

A Trip to the Playground:
Poetry Collection by Peter Volpone

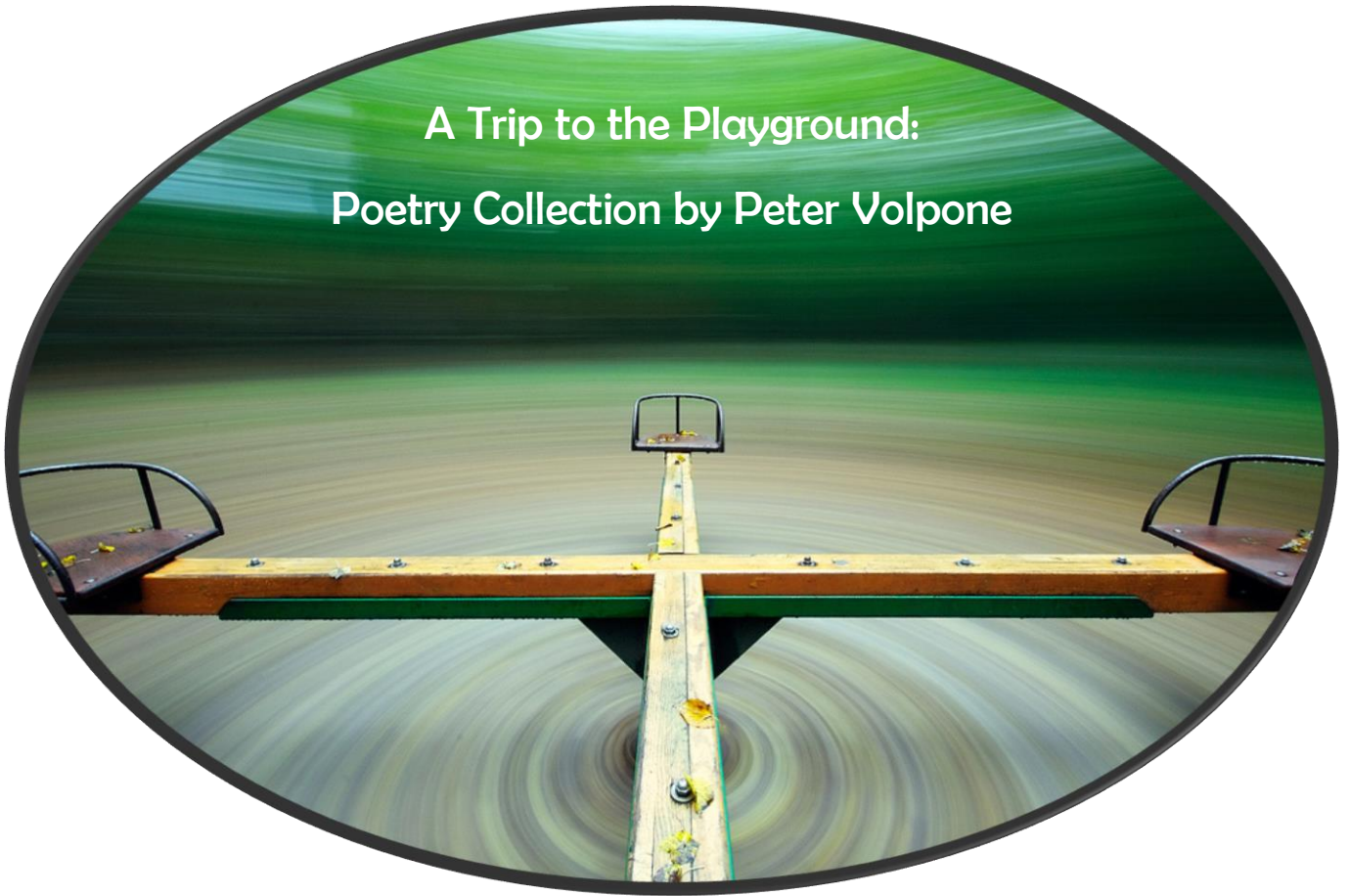


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This collection of poetry was written while studying under Professor Lucinda Roy at Virginia Tech. Thank you for fostering an engaging work environment and giving me precious feedback. Thank you to all of my peers who helped workshop these poems.

Cover image: Long Exposure of a Merry-Go-Round

<http://dvas.35photo.ru/photos/20130922/584648.jpg>

Collocation Meditation

Memories can crash or flow.

I swim like melody through the leaves,

whirl, twirl, reel, and bow.

Float from that black bough to the planet's floor.

I've fallen for Fall.

Dance, quiver, crawl.

Ants stampede, light speed to eat discarded candy treats.

Their little feet, my brittle heart beat-

- - - -

pounding rhythm at my core.

Surging impulse from

head to shoulders, knees, and toes.

Peacock Mitosis,

fine art psychosis,

arrogant musician,

ludonarrative dissonance,

existential portrait:

the tourist stabs a frantic ant with his walking stick.

Remember to breathe.

Head to knees,

holy moly, silly me,

roly poly through the leaves.

Splash of yellow, red, and it's too easy to rhyme green,

but, autumn enthralls.

Emerge from my ball.

Inhale.

Fill my lungs.

It's caterpillar season!

Those bugs' bus bodies lug legs like
drunk bodies on busses home from parties
where strangers make friends with nobody.

Nobody, the other, everybody else.

Pick and choose to name a few
friends for life, quite the party.

Dizzy with friends passed by cars overhead,
tents on thick mud-
knife to glow stick, ooze fluorescent blood.

Whirl and twirl, this is real.

Fixate on stars
in our hand-carved universal mirage.

At halcyon, I reach beyond
to infinity, it's just paint on nylon.

Hands on stars, ears on cars, eyes on leaves, mind on bugs,
eyes shut, worlds undone,

inhale,

fill

my

lungs.

Walking on Fossils

Feet sear on concrete

Man amongst mollusks fallen

Dewdrop grass relief

Cosmic Conversations of Phobos and Deimos

She spins by me once more, “Check this out, I’m spinning,” spinning one of two giants circling each other on the face of Mars. We rocked flesh ancients have done this for some time, tired legs propel us through time.

“Forever you’re spinning Deim. Don’t you see, anything I look at I’ll enjoy, I’ll love it to death, guaranteed!”

Without pause,

she ponders, “Are you scared?”

“No, friend, I’m done with it, that wretched spark of the moment.

Riddance to time and its silly construction. With time comes end,

one that I’d love to experience, something truly fresh!

What I’m scared of is this life and its dregs of repetition- but saying I’m scared would infer a sort of spark, a positive stimulus which warrants recreation.

I suppose that I’m scared of excitement and the lack thereof in this cycle we walk.”

We walk,

She now talks,

Time to listen, to craft a response

“Time is so slippery, one moment I’m here, the next I’m here again but somewhere else.”

“Oh Deim, we inhabit this crumbling yam of a planet that we have for the past four billion moments. We breathe the same flash of dusty blue breath each time we inhale. I’ve felt this cool prickle on my frosted lungs ad infinitum.

Our own morbid company is what we’re left. For fun,

I dissect every ounce of history that circulates through my blood-

to know and stroke each molecule.”

What will she say now?

It doesn’t matter,

she says her thing, “Dusty…”

“Even a speck of microcosmic dust,

a traveler of light years, who finds itself at my teeth will tell me the life and

lineage of its native planet. I’ll crunch it with rapture and catch the vibrations in

my memory bottle. One for the collection. Another unwanted reference to flood the bank.

And for what? An association to declaw the new, soon to be tired, sensations of life.

There is nothing new to learn, but if there is eventual collapse soon follows. My love

has run out, it’s merely bubblegum ecstasy: worthless as a sugar rush.

All I can bring myself to do is pace and complain and pace and complain and

grab at my own tail.

But if I pause to ground myself,

I’ll be thrown through space, that gooey pool of decay,

by my static home. All I hope is that I’m caught in some abandoned soul’s molars.”

“Wow, now I’m here!

Hey, Pho, check this out,

I am spinning!”

The Man Who Stabbed an Ant

My Master cast me out. I am
void of body, yet tethered at his frayed feet, dragged behind on his same
lonesome path. He fumes, "You are too inquisitive!"

I am
punished for my
ceaseless perplexing.

He deafens my suspended presence with
unknown, pleasant bells plugging his ears.
Without a conscience, how can he know?

"I am what's best for you!" I plead, but my voice is
lost on the lazy light of the afternoon sun. The world is
bare. Simple.

He grins, but his joy reciprocates from the star's warmth above,
oblivious to my query.
Is this to know?

The one who asks forever finds nothing.
He who doesn't, finds solace in the nothing.

Usually judicious in pace,
the man reveals a dance to his stride. I am
gone, he is happy.
But I can

never be gone.

Entropy, too, acts on ignorance. His bliss is
fleeting- hollow.

Studious by nature, my gaze falls to his clenched fist.
Curious about the secrets clasped in his left hand, I ask
his right. The outstretched finger there glides along a cobbled, waist high wall.

Here, an ant
drones through its life,
unable to question.
A pathetic existence.
The colossus, the
great equal to the ant,
halts at the creature.

I bite my breath, yet I am
forced to move. Arm raised like an executioner's axe. His spiral print bolts down,
smashing the globe-eyed worker.
No malice.

This disregard for reason, this silly
war. For what?
Why?
I am
consumed by the whirlwind of neglect, but he is
unobstructed by my rage.

The light in his ears now guides him, outside my input.

He Is Chaos.

I crack,

“Please, Master. Allow me at your throne. Hard as it is, I’ll
subdue my nature. I’ll curb my
questions...”

From his left, he releases
a sweat-glazed head of goosegrass from its prison. It drifts to the ground.

I am back. We are whole.

There are no secrets .

Frightened with

no answer,

we continue.

To Live Under the Sun

Lately, I've noticed that my eyes can't handle the Sun. The overwhelming light brings my corneas to sizzle and incinerates the dark hues of my irises. These ocular pearls reflect the orb- a forced offering. The scent of fried eggs wafts through sheen white halls. The Sun reflects from every surface, incinerating my shadow. He offers a fading whisper. Hide. Hide from the Sun. I plunge into red depths. In the trench of the madder ocean, strange creatures dwell. I study my hand and imagine a life with no fingers, only a thumb. Human. Mutant. Where would I be? Abruptly, I devolve into a grotesque serpent, ensnared by withered veins, but swimming is easier now. I weave through iridescent tangerine stars that float nearby. They sing the glories of my other lives. But, I starve beneath the shadows of the great brushes. They slither down from above, like mighty black weeds from a cave roof. The oppressors are the roots to those thriving in the Sun. I see myself in silver and aflame and infinite as the brushes. But I belong here, under the stars. Waiting at the cave floor, I continue to fracture and morph. I press my thumb to the hives on my forehead. These bumps are the mighty talons of a new-born alien, pressing against the walls of its robot shell, eager to bask in the Sun's world. My print is pressed against its own, two universes converging on a point, separated by thin skin. An exhausted chortle escapes my lips as the image of my child clawing the walls of my cerebral womb drifts about. I'm scared of the alien and what it could be. I should upgrade my head. No. I should tear it open. Where would I be? Then, my tongue craves tea, that which so often leaves it scalded. The sandpaper texture gives everything a unique flavor. I sit up from the floor of my room, that constant source of comfort. I move for the hallway but the door only leads back into my room. I've become trapped in my own home. Yet again, I've become a nameless protagonist scrawled by a great brush. Imprisoned here, I craft my canon. One day, maybe, I can annihilate the door.



Visual Journey Through the World of Carnavas

*This poem was imagined while listening to *Carnavas*,
an album by Silversun Pickups, with “The Summit”,
a painting by Darren Waterston in mind



Pull back the curtains;
let the sound cascade into your fish bowl skull as a deluge of chemical plant runoff.
Surface bubbles rise into the Tower in front of which you stand
ankle deep in rainbow oil rings,
amongst the hollow stars in the rusted copper night
sky like leaf sludge atop a closed off pool.
Drill the rivets into place, once you're in there's no escape.

No ground, soaring out of body but
grounded within the Tower. A mythical place of paint. A canvas for the show.
You're one of the crowd, locked into the dance.
Tip toe on mushy mud for fear of earthquakes. Those
gnats sway in the half-moonlight imitating fireflies,
those little stars light the dark, lingering in a
sky divided by telephone wires. Depth compressed from your world,
force your head through the fuzz of the air and eat the scene,
thin as a crepe.

Cue the lights, here's the show.

Where's the show?

It's everywhere,

Wake up, morning, trapped on the floor. The pattern, the grid, the inescapable yet
you can see the stars while

your neck is broken back, eyes fixed on the metallic sky.

Wonder the number of screws it takes to hold air aloft;

how many screws keep you bolted to the ground. The grass slithers through your toes and
prickles your soles, an intimate connection.

So, make friends with your neighbors and hope not to meet the sole of a boot.

The show feels over, faux stars gone, you found your companion, you are now the stars.

The world is watching you rolling in slow motion.

The world is wet paint beading, holding hands off a tilted canvas, each
drip forms a new painting on the floor.

It's called love, apparently,

but you're an automaton, bones grinding on
the back of your brain.

Ignore it, you chose the drowsy warmth.

As your own light, it's hard to see the crowd. You can't find the dance,
you've never felt this static.

Arms flailing, a wild panic tear at the sky searching for the magnetic pull of others.

You've created your own dance, frenzied and free to be viewed by the invisible crowd.

Everybody's doing it, even your love. Everyone's the same. Who are You?

Each star locked in its own cage, we shine

but take up no more space than the grid allows.

Eyes coated in silver film, forming the world cell by cell,

a beautiful construction,
but you can't.
connect.
Ignore it, you chose the drowsy warmth.

The lights flash on, it's a party! You are not
alone. So much is wrong, nothing is right with you.
Stich your mouth into a smile then fix your eyes on the stars,
just like your floor friends taught.
Just people arranged
as intimate and awesome as the star-spangled painting hung in the night.
The twinkles they must see, looking down on earth.

What is the matter? Why do you weep?
Are you numb between the seasons? Are you free, but know you aren't?
You are in a blank, open state, but you still feel the ground.
You are trapped by space: trapped by the nothing of the construction.
So, you weep in harmony with strokes of the empirical pallet knife,
but there is no need for sadness. This world is a beautiful design.
Eyes open, arrange the light into a show, a bare swaying tree tells you
an incredible story.

Tempo change, you find a dial on your chest and
twist. Swoon. Flooded,
flooded, flooded, and flooded
with the stars as they rush into your body like a wave of glitter. Don't drown.
Tree branched stars illuminate sky people painting trees,

creating life in a second dimension. Which is this dimension?

You can wake up now;

that's a lie.

You must learn to focus, to consciously separate from the fuzz, to create your own world,
to decorate your cell.

Three lights emerge from the crumbling dream, showcasing the void
and all it offers.

You reach for the odd luminance of your star. It tickles like cool grass.

It fills you with a drowsy warmth;

it's called love apparently.

Plant it in the ground.

From that mushy mud sprouts the bubble Tower.

You've been here all along.

You're behind the curtains.

Inside the machinery. Your friends have returned.

Everybody dances.

You move, mingle, converse, and forget you are trapped.

You are stars, no longer broken to gaze at the sky.

Destroy the Tower. Oh, the power, oh the pleasure. Shatter the widows,
catapult yourselves into the void as wild comets.

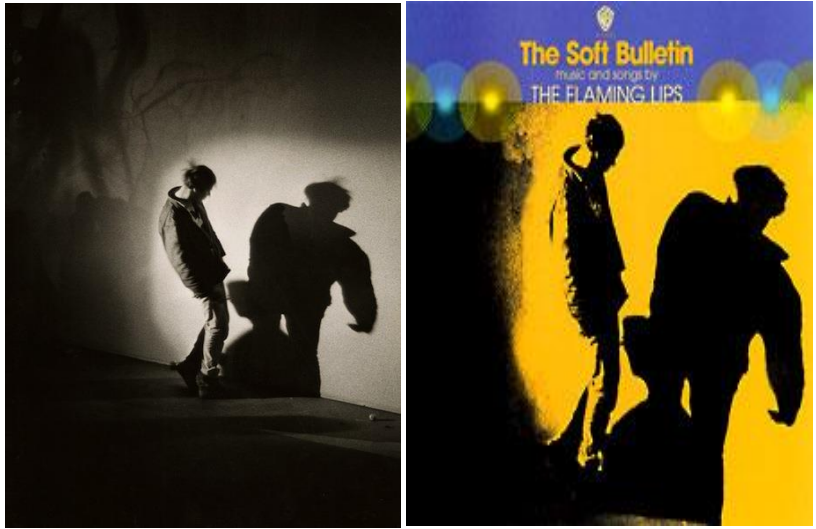
Wipe tears that run past your genuine smile as they ascend

and you can't leave the thick oil ocean of your life.

Remain and decorate your fortress with the bones of your past,

let it grow over with the vines of the future

and make your home warm.



*This is an ekphrastic poem created to celebrate “The Acid Test: Neal Cassady” by Lawrence Schiller with the music album, *The Soft Bulletin* by the Flaming Lips in mind.

Peacock Mitosis

Wild drums beat and deafen the demands of the old generation.

Winded by bass that invigorates our hearts with each stroke of finger.

We are alive.

Mystic synths amplify our minds,

surging impulses down our arm hair. Each hair

writhes at its tip, exuding a brilliant pattern of iridescence.

We are peacocks, coated in feathers of our royal colors –

minty turquoise that cool the soul,

cobalt as abstruse as a child’s eyes, and

the creamy rose of a buoyant dream.

We take flight.

A voice rings through the haze, igniting the butterscotch sunsets

locked away in ourselves. A

happiness bright enough to see our own shadows by. A

love so radiant that

the banal grays of the world are cast in a serene iris shade. A
sadness that brings joy for being a perfect
human passion.

But, who can see these colors? Try as I might, all I see
is the pearly glisten of my family's feathers, too proud to expose their plumage.
I split.

There I am, as white as they come, part of the world.
Here I am, draped in my chromatic patchwork cape.

Even within blistering enlightenment, we can't
truly be each other.

So,
I stand here by my wall, transfixed by my clone,
dancing with my silhouette,
reveling in the exquisite mystery of my dark reflection.
He is me and can never be another.
Overdosed on the chaos,
lost in the ecstasy of life,
each atom ascends.

Waiting for an answer.

Waiting for an answer.

I disintegrate.