

# Fluoridated Public, Dumb on Fluoride

a single poem

in eleven parts

by Greg Bem

design supported via [Twitter](#)

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The panther rejoices in the gathering dark.  
Hands rush toward each other through miles of space.  
All the sleepers in the world join hands.

- Robert Bly, from "An Extra Joyful Chorus for Those Who Have Read This Far"

How can we abandon all this,  
though you say you think we'd better,  
now that the trucks and tanks are closing in,  
and people are running and screaming all around  
and flares light up the entire square.  
Here we sit dumb,  
hardly trembling in the chilly night.

- Leung Ping-kwan, from "Broken Home"

# I: The Encounter

warp flange between  
the sheets as bedrock  
as honey

the listening steadier  
a bullet this energy  
a conditioning

a set into stone  
lapping up the fur  
the fur of ancient bears

conducting ancient yawn  
a micro celebrity  
existence

coffee's hot  
lava tar pit carpet  
singeing hallelujah

(mind's  
a terrible waste  
to place)

micro celeb dense  
the terrain as tourniquet  
the coil

antisocial media  
networks crouching  
in the water

thickly lit  
and senseless  
the touch

taste gentle  
and me imagining  
plastic

## 2: Trickery Triplet

from behind that which is star spangled  
from beyond super and late to supper  
a joke shaped like a dance  
the wind a changing of direction  
though no one to whisper its name  
no one to blink and describe it

\*

I am now  
the proud owner of veins  
weaving like arachnids  
and oh how they crawl  
how they spin to tell their tales

\*

the robber barons  
little figurines

and we all are reaching  
a melting mixing point  
the motion a troubling one  
under the sun more curdling  
under the sun open your door

heads on the back  
get down

this is not  
a joke  
the pig lit



### 3: Incident

I am thinking of a puberty of fire  
thinking of the drop of a coin  
in a barrel of oil

thinking of all the sludge  
everywhere  
sitting up  
stinking canals

am thinking like yams for dinner  
the slow warming of meat  
approach to near liquidity

the incident  
the rub of f  
to follow  
the show  
behind a curtain  
made of ears

of children  
made of eyes  
of quickened light

the same kind I worship  
worry I will fumble

crashed quaking and mend  
sit sip spill sponge

requiem for countertop  
with iridescent reflections  
with all the shy and shattered

a playground for the warmly tried  
for the elastic psychotic

## 4: Smiling but Outside

only with the prickle of the nettles  
underneath the thumb's nail

\*

stupidity of madness  
trees in strange shapes all  
around  
grinning

\*

stupidity of madness  
caused by a single stream  
of crystalline liquid

\*

mild to the touch

splashed upon the face  
curled around corners

\*

chewed neurons  
reduced empathy  
causing cracks  
in necks

\*

spasm of new shapes  
newly treated horror  
this is how we do it

\*

convergence arises  
an arrow of error  
a flowing or flight

the sun peaking up  
the angles awkward

\*

equivocation a word  
not quite right  
not quite bright

\*

impasse  
a tip of the tongue  
bouquet of feeling

## 5: Den Burbling Shadows

and in its place we have strange mannequins  
men with shaking hands  
with shaming bands of eyesight

if you could dance rotten

I'd prophet it

would flight it

iteration and discussion

flagging down

a flagship dance

out out out out

the in of and the out of

the off of and the urn

urge forward and awkward

like brick work

like brick

a trip wire of sour

a token tale of an outage of power  
an ounce of powder colored like glass

dare I say come forward  
dare I say dance dance dance

## 6: After Scream

antennae translucent before creation  
eruption is the belly of a jellyfish  
and chronic chorus of sighing

buzz up in awareness  
awash the shore is colored gold  
a reprisal of what do we want  
and what do we find in brittle hands

chokehold of the talisman  
a gift given from a mother and father

a strive to be fuller  
though you nod  
take a moment  
like a bullet

tracers never as phalanx as we dream  
the lightning never as bright as the first



memory of the ego

a coastline

an unpurchased candle

plastic wrapping

dust getting thicker

with each light switched

## 7: Coincident

swatch of the swab

swish of brackish

was it a barbed feeling

was it coincidence

still dream the flame pubescent

odorless before the odor

tasteless before the taste

a second nature

second skein

second pattern

migraines along the nerves

itsy bitsy crevice of blood

a tincture organic

the people pause

(like palsy)

the people lap

lapse of leprosy

don't forget

to sip

sip sip

itch in the throat command

beckon wonder

the lunacy of the clock

conditioned through earth wind fire air

for the last trick

deadening of silence

thick fronds of flesh

element heard

water

## 8: Fluoride

chirp

buzz whack weed

sluice to slide

throat to hide

ameliorate

a chandelier of blank

dip to whimsy

attempt to form

to remember

this is the wracked

burnt and scolded

scaled scalene saline

warped cunning

intuit

lick of grass

shatter past glass

expulsion of exhibits

interred heart

ornamental

the staring

erasure sets

come home again

## 9: Immaterial Awareness

the letting us

let us go

like a scythe made of stone

waxed and molten and melted

the drip of matter

down around beyond

even the prepositions meek

altitude and pressure gone

waves remaining alpha

brains mush or mold

a treading of certain waters

avoidance of others

boldly static

risk of zeros

this is what

what this is for

## 10: Another Synchrony

tried static

told off tokens

metamorphosing

shadowy currents

and gasps or yawns

crisis of sinks

spouts and sputters

the mind is a brick

still in a dampened drain

terror is a lift

a pirouette

a body of energy

a transportation

an unlocking with lips a slit

tried static



coldness and warming

dangles and processions

charms multicolored

crack of chromatic

clack of shine

the train of the numb

blessed burden

an enticing trial

entity dried

## II: Liquid Atoned

expectation of the window

behind the blow

relationship trapped

to the wrangling set

light gives life

of draws and pulleys

in a brown square

sequence of repercussions

drowned sluiced lucidly partial

it goes without saying

and then without any feelings

impartial

a lull

it is liminal

the rapture arrives  
in the dullitude

cascading thorough  
in gray upon gray

despite inhibitions  
exhibitions  
staring of heart  
kidney liver brain

despite the palate deserted  
desert  
desertification

the rapture arrives shoveled  
hovelled  
motion of the burgeoning grim

lull  
then limbo

extinguishing or

snuffed or

emptied

what we require

is what subdues us

what we know

is what exhausts us

what was ecstasy

now exhaustion

what was operational

is now subduction

the expiation expedited

the expedition of the extremes

never always, constant

Places I want to go for

myself    ancient with horrible pockets

- Hoa Nguyen, from "[Cold black puddle stops]"    little

Love is a fist!

- Mr. Bungle