

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele

Riding downhill on
My tricycle, I struck and
Killed an old lady.

Once widely practiced,
Coitus interruptus
Has the man pull out.

We never expect
Something dreadful to happen.
It happens. Dreadful.

He wanted to sail
Around the world before he
Died. Death intervened.

I've decided not
To have myself circumcised.
Foreskins are precious.

My telephone is
The old-fashioned rotary
Kind. It's all I need.

I am soon perturbed
When I can't find the top to
An ink pen just used!

Doctors and other
Professionals are wise who
Wear a wedding ring.

An orderly who
Collects urine from patients
Calls it "apple juice."

He screams as two masked
Men in black cut off his head.
"Allahu akbar!"

"Allahu akbar!" ["God is great"]
They hold his bloody head up
To the camera.

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In addition to
His seven inches, Roger
Had youthful good looks.

He practically lived
On vodka and cigarettes,
The money from me.

He was sweet, funny,
And immoral. He stole much
From me and vanished.

Thornton Wilder on
Emily Dickinson's work:
Electrifying!

Camel hump roasted
Is prized in the Middle East.
I could forgo it.

I own a number
Of seashells, some so perfect
As to amaze me.

My brother Emmett
And his wife, Louise, wanted
Children, were childless.

I wanted to join
The sinners at the altar.
Mother held me back.

I don't vote, because
I don't want to be called up
For jury duty.

In Houston I met
Henry Fonda on a street.
He smiled and I smiled.

A postal worker
Made off with a large canvas
Bag of first-class mail.

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The Indians we
Call Adena built earthen
Mounds to receive their

Honored dead. The ones
Not leveled astonish us
With their rude beauty.

Jane Withers played the
Mean girl in movies with good
Girl Shirley Temple.

To me, sixty-nine
With another man is damned
Uncomfortable.

You cannot predict
What might happen if you leave
Your front door unlocked.

Foreign matter found
In one's food diminishes
One's pleasure in it.

Another Paul Steele
Lived in my hometown. He was
Not Paul Curry Steele.

The man above me
Hears me masturbating on
My bed before sleep.

The Edwardians
And *All Passion Spent*: novels
By V. Sackville-West

Which I read with much
Pleasure while a patient in
St. Elizabeth's.

Tomb of the Unknown
Soldier guards must keep their waists
Twenty-eight inches.

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Rare, Mrs. Blake was
A “direct voice” medium:
Voices from the dead.

Séances were held
In daylight, in a parlor
With nothing hidden.

Cold, invisible
Hands might brush the faces of
Some participants.

The voices—some low,
Some loud—issued from a tin
Trumpet of plain make.

Foreign tongues were heard:
Italian, Hungarian,
Czech, Greek, and others.

Mrs. Blake and her
Husband, Zach, lived in a house
Haunted by spirits.

A Western Union
Boy saw the house dark but heard
Classical music.

A niece who stayed all
Night woke to bits of sermons
And organ music.

Mrs. Blake’s grandson
Rex Davis saw a man in
The parlor vanish.

Dying, Mrs. Blake
Was granted a preview of
The life after death.

“They described it, but
Oh, how wonderful and how
Beautiful it is!”