

LITANY FOR JARRET KEENE

Jarret can I ask you a question?
Well more like a few questions.
Have you written any poems lately?
And if so, have you written any poems about pickles recently?
What about tighty-whities?
Do you have any poems about potted soil I could borrow?
Have you ever written poems about dry, cracked lips?
Jarret do you have any poems about chewing gum
Or cranberry-colored carpet cutters?
Jarret what about a poem about Lou Diamond Philips?
Got any Lou Diamond Philip poems or poems about Siamese cats?
Can you get me a moped for Christmas
With a poem about it taped to the exhaust pipe?
You got any Joyce Dewitt poems lying around?
Can I have a bite of your Danish?
Could you write a poem about my taking a bite of your Danish?
I could use a good platinum wig poem
And poems about nylon stockings and durags.
You got any poems like this anywhere in your possession?
Jarret when you write that poem about the chiliburger,
Can you copy a few copies for me?
Better yet, can I get some chili cheese fries
Wrapped in wide ruled notebook paper with a poem
About chili cheese fries written on it?
Remember those series of poems about Marilyn Manson
You said you were planning on writing?
Can I have one?
Jarret do you have any poems about harmonicas
Or poems about charbroiled chicken?
Or how about that poem you wrote about
Charbroiled-chicken-eating harmonicas?
Do you still have that one?
Remember that bad dream you told me about, Jarret?
Did you write a poem about it?
Have you written any sonnets lately or a maybe a villanelle?
Can you write me a villanelle about pimple cream?
Would it be too much to ask, Jarret,

If you could write me a poem about Timothy Busfield?
Got any poems about radioactive urine in Rice Krispies?
Or if you have a poem or two about pissing in cereal,
That would be so neat.
Jarret can you do me a favor?
Can you possibly write a poem about this dead
Armadillo I saw in the road once?
I need a coconut poem.
I need a poem about pink elephants and pig feet
Pickled in pig feet juice, Jarret.
Do you think you can write them?
I need a hockey puck poem, a monkey wrench poem
And a poem about wax fruit.
Jarret do you know anyone who has written
Poems about Tammy Faye?
Do you think you can write a sonnet on Tammy Faye?
I need it by Thursday.
This poem you wrote about deep fried chicken fingers
I've been hearing so much about, can you fax it to me?
I might put an anthology of poems together about kiwi milkshakes.
Do you have anything that fits this theme?
You know what I need, Jarret?
I need a Dana Plato poem.
I need some poems about anal beads and shrimp forks.
Jarret can you write me a poem about dust mops?
Jarret I want you to write seventy or so poems
About cum in shag carpet in a purple van.
Think you can do that?
Can you write about my hemorrhoids?
Can you write something about that bad case of anal warts I had last year?
I need a poem about chopsticks and anti-lock brakes.
I need a Beau Bridges poem.
I need that, and a poem written about Anne Bancroft eating peach cobbler.
Think you can handle that?
If you can, tell me about it in a poem.

FAT BOY

I'm barely awake checking emails
And social media messages
When my mother asks me
If I want anything from the store.
She does this sometimes
As if she's some kind of space Martian
who is new to this planet
And hasn't shopped for her son before.
With sleep seeds in my eyes still,
I tell her to get yogurt,
Turkey cold cuts, and chicken pot pies.
I tell her to throw waffles in the cart,
Plums and green grapes without the seeds.
I know she'll forget most of what I ask for
like kiwi and dragon fruit.
Raisin bread instead of cherry plums.
I don't want to clutter corners of her mind
With things like blackberries and almond milk.
Needed ingredients for smoothies
To lower my blood pressure.
She will come home armed
With an arsenal of bags
Filled with turkey wings,
Ham hocks,
Neck bones and frozen okra.
Finger cookies for dad
And canned vegetables pickled in some soupy,
Salty concoction.
She'll come with chocolate milk,
Sugar Pops and Frosted Flakes,
Zero-sugar root beer for Dad's bad blood
And her kidney disease, which was
News she broke to me in the lobby at the cancer center
Minutes before her CAT scan.
The calories I burn at Planet Fitness
Will only be regained under her reign
Where everything must be cooked
With butter, bacon or grease.
She doesn't know that it takes more than pushups

To flatten a belly like this.
A thousand thigh crunches to keep them from rubbing together.
My friend Chuck lost 90 pounds on Noom.
I would give both my nuts
To shed 90 pounds of fried food flesh,
Suck out the midnight cravings with a vacuum hose.
My mother doesn't know what it's like to look down
And not be able to see your dick without having
To hold your belly in.
"You look fat sitting on the sofa," she told me once.
"Are you still going to the gym?" She asked when she
Saw me coming out of the bathroom with my shirt off.
Tonight I'll write out a grocery list on the back of this poem:
Pork loin
Salmon
Beet and pomegranate juice
Almond milk,
Yogurt,
Blackberries and whiskey,
A little something extra for the smoothies.

VIEWERS

Instead of bubble butts in khakis,
I get chasers and gainers.
Instead of this boy in the Street Fighter hoodie,
I get Gonzo Bear.
Instead of leather daddies,
I get buzz daddies.
Instead of this one in the pink T-shirt
Dripping with beauty,
I get Wavi Davi.
Instead of John,
I get Bubba.
Instead of Kevin,
I get Kote\$.
Instead of Chris,
I get unsolicited unlocked pics of assholes.
Instead of Jerry,
I get meat packers.
Instead of a kiss goodnight,
I get suck me dry.
Instead of Donte,
I get Mile High.
Instead of Derek,
I get Pot Belly Sam.
Instead of Hey, I noticed you from across the room,
I get, Hey, girl.
Instead of Josh,
I get Jshun.
Instead of Benny,
I get bad intentions.
Instead of Jamaal,
I get Cracker Barrel Eric.
Instead of Tyler,
I get Freeloader Anthony.
Instead of Grayson,
I get, I want to suck a big cock, and get my ass fucked.
Instead of moonlight kisses,
I get insatiable bottoms and more insatiable bottoms and more insatiable bottoms.
Instead of heart-shaped chocolates,
I get, I love me some BBC.

Instead of, Would you like to go for coffee?
I get, "Please titty-fuck me."
Instead of a hot dad,
I get dick pics in my DM's.
Instead of bear hugs,
I get open relationships.
Instead of horror movie connoisseurs,
I get dilators in dick holes.

LAVENDER WEDDING

I'm convinced that I'll get married in the gym of my old high school.
The ceremony will take place on a beautiful spring afternoon
on Saturday 'cause Saturdays are for weddings.
My suit will be "virgin" white
with a shirt of lavender and ruffles at the collar.
The shoes will be platformed.
I'll reek of Brut and Afro Sheen.
My husband-to-be will look stunning in his lavender Christian Dior wedding dress
imported from Paris.
I'll mow the hair from my legs like newly cut grass with a Lady Bic,
pluck my chest hairs like feathers from a chicken,
paint these lips with apple red lipstick.
I want all my closest friends to come ornamented in those dresses like they wore in *Footloose*.
The lesbians will come as Wall Street tycoons constantly reminding me
how expensive all this shit is and how much it's going to set me back
no matter how many times I tell them that money is no object.
I want my daddy to give me away if he promises to keep his hands off Aunt Tillie.
My mama will be the bearer of rice and punch spiked with whiskey.
The priest will be a Michael Jackson impersonator.
The reception will be held at the House of Chicken and Waffles
where Debbie, employee of the month, will catch the bouquet.
Wally, the four-hundred-pound, stubble-faced cook,
who smokes stink cigars,
where the ashes occasionally fall in the blueberry pancake mix,
will have the pleasure of pulling the garter belt from my husband's thigh with his teeth.
There will be no limousines 'cause if a Pinto was good enough for my sister and her husband,
Then it's good enough for me and mine.

POEM FOR KYLE

It feels like you haven't been here.
Even as I'm drunk off top shelf whiskey,
High off mango-flavored edibles,
Your presence is lost.
Something is off.
Friday night lights wrangles the men in
Like the bulls they are.
My self-inflicted scars owned by a faggot
Mad with madness for chicken tenders
Deep fried with love.
Do you know what a mozzarella stick reminds me of?
Last night fries and fish sandwiches was what I craved,
Something to settle the cradle in my stomach,
Something to soak up all that whiskey.
I sit here tripping off Mango weed,
Missing your Kyle-type hugs
I could never get from these men with their pointed horns.
Tonight I drink to you,
Will eat a Chicken Parm sandwich
And a basket of fries for you.
I will laugh and curse with your tongue.

THE COUGH

Hell if I know where it came from.
Maybe I caught it at work,
Or hanging out at the bars too much.
Something has come over me,
Has taken a hold and won't let up.
Now here I am popping prednisone
Before my morning piss, benzos
Every eight hours,
Washing down horse size doxycycline
With full glasses of water
When the only results I seem to be getting are trips to the bathroom.
I blow into an inhaler for the wheezing
That feels like the devil is whistling Dixie
In my chest. I tell them everything about me
At the urgent care clinic, checking the only two boxes
That pertain to my health. Amlodipine for the hypertension,
Metformin for the borderline diabetes.
Bad blood runs in my family. The nurse pokes and prods
My nose to test me for Covid-19.
The doctor steps in armed in blue, wearing a face shield.
He greets me with a latex gloved knuckle bump.
A series of questions roll off his tongue.
A set of answers push past my lips into unsterile air.
He presses the bell of the stethoscope
At different points in my back as I take deep, labored breaths.
He moves around the front of my chest
Checking for any signs of crackling.
I hope he can do something. I pray he's the angel
That can kill this devil.
I prepare myself for any blood they may need.
I feel much better than I did Saturday night,
Coughing uncontrollably into my comforter.
Not even the thought of blue eyes could lull me to sleep.

Perhaps this is my punishment for the company I keep,
for all the whisky I drink,
For not introducing enough vitamin C
Into my diet of fried and fast food.
Has a curse been put on my name?
Who walks around with a doll in my likeness,
pulling at the seams?

SHANE ALLISON

Shane Allison is the author of four collections of poetry. *I Remember* (Future Tense Books), *Slut Machine* (Queer Mojo Press), *Sweet Sweat* (Hysterical Books), and his new collection, *Turbulent*, which is forthcoming from Hysterical Books. When he's not writing, he's making collages.