

# I'm Your Huckleberry

*poems*

Erika Jo Brown

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I'm Your Huckleberry  
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The author gratefully acknowledges the editors of the following publications where these poems first appeared, sometimes in different forms:

*Anomalous Press*

Captain Snugz Rides Again Again  
Dirty Birdies  
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*Back Room Live*

Faeries

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Alone in the Shower I Practice Peeing Long Distances  
Spur the Threshold

*Forklift, Ohio*

Let Us Assume We Are Each Other's Best Blushing Brides  
Sometimes Stars Shoot from My Breast  
Light Verse Demands Radiant Turns

*H\_NGM\_N*

Depressive Narcissism, or The Case of the Lyrical I,  
or Capers Are for Bagels, or Witness

*Humble Humdrum Cotton Frock*

Decidedly Lyrical

*ILK*

Making Life Better As We Live It

*Jellyfish*

Between the States  
French New Wave Cinema

*Petri Press*

Bernadette  
Violet is a ladyplant whose need for rain and sun  
reigns violently.

*Spork*

Hail, No  
Love is the Pits

*Strange Cage*

Field Guide to Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers

*Transom*

French New Wave Cinema

*Wave Press tumblr*

Wind Advisory

A limited edition broadside of "French New Wave Cinema" was printed by the University of Iowa Center for the Book in celebration of the 2012 Mission Creek Festival.

## CAPTAIN SNUGZ RIDES AGAIN AGAIN

Break a brandy snifter. Break any  
small thing. A nugget of bituminous  
coal. Not a heart. Not a lot. Afterwards,  
improve yourself. Refrain from hitting  
snooze. Fix a small thing. A bug or  
capillary. Eat a schnitzel with capers.  
Stop taking orders. Adopt a schnauzer.  
Adopt a funny German accent when  
commanding it to stay. Captain Snugz,  
how is your mouth always so hot?  
I love you more every day, not less  
and this concerns me. You mug. Plus,  
we live on a floodplain. It may all seem  
non-germaine but G-d, sometimes  
it's cloudy, sometimes luminous.

## DIRTY BIRDIES

For my rabbit heart, nervous in the birches, I enrolled in a class for those with pain or injury, but it wasn't what I expected. A whiffle of light still flickers by the wharf. Once, I was adopted by a family of line dancers. When you fall in love, then you are just down like debris, a meteorite. Consider welding—to unite by heat or compression, after softening. Consider the silliness of yon weft without a warp. What a weave we make.

Wether, you are a castrated ram. Whelp, you are a young pup. Whether introduces an alternative clause followed by another alternative or not, or not. Cave paintings existed during the first ice age. Your problems are not new, although yes, it is cold in here.

Oh, counterfeit wampum! I saw the sign and it said, **VARICOSE VEINS DEMAND EXCELLENCE.** What are your demands? Consider how she whimpers when you unpeel the sheet music. Whoop, there it is. The foam-crustured waves are also known as white horses. Don't mind the noise, it's just birds loosing into the night.

## SOMETIMES STARS SHOOT FROM MY BREAST

I am a hen scattering feed  
around my house for you  
who's seen me aflutter  
over rhubarbs, ridiculous cocks.  
You're an alcoholic and  
I'm a cockatiel, your lack plus  
my surfeit makes an integer.  
It's math, it's a small chicken.  
Let us chuck this starling  
darling, never be lonely.  
I look towards the horizon  
while you, too laden with grain  
to pray, you must find another orison.  
But rook, song-belcher, this season.

# GNOMON

Sometime in the winter of our lives,  
I was all about tillage. An operation,  
a practice, an art of little trenches.  
Tell me about it. The season provided  
its best sledge. I had not one pretty  
tile to tickle me, with the exception  
of a Turkish repro, from Israel actually,  
a gift from my absent auntie. These lacks  
were tugging, as tilapia does a line alive.  
My ticker was rendered pointless, more  
or less. There was a sadness no leopard  
could dispossess. But for the repetitive  
ticks of a tractor I heard this summer.

This is my Monday sad day triage  
poem. My sad cabbage in Monday  
pottage poem. Sounds from an acreage,  
like a made-up plot device. Like a  
sparkly beverage. From a crow's eye,  
there is no progress. Love's test  
is actually a common everlasting native  
to eastern North America. Things like  
this. The spillage and the mileage. The  
carriage through these blah blah blues.

# ALONE IN THE SHOWER I PRACTICE PEEING LONG DISTANCES

A modicum of tenderness is necessary  
but ill-appropriate here. Our origins  
are errant. The same old ghost  
stories do not repopulate the present.  
Sand dulls everything.

I lack the leisure to be rude  
when conditions are crude. I've rituals  
too, that unravel if you learn them.

I've touched a million things.  
Fingerpads are a site of memory,  
of feathery jeopardy, of treachery.  
People tell me about mine all the time  
in succor. I know, I say, look, there's  
a future and it's a vast expanse of desert  
with lightning. And I can't always find  
the oasis. And you can't always find the oasis.

Put up your fingerpad. Tell me which way  
the wind is blowing. I'll start a repository  
of touch memory, bound in clean paper.

I don't know why my body malfunctions  
in comfort, but in the wilderness  
I am a fucking ibex, sinewy and hard-  
scrabbling, avoiding scorpions, trying  
new roots. You can't choose delight, you  
must walk outside and wait for it to find you.

## FRENCH NEW WAVE CINEMA

Because I don't care for Godard,  
I am the loneliest poet. Go,  
dart, to the heart of my beloved.

Tell him: we mythologize each  
other when we're apart. Tell  
him: I'm a bit of a tweaker. No,

I don't actually *sleep* with  
deers out here. Check yo  
navigational chart. In fact,

a perfectly respectable club jam  
came on the radio today. Tell him:  
I'm sorry for accidentally kicking him

in the gonads. It's too bad, too,  
I had imagined us on a gondola  
in a scenic place funded carte blanche

with affection. Tell him: I don't do  
goulash without meat. Tell him: of my love  
for gorgonzola cheese: garbanzos.

Tell him: of my objectionable  
tartness. Don't forget that part.  
My goal is to go steady.

Although I'm rather cerebral,  
I don't know shit about  
beer. The avant-garde won't

protect me here. If I need you,  
I know you'll be available to hold  
my mitten on a starry evening. Oh,

tell my love nothing. I'll do it myself.

# FAERIES

We have named the names but still  
our capacity for desire and  
sorrow is like a grand hotel.

This day was like cigarette ash  
on the porch of a wild friend  
whom in dreams you seize  
and forcefeed sparkle cake.

On the porch also, faint memories  
of undined wishes  
like the flaccid nub of a party hat.

We see the good students  
walking to the park in the sheer  
cacophony of spring being nearly sprung.  
Touch it.  
The dancers wait for no thumb.

## VIOLET IS A LADYPLANT WHOSE NEED FOR RAIN AND SUN REIGNS VIOLENTLY.

See, Violet, the ladyplant prefers  
simplicity, the vinaigrette, the matching  
of components indivisible and weak,  
like starlings and sky, the villainous  
sky towards which she reaches.  
Vinyasana helps. She vibrates  
when her little islet feels overly  
pliant. She fancies herself a Vidalia  
onion aguing a vindaloo stew or  
a nice vichyssoise on her few  
good days. Those inviolate  
good days, when she doesn't feel  
vicarious, an invalid, invalid,  
a victim. When a mundane item,  
a hydrant, for instance, resists  
becoming something violent,  
a trident with evil intent, for  
instance. Mightn't she enjoy pollen  
riven by the gem cutter above?  
Things as themselves: angular,  
faceted, sugar. Sweet Guadeloupe.  
Vile vines creep 'round her planty mind.

## PILOT PROTOCOL

In turbulence, there is no Kareem Abdul Jabbar. Sometimes your eyes are glassy, sometimes cloudy. When you see your dead pet on the ped mall, you must act similarly to when you've had a bad day in the sky. Refrain from acid, though the wondrous fountains of, I don't know, chocolate, or better still, salty caramel ice cream goo, might seem ideal, they're apt to make you keel. Trust me, I've been there. I've been an ornament to success, despair, and feathery ennui. Just keep the plane up.

## HALF-NELSON

Somewhere, an actual balloon floats into the horizon  
of a Midwestern town. I know that because I see it.  
Everyone is sad. I know that because I talk to people.  
Smart people are good at schematizing sorrow  
in ravishing models. Somewhere, the whale-like  
thrumming of French hip-hop thrums. Someone  
has left a tissue in their pocket that sneezes  
all over the new load of wash. General fruit  
is not appealing, but three young apricots before  
you, well. Please accept this half-ditty, half-prayer.  
For once, it's not pity I'm after, just beauty.  
There is no transaction like this. Forgive  
my being forward at the end—rain hitting  
a pane, canary-yellow, chai. Try it with me now.

## ABOUT THE POET

ERIKA JO BROWN is from New York. Her chapbook, *What a Lark!*, was published by Further Adventures Press in 2011. She was educated at Cornell University and the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she was a Capote Fellow in Poetry. Most recently, Brown taught at Savannah State University and co-curated the Seersucker Shots reading series. Brown is currently a PhD candidate in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Houston.

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