

The Agreement & More

by [Jeffrey Zable](#) (November 2024)



Spring in the Trenches (Paul Nash, 1917)

The Agreement

Yes, I did sell popsicles on the battlefield out of a mobile cart
and when a soldier asked which side I was on I was always quick
to say that I was neutral. That all I was trying to do was get

by
during these perilous times.

And even though many didn't carry cash, I was always willing
to take credit so long as they assured me they'd return with
the payment
if they were able to survive until the war was over...

The Show

The sign on the door said, "Only purebred canines allowed,"
so being a pedigree of the highest order, I felt certain I'd
be welcomed—
but upon entering I was accosted by a mangy looking mongrel
who barked,
"Didn't you read the sign on the door!?"

To which I responded, "Surely you recognize that I'm a French
Bulldog...
a pedigree through and through. That I come from wealth and
decorum
of the highest order!"

Surveying me from front to back several times, she then
responded,
"Make sure to spend lavishly so you'll easily be remembered
the next
time around!"

Drawing out 12 different master cards from my diamond studded
vest,
and flashing them before her, she smiled at me with a set of
rotting teeth
before pointing toward the entrance of the show...

Poetry

I never said that poetry changes the world. What I did say was that certain poets have written poems that have impacted people's lives and sometimes even made them change their ways for the better. It could be as simple as getting someone to eat

less sweets, while simultaneously motivating them to exercise more.

The right poem could even make a college educated man or woman follow their parent's advice with regard to their personal relationships

and habits around cleanliness. As well, it could make someone want

to travel more than 10 miles away from their home and stay in that place

for longer than a day. A given poem may even inspire others to write

their own poems and publish them in magazines that could very well

lead to becoming better known to their neighbors who they previously

had very little contact with. The important thing to remember is that

poems should not be written to glorify the ego or make one think they

will live beyond their mortal bodies and minds. Poems should be written

to bring people together who otherwise would keep to themselves...

A Sign of the Times

Standing near the corner of 24th and Mission I watch as a six foot
AI robotic woman, dressed in hotpants and a bra, walks
backwards
across the intersection.

Noticing that she has a beatific smile, I begin to feel
envious
as I can't remember the last time I smiled like I really meant
it.

As soon as she gets to the other side, she immediately rights
herself,
and continuing a bit further, she goes into the burrito place
that has been there for many years.

Somewhat of a betting man, I'd wager that if she's eaten a
burrito
there before, she'll get a couple of enchiladas as I recall
that the burritos
were on the dry side, whereas the enchiladas were just right.

I also wonder if any of the men in the place will mistake her
for a real woman and hit on her as I realize that it's getting
harder
and harder to discern what is real from what has been
concocted
in some laboratory—making this life even more confusing
than it already was. . .

Money

Yes, money is required in most instances and if you're not
spending lavishly, you're certainly not showing the love.

It's the love that keeps people in business and replacement socks
even though the holes would allow for better circulation of the toes.

Other than that, money is something that makes everyone feel better
having in their wallet, even if some say it's better to use credit cards.

These people are misinformed, because it's really the actual green
that resonates with people ... makes them want to consider you
as a mate especially if they can view plenty of it in your stash.

It's pretty much been this way since humans first climbed down
from trees, bought insurance policies, and took out loans to pay
for a cave in the suburbs...

What's in a Name

Of course I remember Daryl Lect, a childhood contemporary
who was always getting into some kind of trouble, who was
always
in the principal's office for something: hitting another
child,
cheating on a test, talking back to the teacher...

I remember at one point he set fire to a house in the
neighborhood
because he lost a fight with a kid whose parents owned the
house.

Luckily, everyone got out except the pets, that included three dogs,
two cats, and an old parrot who'd been trained to sing part of our
national anthem. Unfortunately, by the time the firetrucks arrived,
the house was pretty much destroyed.

Daryl was caught soon after and sent to reform school, the irony
being that after he was released he killed a man in a robbery—
angry that the man only had five dollars and thirty-seven
cents on him.

He was sentenced to forty years for that, and I have no doubt
that he won't be leaving early for good behavior...

Note

First off, RIP, and please don't forget to RSVP, ASAP
if you plan to attend our event in which you may BYOB.
And FYI, as a VIP, you may also bring a friend so long
as they won't be DOA at the door...

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Jeffrey Zable is a teacher, conga drummer/percussionist who
plays for dance classes and rumbas around the San Francisco
Bay Area, and a writer of poetry, flash-fiction, and non-
fiction. He's published five chapbooks, and his writing has
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