

August Blake  
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In my final semester at BHSEC Baltimore, two of the standout classes I am taking are Poetry Workshop and Advanced Fiction Workshop. For both I developed a narrative in which I explored through the short story and poetic forms. The short story lends itself to maintaining one perspective and shifting chronology. Conversely, poetry allows for the switching of perspectives and the greater investigation of each character's interiority.

The story follows the tumultuous relationship of a college student named Adrian Mint, who is working on his thesis with his professor, Lucifer Thomas. Adrian tells their daughter, Oliver, the story of Lucifer's death, which is where the narrative opens.

The excerpts from my poetry series are all written in free-verse, meaning they don't conform to a particular rhyme scheme, stanza or line length. All three have an epigraph with the act, scene, and speaker to easily incorporate a timeline. "Toast" and "Because My Pants Bite My Kneecaps" focus on the imagery of particulars with elements of surrealism. "The Changeling" employs the technique of blackout poetry.

## Toast

*act I . scene II . lucifer*

A butterknife to  
bisect the soul, bottle  
the spreading blood, and  
slice my wife's throat.  
Was she asleep? Up  
waiting for me?  
Or in our bed, warmed  
in the arms of the one  
who dropped her in a grave  
to cover their tracks,  
who made me dig, unearth,  
and identify the body twice?  
Once, drowning in the search,  
wailing for her ghost; again,  
when I witnessed the rigor  
mortis fully set in: her stagnant  
blood stained dark and dry.  
How vibrant the pastel skin.

*Would you like to say  
a few words? Rather,  
Tell us if you loved her.* I did;  
it was infinitely spanning,  
like an all consuming  
anti-sun– How much  
of her life did I take?

Whatever. You're there now  
in the back row,  
admiring your work.

## Because My Pants Bite My Kneecaps

*act III . scene II . adrian*

when I'm lying in the sewer

and the scratching never stops since  
the rodents are 18 to party,  
and the roaches feel left out.

When the trash heaps  
get moody because the river is  
full of trash, and all attention is  
rebuked. I've troubled this world below  
by fleeing with her ring.                      So now

the mice invade my abode,  
making love to my veins  
with their rotting yellow fangs;

They carouse, squealing antsy, and  
the mold, splotched and hairy,  
forms the bricks that erect my bedroom.

The parasites drug my drink with the river  
'cause the pipes had gotten jealous of the  
scratching out-noising their dripping drops.

How ravenous, rivaling the  
adrenaline when I  
softened to the shadows,  
snaked inside your hollow  
chambers, snatched her  
gleaming sewer gem.  
Bright and verdant.  
Burgled and bolted

underground to hum

this song of piss

in which I lie.

## The Changeling, Concerto No. 1 First Movement

*epilogue . oliver*

### I. A piacere

Pa's engraving:

There is only one left.  
I grew up when the decline  
of mornings, of summer.  
Long into places, pressed  
against the edges of a sacred thing,  
I was growing up. A soul and then another.  
Come back? Maybe a little.  
An initiation—learning language—the truest surrender.  
Grow up in love of the idea that  
there is blood turned towards the sky:  
The decline of afternoons,  
no understanding of conversations.

Ma's graffiti:

There is only one left.  
I grew up when the decline  
of mornings, of summer  
long[ed for] into places. Pressed  
against the edges of a sacred thing,  
I was growing up. A soul and then another.  
Come back? Maybe a little.  
An initiation—learning language—the tru[th, a little] surrender.  
Grow up in love [small, love] of the idea that  
there is blood[y] turned towards the sky:  
The decline of afternoons,  
no understanding of conversations.