

# Run

Ted Jonathan

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Set in New Baskerville

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## Dominion

I live in the basement  
but—like you—have rights  
to the sky, so I hang El Greco's  
"Toledo" on the wall facing  
my easy chair. Swirling  
blue-gray clouds, dark  
ominous sky. Man's fate  
hanging by a thread. Flood.  
Okay. As long as it's not  
only me. But the sky changes.  
Alongside "Toledo," I hang  
Magritte's "The Dominion  
of Light." Nicely aligned puffy  
white clouds soften a bright  
blue sky. The paintings remained  
until I, like George Jefferson,  
moved on up. Atop a steep  
as-a-wall NJ cliff high up

on floor 33. Here in the sky,  
on a bright-blue day, I see  
the unglamorous northern  
Manhattan skyline across  
the vast Hudson River,  
and beyond, the enormous  
blimp looms dumbly over  
Yankee Stadium. Deeper into  
the Bronx, 13-year-old me  
sits at one end of our old  
living-room sofa and my father  
at the other. He's watching  
another war documentary on TV.  
I eye the heavy metal base table  
lamp. The one I'll use to bash  
in the back of his head, next time  
he raises a hand against my mother.  
If ever I'd had the chance.

## The Love Fest Will Begin

Shrink touted Wall Street & Thorazine, but into poetry I fell.  
Roll my words on concrete, our world spins in the sky.  
A friend says the love fest will begin when I'm dead.

Snatched Shrink's pipe from his mouth, smashed it on my head.  
Ink spilt on an empty page is a black cat streaking by.  
Shrink touted Wall Street & Thorazine, but into poetry I fell.

An orange is to a guitar as a tangerine is to a mandolin.  
In the beginning was the word, before the word became a lie.  
A friend says the love fest will begin when I'm dead.

"I need a man to show me life," Maria said.  
I had no reply.  
Shrink touted Wall Street & Thorazine, but into poetry I fell.

Saul took a fall, got up, was Paul said, "For our sins Jesus bled."  
Limp in the jaws of a low-flying bat a rabbit's devoured alive.  
A friend says the love fest will begin when I'm dead.

Snatched shrink's pipe from his mouth, smashed it on his head.  
Everything matters, but there is no reason why.  
Shrink touted Wall Street & Thorazine, but into poetry I fell.  
A friend says the love fest will begin when I'm dead.

## The Mexican

Ahead of the crowd, I settle into a choice window seat. This former school bus won't roll from Times Square deep into New Jersey until every seat is paid for. I eye all those boarding. They are, to quote Sly Stone, everyday people. More than a few women board, lugging shopping bags and little kids, and despite knowing they will have to put their bags or kid on their laps, they spread out as though ready to picnic. If I'm looking for a seat, and need to ask one of these women to kindly reign in her domain, I get pissed off. If I'm already seated, I make damn sure my things are on the floor at my feet or on my lap. Legs slightly apart, I will not budge for any man. Always there are a number of larger than normal (yes, normal)-sized boarders, and if you need to sit beside one, or worse yet, beside a legs-way-spread motherfucker, half of you painfully ends up in the aisle, where you're sure to be mauled by fat asses, and battered by bag after bag, at every one of the 10,000 New Jersey stops. When a rare, slim, maybe sweet smelling woman looks for a seat, I shrink, to make the spot beside me more inviting. It never works. A regular-sized guy ends up sitting beside me. The last person allowed to board is a small, taut Mexican laborer. When he finds no place to sit, he heads back to the driver to retrieve his fare and leave. The driver, though, accounts for every seat, and knows there's one remaining. He rises and waves the Mexican on, escorting him to a woman seated beside her small child, a woman who, moments ago, had seen the Mexican looking for a seat, but hadn't made any move to put her big-headed kid on her lap. Coldly, the driver gestures for her to do so. As she lifts her kid, the driver turns to the Mexican, but he's no longer there. Silently, he's stepped to the rear of the bus, where he stands. The driver gets back behind the wheel. The Mexican exudes a kind of detached peacefulness, like a turtle sunning on a rock. Everything I never learned about being a man, I learn from that Mexican, this late afternoon, on that bus.