

POETRY GALLERY

Selected Poems from *Honey Mushroom Wonderfals* by Troy J. Muller
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ARTIST STATEMENT

In *Honey Mushroom Wonderfals*, I am interested in contrasting the optimistic tone of the American dream, as it developed after WWII, with the pessimistic realities of the early 21st century. I am particularly interested in how the American dream was symbolically represented by the “promise” of technology in the decades following WWII. When juxtaposed with images of today’s technology and value systems, the resulting irony seems tragic and comically understated by modern standards. I explore technology’s great potential to dehumanize society and suggest that society itself is on the down-slope of technology’s promise. After the war, American appetites for convenience and pleasure have increased in every possible dimension. I explore the strange, often surreal, effects of consumerism and commodity-fetish culture.

I want to describe where we are as a nation, and predict where we are heading, by examining where we have been in our past. “Found” texts provide an accessible catalogue of unfiltered American history –representing a history of this nation, on a popular level, more accurately than the far-removed accounts of historians. By altering found texts, shading them with new meaning and modern relevance, I am able to contrast the daily routines of Americans with their suppressed spirituality and cosmic reality. This contrast exposes the fragility of a society that claims to be the strongest in the world’s history and indicts technology as the smoke-and-mirrors savior of humanity.

Fallout Shelter

Occupants now dwell below, their houses shuttered from wind and ash, the searing light and wall of concussion from a thousand suns. Families huddle like the cast-plasters of Pompeii. “Inconvenient” the leaflet called the atom bomb’s initial effect. No worse, really, than hot July winds, perhaps unnoticed if shades remain drawn and broadcasting towers remain upright. The Sears catalog depicts an atomic-age lifestyle, bursting with fresh linens, plates and tiles patterned with polka-dots and plaids, featured rooms stacked with carpeted floors, tidy corners, surfaces swept free from all contamination. This is a golden age — fathers pour high-balls to watch hockey, mothers serve iced-cake in sunrooms to rosy children with clean nails. Glorious television produces toothy smiles on every face, every channel.

Kitchen with a Bright Future

Mother has the world laid out
beneath a plaid apron and oven mitt.

From the minute she grabs her first cup
of coffee, her kitchen helps fulfill her

every task. Her new kitchen has areas
for preparing meals and washing laundry.

Mother dreams of a bright future.
She pictures a table with settings for six

guests from Dad's office. Her new kitchen
has a color television set on a swivel

which can be viewed from father's recliner
in the living room. Mother also swivels

from stove to countertop. Hinges
simplify her work and make use

of previously wasted wall and floor space.
The linoleum has a yellow stripe for mom

to follow to each built-in feature. She floats
over polished flooring, never wasting a step.

The Ironette is her slide-out iron. The retractable
Hide-A-Rack hangs her freshly ironed clothing,

the Laundry Caddy hides her clothes hamper.
Mother sends the kids off with ice-cream,

watching as they hopscotch away, through the picture
window behind her new kitchen sink.

Military Industrial Complex

Our nation needs you —to study ancient weapons and their uses: the ballistae, catapults, booby traps, arms and armor. The old, foot-slogging ways must be replaced by more imaginative means: brain scans, psy-ops, totally integrated battlefields.

Terror is an emergency that never ends!

What's the possibility of microwaving the enemy with a solid-state laser— cooking 'em like popcorn? The field of toxic nerve agents has scarcely been touched!

Terrorism is everybody's problem!

Here are a few ideas to start: Hydrocarbon vapors make excellent explosives, electromagnetic guns are just over the horizon, infrared waves can penetrate smoke, fog and the blackness of night.

Are you with us or against us?

Our boys need destructive chemical compounds, high-powered explosives, minesweeping devices, Thermite hand grenades that can boil a man's insides.

Terrorism is a creeping menace!

The artistically-inclined inventor can exercise his talents in the field of camouflage. Innocent looking paintings of farm houses, hay stacks and hillsides might soon erupt into a hail of well-directed fire.

Are you with us or against us?

Is Your Job Killing You?

Men and women, who have the appearance of being alive and healthy, are being attacked by some insidious disease; their bodies

slowly broken, their will to live worn down. A research scientist (a glorified test-tube cleaner) before he turned on the gas, scrawled:

“This will be my final experiment.”

This man stood, he walked, went to work, supported a wife and children – but now

he’s one of the vertical dead. Unexercised aptitudes may right now be gnawing away at your guts, leading you to feel frustration

and failure. A strong talent is dangerous if it remains unused. An urge may develop — to overexert yourself at mastering a job

that you really hate. Is this sinister urge making you work yourself to death? The suicidal drive may disguise itself

as a heart attack or ulcer. High-blood-pressure, diabetes, arthritis, even erectile dysfunction beset the man who is bored stiff at his job.

The desire to “do-yourself-in” may appear as an elevated tendency to have accidents or cause them. Yes, a desk can be deadlier

than the life of a flying trapeze artist, because it drops the spirit so slowly, say research scientists, who measure stress and job aptitudes.

“The Flying Concellos” never wasted sleep, their limber talent, or their guts becoming troubled by visions of their own broken necks.

The Kingdom of Savings

Blessed are those that are hungry now,
for you shall be filled with honey-nut clusters.

Blessed are those with sensitive assholes,
for you shall be comforted with quilted Charmin.

Blessed are those that are confused by labels,
for you shall question our new look, but enjoy

the same great taste. How terrible it is
to be tempted by the rich and delicious

chocolate flavoring. How terrible it is
to cut Mississippi Mud with a chrome fork.

How terrible it is to raise the thermostat
to seventy-two degrees.

Blessed are those that eat frozen air
beneath the interstate bridge, that crowd

around drums, burning trash for heat.
Blessed are those that wear Wonder-bread

sacks as shoes, you shall inherit instant
reward points at Famous Footwear.

Blessed are those that push shopping carts,
for you shall enter the Kingdom of Savings.

Science Looks Ahead...

The sea will be drained and turned into new chemicals, new fibers, new finishes, new materials of all kinds.

We will learn to enjoy algae as food, convert the delicate grassy flavor into synthetic porterhouse steaks.

Corporate farming with radioactive Cobalt-60 will clear away the rotten slums and irradiate large crop yields.

In one shift, a factory worker will produce more goods with machines, than his fellow worker eight hours ago.

Clones of our bodies will hang in “harvest closets”—our organs available for round-the-clock transplant or private pleasure.

The two-car family will be as common as the two-television family a hundred years ago. Cars will run on pea-sized plutonium reactors.

Box-shaped buildings will eliminate gloomy city canyons—parking lots will provide defense measures against atomic bombing.

The business of war will be accomplished by unmanned vehicles, safely controlled from origin to destination by family men.

Consumers will print new sneakers, jeans and blue-eyed embryos on inkjet printers from materials found in the pantry.

New recreations will grow up and flourish almost overnight—“table tennis” and “miniature golf”. Social life will be free

from the restrictions of time and distance— anyone, anywhere, may at any time fuck anyone, anywhere else on the globe.

Channels of air will carry our spoken words at the speed of light. Power and sound will flow at the touch of an electric switch.

It's Important to Look Happy

There's an easier way to rid your face of ugly marionette-lines caused by years of unhappiness –

Wear an amazing life-like rubber mask!

A Mold-Art mask is made from the finest flexible rubber. It covers your entire head, but you can see through

the “eyes” and the “mouth” moves with yours. Breathe, smoke, even vomit right through the openings.

Each mask features heavy makeup for added realism. Adorn your mask with gaudy earrings and piercings.

It stretches over your skull like a diver's helmet. It's wonderful for every dress-up occasion!

Styles include: cross-eyed idiot, circus clown, divorced older-man, angry drunk, hobo,

wife's botched-facelift, cougar spotted with younger men, sophisticated lady of the night.

Each mask has a script to follow, so stay in character!

Your mother will think you look just like the Whore of Babylon, your father might mistake you

for a real tramp! So lifelike, that people will gasp with amazement when the truth is finally revealed.

Neurological Response

Weak electromagnetic fields pulsed near 2.4 Hertz are enough to excite the desired sensory resonance.

Depending on the precise frequency used, this may cause relaxation, closed eyelids, a tonic smile, or sexual excitement.

You live life your way ... and it shows in the car you drive.

The autonomic reaction of sweat glands increase in the palms of one's hands as the intensity of brain-waves amplify.

Control her every movement, take hold of her rack and pinion steering.

Some advertising men will argue that word choice represents the final victory of one instinct over another.

Let her cradle you in the softness of her reclining leather seats.

Sex combines methods of psychology and electrical engineering. Thus, it's possible to manipulate the nervous system

by pulsing images of bikinis and chrome bumpers on a nearby monitor at 2.4 Hz. The slowing of brain-cortex activities

is characterized by an increase of the time needed to silently count backward from 100 to 60 --even with eyes closed.

The Perfect Day

Wake up. Clean your teeth. Eat breakfast leisurely.

Do not quarrel. Exercise vigorously for five or ten minutes.

Swat the cosmos for an answer to even just one long-held question.

Shower. Dress in clothes that are not too heavy or too tight.

Drink a glass of cool water. Consider that each nerve cell has a nucleus that can make more of its own kind. Enter the blinding sunlight.

Do not hurry on your way to the train. In fact, do not hurry at all.

Begin your day's work at the office. Plan to escape at lunch.

Grab rocks from the parking lot and hurl them at windshields.

Swat the cosmos for an answer to even just one long-held question.

Whatever you do, don't expect much from the first session. Open a magazine.

Fill out the psychologist-recommended exercise-- a list titled "The Perfect Day."

Go to bed at such an hour as will enable you to finish your list tomorrow.

Turn off the lamp. Only the hallway light and one long-held question will remain.