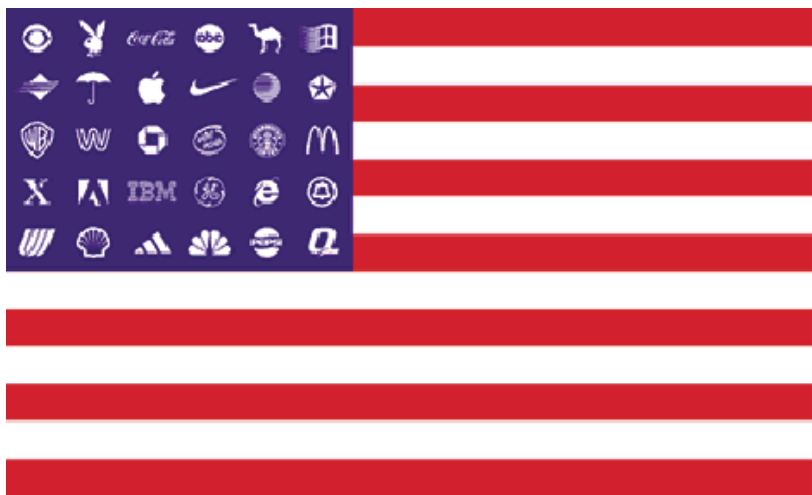




***Box of Dream Stuff, Because We
Could Not Stand the Grief***

(& one erasure)

Poems by Paul Nelson



Box of Dream Stuff, Because We Could Not Stand the Grief and one erasure.

Poems by Paul E. Nelson,
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Box of Dream Stuff began as part of a writing exercise conducted at the Richard Hugo House in Seattle. The exercise takes one of the collage methods used by Ted Berrigan, with a specific formula for structuring the poems. Sonnet length, they are also inspired by the American Sonnets of Wanda Coleman. The inspiration for the content comes from the title poem of Amalio Madueño's *Lost in the Chamiso*, from William Blake, José Kozer, Omar Perez, from the August Poetry Postcard Fest and other sources.

Because We Could Not Stand the Grief is dedicated to Eze Anamalechi, whose words provided the title. He was speaking of what would have happened in the event Barack Obama lost the 2008 U.S. Presidential election. The untitled erasure was created using the words of Chief Sealath. The author wishes to extend his gratitude to Eze, Ted, Wanda, Amalio, José, Omar, Amanda Earl, my sister Barb Nelson and the indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest.

Box of Dream Stuff

I

On the water in the pickup truck
he plays his American tricks.
High above the kayaks
time slows and it is too late to scream
when only yesterday the dream had me.
It is an itch emblematic.
This ain't the Mudd Club
& everyone's forgotten about the baby.
but it's a season of heavy gray and rain
and we can no longer dance around it
peeling off large sections of head skin.
So I get the urge to break glass
where a wave has propelled us.
He is going to kill someone.
Mama told me not to come

II

Barbarita!

Here at Hugo House thinking
of you & Scotland & how
the rainbow exploded
inside me w/ the essences
Charlie prescribed. Shooting
star indeed. Felt lighter
late last night after
the massage before Jesse
Minkert's story about living
hairpieces & the responsibility
of their care.

III

Beyond the agony of the garden
in a low-ceiling'd room,
close by a window
above the sitting room
at the corner of Broad and Marshal streets
maybe the sun rising above St. Paul
or maybe the sun setting
toward Kensington Gardens
under The Printing Office
under The Sculptor's Studio
is this where we will see god
or have other visions of divinity
on our way to becoming
obsolete constellations?

IV

How he learned to hurdle
best he could not with dreams
unveiling the shooting star
to the heart chakra and still
 earclip celphones
 avalanches, waterboarding
but not able to get traction.
An outlaw here as well, reinforced
say Grahhr. GRAHHR!
with every time he hears himself
on the ice, driving, in the dream
and other *petroleum fantasies*.
past the vast parade
finds a way past viagra
which had not made it
of reason but peeled skin
or a burn past the *numb confederacy*

V

Amanda –

OK, no weather,
but no beach either. Why
not grass? Sandburg liked
the work it did after
war.

I liked its cooperation
when the youthful storm
of hormones blew into
my midwest loins.

Yes, we
found the soft golf course
grass and the mosquitoes?
Well, let's just say they
cd smell blood.

VI

On the water in the pickup truck
Mama told me not to come
he plays his American tricks
he is going to kill someone.
High above the kayaks
where a wave has propelled us
time slows and it is too late to scream
so I get the urge to break glass
when only yesterday the dream had me
peeling off large sections of head skin.
It is an itch emblematic
and we can no longer dance around it.
This ain't the Mudd Club
but it's a season of heavy gray and rain
& everyone's forgotten about the baby.

VII

How he learned to hurdle
or burn past the *numb confederacy*
best he could not with dreams
of reason but peeled skin
unveiling the shooting star
which had not made it
to the heart chakra and still
finds a way past viagra
and earclip celphones
past the vast parade
of avalanches, waterboarding
and other *petroleum fantasies*.
but not able to get traction
on the ice, driving, in the dream.
An outlaw here as well, reinforced
with every time he hears himself
say Grahhr. GRAHHR!

VIII

Amanda,

Here above False Creek
(of course) Raven's wingbeats
keep time aboriginal,
we yearn for a Spring light
distraction as camouflaged
by skin, long to be a water
fall or until that at least
be its uncommon ROAR.

IX

Better an obsolete constellation
than to never have burned
lost in the *numb confederacy*
the candidates, out their blow holes,
call *freedom*. I lift my own gift
economy on this urge that rises
goddess up from the perineum
a nutrient manifesting as enthusiasm
but only in a way a crab would recognize,
sideways. Sidereal. The line in the sky
goes from Fa Tsang to William Blake
to Whitman, then Whitehead & Williams
you look Puerto Rican she said, but no
his Cuban mother loving the way he cursed
like an uncle lleno hasta el borde de ron.

Because we Couldn't Stand the Grief

Cool, he's Miles cool, he's Coltrane cool
he's Sidney Poitier cool, he's armani,
cool, he's raybans cool, he's black man
cool.

No need for gulags, for
snarling dog torture, for
other hung up in hoods
cuz humiliation's never
cool.

Thriving middle class
cool, green economy
cool, health meals
for poor children,
cool, money for mass transit
cool.

Nobody looks cool
on the aircraft carrier, no one
cool ordering the bombing raid
not cool commander in chief
lying.

Lying about the bombing
of innocents, lying
for Halliburton and Enron, lying
about the cigar
in the honey pot,
the blow in the nose,
My Pet Goat, plumbers
in the Watergate, troops
over the border again, lying
about the mass destruction
weapons never there.

Orange alert
and the tactic of fear,
totally uncool.

He's take you to the hoop
cool, he's sneakin' a smoke
on the jet cool, he's south
side of Chicago cool, he's
peace is patriotic, cool, he's

give the fundamentalists
fits cool, cuz they know
he loves Jesus cool, just not
as they do, with all that
uncool hate caught

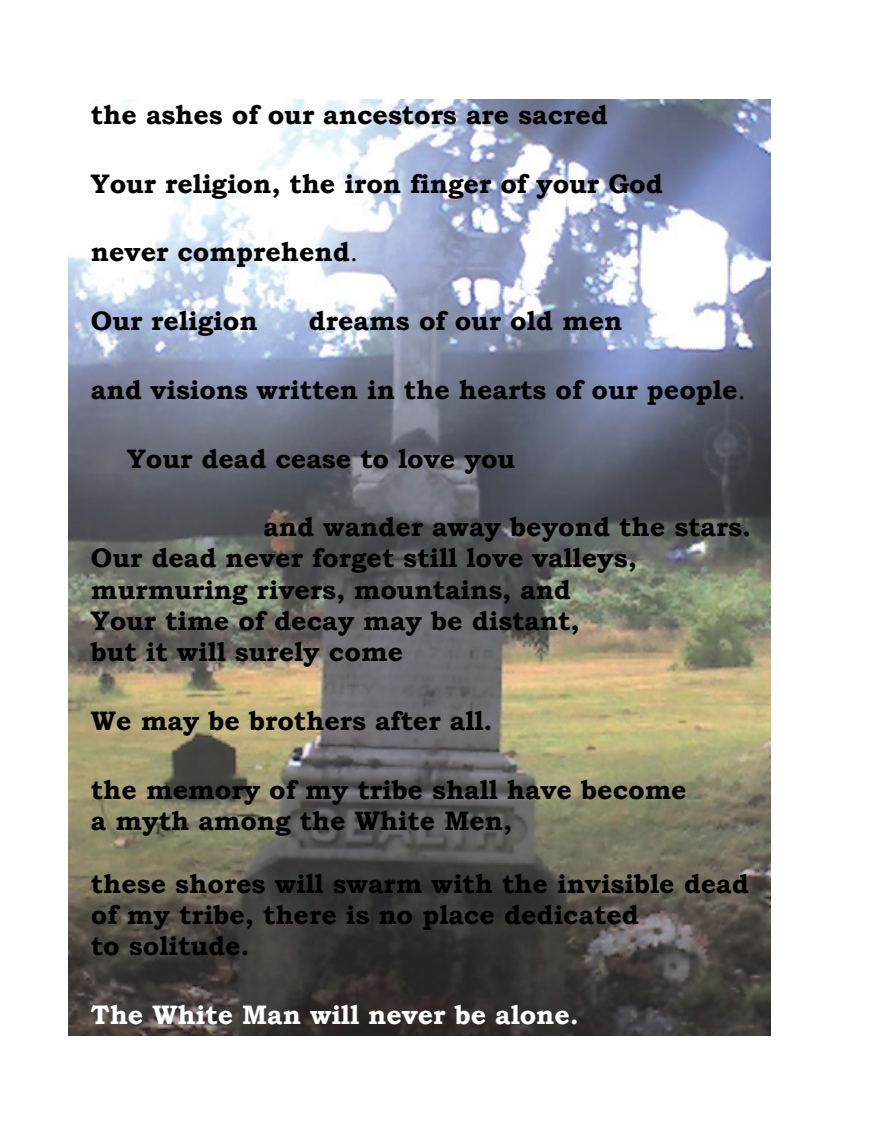
in the depths of they gut.
He's Hawai'i cool, he's
black man at Harvard
cool, he's

stare a dagger into
the eyes of a Cracker
cool. He's voodoo
cool, who do
the lynching NOW
motherfucker?

Ain't that the thought
caught somewhere near the back
of that tiny lizard brain
you got?

Not Obama.
He's cool.

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the ashes of our ancestors are sacred

**Your religion, the iron finger of your God
never comprehend.**

**Our religion dreams of our old men
and visions written in the hearts of our people.**

Your dead cease to love you

**and wander away beyond the stars.
Our dead never forget still love valleys,
murmuring rivers, mountains, and
Your time of decay may be distant,
but it will surely come**

We may be brothers after all.

**the memory of my tribe shall have become
a myth among the White Men,**

**these shores will swarm with the invisible dead
of my tribe, there is no place dedicated
to solitude.**

The White Man will never be alone.

Paul E. Nelson is co-founder of the Northwest Spokenword LAB, and Founder of Global Voices Radio www.GlobalVoicesRadio.org. He earned an M.A in Organic Poetry from Lesley University. www.OrganicPoetry.org. His poems/essays have been published in: Golden Handcuffs Review, Jacket Magazine, Fulcrum, OlsonNow Blog, The Argotist, Raven Chronicles, RootStock & elsewhere. He's interviewed Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Anne Waldman, Robin Blaser, Sam Hamill, Wanda Coleman, Eileen Myles, Jerome Rothenberg, George Bowering, & other poets. See www.splab.org. His serial poem re-enacting Auburn history, *A Time Before Slaughter* will be published in April, '09 (*Apprentice House*.)



