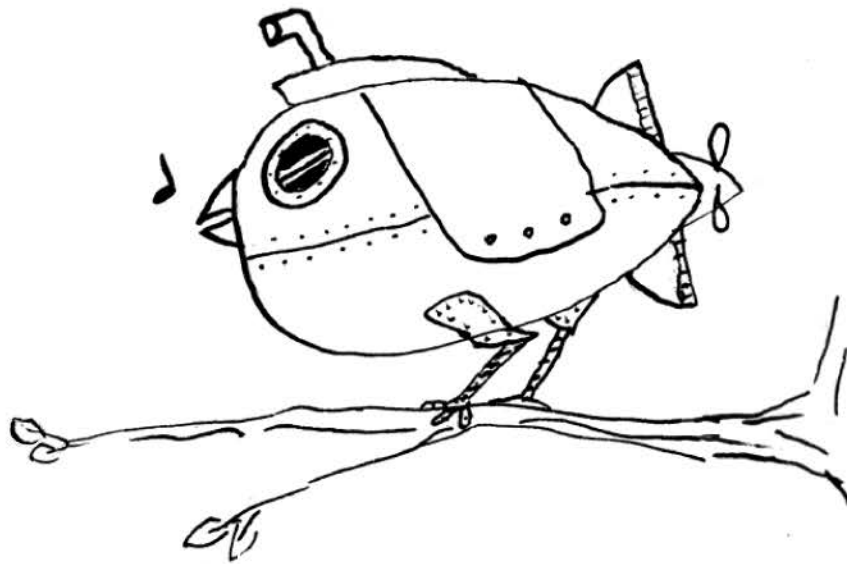


# No Permit's Required



by Daniel Stephens

Illustrated by Anya Lauri



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by Daniel Stephens

Illustrations by Anya Lauri

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## **No permit's required**

No permit's required  
I realize  
to capture moments  
from my life  
in words  
to share with others

From a middle-aged  
beginner poet:  
some verses  
for those who like  
to laugh  
or ponder

And everyone else  
can go to hell

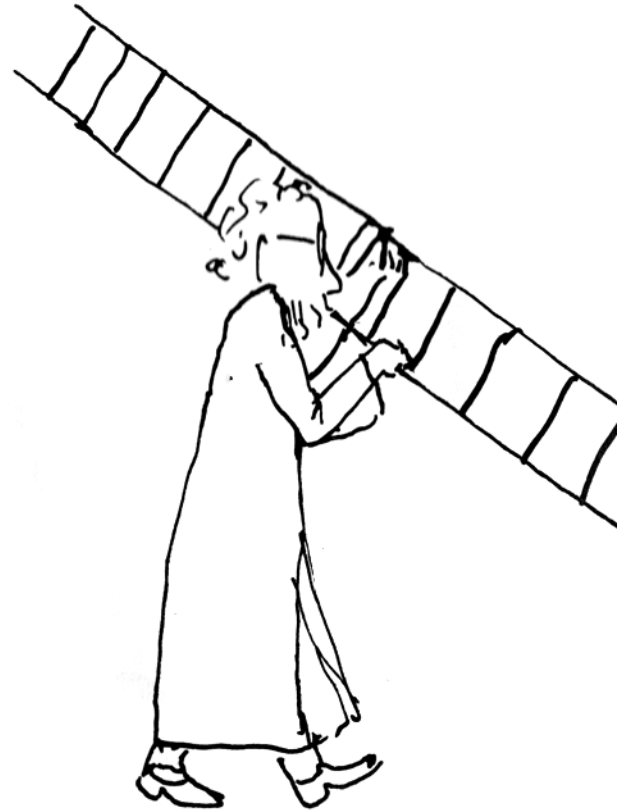


## Legal Notice

Uploading this text  
to Instagram,  
Facebook  
or some other  
social network  
I'm too old  
to have heard of  
so as to demonstrate  
your good taste  
and sense of humour  
to 'friends'  
or 'followers'  
would be a violation  
of copyright.

But go ahead  
For what's the point  
of poems  
if no one reads them?

LEGAL  
NOTICE





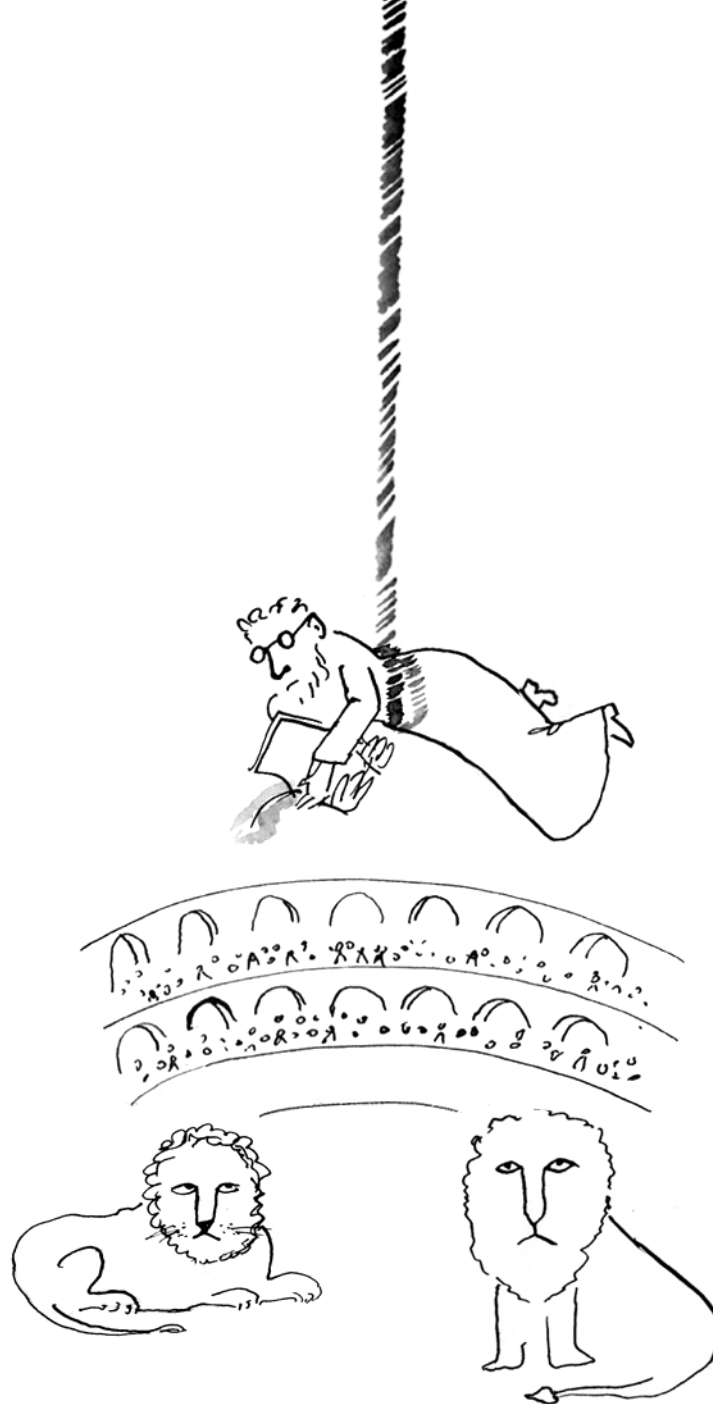
## About this ebook

The editorial staff  
would like to assure readers  
that no poets were killed, injured,  
or in any way mistreated  
during the writing  
of this ebook

Non-unionized writers  
were not employed  
and no financial  
or other incentives  
were offered

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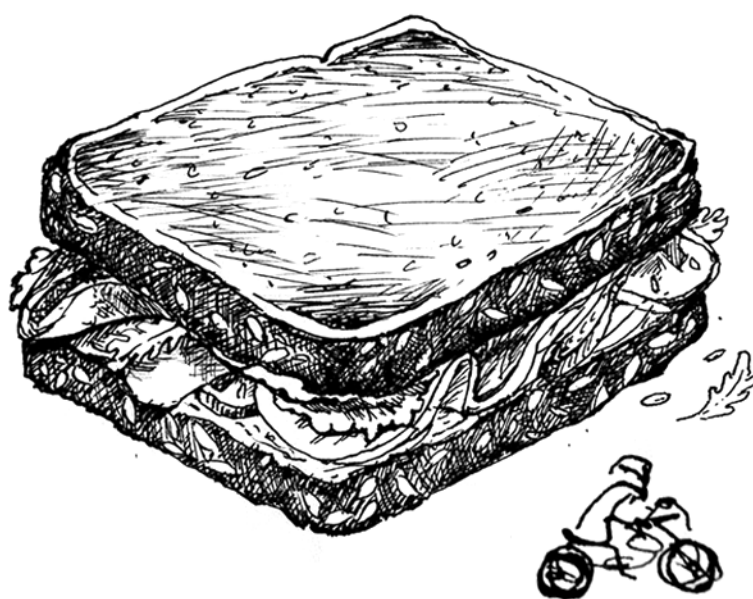
**!** Readers of  
a sensitive nature  
are advised  
that this e-book  
contains **taboo language**  
as well as comments  
that some  
may consider to be  
in questionable taste



## **Trivial thoughts about dying**

Chest pain while typing:  
at least let me  
finish this article

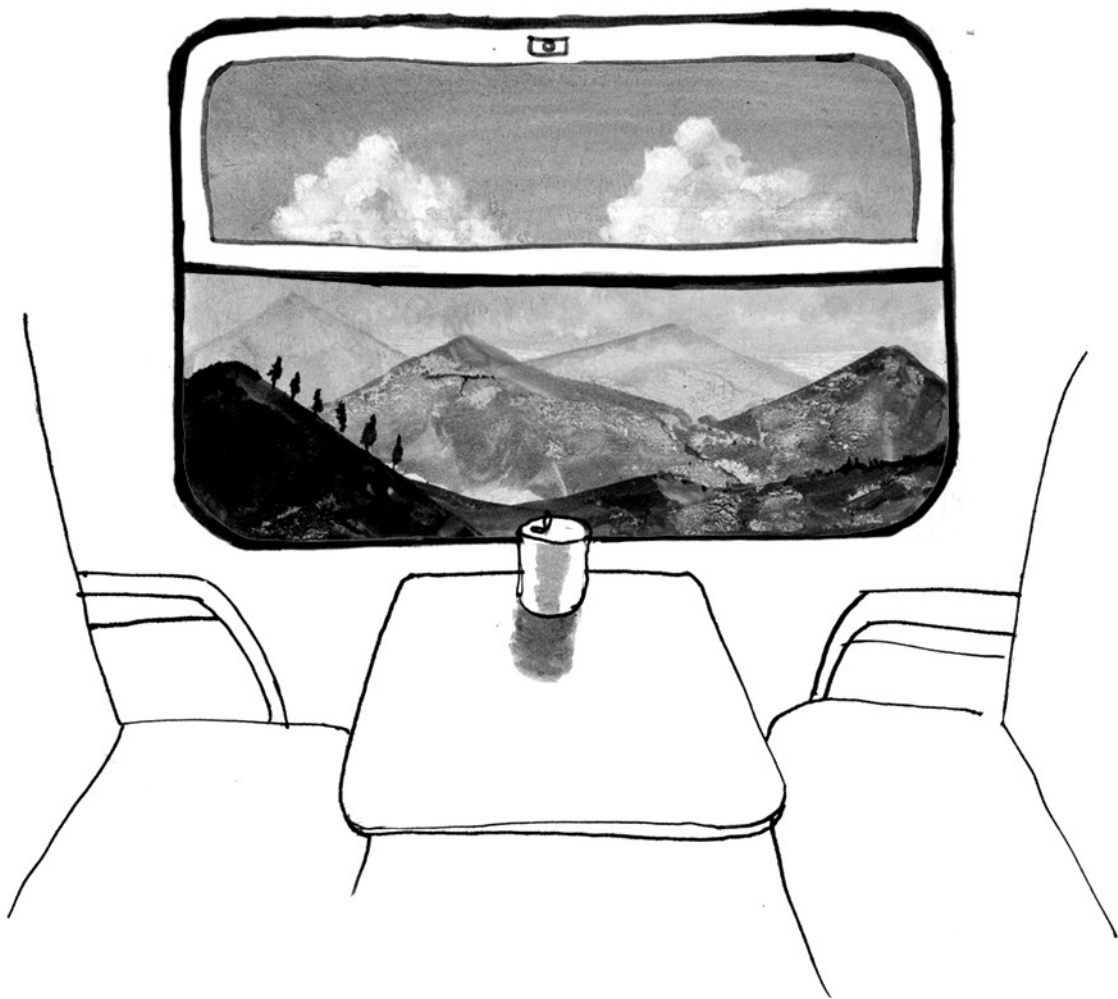
Near-miss on the motorbike:  
who would eat the sandwiches  
in my backpack?



## **Really whizzing along!**

Our train took  
what seemed like forever  
to leave behind  
the ad-plastered  
smoke-stained downtown  
that was January  
and navigate  
at not much more  
than a slow trot -  
certainly nowhere near  
a gallop -  
the endless back gardens  
and washing lines  
of February  
By the first  
gloomy fields  
of early March  
we'd picked up speed  
at last, and now  
cheerful chatter  
opened beer cans  
balanced on  
seat-back trays  
we're going full out  
wheels clattering  
on steel tracks  
the train rocking  
from side to side  
really whizzing along  
the white trackside blossom  
of mid-April  
just a blur  
outside the window

up front, the driver  
getting ready to brake  
to slow us down  
for our first  
scheduled stop -  
2019's late Easter -  
the grimy city behind us  
all but forgotten



## **Late April afternoon**

Within a few steps from home it's clear  
no adjective could do this weather justice  
the sky a school parking lot on a Sunday afternoon  
its color the sea in holiday brochures  
the light such that no detail's missed  
shade under the trees I pass forming pools  
to splash through or plunge into  
Shaking off water like a dog  
I wonder whether to dress  
or walk on like this  
the sun warming skin  
blanched by winter





## **Cars are like people**

My neighbour Pietro's  
clearing out the trunk  
of his silver-gray  
Volkswagen Passat  
now parked round the corner  
from my house

I've got to get her  
to the breaker's  
he explains  
She can't be fixed  
They patch one leak  
then oil just starts  
squirting out  
some place else

Don't know how  
I'll get her there  
he worries  
They won't collect  
they said  
The Germans screwed you again!  
I tease him  
knowing it's his  
second Passat

No  
he tells me  
a true believer  
This 'signora'  
had done a hundred  
and twenty thousand  
before I got her

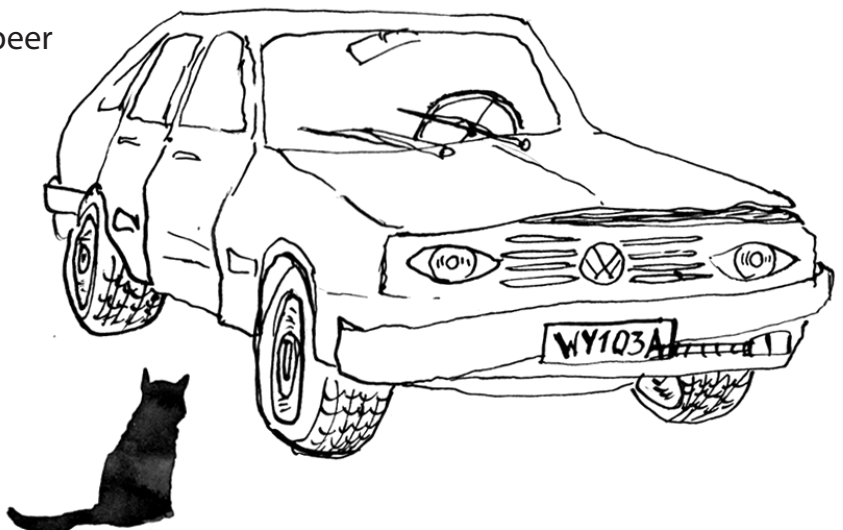
And now? I ask  
knowing he wants me to  
Three hundred and forty!  
he boasts

It's not the Germans  
he assures me  
Cars are like people  
They just start  
losing pieces  
when they get old

Pietro's father's  
been ill I heard  
close to death  
He put a lot of miles  
on that Passat  
driving up and back  
each evening  
just to sit a little

I shrug  
I've no more jokes to make  
so turn away  
it's Saturday evening  
I'm off to buy some beer  
Pietro calls after me  
as I walk away:

You think  
you're going to  
live forever?



## **Two Italian fathers watch their daughters riding bikes**

Outside my kitchen window  
a chilly Saturday evening in April  
two Italian fathers  
Massimo and Paolo  
stand together  
chatting about nothing  
really watching their daughters  
- they each have two -  
riding bikes too fast  
up and down the courtyard  
around the parked cars

Massimo looks cold  
dark puffer jacket  
baseball cap pulled low  
Paolo's lightly-dressed  
a pale sweatshirt only  
but tall and confident  
Now his wife  
bright crimson top  
no jacket either  
joins them  
she's smiling

All three stand and watch  
the girls whizz past  
Perhaps it's been suggested  
they burn off  
excess energy  
before it's hoped  
they'll sit still in a pizzeria  
for an hour or two

I sit back down  
a bottle of beer uncapped  
laptop screen lighting the room  
and type this out  
not really tasting my drink  
a shame - it's IPA -  
trying to get this down  
before it's forgotten  
as most such moments are



## **I googled how to write a poem**

I wondered lonely as a cloud  
Your mom and dad they fuck you up  
There's not to reason why  
- was all I knew about verse

I googled how to write a poem  
and found a website with advice  
Start with ones that rhyme, it said  
I clicked another link instead

Turns out, anyone can be a poet  
history is lousy with them  
The precise form of a poem  
is not important  
Choose a topic  
for example, the sea  
What color is it?  
How does it move?  
Be as descriptive  
as you can  
Bore the shit out of them  
with long lists of adjectives

Write what you know  
I read elsewhere  
which sounded like  
a good idea:  
e-commerce, marketing,  
living in Italy...  
Screw that  
- nothing rhymes with Italy

Enough research, I had a go  
and hey, it's not so hard  
The poems you're reading now  
more or less wrote themselves  
Hope that doesn't show

The trick of poetry, I'd say  
while admitting that  
I've just begun  
is not the writing of it,  
as my granny would have put it  
but the getting someone  
to want to read it

Not to mention finding a way  
to get your babies published  
so as to send a copy  
home to mom  
Harder still, I'd suppose  
to make any money  
out of it

Marketing, it occurs  
that's what's wanted here!  
Now where can I find a poet  
who desperately needs  
marketing assistance  
and yet has cash to pay?

## **What would it feel like?**

What would it feel like  
to be that extremely short  
rather plump  
(but very friendly)  
middle-aged blonde woman  
who works in our local supermarket  
and some place else on Sundays  
and lives with seven cats  
and her brother  
- I got this from her gossipy colleague -  
and rides her bike to work  
on busy roads  
but takes the bus  
when all dressed-up  
and going on a date?

What would it feel like  
to be that beggar  
the one with the  
pink burn scars on his face  
and no fingers at all  
- his hands just rounded lumps -  
now sitting on a sidewalk  
holding out the plastic cup  
I never drop anything into  
when I pass each day  
but later up  
and heading home  
at the end of a long shift  
like all of us  
who work in the city  
but live elsewhere?

What would it feel like  
to be that gray-bearded  
thinning-haired  
paunchy foreign guy  
the one who spends  
most of each day  
alone with a computer  
whose kids are grown  
who works too hard  
and drinks too much  
and might, if all goes well  
manage another twenty years  
but has no idea  
what he'll do with them  
or why?





## **Some bastards**

Some bastards  
rhyme their poems

And load them up  
with portent terms

While I've just rhythm,  
that's hard to spell

And a vague sense  
of something to say

Keats  
W. G. Williams  
Byron  
Goethe  
Yesenin  
GINSBERG  
DICKINSON  
T. S. ELIOT  
HOMER  
Shakespeare  
E. L. MASTERS  
DANTE

---

## **The submarine bird**

Five a.m  
or thereabouts  
and the submarine bird  
is back again  
Outside my window  
some way off  
beyond the trees,  
far from the happy-sounding  
primary-school class row  
the other birds are making  
as they argue through  
how the world might be

The submarine bird  
hangs back  
chats to no one  
Perhaps he can't  
he's got only one note  
his plaintive sonar call  
no good for gossip  
only of use  
to signal  
his loneliness  
and desire to mate  
to other submarine birds

(Or 'hers'  
I've no idea of its sex  
but just assumed  
it's a male, like me)

But it's spring!  
Remember that

imperative urge  
for someone  
that loves you  
to love?  
Yet  
I've only ever heard  
the undersea call  
of one submarine bird

He must be lonely  
I conclude  
Too shy  
or different  
to make friends  
No girlfriend  
to nest with

Go submarine bird!  
Keep on calling  
I'm rooting  
for you

