

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

***José Padua***

***Hose***

***Guru Joe Cheese***

***Baby Joe***

***Dad***

***Honey***

***King of the Road***

**12/19/17**





**Nine Haiku for Jose's  
Sixtieth Birthday**

on Avenue B  
at least two lifetimes ago  
life inhaled like smoke

*sans* your peerless poems  
I'd never have written one  
yes I'm blaming you

remember the mail  
full of poems we used to trade?  
holy fuck we're old

the brilliant corners  
of your mind remind me of  
Thelonious Monk

just because we're old  
doesn't mean our youth is gone  
it's just itchier

you turned me on to  
Husker Du but I still don't  
get the Minutemen

you lucky bastard,  
Creator of Poetry:  
Maggie and Julien

a thousand nights in  
smoky bars remembered now  
like a field of stars

tiny buffaloes  
make wild and intriguing friends  
thanks for being mine

--*Michael Randall*



**Comrade**  
(for Jose)

I'm glad we were un-introduced  
to our demons.

I like your feet just fine. They remind me  
I am fond of mine.

Pity, all that knee-less shoe-  
bottom gum-stuck sidewalk grit.

I doubt I could have steadied you.  
You could not have steadied me.

I suppose that's the nature of walking  
on marbles.

There's a cracker joint 'round the corner.  
You know it—peopled by blank white pages.

I want to sit across from you.  
Showing old scars.

It will have to be at night. We don't even  
have to talk.

Like two old top  
secrets – comrades writing codes.

Our reflections in the southern-fried glass  
passing some time on solid ground.

--*John Berry*

## Ron Kolm

I have always admired Jose Padua as a writer – he observes things clearly, and then writes about them with a marvelous style. But what I want to talk about here is the past – the ‘good old days’ in the East Village. It was an interesting period: the neighborhood had emptied out, and even though gentrification was



on the horizon, it was still kind of dangerous. Many of the folks we hung out with thought of themselves as living the writerly life, but it was usually a pose, not reality. Jose, along with Michael Randall and Carl Watson, were the real thing; much closer to the Bukowski ideal of knocking back some beers in a bar, maybe shooting some pool, then reading your work at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, or wherever. Their work had ‘the stink of reality.’ Jose just had a poem published in the most recent Unbearables anthology, *From Somewhere to Nowhere: The End of the American Dream*, and I would like to add it here – it is a wonderful piece of work!

## Avenue Banana

Living on Avenue Banana  
in the 1990s is not a lot  
like drinking tea.

I look up to the sky.

You shout at people  
driving by in limousines.

We eat rice and chicken,  
wonder what to do.

You could go home and  
watch your color TV  
or whistle on the way  
to the sink.

I can lie back on my mattress  
like a tiny buffalo

and wave my hands at the flies  
in the air or on my knee.  
Alone I see white paint chips  
on the ceiling, feel the need  
for something green or golden.  
With you there's sometimes  
a step in between, you sitting  
in my window reading a magazine.  
Sometimes we're watching  
the same movie on different TVs.  
Other times I'm giving you cigarettes  
like moonshine by the sea.  
And though this isn't Paris  
in the 1930s  
and I can't be Henry Miller  
and you can't be Anais Nin,  
the look in your eyes sometimes  
makes me think of you  
as Grace Kelly in bed  
reading a copy of Vogue,  
and me as Jimmy Stewart,  
asleep by the window  
with two broken legs.

### **Pat Padua**

Thank you for giving me my allowance and helping me through school and showing me New York and for teaching me that it's okay to like both Lionel Richie and Sun Ra.

### **Sharon Mesmer**

Happy birthday to one of my favorite writers and human beings. And remember: you're not getting older; you're getting less young. Woo-hoo!



## Jeff McDaniels

I remember the first time Jose came to the 15 minutes club. Of course I was skeptical. He read his first poem and I was completely blown away. I completely expected his next poem to not be very good because back in those days people only had one good one. But his next one was amazing as well. And he had such a strong persona. Sometimes I thought it was a little bit of an act, the whole alcoholic writer thing, but then there were times where it just kept going and going and it went into a whole new sphere. But those times when we did readings in Washington and New York and different places and hung out and drove to Michigan, those are times I will cherish. I remember the last night of the finals and Jose completely rocked the house and I was so happy for him. And Kenny rock the house as well. I was actually the one who dropped the ball for us that night. Anyway it's a combination of seeing José read and then also the downtime, the hanging out the conversation. And to be honest your relationship to Jose is so amazing. Like this whole new person seemed to emerge from that persona, and he is so good with you and with the kids. I saw him open the door for you once and I just thought he was so conscientious and it's obvious that he's a good dad and those things are so important, more important than anything. Please give them a hug for me and tell him congratulations for staying alive six decades. And congratulations on the bond and love that is your family.

## **Michael Cash**

Jose, It is hard for me to believe that you are 60. I am glad to have met you and your family and am awed, saddened and gladdened by your poetry and your insights. You are a treasure. Happy Birthday!

## **Sarah Davis Boyd**

Thank you for always believing in me, even when I was a bratty teenager. You have inspired me to be a better writer, a better person, to stand up for myself, and to find a voice of my own. Thanks for being the cool cat that you are. I hope you have an amazing birthday! Happy birthday Jose!

## **Andy Fenwick**

Jose Padua was one of the first people I met when I moved to DC. He is one of the funniest people anyone will meet. I love his poetry, for which he deserves a large monetary prize. We also had a threesome with Betty White. Memory is foggy. It may have been with the Ass Man. ~ Andy Fenwick

## **Joel Dias Porter**

Jose is a cool guy, even when he was drunk. OK, maybe not so much then, but he was always smart, funny, and a great guy. I'm proud to have known him all these years. PS it wasn't my idea to leave you in NYC that time. OK, maybe it was, but it worked out right?

## **Ryan Boyd**

For Jose: For the small amount of time I've known you, your conversations are always entertaining. You're like an apex predator waiting to strike with either some sort of pun, sarcastic, or smart ass comment that always makes me smile or laugh. With that I hope you have an amazing birthday! And don't forget, being a smart ass is always better than being a dumb ass!



## **Joe Maynard**

Hi heather... sorry, I get stressed about toasts and such... anyway, Jose's so cool. I enjoy y'all's updates. happy holidays & here: Jose, you are insightful and most often funny. I still find it hard to believe you moved to Front Royal, VA. You are a reluctant Barbie therapist, though it is the All-American bigots that worry me most about killing us all. Somewhere, there is an observation to change the course of history. We're all looking. You have the eye to spot it. Lord knows you put yourself in "the shit." Happy Jackie 6-0, comrade!

## **From Eileen Moeller**

For Jose Padua, As He Turns Sixty  
So, you've lived a cosmic hour,  
Dear Poet. Each year ticking by  
quick as a minute, your poems  
stopping time, giving you a full  
taste of being present, of the present  
itself, with its intimations of eternity,  
or leading you to the ravenous  
caterpillars of memory, feeding them  
until they burst into flight, intensely  
beautiful, alive, alive, alive images  
and metaphors, poems containing  
them in delicate cages of words  
hung on the bright fog of the page.  
Each picture, each insight, each time  
the heart sped up in recognition of something  
other worldly, a single hair whitened: little spirits  
nestled into your mane and beard, making you  
newly luminous. May they continue to  
light your way through this difficult  
world, and pull you toward  
what is numinous.

## **Chris Spehr**

Well, My writing skills are not on par with most but I have two stories about Jose. The first was going over to meet Pat on Hobart



street and Tony and Jose scolded their Dad for climbing out on the roof landing to clear leaves. I think Pats dad was 90 and not long had cancer treatment...I was like man the Padua's are something else...

The other was of course the 24 hour film project that proved that we were in over our heads to even try but then Jose and Gus managed to push the project through. I remember working to get Jessica to smoke the cig just right and also becoming the chief cameraman because John Snelson's camerawork was to shaky...it was great fun.

## **Michael McConnell**

For Jose's 60th: Best wishes from Mike and Mary - "You don't pull no punches but you don't push the river"

## **Amy Shull**

Happy birthday! I'm tickled with this opportunity to reflect on your greatness! Ever since our girls met as tiny ballerinas, you and Heather have been sources of kindness, creativity, intellectualism, support, and understanding in a town where it was incredibly hard to find kindred spirits. I greatly appreciate your friendship over all these years—both in person and on Facebook, where I've relished your thoughtful essays and poems and found them to be wonderfully relatable. I admire your wit, wisdom, deep love for your family, and fierce opposition to injustice. I hope your birthday is a delight, and I wish you many joyful years to come.



## Silvana Straw

**Part I.** Happy Birthday Jose, the most prolific and beautiful writer of us all, loving father of beautiful Maggie and Julien, loving husband of beautiful Heather, Jose of the great and funny spirit, and master of the sardonic. Happy Birthday Johnny Depp's Garbage Man, proud member of Husain and the Sweathogs, survivor of near death rides home with Pakistani princes that smoke Dunhills and write of sheep and meat. Happy Birthday Jose the liar who lies about the Ass Man at the 15 Minutes Club, who throws cigarettes at the crowd at the Nuyorican , tells them "I don't give a fuck what you fuckers fucking think," then vanishes down an alley. Happy Birthday Jose , big-hearted chronicler of

his family and children and mountains and skies and village idiots and rebel flags and beaches and music. Thank you for always making me laugh. Thank you for always inspiring me to write-- for reminding me every day that writing is a beautiful and necessary thing. For being my friend all these years. If it were not for you and Heather , I would not have quit smoking. Thank you for saving my life. Happy Birthday! With love and admiration, ~Silvana

**Part II.** Once upon a time in the mid-90s, Jeff, Renegade, Kenny, Silvana and Jose drove from DC to New York and back again in the same day to compete against the NY slam team. In this photo, Jose Padua is remembering that night and how we abandoned him. Or perhaps he abandoned us. We may never know. That night at the slam, when it was his turn, Jose walked onto the stage at the Nuyorican, took the mic and began throwing cigarettes at the audience and grumbling, "I don't give a fuck what you fucking fuckers think" then taking long deliberate pauses before throwing more cigarettes at the crowd and

cussing . This went on for quite a while to the point where we were really scared that he would never actually get around to reading his poem. But then he did. And then we beat the Nuyorican team on their turf anyway. Later that night, we were all outside about to get into Jeff's car and head back to DC when we realized Jose wasn't with us. Where's Jose? Has anyone seen Jose? Someone went looking for him in the club but he wasn't there. Someone said they saw him disappear down the alley. Then someone suggested we just leave without him. Jose is from New York they said. He knows what he is doing. He probably had other plans , they said. And so we left. ~Silvana

### **From Puffkin**

Happy Birthday, I wore my pink underpants for the occasion!



## **Laura Levesque**

Hi Jose, you are blessed with many gifts and you share those blessings with us in your writing with such candor and grace. I'm glad to know you and wish you many more fruitful years! Happy birthday!

## **Holly Dawn Hewlett**

Wild man...I am glad you are on this earth. Wow...man! This world is sooo much more amazing because you are in it!! Love ya Holly

## **Donna Winfield**

Wishing you an amazing 60th birthday, Jose! A poem you wrote this year was a much needed reminder for me about empathy, tolerance and coping with "otherness." It was about the pursuit of happiness, a journey we all share, and I loved it. Thanks for your words and friendship, Jose. 😊



Henri Cartier-Bresson. "Brie, France, June 1968"

## **Sid and Jules**

Jose... And/Or Pablo, if you ask Jules...

But I am the author stealing from you - by far one of my most beloved storytellers. Yes, I am certain many will use the specific word "poet" to identify you on this most memorable occasion of celebrating your first 60 years on Earth. This choice is not wrong. I simply choose to embrace a broader scope, I suppose. Including poetry. The tradition of "storytelling" regardless of the form it takes seems more appropriate. A written oral history, if that can be. Framing years of your experiences into well-worn, comfortable, approachable moments - even when they are filled with pain and anger. Endlessly handing us wisdom from your knowledge. You may not recognize it... But we do. Large doses and small slivers alike. I imagine you rebuffing this truth with my own father's last words - "Ah, what the hell do I know?!?" We both know there is wisdom in that as well!

What specific wise words do I steal today? Those you shared on 13 December... "We're not those people." We're not those people either. And I am as grateful to have as a member of the family Jules and I have chosen. The four of us each come from such different backgrounds, but none of us are those people. And never could be, never will be, and thank goodness we have each other - accepting us each "as is". What a gift to have for at least the past 20 years from you. Let's not overshoot the mark for another 60! But we can certainly look forward to celebrating 20-30 more of these December 19th milestones with you!  
With much love, Sid and Jules

## **Steve Allen May**

Happy birthday, Jose. Long may you write!

## **Lisa Stoffer**

Happy, happy birthday, Jose, and many happy returns!

## **Carmen Calatayud**

Dear Jose, Happy 60th Birthday! I love your poetry and writing, and wish I had more time to focus on reading all your blog entries. I admire the way you blend gut-level truth telling, social and political observations, insight and humor in your writing, in ways that no one else can. I'm wishing you a beautiful birthday and new year. Thank you for teaching all of us to write with your own graceful writing and kind, supportive words. I'm so grateful for your wise soul and friendship. I celebrate you!!!

Love, Carmen

## **Sunil Freeman**

Happy 60th Birthday, Jose. I don't know where to begin, there are so many good things to say. I'll start by saying that Writer's Center reading with you, Heather, and Brian Gilmore was one of the most enjoyable events in all my years working there. Truth Thomas had contacted me to have Brian read from his new book, and I wanted to be sure we had a perfect group of poets for the event. I'd been enjoying your extraordinary Facebook posts, poems and prose, and suddenly a light bulb went off. A real "Eureka!" moment, and it all came together perfectly. I've thoroughly enjoyed our get togethers since then, and I always enjoy your posts of brilliant sanity when you share them with us.

## **Tracy Arden**

There once was a man who resided in Front Royal,  
The local politics can make one recoil,  
But his wife, so lovely, a pink-hatted beauty,  
His children - so creative, so brilliant, such cutie-pa-tooties,  
A finer family one cannot recall.

Happiest birthday to you, dear sir!! Here's to good health and many more birthdays to come...XOXOXOXOXO

PS: I am no poet...forgive my poor pros above!!!

## **Elizabeth Spehr**

You keep it real and I take solace in your writing in this harsh world. I wish you good vibes and energy on this very special birthday.

## **Betsy Marsh Zung**

The Chinese recognize 60 as a special age. I don't know about other Asian beliefs but the Chinese think you have made a home run. You have reached the age of venerability and the rest is gravy. There is much wisdom and humility in your writing so just keep on being venerable and humbly accept the respect you deserve.

Happy Birthday venerable sir.

## **Lisa Rabasca Roepe**

Happy Birthday José. I'm so happy to have met you and even happier we have kept in touch (through the magic of Facebook). Your poems and reflections give me hope in these dark times. Thanks for bringing some light into our lives. Happy 6-0 and many, many more.



Photo credit: Maggie Padua



## **Valeano Valeani**

My dear José, as it happened I met your poetry while I was on the never ending Golgotha that is my own complete failure, I read your words and found in their thread the merciful warmth of someone who knew, a soul companion. Happy birthday to you and many candles to be blown, now and in the years, as the pains you blow out with your words.

## **Khadija Anderson**

Dearest Jose,

I know what 60 feels like since I just crossed over. It's not so bad, especially with an awesome family around to love. Enjoy the day, enjoy the year, and a very long life to you!

## **Darius James**

The first time I ever heard you read your work, I marveled and felt instant respect. I was in the presence of an authentic poet of grace and great power. You opened both my eyes and ears. Thank you, you old-ass muthafucka!

## **Bonny Finberg**

Jose, you always brighten the moment with your insight and elegant poetry/prose. I miss your dry sense of humor, especially in these swampy times. We all wish you would come back to New York Shitty soon. Even if just for a visit. Long overdue. Happy happy birthday, baby.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=lfy18ynhWNU>

## **Merry Fortune**

San Jose, thank you for your writing; it is a present I've come to look forward to and dream on. So glad to have met all those years ago. fly robin, fly!

## **Preeta Nasir**

I will most certainly write something dear Heather! I am so deeply touched that you included me; as you always have. So very glad we touched base again. It means a great deal to me.

God bless all 4 of you. My love, prayers and good wishes will always be with y'all. May Maggie and Julien grow up to be wonderful human beings like their parents- kind and compassionate.

xos    :))

## **Joy Dubblex Leftow**

Happy Birthday - 60 is a new beginning. We love your writing!

## **Linda LaCloche**

Happy birthday Jose! Keep using your voice to show us the world and all its goodness and flaws.

## **Molly Fasick Snyder**

Around 10 years ago, Joseph and I were sitting eating lunch at the County Seat in Fro Ro when we were surprised to meet two "like" minded wonderful people, Heather and Jose. Since then I have had the pleasure of reading and listening to Jose's poetry. My life has vastly improved from meeting the both of you. Happy Birthday, Jose!

## **Sam Serafy**

I buy these hoes whacky packs and I flip these paccs so I'm not wiggity wack

## **Paul T. Hopper**

Jose Padua enjoys life--and recognizes problems in our lives. And both of those elements (and more) appear in his poems, for which I am grateful.

## **Reuben Jackson**

Love for life

## **Dana Weintraub**

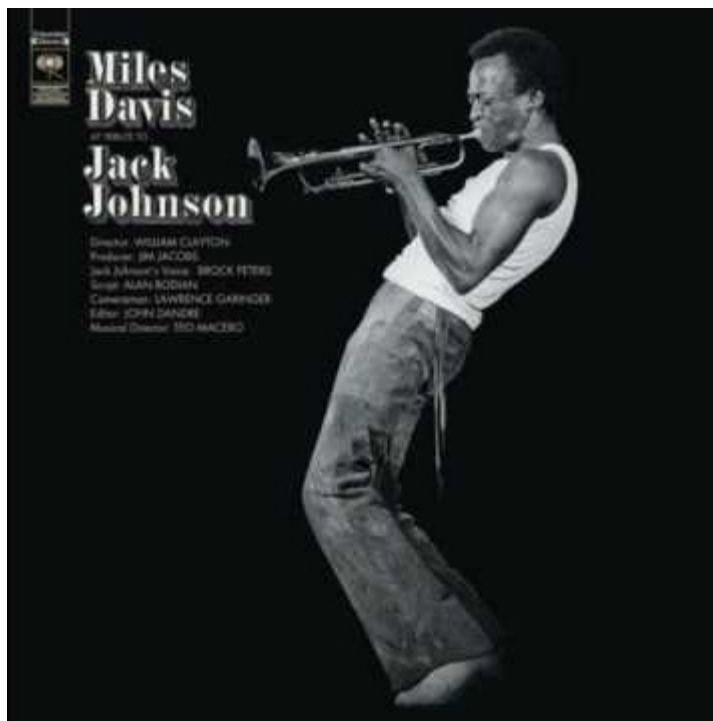
Dear Jose, wishing you the very best, always, on your 60th birthday. Your writing inspires me and lifts my soul, but most importantly, I see what a great husband and father you are, and that gives me calm and comfort. Happy birthday, Jose, I hope to see you and the family again soon.

## **Def Jetson**

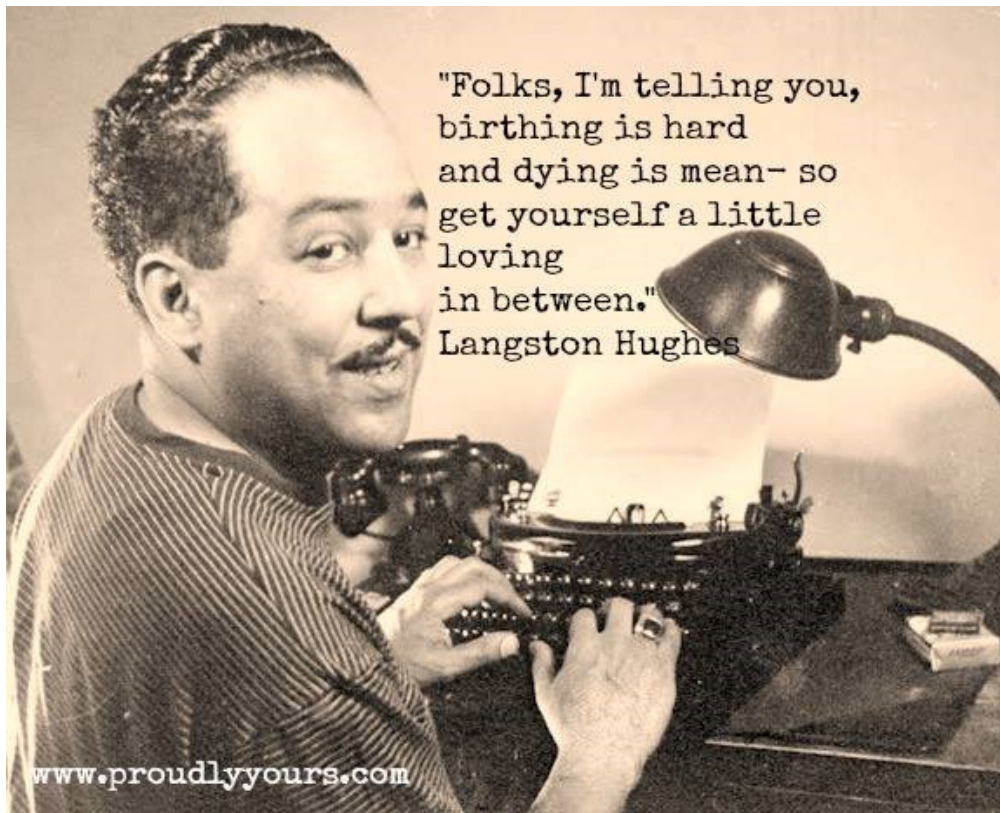
There is no way he's 60. Holy mackerel!

## **Casey Scott Bishop**

Some of my favorite, most prescient memories of NYC are of drinking with you and Carl in those narrow, squalid, glorious bars. Lucy's, the International, that Irish one on 14th, what was it called? Jack Dempsey's? So many legends haunting those places, and with you I felt in on something true and dark and marvelous, like I was sitting shooting the shit with Bukowski and Henry Miller. What's more, I always felt heard--when most people treated me like a neon tetra, you always spoke to me lion to lion. You're one of my favorite characters from my hypnotic dream of that city, and I've loved watching you transform into a full blooded human being in a less glamorous, more universal context. The best is yet to come. You are winning The Big One!



## Michael Waters



## Michael Simms

Jose is the best poet I know (And I know a lot of poets!)

## Deborah Pintonelli

Jose you beautiful and brave soul. Please stay around forever....bwahaha. xoxo

## Miles David Moore

I remember those days at Club 15 Minutes, Jose. You were the crowd favorite, deservedly so, and you still are. Happy Birthday!

## **Chuck Cuyjet**

So very happy to be in your circle here on FB. One of these days I hope to meet you in real life...Meanwhile, have a great birthday!

## **Tammy Ruggiero**

Jose you have such a warm, intelligent, thoughtful energy. Your work moved me so much that I attempted to write my own poem after watching you read yours. It came off well as I read it at my birthday but then it disintegrated into the night as we danced the night away. I found a few shreds the next day and resolved to write another one day to show you. I am always happy when you "like" something I shared on social media because I admire your taste and feel it is a little nugget of approval from someone I respect and look up to. It is these small everyday things that make a difference when you are a mentor without even knowing it. Now you know. You can just be you and silently be mentoring all of us to be brave, pay attention and keep raising our soul flags and fly them proudly through our work. I hope you delight in your 60th twirl around the sun!

## **Elvie Ebert**

Age is a jewel  
Shining with wisdom and light  
Faceted with dreams

## **Kim Roberts**

Jose, I hope you realize what a fan I am of your poetry. I consider myself fortunate to have had the honor of publishing you (in my anthology and in the journal Beltway Poetry). Here's wishing you a fabulous 60th birthday, and a year to come full of surprise and wonder.

## Veronica Padua

"Tam bo li de say de moi ya Hey Jambo Jumbo Way to parti o we goin' Oh, jambali Tam bo li de say de moi ya Yeah, Jambo, jumbo" Lionel Richie reminds me of you. How you taught your younger brother to be authentic in his taste and to be open to all things. You bought the cool records and the records that has the guy wearing the dad sweater on the cover. You helped form the qualities that not only makes him a wonderful critic but your influence helped him find joy in the heights and the depths in this life. In words and in silence you have shaped the world for 60 years and it breathes and moves with truth for countless days. So I lift my proverbial glass to the first 60 years and pray for 60 more. So sing with Lionel, "We're going to Party, Kalamu, Fiesta, forever Come on and sing along!"



Photo credit: Maggie Padua

**11 Suggested Essay or Poem Titles for Jose Padua on His Birthday  
(Which Can Be Especially Handy If You Have a Word Count Limit and the  
Title Doesn't Count) --Bart Plantenga**

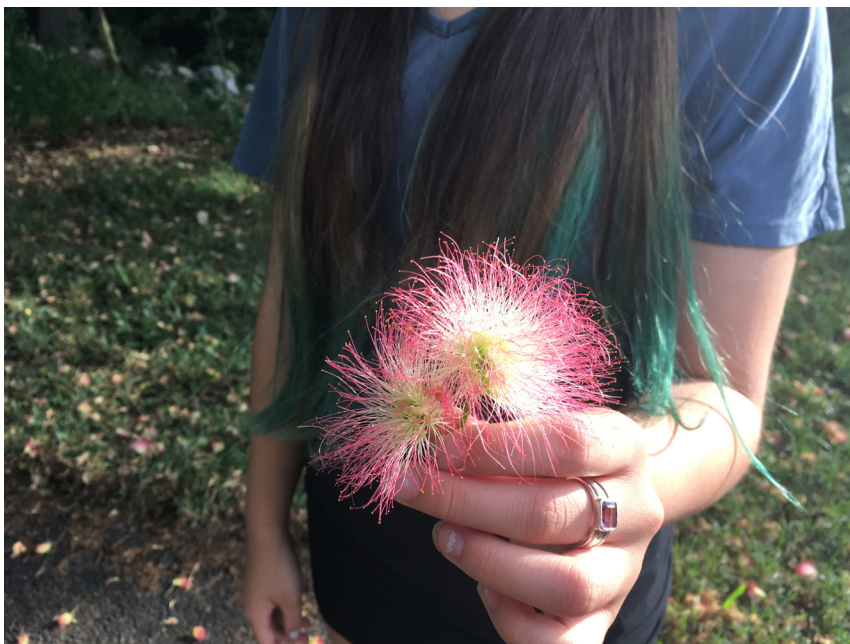
- 1. The Day I Woke Up and Wished I Hadn't Because Justin Bieber's "Band" Was Sleeping On Our Living Room Floor and I Could Not Explain Away Their Presence To Maggie Without Using My Lip-Syncing Skills**
- 2. Back When The East Village Considered Me King [I Thought] For Staring Down The Jukebox In The Life Cafe Until It Played Something Excellent By Sun Ra And The Hippest Bar, Max Fish, Hired Me To Be Their In-House DJ, Which Lasted One Week Because I Played Too Much Gertrude Stein And Robert Ashley**
- 3. We Were Down At The Shore But Some Republican Had Stolen Our Beach And Left Behind A Tapestry of 250 Cheap American Eagle Beach Towels Placed Side By Side And Thought Nobody Would Notice – But I Did**
- 4. The School Bake Sale That Never Happened When A Fight Between Rival Bake Clubs Broke Out Over A Parking Spot Turned Ugly And The Parking Lot Looked A Lot Like A Jackson Pollock Painting Done In Sponge Cake, Cupcake And Weird-Ass Colored Icings**
- 5. The Day The Home-Schooled White Supremacist City Councilor Convinced The Majority In Town That I Was The Racist For Making People Feel Uneasy About Their Own Identities And Determined That A Safe And Comfortable Distance of 100 Feet Whenever I Was Around Would Temporarily Ensure Adequate Safe Space For The Locals**
- 6. What To Say When A Neighbor Comes Over Drunk And Unannounced To Stare At Our Guests, The Meat Puppets, Who Are Eating Tater Tots With Gusto On A Day Off From Their Reunion Tour, Heading To Washington To Play My Old Hangout I Thought Went Out Of Business In 1992**
- 7. That Day The Republican Party Exploded When At A Party Gathering I Told Them That Playing Elton John Songs Dating From When "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" at Dangerous Volumes Is Not Only a Health Risk But Could Only Further Erode America's Reputation As A Style Icon**

**8.** The Dream That Wrecked The Democratic Party On The Night I Read My Poem Praising Cornel West Together With Russian Poet-Friend Evguénie Sokolov And They Revoked My Membership Following Accusations Of Collusion And Spying And I Denounced Them As The Enemy Of The People Of Excellent Poetry

**9.** The Night We Ate At Denny's And The Waitress Forgot Our Fries And As An Apology Sang Brenda Lee's "I'm Sorry" Holding A Dirty "Crazy Skillet" Platter In One Hand And A Dirty "Lumberjack Slam" Plate In The Other Because At Denny's You Can Have Breakfast For Dinner

**10.** There Was The Day That Walmart Security Accused Me Of Shoplifting The Thelonious Monk CD "Monk's Dream" I Had In My Pocket Even After I Showed Them That This Branch Had Never Ever Carried Anything By Monk And That Indeed Walmart Had A Policy Of Never Carrying Anything By Monk For Fear of Alienating Loyal Shoppers [PS, My Mugshot Is Now In Their Database Marked Potential Threat To The Public Order]

**11.** I Woke Up One Day And It Was My 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday And I Was Sitting In Front Of The Computer Wearing A Pair Of Boxer Shorts I Bought In 1994 When I Noticed That 20 Million Republicans Had Already Wished Me A Happy Birthday On Facebook And I Had To Thank Each One Of Them Personally - Or Else Be Called An Ungrateful Immigrant Forever





## Houses

--for José on his birthday

You send me another one, at work, mid-morning, pixels flying through the ether to form pictures of a life five feet closer to perfect: emails that link to dream house after dream house, each one more virtuous than the next, at the beach, in the city, hidden in towns we've never heard of. You don't tire of looking because what if it exists—that single impossible find—like an undiscovered planet in an infant universe spinning miles from the skittish dogs next door, the cops stopped across the street again, and the bleary-eyed woman, cigarette alight, whose racist slurs fail to break the lawn guy. What if it's out there, far from small-town stillness and mortal time?

The house we live in now, one hundred years old, sits on stone, telling fortunes to the wind, whispering sweet nothings we love but should ignore. Remember, years ago, on the train ride out west, my hand warm under yours, yours solid over mine as we sliced through the night, shrinking valleys and mountains, searching. Remember the births—a girl, then a boy—their tiny bodies like harbor lights in the darkness of our room, signaling *this is home*? It's enough and never enough. We all deserve a roof—of metal, wood, or clay—but also something diaphanous that lets in moonlight and distance, that serves up stars in their eternal shining. We're always building houses, all of us, in our own blood, in our lover's eyes, real ones for shelter and metaphors to stretch out in as we run.

--Heather Davis



Credit: Maggie Padua