



## BEAT THE DUST

October 2007

Justin Hyde interviews himself



Q: Are you a Bukowski copycat?

A: Not by design or premeditated intent. I feel more kinship with Raymond Carver than I do Bukowski.

Q: What the hell are you doing in Iowa?

A: Shell-shocked and debauched by what my friend Sartre called the "practico-inert" just like the rest of us.

Q: Why do you write?

A: It's an ephemeral way of reconciling our philosophical impotence. The heat of the creative act allows us to get some distance from it. But like I said, it's ephemeral.

Q: Do you like to use big words to sound smart?

A: No, but the language of philosophy has given me a framework for battling the absurdity of our existence.

Q: What is something nobody knows about you?

A: I flunked English my junior year of high school.

Q: Seriously?

A: Yes.

**cobbling days together like torn kites** by Justin Hyde

every couple of months  
 i need a solid week  
 on the couch  
 in my cool dark basement  
 with nothing for company  
 but the silence of  
 cobwebs.

if i took it  
the job  
would flick  
me.

wife  
would finally  
have me  
committed.

so i cram coffee  
sugary foods  
alcohol  
internet porn  
and whatever pills  
i can snatch.

as a kid  
in science class  
i used to wonder  
how those bugs  
got trapped  
in amber.

now i just  
look down  
at my feet.

**"BRING IT MOTHERFUCKER!"** by Justin Hyde

he 180'd.

i grabbed his shirt collar  
through the window  
as he hit the gas.

a chunk  
ripped off  
in my hand.

i pulled into a space  
and sat  
until my arms  
stopped shaking  
and my lips  
no longer quivered.

then i got out  
and impaled the thing  
on my antennae.

what the hell is that?  
my wife asked  
the other day.

keep that there baby,  
that's prima facie  
that the world  
ain't sucked out  
all my spirit  
just yet.

Misti Rainwater-Lites interviews herself



Q: So who the hell are you?

A: I'm a happily married happily knocked up bat shit crazy writer of poems, blogs, novels and grocery lists. I'm a maker of collages. I'm a karaoke Mexican beer road trip MySpace fanatic. I'm a lulu.com freak. I'm Kim Wu and Koko Loko.

Q: Where do you live?

A: I currently reside in Albuquerque, New Mexico but will soon return to my native land, the Lone Star state. Don't hate me for that, please.

**sympathy for the scrappers (jay's monologue)** by Misti Rainwater-Lites

unlike you, these girls don't have a mommy and daddy  
to run back to in suburbia heaven.  
these girls have no choice but to shake their asses  
lick their own nipples  
stare at drunk horny men  
like they want to devour them  
hope it will be enough to pay for the cab ride home.  
these girls know how to scrap to stay alive.  
they have babies to feed  
cell phone bills

tanning salon bills  
hair salon bills  
nail salon bills  
gym memberships to pay.  
don't judge them for their silicone implants  
and rose and dagger tattoos.  
that's how they shine.  
they don't have the luxury of being like you  
a precious snow white tabula rasa  
with a china doll face and blue eyes that have never  
been blinded by the flames of hell.  
these girls have scars and pockmarks  
bruises and war stories that would make  
your life look like a disney cartoon.  
you don't know struggle.  
you don't know fire.  
you don't know shit, baby doll.  
you need to learn how to put on your big girl panties  
and fucking deal.  
you need to learn how to grind your cunt to maximum effect  
because your tits are too small.  
this is not abuse.  
this is reality knocking on your door.  
I'm the best man you will ever have.  
you could never get a lawyer or accountant or any kind of normal man.  
you aren't sexy enough to pout.  
you aren't strong enough to hold down a real job.  
the best you can hope for is a lawsuit settlement  
and an inheritance.  
take it for what it's worth.  
now get the fuck outta my car.

### Dan Fante



Dan Fante was born and raised in Los Angeles. At twenty, he quit school and hit the road, eventually ending up as a New York City resident for twelve years. Fante has worked at dozens of crummy jobs including: door to door salesman, taxi driver, window washer, telemarketer, private investigator, night hotel manager, chauffeur, mailroom clerk, deck hand, dishwasher, carnival barker, envelope stuffer, dating service counselor, furniture salesman, and parking

attendant. Fante is married and has a two year old son named Michaelangelo Giovanni Fante. He hopes eventually to learn to play the harmonica. Visit his website at [danfante.net](http://danfante.net).

**mom at eighty-nine** by Dan Fante

Today  
at the home  
I read her some of my new stuff  
while she squinted at me - straining to hear

My savvy mouth  
sputtering out  
chain-saw syllables  
beneath those perfect and unspoiled steel-grey eyes

This ancient ex-editor  
who's read more and knows more about writing and poetry  
than I'll ever hope to know

Five minutes in to it looking up - I said - "Well, whaddya think?"

She seemed distracted  
ten thousand brow wrinkles came - flattened out - then returned

"Do you still have that phone-sales job," she said -

"No Ma, I don't have a day gig anymore - writing is all I do now"

"Well get one, for chrissake," she said - "and help me up -  
I need to use the bathroom"

John Sweet interviews himself



Interviewing myself didn't work out too well. I was a total asshole:

Q: How old are you?

A: 38.

Q: Aren't you old enough to know better then?

A: Fuck off and die.

Q: I mean, seriously, what the hell is wrong with you?

A: I wouldn't even know where to begin.

**footnote from the decade of burnt toast** by John Sweet

december when you find your father  
in a room no bigger than  
a bad dream

he asks for money

asks for a kiss

holds out his hands and  
the blood you see on them  
is your own

the man you marry  
is the son he never had

all they want is to  
show you how good it feels to hurt

Jereme Dean interviews himself



Q: How do you pronounce your name?

A: It's the same as Jeremy. My mother used the French spelling by sheer luck. She was a stoned 17 year old who thought it'd be fun to spell it differently. My middle name is completely made up.

Q: Is your writing autobiographical?

A: Yes, for the most part; all writers embellish. I am not clever enough to write about what I have not personally experienced. I have battled with drug addiction for about 4 years now.

Q: What new writers do you read?

A: I am not a fan of new writers. I am also not a fan of most old writers. I did not like anyone new until I found Tao Lin's poetry and short stories. He writes of loneliness in a way that most others have not touched upon. I also enjoy Tony O'Neill. The reasons should be patent if you've read him before. I am also a fan of Buddy Wakefield (although I do not care for Slam Poetry much).

Q: Do you have a blog?

A: Yes, I recently started one. It is more of a diary though. I know people are going through their own struggles and do not want to hear me complain about mine. The blog is [weak-signal.blogspot.com](http://weak-signal.blogspot.com).

### **little saigon** by Jereme Dean

"I'll have a ca fe."

"Ca fe su da?"

"No, no just a ca fe."

"Oh, that's very strong."

"I know darling." I smile at her. She acquiesces and walks behind the counter to get my order. I go through this exercise at every Vietnamese coffee shop. Ca Fe is Vietnamese iced black coffee. It's specially brewed with a chicoree roast. Complicated shit compared to every day American coffee. It's damn strong and damn good but the Vietnamese waitresses are dumbfounded when a white orders it.

I'm here at the Ngoc Ma coffee shop waiting on the man. The early stages of dope sickness are kicking in and I'm sweating suspiciously in the cool air conditioned room. The coffee shop is standard fare for Little Saigon. The place is small and dark with Vietnamese music blasting throughout. The waitresses are dressed in panties and bras with their boob jobs and little waists. No smoking signs litter the walls while old men smoke cigarettes at their tables. Little Saigon is one of the few places left in California with indoor smoking since the ban. It's still illegal to smoke indoors but the cops turn a blind eye out of fear.

The cops have reason to be fearful. These coffee shops are the favorite pastime of street and organized criminals. Last week a white guy wandered into a Little Saigon coffee shop and saw his last sunrise. He smiled at the waitress and complimented her beauty. The boyfriend of the waitress took exception to the extra attention. Walked up calmly behind the man and shot him four times in the back of the head. I wonder what he was thinking about the seconds before the bullets ripped his skull open. The boyfriend jumped on a plane to Vietnam and eluded apprehension.

"Here your coffee."

I nod at her. Pull a cigarette out. Bring it to my lips. I look up as I light it and notice she's staring at me. I don't say anything.

"Are you hot?"

I shake my head no.

"Just a little sick."

"Oh."

"Can I get another?" I shake my iced coffee at her. She smiles and walks away. Warily, I watch her pale ass jiggle in tight blue panties from the top of my eyes. She's beautiful. Absolutely beautiful. Empires have fallen because of ass like that. I avert my gaze and notice a man in the corner. He's got both arms up over the back rest with a cigarette in his lips. Green neon light is reflecting off of the lens of his dark sunglasses. It's hard to determine if he's staring at me. I drink my coffee and stare back. He barks something in Vietnamese at the waitress and smirks towards my direction.

She brings me the second coffee with a worried face and scampers off without a word this time. A country tune starts up. The song reminds me of the old Chinese ghost story movies. I want to ask what the song lyrics are. Better to not push the envelope. I light another Marlboro red. Watch the smoke roll up to the ceiling. Finish my iced coffee and throw a \$20 bill on the table. My shit should be ready to pick up.

I get up and walk out into the day. The sun is harsh and bright and nausea sets in. I puke between two parked cars and stumble off. The sickness is getting worse. My mind is murky. Cognitive thought is almost impossible. The sweat is streaming off of my nose and chin.

I walk into the small white building. A young Vietnamese boy is fingering a gum ball machine slot in the corner. He looks very sad. The parents are indifferent to the boy's struggle. I am the only one who notices.

The clerk motions me to the counter.

"I'm here to pick up a prescription."

"Name?"

"Hayes. Charlie Hayes"

The clerk confusedly looks around the filled orders.

"Sorry, five more minutes."

Lou Reed was right. The man is always late. I look over at the boy. He's shaking the gum ball machine. The balls rattle but none come out. He looks so sad.

"Ok, order is ready."

"Great."

"But your insurance will not pay. It's too early."

"How much?"

"\$989 for the Oxycontin, Roxicodone and Fentanyl."

I pull out the money from my wallet and hand it over. Two fives are left in the bill fold. There goes rent. It won't matter soon. The warmth and numbness the opiates provide is more comforting than rent. The clerk hands over the bag of narcotics.

The boy is sitting sullenly at the foot of the gum ball machine. I fish out two quarters from my shorts pocket and slap them on the top of the machine. The boy looks up. I walk back out into the suffocating day.

Luis Cuauhtemoc Berriozabal interviews himself



Q: Luis, where were you born?

A: I was born in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

Q: Where can I find poems, like Crazy Fuckers, influenced by people struggling with mental illness?

A: My first book, Raw Materials. It was published by Pygmy Forest Press. Also, Kendra Steiner Editions published my first chap-book, Without Peace in July 2007.

Q: Where can I read samples of your work?

A: I have a blog at [myspace.com/cuatemochi](http://myspace.com/cuatemochi).

**crazy fuckers** by Luis Cuauhtemoc Berriozabal

I like to take  
small steps when I  
walk around here.  
You never know  
when you're going  
to fall and break  
your hip. All the  
crazy fuckers  
in this place would  
have their way with  
me if I were  
to be laid up

with a broken  
hip. They would come  
in my room and  
steal my stuff and  
I couldn't stop  
them. If I had  
a gun, I could  
shoot a warning  
shot to keep the  
crazy fuckers  
away. I wish  
I had a gun  
right now because  
the doctor won't  
let me out. I'd  
like to shoot that  
fat bastard right  
between the eyes.  
If I had a  
gun, he wouldn't  
be so quick to  
judge me insane.  
I would run this  
joint and all the  
pretty nurses  
would come in my  
room and give me  
sponge baths and I  
would return the  
favor if you  
know what I mean.

Emily McPhillips interviews herself



Q: Who are you?

A: Emily Louise McPhillips.

Q: Nicknames?

A: Emmy Squirrel, Electro Magnetic Pulse, Emails. Many words beginning with E.

Q: Your favourite books?

A: Far From the Madding Crowd. I love Thomas Hardy. Bathsheba Everdene is a favourite heroine of mine, her faults make her very likeable, so much so that I want to open up my own cafe eventually and call it Bathsheba's; you must come! And books by Tove Jansson too - they're so wonderfully lovely.

Q: Your most embarrassing celebrity crush?

A: I'm not too embarrassed about it but I did used to have a major thing for Angus Deayton, a little bit odd for a 13 year old girl though.

Q: Plans for the rest of 2007?

A: I desperately want to learn ballroom dancing, oh and take some Spanish lessons too, oh and writing, more writing.

### **freddie and anika** by Emily McPhillips

You don't want to go to the ice rink, Anika had her fingers sliced off and they stuck to the ice and then Freddie came over and licked the blood up like jam from a doughnut. The medics had to cut his tongue out with a surgical knife. He signs fuck you to the kids that push him around. He has been Anika's boyfriend for two weeks; he was round at her house when her dad caught him looking up her skirt. Freddie got kicked out and landed in a mud puddle, his arse sogging wet. Under the billows of Anika's skirt he watched the pleats softly sway with her nervous contractions and her protestations at his being there. He savoured each eye full; the soft fabric framing his chubby twelve year old face. He rubbed at the sensation between his legs.

He kicks stones on his walk home, kicks them at the chained up bicycles by the canal and hears them plop as they hit the water. Sometimes he watches them sink, but it is hard when the water is so murky. He thinks about the body of a thirty six year old man that was fished out of there two years before; he wonders if it was hauled up like a fisherman's bounty of cod, and then he gets hungry and heads towards the chippy.

Freddie unwraps the parcel of fish and chips and remembers being about five years old and playing Pass the Parcel and never being lucky. He shovels food into his mouth like a necessity, letting it bypass his stump of a tongue then awkwardly directing it towards his throat where it slowly travels down and is digested. He sucks at his salty fingers and he compresses the newspaper wrapping into a ball and slam dunks it into a bin a few steps away from him.

Anika is crouched beside her bed and is feeling the heat of her father's back-hand slaps against her calves. She bites into her mattress and runs her tongue against its alien texture. She imagines what it would be like to kiss with Freddie, her tongue winding its way to find what is left of his. Her father leaves the room and she stays where she is, beside the bed; gently swaying her hips back and forth.

She hears the television set switch on and hears its droll noise creep from the living room, creeping upstairs. Her door is closed but it still filters in. She makes her way to the window and stares out to the canal and all the buildings built up around it. She wonders what this view might look like without all these buildings and without all they hide inside. She lights up a fag and doesn't inhale because she doesn't really know how, and she can barely hold the fag straight because her fingers don't take orders well anymore.

Freddie walks over to the ice rink and he sits on the wall outside. There is a constant humming coming from the inside of the building, from the coolers or some sort of machinery; it makes the silence feel human, like pleasant conversation made to break an insufferable silence.

Anika washes before she goes to bed, splashing cold water on her face because she read that it is good for her pores. She clambers into bed and her phone beeps as she receives a message; it is from Freddie, he wishes he was under her skirt admiring her with more intricate detail. She touches herself and lets him know what she is doing. He lets his hand reach down into his pants and he tugs away.

The television can still be heard downstairs and the hum of the ice rink persists.

Anika draws open her curtains in the morning and notices the green verges by the canal and a clutch of buttercups by the bike stands, her eyes skimming over the built up blocks of flats.

Freddie fell asleep in the doorway of the ice rink, nobody has called to see where he is, and he carries on sleeping there until he gets moved along by the employees of the ice rink. He tries to stick his tongue out at them and they laugh, and he laughs too, then he saunters off on his way to school.

They meet up at break time and share a toilet cubicle together, directing each other's hands under their school uniforms. His hands under the elastic waist of her rolled up skirt, her hands under the loosened fly of his charcoal trousers. They leave the cubicle each time with guilt.

Rob Plath interviews himself



Brain: Hmm, why do I write?

Bones: Because I bully you into it!

Brain: But my neurons contain the language and the skills.

Bones: Yeah, but I make you not bullshit like other poets.

Brain: That's true I must admit.

Bones: You better say that, the skull is made up of 14 bones, you're outnumbered, you bastard!

**galloping between the shit of ages** by Rob Plath

death cannot  
be defeated  
by scruples  
or syllables

authentic acknowledgment  
of the abyss  
isn't localized  
in the body  
isn't restricted  
to yr fucking noodle

it swims thru the blood  
is filtered thru organs  
sloshes around tissue  
is in spongy marrow  
is in branches of nerves

what the fuck,  
you who suck  
the pink milk from  
the tit of fiction

while i tip back  
my flask filled  
w/the sour milk  
of the soulless

no, i will not  
quit abusing yr  
hearts

i will continue  
to pile a silo  
of shit atop those  
ugly chambers

i, wizard  
of disillusion

will unmask  
those plastic smiles  
rubberbanded  
around yr heads  
of carrion

will overturn  
those toybox  
minds  
& stomp  
rattles  
& pacifiers  
into dust

poetry isn't  
fucking pretty  
it's a putrid  
yawping mouth  
thousands of  
years old

& its heart  
a leper  
galloping  
beneath  
the shit  
of the  
ages

**maybe you should start shaving yr pussy, boy** by Rob Plath

he asked me how i'm so prolific

do you really want to know, i said

yes! he yelled, i feel mad tonight!

how bad do you want to know, kid

& what's it worth to you? i added, openly  
shaking him down

if you tell, the drinks are on me all night, he begged

i let him buy, but i kept stalling  
i kept ordering expensive scotches, neat of course  
i almost lit my nose on fire lighting a cigarette  
but i kept prolonging giving up what he thought was a secret  
is it scotch & a lot of fucking? tell me! he yelled  
when he went to the men's room i stumbled out & left him there  
the next day, as i was sweating out the booze  
i banged our conversation out  
in a couple of minutes on the machine  
slapped him in the face w/ the title  
& sent it to him

#### James Quinton interviews himself



Q: Name?

A: James - [www.myspace.com/jamesquinton](http://www.myspace.com/jamesquinton).

Q: Open Wide Magazine?

A: Yes - [www.openwidemagazine.co.uk](http://www.openwidemagazine.co.uk).

**the sky exploded** by James Quinton

i sit in  
 dust  
 exposed  
 to the  
 elements  
 my limbs  
 seizing  
 my terrified  
 mind  
 watching  
 polished metal  
 turn to  
 rust

when the  
 sky  
 exploded

Scurvy Bastard interviews himself



Scurvy: Why do you write?

Bastard: To keep from going sane.

S: Is it true that Shane MacGowan, among others, was a regular in your DJ booth at Dingwalls during the early 80's?

B: Shane was never a "regular" anything but he was often in the clutter and that booth had more chopping going on than the French Revolution.

S: Speaking of The Pogues, Ron Kavana wrote that you were, "The world's greatest roadie and party animal." Have you mellowed?

B: Mellowed, yellowed and the banana's gone acoustic.

S: You have been living in Northern California for the last 10 years. How do you like it?

B: A truly beautiful slice of the sphere. Downside is that it's full of Californians, but the gods are working on that.

S: Whose round is it anyway?

B: Ours.

**blood train** by Scurvy Bastard

Mama can't sus the new-speak  
Silver bitch gotta rusted switch  
Your mind keeps lookin' at  
Chef Jones cookin'  
'neath a pork-pie hat  
While the fleas are bookin'

Freeze to your knees  
It's Damacles  
Ditch your dreams  
Behind the trees  
Satan's been waitin'  
With a spoon of bone  
You know he loves you  
You can hear him moan

Daddy's long gone  
Down a one-way track  
He once fucked a heathen  
And never looked back  
Now there's showers of shit  
Diluted by Jack  
You're only so rich  
By the things which you lack

'nother alley 'round the corner  
'nother day around the bend  
Another hungry vein  
Waiting on a friend  
You know you keep on using  
The same old ink again  
But each kiss provides  
A place to hide

From them  
From them  
From them