



BURNING THE ANARCHIST BIBLE

cynical poetry for those fed up with dogma

INTRODUCTION FROM THE PUBLISHER

MOST OF THE PEOPLE I KNOW, MYSELF INCLUDED, CRINGE AT THE WORD “poetry”. Most of the anarchists I know, myself included, cringe when someone says something like “I’m so fed up with this P.C. culture.” And yet, most of the anarchists I know *do* know that something is wrong with anarchist culture: we have allowed ourselves to be more concerned with the specifics of language than confronting individual acts of oppression. In a very real sense, we have often abandoned the anarchist practice of taking each instance as its own unique event to hide behind the safety of codified rules.

The poet we have published herein was frustrated to the point of burn-out by the instances he saw time and time again, and wrote in retaliation. A few years went by; eventually he calmed down and started talking to us anarcho types again. Our aim in publishing his work is not to lambast our fellow anarchists, but to provide precautionary warnings.

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DISCLAIMERS

I've heard it said before
by people
you know, "passionate" people
that it is absolutely best
to never disclaim your speech.

If I want to say
"this poem is shit,"

then I had best not say
"I understand why you wrote this poem
and I think that it has redeeming
qualities,"
beforehand.

because I might undermine my "passion."

and certainly, it can be frustrating
talking to some people
who play politics with every
word
they use.

but sometimes you need to disclaim.
take this zine:
I love most anarchists
I hate most poetry
and yet herein I present you with poetry
that disparages anarchists.

so to disclaim:
I hate oppression as much as the next
straight white 20-something male anarchist who was raised
middle class in the USA
and by that I mean, I hate it a lot.

RACIST

he was a big guy, chicano, bisexual
nice as folks come
didn't smoke but bummed for his friends,
kill whitey patch on his knee.

he chuckled at a rape joke once
and has been raped himself
but people don't disclaim that
when they painfully laugh.

so a white woman turns on him
there is nothing funny about rape.

she calls him a straight white male
who would therefore never have to deal with rape.
the only word she got right was male.

he calls her sexist.
she learns that he is chicano
and her story changes.
she explains that in the same way
that he, chicano, couldn't be racist
against her, white
she, woman, couldn't be sexist against him,
male.

"I was raised a racist," he replies,
"by militant chicano seperatists."
with her choice anti-racist views
she had denied the struggles he had
against his own internalized racial
bigotry.

but that's okay, because later he became
too racist against us good white folks
or something
and we had to kick him out.

FEMINIST

she gave three men, crusty punks, a ride
six hundred miles.
of course, she bought all of the gas.
of course, they didn't know how to drive.

“why do you own a car?” it was their refrain.

she played the radio and drove them
most of the way up the west coast
to their green anarchist gathering.

on the stereo, political rap.
“if a woman ain't down, she can never
really be your wife.”

“turn that sexist shit off.” it was their chorus.

“look, I am a woman, and it doesn't offend me.”

sitting shotgun, one took the opportunity of
turning that sexist shit off for her.
“just because I am a man, doesn't mean
I can't be a feminist.”

HOMOPHOBE

years ago in high school
I was no anarchist.
I thought laws could solve the problems of oppression
and I thought rules should curtail improper behavior.

we formed the gay-straight alliance
to let everyone know that homophobia was going to stop.

one day a teacher taught us that fanny packs were for fags
and I used to respect that teacher
but I told him I didn't appreciate gay jokes.
three other members of the gay-straight alliance
who were in the class with me
tried to turn invisible.

he told me that it wasn't serious.

I told him the law against queer discrimination
in the public schools of our county.

his eyebrows dropped in anger
his old broken hands wrung themselves
"if you want someone to understand you
or comply, the worst possible way is
to quote law at them, to tell them
what they can and cannot do."

I was silent and self-righteous at the time
but he was right about law.

I still don't appreciate gay jokes.

ABLEIST

six of us in a three bedroom glorified shack
there wasn't much we didn't share
food, germs or money.

we drove to the edge of town
to pick him up.
he was cute, and tough.
tough like only a tranny boi
hitchhiking alone with federal warrants can be.
he came highly recommended as a
house guest so we took him home.

seven of us in a three bedroom glorified shack.
I drank orange juice straight from the bottle.
our house guest was appalled
he looked like maybe we just shot his dog.
quickly, angrily he informed us
that those with weakened immune systems
(like those with AIDS, we presume)
would be put in serious danger.

we are horrified
we looked like maybe we just shot his dog
I quickly ask "do you have a weakened
immune system?"

"no, but your actions are ableist."

six of us in a three bedroom glorified shack,
there wasn't much we didn't share.

DATE-RAPIST

he raped my friend and he got away with it
glib-motherfucker and quite the slam poet
he knew exactly what to say
the bastion of a community
that won't miss these two travelers.

“if we call him out he won't be able to heal”
but if you asked him to his face
he would summon anguish and tell you
exactly what you want to hear.
his language is flawless
his remorse a perfect wax statue.

the best rapists are lawyers, are politicians
are glib-motherfucker slam poets.

oh god, please stop quoting at me.

SAFER SPACE

no punk can turn down a dance party
for some godforsaken reason
so we pile six or seven plus a dog into the sedan
and arrive prepared to talk our way out of donation.

the door makes something clear:

 this house is a safer space -
 actions or language that
 perpetuate sexist, racist
 homophobic, transphobic,
 ableist, sizist, ageist or
 audist behavior will
 NOT be tolerated.

we enter to a Michael Jackson song
"billy jean"
Michael Jackson, the child molester.

we stand in line for the keg and
Gravy Train comes on.
"I go to the high school and find me a bitch
a young virgin switch."

we take our beer back to the door
and, marker in hand, add what the sign left off:

 the music and its lyrics
 of course, are exempt.

let's just be honest with ourselves.

AUDIST

she was on the seat of the bike
while I worked the pedals
and this is probably as close as
I will ever come to telling her how
amazing she was and is.

playing the spoons three-four to
my concertina on the street
or reading Sherman Alexie aloud
before we fell asleep.

but there she was on the seat of the bike,
not 100lbs but with more anti-fascist brawls
in her than me, she was brass knuckles and
brown fists.

"I saw this sign," I began, and asked her
what audism was.
she didn't know, but conjectured it meant
discrimination against the hearing impaired.
surely, I argued, that was covered under ableism.

"ah!" she laughed, "are you claiming that
those who can't hear are differently abled?
let me off this bike, you audist!"

and so we collapsed into the grass and laughed
and laughed.

SEXUAL ASSAULTER

he had an act, yes.
he was good at it.
a sob story is a great way
to get into a yuppie's wallet
or a person's pants.

and it's really not okay.

there were a few score of us
having all kinds of sex in that squat
but he went about it wrong.
there was consent, this isn't the question.

a week into this questionable fling
she touched him as he said no
in a clear, articulate and repeated way:
no, he did not want to be touched there
and she kept touching him.

the powers that ought-not-be came together
and had him kicked out
for his general sleaze and coercion.

the assault came to light.
"although you may not want to hear this
it is important to side completely
with her.
we are within a culture of patriarchy."

and so he left
and she stayed
and a powerful blow was struck that day
against the patriarchy.

SPECIESIST

there was a campfire in the woods, of course
and we soberly plotted authority's demise.

I don't know who it was who suggested that
every fast food joint should burn.

the woodfire crackled with joy and
wise young heads nodded.

I was old at 21 -
I suggested that ideally one would be prepared
to feed the family of the displaced cashiers
and fry cooks
until they found other jobs.

the woodfire sputtered its disdain and silence
or disbelief gathered in the faces around me.

they taught me that concern for humanity
is tantamount to treason
and for voicing this opinion
I was speciesist.

SEXIST

in an old car on the way to the forest,
the forest we all agreed ought not be cut,
the discussion turned to poetry.

Bukowski was a sexist, I hear,
and its true that he flung words like
bitch
around.

but his poetry has done a lot for me
or at least driven me to drink,
and I rose to his defense.
he didn't hate women in particular,
I claimed
(perhaps mistakenly),
he hated people.

but Bukowski was a sexist
and I needed to stop reading him.

these people, their dogma
I don't know where they came from,
or how to define them.
they don't even have a word for what they want,
but I hope they find one soon
and leave "anarchy" well enough
alone.

THE ANARCHIST BIBLE (EXCERPT)

the book of politics

- 1— all social ills are, at their root, caused by hierarchy.
- 2— all hierarchy is unnatural to human nature.
- 3— hierarchy was created by greed, 10,000 years ago during the agricultural revolution.
- 4— before agriculture, all humans enjoyed an idyllic, anarchist, and egalitarian existence.
- 5— government is an inherently hierarchical institution.
- 6— capitalism is an inherently hierarchical institution.
- 7— the goal of anarchists is to achieve peace and equality.
- 8— it is only through the abolition of government and capitalism that peace and equality can be reached.
- 9— any political actions that do not actively further the abolition of the state reinforce the state.
- 10— as far as non-hierarchical, non-reformist actions that directly undermine or attack the state and capitalism while maintaining a respectful attitude to social concerns (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of oppression) are concerned, a diversity of tactics is respected and encouraged.
- 11— all wars conducted by nation-states are unjust.
- 12— those who do not believe in the values rendered within this book are not necessarily evil people; they are uninformed and reasonably innocent. exceptions to this are as such:
 - a) the yuppie is not innocent; s/he is so consumed with consumptive greed as to be considered evil.
 - b) the pig (police officer) is not innocent; s/he is so driven by the desire to repress through violence that s/he is actually inhuman.
 - c) the politician is not innocent; s/he is so consumed by greed for political power that s/he is to be considered evil.
 - d) the corporate media journalist is not innocent; s/he consciously seeks to misguide “sheep” towards evil ends.
- 13— all violence against the above-mentioned exceptional categories is justified.
- 14— attempting to propose what is best for any group of people outside of your own gender, sex, class (as defined by your conditions as a child rather than your current social class), sexual orientation, race, color or creed (in this case, your creed is anarchist) is vanguardist and inherently authoritarian.
- 15— all anarchists work on the group consensus model.
- 16— if an anarchist does not adhere to the decisions made by the anarchist group, they are to be, at the very least, shunned.

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