

**FIVE POEMS**  
**by Bradley J. Fest**

**2014.07**

Lady Gaga’s naïve self-aggrandizing stare  
into Judas’s camera, her comically clinging  
Jean Grey<sup>1</sup> outfits, her stamping dancers,  
her various anti-Whitman-esque refusals  
and reversals, none of these facilitate  
agonistic imitation; for really, we are all  
quite happy to be partying this eve. A little  
change can go nowhere with both hands  
on the wheel, with someone in the passenger’s seat  
keeping you company (and maybe even warm).  
No, we are *still* seething with half-ravers in  
techno bars about our (or others’) constant plagiarism.  
We’ll miss our moment, we’ll remember that we actually  
do care about trying to take it all somewhere else.

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<sup>1</sup> Circa her Madelyne Pryor/Ferguson Hellfire stint.

## 2014.08

I must have read a thousand video permissions,  
a thousand screaming hardcore bands in the last  
gasping breath of the night . . . it was like Red Scare  
finally woke up, got its “Send Me an Angel”-effects

together, and then forgot all about the twenty-first  
century. What do you think? I could’ve sworn  
that your perfect little screaming anchorages meant,  
well, *something*. But how could any of us possibly

pretend to be in capitalism, rather than just sorta  
“around” it? Or rather, They’re quite good at producing  
certain kinds of inequalities; or rather, the others  
of us that bother to become and/or consider popular

culture, well, we’ve already turned the lights on, we’ve  
already gone far past considering our lives *as* art, as  
that thing we can never get back.

## 2015.03

To each other we’re all just poorly sketched characters  
in some bronze age comic hoarded by a lonely nerd-god.  
We have no truck with the contours of reality, let alone any  
insight into these ridiculous excuses for fully formed human

beings all your sketches seem to be.<sup>2</sup> You aren’t all that unattractive,  
just a little two dimensional. But I keep confusing Rogue and  
Psylocke at the club. Meanwhile, the rest of us keep grinding  
our beyond sympathetic phrase-checkers to some kind of wicked

dark dubstep and an early oblivion. Sad loose transcendent AIs,  
all y’all are bagging on those obtuse suburbanites for their rather  
more genocidal dance moves in the nonstop party wagon club  
of the US twenty-first century, like its Linkin Parks or Taylor Swifts.

We can *immediately* change. So. And. That is to say.  
It is poetry. It continues to be. It does not have to work  
like before.

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<sup>2</sup> Written by Chris Claremont.

## 2015.07

Lots of deserts and big sky, roads and fences, words and calluses.  
Take “Work Bitch,”<sup>3</sup> the anthem for *The Year of “The Rocking Chair.”*  
We might see how famous one can get feeding upon popular music,  
blasting off to new contemporary issues,<sup>4</sup> writing academic sonnets

as metacommentary on previous poetry. But really, let’s be honest. I’ve created a document around which the plot of a future [mostly unwritten novel] will hinge *already*. This is what I’ve been trying to say: I’ve been writing a fictional *ur-text*,

a “holy grail” being searched for in the mystery at the heart of my forthcoming megatext! It’ll be HBO-ready in seven years. Zombies and everything. Volume I: *The Eschatology Index: Guantanamo Bay*.<sup>5</sup> It features a guy that voluntarily got jailed at the heart of the National

Security State in order to record a new (literary) history about an end that already occurred.<sup>6</sup> Stay tuned. Keep alert. The easter eggs<sup>7</sup> include Bruce Willis<sup>8</sup> and Ke\$ha cyborgs nanogrinding into the morning at *Club Furiosa*, assembling.

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<sup>3</sup> See Spears.

<sup>4</sup> Like Jon Stewart having only two more shows.

<sup>5</sup> Also see Bardo Lièr Parté, *The Eschatology Index: Past the Singularity*, vol. 2 (forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> While trying to stave off climate change. See Bradley J. Fest, *The Rocking Chair* (Pittsburgh, PA: Blue Sketch, 2015), esp. 101–6.

<sup>7</sup> Like this one here!

<sup>8</sup> From *Die Hard*, dir. John McTiernan (Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox, 1988).

## 2015.08

There are those who cannot accept poetry as a technology of history, of utopia; such assent might be necessary for the possibility of a poetics of control in the twenty-first century. Can only new scripture gesture toward such an imaginary?<sup>9</sup> Do we only have postsecular solutions

to these dark infernal times? In the middest, some clear reflection on “my” activities: “My office has three windows. The middle is draped. Murray Avenue runs from left to right and back, but my roof blocks the street. Books and papers are everywhere.”<sup>10</sup>

My new Motorola DROID Maxx rests upon *The Metafictional Muse*.<sup>11</sup> I have a cup of decaffeinated coffee with a heat-sensing sticker of Henry VIII and his six wives slowly peeling away from its ceramic-being. My Logitech M310 mouse is wireless.”

I guess that was not so hard. It should be no wonder that  
I’m surrounded by an archive and my ironic pestering of you  
is merely a slow ruse.

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<sup>9</sup> Or a willingness to break the rules. See Die Antwoord, Stage AE, Pittsburgh, PA, August 12, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., see Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. and trans. Allan Stoekl with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), Theory and History of Literature, vol. 14; Bradley J. Fest, “The Shape of Things II,” MS; Michael Gurnow, *The Edward Snowden Affair: Exposing the Politics and Media Behind the NSA Scandal* (Indianapolis, IN: Blue River, 2014); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (1960), trans. Hazel E. Barnes (1963; repr., New York: Vintage, 1968); and Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (New York: Methuen, 1984).

<sup>11</sup> Awaiting its armor. See Larry McCaffery, *The Metafictional Muse: The Works of Robert Coover, Donald Barthelme, and William H. Gass* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982).

### About the Author

Bradley J. Fest is assistant professor of English at Hartwick College. He is the author of two volumes of poetry, *The Rocking Chair* (Blue Sketch, 2015) and *The Shape of Things* (Salò, 2017), along with a number of essays on contemporary literature and culture. He blogs at *The Hyperarchival Parallax* ([bradleyfest.com](http://bradleyfest.com))