

AUTOHAGIOGRAPHY

JON DAVIS

CHUCK CALABREZE is not getting his lands in order
He's not saying please and thank you
He's not excusing himself from the table
CHUCK CALABREZE is not thanking you for your patronage
He's not having a nice day
CHUCK CALABREZE is not working on himself
Not taking it one step at a time
CHUCK CALABREZE doesn't give a fuck really
He's not going slowly
He's not regarding other's feelings
He's promised to fuck you up
You and you and you
He's refusing to mind his own business
He won't rise early and he's banging his head to Rancid
(in total disregard of the lease he signed) till late at night
CHUCK CALABREZE will be late with the rent this month and next month and the
month after that.
He doesn't feel much like answering the phone so he's letting it ring
CHUCK CALABREZE 's answering machine is saying
I'm not here and if I was I wouldn't answer anyway
So leave a message and I might call back if I feel like it
But don't hold your breath cause I haven't felt like it
In a long long time
CHUCK CALABREZE is bouncing checks
Checking eighteen items in the fifteen or fewer line
He's refusing to save and he's spending beyond his means
He's neither frugal nor thrifty nor wise
He's not praying for peace
He's not chanting in the arboretum
He's not recycling
His cholesterol is way out of line
And he's not giving anything up
CHUCK CALABREZE does not mean well
He's not trying his best
He won't be patient
He won't act his age
He's drooling on the pillow
Pissing on the seat
He drives in the passing lane
Passes in the breakdown lane
He doesn't care whether bridges freeze before road

CHUCK CALABREZE has refused to find the lowest cost long distance carrier
When he wants something
He shouts and shouts until he gets it
When he gets it he whines
That it's not exactly what he wanted

DEAD SQUIRREL

after Fred Frith

Possibly amidst the smashing glass.
There amongst the tambourine marchers.
Possibly before the door slams.
Before the drummer stumbles. Before
the scatteration of cymbal and tom,
the crash and rattle of toppling snare.
Possibly before the pharmacist staples
the bag to the bag to the label
to the receipt. Possibly there, among
the ordinary gleamings in the silverware
drawer, the wine glass coaxed into song.
Possibly before the ambulances arrive, before
the lumberyard truck starts backing
and the geese lay their necks along the grass
and emit the hissing blat we learned
to call honking. Possibly before someone
climbs tableside and attempts a ragged
Mr. Bojangles imitation. Possibly
before the dinner music. Before
epistemology. Before the arrival of the latest
tropical depression. Before Romanticism.
Primitivism. Possibly before
the fight song, the drinking song,
the mystical ravings. Back there,
in the dawn of time immemorial
or something rather like it. Before
the baying hounds. Before the cartographers
mapped even the darkest caverns
of our collective psyche.
Before blenders. Crock pots.
Before the lap dancer tossed
the man's drink in his face. Before
lap dancers. Before drinks. Even before faces.
Somewhere during the cacophonous
ceremony we were beginning to commence
to initiate, quite possibly the hysterical
combatants were shouting
over and over for no reason: Dead
squirrel! Dead squirrel! Dead squirrel!
Whether celebration or lament
we cannot know, but the chant was,
reports indicate, accompanied by much

high-stepping and forceful vomiting,
by smashing glass, door slams,
stumbling drummers: Dead Squirrel!

PUBLIC APOLOGY

It's true I'm even more unreliable than I was when my unreliability was publicly acknowledged. Are these heights or depths I'm reaching? Yes, the sample was inadequate, but forty percent responded heights, fifty percent depths, while ten percent reported an unshakable lassitude. Therefore, I apologize for the six consecutive banquets I failed to attend. Especially the one at which I was honored and my plateful of Coquilles St. Jacques simmered unattended. Sorry, too, for not reading the latest guest of honor's most recent trilogy. You're all probably correct when you suggest that if I knew anything, anything at all, about the Crimean War all of this could have been avoided. I must reiterate, however, that had you all been less judgmental you could have better appreciated the entertainment value of my plight. The various betrayals, the shenanigans, the pratfalls, and the less benign miseries—the bottle of barbecue sauce hurled at the adobe, the vengeful gnomes prancing with their glasses of wine, the ardent hound howling as the principles tussled in the den. I apologize, too, for the unfortunates who witnessed the unforeseen copulation on the gravel driveway of one of our finer restaurants. Such intemperate claspings, though they have become a trademark of sorts, must not be tolerated. The shouted admonition to “keep it in your pants,” while colorful, proved an ineffective deterrent. Likewise, Get over yourself. Likewise, Think of someone besides yourselves. Frankly, there was little anyone could have done. Not even gravel. Not even public humiliation. Not even bruises. Tar and feathers. Still, my apologies are genuine. Please report them in full at the next cocktail party. I understand they will not be as entertaining as the moans that allegedly rose from the driveway, the hot tub,

the back of the van, the scenic overlook, from
behind the yews of the unoccupied house,
but perhaps they will make you feel that you
are not -like the unnamed protagonists
who would risk everything to cavort
among the chollas and prickly pears.

MOVING FREELY ABOUT THE CABIN

Unbuckled now. Seatback and tray table
in a less-than-upright position. Who will say
I am not the happy genius etc., riding
thermals between Des Moines and Dubuque
like an afternoon vulture. The woman
with the infant at her breast, the man
with his Wall Street Journal—I contain
multitudes, my breasts enormous
and swollen with milk, my bank accounts
unaccountably huge. I have kicked
my habits. I have vetted my long-term
investments. Look at me, moving
freely about the cabin. Look at me,
athwart the gunnels, my massive
missive tucked beneath my arm. My flight
attendant proffers a beverage; my captain,
O captain, hopes I am enjoying my flight.
While the miserable shudder at bus stops
or risk gangland executions, while
the complacent wade into honest back-
wrenching jobs or cross out bank,
movie store, grocery, I am engaged to recite
to the assembled hobbyists and hopefuls,
to the tenured and tracked, to the wan coeds
matriculating by the fire exit. Then I'm
island-bound to a conference on
The Caribbean Sea as Metaphor
during which I will declaim
my fatuous "St. Kitts Ode," committed
to secure the invitation, but which also
demonstrates my unequalled grasp
of the semi colon—"not since Wordsworth"
the critics intone—and my keen eye
for particulars: cabanas blooming pale
in paler light, bikinis like hammocks
for the sleepy breasts. Six miles up,
I perambulate among the REM-sleepers
and cellophane-crinklers, among the lap-topped
and newly-pensioned. Tomorrow, I shall be
their spokesman, their voice, celebrating
myself, assuming what they assume,
barbarically yawping in this language
that mostly makes them nod and drowse.

*Poet, humorist, and literary raconteur Chuck Calabreze died suddenly on December 26, 2000, in the bathtub of his estate in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was 38. Although his rapid movement up the ATP rankings (in both singles and doubles) has been largely curtailed by his demise, the indefatigable Mr. Calabreze continues to produce texts. His manuscript of poetry, *How Is This Fun*, is nearly complete, and he has begun work on a collection of essays entitled *Try to Stop Me!* about his post-mortem writing career. In the introduction to *Try to Stop Me!* the irrepressible Mr. Calabreze addresses his unprecedented career move: "I never truly existed, I was always and already that point at which nonexistent cultural attitudes upthrust; I simply made manifest--reified, if you will--the complicities and projections, the lassitudes and desires of my nonexistent-but-potentially-virtual readers. This is a service which I gladly continue as a dead man. My existence as a tennis player was somewhat more corporeal; regrettably, my death has forced me to retire my racket and my trademark smiley-face wristbands."*