



**LITTLE  
UGLIES**

**DAWN SUEOKA**

*“Indeed, ghosts are a major problem  
in our society.”*

LITTLE UGLIES  
Dawn Sueoka



## UTOPIA

Pride is when nine billion birds flatter the sun.

Karma is when nations rise out of the sea.

The tides grow fat with age as the  
sun grows fat with age. In a struggle of  
man vs. himself, man is a distant  
city, a catcher of dust.

YELLOW SKIN BANANA WITH DARK SPOTS ON IT

Sometimes I space out a little.  
I let my body go completely limp.  
The sky becomes false to me.  
Everything is gross to me.  
Ten times a day the sun rises and ten times a day  
the sun sinks.  
I shut one eye and it is still there.  
Don't let anybody tell you otherwise:  
Dog bites kid, and the world moves savagely on.  
Ha!  
In the next century, I hope to be savage as  
Paul Verlaine.  
I dip my fingers into a lake  
that is only a rumor of a lake.  
I throw fistfuls of petals into the  
heart of the moon.  
I shut one eye, shedding tears of red and blue.  
Sometimes I space out a little.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN ON BOARD

Charlotte, like Charlotte  
O'Hara, had one father and no more.

This statement is a lie, this  
statement is unproveable. God alone

has knowledge of those days, for God  
alone is the last soldier standing.

What are gloves for when guns  
in the distance are one identical flame? Dear

kids, what is the sun for?  
I will tell you when I'm dead:

This statement is a lie, this statement  
is a mover of earth.

THERE ARE THINGS YOU REMEMBER  
AND THINGS YOU FORGET

How the breath of a younger Bob Barker  
falls across the floor like an eagle in winter,  
how the wind whips through the chapels  
of my own hometown.

What happened just now?

Someone dropped a cheerleader.

How can I trust you if I can't see you?

I sure miss you.

It's said that squeezing water from a stone  
is like squeezing salt from a thousand tables,  
that in a world where brother shoves brother,  
everything will be OK.

I have never believed that,

but for the water that swirls around our ankles,

I am grateful in my own way.



## UTOPIA

Our jaws are full of wishes.

Our beds are super clean.

The wind brushes the grass, which we've  
smooshed with our feelings.

You talk about the war.

I talk about my bleeding heart.

It's winter here.

It's the longest day of the year.

THERE ARE TRAPS BESIDE THE RIVER THERE ARE  
STRINGS IN EVERY BED, *or* DEAR GENTLE READER

When I was young I used to stare at pictures of trees.

The leaves were green the

leaves were brown the leaves were black.

There were no

fathers in the wild. And nothing ever suffers

or has suffered no matter how much

you suffer.

But sometimes the wind blows, sometimes the

clouds break. Smoke rises from a million houses

like a GIF you keep opening.

It batters my voice, my voice that stumbles

like a GIF.

I guess the main questions I want answered are:

How do I know when to start walking around in

my dream?

How do I enter my dream?

In the wild, dogs kill rabbits like kids kill birds.

Dogs kill live rabbits and eat them.

## HEY WHAT'S UP

This is not a poem;  
this is a dancing ground, a  
hustling ground.

Birds climb all over it like  
poor people's trash.

Lay your hands on the radio.

Lay your hands on the radio and  
dance.

As bluebells grow ever  
more bitter, guys with crows  
only get cuter.

Yet the most beautiful thing has already been said:

This is not a poem.

## DRAWING PICTURES OF THE SUN

What is a car crash.

What is a virgin.

What is a phoenix.

What checks in on a Tuesday and out on a Friday.

What checks in and out of a Palm Springs hotel.

Cacti, furnace of the gods—the  
gods and the gods of the gods.

Garden of the Gods is a park in Colorado,  
the burning away of falsehoods, revealing Pluto's  
transformation in us all.

Change is watery and hard to kill, yet change  
is always believable.

I admire strong women,  
silence and noise, limbs that grow  
like a cactus.

Folding my arms I fall asleep on your couch.

Folding my legs I sink to the  
bottom of the river, a free fall.

You are so elegant and sturdy, a room  
within a room

something that opens and closes a door  
drives into a wall

## REALITY CHECK

The plot of every movie or  
book is basically tragedy harm, harm,  
tragedy, and then  
somebody weeps. Baby, drug  
baby, wipe your wet white eyelashes  
on the side of the monitor.

On the side of the moon is an opening  
from which not a peep is heard all night. On the  
side of the brain is a door.

IT'S LIKE WE FELL INTO A DREAM, you  
with your sandy hair, me with my  
wet, rain-soaked hair.

In this world of magic  
and illusion, the moon is  
brutal as the waves are brutal.

And the droplets are spreading: beans, pills,  
clouds, whatever

## STRANGERS TALKING TO STRANGERS

I want to pinch Mount Olympus, to  
separate what is real from what is just crap.

I want to praise my own shadow, but odes  
make no sense to me.

Mount Olympus has fifty-two peaks, each  
one more or less wet

with rain. I want to pinch them one by  
one, until my face is no longer

my face and the air

becomes a pile of broken pots.

TO BE TRULY AMERICAN YOU MUST BE TOTALLY PISSED OFF

*after Matthew Arnold*

In this age of arrr and aught  
we are coming together and coming apart:  
Sexy, alluring, mysterious for commercials.  
Warm, friendly for narrations+commercials.  
I may not be a female or a male, but I  
know that a beauty queen is just like anyone else on TV:  
a woman dragging her dress across the sand.  
The sea is calm tonight.  
The moon lies fair upon the straits.  
I hold you by the elbows, grapple with you,  
no trusted mom and best friend.  
No mysterious guy next door, warm and authentic.  
The waves break against the rocks, pale  
as astronaut ice cream or the naked backs  
of brothers. The stars  
roar, and I am like Awesome!  
Is it only the wind, the  
wind that brushes the beach? When you wake, say  
it was only the wind.



## WE OWE YOU NOTHING BUT LOVE

Today is 12/21/12, just fyi, one of the last days on earth. We lie upon this beach, scraping the wind from the sea or a sticker of the sea.

We dream upon this beach, breathing the slimy breath of the sea. I imagine my hero, the legendary Annie Sullivan, who taught me that flapjack is another word for pancake and that dying in dreams = skypeing in dreams.

I skypeed the whole galaxy in hopes that you would bump cups beside my sleeping head, that my daughter would never be grabbed, and I would never become crazy.

It's sad, but in some cities, water does not equal water.

On Wed. I will read all your chats to you.

On Thurs. I will lie down beside you.

You whose hair is on fire, you may remember me by my flat-footed walk and wide-set eyes—

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE  
MY IMPROVING PHOTOGRAPHY

I am just a simple person looking for answers.

You are a wimp with a mic.

I pat my nipples to better resemble you.

I may even pretend to be you.

Blessed are those who

asphyxiate in secret, the stars

that shine, the hairy stars.

Forget your neighbors, forget your cat. Hiding is  
how you know you're awake.

YOU COULD BE A SHADOW

The world is made of water.  
The road is a trail of bright lights.  
Behind each door is a bride with her puppy, fat  
as a strawberry.  
This is the lint of American life.  
Ladies of Antietam, of Harrisburg, the stars  
bend, and I cannot see you.  
The sun pouts, with an air of violence, and  
I cannot see you.  
You've become a stranger,  
and by stranger I mean disaster  
whereby you feed yourself to others as  
the world beats a path to your door.

THESE PRETTY LADIES LOVE TO FIGHT

It's like  
seeing people you know  
in huge blobs of war,  
learning to squat, learning  
to scratch, learning to  
stay afloat.  
It's like pulling a muscle in your  
one good eye.  
Ladies, give unto us  
your chubby tears:  
A bird in the hand is a  
blade in the hand. That's it, now—  
Into the drink!  
Into the drink!

HELLO GOOD FRIEND, GREETINGS  
IN THE NAME OF GOD

Fighting is a way of praying.

Praying is a way of communicating with God. I like  
to fight, is that wrong?

I spent my youth talking to the Almighty  
and pretending to sleep.

It's what I wanted most from my life. Fighting is sitting  
beside God and punching his knee.

Fighting is listening  
and satisfying God.

## AND THE PIPER PAYS HIM

You and vous are just two guys in  
trouble, a joke you read  
with your own two eyes.  
The sun makes you old.  
The stars go round and round.  
You drive to Burger King, to  
Costco, to the Hilton, your  
eyes like black tubes.  
Rings on every finger, fingers in  
every cup, oh  
the sun makes you wild.  
RT @CassiniSaturn: Hello,  
ringing in your ears, your own  
red-rimmed eyes. Laughter is  
trippy and smells like blood. RT  
@VodkaRx : Tonight, find  
Saturn near the moon.

PEOPLE FLOATING HATE BEATS

I knew them by their  
foams, their  
fires; their dirty pictures,  
their spilled sun.  
They are three in number  
but we don't see them.  
You there? I'm  
evil. I'll soon  
depart for the east.  
Oh, my sweet  
regimes! I kiss their  
secrets one by  
one: Inside every  
god is a smaller god  
just like it. Inside  
every good job  
is a bottle of war.  
I try to speak, but I'm  
only a ghost. Theirs are  
the symbols, mine  
are the sighs.

## PRELUDES & NOCTURNES

Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world, a true miracle of nature.

It's a can of several flowers, and a grave to place them on.

I turn on this old radio, with its preludes and nocturnes, nocturnes and preludes;

all the daddies of the world gasp.

I have a little dog who fetches my slippers.

I have a little wife who strangles me in my sleep.

It's the rain, Dr., it's only the rain.

Lake Baikal is the purest thing in the world.

Lake Baikal is a pistol.

Lake Baikal is calling you collect from places no one's ever heard of.

Girlies of the woods,

we are standing in long lines for daiquiris and the water is rising, rising.



NO DISHES, MORE MEAT

We are living in a world created by Elizabeth Bishop.

Daylight frightens

the faithful; secrets

keep us clean. What does it mean

to confront the gathering cold?

No one can ever know.

Still we go forward, smiling

and miming death, the last itch.

## WOULDN'T GIVE YOU MY SHOES FOR YOUR SHOES

These are the saddest songs I have ever heard.  
No, these are the edges of the  
saddest songs I have ever heard, the places  
where words have two meanings:  
America is lousy like a carrot.  
America is gorgeous like a horse.  
Some people say I have  
problems, but I'm just waiting for America's  
Sweetheart to come to my door and  
ask, "Where's the sodee?"  
I crack open a cold one, look up into the sky,  
but hear only the sound of her shoes.  
It is the saddest song I have ever heard,  
and I cannot help but weep.

SINCE EVER SINCE

The sun sets, the sun rises.  
The cops I've seen strangle the  
widows I've seen.  
Yet life has a way of turning what's  
only a dream into a full-blown crisis.  
It is only then that I am truly grateful.  
Let's ditch this party with its termites  
and withered gods.  
If you give me your numero,  
I'll call you my radio.  
Listen! A billion car alarms are going off!  
Touch me with thy hand of mercy,  
thy thieving hand,  
while above us the moon  
grows fatter and more sarcastic.

## NIGHT PEOPLE

*after* Night People

In general, ghosts are just a bunch of bleached-out people with wings.

They often have a motive, which can be silence, dread, dance, or just plain anarchy.

If you encounter a ghost you may feel a burning sensation in your heels.

You may feel partially or totally agnostic.

I was burned by a ghost today.

Tell me whether this is okay or not okay.

The title of this poem is

“A bunch of bleached-out people with no real quote unquote ‘eyes.’”

This is so wonderful!

This is so nice and interesting!

To become a ghost after dying is an act of the purest revenge and the highest compassion.

In fact, a ghost is something I am often mistaken for.

Tell me whether this is okay or not okay.

If you encounter a ghost you should stay absolutely still for ghosts are weapons of mass productivity.

Indeed, ghosts are a major problem in our society.

They see with their

own eyes, channeling ghosts channeling ghosts

channeling ghosts.

A ghost is a person in infancy,

a ghost cut out of paper.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“Hello good friend, greetings in the name of God” and “These pretty ladies love to fight” previously appeared in *West Wind Review*. “We owe you nothing but love” and “Preludes & nocturnes” previously appeared in *Coconut*.

Dawn Sueoka's work appears or is forthcoming in *West Wind Review*, *Shampoo*, *smoking glue gun*, *Pinwheel*, and *Coconut*, among others. An essay on John Cage appears in *Jacket2*. She lives and works in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

*Little Uglies* is the fourth chapbook in the 2014 series from Bloof Books. Each chapbook in the series will be released in a limited edition of one hundred numbered copies, followed by a digital release.

**BLOOF BOOKS CHAPBOOK SERIES**

Volume 2: Issue 4 (2014)

ISSN 2373-1648 Online

This is the electronic edition