked him at
the time it was enough.

*There's Something Wrong
with Morgan*

they would say. Your parents
could not concur on
much at all, but on that
they spoke as one.

When your father
spat it out, his squint was from
your velvety
countenance.

Once, he suggested
that you strum
an air guitar. *Your wrists are
limp enough.* Bestowed a
sky piano. *As gay as Elton
John's.* Hoping you'd
start a band up
in the ether, get out of his
fucking sight.

With mother it was worse.
Catching you in your
sibling's training bra.

Curiosity
of a child, it was
embarrassingly
dismissed. A smack
upside the head
imprinted that.

You changed your name to
Morgan. Folks pondered
its necessity, being the spelling
goes unchanged
despite the gender.

It's the shift
in its inflection you retorted,
learning how to sway
truncated hips. Our sunrise
most sublime.

Morgen, if you'd stuck
to your German roots.
But you could hardly
forgive the way
they killed the Jews.

I told you it's
identical
in Yiddish. Anglicized
from the Welsh
you're birthed in sea.
An air-kiss from the
pursing of the waves.
A sparkled, golden
greeting from our star.
Shines on saint & sinner
you learned in church.

How *wrong* indeed you were
in penitent trudge,
beating would-be breasts,
das Licht eternally half-a-
skip ahead; invariably
silhouetted, your fuse
of girl & boy.

Par Quatre

I hate KitKat bars.
I could leave this poem at
that, but then I'd get
the infernal *why*?
So I'll lay it on the table
with its wrapper:

I loathe the corporate pressure
I'm forced to *share*, with anyone
else in the room, its *sanctimonious*
fingers of four, unselfishly
snapped for another. If you
give me puppy eyes, know
that it's the middle —
lifted in the fury
of my gaze.

There's no *space*
in the KitKat logo. A single,
melting pillar. It must have
been TikTok's muse —

and just mentioning
it will birth it in my
scrolls.

It's more wafer
than deliquesce. Its brown
I can never wipe off. If I wanted
a bloody cookie, I would have
bought a bloody cookie. Like the day
in Hermie's Drugs, looking for
oatmeal raisin
in its rowdy cellophane.
Spotting the *KitKat*
while I reached. It added
7 seconds
to my jaunt.

A woman and her toddler
began to stroll across the street
a minute later, as I darted
from the parking lot.
They were creamed by a
heedless driver while they did.
I was the car *behind*—

would have been *ahead*
if not for Nestlé,
stopping on a dime;

if I hadn't loved cats and
kittens, since 1 or 2 years old,
or been smitten by all things red;

if I hadn't *dillydallied*,
pondered I'd have to split, divvy
up the four when I got home,
and goddamn it I hate
KitKat. Its lie of satiation,
of easy, painless math.

On the Days of Taciturn

You're verbose
when you're laconic.
Your silence
like the crunch of
boot-on-grass,
in late November frost, foliage
swept *away*
by gust and rake,

or stacking
gilded dishes
once they're dried,
the *clonk* on cupboard
shelves.

Silence isn't gold
it is a pyrite,
the shine in a
prospector's
pan, the fool
who thinks he's rich

once all the grit's
been sieved away.

You say much more
when your lips are
closed and curved,
arched just like a
rainbow
void of colour.

I recollect the
circus as a kid, the clown
who bore a flower
and a frown,
how he never
spoke a word
throughout the show,
plucking every petal—

like a tree
uncoupling leaves
of aureate,
never even voicing
fare thee well,

*thank you for your
splendour and your shine,*

your mimicry of Sol
when it went cold,

rigid through its loss
of cloak and love,

like the Winter
nights that followed,
your slumber
on a couch
without a cushion,
naked
on its wood of
hinted rage.

Orthodox Christmas

—January 6th & 7th, 2026

This either side of
midnight,
when I wave in your
direction, do not
view it solely
as a greeting—

but as a signal
of my departure.

And my footfall
in the snow?
Peruse the *prints*
I leave behind. My boots
without a heel. A toe
that's been *uplifted*
to the clouds, as if
I can ride the air
a *second* time,

a fortnight
since the first,

like a sleigh
of alms and bounty,

for those in
Vyshyvanka,
Amalia and Netella,

garments
of a people
tracking days the
Julian way,

their candles sinking
slowly like a saint
of light and favour
on his knees.

On Eating Ratatouille, or Eulogy for Jill

The funeral home
has banned me
from their parlours.
My saying *sorry she expired*
as condolence.

A bag of milk
expires. Dumped into
the drain a
minute after. Whenever
I'm *neurotically* inclined.

I have given too much
credence to "best before."
It doesn't mean it's
bad you always said —
chowing on the cheese
that even *Remy*
wouldn't sniff. Assuring me
the mould in my tortilla

wouldn't *emerge* for another
week, from the time
I think it's died,

the stamped-on date
a mortician's keen
arrival, orbiting as a vulture
over those who've breached the
sand, broiling
beneath the sun
amid their stagger.

You added *fungi gives it colour* —
the bread, like moss on a log
that's felled — though past its prime
had vestiges of beauty left to offer.

Chiquita, Queen of the Burlesque

I've recently been reading
that humans share a
discomforting amount of
genetics with bananas.
This likely explains a lot.
The bruising of our skin
with every bump. The
mindlessness of MAGA.
Cocooned within our sheath,
beholden to the phallic, the fear
it turns to mush.

Primates like ourselves
devour them. Perhaps
we're narcissists, from
Ganymede the Gorilla
to the flash of our celebs,
never missing the chance
to glance a mirror.

No matter how *cool* he is,
every single bro
looks ridiculous eating one.

John Wayne would've lost his
cred, sauntering in the
saloon between the bites.

An apple fared much better.
He could pitch it at the villain
before he finished, the hurl of
spit & seed. But we've saddled
it with the blame for
all our woes,
our fall from nudity.

Lest I study more
it's been debunked.
Exaggerated clickbait,
from someone at the peeler
bar, a would-be Betty Boop,
stripping off her garb
to dangle the sweetest
bod this side of the Rio Grande.

The Constitutional

We haven't walked the park
in twenty years. Marriage
will do that sometimes.

My knees, your hips.
Your shoulder, my neck.
I can no longer turn my
head at the sound of the
finch. Your hearing's
flown the coop—
oblivious to its existence.
It can't be what it was,

when both our bloods
were *surging* under sun.

Time may not regress
with our feeble tread,
but maybe we'll
awaken evocation—
ours as well as its.

Nestle your hand in mine—
the *other* one, my darling,

which lacks a
diamond band,
naked not ornate.

We'll stroll *afresh*
for the very first time,
a golden wheel above us,
faithful in its wander
day-by-day,
alighting everything it
must to learn of love.

Then and Now

None of us needed *another*
Beatles song, especially
as farewell.

We thought *I Me Mine*
was it—the January '70 ode
to going solo. John
had split by then, shearing
off his locks
after bedding-in.

The End from Abbey
Road? Turned out *not*
to be. A looping cul-de-
sac, in the tease of
getting back.

The Spector couldn't
simply let things be,
his bombastic orchestration
on another winding lane,
Ringo behind the kit
that April Fool's.

We prayed that
Paul was *jesting* on
the 10th,
flipping his *mop-top*
for a mullet—flipping the bird
& breaking free.

He sung in '25
to wrinkled throngs,
women in their walkers
tossing diapers.
Nothing ever changes
when it does. Chapman
and his crazed & happy
trigger, snuffing *all you*
need is —

The kids
are all awash
with *unalive* —

*she'll unalive
herself if
she can't transition*

*he was unalived
while jogging
by the cops,
running laps
around the boulevard
while Black*

and I think
I kinda get it,
that *suicide*
is so *passé*,

will alert the
algorithms,

and to *kill*
so indifferent
and abrupt,

a paltry *syllable*,
from the *Book of*
Exodus,

that it's a case
of *lexical innovation*,
as someone smart
had put it,

conveying
as with a glass
that's gone opaque,

one their parents
and their teachers
think is just another
mirror,

inclined
upon reflection,

until the jump-scare
you've been waiting for
appears,

the girl who is
rotting while she
stands,

head *tilted* to the
side as if she'd hung
in English gallows,
the one you say you saw,
while engaged
with your *mascara*,

and not the darkening
of your lashes but the *boy*
you tell the other girls about,

on TikTok and in texts,

whose *wand* was something
less than you'd expected,

that you'd laughed until
your eyes were running
black,

thinking you've never
felt so alive
since you were born.

The Philodendron

You dubbed it *Phil*
for short, verdant
by the window
fringed in snow.
Though you water
twice a day
it's yet to wane,
fading like Selene
or Artemis, once
our morning strobe
is set to soar.

You expunged
your cold abode
of all its red;
a valentine
foreshadowing
loss of blood, still pocks
your thrumming organ,
your unexpected
reason
to be —

our assuming
you spoke of *Philip*
across the hall—
muscled girth,
sculpted jaw,
his compelling
cleft-in-chin,

not supple *Philomena*
atop the stairs—
lover of the moon—

who way too soon
was smitten, not by Eros
but with Hades,
his myth that *darkness*
heals us quicker
than the *light*, if not
too much of one,
not enough of other.

Bliss

My window is
an extra eye, one that tells
my brain it isn't raining,
how gusty the gales
might be, that the city
has sent its crew
to furrow the street,
that a dog is doing
its business in the
hedge my neighbour
planted — to keep
the unwanted away.

My window never blinks
although it can —
with a placid
tug-on-blinds.

And should *grit*
get stuck on its
pupil, a *splash & swipe*
from a Jiffy Wipe
will surely put an
end to that.

But this is in truth a poem
about the things
we choose to discern.

I could have
mentioned the woman
on the corner
after dusk; the man
who's a stone's throw
away — clothed in leather-
black; vendors of the
commodities
we'd rather not distinguish —
blinds because our vision
is blissfully
veiled. The ignorance we are
gifted with the *yank*
of a nylon cord, as if a
parachute floating you
tenderly to the ground,

its blanketing of
your head & crumpled
frame, shrouding the sound
around you, telling you in its
murmur that you're safe.



Visit Andreas at his website:
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Andreas Gripp was born and raised in Treaty 6 Territory (London, Ontario) and in 2024 moved to Leamington with his wife, Carrie. He's the author of over 40 books of poetry, including *The Earth is Painted War*, *Yada Yada Kismet*, *Last of the Bons Vivants*, and *Delirium Lullaby: a collection of poems favoured and new*. His writing has been lauded for its lyrical and literary merit, accessibility, and for its blend of comic & poignant story-telling.



A nearly life-long Londoner, Andreas Gripp now lives in Leamington, Ontario, with his wife, Carrie. The author of forty books of poetry, his poems illuminate both the quotidian and the grand in an interchangeable manner. Poems which are rooted in *storytelling*: meaningful and accessible from the start.

Commencing from the close of *Last of the Bons Vivants*, *Trigger Happy Warnings* presents no shielding from the squall of social inundation. These poems engulf the gamut of personal and global experience. We are never alone except when we are. A communal paradox that's lyrical, narrative, and cadential. The pulse of our present days on absurdist display.

Your poems move effortlessly, from a quaint or innocuous observation to their unlikely denouement, succeeding in always turning a thing on its head! I love the sweeping twists you deftly wring out of your closing lines, at once so obvious in their necessity and altogether out of left field. Spontaneous and clever and always a refreshing surprise!

-Teresa Daniele, author of *The Arc of the Infinite Line*



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