

Spoopy Tejas

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(1.)

Howdy—everyone in Texas,
including the rattlesnakes—
Today I woke up in New Mexico
and drove through Texas all morning
to get to New Mexico
I climbed the equivalent
of a 70-story building
up and down into a cave
or maybe cavern
I don't know the difference.
The entrance smelled of shit
like a petting zoo or pet store
swallows rose up in a whirlwind
swirling in spirals into the sky
but the cavern is so large
it has its own sky
it breathes the earth
it is the Earth breathing
Slippery conditions exist

Confluence

(3.)

Jim White

discovered Carlsbad Caverns
when he noticed smoke rising
from the horizon of his farm
so he rushed over to check it out
but it was actually a colony of bats
so he came back with a ladder,
some rope, candles, and oil

It was part of his journey

to find and explore the cave
then they started mining shit
literal shit, like bat guano
hundreds of thousands of pounds
came out of those bats
and eventually the cave
to fertilize dry soil

(4.)

Swallows build nests
held together by saliva
New Mexican nursery =
correct combinations of
food + water + shelter +
plenty of space & safety
Bats gestate for 90 days
cleaning the newborn
sticking it to the ceiling

waiting 8 to 10 years to die

all they have to do is mate

maybe even a few times

then they're just living life

being bats

is that the purpose of life?

for Christians and bats?

Be fruitful and multiply

—eat fruit and die.

(5.)

Bats flow upward

silent and sparse

through faint rain

is this a murmuration?

bats are not birds

they give live births,

milk through armpits

or maybe wing-pits

in this month of Halloween

bats migrate south

for margaritas and beaches

or maybe just stable sources of food

the whirlpool of wings

vigorously rises

into evening showers

for moths mating at 10,000ft

for insects in Carlsbad

Confluence

for a warm Mexican winter
these ain't no city bats
these bats need their space
these bats
these flippin' bats

(8.)

today I drove through Uvalde, Texas
there were still signs and memorials
still pain and mourning and suffering
still news crews using the school as a backdrop
still no solution, remedy, or *good-faith political action*

when I moved to Colorado in August 2022

I thought about all the mass shootings

as I drove south on I-25

Aurora (12)

Columbine (15)

Boulder (10)

[and now—Colorado Springs (5)]

~

Indiana sure loves guns

but I guess most everyone is angry

and xenophobic

in the same general direction

or they leave

like me
the Midwest is a marsh beavers won't inhabit
Poets
or, rather, all artists
are the keystone species of society
sensitive to disruptions in the harmonious order
to changes or shifts in tone
to rising hostile tides
to growing—stifling conflicts
it is a risk
to choose between slow suffocation
or the dangerous volatility of somewhere better

(9.)

so I have cigarettes for breakfast
and take Sisyphean camping trips
and take inconsistent psychedelic trips
and hike until my feet bleed
and hike until my hands and knees

also bleed

I can't stand the frustrations
of both: my own problems
and everything on the nightly news
and everything on the local news
and everything with my family
and everything in my past
and overcoming all those everthings
every day

but I endure:

- lighting storms in tents and flash floods in riverbeds
- plump rattlesnakes and rutting bison
- cancer AND chemotherapy
- addiction, alcohol poisoning, and alchemical inclinations

(10.)

It's flippin' bats

emerging in colonial swarm
billowing cigarette smoke of squeaks
irregular natural chaos
in trickling puffs
like clouds roll over
Guadalupe Peak
or condensation and sweat
down my bare chest
serendipitously mixing in
one-thousand-one directions
bats head south at 90 miles per hour
while I'm stuck at eighty-three
to keep the pigs from squealing
or trying to steal my weed
Texas has road signs alerting:
Road May Be Slippery When Wet
as if Texans had never experienced rain
Slippery conditions exist

(11.)

Dead buzzards

Dead possums

Dead trailers

Dead dogs

Dead butterflies in my grill

Dead tired tires—blown out

Dead trucks

Dead houses

Dead rattlesnakes flattened on the roadway

Dead pueblos that were killed to be rebuilt as churches that were also killed—repurposed as houses then finally surrendered to the federal government

All 20 miles from Eden, Texas

Surrounded by windmills and guilty stomach aches about all the classics I haven't read

Don Quixote Moby Dick The Brothers Karamazov Madame Bovary Anna Karenina

Texas flattens out somewhere north of Eden

Somewhere under cloud-free skies

I swear officer, it's medicinal

Sir, that is crystallized LSD

How do you know?

Whenever I need to fly

Across Texas over the moon to the tops of mountains up to beehives for honey

To wherever the hell tea leaves grow

Confluence

I've been driving for 6 hours
And I'm still in fucking Texas

Okay, only four
But it will be six before I'm done
Fuck-king hell
is
New Deal, Texas and
Hale Center, Texas—
REPENT and believe in JESUS CHRIST
It's so flat I might start praying too
Happy, Texas—
Suffering exists

Somewhere (*hopefully*) near the Oklahoma border,
someone rides their horse to the liquor store,
in Stratford, TX