

**Poem, A Chapbook**

Dudes be tall like trees up north with big swinging  
Pinecones and maple syrup dripping from their trunks

Pancakes are a simple pleasure

This book contains no periods

Try to count them

Count to zero

People sing more than you know  
Caravans of circus animals don't come to see you on purpose  
Special is as special does, doesn't it?

That last one was a question mark  
It looks like a period on fire  
A lump of coal  
Releasing a plume of black smoke  
Like a flag above it  
But it isn't  
It only denotes an interrogative  
Something that needs an answer

Page three  
Here we go  
We are really going to get poetic now

There might even be a rhyme somewhere  
But probably not

Try to count them too

Now that we are all paying attention  
Let's pause for a moment to consider death

That was enough

We are ready to move on now

If this poem turns out alright for us  
(we are in this together, you and I)  
I will take everyone out for ice cream  
We'll all get together and chase after the truck

We will be a gleeful mob when we are finished  
But we are not ready yet  
We still have more raging to do  
In our poem

Cuz that's what we are doing, right?  
Raging?

That is two more periods on fire

You can count those two  
Also

When I read newspapers  
I light them on fire first  
To make the news more urgent

Let's wake up and read the news together

Seven is a lucky number for us  
They are all lucky numbers  
We are lucky to have them at all

Sometimes the poems want to go to the end of the line (they must be feeling lucky)  
and turn themselves into prose, something like the news maybe, something with  
periods maybe, something to be set on fire

But fuck all that

You and me,  
We are here to poem



An exclamation point is  
A period with a knife in it!

If I am poem-ing too fast for you  
I can slow down a little but not too much

When people like us get raging on a poem  
Like this one (any poem will do) we gotta hold on  
Tight, dude, tight

Remember those tall dudes from the first page

Let's bring them back into play

When I was a little kid I went to visit a cabin my buddy's family used to rent every summer up north on a lake in one of the really cold states and this one time we

Sorry about that  
I was doing it again

Fuck those tall dudes anyway

At the end of the story everything was going to be on fire, except for the final period

How unrealistic is that?

So we've decided we're gonna poem hard  
In the realist mode  
(though we reserve the right to take liberties)  
And afterward the world will be changed for the better  
Because we will all have ice cream

I wish the exhaust of an ice cream truck  
Smelled like bubble gum

I know that is not a particularly original wish  
We have all had it  
But I wish that wish anyway  
And I am sorry  
I cannot make that happen for us today

It wouldn't be realistic

Let's take a moment to mourn the loss  
Of delicious bubble gum fumes

There  
That was enough

No wait

One more

Hey maybe after we have finished this poem  
And eaten our ice cream  
You can poem me for a while

We'll rage again

After a little rest

If you can feel the heat of the poem  
The burn in your fingers and eyes  
Skin peeled and popping, cool air  
Against pink tissue, stop

Put down the book

You have lit the wrong thing on fire

A period is a just a tiny burnt pancake  
Stuck to a white wall at the end of something someone  
Once called a “complete thought”



Did you see?  
Did you see?  
Did you see?

That was almost a little baby poem right there

All you have to do is get people to look around

Let's take a moment to look up from the page

To appreciate our surroundings

It's okay  
Don't rush

The poem will be here, waiting

More people dance than you might expect  
Some people only do it in dreams at night, sure  
But you should see them wriggle, bounce, rage  
Movements that could be described as poetry  
If we wanted to walk down that cliché

By the way, did you notice that “e” with the little hat on it?

We poem hard, realistic, and gritty  
But also sometimes cute  
At least when it comes to our hats

Or maybe e’s head was just starting to catch fire  
Heard that can happen if you poem  
too hard  
too long

Let’s take a moment to dump a cup of water on our heads, to be sure

There  
All better now

Sometimes I like to walk and read a book at the same time  
Let's try it

Really bury your head in the book and start walking

What we are doing right now  
(walking and reading at once)  
Is a great activity because when you look up from the page  
There is a whole new world around you  
One you hadn't even known you might be headed to  
Because your eyes were busy reading

Don't look up yet

Keep walking and reading

Keep trying to count things

Don't worry

I will too

You are not alone

You could just as easily read the word LOVE a bunch of times while you walk,  
I realize

You will end up in the same place no matter what you read  
And that place will surprise you, no matter what  
Whether there are any periods or no  
You will end up somewhere blind  
New  
(possibly on fire)  
If you walk fast and read deep

Let's take a moment and try it

Keep walking

Remember to read deep

Hard



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Now look up and take a moment to appreciate your new surroundings

Where are you?

You are here

Wherever that is

Is always home

Hold that thought forever

Don't "put it on hold"

Hold onto it

Squeeze it tight with your brain's fingers

Always home

Period

All raged out?

Let's go get some ice cream