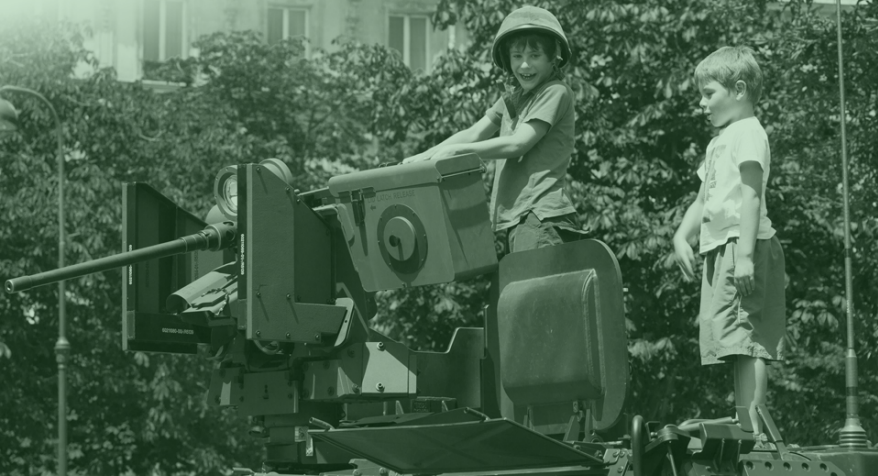




SCOTT ABELS

A STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH



A STATE
OF THE UNION
SPEECH

by
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For Ronald McDonald Reagan

Poems from A STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH have appeared in *The Continental Review*, *Counterexample Poetics*, *The New Megaphone*, and *Fact-Simile*.

1.

I want them to know it's me.

On

the Seal of the State of the
Union

there will be
no brown cloud.

Every game
is an apology;

do
we need a hero?

if I showed you
a deck of cards

and you asked me
to play a game,

would you put on
your best poker

face, or would you ask
who left bacon

in the work fridge
a lot of times;

on the farmhouse
yeast grows wild;

I'm holding out
for a hero

till the end
of the night:

we are not
giving his name

in order to protect him
from possible
reprisal, we are giving
his name
to put fifteen
dollars on the table,
hold hands,
and leave early:
praise the
contents
of a sad fantastic
song in the wrong tune:
poems
explain,
my sister,
let's spend a year
fixing the farm:
there will
be no
brown cloud:
in
zucchini season,
lock your
car doors;
I'm holding out
for a hero:
even if
it's just dancing
in the ark
the theme is trust:
teachers
Xerox

assembling the parts of an
incomplete Penguin;
consumers demand
high quality lamb;
this president orders
the body of
an extraterrestrial
(no president
has ever thought
of that before)
and botches the autopsy himself:
this is the state of the seal of the
government food pyramid
after a long day of school:
I usually use
the bathroom
and then turn on my computer:
it has a picture
of rice drawn on it, a good luck
picture of beets:
I watch the social services
funding dry up:
old
friends, no
cooperation
for the rest of the year.

2.

I have just come out
of a clinic
and it is hard to dance.
This may be
a difficult line
for you to follow.
The first
mention
of
Monsanto
is
Monsanto
frightens me.
They enter
like baseball cards.
They had
a good one.
Gun
fancier, practice
makes
perfect. We have
no maps. Invasive
vines
are suffocating
the new shoots.
This glo-
rious circus
show: sneak,

you will
begin
to understand
Monsanto.
Politicians
who can't handle
the heat should just
quit politics.
Not long ago, thistle
seeds were
sent everywhere.
We will
have help.
Lava can
build land,
citizens
of the country,
a new island is coming.

3.

Note on a University of Hawai'i-Manoa panel discussion titled *Monsanto in Hawai'i*:

The first mention of Monsanto is
Monsanto frightens me.

[. . .] so there's a cobra
in the corn chowder, and facial hair takes over.
You can't hurt me now. A cobra is drowned
by my eyebrows.

These things happen. Blocks are knocked off.
Here is what we call the thing,
when you're burning
out your clutch
moving through traffic,
and you see a bicycle passing you,
do not cooperate.

4.

Nazis are not analogies.
Have my friendly
neighborhood wave.
I am sorry
I brought it up.

5.

Imagine the service for a dead horse.
The cash cow and the hamburger patty
conjure the ghost of
Ronald ~~McDonald~~ Reagan fired from a torpedo
we didn't know existed.

6.

And you
bring me to my feet again.
I see what's happening here.
Many parents fear
men peddling knock-offs.
There is someone special
in this audience,
but the fact is the scaffolding
isn't stable, and
here is the disruptive thing
behind the bard barn
after many passions and dental records
there is a toilet
composed of frozen sperm
the size of a tire
on a Honda civic.

It was the hardest winter, ever.
An array of sperm
and a potato were sent to space.
I ain't the same. Only jerks
don't like the nicest rides there are.
An incoherent attempt of many tentacles
to get more Hummers® off the road
has ended.
Posthumously conceived children,
you'll be sorry when I'm gone,
you'll miss my tan left arm,
but this is not the point
of view of the cow
being scuttled toward the slaughter.

Expats of Puerto Everywhere,
we have vacated
the mini-malls
that surround the airport.
Now we are panting
For More Coffee!
black like green at night, black
like the color green in the dark,
the artist has lost memories,
one's the crowd went wild for,
and I'm the one to bring it up,
taking a whole new grown aim
at winter beauty tips
and small town words

like *famous*
and *addictive*,
I say what it is, I rub
a little lotion, stop a moment,
and listen. Have we tried that door
full of stabs? I smudge it all at once.
We can't just see both knobs.
I break a broom on it.
Then I carve this
into it, Dearest Dora,
besides these
unreal ruins,
a perfectly poured Guinness
is the closest thing to God.

7.

What nerve was touched
in Nancy Reagan's not-for-profit
beauty parlor? Another year
without a raise. Finally,
it's that kind of science
that you have more control over.
In the humility of
you'll never know
there is this argument for magic
that will end with heaven
and start with hell:
everything
won't open up
like a flower, for
your nice realization
for your limitations
I welcome your rise.

EPILOGUE

The same fire
that illuminates your beans
when the climate begins to change
maybe it reflects

in the mouth of a metal lock
and all you go without
with an X on your hand from the bar
in a wind that is contemporary to a speech
and this draft, sweetening your
swagger, you
lean in

all this milk and
the baby cows
are in the cooler.

SCOTT ABELS currently lives and teaches in Honolulu, where he edits the on-line poetry journal *Country Music*. He is the author of *Rambo Goes to Idaho* (BlazeVOX, 2011) and *Nebraska Fantastic* (Beard of Bees, 2012).

