EARTH DAY SUITE

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Hello - Welcome to the Anthropocene!
You grew up in a different geological epoch, so some of the elisions may be unfamiliar to you.

For instance: bumper sticker wants to know do you have hope. Say No, not that kind I don’t, but thanks.

For instance: you may ask yourself: What’s with the cloying pastels? Fragrant crabs tumescent tulips scummy duckweed: all that reproduction for itself?

The poem does, too.
That is your task:
More golden-egg-laying goose-killing
Children over water
fire fight
our children
grow old
sweating
houses flicker
people afoot in
groups moving
Rabbit climbs
the moon to set
his goddess up
against the dreory
troops
the kids are fine
will be fine
If I imagined it
then it’s a myth
If I can’t imagine it
it isn’t real
Babies occupy our time  
while nature does its work on us.  
Would you like eco-friendly or eco-regular?  
I would like a reassurance please:  
The cutest thing you ever saw.  

(false indigo pods  
shook into rattles  

If you eat only one bowl of rice a day  
you will get all the babies you want.  
This is called the Law of the Blessèd Event.  

If Earth Day’s today  what’s tomorrow?  
In another four days  I’ll be going like,  
Arbor Day already??  

Aw, shoot!  
I should have planted a tree or something.  
Let’s go to the Tomb of the Unborn Leaf.
In complication of branches
still as a picture seen
through a window, active verbs
causing only karma —

an illness that cannot be named
an insult that cannot be named
a deity cannot be named —

the same robins make
the same yearly sounds
Stillness can only be seen

Soon each robin will seem
an unnamed bird of mine
“Your bad data caused
these gruesome rebirths! — ”

thus the personal gravity
sinks through the woof,
altering time spaces
your footnote, residue,
a missing tile-sliver
from a floor mosaic,
so that someone awakens
with orange on her sole.

I am a woman trapped
in the body of the poem
it makes an epigram of
my epitaph without me.
Woodpecker Man says “STOP!
I’ll pound your brains out, or else!” —
laughs that creepy vocalization
like an extinct cartoon
like the Lord God Elvis:
a woman’s figure with bird head
& claws, fiercely clutching eggs,
declaring: “The living now outnumber
the dead. . . We will devour them!”
The dead experience
a deep memory
a fantasy of “off-spring” vaguely,
a semicolon + close parentheses =
eldritch disenheaded emoticon.

Plug in different data for a different writer:
Didn’t you notice I’m invisible?
No one ever jumps facing
the open sea, no one hears
the past and present perfectly
conspire, part of the same ghost.
Decoy Canada goose —
why o why in a back yard
From a pear tree branch
from a thread of its own
mucus hung a dead slug
something writhing
out of its neck:
this is known as “The Real.”
(heaps of dead cave crickets emerged from her throat
chirping “Alas, poor slug!” —
(really two slugs mating live —
entwined in their own
mucus, penises groping
out of necks, each looking
out to find an other
Since safety orange is become
a fashion statement,
I walk the woods content,
now knowing I shall ever —

“Feeding stations! Feeding stations! —

...Legacy warlords! Hold your fire!”

(unborn : preborn = undead : predead)

Aw, let the Pope shit in the woods,
if that’s what he wants to do,
deep in the dark incontinent.
Fucking killivores . . .
As the galaxies expand,
they become less funny.
So if “I Love Lucy” escapes
time-space, who knows who
will get it.

On Jupiter storms like this
fill up the size of the earth;
these storms fill up the earth
after storm after storm.

If the sky were really empty
it wouldn’t kill
this jolly jupiter
“all stones keep records”
(duh)

but does Sisyphus remember
what he did to deserve it?

The how-ever bird —
he slew him.
The politics of colors:
dust over asphalt,
scraggly former buildings,
moraines sans plants —
hard-wired for green,
loaded for bear,
the red planet,
down on earth,
hemoglobin
watching the inbred animals
run against each other,
the girl would rather be cutting
her arms at home
while watching the earth’s curve,
as though life were down there
rice rat, spiny pocket mouse,
burrowing newt, white-lipped
toad, a race things dream of
Goofy coots do the “coot scoot”
when spooked, utter Stooge-

Curly whoops: The Three Species
left in syndication

(there’s not a lotta ocelots,
nyuk nyuk nyuk)

brood parasites
communal defecators

oriole ore or sodalite song.
Integuments?

I’ve forgotten all the big words:
your fecunds your extirpateds
Write a sentence using
“flat-footed armadillo mosquito-pigeon”
& win our prize

& prise our wen —
Ouch! no stop it you’re thinking
too much to win: write
from the body
if you want to live
you must breathe. OK OK OK —

Well, I prefer cultivars of hoary puccoon,
personally, to species varietals.
For “lifestyle style”

I checked:
“nihilism, upscale.”
Quantity: 1

Now everyone can relax,
write that poem about spring
Plant Life of the Aeolian Sound Plain:
panamerican palmscale
zapata bladderpod
ashy dogwood
prostrate milkweed
desperate rose.

Red rose or white? =
live or dead,
no lily ungilded,
no border uncrossed.

Q: What is stopping sumac from taking over the world.
A: Kudzu. Thank god for sumac, Our Hope.
Thousands of gulls stream
over the fly-overs so
they know it’s fall.

The gulls do not fall.
The fly-overs do not fly.

If I could make words into gulls
I would do so. It would not make
me God, but it would solve
many problems.

All my words would go
one way only, up.

The fly-overs are gulled.
The gulls fly over, and out —
(around the heat of the heart speak
plain words to be ignored
Sight cast to tailing reds
cross-hatching implies a net
Thick seagrass meadows
support double digit days
Vast unpressured flats
display a low lack of persuasion —
(a 25-inch west-side
captured on a popper)
Every time a closing bell rings,
an angel gets his
chance to get away, lootless
as a ruptured duck on a dump,
a flushed pigeon under a kestrel’s claw.
When I hear the words creative
destruction, I reach for my checkbook:
someone had better get ready to go.
But nothing says “Culture” in the heartland
like ballerinas in taffeta and men in tights.
The scrubby green stuff we call nature
recall as rendered
as needed
as if
Is Earth Day the New Christmas?
The gifts beneath the cut tree
decked in green and green
brought down the chimney by a G-d
who shall remain whoblivious.

The global confectionary landscape
The Planet of the Blondes
The bubble of the globe —
Don’t laugh at the birds, it’s unkind

The body of the Body
does not store energy
any more than anything else.
The board read Oct. 23, 1913,
20 minutes til 3. Many happy returns.
I’ve always said life =
a just bowl of cherries
most of us don’t take notes
for an answer
those who live
after memory disaster
don’t take it serious
it’s too mysterious
Plain speakin plain folks
know the truth just
flew under our nose
when we see it.
The Mammal Brigade —
we’re special, OK?
we’re hurrying to finish up
before we die.
Are you shitting me? These animals are people! They don’t know a friend when they smell it. We wrote them off a long time ago, actually, not actuarially. C F I care. Eat the wetlands, you bitter real estate elitists! Eat thy wet heart out, thou holy simonist! Fear Detection Center — Number One! in protection of the centermost center of Libraries.

And if I care, what then? Shall we say, Whenever someone acts strange look for the ear bud, the blue tooth? What, then, Phaedrus, is a smile, but a frown turned upside-down? When you say Ideology, I already have.
We regret to inform you your immortality expired. Human bodies cannot bear too much reality.

hen bit       june fee
The towels exist for my hands
The trees exist for the towels
Clean sun       light light
My hands exist for make make
All those sad figures — what do jesuses do?

That does it —

You’re It now.
JOSEPH HARRINGTON is the author of Things Come On: An Amneoir (forthcoming from Wesleyan’s poetry series) and Poetry and the Public (Wesleyan 2002). His creative work has appeared recently in Pinstripe Fedora, Hotel Amerika, Otoliths, Fact-Simile, With+Stand, Cricket Online Review, and P-Queue, amongst others. He teaches at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, USA.