Mirrored Experience: A Poetic Exploration

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

T.J. Tekulve

Thesis Advisor

Prof. Peter Davis

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Abstract

Poetry has been around for a while now, so naturally it can be difficult to find something new to say. Stereotypes have formed: the Shakespearean sonnet, the flowery love letter voice, fantastical images and ideas—while these are indeed their own forms, they are not the be all end all of poetry. At its base, poetry is writing about the world in ways that differ from the typical journal page. However, there is another stereotype tied to the writing of poetry: sitting at a desk, separated from the world. My intention here was to write poetry that breaks the “classical” standards or at least bends them in directions perhaps not deemed as “normal.” In addition, I have decided to pair up differing experiences to provide a needed sense of contrast found within typical life. While I am not and will never be universal, I have tried to make my poetry as familiar yet strange, whimsical yet stern, and approachable yet complex in my take on living experience.

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I would also like to thank my parents Buddy and Regina Tekulve for supporting me in all my creative endeavors, whether through lengthy phone conversations or “motivational packages.”

Finally, I would like to thank every professor I’ve had in my four years at Ball State University for helping me grow as a writer, student, and overall citizen.
Process Analysis Statement

When it comes to describing how this poetry was made, I feel like there's not quite as much to say. I have my laptop, my mind, and the experiences I intend to write about. It's about as simple as I could get in something creative. Research was entirely direct—basically everything that is written is a result of my own primary experiences. Although, in today's culture, it's difficult (if not rather impossible) to not have some semblance of society rubbing off onto my work. It's inescapable. I make references where I feel they make sense, where I think some kind of joke would work well, where I simply thought of something that just fit. Calling poetry objective, in my opinion, is a near total fabrication, and I believe my work showcases that. It's a subjective process that involves the writer and what they want to write about.

However, it feels dismissive to just say that and call it done. I will admit that my original intentions were clouded and pushed back by life itself: work, financial stresses, and other such dramatic episodes drained my drive and will to even perform some remedial tasks. But I have persevered in the end, and I wrote to the best of my ability. In my original statement, I had said something to the degree of writing for "universal" themes, but as a white male graduating college student I feel like my view of the world is perhaps a little limited. That isn't to say that it hasn't been broadened by my experiences in the Honors College and English Department here at BSU, but—barring the experiential learning semester I had the spring of 2016—my perspective is simply limited due to my relatively safe environment. As for the poetry itself, however, I believe it is up to the standards I have set for myself, as potentially strange as they may be.
And to be quite honest, that's the majority of what I can say about my poetry sampling here. I did my best to hold to my original plan and write about experiences as I participated in them, but time and mental constraints held that original vision back a bit. I enjoyed writing them, as I always do to varying lengths—it's the creation itself that I enjoy. If I make confusing references or jokes that don't make sense to someone, that's okay. If my poetry isn't what someone expects out of poetry, even better. It's all about the fun of writing: rambling, metaphors, similes, imagery—it all adds up to an experience that I thoroughly enjoy. And I hope I can convey that to others simply by showing them and letting them read.
“I'll have an order of disorder”

a chesty existence full of nothing but
late 1980 Reagans pounding at my Gorbachevs—
my breastbone and all the flesh around there

something something stereotypical
Indiana race cars 500 racing bullshit my
head can't escape can't win this race

no matter how many laps whoever's in
first place driving the Lightspeedomatic already
finished the whole damn race before I began

but it was important, pivotal, essential
that I place in this race
monthsyearsdecades of tutorialized living

haircuts are too expensive—desperate, grasping
hands will do the same job at a fraction
of the economic cost
“getawaycation”

following the trek of tires/asphalt and
following the mirrorstaring pastime
and following the head-induced ceiling-dwellers

it's done
for a week

my sequoia collapsing into an appropriate bed
of paper leaves and formulated dirt and
sticks and rivers
and the stray fellow tree

the roots aren't pulled up yet—still work to
be worked on, forms to fill, races
to sign up for

but the obese foreigner has yet to pipe up
and thus the rings can keep growing
undoubtedly for dissection at a later date

not to say she won't bellow out a terrible tune
sooner or later, but

for now
for a week

just painted grass
metal wind
and stained-glass
blue sky
"Procrastor (slow-release capsule)"

Take one orally daily, when you remember. At least by 11:59pm of the day you’re supposed to take it. May take 1-72 hours to take effect due to new capsulate nanobot technologies.

Treats: Worrying in the short-term, important projects, boredom, and sense of progress.

Do not take with other similar drugs such as Gameclyn, Browsitonin, or Reddilin as it may enhance the effects to undesired levels. Do not take with alcohol. Take only with uncarbonated water or flat, month-old, caffeine-free soft drinks. See our ad in Game Informer for more information.

Side effects may include: Worrying in the long-term, putting things off to the last second, stress, hair loss, fatigue, anxiety, depression, overeating disorder, misdiagnosis of other illnesses, failure to meet societal standards, and illusion of sense of progress.

If you experience any of these side effects or others, contact your doctor eventually.
"Gradmecil (tablet)"

Take one orally during the month of May, July, or December, depending on preference. Effects should start sooner than you had originally planned for. It will feel as though you took the pill a while ago and it took at least four years to take effect.

Treats: Potential for career instability, anxiety, depression, sense of place, side effects of Procrastor, parental disapproval.

Recommended to take alongside similar medications such as Internital, Resumecton, and Experilin to enhance expected results. See our ad in Time for more information.

Side effects may include: Uncertainty, nervousness, anxiety, depression, thoughts of wasted opportunity, and parental disapproval.

If you experience any of these side effects or others, contact your doctor to invite them to your party.

(Polished wood frame with glass cover and wall-hanging fixtures included.)
“ranchnut butterdip”

Green slivers of fiber stacked on a platter surrounded by hungry-hungry hippo-pot-am-usses but—apparently—a single portion of the peanutbutterless stringstick can cause cancer, or at least kill you.

So a pool of nonrubber redballs (that are more ovular than most balls) perhaps could solve the age-old question of eating a stack of printer paper or maybe soaking it in sugarwater for a minute beforehand—but that’s silly.

So, maybe, a doctor-disapproved miniplanet, possibly reddish or greenish, mind you, could do the job—but no, there’s worms cosplaying Dune in that there crisp flesh.

So what’s a hippo to do?

Embrace the wiggleness and just get a sack of sugarcrusted, artificiality-approved, manufactured cornstarch.
“barely mooink anymore”

ding-dong, hi there, wanna buy some greased cow between two fakebread disks and yellow soy protein, potentially gluten free or gluten-laden depending on your prefs?

no?

how about some crusty old bread crumbled into a heap of powdered bags dusted like salt on the sidewalk just before snow onto potentially abused oink-oinks converted into protein patties for your consumption?

still no?

how about we bastardize a culture’s cuisine and call it “Americanized” and sell it for half as much as the mum-n-dad shop across the pond?

really? still don’t want that?

how about some fast food?

jeez man no need to rip my arms off (they might become a burger)
"Outside Atrium – Winter"

as one might say,
“it’s fucking cold”

but there’s not really anyone here—
save for the spare student giving me
a strange stare as I stutter—
nor any plant that isn’t in a state
of physical preservation or possibly
degradation

bodywarming the coldmetal chair
brisk wind whispering in my ear,
“why are you out here you idiot”

because I thought it would be fun
to sit outside in the middle of winter
and finally have somewhere to sit
[near] the Atrium
“Outside Atrium – Spring”

tricklerocks and puddles of non-tears and
actual trees flaring up the nostrils of
unfortunates passing by—contrasted
by the foreigners in their grainy pots

has it ever occurred how awkward
it really must be for these fake ferns
—assuming sentience—to preside in that
purposefully noisome space

but it’s still relatively chill, out away
from the windowpanes and metal frames

the season succeeding winter is here, yet
barely anyone wants to gobble grease
outside

inside
the taco salads reign
supreme, paternal pizza,
or religious chicken

away from the birds and
the bees and the

various other metaphoric animals
"would get a Crave Case but that's a really bad idea for my bowels probably"

if ever there were a black hole found
within a human, I am that human

thoughts meander and piddle and flutter
about but always narrow down like a dart
thrown by Robin in The Hood to the bullseye of
I'M FUCKING HUNGRY

[something about physics and research and
something intelligent about the state of body
while it's in a state of hunger and causes a state
of distress in the brain but I couldn't be
arsed to do research because it's not my major]

now I'm not like some stereotypical commercial
for saving the kids, the one with that creepy white-
bearded guy always displaying a sad foreign child
"omg look how hungry this fucker is give him
a cheeseburger or something!!1!! wot? no I won't
pay him in food for being exploited on national
television that's juuuuuust sillyyyyyyyyyyyy"

NEW SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH THIS JUST IN
NEWSFLASH LIVE STREAMING NOW FAILS COMPILATION
YOU'LL NEVERBELIEVE WHATHAPPENSNEXT
BUZZFEED YELLOW BUZZFEED BLUE BUZZFEED RAINBOW
RED LOBSTER LOBSTERFEST CRAB LEMON JUICE
FLAVORED DRINK THAT DOESN'T HAVE ANY
ACTUAL JUICE IN IT:

hunger is only three letters
away from anger¹

¹. See: hangry
"ugh"

fingers feel that much goggier
like drizzled in molasses levels, I’m sayin here
after shoving a myhead’s worth of
foodmatterdownthere
whatsaspacebaragain
ohits right there

if I saw a billboard for anything bodily consumable I’d just
not want to look at the billboard anymore

Red Lobster only makes me think of aquariums

new story this just in:
writing about levels of hunger
is best done while somewhere in the
half of “more hangry than feeling like
an obese beached whale”
“what can yellow do for you?”

oh baby lord metaphorical jesus
the dam is gonna leak and I don’t have
me a finger to help

instead of solving the solution I shall
make strange concoctions of corruptions
that stream into my h—that was a bad
choice of words just now because stream

is another word for something that happens
when you get to relieve the thing that builds
up over the course of a day, although it does
build up much faster if you drink a lot of water

and guess what I drilk a lot of water and yes
I’m ignoring any typos that word doesn’t fix becu
ause that’s the goal of this pseudo poem thing
right here wow we’re getting pretty meta right
now but
I believe, if I were getting workshopped right now
that many people would say “your imagery is lacking” and
I’d just be like “well oka y dudes but if you really want some of the imagery that im
thinking right now I think youd regret your decisions almost instantaneous ly wow okay
I hitnk
tis’
about time
to answer the call
hello yes this is toilet
“hopefully more than brown can”

thankfully toilet answered the call and
I can return to dutifully correcting errors in

REAL TIME

although the unfortunate part of written work is that it’s never really live unless you stream it

simplicity of bodily functions reveals itself when I just noticed how “stream” didn’t get my groin in a fuss like an incorrect bicycle seat [note I have never partaken in the process of bicycle learnings but have heard the tales of crotch-related mishappenings on bikes]

is it all unicorns wearing labcoats to know relieving oneself of a natural buildup or deterioration actually causes relief?

a strange world this would be if in order to for us to pee, we’d always feel pain—
“with a chance”

digits delving into the darkbrown forest—
someone left the greaseplants on overnight

fairly sure skin surfaces aren’t supposed
to sheen like a McDouble bun either
(or smell faintly like one, at that)

the upper upside-down V residents
also claim to be experiencing their own
residual case of scented yet invisible
smog in their crimed streets

Light: flicked on
Fan: knob turned to “high” setting
Clothing: [Censored]

*Hi this is Fake Al Roker
*and there’s a Rain Dance
*in your area of the forest*
"ain't Noah much goin on here"

luckily the rainbow's promise seems not to have been made with crossed fingers and the cornchip risk factor is down the seafloor

the Tapestry of Dryness used for its intended purpose clothing returns to its proper state of lacking of need of black bars if I were on television

I've yet to put a hamburger bun in the shower but if it loses its sheen and general scent I'll make sure to inform the masses of my scent-ific breakthrough

and promptly proceed to purchase more of those scentstain diabetical sandwiches until another Dance is ultimately required
"stereotypical cowboy time"

disregarding solar cycles and the stray third-shift nocturnals in their caves—it's about the exact midpoint of waking hours

calories converted, papers (un)perfected, and anticipation of watching the gas hand go from F to E

it's already halfway there, halfway there halfway, there halfway there halfway, there, halfway there living on a modest part-time budget

while still managing to shovel mounds of angust beef and health-ridden translucent vegetable circles

idle thought:
what did cowboys do if it were cloudy that day?
“stereotypical college student time”

tonight is already tomorrow
and the eyelids’ vacation locations are
planed for the week

deads are done, shade is
all there is beyond the window glass
spiderman villain just got into
the mattress business and sells
for cheap

not sure why he won’t at least
charge retail but I guess he
prefers wholesale for
his sleep

which should preferably occur
within the hour, but the
day is quite pubescent
somewhere deep
through the core and

...something about

numbering sheep
"ownership of a cylindrical object"

chromatic address saved to the point that all you need is the "y" and "enter" keys on your little entertainment machine there (quite an expensive thing deemed "required")

but there it is at your whim, o emperor, you watch other actual humans or lack thereof just doing "enter"taining activities for your drool-pooling mouth

oh, no, O Master of the Pixels, you need not lift more than a finger—if that is acceptable in itself—to just "click" away at your ease

—but fuck that paper due tomorrow right?

you've gotta watch you some 1000 degree knives and explosions in slow motion and people yelling immaturities at each other because that's the intent of YourEmpire
"if Pong never happened 13-year-olds wouldn't have Call of Duty"

disc or digital, keys or buttons—
either way eyes are gorilla'd to the glass

pixels no longer passively participating in
some play, the fifth and sixth walls
are being built just to be taken back
down again

chestorgan pumping life into
the technically inanimate

—but fuck that paper due tomorrow right?

you've got cars to drive, heroes to kill, villains
to proclaim, numbers to increase, lives to
live anywhere but here in this
bossless dungeon
"father and"

Radiation sure
feels pretty nice for being
the cause of some deaths.

Just to imagine—
globs of energy just up
and caused all of this.

But it can take it
away just as easily
as it first happened.

Distance is a key
factor in survival—just
don’t stare too long, now.

Sunglasses are cool,
but not if you needed them
because you’re stupid.

Soap probably won’t
cause blindness—unfortunate.
Can’t blame them today.

Just enjoy the rays.
something something basking in
the stereotypes
"precipitation fellow"

The sky decided to cry today.  
Surprisingly the town found it okay.  
A river overflowed,  
some cars just got towed,  
But the trees continued to sway.

Green leaves nowhere near Christmastime,  
flatter than the stout cone-bearing kind,  
catch all of the rain  
along their slight veins,  
and despite the intrusion, don't mind.

It's probably been this way for a while,  
water following green mile by mile.  
For if it were too much,  
balance would lose its touch,  
and the Earth would be a bit of a pile  
of shit