

# CLASSIFIED AD POEMS

... WATER IN HELL!

## WARNING!

### HELL IS WAITING FOR YOU!

JESUS CHRIST (the Son of God) DESCRIBES HELL TO BE:

- A LAKE OF FIRE! (Rev. 20:10-15)
- A PLACE OF TORMENT! (Luke 16:22-24)
- A PLACE WHERE LOST SOULS NEVER DIE – AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED! (Mark 9:43-48)
- A PLACE OF WEeping – WAILING – AND GNASHING OF TEETH! (Matt. 25-30) (Matt. 8:12) (Matt. 24:51)
- A PLACE WHERE SINNERS AND UNBELIEVERS DRINK OF THE WINE OF GOD'S WRATH! (Rev. 14:10)
- A PLACE WHERE THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT ASCENDETH UP FOREVER AND EVER. (Rev. 14:11)

ALL LIARS, ADULTERERS, FORNICATORS, SORCERERS, (Enchanter with drugs) MURDERERS, AND UNBELIEVERS, ARE GOING TO SPEND ETERNITY IN THE LAKE OF FIRE! (Rev. 21:8) (Rev. 22:15)

**MOST PEOPLE ARE GOING TO HELL!**  
(Jesus said so!) (Matt. 7:13-14)

THERE IS NO WAY TO ESCAPE OUT OF HELL! FOREVER! – AND EVER! THERE IS NO PURGATORY! (Read Luke 16:19-31)

## AWAKE! AWAKE!

**YOU ARE GOING TO HELL!** – – UNLESS YOU SINCERELY, WHOLEHEARTEDLY – REPENT OF YOUR SINS! THEN – “BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST” AS YOUR SAVIOUR AND LORD! – THEN – FOREVER FOLLOW HIM! – LOVE HIM! – OBEY HIM ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE!

**NO SIN – OR SINNER – WILL EVER ENTER HEAVEN! – AND HELL IS THE ONLY OTHER PLACE YOU CAN GO!**

... WEeping – WAILING – AND GNASHING OF TEETH

... PEOPLE OF EVER GETTING OUT – ETERNITY!

By Margaret Menamin

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Most of these poems were written in the late 1970s and early 1980s. I noticed that if you read only the first lines of some classified ads, they are quite intriguing, and I took off from that. The large ad shown at the beginning of this page is a real ad taken from a newspaper of that time.

## TRAVEL BROCHURE FROM CHARON'S TOUR

Hell is waiting for you!

Hell—  
a lake of fire  
a place of torment  
a place of weeping  
    wailing  
        gnashing of teeth  
and other colorful native customs

All  
liars  
adulterers  
fornicators  
sorcerers  
and unbelievers  
will spend eternity  
in hell:  
you can sail on the next boat

Most people are going to hell  
economy class  
ask about our plan

You are going to hell:  
send for free literature  
concerning eternal punishment  
at family and seasonal rates

Send for beautiful  
two-color  
illustrated  
336-page book  
only three dollars

Three dollars?  
I'll be damned

## **BUYERS FOR RAINBOWS**

wanted. Am breaking up large collection.  
Some large and elegant,  
some very modest.  
A few smell of my body  
from being hidden close to my heart.  
None are much used  
and there were never any pots of gold.  
(Some crooked dealer started that.)  
One, rather faded,  
dates back to the Ark.

## **JUST ARRIVED**

Synthetic rainbows!  
A circus wagon full  
of assorted widths and lengths  
all new man made materials  
manufactured in accordance  
with USDA regulations

Now you can have your own!  
Keep up with the Jupiters  
and Mrs. Demeter next door.  
Your friends will never be able  
To tell the difference

unless of course  
you leave one out in the rain  
the colors tend to run  
when they are wet

**DON'T SETTLE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE'S  
RAINBOW—**

Hand-me-down rainbows don't fit.  
We can make yours to order. We  
are an old established firmament  
with an eternity of experience  
in skylight decorating. We  
carry red, yellow, blue  
or can orange a special spectrum  
lined with silver.

Try one on for sighs:  
wrap it around your shoulders  
like silkstriped taffy  
and bury the recipe  
under the far end.

The world will want  
your multicolored secret.  
Watch out for rainmakers  
with upside down umbrellas.

## **LOST: MY RAINBOW**

where did it go  
turned my back for a minute  
and it was gone

what did I do  
what did I do  
wish I could remember

what did I do  
did I trade it for a drink  
did I hock it  
or did life pick my pocket?

## **FOUND: A BOX OF RAINBOWS**

dropped in the street  
from a hasty chariot  
hurrying along the sun's path.

The owner may claim them  
by pulling his solar steeds up short  
and gathering up this iridescent clutter  
on his next trip.

It's a narrow street  
that runs through this  
little watering spot and  
my god this place  
is crawling with leprechauns.

## MY THANKS TO SAINT JONATHAN

for favor granted  
the day he leaned out the window  
of the thirty-ninth floor  
of the U.S. Steel Building  
and picked a rainbow  
that got caught on Pittsburgh  
and handed it to me  
for a souvenir.

I gave it the best spot  
in a bouquet of rainbows  
he had already given me  
and he smiles

in red  
orange  
yellow  
green  
blue  
indigo  
violet  
and evaporated.

(Written for Jonathan Cohill)

## **BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR STOMACH?**

Try our proven patented butterfly remover.  
Satisfaction guaranteed or your tummy back.

All you have to do  
is swallow the recommended dosage  
of black and white.  
Let it settle into your system.

Take no risks:  
don't laugh out loud  
don't walk in rain  
don't love without license  
don't question anything They tell you  
don't wonder why you are  
    who you are  
    where you are.

You'll never see another butterfly  
or have another dizzy rainbow day  
and friend I can guarantee  
you'll never feel another flutter  
or much of anything else.

(Published in *KUMR Program Guide*, 1979)

**ATTENTION: GOD**

This is to notify You  
that I am here.

And nothing You can do  
will change my mind.

**NOTICE: I WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE**

for any debts other than my own.

I will not be responsible for my own debts either.

I will not be responsible for anything.

No, not ever again

I am tired of being responsible.

I will not be responsible

I will not be

I will not

## **EDWIN PLEASE COME HOME**

We need you.  
Father has finished building the attic.  
He sits up there  
like a trapped animal  
not eating not speaking  
waiting for you to build a house under it.

## **NOTICE TO ALL CENTAURS**

Please stay out of my garden.  
Is it not enough  
that my mares and my daughters  
run wild in the forest  
with white manes flying under the moon?  
Must you also trample my cabbages?

## **WANTED: A DIFFERENT DRUMMER**

This old song and dance  
slows up the parade.  
High steps and double time  
don't stop the treadmill.

Mark time, mark time,  
inhale exhale  
turn the calendar, refinance  
inhale exhale  
change partners, new dance:  
you are still the same distance  
from God, the Joneses  
and the Gross National Product.

Behind the metallic meshing  
of the perpetual cogs  
ticks a cricket sound  
ancient as the pyramids.  
Olympian winds return from some new universe  
to comment on the inevitable path of coin  
and high above the pitch of civilization  
a seductive panegyric plies my ears  
as somewhere under the lamps of Wall Street  
shaggy fauns leap in the mist.

## **OPENING FOR RESIDENT POET**

Professor preferred. Although  
we do not grant degrees  
in the frivolous arts  
we are liberal to the aberrations  
of our established faculty.

Must sound properly absent  
and be able to read  
in a scholarly and melancholy monotone.  
Occasional interjections of humor  
acceptable to awaken listeners.

Some eccentricities helpful  
for sake of intervarsity reputation.  
Beard essential (if male  
and whoever heard of a resident poet  
who wasn't?)

We pay minimum wage  
under protest.  
after all there are plenty of these loonies  
looking for work.

(Published in *Southwinds*)

## **TICKER TAPE AND TINSEL**

Take my word  
they twine like rose and briar  
to beanstalk height

Whatever you have heard  
you haven't heard right.  
The gaping machines  
spew tinsel on the city  
as higher and higher  
we wind the weightless stuff  
and climb to the moon on it

and yearly  
hang our dreams on evergreens  
and wreath them round with ticker tape.

## **AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY**

A heart so long uninhabited  
there has grown over its windows  
a frost no longer seasonal.  
No one of late has pressed a face  
against this cheerless glass  
or gauged the warmth of any room herein.

There was a time  
when shadows flickered in these long, dark reaches  
whose walls glowed hot with fire and light.  
If ever a footstep echoes here today  
no shadow follows it.

Come in and look around.  
A little care could make it livable  
if you don't mind an occasional ghost.

## **SELLING SHADOWS**

isn't easy.  
Nobody understands their function  
least of all me.

If you could expiate your sins  
by pointing over your shoulder  
and saying "He did it"  
this would have its merit  
or if you could send them on ahead  
to meet uncertainties...  
but they inevitably desert you  
on dark streets.

The best argument I have  
is you've got to have one  
it's always been done that way.

It's a good line  
It's sold a lot of other things.

## **LOST: MY DAUGHTER**

O rare and fragile thing  
where have you gone?  
Your eyes were clear as August  
and your hair like flax in the hot wind.  
O slender beauty  
O flower of straw  
where did you fly?

Last seen wearing  
summer like an easy shift  
you fled into your own season.  
I cannot find you now  
behind your slow mysterious smile.

He who finds you in your secret land  
will lead you home  
and ask for his reward  
but you will never be returned to me.

## I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED

to own a bookshop  
if only for the pleasure  
of clearing the shelves.

Famous people talking to themselves  
would be discarded  
and all memoirs  
of unmemorable people  
moved aside for jonquils  
in their season.

I reason  
that volumes stocked  
only for the sake of fine bindings  
should be quietly hollowed out  
for sandwiches or bombs.

Novels written under *noms*  
*de plume* would vanish  
from my honest collection  
and those wasted pages  
bound only to gratify someone  
who craved his name in print  
would be burned  
saving the covers and names.  
Likewise bratty poets playing games.

## **YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED**

to my burning.  
Curtain time is uncertain.  
The candlelighters haven't learned their lines.

Tomorrow, maybe, we can get down to business.  
They will burn me beautifully  
on a pyre of artificial logs  
that spit spasms of color under the match.

Nobody will cry witch.  
The age of ignorance is past.  
But there is no doubt I am in thrall  
of what has never had to do with God.

My banes are box-mixed  
for supermarket Circes,  
my veins are raw with poison  
which I share in prepackaged handshakes.

There are millions of me.  
Maybe the custom will catch on.

## **LOST—**

you and everything.  
I don't know how to touch you anymore.  
Ice creeps into the grooves of my fingers  
until they are smooth as wax  
and I have no fingerprints  
no self  
I am lost.

I open my mouth like a great cold cave  
and try to bring your name outside.  
No sound comes  
no you  
You are lost.

Somewhere in another world  
summer is going to happen again:  
I hear the bees making plans.  
But here it is as cold as a desert.  
It's all lost  
you and everything.

**GUN FOR SALE—**

Like new, used only once  
to kill myself.

May be seen at 73 St. Croix  
after nine p.m.

## **GRAVE FOR RENT**

in a quiet neighborhood  
and not as difficult to heat  
as you might believe.  
The long memories of April  
race underground  
like yellow flame.

But April light  
without its venous channels  
burns vulnerable bones  
and I must walk again  
the cool flagstones  
feel the little lake winds  
in the parks.

I want to go back:  
I long for my old address.  
Take notice, sullen landlord,  
of this vacancy.  
I am too restless here:  
I want to go back.

## ETAOIN SHRDLU

in stealthy shoes  
stalks the *Chicago Daily News*

city desk broods  
sports swings at shadows  
the copy person has Ms.givings  
about going to the ladies room alone

by some dim wall  
lurking in the dark  
etaoin shrdlu  
leaves his mark

(Published in *Southwinds*. Note: *etaoin shrdlu* was the bottom row of keys on the old-style linotype. Often typesetters would pull a finger across this row of keys as a sign-off to a news story. Many times the proofreader failed to delete it and *etaoin shrdlu* got into the newspaper, to the puzzlement of readers.)