

Variations on a Theme: Four Poems

written by Guest Contributor | September 16, 2016



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Día Dora Vida @ the Piano Warehouse

Ominous in the near dark, the band's gear
a simmering constellation of standby lights, tubes,
webbed cords spewing from an overloaded outlet.

The drummer peeled his shirt, the lead
guitar fading in as they began, rolling volume knobs
to full, bass and drums locking, ascending song.

The room shook, stamping feet in exultation,
crescendo teasing the air, an aroma of violence.
The melody spun apart of its rhythm, punctuating

shards of noise an instant before the dark took us.
But the drummer, undeterred, bashed his kit
with unrelenting velocity, urged by the crowd

to unleash upon it with such fury that the sound
would be beaten into a single pitch, a vibration
so intense that the molecules threading our bodies

together would be eviscerated in its godliness.
A minute later the power restored. With a nod,
and without missing a beat, the band picked up

where they left off and finished the song.
A split second of silence infinite in its appreciation
after the amps rang out.



[Jeffery C. Johnson Photography](#)

Inspector Owl @ the Metro

The stage lights catch her eye in such a way
that I begin to question the firmness of reality.
Her hand is out, touching the stage, fingers long
and feminine, held aloft for no reason
other than flight, to be suspended in air.

Chestnut locks drape her form like a curtain
waiting to be brushed aside, cradle of her neck
exposed to the shiver of a primal touch.
In this moment I know the laws of physics
for my heart have altered forever.

Staring into that bright speck gyrating on her
sclera, the full spectrum of our future unfolds
before me and tomorrow weeps for first the life
it had intended and later the life I was set to
inherit, exchanging all the melancholy
for the elation it's set to become.

The music is almost inaudible in the flood
of serotonin, drowned by the ohm
escaping from the hinge of my chin, floating
on bass tones back to her and absorbed
by her silhouette as I melt into the ambush
of bliss and reach out to claim my new life.



[Jenna Braunstein Photography](#)

HEAVY MUSIC

a love letter

Give me feedback
to kick it off, hot and piercing,
so every canine in a 7-mile radius drops,
feedback like an orgy of computers
melting their circuit boards in unison
while the old dialup connection blares
into the foghorn atop a lighthouse.

Bass up, a lumbering landslide
of low-frequency boulders

cascading odd intervals
off the interior walls of my skull.
Bass like a symphony
orchestra doing Brahms
with ballpeen hammers on blue mist,
like the congregation of idling stock cars
at Daytona when I was too young
not to be scared of the noise
revving articulate ambitions to nova.

Choke the ride on four, in with the skins,
toms that blaze like hooves on a Pamplona bull,
snare like a Kalashnikov,
kick like the tempest of axe to a pulp of fresh trunk,
cymbals like a wife's roar and immediate revenge
exacted on the crystal whizzing past
my stupefied face to brick wall.

I want guitar tone like slabs of tectonic plate,
like Chernobyl, like Fukushima, radiant
like Satan's molten-fucking-lava spewing cock
covering my face with his white-hot-hate-jizz
before the extinguishing blast of CO₂ breath
hardens his rage sperm to rock
and the pressure in my head builds to critical.

And vocals, vocals like gargling razor blades,
dry and crackling and hot, like the sound

that fell from my father's mouth
when he leaped the bleachers
to beat the piss from the ump
who blew the call at my little league game.

You can keep the banjos, the ukuleles,
the soft I miss yous, the flaccid coffeshop bleatings,
the dancefloor declarations of endless flowering love.
You can keep adagio. I bear only crescendo.
Turn it up. I need it to feel.



Robert Ashworth, [flickr](#)

Analogue

Walking home along the open windows of garden apartments
like slow rolling the dial on an analogue radio.
With each new window, a gradual crossfade into the new.
A captured frame of life in motion, the sounds and the smells.

From the hipster chick in bandana backing off peak volume
as the undulating whale song of Bowie's "Heroes" sirens out
to the sweet raisin aroma of pipe tobacco, the gentle creak

of a leather-bound spine stretching before a middle-aged man.

From the staccato rumble of "So What" blurring from novice lips, devoid of Miles' meaningful swing, but genuine, well intentioned, to the grandmother frying aromatics in her heirloom cast iron pan as its partner pot simmers over with the import of each dumpling.

My block, one segment of the AM band of life, universally appealing to the internal antenna, riding its gentle photon transmissions from a shallow burial in the radiant electric wave of civilian purpose to the foreign station of the next block where a new hand takes over.

Music can hold enormous power in memories and experiences, transporting us instantly to an age, location, or person. What sonic joys, mysteries, disbelief, and clarity have you experienced? Identify songs of influence in your life and explore them like variations on a theme, melding syntax and song structure, recalling the seriousness or levity that accompanies. Whether it's an account of when a specific song first entered your life, the process of learning to play a song, teaching someone a song, experiencing the same song in different places as it weaves through your life, unbelievable radio timing, sharing songs with those in need, tracking the passing down of songs, creative song analysis, music as politics, etc, I am interested in those ineffable moments and welcoming submissions of your own variations on a theme, as drawn from your life's soundtrack. Please email submissions to meganentropy@gmail.com and keep an eye out for others' [Variations](#).

("song" is a broad phrase: could be a pop song, a traditional tune, a symphony, commercial jingles, a hummed lullaby, 2nd grade recorder class horror stories, etc)



Dan Hoefler is a poet from Chicago, IL. He recently completed his MFA in Writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts and is presently working on a multimedia piece that combines an epyllion (that is, a long-form narrative poem resembling an epic but shorter) with original music, found sounds, and mixed visual media. This is his first publication.