

**APOCALYPSEPHYXIA**

**or**

**LAST POEM WRITTEN BY SANITY  
AFTER EATING BANQUET POT PIES  
& WATCHING FOX 2 NEWS  
TOO MANY NIGHTS IN A ROW**

I'm starting to better understand  
the faulty wire-cross that inspired  
my brother to pull a hunting rifle  
(of all things) in a parking lot fight  
outside a downtown nightclub.

Same blood slang that blames Pastor Winans'  
carjacking more on his choice  
of 'hood & gas station than the 8 fists  
that relieved him of his luxury sedan.

On average I eat one and a half times a day,  
just enough to maintain this bird-chest  
equilibrium. Some days the T-Bird gets  
the lion's share of the last 10 dollars  
because I stomach the car's empty worse  
than my own. Some days I just miss, altogether,  
a lame-leg drag of a body that aches triple  
in winter like sharp metal searching  
for a warmer climate in flesh.

Have you named your shrapnel yet?

That shrill dig that torques on that  
100<sup>th</sup> week of unemployment or  
60<sup>th</sup> hour of minimum wage this week.  
I call mines *broke*.

My *broke* comes with flu-like symptoms  
& rocks the same one pair of khakis  
to every job interview & church function  
this side of of 25. Carlos' *broke* was  
gripping the safe end of a steak knife  
like a key a month ago, and I could tell  
by the way his tongue pushed against  
his closed mouth that he seriously  
contemplated unlocking a man's muscle  
with it in the name of repair.

This bully is a shapeshifter,  
is a thief of fire,  
is broken compass in a swallowing forest  
is a crowbar against the lockbox  
and will take everything you own.

Maybe this bottoming out  
is the Zombie Apocalypse & we've  
already ran out of bullets, maybe  
this kind of empty turns us on,  
& we're all a bit auto-erotic  
when it comes to our own asphyxiation,  
I mean, it would explain alot:

why there's never a coke mirror big enough  
for us to fit our extinction on; why  
we forecast The Rapture like an album release;  
why on the grey days my city looks like an empty  
pocket, starving for the heads of presidents; why  
the rifle my brother shouldered that night  
was my grandpa's, and why it was already  
loaded before he snuck it out that closet,  
unfired since deer season of '84,  
as if Papa was awaiting some bawled reckoning  
to drag itself blood-dirty to his doorstep  
any day now,  
& why I scare myself more & more  
whenever my hands grip something  
sharp.