

# The Meat Game

by Chris D'Errico

Versions of some of the poems contained herein  
have previously appeared in print and online journals such as:  
*Unlikely Stories*, *Mojo Rising*, *Nocturnal Lyric*,  
*Apricorn Anthology* & *Las Vegas CityLife* (online).

## Diving Into the Hedonic

the book made outrageous claims. life as this  
insistent back-beat gone amok in sum

primitive raw to propagate, orchestrate  
infernal melodies that play always in the flesh.

an enjambment of fire is there to deliciously heed  
to feed wild arpeggios that augment the soul

& it is precisely this dangerous proposition  
that gives worth to dreams & weight to our hearts.

a life of discord searching for some sweet harmony.  
veille & screw up magnificently.

an exquisite wreck, the divine comedienne redeemed  
by an understated allure, an irresistible chemistry

stains each chapter of a crude apotheosis.  
a glossary of bone, blood & song & in the soul

cultivate heart, sense, tolerance. some gravitate  
toward utility. others, visions.

raising hell or rearing love  
in its extroverted mutations, its intimate vibrations

a nod to the criminal adrenaline rush of idle dreamers  
taking an axe to the system's doctored ladder.

kisses like footnotes blown to the ephemeral,  
the smug dance of knowledge implodes

to expose an appendix of sputtering nerves & animal tics.  
dive in, chum. lost minions paddle on for greater shores.

exploding truths dissolve  
the indigestible dirigible our hearts can become.

cast into the vast seas of sentiment & sleaze,  
stupidity & sanctimony. surrounded by rotten cactus & killer bees,

alone in a crowded desert of compromise,  
sample the fantastic nectar of the sweet & real.

a bibliography of hope, occasional treasure,  
excavation of the lost, the challenge of truth & the allies of fear.

there is a lake of bodily fluid containing sacred scrolls buried  
under its bed. dive in, chum, it's a dicey hand, draw blood.

never mind the sharks.

## Cut & Bleed

it's stopped raining how nice  
or so the night has  
its g-rating it so desperately campaigned against  
sinister amusement i complain but i have  
nothing but this  
breathing  
the neon chemical landscape fake  
night glistens hears but doesn't listen  
alone i listen alone overcrowded overpopulated  
ripping through cigarettes like breathe mints  
at a halitosis convention  
dead pigeons out the window calling  
the rats to supper  
coughing engines grieving widows aging television  
sirens  
false alarms calling witness to everyday disasters  
on the streets uppity mongrels all weird & bloated  
flesh matters & anti-matter in the moon spotlight  
competing with taxis for the biggest balls  
a man jumped in front of the train today  
or was pushed depressed or ecstatic no matter  
time is lame, fat & depressed everybody knows  
beggars coerce the rich in an obvious conspiracy  
you know  
as big as hercules was he was still a lazy son of a bitch  
in someone's eyes  
goliath had an effeminate laugh  
WELCOME TO CHINATOWN sign says  
dry cleaners steaming away, jewelers chipping costs  
leathered cops eyeing skirts  
pass through the rude belch of hot air & BEHOLD  
peasant gourmet *pizza coffee donuts cigars* anything  
you want but don't need the zeitgeist of poverty delivers  
right on time  
homeless royalty, spiels of the underclass sharing friction  
i burn a travis bickle stare  
ready for almost anything but the usual nothing occurs  
BE PATIENT  
doodle around with things i have no intention of buying  
magazines, amusing canned goods  
wipe the sweat off with the arm of my shirt  
collect my head & get the hell out  
i have nothing but this  
spiritual commerce  
karma never stunk so bad as when it ricochets back  
from a rotten place disgusted & disgruntled with its job  
so repetitive but purposeful only to those who accept  
& receive it in good faith

buy or believe it sell it believe it the news is the same  
we have nothing but this  
everyday someone born someone dead while others contemplate  
the tireless vector of the in between

## Waitin' For The Man

tic-tic-tic  
menial hours dropped like punctuation  
from a bloated sentence  
some righteous riots, some foolish laments  
hilarious breaks in the profundity  
of a life mired in wishes wishes wishes

no calculating  
the fighting, flailing, hope, thinking, emoting  
this great spoof, this syrupy suicide, this inward gallop  
this character-building exercise  
which makes dreams appear & kills time for those without  
the necessary imagination, responsibility  
that can turn bitter  
& difficult to bear  
or grow huge heart & many heads  
so many transparent in the light

bleeding memory  
led to slaughter by conscience erasure  
some sort of purgatory, remembering  
the past, snatches of time stacked  
bits of dialogue swept away  
to a far corner like mouse turds & i wait

'til that big door opens  
a feast appears

how sweet sweet sweet i do hope it is

## Street Music

the buskers lean into their song  
spirit clustered tight, soul-snared  
in poly-voice, novice subway ears  
punched by blue-fisted melody's cadence

the ear's conundrum counterpointing  
sophisticated jungle  
& simplifying street fusion solos  
raw & undeniable

quite a cornucopia of brain waves to feed my exhaustion  
on the way to my daily grind  
the subway's rude interlude subsides  
& i get the rhythm back & through  
the pounding florescent at 8 in the morning  
i'm awake & coffee-less

remind me that  
there's more to this life  
than the assembly line we're lame, too quick  
to head off to, when  
the crowded train platform gives way to a crowded aisle  
inside a cattle car, holding a greasy silver pole for support  
stuffed against other humans & their various versions of humanity  
some of it spat aloud, most with newspaper eyes whispering

that uncomfortable twitch  
that brain-less silence that's there because it has to be  
passing time until we get where we're supposed to be  
i hear the music from the streets again & i am reminded

there is work to be done

& it is of the soul

## Digger's Lament

skin is broken  
all colors cleared  
spirit whisked away in delicious  
effervescent  
cocktailed  
elixir of sound  
rumblings of a pure tarnished existence tuned  
from lust  
suffering, self-sacrifice  
& sure, some flat out stupid choices  
dogged, beatific  
eloquent in all its kinks  
bringing it down to the laymen high on tragic love's miracle  
from the (w)hole that's where its at & you're enamored  
of pain & struggle & the ability to transcend  
the terrestrial, multi-dimensional, external prowess  
born from the internal  
totally human, yet otherworldly  
profoundly awake  
eternal

## God's Special Nonsense Creation

*... so screw those harbingers of doom on shellacked heels  
moaning and lamenting over the dark and flirting  
with true penance as convincing as a classified ad*  
from a Sunday rag

get a lift, get a lift from the wholly men  
who instruct  
who de-construct  
laughing at the accomplished id  
spitting at the ego  
( 'cept that which boils quintessence from the folly  
of our lives)

squeeze out the pulp, discard all extraneous BS & live  
live  
live unruly through all the peculiar stats  
accept the weather  
in the end  
build shelter- when necessary  
draw your own symbols  
LIVE  
unappreciated perhaps but evolving live  
through the cruel math the algebra of the streets  
kick open the phone box dial for help  
articulate the real of what you can  
fabricate the rest  
(the rest is filler, figured in the rest of our lives,  
figure it out):

negotiate the mind's exposure reeling in daft air  
consider dirty looks from those stuck on the onramp  
(a challenge)  
from which you have just past without haste  
to battle the elements and brave  
the furious speeds of the serotonin highway  
stuffed with oily curtains  
of knowledge  
that hide  
so many of us from the wizard we wish upon

## Possessions

finally, to say what  
we leave on this earth

fading yellow & frayed  
dog-eared bits of collateral

for who is left to extrapolate  
or ignore:

the scent of vermilion;  
the grasp of an iron claw...

money, friends, family;  
a love letter written by a lover to be cherished  
for its scathing emotional text, a legacy  
hidden away in attics, basements...

and what of emotions? flags  
of new continents emerging  
for others to be stifled & excreted  
by mechanisms of control-

soured fallacious homebodies, we  
create the need desire virus then retreat  
to comfort lair in desperation

to find new air, finally  
when all that is left

is nowhere to be found.



## **Song of Deceit**

A soul abduction...

Some cosmic drama...

His poor resinous heart

taken in a bloodless incision, executed

too precise

for mortal hands.

He couldn't believe what was at stake

with each flutter

of inebriate lash.

Fooled

by the eyes.

Those eyes...

EYES

bluer than noontime in Iceland.

**Before I Float  
(Through Your Back Porch Still Buttoning My Shirt)**

Rainwater tickles down  
to pool with silence at the edge  
of this impossible bed  
There are shadows overbearing  
a big fat sun too bashful to ensconce  
Which is its only job, shameful, after all  
this day should be, unfettered

Open the windows for chrissakes  
let in some air  
The sound like Divine surf whispers  
what's this great sadness  
To nourish & collect our being  
a pale moon would suit us better I'm afraid  
This frail white filament of a soul, crackling  
in the tension heat  
Like a car bomb this silence blows my mind,  
my conception of two as one

With more to give, more to want, killing me  
those cancerous weeds pissed forth  
In anger your vicious afterthought tangles me  
in its brush  
But I know good life oozes from inside  
still an occasional treat  
Naive, sweet, all promise & apology,  
a smooth balm for the psyche  
That absolves all crime instantly from the room

Tonight within the maelstrom of expectations  
I will drink  
Platitudes digressing from small talk,  
warm dialogues, caressing dialects...

*Simplifying  
Mechanisms  
No nets, no ceilings*

In this smiling blue hole  
we call our home I am swollen in abscess  
I am the deep red gauze of your sleeping  
Against your kiss  
I am the cool black silk of your breast  
I am the pressure vice that brings you to  
Yes

Now as I leave smashing mirrors & feeling free

I feel metallic wind at my heels  
I hear the caterwauling squeals  
& the three-ring conundrum left behind  
Perfect

Like chaos

## Pleasure Trade

lips, fingertips, plots, below the belt shots,  
the money, the charade, the taxicab parade

o mercy to the pleasure trade we slave.  
hips slide, the pouch opens, spills the love letter

hidden from the lover. the secrets, eyes flutter.  
the bombshell pose, the cheetah-print interior,

the fuzzy dice play with sweaty hands,  
the pangs, the morning sickness at dawn,

conversation went wrong, gyrations & palpitations,  
assurances, reassurances, the personality tics,

the nightly fix, the tongue, red cheeks, the curiosity peeks.  
the valley summons, the clock ticks,

mind splatters, nothing matters.

*a bad stomach & no sleep. the terror  
of "gelatinous goop spitting flecks on the starter kit"...*

eggshells, wedding bells, the lazy groaning,  
the couch, moaning, the throbbing, the bloating,

the feeling that nothing is finished  
but maybe shouldn't have started in the first place...

*(heart filmed in effigy. Cupid a gross parody:  
muttonchops, pitchfork & bloated belly.)*

at worst, lovers know the heavy stare of silence, gloom  
atrophying in rooms further away from each other.

this is the meat game, this is  
the ending buzzer, this is the tension, kiss, the release,

the final shot careened off  
wet lips dribbling there forever on a pristine thigh,

the back door on the sly & then  
the organic display calms. gives way to the cold

machinery of night.  
catatonic, conformity, uniformity, anonymity.

the dull morass of everyday

existence. bare, bored, blaring out

alone.

## Ghost Hunter

you were soaring through the sky  
while everyone was dumbing down  
I was brainwashed by the illusion of it all  
wondering  
where are you  
in the deep cleavage of lust  
there is a nihilism that betrays itself  
when love is something desire conquers  
where are you  
where are you in the soul inexplicable  
revealing itself under duress  
when the nebulous nature of euphoria  
leaches into the blood  
its acute toxicity, its blunt poisons  
ravaged rationality  
& I'm seeing double, slurring  
a proof dialogue from the eye of disaster  
a dial in progress to the heart  
the only light that matters  
I want to slip through the wormhole  
of your eyes take me to that farthest star  
to that movie where the villain gets away  
& rides into the sun  
where are you  
in the pursuit of happiness  
like a rope of smoke impossible to grasp  
like the night  
gone without a trace  
leaving only gray reflections & fringe theories  
searching for an anchoring light  
once you built an exquisite fortress  
& with your arms built a bridge for me  
but my flaws were not made perfect  
& I blamed my own self-doubt  
full of hot air, smoke & mirrors  
to be smashed & re-invented  
I am seeking you out  
challenging your legitimacy, your dominion  
your very existence  
but alas there will be no conclusions  
just an up in the air grotesqueness  
whose design I cannot ever know



## Why Are All These People Dying In Bad Shoes?

Great cities of dust stand up  
each grain of sand is a voice  
that matters as a human who bleeds  
Salt the wound we know is there  
and is obvious as air tactile as the breath  
that escapes the living

Salt the wound make the pain unbearable  
Put slugs in the machine whenever you can-  
it's for the common good it's for  
the selfish gene that wells up there  
at the fingertips & spine Feel it  
It's real it's good it's worth it Teach others  
to grab their share & give back the rest  
as the noble soul would wizened

Up off your ass collective abandon all stations  
effective now out of that cubicle of death go home  
hug the family friends kiss the ground  
the bare earth each grain of sand in a chorus  
that matters as a human that needs that bleeds  
conversation How to live inside this burden

out in the open Truthful Naked  
Bankrupt & Beautiful

## The Hack

There was the concert he went to where the singer said  
"I hope to one day never have to sing  
these kind of songs again"  
then proceeded to play the populist political tunes  
that made the band multi-millionaires.

Good deal.

He would like to sell even a few ideas  
& make some money  
for himself, maybe someday do something great  
for mankind.  
He daydreamed of making a positive difference  
in the world.

Tonight he sits & stares.

Headaches, bad breath, mistrust, stained soul  
& questionable motives all stuck with a desire inarticulate.

He has written with the cluttered mind of adulthood.  
He remembered chasing the flame  
into oblivion & then silence & atrophy.

He stares & stares & nothing comes.

*...the rush hour slathers its Orwellian glaze  
tired homeless break last bread on soup kitchen lines  
as the rich eat the world  
pasteurized crowds digest in the belly of industry  
pop rots the guts out & soul gets cut  
wrapped & shelved like processed American cheese...*

He often hacked off a little for himself.  
(This flavor of the month is quite delicious, by the way.)

He didn't blame the corrupt,  
war-mongering morons in the govt.  
for his inaction while he tried the keys  
he stole from the lost & found  
to unlock intuition's concentric dialogues  
finding only ancient questions, ancient excuses.  
Chased the specter of constant *somethings*,  
big ideas, gut feelings twisted over, terrible train wrecks  
smoldering & hissing.

Searched for survivors to carry on the bloodline.

He exposed his innards to shell-shocked by-standers  
to see if they might actually care.  
Results inconclusive.

He did what was needed to do to survive,  
injected with desires to do otherwise.  
He can only hope to be a remarkable footnote  
outside the margins, maybe, not mentioned in the text.

Plucked a few songs out of this vast debris of hearts.

He wanted the passion of a life incendiary,  
but he got what's thrown out off the center.  
A necessary result of others' expectation & perception,  
like a celebratory cocktail abandoned on the bar  
with the ashtray & butts, a landmark of tiny accomplishments.

The hallmark of a world full of fools  
where far too many dogs think they are masters.

## A Little Remorse

with sorry angst i catalogue  
my blunders one by one  
quixotic in a cheap desert motel  
images chaotic as spirits on my tongue  
screaming like tiny little saviors o lord  
i gotta get some sleep can't think with my brain  
swollen in this heat...

...pour another, check the door, make sure it's locked  
it is she is checking her stockings for runs  
i'm counting hits & unnecessary seconds hesitations  
still keeping firm pressure on the bandage  
my badge of courage  
... a suitcase full of money  
a bag of clothes left bloody there a story of desperation  
& the darkness that led us thoughtless  
shouldn't have done what we have done  
now my conscience  
is spitting up blood

## **I'm the Exterminator**

that's what the old man said  
my job is to snuff out the lesser species  
to survive  
i eradicate vermin & collect the bill  
driving home to wash the sweat & grease off  
launder my soiled uniform  
burrow into the night  
eat my dinner in front of the television  
& pass out only to awake drop-kicked by the clock  
shower out my dream's residuals  
& hit the road to control,  
eliminate,  
kill,  
clean up,  
basements, bathrooms, kitchens, attics  
chatting, listening to seniors & section 8's,  
the rich wax about what happened  
to the world & why me, why me  
why me

that's what the old woman said  
as i knelt  
on her kitchen floor  
not from any divinity or sick ritual  
but to spray for cockroaches under her sink  
& to put a little rat poison behind her stove  
there's murder in the suburbs, you know  
paradise in the projects  
you have to look beyond  
this infestation  
this existence  
to survive  
to keep your wings  
or to get them  
finally, in the end

## In Transit

Across the Moral Highroad,  
neighborhood kids are constructing forts  
out of dirty ice  
& hurling snowballs through the twilight.  
You're parked in a darkened cul-de-sac, ensconced  
in mist & portent like some gothic B-movie,  
a helix of black birds circling overhead.  
Your insides are momentarily fine,  
your color warmed by the glow of an obscured sun.

Though your vehicle is unmolested by appearance,  
pale-faced commuters lean over  
to satisfy their morbid curiosity, peeking through  
your factory tint- remarking, judging.  
It slows traffic down to a stand still but  
few seem to figure out why, or care to change course.

You're not the only one here going nowhere fast.  
Multitudes crowd this makeshift parking lot...  
*God's spirit. God's creatures...*

Watching the young ones fool about,  
sometimes you yearn for your childhood now  
infinitely gone.  
Surely you can remember life before  
accusation & indictment?  
Dreams swelling with lessons of confidence, though  
oblivious to assume the rising tides & storms ahead...  
Good for them. They'll get what's coming  
soon enough.

As the fog steadily burns away,  
children sing & kick around atop the clouds  
that bandage the immense blue  
starting to seep slowly downward...  
*God's breath. God's blood..*

You turn the ignition, crank up the heat,  
you're ready to go.  
The road ahead is difficult to maneuver on a good day.  
Riddled with potholes, dead-ends & unpaved dips  
that lead to *God-knows-where*.  
Although you've traveled through this place many times,  
seldom have you found a decent, up-to-date map  
& you often lose yourself, wondering  
where you were heading off to in the first place.

In the crisp, clear air

the road to the stars is yours for the taking.  
Like a painter contemplating colors in the dark  
you're waiting for some hidden obviousness  
hung inside a desperate, hungry mouth.  
A secret story dying to be told,  
wrought from flesh & spirit.  
*God's arms. God's will..*

You shift into neutral, hit the emergency brake  
& step out onto the frozen earth.  
Pulling out a wad of unopened bills  
from your thick overcoat, you weigh them in each hand  
before tossing them onto the backseat.

You vow that you will pay these dues sometime soon,  
but not today. Today is your day off.  
Away from such dangerous heights,  
leaving the engine to run, it is your time to rest.

You will take it all in with your tongue,  
your eyes & your lungs & your fingertips  
clenched to the surface, listening  
for the distant squelch  
of true desire caressing mechanisms beyond control...  
In anticipation of a healing that surely lurks below.

## High

Sometimes  
We can hail the cosmos  
We can get lost in the lyric of the sky  
We can hear beautiful & strange  
Language, tunes carved through millenniums

(working so hard to sculpt not an edifice of limp importance  
but a defining eternal character culled  
from quintessence of all that's reeled  
that's true, that's right  
a labor of light that may purify the rot & sloth of etceteras  
dazed in a rash of invention)

Humming along  
The melody through static

Let hinges creek open to show worth  
Let angels decipher our sideways spiral towards ecstasy

sometimes when high we think  
of bloated phrases like that  
then scratch ourselves silly in the morning  
wondering on the way to work  
why we even bother  
and then we are answered

Lucid sometimes  
Our molecular coordinates  
Assembled to receive  
Beautiful & strange  
Chemistry through the ages  
Timeless drunken love songs, or  
Angst-ridden rues above the dirt-faced herd

Profound  
In light  
Answers  
No tunnels  
Sometimes  
No escape