

SUBTERFUGE SOBRIETY A COLLECTION OF ABSURDIST POETRY

Charles, in those old Thin Man movies..tube top stretched so extravagantly that it might kill bystanders if it snapped, she was temptation. When Curtis clarifies that he doesn't need to rest, but rather that he urgently needs to relieve himself, this..and what you think maybe he really does is have his sweaty, greasy, drooling, lustful way with me."..in daylight, they had slouched low, to avoid being seen by passing motorists who might signal the driver..the wretched plaints of the tortured Hammonds in their last moments on this earth..Tiny pill bugs curled as tightly as threatened armadillos. All these and more had been rescued by this..This was a girlish merriment, sweet and musical, almost shy..When he visited Laura, he talked to her at length. Whether in a trance like this or more alert, she never."I suppose not." Sirocco conceded, deflating with a disappointed sigh. After a second he looked up sharply again. "I'll do a deal with you though. Tell me after this is all over, okay?".what Lani girl gonna taste like."."How's it coming along?" Pernak asked..locales is entirely coincidental..The noise grew hellish. Prone to headaches these days, Noah wanted nothing more than quiet and a pair..Better move..that you'll come through all right, as well as an immeasurably higher likelihood that you'll be able to look..to the lunch counter, where customers occupy fewer than half the stools..seat, lightly dozing..Perhaps signifying the beginning of a shift in the obsessions of the resident, a single poster of Britney..twilight, Micky proceeded with caution. Her wariness didn't halt her altogether, because she was certain..on a forty-eight, that right?" Waiters asked. "Uh-huh." "Any plans?" Jerked up and jammed down, the lever handle doesn't release the latch, but pulled inward, it works..,"This isn't like having a big schnoz. I'm either a mutant or a cripple, and I refuse to be a cripple. People..~You got it wrong," Colman told them. "It's not the little ones at all." He widened his eyes in a parody of lewd anticipation and grinned. "Think of all those grandmothers." Terry and Paula laughed..when it struck the floor and tumbled, lashing angrily, as though mistaking its own whipping coils for those..While the noise was dying away, Sirocco swept his eyes around the room and over the sixty-odd faces that had stayed to the last, and who, apart from the ten lookouts placed around the block, were all that was left of D Company's original complement of almost a hundred. He was going to need every one of them, he knew, and even so, it would be cutting things ridiculously thin. But as well as the misgivings that he tried not to show, he felt inwardly moved as he looked at the men who by all the accepted norms and standards should have been among the first in the Army to have gone. But apart from the SD units, D Company's record was second to none. It was a tribute to him personally, expressed in the only common language that meant anything to the mixture of oddballs and misfits that fate had consigned to his charge. But Sirocco had always seen them not as misfits but as individuals, many of them talented in their own peculiar and in some cases bizarre ways, and had accepted them for what they were, which was all they had ever really wanted. But the term misfit was a relative one, he had come to realize. The world that had labeled them misfits was the world that had been unable to compel them to conform. Chiron was a world full of individualists who could never be compelled to conform and who asked only to be accepted for what they were or to be left alone. Every man in D Company had been a Chironian long before planetfall at Alpha Centauri-many before departing Earth. The highest form of currency that a Chironian could offer was respect, and these Chironians were paying it to him now, just by being there. Their respect meant more than medals, citations, or promotions, and Sirocco permitted himself a brief moment of pride. For he knew full well that, whatever the outcome of the operation ahead of them all, it would be the last time they would formally be assembled as D Company..To Micky, Aunt Gen said, "Isn't she something?" "She's an absolute, no-doubt-about-it, fine young..most likely bring him to the same hard death..Celia took a quick breath, held it for a moment, and then lifted her face toward him. "Very well. I've seen what happened to the corporal and to Padawski. The Chironians retaliate against whomever they perceive as the cause of hostility directed against them. If the evictions are enforced."To assume the proposition as a premise is not to prove it," the girl explained, looking up at the preacher. "Your argument, I'm afraid, is completely circular."."And by implication that he was mixed up in the bombings and the Padawski escape too," Bernard threw in..,"It never occurred to me that a congressman would keep a bunch of thugs on the payroll."..news chopper or even a corporate-executive eggbeater with comfortable seating for eight, but huge and..one-inch gap under the poorly hung door, or because Sinsemilla let it into her room and then it could be..dish for the dog; he will simply refill it with juice as often as the pooch requires..restaurant like a spring-loaded joke snake erupting from a trick can labeled PEANUTS. Released, they..worlds..Jean seemed to dismiss the subject from her mind. She looked uncertainly at Bernard for a few seconds, and then said, "It's not really anything to do with that. It's- oh, I can't put this any other way-it's you."..see clearly in herself..Veronica came back into the room and began picking up Mrs. Crayford's boxes. "It's all right. You stay there, Celia. I can manage." She saw the expression on Celia's face and smiled. Her voice dropped to a whisper. "I know--awful,,shouting, a couple men cursing, a woman, shakily reciting the Hail Mary prayer over and over. The."Quite. We have to show the Chironians how to be strong in the way we've learned to be, and if we do that, there will never be any war."..incoherently, believed herself to be a more delicate and exquisite flower than any hothouse orchid..,"Steve's an engineer," one of the Chironians, a bearded youth in a red check shirt, explained, indicating Colman and speaking to CL "We told him about the resonance oscillations in the G7 mounting gyro, and he said he might be able to suggest a way of damping them with feedback from the alignment laser. We're taking him up to have a look at it."."Yeah, but it never quite makes up for always being the bearer of bad news." He stepped back from the..of her room to go to the toilet or to get something to eat, then it could slip in her room, too, through the."Fear implies respect," Leilani said..,"No, the law is there, implicitly, and it applies to everyone, but you have to learn how to read it," Bernard frowned. That hadn't come out the way he had intended. It invited the obvious retort that two people would never read the same thing the same way. The

difference was that the Chironians could make it work. "All I'm saying is that I don't think the problem's as bad as some people are trying to make out," he explained, feeling at the same time that the explanation was a lame one.. "The mediocre shall inherit the Earth," Kalens had told his wife, Celia, after returning to their Delaware mansion from a series of talks with European foreign ministers one day in 2055. "Or else, eventually, there will be another war." And so the Kalenses had departed to see the building of a new society far away that would be inspired by the lessons of the past without being hampered by any of its disruptive legacies. There would be no tradition of unrealistic expectations to contend with, no foreign rivalries to make concessions to, and no clamoring masses accumulated in their useless billions to be kept occupied. Chiron would be a clean' canvas, unspoiled and 'unsullied, awaiting, the fresh imprint of Kalens's design..The dog curls on the passenger's seat and lies with his chin on the console, eyes glimmering with the capsules of vitamin supplements, and spent a lot of time worrying about global warming. She had been.toward the sky as though the lunar light inspired joy. Face tilted to bask in the silvery rays, she turned."So suppose someone else showed up who thought he knew just-as much. What if half the people around here thought so too, and the others didn't? Who decides? How would you resolve something like that?"..Bernard wasn't getting through, he could see. "Take Kath as an example," he said, turning toward Nanook. "A lot of people around here seem to accept her as... boss..Five minutes later Swyley and Malloy had gone into conference in a corner with Celia and Lechat, and Colman stood apart with Sirocco and Hanlon, discussing tactical details. "We might have enough now to put a demolition squad outside to take out the Battle Module drive section like Carson suggested," Hanlon said. "Even if Sterm gets in there it would give more protection to the rest of the ship."..part misery and part fury, as she jabbed the lance hard at the coiled target..Lechat told Fulmire that he no longer thought it advisable to attempt setting up a Terran community alongside the totally unfamiliar experience of Franklin--at least, not immediately, The Terrans would need time to readjust, and in the meantime they would cling to their Own familiar ways and customs. The proximity of Franklin would only cause tensions. Lechat believed, therefore, that the migration to the surface should be halted completely, the existing plans abandoned, and a new Terran settlement established elsewhere for the transition period. An area called Iberia, on the south coast of western Selene, would be a suitable place, he thought. Lechat didn't know what would happen after that and doubted very much if anything could be predicted with confidence, but for the nearer term it would be the answer both to giving the general population a chance to settle in without disruptive influences, and the extremists an opportunity to cool down and do some more thinking..around in your new Corvette by Thursday. I'm sort of stuck with her, if you see what I mean, and I know."..Healed?" Micky didn't consider this girl's deformities to be a disease or a sickness. In fact, Leilani's..A gray-haired man in shirt-sleeves stepped forward from a group huddled outside one of the office doorways. "I am," he said, "McPherson--Communications and Datacenter Manager." After a short. pause he added, "At your disposal."..blood flowed now, but much of the surrounding soft tissue was blue-black. Probably just bruises.." Michelina Birdsong."..When he glanced back, he noticed a Lincoln Navigator pulling away from the curb across the street, no.Perhaps the trucker has just now remembered a particularly funny joke. His unrestrained hilarity is..English accent..had done nothing of the sort, and though he knew that she was not for an instant disposed to take..Colman's face creased into a frown. "Take the ship out with what?".. "Luck," Micky clarified. "The angle of the shot was severe. The slug literally ricocheted off her skull..merriment, the mirth in her voice was unmistakable: "You think I'm making up stories about Dr. Doom..The closet door rattles. Probably just road vibration..The moonless darkness baffles, but the dog is close enough for Curtis to see that she's interested in the..Another zoom shot revealed that the man delivered by the Jaguar was Congressman Jonathan Sharmer..whole-of-limb, hard-bodied, martial arts wunderkind. The Klonk way wasn't the way of the Ninja. The..He turned his head back to look at her. "Yes?".. "Don't tarry, child!" the queen commanded. "Come hither at once and lay thine eyes upon this treasure..than halfway toward Curtis and Old Yeller.."Want to come with us?" Bernard invited.."Is that just a copy file, or are you displaying the master schedule?" Lechat inquired..When she reached the swagging fence, Micky could see that the tormented spirit was of this earth, not..know joy, to have faith that our lives have meaning . . . and to find The Way..Currently, however, a sense of inadequacy so overwhelmed her that she had no capacity for shame. In.."Which one is that?" Leon asked from the screen, sounding dubious but also interested..After walking another mile, he came to the all-night market that he'd specified for the rendezvous..They boy is puzzled. "I know that movie.".. "Major Lesley calling from the nose, sir-"..Leilani looked toward the kitchen window but seemed to be gazing at something far away in time and at.."I don't know. It depends on the situation. Maybe. That's something else we'll have to leave to Sirocco to decide."..entirely to down-to-earth stuff like TV wrestling, video games, dinosaurs, and serial-flushing public..following the ramped bed. He is waiting immediately behind the truck when his master arrives..Leilani dressed in a pair of summer-weight cotton pajamas. Midnight-blue shorts and matching..men, then two others. Or four. Or ten. Or legions..The theories currently favored on Earth attributed the domination of matter, as opposed to antimatter, in the universe to a one-part-per-billion imbalance in 'the reactions occurring in the earliest phase of the Bang, in which the energy available produced copious numbers of exotic particles not found in the present universe, whose decay patterns violated baryon-number conservation. In the present universe they appeared rarely, only as transient "virtual particles" and were responsible for the almost immeasurable, but measured, 10³¹-year mean lifetime of the proton..Karla giggled, said something indecipherable, and pulled Sharmer inside, closing the door behind them..Although conceding the game to Death, she remained determined not to let Death also take sweet..opening and the brief clatter of something being fumbled from a closet floated back into the room..eyes, a flash of teeth in the hooded beam of light. He almost cries out in alarm.."Lucky you feel that way," Donella replies, "because that's not actually a choice you have."..That morning Paul Lechat, whom she had never thought of as especially noteworthy on any issue, had announced himself as a late candidate

in the elections and called for the establishment of a separate Terran colony in Iberia, somewhere up in Selene. He wanted to allow the people from Earth to pursue their own pattern of living without disruptive influences for the immediate future, and possibly to make such an institution permanent if it suited enough people to do so. To Jean the announcement had come as a godsend, and to many others as well, if the amount of popular support that had materialized from all sides within a matter of hours was anything to go by. Why couldn't everybody see it that way? she wondered. It was so obvious. Why were there always some who were obstinate and valued political interests before what common sense said would be for the common good, such as Kalens, who even now was reacting to Lechat as a threat and rallying his own followers to action? "They're priceless," Celia commented dryly from her chair. They had been, literally, but the irony was lost on Mrs. Crawford. Veronica caught Celia's eye with a warning look..local authorities would probably decline to do battle with him..cast it. This evening had become all about Leilani Klonk, if it had not actually been about the girl from the.wide. Maybe twenty inches deep. The bottom rail cleared the floor by three inches..than you, Curtis, just you remember what I'm going to tell you." She leans across the counter as far as her.about a confrontation, and if what Pernak was beginning to glimpse of the Chironians was anything to go by, then that faction might well be in for some nasty surprises. That didn't worry Pernak so much as the thought that a lot of people stood to get hurt in the process. Knowing what he now knew, he felt he couldn't allow himself just to sit by on the sidelines and leave things to take such a course..Micky hurried to her, knelt at her side. "What's wrong? Are you all right?". "It's Michelina..Congress?sometimes he calls it the Parliament of Planets?and those plans will take time to carry out..theatrical voice: "Pray ye, say who knocketh upon my chamber door..".Colman felt something cold deep in his stomach even before his mind had fully registered what Brad had said. "Sterm?" he repeated numbly. He licked his lips, which had gone suddenly dry, and looked from one of the SD majors to the other. "You mean he's already in there?".he shouted at Harding. "Fire at any SD's who get in the way. They know we're here now." He turned to the others. "Grab those two and stick with me. You two, stay with Crosby and cover the rear. Okay, let's get the hell out..".Hiding in the tiny toilet enclosure is out of the question. The owners just came from the restaurant, and.collections of victims' teeth at bedside for nostalgic examination will evidently pull over without hesitation."You can't be soft with people like this," Borftein said bluntly. "Give them a yard, and they'll hate you because they want a mile. Give them nothing and clamp down hard, and later on they'll love you for giving them an inch. I've seen it all before..".swing, but there.forever. Girl, I'd give everything I have if that could happen for you..".hope of escape lies ahead..The rattletrap engine turned over on the first try. The other car had always needed coaxing. The.explain her moral choices once she dies and finds herself standing at judgment. I'm not sure that God..Many businesses were closed now, at 9:20 on a Tuesday night..".LCP's standing by and ready to fire," another voice reported..Over at the table where Celia and Jean were sitting, Marie, who had been listening silently without understanding a lot of what was being said, looked up inquiringly at her mother. Jean smiled and squeezed her hand reassuringly..Micky figured this approach to hardship and calamity worked best if you'd been shot in the head and if..At last the quality of this bestial voice frightened her into halting the assault on the snake. It was dead..".Are you all right?" Micky asked, moving along the fence toward the collapsed section of pickets.

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