

at 21

By Wayne Russell

watching the purple worms swim
through my numbed out brain
i go mellow on the sh-rooms
oh those cow dung magic clouds
purple power majesty earth
boiled upon camp fire song
mingled within cheap beer hues
back in my youth
i climbed a sad ol' southern oak
tree and watched it weep
and i prayed to god i saw him
in the golden sun
he said i was a sinner
i prayed for death
to rain down on me
even at age 21

I Bleed Poetry Too

By Wayne Russell

i am not worried about
the prizes that push alone
the cobbles of poetic fame.
i am the underdog locked
within the rabid foaming
jaws of this word game.
these scars that dwell
within rot gut chasms
twisted rhythms venom
spews and masturbates
in showers of toad stools.
these bastard rhymes cooked
in the kitchen of hell basted
within the throes of the damned.
i am a poet not of perfection
and yes my mind is not that of
a PHD philosophy
but dig this i do have
an AA and a few
blue color
certificates.
i bleed poetry
too.

The News at 6 A.M.

By Wayne Russell

It's six A.M.
I boil the kettle
and prepare my
coffee, strong
no sugar, a dark
brooding concoction,
stirring, entwined in
a mad ballet dance
with a spoon, destined
never to be silver.

Click

On the television the
news anchors speak of
unimaginable suffering,
they seem to have a blood
lust in their eyes.

Blood lust

Like

Modern day gladiator's

Gladiator's tucked safely
behind shiny new laptop
shields.

And seated like Roman
emperor's upon a leather
covered throne, their courtroom,
the pomp of brightly lit news
studios.

The lower ranks, take to the
battlefield of urban blood

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letting.

Reporters crowing at the
blood shed rising, in the
hissing sun, a new day comes
kicking and screaming into
fruition.

The Parana's prepare to feast,
sharpening fangs, a feast of blood
and meat, of meat and blood.

"Let's go! Let's go!" the reporters
bellow

"Andddd weee are

"Live on location,
at the scene of the crime!"

The reporters

seem to be describing the
latest action / thriller movie
as they speak through their
smugness and slimy smirks.

The reporters

seem to be chanting into my
living room, staring straight into
my own lust for blood and death.

"Death is interesting, death fuels
our ratings! Give us death! Give us
blood!" "Give us pain, suffering, war,
street riots and misery!"

Cameras cut from the steely eyed
reporter and ensuing carnage upon

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the battlefields behind him

"Now back to you."

The reporters in the studio all seem
to agree in between quick glances
struck between them,

that

"Death by violence is so exciting!"

&

"Our ratings must be skyrocketing!"

and so it goes on and on,
a vicious cycle, where will
it end?

The reporters on the morning news
make pathetic attempts at cloaking
the grisly scenes, with their hollow
words of

"Heartbreaking"

and

"So very sad"

Yet

I can see the twinkling of there eyes
blood lust and glistening sparks dancing,
married, ambitions set high.

I can just read their thoughts now

"Local news now, world news here I come!"

As they speak of the people

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that have been burned alive
in mobile homes, drowned in
floods, and shot and killed in
convenience store robberies.

I can just read their thoughts now

"Yes it's a dirty job, but someone has to
report it."

"Sigh, just another day at the office, mmmm
donuts and coffee sound so good right now."

I sigh, drink my dark coffee for the same
cup that I do everyday, and click off the
blood bath on the morning news at 6 A.M.

Yes it's a dirty life, but someone has to
report it.

Black Coffee and Menthol Cigarettes

By Wayne Russell

black coffee and cigarettes
after sex with her seemed
to make perfect since at the
time.

we were young and i adored
her, even though i never felt
like she connected with me.

her inner detachment from
everyone on earth, peaked
my curiosity, when i first met
her at the dance club a few
years ago.

she sipped her expensive drinks
cold and methodically through
thin blood red straws.

i grew intoxicated from the dark
beauty of her hair that gently
swayed with her every movement.

her eyes were dark as a universe
devoid of every last star.

my defenses were lowered through
my consumption of cheap grog, she
took advantage of the moment,
seizing my heart, capturing my soul.

we co-authored poetry on the surface
of bar napkins, love and death were
waiting in the wings.

two months later, we were married
in a beautiful garden behind the justice

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of the peace, it was late July of 94.

i can still smell the "baby's breath"
flowers carefully arrangement in
her hair...

The Hazards of Being Five

By Wayne Russell

I'll never forget that day
while walking home from
kindergarten in the pouring
rain, October 1975.

Underneath sidewalks aligned
with magnolia trees and old
wooden power poles, it was
there that I first felt truly
defeated by Mother Nature.

Soaked to the bone, no umbrella,
no rain coat, no rain boots, just a
lonely, melancholic, stroll home.

On that cool Fall day, while still
at the tender age of five, I tasted
abandonment for the first time.

I understood that things were
strained under the Carter
administration, and that I "lived
to close to home" for "the big yellow
school bus" to pick me up, or to take
me home, during the school week.

I felt somehow jaded that mom
now had to work, because of dads
drinking and gambling excesses.

Sometimes I felt that it was my fault,
that Mamma could no longer take
me to or pick me up from Sherwood
Elementary School.

All the other kids seemed to have
rides on the bus, or by mom or dad,

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even my best friend Mary hitched a
ride with her mom.

My feet where engulfed by puddles
that kept expanding and covering all
ground in it's way.

I stamped my feet and the rain water
shot up like violent ocean wave from
ether side of my shoes.

Just then a large white Cadillac pulled
over to the side of the road, the window
rolled down, and a man of about 35
offered me a ride home.

Wayne Russell bio: Wayne is a creative writer from Tampa, Florida, his work has been described by his peers as "dark" "brooding" "honest" "raw" "surreal" "gritty" and "very observational of the ravaged world that we live in." Over the years Wayne has been published in various publications such as Foliate Oak, Poetry Quarterly, Danse Macabre, Dead Snakes, mgversion2>datura, Eccentric Press, Far Off Places, Poets' Espresso Review, and the Moon Mist Valley anthology.