



“this earteeth/ & tith[err] chew” – Boris Iszus

## LOGAN RYAN SMITH

( San Francisco )  
from **IN A STATE**

from this state,  
which state,  
this state

the state from which I plant my flag

could be any state  
given the moment in time from which I state  
my intentions or my intentions are given to me

could be anywhere  
could be any time:

I’m in the back row of the state signaling with  
my broken cell phone, I sit in the back of the room and yell  
and I yell,  
“You, at the front, stand down, sit,  
you’re ruining the show, you’ve got no right  
to rock the boat, to disappoint my view,” and when

my view is diverted my state is willing  
my state is in a sense of change and that change  
brings forth the rest  
because, from here, I don’t really want to notice  
the rest of the room  
or be noticed  
and the thing at the front of the room that is playing  
be it a film or an actor or a poet speaking from a podium  
with a piece of paper  
or a combination of all three  
I do not want it  
and from my state  
I will plant myself

solidly  
will call out again,  
“Hey, you, you sitting next to me, what brought  
you here next to me, why are you sitting so quietly, speak  
up, speak up, I say, I said, speak up,” when I spoke up I  
found the room spun inconveniently so  
and once again I’m turned over, in a state of unending  
imbalance, *there are rules to this, you know*, says gravity,  
*there are ways that are and ways that aren’t*  
*and you can’t do this, you know*,

and I know

it’s not happening,

I’m only sitting in a room balancing

counting my lucky stars forming in the wake of displaced  
eyes my eyes, of course, displaced from the balance  
causing little red and green stars to dance before my eyes  
until I take a deep breath

and see  
clearly  
again:

I see that I’m in no auditorium and there are no poets  
or actors  
or anything of the like around me:  
I’ve got a glass and a table near a window and it’s the city  
that’s below me  
this city that bellows loudly regularly for me  
with the burning up of buildings and citizens  
running like magnified ants  
below me  
crossing the intersection without much thought ringing  
down upon them from the stars balanced above them  
their heads so level upon their shoulders  
until  
of course,  
I see one of them beneath the front fender of an

imported car  
that glistens quite nicely in the dark  
and I yell down,  
“Are you okay, are you all right?”  
and the driver says,  
***Yeah, I’m fine***

from this state,  
the state of “being”  
from this state  
that acts like anything  
can be anything  
and all  
ends the same  
from this state  
I find myself  
and in this state  
I am myself  
or sometimes  
I may be  
someone else  
but that’s up  
for discussion  
and you may  
speak of it  
in your  
dissertation  
at the front of the room  
I will assist you with visual aids  
I will lift you up  
over my head  
and throw you  
I will throw you, trust me,  
as far as I can, and when I throw you,  
trust me, I will throw you somewhere  
and in such a way  
that nothing can hurt you  
and you’ll thank me, you will, you’ll say,  
“I thank you. I do. Thank you, I did not know  
it could go this way,” and I’ll tell you  
how it could go any way, and anyway, Jesus,  
it’s not so difficult to imagine a way to

the beginning of this state  
or out of it  
but there’s seemingly none of it  
I don’t think I know what I’m saying  
but I’ll always believe that you do  
so I’ll keep going  
I’ll ride from the stage  
out on a lion  
I’ll hold onto its fangs for good balance  
it would be terribly embarrassing  
to fall off a lion, you see,  
in front of an audience—  
Are you writing this down  
this is good stuff  
you should be sure to write the good stuff down  
and what I’m telling you  
now  
is good stuff  
is something you could use:  
**don’t ever fall**  
and when you do  
pretend you didn’t  
pretend the whole thing was a joke  
but nobody will get it and you’ll be eaten  
by the fucking lion you rode in on

I suppose I’ve always confused depression and boredom.  
I can’t count on anything to settle in this state. It’s all  
“up in the air.” And that’s a good place to be, especially  
when you’re afraid of falling. From the back of the room,  
to the front, that’s not a good way to go, either. No one  
wants to notice you, and no one wants to have any fun,  
either. It’s easy to tell with the things people fill their  
heads: Poetry, News, Politics, Philosophy, Theory, and  
Death. Well, I don’t really know how much they think  
about these things, but I can tell you one thing, They, are  
always thinking about these things and they make life very  
boring and depressing for you and me. They go on and on  
and on from the front of the room about all these heady  
things making my head spin and my stomach sick and I  
say, I yell, from the back of the room I scream,  
“If I wanted to go to the County Fair, if I wanted to hear

<sup>1</sup> re: *Robotic Muffins*

some bad music, if I wanted to be turned upside down again and again on the Zipper, I'd not have gone there in the first place," and, strange, how I'm there, in the Imperial Valley County Fair, chipping my teeth on candied apples and feeling my skin pull against me on the Gravitron, seeing all the animals, and by animals, I mean the fat furry people of the Imperial Valley, walking around giggling like there's something so fucking funny about any of this.

Well, I'll tell you one thing. I don't get it. It's hot as hell, the sun is beating down and we're filling ourselves with junk like chocolate covered frozen bananas and pop before we put ourselves amongst the smell of pig shit and throw our bodies all around. You know, right, that Gravity didn't intend this abuse. But what do I know. I'm afraid, always, that gravity will stop.

Then where will you be? I guess you'll be on top. And I'll be underneath you.

But I did not expect this poem to get to sex so early.

We'll talk about the Fair later. When we've got more time for trivial things. We'll talk about the state and poetry and theory and philosophy, more, later, trust me, when I can balance my checkbook and we've got more time for trivial things.

I guess we'll talk later.

a robotic megaphoned voice outside says, "Dada, Dada, Dada," and it's because of you people that I can no longer think it's a child calling for its father

in this state that I've been in all my life, and yes, that's California, in this state of boredom that I've not yet learned to know as depression from this bottom of the well I can see the water-drinkers roam along the periphery of the circle of light above me

and I float in water because of this thing called "buoyancy" though I don't trust that either and I will eventually sink when I get tired as I always sink when I tire and I tire of your face I tire of your words and I'm tired, so fucking tired of this state, the state, the state from which I began with and which will force me to claim a stake in sobriety at some point for the reasoning it has placed upon me with a great weight has lead my leaded head with an overwhelming drunkenness leaving me floating here in the bottom of the well that I, of course, did not dig, and I don't think you did either, but I've no proof, well, except that, well, I'm pretty sure that none of us are digging any of the wells we're drinking from

we're just lucky in finding them

some might call it smart and why not I don't believe in luck but I do believe in the lucky and you're probably lucky we're all lucky it just depends on which kind of luck you have

unfortunately, it's getting quiet now in this well and stupid me, instead of drinking from it, I fell in it

now there's a cat outside and it's lonely in the gutter of some city, my city, I'll give you one guess which one, there's a cat rubbing up against Post Office boxes and concrete trash receptacles and screaming, it's screaming, "I do not want your thoughtful processes, I do not want your singing voices, I do not want your poetries, and I do not want anything, but I do not want to be lonely."

That's what that cat outside the window on the city street is saying.

That cat, that shadow of noise, is in my state, and I am in its.

But none of us began this, and, thank god, neither of us can take credit.

From where shall we begin,

from which state do we each have offices,

and yet, I do believe, we each have offices in each state

even if we only have houses in one

where we'll retire

or where we'll reside for the time being

the time being something that I'm sure you treasure and that's why you waste it

accordingly from the offices of every state

vacationing from your houses

of solitary state one state

well, I don't believe it anyway I don't think you can have all your houses in one state and who stated that, anyhow, who said that first who said your houses can all be on one island

do you think you've created yourself a little paradise a little slice of heaven well, you haven't because your houses are spread out all over

and you're nothing special because so are everyone else's

they're all a mess all with no housecleaners and no real upkeep

when's the last time you looked at your rain gutters?

I'm no one to speak but I think that these floating houses that move all across our states are something to be wary of

something also that we shouldn't be seeing if we were more evolved at least if we were closer to being a ball of light and energy and not these messy noisy disgusting bodies

these houses floating all around and pushing you out

it's embarrassing almost as embarrassing as falling from the lion you rode in on in front of an audience because you thought it'd be smart or fun or whatever but no one no longer cares

and it's gone, oh, yeah, it's gone