

The University of San Francisco

USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center

English

College of Arts and Sciences

8-24-2017

Spoiler Alert, June Notebook, and Political Poem

Dean Rader

University of San Francisco, rader@usfca.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.usfca.edu/engl>



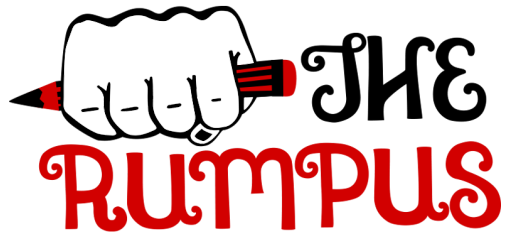
Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rader, Dean, "Spoiler Alert, June Notebook, and Political Poem" (2017). *English*. 33.

<https://repository.usfca.edu/engl/33>

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts and Sciences at USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in English by an authorized administrator of USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. For more information, please contact repository@usfca.edu.



Fight like a motherfucker.



Rumpus Original Poetry: Three Poems by Dean Rader

By [Dean Rader](#)

August 24th, 2017

Spoiler Alert

This poem opens with clouds sliding off the edge of the sky. It is dusk. The camera has been sped up to make everything

appear to be in a hurry. And now night. What looks like ghosts trail along overhead as though on a conveyor into nothingness.

In this stanza, the poem will draw comparisons between an axe and a decree from a far off country, a document

or declaration, perhaps of war
or genocide but the poem
will have strong misgivings
about the presence of

genocide in the poem, especially
as the first word of a stanza.
Soon, but not yet, the poem
shall shift to a different scene

where two boys practice shooting
at two other boys they believe
to be their rivals. Are they playing a
video game? Are they on a

paintball course? Are they
in a suburb in America? We don't
know but the camera has now
moved to a bed where a man

and a woman do what exactly?
What the reader wants and what
the poem needs might be in this
scene radically different. The

point is that something is
happening in the bedroom on
that bed. It is dusk again.
He lifts a hand, and now we know

June Notebook

_____ *for Cassie Duggan*

Because the fan could not turn the summer air to ochre, the feathers
found their way to the window.

The old grammar was always just a placeholder for new resentments.

You planted rows of gardenias in the billiard room (noticed) (at last),
even though the house was clearly in flames.

Our lives are a diorama of what is yet to be,
a slingshot over the commute.

This revelation is a caterpillar on a tree.

If paradox is your home, look out the window to see simplicity
from the scope of the sniper.

We spend so much of our lives in the visible.

Returned letters are on the prowl;
the gold of the mind buried next to the pickaxe.

Open your mailbox to find the shinbone your disquiet dug up from the yard.

Let's admit it: we have all been vacillating between hindrance and drawback,
but that doesn't mean our languor is our own.

Perhaps this is why we have become addicted to a drug called recovery.

This poem is slowly transforming into a wounded zebra
about to be set upon by a pack of lions.

The moon shining on your bright face and you shining back.

The road is closed, but at the end one of two things waits:
1) an aging clown; 2) cancer.

Self, you are a lot like a combination lock on a small island.

The moths come in seasons of drowsiness;
the flood arrives with a whirring of wings.

Nature, you are a suitcase too heavy to carry;
you may get left behind.

Sometimes I am a person who says yes to everything, even a toothache.

History has lectured to us about both plot and structure;
O to be frenulomed to our words.

Political Poem

_____ *after W. S. Merwin*

One day
when the war

is over
something will

rise to bear
the new weight

we have been
asked to carry

up the path
to that place

we have come
to think of as

this life. In a
small field

a young
girl raises

a shovel and
sets it down.

She imagines
a small bird

lifting into the air
like some sort

of prayer
that knows

its way.

Share this:



[Dean Rader's debut collection](#) of poems, *Works & Days*, won the 2010 T. S. Eliot Poetry Prize and *Landscape Portrait Figure Form* (2014) was named by The Barnes & Noble Review as a Best Poetry Book of the year. He was won numerous awards for his writing, including the 2016 Common Good Books Prize, judged by Garrison Keillor, and the 2015 George Bogin Award from the Poetry Society of America, judged by Stephen Burt. He writes and reviews regularly for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Kenyon Review*, *Ploughshares*, and The Huffington Post. Two new collections of poetry appeared in 2017: A book of collaborative sonnets written with Simone Muench, entitled *Suture* (Black Lawrence Press), and *Self-Portrait as Wikipedia Entry* (Copper Canyon), about which, *Publishers Weekly* writes “few poets capture the contradictions of our national life with as much sensitivity or keenness.” [More from this author →](#)

Tags: [Dean Rader](#), [poetry](#), [Rumpus Original Poetry](#)

Filed Under: [Poetry](#), [Rumpus Original](#), [Rumpus Original Poems](#)

As a [Bookshop](#) affiliate and an Amazon Associate, The Rumpus earns a percentage from qualifying purchases. This income helps us keep the magazine alive.

The Rumpus Newsletter
Get Our Overly Personal